

the message and summary of the BIBLE

1. The Old Testament Books
by Dr. Benjamin Chew



PREFACE

At the repeated request of young believers and older Christian friends, this book has been written to help and encourage the young believer in his personal study of the Word and to enable him to grasp in an orderly manner the main messages first of the whole Bible and then also of each of its sixty-six books.

The writer has made use of personal notes made over many years and also acknowledges with deep gratitude the very great help received from many Bible scholars and teachers through their books and ministry during that time.

May all of us who love and trust the Lord be continually led by the Holy Spirit in our study of the Word and the use of this book, with its obvious deficiencies, to understand and take to heart in practical obedience the messages of God's eternal Word to His children.

B.C.

FOREWORD

Here is a little book designed to help the young Christian to get a 'bird's eye' view of the Bible: first, we are given a brief survey of the whole Bible, and then a more detailed account of the contents and natural divisions of each book. Scattered through the book are many helpful thoughts and observations, drawn not only from the author's reading, but also from his own spiritual experience.

May this book lead many to read the 'Book of Books' for themselves, to lay to heart its message, and to show the result in transformed lives, full of the power and purpose of God: for young converts, it should prove particularly helpful.

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THE MESSAGE AND SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE

The MESSAGE of` the Bible i.e. the OLD and TESTAMENTS may be summarized in the ONE word — TESTAMENT - (= COVENANT). This is God`s covenant, pledge and promise made by HIM out of His love and grace to man. It is not a 'bilateral' agreement. The BIBLE is GOD'S WORD (II Tim. 3: 16 "inspiration of God" means 'God—breathed'), GOD'S MESSAGE, NEW GOD'S TESTAM ENT, GOD'S COVENANT.

In the OLD TESTAMENT are the covenants God made with Adam and Eve (Gen. 3: 15), with NOAH (Gen. 9. 8-17: note vs. 16 'everlasting covenant`), with ABRAM (ABRAHAM) Gen. 12.2-3: 13, 15-16: 15. 5, 18: 17. 4-10, (note 'everlasting covenant` vs. 7) 22. 16-18: with ISAAC Gen. 26. 2-4: with JACOB Gen. 28. 13-15: 35. 10-12: all these covenants were unconditional and to be accepted by faith.

The Covenant with MOSES, (Ex. 6. 2-8: 19. 3-6) however, was conditional on obedience. The Law was given to lead the Jews and, through them, all other men to the Messiah —CHRIST. The sacrificial offerings, the tabernacle and the priesthood also all pointed to the coming CHRIST. It is in the Old Testament that the NEW Covenant is first mentioned. Read JER. 31. 31-34; and compare with HEB: 8. 6-13 for example, to confirm that we cannot separate the Old and New Testaments.

The New Covenant, of course, is fulfilled in the Person of` the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we recognize the central figure of the Bible, as GOD our SAYIOUR incarnate, the Mediator of His own covenant. (I Tim. 2. 5-6: Heb. 8.6 : 9.15 : 12.24)

In the Old Testament (39 books) is therefore the PROMISE, PROPHECY and PREPARATION of the New (27 books). It was the Bible of Our Lord and the apostles, and its supreme authority as God's word so recognized. (Matt. 5.18-19 : 19.4-8 :Jn. 5.39).

The MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE is personal and not primarily philosophical and must be either accepted personally as true, or otherwise rejected. The BIBLE presents:—

1. GOD our CREATOR and COVENANT-MAKER, appearing in the New Testament not suddenly as a visitor from another realm but in Jesus as part of man's history. As the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son has no genealogy (Gospel of St. John). As Man, He is linked with previous history in the genealogies in St. Matthew and St. Luke.
2. GOD'S COVENANT-PEOPLE and CHILDREN i.e. those who believe in Him and in His Son, both in the Old and New Testaments: e.g. Abraham, who is called the father of the believers (Gal. 3.6 et. seq.) and Moses (Heb. 1 1.26). Israel is called the church (ekklesia) in the wilderness (Acts. 7.38) and believers now form the church (ekklesia) in the world.
3. GOD'S COVENANT—PLAN of SALVATION for all man-kind in His love, power, wisdom and holiness- His grace shown and His life given in CHRIST to all believers, through whom the plan would be proclaimed to others. Although this plan is for everyone ("whosoever will") yet believers may grasp the wonderful truth that God chose (a) Israel Is. 44.2, 45.4 (b) the Church Eph. 1.4, Col. 3.12, I Thess. 1.4 and (c) every believer I Pet. 1.2.

The OLD TESTAMENT

The O.T. "testified of Christ". Read what our Lord said in John 5.39. Moses 'spoke of I-lim' John 5.46.

There is much of incalculable value of history, philosophy, poetry, drama, prophecy and ethics in the O.T. Scriptures, but if we do not see that everything points to Christ, we miss the essential message.

OUTLINE of CLASSIFICATION of O.T. BOOKS.

Three main sections are recognized —the Law (also called Books of the Law, Books of Moses, Pentateuch, TORAH), the Psalms and the Prophets.

To help our memory in a classification of all the books, let us take this Outline:—

I (a) The PENTATEUCH (five Books of Moses, LAW, TORAH) and (b) the POLITICO — HISTORICAL BOOKS.

Pentateuch:—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. (5 books).

Politico-historical: — Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. (12 Books).

II The POETICAL and PHILOSOPHICAL Books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon (5 Books).

III The PROPHETICAL Books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations (poetical), Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. (17 Books comprising 5 'Major prophets' and 12 'Minor prophets').

SECTION I

I(a) The PENTATEUCH (5 Books).

I. GENESIS (means "Beginning"); 50 chapters: Key verse Gen. 1.1. "In the beginning GOD" It is the Book of beginnings:—creation of the universe, of living things and of man: origin of marriage, of man's sin and of the promise of salvation and the coming of Christ.

Here begins the march in history of God's purpose — seen in the lives of the patriarchs (especially Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph) and God's dealings with His chosen people, Israel.

Study the lives of these men. The MESSAGE is that, the GOD of beginnings is "the GOD of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." The great events are Creation, man's fall, the Flood and the settling of the descendants of Israel in Egypt. Although Joseph was not

an ancestor of Christ, yet his life is a great picture of the life of our Lord. The book closes with the death of Joseph.

SUMMARY

I. 1.1-4.26: PRIMARY PERIOD

(a) Ch. 1—2 CREATION. Genesis was written by Moses more than 3500 years ago. Geological and palaeontological research which began only about 150 years ago has however often revealed the remarkable factual accuracy of the Genesis record. This must be carefully and reverently studied with due regard to the actual meaning of the words in the text, which is extremely condensed and yet has presented through the centuries to Christian schoolboy, scientist and scholar alike the wondrous power and purpose of God in CREATION.

Note 2.4 "the GENERATIONS of the heavens and the earth when they were created." The word, 'generations' recurs in 5.1, 6.9, 10.1, 11.10 and 19, 36.1. 9. and 37.2. It has the interesting meaning of 'begettings' as well as 'genealogical records,' and therefore may be regarded as a SUMMARY or SOURCE-DESCRIPTION. (The student should know that long before 3000 B.C. writing on clay tablets was an established practice and tablets containing family genealogies have been dug up.)

(b) ch. 3. TEMPTATION and FALL OF MAN.

Note v. 15—God's FIRST COVENANT (see 13.15, 17.8 and GAL. 3.16, 4.4.)

(c) ch. 4. CAIN and ABEL: the FIRST FRATRICIDE: SETH (v. 25), 'instead of Abel' and ENOS (v. 26).

II. 5.1- 11.32: PRIMITIVE PERIOD

(a) ANTEDILUVIAN: 5.1 —7.16

Note 5.1 ".... the BOOK of the GENERATIONS of Adam. ..." and 6.9 ".... the GENERATIONS of Noah" The word 'book' in 5.1 means register or record.

(b) THE FLOOD: 7.17-8.14.

(c) POSTDILUVIAN: 8.15- 11.26.

Note (i) 9.8 — 17: God's everlasting COVENANT to NOAH v. 16. (ii) 10.1 "GENERATIONS of Sons of Noah" (iii) 11.1-9 BABEL, the FIRST CITY; 10-26 "GENERATIONS of Shem ... " - the

origin of the Semitic peoples.

III. THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD 11.27 to 50.26.

(a) ABRAM (*exalted father*), ABRAHAM (*father of multitudes*, 17.3-5) 11.27 to 25.10.

The greatest example in the O.T. of a life of faith, he is described as the father of all believers (Gal. 3.6-7) and the friend of God (II Chron. 20.7, Isa. 41.8, James 2.23). As the ancestor of the Hebrew, Arab and other nations, he is held also in highest esteem by Jew and Moslem.

For a summary of his life read Acts 7.2-8.

Note the LORD'S direct dealings with Abraham in

- (i) the CALL and COVENANT of faith, the great and gracious ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, 12.1-3;
- (ii) the CONSECRATION of faith, 12.7-8;
- (iii) the CONFIRMATION of faith, 13.14-16, the Covenant confirmed and amplified. Study the account of the remarkable person of MELCHIZIDEK, a King—priest and a great type of CHRIST (14.18-20, Ps. 110.4, then Heb. 5-7 especially 7.1-4).
- (iv) The CONFIDENCE of faith, 15.1-13; note v.6 "And he believed in the LORD and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4.3, 9.22; Gal. 3.6).
- (v) The COMMITMENT of faith 17.1-22. The LORD appears to ABRAM, as EL-SHADDAI, the All-sufficient and Almighty One. Abram is named ABRAHAM and the COVENANT renewed, with CIRCUMCISION as the Covenant—sign for Abraham and his descendants. SARAI, his wife is named SARAH and included in the covenant (Isa. 51.2, Rom. 4.19, 9.9, Heb. 11.11, I Pet. 3.6).
- (vi) The CHALLENGE of faith 18.1-15, with regard to an heir to Abraham and Sarah, and in v. 16-33 concerning

SODOM and GOMORRAH.

