

TLCBiblical.com Video Series

110 Overview Of The Old Testament

1. Introduction

In our last video we identified the two main divisions of the Bible. Now its time to take a closer look at each of them in more detail. In this lesson we'll examine an overview of the Old Testament.

2. Clarification of terms

First we need to clarify the term Old Testament to eliminate any confusion you might experience when discussing the Bible. The term Old Testament can be used in two ways. The first of these is as a descriptive term referring to the 39 books of Hebrew origin known collectively as the Old Testament. A second use of the term is as a reference to the Law of Moses. The Law, consisting of the 10 commandments as well as a number of regulations, statutes and ordinances, can be referred to as the Old Testament in a proper sense. The Law of Moses is also referred to as the Old Law, the Old Covenant, the Law and the Old Testament. Each of these terms is correct but can be confusing for those not familiar with the scriptures. In these lessons I'll refer to the Law of Moses as the Law and the 39 books of Hebrew origin as the Old Testament. In a later video we'll talk about the time period governed by the Law since this extends beyond the 39 books ending with Malachi.

3. Major divisions of the Old Testament

To help organize a study of the Old Testament we can divide the books into groups. There are four main groups. These are:

- a. Law
- b. History
- c. Poetry / Wisdom
- d. Prophecy

These categories are only a tool to assist in understanding the predominant themes in each of the groups. While the name identifies the primary focus of the group it doesn't limit the content to a particular type. For example, books of Law also contain history, poetic language and prophecy. Poetic books may relate histories, contain prophetic elements and discuss points of Law. The books of prophecy and history incorporate each of these elements as well. Let's take a closer look at the groups.

4. The books of Law

There are 5 books in this group and are also referred to as the pentateuch, a word derived from the Greek word for five. These are attributed to Moses as the originator and so are also known as the books of Moses. In order these are ...

TLCBiblical.com Video Series

110 Overview Of The Old Testament

- a. Genesis
- b. Exodus
- c. Leviticus
- d. Numbers
- e. Deuteronomy

5. The books of History

There are twelve of these books written by various writers including Samuel, Ezra and Nehemiah. These books cover the time period from the death of Moses to the return from Babylonian exile. There is some degree of overlap in the time periods of these books which we will clarify in a later video. These books are:

- a. Joshua
- b. Judges
- c. Ruth
- d. 1 Samuel
- e. 2 Samuel
- f. 1 Kings
- g. 2 Kings
- h. 1 Chronicles
- I. 2 Chronicles
- j. Ezra
- 11. Nehemiah
- 12. Esther

6. The books of Poetry or Wisdom Literature

There are 5 books in this group. They are referred to as the books of poetry due to the literary forms used to express the ideas in the books. Based on the content of the writings they are also referred to as the wisdom literature although some writers reserve this term specifically for the writings of Solomon. There are multiple authors who contributed to these books including Moses, David and Solomon as well as others. These books are:

- a. Job
- b. Psalms
- c. Proverbs
- d. Ecclesiastes
- e. Song of Solomon

TLCBiblical.com Video Series

110 Overview Of The Old Testament

7. The books of Prophecy

There are 17 books in this group which can be divided into two smaller groups. These subgroups are...

- a. The major prophets and
- b. The minor prophets

The terms major and minor refer to the length of the writings not their relative importance. The minor prophets writings are shorter in length than the major prophets with one exception. The book of Lamentations, written by the prophet Jeremiah, is shorter than Hosea but is grouped with the major prophets as an extension of Jeremiah's previous writing. Let's take a look at both of these groups.

The major prophets. There are 5 of these books which in order are:

- a. Isaiah
- b. Jeremiah
- c. Lamentations (Lamentations of Jeremiah)
- d. Ezekiel
- e. Daniel

The minor prophets. There are 12 of these books

- a. Hosea
- b. Joel
- c. Amos
- d. Obadiah
- e. Jonah
- f. Micah
- g. Nahum
- h. Habakkuk
- i. Zephaniah
- j. Haggai
- k. Zechariah
- l. Malachi

8. Summary

These groups not only identify themes in each of the books but they will also help clarify a sense of time, establish context and will aid in memorizing the order of the books.

11. Next

TLCBiblical.com Video Series
110 Overview Of The Old Testament

In our next video we'll take a closer look at **The Books of Law**.