(vii) The CONFORMITY of faith 22.1-19. Study the moving story of Abraham and Isaac, in which Abraham enters through the obedience of faith (James 2.21, Heb. 11.17-19) into the experience of conformity to God's love in the gift of His son. Because of this (v. 16, 18), the covenant is fully reiterated (v. 15,-19).

Note also the provision of a substitute and the names of God in vs. 8, 14 "God will provide," (Elohim-jireh) and ".Iehovah—Jireh."

Study in contrast the sad life of Lot (13.5-13, 14.12-16, 19.1-38).

(b) ISAAC (=laughter), 21.6. (21.1-8, 22.1-19, 24.1-67, 25.5-11, 19-21, 26.1-28.5, 35.27-28).

Note (i) Isaac as the son of promise (17.21, Gal. 4.23, 28).

(ii) His filial obedience ch. 22.

(iii) The Choice of REBEKAH ch. 24.

(iv) The COVENANT renewed to him 26.2-5, 24.

(v) His BLESSING upon Esau and Jacob 27.28-29, 39-40, 28.3-5, an act of faith (Heb. 11.20).

Note 25.19; " GENERATIONS of Isaac

Study the life of ISHMAEL in contrast: 16.16, 17-20, 21.9-21, Gal. 4.22-31.

Note 25.12: " GENERATIONS of Ishmael

(c) JACOB (=supplanter), 25.26, later named ISRAEL, prince of God, 35.10. Study also in contrast the life story of ESAU, his elder twin-brother. (25.21-34, 27.1-33, 20, 35.1-37.4, 42.1-2, 43.1-14, 45.25 to 6, 7, 47.27 to 49.33).

Note 1. God's gracious choice of JACOB 25.23, 27.40. (Mal. 1.2-3, Rom. 9.13).

2. God's direct dealings with him.

(i) 28.13-15 The COVENANT at Bethel.

(ii) 31.1 1-13 (at Haran).

(iii) 32.1-2 (Mahanaim).

(iv) 32.9-12 (before JABBOK v. 22).

(v) 32.24-30 (after JABBOK, PENIEL).

(vi) 35.1 (at Shechem).

(vii) 35.9-15 (back at Bethel)

3. Jacob's children and descendants: 35.22b-26, 37.2
"These are the GENERATIONS of Jacob."

4. His BLESSING upon them and last words: 48.3-22
(upon Joseph and his children 49.1-30 (upon all).

(d) JOSEPH (means 'added' 30.24).

Note 1. Joseph with his father and brothers in CANAAN- 37.1-36.

2. Joseph in EGYPT 39.1- 50.26.

(i) in POTIPHAR'S house 39.1-19.

(ii) in PRISON 39.20-41.13.

(iii) with PHARAOH 41.14 to 50.26.
(as ruler of Egypt 41.43-45).

2. EXODUS (means "going out") - 40 chapters.

Key verse: Ex. 13.2 Key-phrase "out of Egypt" or "out from Egypt" occurs many times. Note Ex. 20.2. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of

the house of bondage." The MESSAGE is "the REDEMPTION of God's people." No Pharaoh, no human agency, can stop the plan and purpose of God. Note the presence of God with His people and His provision for them in spite of their disobedience and unbelief. His power is revealed.

Study the life of Moses, of Aaron, the giving of the Law to show up sin (ch. 20), the Tabernacle (ch. 25-27: 30-31 : 35-40) — a wonderful symbol and type of the Lord Jesus, of redemption, of God's holiness, (especially ch: 32) and note also the results of disobedience.

SUMMARY:-

1. ch. 1 to 13.16. ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

(a) ch. 1 Bondage and oppression (read also Acts 7.17—19).

(b) ch. 2.1—15. MOSES, the deliverer: his birth and childhood (vs. 1-9; Heb. 11.23) and the first 40 years of his life as prince of Egypt (v. 10; Acts. 7.20-29).

(c) ch. 2.16-25 MOSES in MIDIAN (40 years) Read Heb.11.24-27.

(d) ch. 3 to 4 MOSES at HOREB: his CALL and COMMISSION.

(e) ch. 5 to 11 MOSES before PHAROAH. The Plagues of Egypt.

(f) ch. 12, The slaying of the first-born and the institution of the PASSOVER.

2. ch. 13.17 to 14. The EXODUS and the CROSSING of the RED SEA.

3. ch. 15 to 40. ISRAEL out of EGYPT.

(a) ch. 15.1-19. MOSES' SONG OF DELIVERANCE.

(b) 15.20-27 On to ELIM.

- (c) 16. In the Wilderness of SIN : Israel's murmurings; MANNA given: OUAILS sent (v. 13).
- (d) 17.1-7. At REPHIDIM. Water from the SMITTEN ROCK in Horeb (contrast Num. 2.7-13) Read 1 Cor. 10.4.
- (e) ch. 17.8-16. VICTORY over AMALEK. JEHOVAH-NISSI, the Lord, my Banner v. 15.
- (f) ch. 18. Jethro's advice: temporary government.
- (g) ch. 19 to 40 ISRAEL AT SINAI.
- (i) ch. 19.1-9. The COVENANT with MOSES.
 - (ii) 10-25 The LAW GIVEN from MT. SINAI.
 - (iii) ch. 20 The TEN COMMANDMENTS.
 - (iv) ch. 21 to 23 The 'JUDGMENTS'.
 - (v) ch. 24: The WORDS of the LORD AND the JUDGMENTS orally given to the people: then WRITTEN by MOSES in "The BOOK OF THE COVENANT", and again read to the people. v. 7.
 - (vi) ch. 25 to 31 . DIRECTIONS for the TABERNACLE: the building (25-27), the priestly garments (28), the priestly office and offerings (29), the articles in the Holy of Holies (30.1-10) the Peoples' offerings (30.11-16) and the cleansing and anointing of the priests (30.17-38); the builders and artisans. (31.1-11) Read Heb: 8.5, ch. 9 to 10.
 - (vii) ch. 31.12-18 the "Two TABLES OF STONE" GIVEN to MOSES.
 - (viii) ch. 32. ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY: THE GOLDEN CALF.

(Note vs. 7 and 11 " Moses Thy people " and " LORD thy people!) The "TABLES of the Testimony" broken 15-

Note the bad leadership of Aaron in Moses' absence.

(ix) ch. 34. MOSES' COMMUNION with the LORD
(note vs. 9), 11-23.

(x) ch. 34. MOSES again in the MOUNT: the LAW re-written vs. 27-28.

(xi) ch. 35 to 40. The TABERNACLE built and set up.
40.34-38. Guidance for the journey.

3. LEVITICUS (means "concerning Levi" i.e. the priesthood):
27 chapters. KEY VERSE: Lev: 19.2B "You shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." This applies also to Christians- 1 Pet. 1. 15-16. The MESSAGE OF THE BOOK is "the HOLINESS of God's people" i.e. their SEPARATION to GOD necessitating complete obedience to His Word. (Read ch. 26 and note the judgment on two of Aaron's sons ch. 10. 1-2).

Study:(1) The OFFERINGS (ch. 1-7) Five:—BURNT-, MEAT - or MEAL-, PEACE-, SIN-, and TRESPASS-OFFERINGS which all speak of the way to God by sacrifice and which set forth the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) The ORDERS: for the Priesthood (ch. 8-10), regarding food (ch. 11) and health (ch. 12-15), against impurity, idolatry and immorality (ch. 17-22), concerning persons and possessions (including tithing). ch. 24-27.

(3) The OBSERVANCES (ch. 23) (i) the Sabbath v. 3. (ii) the Passover and the Feast of unleavened bread vs. 5-6. (iii) Feast of first fruits v. 10. (iv) Pentecost vs. 16 (or feast of weeks, fifty days after the Passover). (v) Feast of Trumpets vs. 24. (vi) Day of atonement v. 27, also ch. 16.29. (vii) Feast of Tabernacles v. 34-43.

4. NUMBERS (So called because of the double numbering of the people. ch. 1.2 and 26.2) 36 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the book is "the DIRECTION of God's people."

KEY-VERSES: ch. 6. 24-27 (the Aaronic blessing).

The Lord blesses those numbered and called by His name (v. 27) with His protection (v. 24), His presence (v. 25), His pleasure and His peace (v. 26). First read ch: 33 for the resume of the JOURNEYS of the children of Israel:—

- (a) v. 1-15 Egypt to Sinai.
- (b) Camp at Sinai (about 1 year) ch. 1.1-10.10.
- (c) Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea ch. 33. 16-36; ch. 10. 11—12.16, 13.26.
- (d) The great tragedy of unbelief and disobedience in the refusal to enter the promised land by GOD's direction; their WANDERINGS begin and go on for 38 years, until they return again to Kadesh-Barnea (ch. 15-19). There is no record of these wanderings (in ch. 33 — there is a silent gap between v. 36 and v. 37).
- (e) vs. 37-49: the final journey to Canaan (ch. 20-36)

Study:(1) The judgments because of disobedience to GOD's - directions. e.g. 11.1, 33: 12. 10: 15. 32-35: 16. 32,35. (Korah and others): 20. 12: ch. 21 (the plague of fiery serpents, the brass serpent a means of healing for all who 'looked and lived').

- (2) The remarkable events about the false prophet, Balaam, who was compelled against his desire to bless the people of God; the unique incident of Balaam and his ass; the total judgment following his seduction of the Israelites into immorality and idolatry (ch. 24-31).
- (3) After the 2nd numbering, the people thus set apart are given the laws of inheritance and offerings, and the final directions for the division of the land and Joshua is appointed Moses' successor (27. 15-23).

5. DEUTERONOMY (from the Greek word meaning 'the second law', as in ch: 17.18 'a copy of the law'). 34 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the book is "the INSTRUCTION of God's people:"—

(a) the REVIEW of the PAST. ch. 1-10. II. Key—word — Remember:—God`s Covenant (4.23), His mercy (4.31), His love (4.37, 7.7-8, 13), His commandments (5.1), His deliverance (5.15), His direction (8.2), His discipline (8.5), His wrath against disobedience (9.7).

(b) the REQUIREMENT of the PRESENT: ch. 10.12-ch. 26- obedience to God`s law—summed up in ch. 10.12 — "fear LOVE and serve with all your heart and soul". The blessing of obedience and the curse of disobedience are contrasted in ch. 11. 26-28.

(c) the REVELATION of the PROMISES (future) ch. 27-34. The great chapters 32 and 33 contain the prophetic song and blessing of Moses.

We need to take this book to our hearts, remembering that our Lord in overcoming Satan`s wilderness-temptations used only three verses from this book. (Deut. 8.3: 6.16: 6.13).

I(b) The POLITICO-HISTORICAL BOOKS (12 Books)

1. JOSHUA (the name in the Greek is JESUS, meaning the LORD saves) — 24 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the book is "the DWELLING-PLACE of God`s people." Key-verse — Josh: 21.43 — ", and dwelt there." The similar book in the N.T. is EPHESIANS, in which the CHURCH in the heavenlies in Christ` is the theme.

Whereas Moses had led the people from bondage in the crossing of the Red Sea into the wilderness, Joshua led them in the crossing of the river Jordan into their promised dwelling-place, Canaan.

- (i) PREPARATION
 - ch. 1 — the Commandment
 - ch. 2 — the Circumspection
 - ch. 3 — the Consecration
- (ii) PROGRESS
 - ch. 4 — the Crossing
 - ch. 5 — the Circumcision (the most important spiritual significance of circumcision is stated in Rom. 2.29, Col. 2.11 and Eph: 4.22, 25, 31) ch. 6 — 11.22 the Conflict.

(iii) POSSESSION (see 21.43-45) ch. 11.23 to ch. 24
Compromise (15.63, 16.10 e.g.) and Conquest.

Some of the great events in the book are MIRACLES e.g. the crossing of JORDAN (3.16), the conquest of JERICHO (6.20) and the continued day of JOSHUA (10.13). Their historic reality is confirmed by the careful of the geography and history of this book.

Finally, note the effective form of a God-controlled government, summarized in eh. 24.1.

2. JUDGES (so called from the government of judges, whom God raised to deliver and rule the people). 21 chapters.

The sad MESSAGE of the book is "the DECLENSION of G^Od's people" Key verses- 17.26 repeated in the last verse of the book (21.25) " every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Study: (a) the summary of the whole period of more than 300 years in ch. 2. 11-23.

(b) the steps of declension — compromise, which began when Joshua was still alive (1.19, 27-23), then corruption and captivity (2.11, 14, 19).

(c) God's grace in raising up judges to deliver the people again and again — TWELVE (We omit Abimelech— the wicked murderer and usurper) Othniel, EHUD, Shamgar, DEBORAH, GIDEON, (Abimelech), Tola, Jair, JEPHTHAH, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, SAMSON. The thrilling stories of these judges (especially of those in capital-letters above) bring many great lessons to us.

Other judges are named in I SAM:—Eli, the priest, Samuel, the prophet and his two sons.

3. RUTH (the name means "Satisfaction")—4 chapters —an episode during the dark period of the Judges: one of the only two books of the Bible which bears a woman's name- RUTH, a Moabite Gentile among Jews and ESTHER, a Jewess among Persian Gentiles.

In most striking and complete contrast to the message of the previous book, that of RUTH is "the DEVOTION of God's children." This charming rural idyl portrays this devotion in the lives of the two principal characters RUTH and BOAZ in innocence, purity, fidelity and love — a shining contrast to the immorality, pollution, faithlessness and lust of that period.

Key verses: 2. 11-13.

RUTH is the type of the alien sinner becoming a blessed child of God. The finest declaration of devotion in all literature is hers in 1.16-17.

Naomi is the type of the backsliding believer. BOAZ (the name means "strength and swiftness") is a great type of our Lord as "Kinsman-Redeemer" (2.20: 4.10, 14). Ruth becomes his wife and they are both mentioned as ancestors of our Lord in Matt. 1.5.

4. I SAMUEL. (the name means "asked of God" 1.20). 31 chapters. The MESSAGE of the book is "the DESIRE of God's people." Please read Rom. 8. 6-7; Gal. 5. 16-17.

Key verse: 16.7b "..... the Lord looketh on the heart."

SUMMARY:

(a) ch. 1.11, 20. HANNAH'S heart-felt (1.13) DESIRE OF THE LORD. ch. 2. 1-10: her doxology. chapters 1 to 7: the miraculous answer to her desire: SAMUEL—the first of the line of God's prophets. After Eli's death, Samuel became judge and deliverer: the ark of the Lord was returned after God had visited the unlawful holders with an epidemic of bubonic plague (ch. 5-6). Samuel was the pioneer principal of the school and company of prophets at Ramah (10.5, 6, 10: 19.20), a foundation for mental and spiritual education of the greatest importance in the national life.

(b) ch. 8. 6-9: the PEOPLE'S DESIRE— REJECTING THE LORD. chapters 8-15: the answer:— SAUL, the first of the line of kings: his recognition and rise (ch. 9-11), his reign (12-13), his repeated rebellion against God (13.3, 9-13: 15.19: 22.18), his rejection (13.14: 15.23, 35) and his final ruin (31).

(c) ch. 16.1: God's gracious provision of a King to succeed Saul. chapters 16-31: DAVID —the man "after God's own heart," an obedient son, a good shepherd, a valiant soldier; the "sweet singer", saviour of his people (ch. 17 —his epic victory over Goliath; ch. 23.5, 30. 17-20 e.g. his conquests of Israel's enemies) and the Lord's appointed sovereign. His great friendship with Jonathan (ch. 18-23) and his personal dealings with Samuel and Saul hold abiding lessons.

5. II SAMUEL: 24 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the book is "The DYNASTY of DAVID: its DEFINITION and DEVELOPMENT."

Key-verses: the DAVIDIC COVENANT: 7. 12-16. (read also 23.1-5) God promised that David's throne would be established forever in his Descendant, the Lord Jesus CHRIST. (Ps. 132.11; Isaiah 9.6-7; 16.5; Luke 1. 31-33).

SUMMARY: Read 5. 4-5.

1. Ch: 1-4 DAVID'S FIRST CROWNING (2.4): KING over JUDAH 7½ years. Progress of CIVIL WAR. 3.1.

2. Ch. 5-10 DAVID'S SECOND CROWNING (5.3): KING over all ISRAEL — 33 years:—

(a) the CITY of DAVID — the political CAPITAL (JERUSALEM) 5:7

(b) the first CONQUESTS ch. 5.

(c) CARRYING and CONSECRATION of the ark of God ch. 6. the city of David—the religious CAPITAL (6. 17-18)

(d) GOD'S COVENANT with David. ch. 7.

(e) the CONQUESTS beyond Israel. ch. 8-10.

3. Ch. 11-19. The terrible CONSEQUENCES of David's SIN (ch. 12 to be read with Ps. 51 — David's contrition, confession and cleansing).

4. Ch. 20-23. David's CHAMPIONS and final CONQUESTS. (ch. 22. 2-51. Ps. 18. 2-50) a CELEBRATION- SONG of CONFIDENCE in God.

5. Ch. 24. 1-17. David's CENSUS and God's CHASTISEMENT.

6. Ch. 24. 18-25. David's FINAL CONSECRATION.

6. I KINGS. 22 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the Book is "the DISTINCTION and DIVISION of the DYNASTY."

The Key-verses are (a) 10. 7-9 and in contrast (b) 11. 9-11.

(1) Chapters 1-10: DISTINCTION.

ch. 1. — Solomon's CROWNING.

ch. 2. — The CHARGE to Solomon.

ch. 3. — His CHOICE (wisdom) (3. 12-14).

ch. 4. — His COUNTRY — its wonderful welfare and wealth.

ch. 5-6 CONSTRUCTION — of the magnificent temple (7 years).

ch. 7. — of his palace (13 years).

ch. 8. — a great chapter of the CONSECRATION of ARK and TEMPLE.

ch. 9. — Further CONSTRUCTION of Cities (vs. 15-24), of the navy (v. 26-28).

ch. 10. — of golden articles, chariots, etc. The Queen of Sheba. (11. 7.—the sad account of his building to abominable gods).

(2) ch. 11-22: DIVISION.

11.1 — "BUT" "Solomon's CORRUPTION — a tragic ending to a great reign. This together with the idolatrous defection of the people brought about the judgment of God upon the nation — a divided kingdom — the NORTHERN KINGDOM (10 tribes) of ISRAEL and the SOUTHERN KINGDOM of JUDAH AND BENJAMIN. From the careful records, it is easy to compile the two lists of Kings. Note the following:-

- (a) the NORTHERN KINGDOM (capital—first Shechem then Samaria) with its line of totally evil kings, beginning with JEROBOAM, Solomon's servant, "who made Israel to sin." This sin of idolatry is repeatedly mentioned in I & II Kings — a black shadow across the reign of all the kings of Israel, ending with the ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY in 721 B.C. (II Kings 17.6).

The 7th King of Israel AHAB and his equally wicked wife JEZEBEL, whose name is now a byword of evil, are given prominence (16.29 — 22.40)

The DAVIDIC DYNASTY continued in the SOUTHERN KINGDOM of JUDAH and Benjamin with its royal line of good as well as bad kings beginning with REHOBOAM and ending in the Babylonian Captivity in 586 B.C. (25.21) The last three kings were enthroned by the will of Egypt and Babylon.

- (b) The best kings: —ASA and JEHOSHAPHAT in I Kings and HEZEKIAH and JOSIAH in 11 Kings. The extensive reforms in their reigns were superficial and did not arrest the nation's downfall.
- (c) The shining ministry of the PROPHETS of God in this dark period beginning with Ahijah, the Shilonite (the name means "friend of Jehovah": 11. 29-39; 12. 15:14. 6-16), Shemaiah (= Jehovah hears) 1 Kings 12.22-24, Jehu (= Jehovah is He: 16.1), Micaiah (: who is like Jehovah: 22.14) and ELIJAH, whose great ministry is in accord with his name, that Jehovah alone is the Almighty God. Outstanding are: his supernatural sustenance and his miracles (17), his marvellous triumph over Baal's prophets (18), his restoration and his successor (19), his translation (11 Kings. 2.11).

7. II KINGS —25 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the Book is "THE DEGRADATION AND DOWNFALL of the DYNASTIES." Although the book tells us about the darkest period of the dynasties yet there are some bright intervals under JOASH of Judah (11-12), HEZEKIAH (18-20) and JOSIAH (22-23. 30). The reforms they instituted were nevertheless superficial and could not save the nation.

The KEY-VERSE is 13.23, telling of the LORD'S grace, compassion and regard for His people, "because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

The book must be studied as the background of the great and gracious ministry of the PROPHETS — whose utterances and writings delivered during this period and preserved for us, declare God's gracious and sovereign will and purpose.

ELISHA (ch. 2-13.21) ministered during the reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Joash (of Israel), and

Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah and his mother Athaliah, and Joash (of Judah). Except for an alliance after the marriage of Jehoram of Judah to the daughter of Ahab, (II Kings 8. 16-18 to 13.9) the two kingdoms continued in bitter opposition.

ELISHA lived up to his name (which means "GOD FOR SALVATION"). Note the following: healing the waters at Jericho (2.22), judgment on the gang of young hooligans (2. 23-24), counsel for victory (3.14.), multiplying the widow's oil (4.6), raising the Shunammite's son (4. 32-35) curing the poisoned pottage (4. 39-41), feeding the 100 (4. 42-44), healing NAAMAN (5), restoring the lost axe-head (6.6) saving the besieged city from the Syrian hosts by striking them yet sparing their lives (6.8-23) and finally even after his burial, restoring the dead!

JONAH (14.25): HOSEA (Hosea 1.1.): AMOS (Amos 1.1):
ISAIAH (II Kings. 19-20): II Kings 19:1sa. 37: MICAH (Micah 1.1.):
NAHUM (in reign of Jotham, according to Josephus):
JOEL (Joel 3. 1-2: after Jehoshaphat and the Assyrian captivity, as only the captivity of Judah is predicted):
HABAKKUK (Hab. 1.6—before the captivity): ZEPHANIAH (Zeph. 1. 1):

JEREMIAH (Jer. 1.2: Josiah and the last kings of Judah: compare II Kings 25. 27-30 with Jer. 52. 31-34).

EZEKIEL and DANIEL were taken into captivity with Jehoiachin, King of Judah.

8. I CHRONICLES: 29 chapters.

This appears to be a repetition of I & II SAMUEL, (David's reign), and II Chronicles of I & II KINGS (Solomon's reign and the divided kingdom). Both I & II Chronicles are however very different in approach and in substance.

Whereas the books of Samuel and Kings have a politico-historical emphasis, those of Chronicles were written AFTER the Babylonian exile (read the Decree of Cyrus at the end of II Chron: which is repeated in the opening verses of EZRA) from a religious and priestly viewpoint, for the purpose of reminding the people and giving them spiritual encouragement and direction. They were carefully compiled from many sources

(refer I CHRON: 9.1 ; 27.24; 29.29; II CHRON: 9.29; 12.15; 13.22; 16.11; 20.34; 24.27; 25.26; 26.22; 27.7; 28.26; 32.32; 33.19; 35.27; and 36.8) probably by EZRA.

The MESSAGE of the Book is "The DAVIDIC DESCENT and DYNASTY — a DECLARATION of DIVINE DIRECTION."

The Key-verse is 16.8 " make known His deeds among the people." Read to vs. 22, which is also Ps. 105. 1-15, and vs. 23-33, which is also Ps. 96. 1-13a. Verses 35-36, Ps. 106.47-48 and vs. 34. Ps. 107.1: I CHRON. 16. 15-17 (..... an everlasting COVENANT).

SUMMARY: I GENEALOGY (ch. 1-9)
 II GOVERNMENT (ch. 10-29)

- I (a) Primeval: Adam to Abraham (1. 1-1. 27)
- (b) Patriarchal: Abraham to Israel (Jacob) (1.27 — 1.54)
- (c) Politico-national: Descendants of Israel (2.1 — ch. 9:)

Note the selective character of the genealogy — primogeniture is disregarded; emphasis on the Davidic line of Judah; (ch. 2.-4.23:) note 5.2 " of him (Judah) came the PRINCE (R.V.) Bathsheba is mentioned (3.5) but David's sin and the terrible results are omitted. Benjamin linked to Judah in Southern Kingdom has special mention with Saul as descendant (7. 6-12, 8, 9. 35-44: also 1 Kings 12.21, 23.); great emphasis on house of Levi and priestly service (6. 1-81; 9. 10-34).

- II (a) ch. 10. The tragic passing of SAUL note v. 13-14.
- (b) 11-29. DAVID'S REIGN. _
- (i) 11.3 David's CROWNING; v. 4-8, David's CITY v. 10-12, 20-47, ch. 12 His champions and soldiers.
- (ii) His CARE and CONSECRATION of the ARK (ch. 13: and ch. 15-16)
- (iii) CONFIRMATION of the DAVIDIC COVENANT ch. 17.
- (iv) His CONFLICTS and CONQUESTS. ch. 14 and ch. 18-20.
- (v) David's CENSUS and the DIVINE CHASTISEMENT. ch. 21.
- (vi) David's CHARGE and COMMISSION regarding the TEMPLE. — the Levites, priests, singers, porters (22-26), His chieftains, captains, soldiers, stewards (27).
- (vii) CLOSING COMMANDS and the CROWNING of Solomon. (28-29: 23.1 and 29.2).

9. II CHRONICLES: 36 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the book is "the DAVIDIC DYNASTY: its DOMINION, DECLINE and DISSOLUTION."

Key-verses: 7. 16-20.

chapters 1 -9. DOMINION: Solomon's great reign.
10 —35. DECLINE: 20 Kings of JUDAH
(note (a) the bright periods as in II Kings.
(b) the Kings of Israel are omitted)
36. 1-20. DISSOLUTION: the Babylonian Captivity.

Note (a) vs. 21—fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years captivity. Refer Jer: 25.9, 11 & 12: 29.10; and chs: 50 & 51 for further details and prophecy of the fall of the Babylonian empire to the Medo-Persians.

36.22 — 23. The Decree of Cyrus, the King of Persia which is repeated by the chronicler in Ezra 1. 1-3.

10. EZRA (the name means "help"): 10 chapters.

This book, directly linked to CHRONICLES, must also be studied together with NEHEMIAH and ESTHER to get the message to us of God's gracious dealings with His people in the post-exilic period. Ezra wrote ch. 9 in the first person and is probably the compiler of the whole Book and possibly of CHRONICLES.

Of significance is the fact that chapters 4.8 to 6.18 and 7. 12-26, are in ARAMAIC (mistakenly called the Chaldee language as e.g. in the A. V. margins) 4.7- A.V. "in the Syrian tongue" (twice) is correctly translated "Aramaic" in R.S.V. In Gen. 31.47 Laban, the Syrian called a place in Aramaic "JEGAR-SAHADUTHA" meaning "the heap of witness" but Jacob used the Hebrew word having the same meaning. JER. 10.11 and DANIEL 2.4b to 7.28 are also in Aramaic. As it was freely spoken then, there are many Aramaic words in the N.T.

The MESSAGE of Ezra is "the POWER OF GOD - over all." The KEY VERSE is 6.14: " prospered through the prophesying builded and finished, ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL, and of Cyrus,

Darius and Artaxerxes."

SUMMARY: (Note 1.1-4—the DECREE OF CYRUS, 6. 8-12—the DECREE OF DARIUS and 7.12—26—the DECREE OF ARTAXERXES)

Chapter 1 — 2 The RETURN and REGISTER of the exiles.

- “ 3. The RECONSTRUCTION of the Altar of Burnt-offering and Temple under Zerubbabel and Jeshua.
- “ 4. The RESISTANCE of the Samaritans: work stopped.
- “ 5. The REVIVAL through Haggai and Zechariah and the REBUILDING of the Temple under Zerubbabel and Jeshua.
- “ 6. The Decree of Darius (better than that of Cyrus). Temple completed (v. 15) 20 years after the Return.

Between chapters 6 and 7 there is a gap of 58 years (516 to 458 BIC). The Story of ESTHER belongs to this period.

Chapter 7. The Decree of Artaxerxes.

- “ 8. The RETURN under Ezra.
- “ 9-10 The REVIVAL and REFORMATION of the Nation.

11. NEHEMIAH (means "The LORD'S COMFORTER"): 13 chapters.

Twelve years after the national revival under Ezra, things were again in a bad way, the city walls in ruins (1.3, 2.13), destroyed by foreign enemies. There were also enemies within (ch. 4.). The Book describes the stirring sense of vigorous PURPOSE in the lives of Nehemiah and Ezra especially in restoring the people again.

But the MESSAGE of the Book is actually "The PURPOSE OF GOD, fulfilled through His servants." The KEY VERSE is 6. 16b — "..... this work was wrought from God."

Study first chapter 9, the CONFESSIO*N* of the people, which includes a remarkable SUMMARY of how GOD'S PURPOSE is effected in the history of the nation (note vs. 7-8, 14, 32-33). vs. 17b is a wonderful verse telling of God's abiding grace, mercy, pardon, kindness and faithfulness.

GENERAL SUMMARY:

I. chapters 1-7 (Nehemiah's personal diary) REBUILDING the CITY-WALLS.

II. chapters 8-13 the REFORMATION of the COVENANT-PEOPLE.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| I (a) ch. 1-2. | Prayer and Preparation. |
| (b) ch. 3. | Planning and Placing—work and workers. |
| (c) ch. 4. | Perils conquered and Project continued. |
| (d) ch. 5-6. | Perils conquered and Project completed (6.15). |
| (e) ch. 7. | People registered. |
| II (a) ch. 8. | Their congregation. |
| (b) ch. 9 | Their confession. |
| (c) ch. 10. | Their covenant. |
| (d) ch. 11-12.26. | Their commissions. |
| (e) ch. 12.27-47. | Their consecration. |
| (f) ch. 13. | Their correction and cleansing.
(This ends Nehemiah's personal diary). |

The POLITICO-HISTORICAL Record ends with Nehemiah (432 B.C.). Malachi, the last of the O.T. prophets ministered at this time.

12. ESTHER. (the name means "star," a lovely name for a witness of the Lord in a foreign land. She was first called "Hadassah" 2.7, which means "Myrtle", a tree with a star-like flower. Zechariah (Zech. 1. 8-17) used the myrtle-tree as a symbol of the Jewish nation in captivity. The dramatic and well-known story is about Esther and other Jews who remained in the foreign land. See also note on the Book of Ruth.

The MESSAGE of the Book is most emphatically "THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD, in the lives of His people." The name of God is not mentioned but concealed in acrostic form, four times, of the four letters which stand for JEHOVAH. (1.20; 5.4, 13: and 7.7).

God is behind the scene of the story, yet providing for His people in a most wonderful way in every circumstance.

Key Verse: 8.16. "The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honour." The word 'and' repeated suggests the continuity of God's providence.

SUMMARY. Chapters 1-4 The DEADLY DANGER
5-10 THE DIVINE DELIVERANCE

II The PHILOSOPHICAL and POETICAL BOOKS (5)

1. JOB "HUMAN EXPERIENCE and EXPRESSION:— the WOE of JOB in the WISDOM and WILL of JEHOVAH."
2. PSALMS "HUMAN EXPERIENCE and EXPRESSION:- the WORSHIP of the LORD."
3. PROVERBS "EXHORTATION ---- WISDOM begins and ends with the LORD."
4. ECCLESIASTES "EXPERIENCE and ENQUIRY — WHITHER WISDOM ?"
5. SONGS OF SOLOMON "ECSTASY --- the WONDER of LOVE"

1. **JOB** (two similar words in Hebrew mean "Afflicted" and "Converted") — 42 chapters.

This book, probably one of the oldest in the O.T., is the true story of a real person (Ezekiel 14. 14, 20: James 5.11). It consists of magnificent poetry in dramatic form, as well as the noblest philosophy (Job and his friends are addressed as "..... the wise" 34.2 i.e. they were the philosophers of their day).

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The WOE of JOB in the WISDOM and WILL of JEHOVAH."

Key-verse—36.5, "Behold God is mighty in strength and deliverance."

SUMMARY:

Three Sections: I. INTRODUCTION (in prose) 1 to 2.8.

"The PRESUMPTION of SATAN and the PERMITTED AFFLICTION of God's SERVANT"

II. The DRAMA (in poetry) 2.9 to 42.6

Section (a) JOB and his THREE FRIENDS, ELIPHAZ, BILDAD and ZOPHAR in three series; (2.9 to 31).

First: JOB (ch. 3), ELIPHAZ (4-5), JOB replies (6-7) BILDAD (8), JOB (9-10), ZOPHAR (11), and JOB (12-14)

Second: ELIPHAZ (15), JOB (16-17), BILDAD (18), JOB (19), ZOPHAR (20), JOB (21)

Third: ELIPHAZ (22), JOB (23-24), BILDAD (25), JOB (26 to 27.10)

*ZOPHAR (27.11 to 28.28)
JOB'S final answer to them (29-31).

*(This is not stated in the text but can certainly be inferred).

The THEME of this section (a) is "The PROBLEM of SUFFERING and SIN."

Job's friends speak much of valuable truth but 'quite wrongly equate Job's suffering with some personal sin. This he vehemently denies as he expresses his grief, bewilderment, resentment and also HIS FAITH. (19.25-27) is a declaration of faith, unequalled in the O.T.). Job's many questions can only be answered in the N.T. revelation of Christ e.g. 9.2 by Rom. 5.1., 9.33 by 1 Tim. 2.5, 23.3, by John 14.9 and many other instances. Compare 19.25 with Heb. 7.25 and 23.10 with James 1.12.

Section (b) ELIHU (ch. 32 to 37). "The PRONOUNCEMENT of the SOVEREIGNTY of GOD." Elihu, youngest of all, gives very wise

counsel but makes the mistake of speaking dogmatically as an oracle.

Note however the key verse 36.5 and also the great section 33.23-30.

Section (c) JEHOVAH and JOB. (ch. 38 to 42.6). The LORD rebukes Elihu for "darkening counsel with words" and reveals Himself to Job. The theme of this section (c) is "The PRESENCE and POWER of JEHOVAH and the PENITENCE and SUBMISSION of JOB."

III. The ENDING (in Prose) ch. 42.7-17.

"The POWER of SUPPLICATION and the final PROSPERITY of GOD'S SERVANT."

2. The Book of PSALMS: (150 Psalms).

The greatest of devotional books, setting forth in the most magnificent poetry, every phase of human experience as well as precept, philosophy and prophecy. it is the great hymnal of God's people.

The MESSAGE of the Book is "HUMAN EXPERIENCE (and EXPRESSION: the WORSHIP of` the LORD."

It is in FIVE divisions: (1) Ps. 1 to 41. (2) Ps. 42-72. (3) Ps. 73 to 89. (4) Ps. 90 to 106. (5) Ps. 107 to 150. Each of the first four divisions ends in a liturgical doxology. The fifth division is completed by Eve doxological Psalms (146-150).

About half of the poems were written by David, fifty are anonymous (Hezekiah most probably wrote the anonymous "Songs of degrees" Isa. 38.20). Ezra probably wrote — Ps. 99, Jeremiah Ps. 137 and Haggai and Zechariah Ps. 146 and 147 (Septuagint). Nearly all were written in the 300 years between David and Hezekiah.

KEY VERSES: Ps. 104.33-34 "I will sing My meditation sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."

SUMMARY (classification) of Psalms:-

1. PRECEPT and PHILOSOPHY: Ps. 1, 14-15, 19, 25, 37,

39, 49-50, 52-53, 58, 73, 76, 82-83, 90, 93-94, 101, 104, 119, and 144.

(Pss. 14 and 53 are similar but have significant differences).

2. PROPHECY: Pss. 2, 4, 16, 22, 24, 40, 45, 68-69, 72, 87, 97, 110 and 118.
3. PRIVACY (the "Quiet Time" day and night)
Pss. 3-5, 13, 42-43, 57, 63, 88, 92, and 143.
4. PENITENCE: Pss. 6, 32, 38, 51, and 130.
5. PERSECUTION: Pss. 7, 10-11, 35, 55, 59, 109 and 120.
6. PRAISE: Pss. 9, 21, 29-30, 33, 46-48, 95-100, 103, 105-108, 111-113, 115-117, 135, 138, 146-150
7. PRESERVATION, PROVISION and PROMISE: Pss. 12, 18, 20, 23, 26-27, 31, 34, 36, 41, 60-62, 64-67, 84, 85 89, 91, 140, 145.
8. PRAYER: Pss. 17, 28, 54, 56-57, 61, 70, 86, 102, 141-142.
9. PILGRIMAGE: Pss. 44, 71, 77-81, 105-107, 114, 120-134, (songs of the degrees), 136-137.

(The fifteen songs of "the degrees" were most probably compiled by Hezekiah (Is. 38.20) for temple worship, ten composed by him, four by David and one written by Solomon. Read II Kings 20. 6-11: Isa: 38.5, and 8: "the degrees" refer to these "degrees" spoken of in the history of Hezekiah, whose life was graciously prolonged for 15 years.)

Study the Psalms underlined before going on to others in the group, but you will certainly find your own favourites, through which the Lord has given you a special personal message. The prophetic Psalms refer to the manhood, sonship, deity, Kingship, sufferings, betrayal, death by crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, priesthood and second coming of the Lord.

3. **The PROVERBS:** 31 chapters.

This unique book is the collection of sayings of Hebrew "wise men," the practical philosophers and counsellors of their day (including some women: Pro. 31.1: 11 Sam. 14.2).

Most of these proverbs were those of SOLOMON (1 Kings. 4.32) The MESSAGE of the Book is "EXHORTATION-WISDOM begins, continues and ends with the LORD."

KEY VERSES: 1.7; 9.10; 15.33 and 30. 5-6 (The fear of the LORD beginning of knowledge WISDOM._ instruction of WISDOM WORD of GOD pure add not)

SUMMARY: Five DIVISIONS

(Note: Five Books in Pentateuch, live Philosophical and Poetical Books, Psalms — five divisions)

(i) PROVERBS of SOLOMON — ch. 1-9.

- (a) 1. 1-6 Introduction
- (b) 1.7 to ch. 7 PATERNAL PRECEPTS ("My Son")
Study 3. 1-26
- (c) ch. 8-9 PERSONIFICATION and PURPOSE of WISDOM (also 1.20-33)

Note (b) and (c) are possibly of more ancient origin.

(ii) PROVERBS of SOLOMON: ch. 10.1 to 22.16

- (a) 10 to 15: PROVERBS in PARALLEL — contrast (anti-thesis) (..... but)
- (b) 16 to 22.16 — comparison, combination of similar ideas as well as contrast as in (a).
(14.12=16.25)

(iii) PROVERBS of "the WISE"

- (a) 22.17 to 24.22 — "Words" of the WISE
- (b) 24.23 to 24.34 — "Sayings" of the WISE.

These are PRACTICAL PROVERBS, highly characteristic of practical Hebrew philosophy, which centres in JEHOVAH (22.19, 23; 23.17b; 24. 18,21)

(iv) PROVERBS of SOLOMON compiled by Hezekiah`s men ch. 25 to 29. These are PARABOLIC PROVERBS (see I Kings 4.33) Note 25.2 "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of Kings is to search out a matter." cf. Deut: 29.29; Rom. 11.33.

Every-day object lessons abound to teach abiding moral and spiritual truths e.g. ch: 25:—pictures, ear—rings, clouds and dry winds, a ruined city without walls. ch: 26: — the horse and ass, a dog returning to his vomit — v. 11, (II Pet. 2.22) a fire dying out for lack of wood v. 20, taking up a dog by the ears! v.17.

(Note 26. 7-9 "parabolic proverbs— misplaced"!)

ch. 27: stone and sand, a near neighbour, a continual patter of rain like a nagging woman! a Narcissistic reflection v. 19-21, hay and herbs, lambs and goats.

ch. 28 to 29- proverbs of contrast and comparison again using simple object-lessons:—falling into one`s own pit 28.10; a roaring lion and a ranging bear v. 15; a diligent farmer v. 19; a net and a noose, (snare) 29.5, 6; the rod and reproof v. 15; the thief`s accomplice v. 24.

(v) PROVERBS of AGUR and LEMUEL ch. 30-31.

These are PICTORIAL PROVERBS, drawn from nature and common life. The book ends with the beautiful, graphic picture of the perfect wife. 31. 10-31.

4. ECCLESIASTES or THE PREACHER. 12 chapters.

Although "the Preacher" is described as the son of` David, King in Jerusalem (1.1) and King over Israel in Jerusalem (1.12), the word describes an office rather than a person. Then also the name of Solomon is never mentioned and the style of the book is quite different generally from that of Proverbs.

The MESSAGE of this mysterious Book is — "EXPERIENCE and ENQUIRY — WHITHER WISDOM?"

The KEY-VERSE, which is the Preacher`s text, is 1.2 — "..... vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

SUMMARY:

- (i) ch. 1 to 5. the VANITY and VEXATION of LIFE.
(note that these two words are repeated often).

There are partial answers-- to the many questions asked - in 2.24-26 and 3.1 -17 (note in R. V. and R. S. V. — the great verse 3.1 1), followed by a pessimistic return to the text in 3.18-22 almost of existential despair; then again an incomplete answer in 4. 9-12, followed by a return to the doleful theme.

There is good advice in ch. 5 — "Fear God: enjoy what you have," but it is more philosophical than of faith.

- (ii) ch. 6 to 11. The VICISSITUDES of LIFE.

In these "ups and downs," there is the common factor of "evil under the sun" 6.1 (also 5. 13), 9.3.10.5, 11.2. Reflection I leads to impassioned philosophical conclusions:-

- (a) 6. 1-8. Pessimism " evil diseasedarkness. no good appetite (soul) not filled."
- (b) 6.9 to 7.12. Pragmatism: Key word e-"better" 6.9, 11; 7.1-3, 5, 8, 10, 11 (A. V. margin)
- (c) 7.13-24. Opportunism (vs. 16-18!!)
- (d) 7.25-29. Cynicism
- (e) 8.1-11. Resignation
- (f) 8.12-14. Faith (not complete as in Proverbs and Psalms, but earth—bound)
- (g) 8.15 to 9.18. Epicureanism (note 8.15, 9.7-9, also 10.19)
- (h) 10-11. Prudence - of wisdom as contrasted with folly; - in avoiding excesses, indulgence, sloth and anger—even in one`s thought;— in doing a good turn, in daily work and joy. These exhortations and warnings, practical and helpful, especially 11.9b, lose some value because of this underlying pragmatism.

(iii) ch. 12. 1-12: The VISTA of LIFE. v.1 a—"Remember now thy Creator in. thy youth." is a great word, but v.1 b is sheer pessimism. vs: 2 to 7 — in keeping with the whole book, is a grand

survey in the finest poetry of the decay and death of the body (of special interest to the doctor) and the return of the Spirit to God.

The doleful theme of (i) is repeated in vs. 8-12.

(iv) ch. 12.13-14: The VERDICT: "To fear God and keep His commandments is the whole (duty) of man, because God will judge every work."

This book needs to be carefully studied, as it reveals so much of the search and travail even in the mind and experience of a God-fearing man, who has NOT found the final answer. As in JOB, this is to be found only in JESUS CHRIST—the final WORD and WISDOM.

5. The SONG OF SOLOMON: 8 chapters.

The unmistakable MESSAGE of this "sweetest of all songs" (R.V. SONG OF SONGS) is "ECSTASY —the WONDER of LOVE." The sancity and strength of human love in all its purity and passion, as ordained by God, between husband and wife, (Eph: 5. 22-33) is here enshrined.

Many of the oriental hyperbolic metaphors may sound strange, but all have deeper meanings which need careful study. The historical background and dramatic form of the song need to be considered, although they are of secondary importance to its supreme spiritual message.

We may reject two main points of view.

First, the traditional one that Solomon was the bridegroom is most difficult to accept:—

1. The bridegroom is a SHEPHERD from the country (1.7-8)
2. The couple have their home in the country-side (ch. 6 to 8)
3. Whenever Solomon is mentioned by name or referred to, as King (1. 4-5, 3. 6-11, 8. 11-12) the language is objective, indirect or highly respectful and not intimate. 3. 6-11 e.g. is a special recitative of his majesty and armed might.
4. Solomon's own past crowning and marriage are clearly mentioned (3.11) as are the references to his many queens and concubines. (6. 8-9).

Secondly, the modern view that Solomon was the rival-suitor is possible, but it is scarcely credible that he would compose a "song excelling all songs" to set forth the idealism of love with himself as the villain of the piece! Further - to relegate some of the loveliest passages as in ch. 4 and ch. 7 to a wicked attempt to seduce the bride does impossible violence to the text, which eulogizes chastity and sanctity. (4.4 'protected tower', 4.12 'enclosed garden, a barred spring, a sealed fountain.' 7.4 'ivory tower')

We may regard King Solomon as having approved and arranged the descriptive songs and dramatic setting within his palace, in order to extol love's perfection in the experience of the young bridal pair. (The description of the bride in 7.1 as a prince's daughter may be literally true. Cf. Psalm 45)

SUMMARY:

CHAPTER I. The bridal couple in dialogue, with the bride's attendants ("virgins") joining in in v. 4 ("we") and vs: 8 and II. King Solomon is present (v. 12).

CHAPTER 2. v. 1 — The Bride's humility 4 "I am (only) a rose v. 2 — The Bridegroom's reply- "As a lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters." vs. 3-6- The bride's exquisite words. Note. 2.7, 3.5 and 8.4— repeated similar charges of warning to the "daughters of Jerusalem," immediately following a nuptial embrace. vs. 8-17 — A lovely solo recitative by the bride on the springtime and sunshine of love.

CHAPTER 3. vs. 1-5 - a solo narrative by the Bride—vs. 6-11 — a processional concerning King Solomon—his majesty and might and his past marriage.

CHAPTER 4. The Bridegroom's song (4.6 love's highest experience cf. 2.17, 8.14) v. 16 —the Bride's reply.

CHAPTER 5. v. 1 — The Bridegroom. vs. 2-8. The Bride's Narrative. v. 9 — The question from the chorus and vs. 10-16 — the emphatic reply.

CHAPTER 6. vs. 1— Further question. vs. 2-9: the Bride replies as well as the Bridegroom — who refers to

Solomon's retinue as well as the bridal attendants (virgins) vs. 8-9: the chorus interrupts in vs. 10, 13 and the reference to two companies is significant (13b R.V. (margin).

CHAPTER 7. vs. 1-9: the Bridegroom: vs. 10-13 the Bride's reply: a 'pastorale' to 8.3.

CHAPTER 8. v. 4 —The final warning to the daughters of Jerusalem. v. 5a: the final question by the chorus: v. 5b: the Bride is well-known.

vs. 6- 7 the KEY VERSES: sung by both Bride and Bridegroom. They continue in vs. 8-9 and the Bride concludes the song of songs — Solomon (vs. 11, 12) and the 'companions', bridal attendants (V 13), are still present.

The KEY-VERSES climax the Song, telling of the SEAL, STRENGTH and SUPREMACY of LOVE.

The SEAL of love is in its selectiveness and sacredness; ("dove" speaks of innocence and purity, 1.15, 2.14, 4.1 ; "tower" of exclusiveness, 4.4, 7. 4-5; similarly "garden" "lily"; note the many words of mutual possession and satisfaction). The STRENGTH of love is in its protective power and discipline (note the comparisons to 'armies', 'wall', 4.4, 8.10 and the warnings not to artificially arouse love, 2.7, 3.5, 8.4). Love's SUPREMACY — over subtle evil (2.15), separation (3. 1-3), misunderstanding, persecution and hardship (5. 6-7) and above all, its steadfastness and transforming power create worth, beauty, delight and joy in the world of nature, and particularly in the physical and sexual attributes, hallowed by the Creator to find a pure and perfect fulfilment in husband and wife.

Throughout the centuries, the Song has brought the Jewish people to a deeper appreciation of Jehovah's love, and Christians to a closer communion with their Lord, "who loved the Church and gave Himself for her."

The perpetual challenge to us is that love can never be artificial, cold-blooded or calculating for it is warm, spontaneous and supremely sacrificial. In CHRIST, love never fails.

III. The PROPHETICAL BOOKS. (17) 'MAJOR'— 5: 'MINOR'— 12.

1. ISAIAH (the name means the LORD is SALVATION: 66 chapters.

Isaiah is the grandest of the Prophets, with his superlatively great prophecies about the coming Messiah and the majesty and extraordinary clarity and depth of his utterances. He is rightly called 'the Evangelical Prophet.'

The MESSAGE of the whole book is based on his name, "the LORD is SALVATION or SALVATION is of the LORD." His two sons "given for signs and wonders" (8.18) were named SHEAR-JASHUB meaning "the remnant shall return" (7.3), and MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ meaning "speed to the spoil and haste to the prey." (8.13) The latter may be considered to be the title of Isa: 1-39, and the former of Isa: 40-66.

The KEY-VERSES are 12. 2-3: "..... GOD is my SALVATION wells of SALVATION."

The Book therefore presents a remarkable UNITY. This has however been repeatedly criticized and denied in the past century, especially with regard to the 2nd part (40-66) because of the startlingly accurate, graphic and factual description and background in some of the chapters (e.g. 44-45) of the post-exilic period — about 150 years after Isaiah's time!

We need to grasp some of the evidences of the UNITY of this Book.

(A) EXTERNAL. (i) This unity has been accepted without question for more than 25 centuries. The QUMRAN manuscripts of Isaiah ("Dead Sea Scro 1 1 s") discovered recently, were copied in the 2nd century B.C. indicating that the Book was then regarded as a unity.

(ii) In many N.T. references to the most disputed portion, our Lord Himself and others actually name the author as Isaiah. (See e.g. Matt. 3.3; 12. 17-21; John 12.38; Rom 10.16, 20-21.)

(B) INTERNAL. (i) the ONE great theme of the Book as indicated by Isaiah's name and the sub-themes as suggested by his children's names.

(ii) Accurate prophecies concerning Babylon also occur in ch. 13 and 39 as well as 44-55. ch. 13, often disputed, opens with "..... which Isaiah, the Son of Amoz did see."

(iii) The phrase "the HOLY ONE of ISRAEL" occurs 12 times in the first part and 13 times in the second part of the Book (elsewhere in the O.T., only 5 times).

(iv) Many identical thoughts and themes occur throughout — e.g.

(a) The HOLINESS and SOVEREIGNTY of GOD (Is. 6 and 57.15; 66. 1-2)

(b) ISRAEL'S Rebellion (1.2; 63.10)

(c) "The Remnant" (many throughout)

(d) The lifting of an ensign or standard (the same Hebrew word) 5.26; 11.10, 12; 18.3; 30.17; 49.22; 62.10

(e) The hiding of the Lord's face against sin and His mercy to those that come to Him (1.15, 18 with 54.8; 8.17 with 64. 4, 7)

(f) Spiritual blindness and deafness (6.10; 29.18; 42.7, 18)

(g) the Millenium (11. 6-7, 9a with 66.25)

SUMMARY:

INTRODUCTION. 1.1. The two-fold THEME, "concerning Judah and Jerusalem," and TIME, "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah," of the book. (758 to 698 B.C.)

CHAPTER 1 —contains the main subject of the book — the rebellion of the Lord's people (v. 2-8), and the redemption and restoration (v. 25-27) of the "remnant" (v. 9, 27); the Lord's holiness, (v. 4 "The Holy One of Israel") and His gracious invitation (v. 16-19); judgment on rebellion and disobedience (v. 20-24) and the last verses (v. 28-31) point to the closing verses of the book. (q.v.)

TWO SECTIONS: I ch. 2 to 14.28 — Prophecies "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz.", (14.28 " Ahaz died")
II 14.29 to ch: 66- Prophecies "in the days of Hezekiah."

The FIRST SECTION. (2 to 14.82)

(a) The reign of UZZIAH ch: 2-5.

2.1 — introduces subject of chs. 2-5.

2. 2-5 — "The MILLENIAL KINGDOM — its glory, prosperity and peace."

2.6 to ch: 5 — the immediate and distant JUDGMENT on the NATION, closing with "SIX WOES" (vs. 8, 11-12, 18-19, 20, 21 and 22-23).

(b) the reign of JOTHAM (a good king): chapter 6.
Death of King Uzziah and Isaiah's VISION of the Lord's holiness, sovereignty and glory: his conviction, confession, cleansing, consecration and commission.

(c) the reign of AHAZ: chapters 7 to 14:28 (his death recorded)
chapters 7-10. National prophecies continued.

„ 11.. A great MESSIANIC and MILLENIAL prophecy.

„ 12. The SONG of SALVATION.

„ 13 to 14.27: Prophecies concerning BABYLON.

The great chapters in this section are chs: 6 and 12.

The SECOND SECTION. (14.29 to 66)

(a) 14.29 to ch. 23: Prophecies concerning GENTILE nations continued.

(Philistia — 14. 28-32, MOAB — 15 and 16,

DAMASCUS — 17, EGYPT — 18 to 20,

BABYLON again 21. 1-10, EDOM — 21. 11-12,

ARABIA —21. 13-17, as affecting

JERUSALEM 22, and TYRE — 23.)

- (b) ch: 24—The LORD'S JUDGMENT on "the earth"
- (c) ch: 25-26 — The SONGS of SALVATION and ch: 27 - The SWORD of SLAUGHTER.
- (d) ch: 28 to 33 — JUDGMENTS—"WOES"
 (every chapter however with precious promises
 (see 28: 5-6; 29. 18-19; 30. 15-26; 29;
 31.5; 32. 1-8, 15.20; 33.5, 15-24)
- (e) ch: 34—The SWORD of JUDGMENT and ch: 35
 — the SONG OF JOY.
- (f) ch: 36 to 39 — HISTORICAL (except for
 Hezekiah's SONG OF THANKSGIVING 38. 9-20,
 the rest is a transcript of II Kings 18.13;
 18.17 to ch: 19 and 20.1-19)
- (g) ch: 40 to 66 — MESSIANIC and MILLENIAL
- (i) ch: 40 to 48. The SALVATION OF THE LORD
 (see direct references 40. 2, 9-11, 18-31;
 41.10, 14; 42.6-7, 16, 18; 43.1-3, 11,
 14, 25-26; 44.28, 45. 1 et seq; 45.6, 17,
 21-22; 46.13; 47.4; 48. 17, 20)
- (ii) ch: 49 to 53. The SERVANT OF THE LORD
 ("SONGS of the SERVANT": 49. 1-12; 50.
 4-11; 52.13 to ch: 53 referring to the Lord
 Jesus Christ: Jacob and the nation Israel as
 the Lord's servants- earlier references: 41.8;
 44.1,21; 45.4)

The great chapter in this section is CHAPTER
 53.

- (iii) ch: 54 to 57. The SUFFICIENCY and
 SUPREME AUTHORITY of the LORD. N.B.
 "COVENANT" in each chapter.

The great chapter is CHAPTER 55.

- (iv) chs: 58 to 59—THE SUSTENANCE and
 STRENGTH of the LORD. (N.B. 58.11-14;
 59.19)

(v) ch: 60—THE SONG OF SUNRISE (a great chapter)

(vi) ch: 61 to 66. THE SPIRIT of the LORD, (61.1; 63. 10-14) and the SOVEREIGNTY of the LORD (direct ref: 62. 1-3 ; 63.1 ; 64.8; 65.6, 16 (truth=AMEN) — 18; 66.1, 18-23) Study also the earlier MESSIANIC prophecies to grasp and treasure the message:-

IMMANUEL, the virgin's son: 7.14; 8.8-10; the CHILD born, the SON given and HIS NAME; 9.2-7: the BRANCH — ch.1 1; Eliakim, a Messianic type, 22.20-25; the KING, 32. 1-8; 33.17.

2. JEREMIAH (the name means, "the LORD appoints- exalts or casts down) 52 Chapters.

The book is a moving autobiography as well as a historical and prophetic record of the greatest spiritual value. These three aspects have to be studied (see SUMMARY).

The MESSAGE of the book is "the SORROW of JEREMIAH and the SOVEREIGNTY of JEHOVAH in the exercise of His lovingkindness, righteousness and judgment? (17.12, 18.6, 20.11, 21. 8-10, ch. 23. 31—35, 32. 17-20, 33. 2-3, 49.38, 51. 10-16)

The KEY PORTION is 8.18 to 9.26 and the KEY VERSES 9.23-24.

SUMMARY:

(a) AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

(b) HISTORICAL

(c) PROPHETICAL.

(A) AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL.

Jeremiah's CALL and COMMISSION (ch.1) came in the 13th year of JOSIAH, 70 years after Isaiah. His ministry, extending for

about 45 years, was one of extreme disappointment and failure, attended by deep sorrow and severe persecution — nevertheless a ministry fulfilled with exemplary fidelity, and displaying wonderful compassion, selflessness, unswerving devotion, courage and patience.

Called "the weeping prophet" (see ch: 3 and also "the Lamentations"), he is a type of the Lord Jesus — who "was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He is also "the prophet of the NEW COVENANT." (see below under C)

(Refer ch. 1; 9. 1-8; 16. 1-8; ch. 20; 29.1; 32. 1-16; chs. 36 to 39; 40. 1—6 and chs: 42-44)

Jeremiah's life and ministry may be divided into three periods-

(i) JOSIAH'S REIGN: there were widespread reforms in the reign of this good king, but Jeremiah saw through the superficial nature of these reforms, and insisted upon a change of HEART (3. 6-10). We find this word often used in the book.

(ii) The REIGN of the LAST KINGS (who were wicked or weak).

In the darkest period of the national history, he endured great suffering, persecution and sorrow. The "prison episodes and prophecies" (ch. 31 to 33) show his steadfast faith in the Lord, and his unchanging compassion for the guilty nation.

(iii) The BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY. His wise counsel and prophecies of warning and hope are continued.

(B) HISTORICAL. The many dates recorded will be very confusing unless the method of writing is understood. ch: 1. 2-3 is the historical summary. Read chapter 36 next, and note that the prophecies were first written on a roll (vs. 2,4), which was burnt (v. 23). They were then re-written (vs. 27-28, 32) and additions made (v. 32b). This will explain the reason for the unusual DIVISIONS of the book (4) each commencing with an early date and going on in fairly correct chronology to the end of the division (dated and historical portions in brackets).

(i) THE FIRST DIVISION. ch. 1 to 24.

(1. 2-3; 3.6; 21.1; ch. 24— historical)

(ii) THE SECOND DIVISION: chs. 25 to 34 (25.1; 26.1; 27.1; 28.1; 29.1; 32. 1-2; 33.1; 34.1: ch. 34— the final doom of the nation).

(iii) THE THIRD DIVISION: chs: 35 to 44 (35.1; 36.1; chs; 37 to 43: — Historical; 40 to 44: — the captivity)

(iv) THE FOURTH DIVISION: chs: 45 to 51 (45.1; 49.34; 51.59; ch. 52 — Historical concerning Zedekiah, the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity, is similar to II KINGS 24.18 to 25.21 and 25.27-30).

(C) PROPHETICAL. (i) Concerning JERUSALEM and the NATION (chs: 2 to 19; 21 to 24)

(ii) concerning BABYLON and the GENTILE NATIONS (chs. 25, 29—the captivity, 46— Egypt, 47 — Philistia, 48 — Moab, 49 — Ammon, Edom, Damacus etc., 50— Babylon and the Chaldeans, 51 —the final judgment of Babylon.

(iii) Messianic and Millenial (ch. 23.5, 33.15 the BRANCH of righteousness; 23. 1-8; 31; 33. 6-26).

(iv) The COVENANT (a) the OLD broken (11. 1-10, 22.9, 31.32; 34. 13-18) (b) the NEW promised (31.31, 33-34; 32.40)

3. The LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH. 5 Chapters.

Written on the occasion of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, this is an ACROSTIC DIRGE consisting of five poems (chapters). The 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th each have 22 verses, in the 1st, 2nd and 4th, each verse commencing with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order. In the central chapter (3), there are 66 verses with 3 verses to each letter. In the last chapter, the acrostic form is dropped.

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The SORROW and SOB of JEREMIAH over JERUSALEM."

The KEY VERSE is 1.12 " behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" "

The great, kind—hearted prophet reminds us of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in HIS suffering and sorrow for sinners.

Note the highlights of joy and confidence in the LORD in the midst of profound sorrow (3. 22-26; 31-33; and 5.19).

4. EZEKIEL (means GOD STRENGTHENS) 48 Chapters.

Taken into Babylonian captivity with JEHOIACHIN, members of the royal family and the elite of the nation (II Kings. 24.15), Ezekiel commenced his prophetic ministry in BABYLON in the 5th year of the captivity and continued for more than 22 years.

As a young man, he must have come under the preaching of JEREMIAH (in Jerusalem) and in later life was contemporary with DANIEL.

A priest like Jeremiah, he was a prophet of great power (often consulted by the elders - 8.1, 14.1, 20.1, 33.31), conscious of the Lord's hand upon him (ch. 1 and 3.14b) and of the power of the SPIRIT of GOD (1.12, 20; 2.2; 3.12, 14, 24; 8.3; 10.17; 11.1,5, 19, 24; 13.3; 18.31; 36.26-27; 37.1, 14; 39.29; 43.5).

He is called "Son of man" 90 times and as one controlled by the Spirit and declaring God's glory and grace, he is a type of our Lord.

His prophecies are unique in awe-inspiring visions (ch. 1 — whirlwind and fire, living creatures and wheels, the whole universe, the throne, and the likeness of a MAN and the glory of God: ch. 8—10—cherubims, fire and whirling wheels and the glory of God departing), prophetic lessons in mimicry (chs. 4 and 5), parables (ch. 17 — two eagles and the vine; 20. 45-49, the forest fire; 24. 3-5, the boiling pot) and poetry (ch. 19).

The MESSAGE of the book is "the STRENGTH of the LORD in HIS GOVERNMENT, GLORY and GRACE."

KEY VERSES: 16.60,62. "I will remember my COVENANT I will establish an everlasting COVENANT thou shalt know that I am the LORD." 36. 26-27 " a NEW SPIRIT will I put within your MY SPIRIT within you ".

SUMMARY. Three divisions corresponding to three periods:—

- I From Ezekiel's call (1.2) to the SIEGE of Jerusalem (24.1; II Kings 25.1) and death of Ezekiel's wife (24.18). CHAPTERS 1 to 24.
- II During the SIEGE, terminated by the FALL of Jerusalem (33.21). CHAPTERS 25 to 33.
- III After the FALL of Jerusalem: CHAPTERS 34 to 48.

The first division: chs. 1 to 24. THE GLORY of GOD and the NATION'S SIN and JUDGMENT.

ch. 1. GOD'S GLORY DEMONSTRATED: the VISION of God's CHARIOT (=government) and the VOICE of GOD'S CALL.

ch. 2-3. GOD'S GLORY DECLARED: GOD'S COMMISSION.

ch. 4-7. GOD'S GLORY DEFILED: (5.11; 7.20); chs. 4-5: GOD'S CHASTISEMENT: four prophecies in MIMI—CRY: chs: 6-7 GOD'S CONDEMNATION.

ch. 8-11. GOD'S GLORY DEPARTED: (8.4; 9.3; 10.4, 18-19; 11.23).

ch. 12-24. GOD'S GLORY DEFENDED: (12-the captivity; 13. 8-23; 15. 6-7. God's COVENANT:— 16. 59-63 to ch. 17; personal responsibility:—ch. 18 (vs. 4; 20 to 32); condemnation of spiritual rebellion and adultery:— chs. 19 to 24.

The second division: chs: 25 to 33: THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD in the HISTORY of NATIONS.

Prophecies against seven nations.

ch: 25: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia.

ch: 26 to 28.19: Tyre — 28.11-19 SATAN personified .

ch: 28.20-26: Sidon. chs: 29 to 32:-

Prophecies (7) against EGYPT. (29.2, 29.17, 30.1, 30.20, 31.1, 32.1, 32.17 — the last two after the FALL of Jerusalem).

The third division: chs: 34 to 48: THE GRACE OF GOD TO HIS PEOPLE.

CH. 34: THE RETURN under one shepherd (12-13; 23-24) and REVIVAL (vs. 26 to 29)

35: THE REMOVAL of Edom.

36: THE RESTORATION and REGENERATION. vs. 25-27.

37: THE RESURRECTION (of dry bones) vs. 1-14; and THE REUNION (symbol of two sticks) vs. 15-28.

38 to 39 THE PROPHECY against GOG and MAGOG and the final REDEMPTION 39. 21-29.

CHS: 40 to 48.

(a) THE RESTORATION OF GOD'S GLORY: (43. 2-5: 44.4)

40-46 to TEMPLE and PRIESTHOOD.

(b) 47- THE RIVER OF GOD'S GRACE.

(c) 48- THE RESTORATION OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT — the CITY of GOD (vs. 15b, 17-20, 22, 30-35, named — JEHOVAH SHAM MAH — the LORD IS THERE).

To understand better Ezekiel's visions and prophecies, take this last word of the book as a Key—Word — that is "the Lord is there" in every vision and prophecy, in His glory, grace and government. Use also the concordance to compare them with the many corresponding passages in REVELATION.

5. DANIEL (means GOD, MY JUDGE) 12 Chapters.

Deported when a young man. into Babylonian captivity, Daniel had a long ministry extending into the Medo-Persian period of more than 70 years. He was contemporary with Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel and Obadiah. He may be regarded as the greatest prophet on world history and on the Kingdom of God and the Messiah.

Every chapter of the book is a complete story in itself. Like

EZRA, the book is bilingual, 2.4 to 7.28 being in Aramaic and the rest in Hebrew.

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The Kingdom of God is everlasting." The Key-verse is 7.27..1 " the most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

SUMMARY:

I ch:	1 to 6	HISTORICAL
II ch:	7 to 12	PROPHETICAL.

- ch. 1. DANIEL'S PURPOSE. Hebrew children in a heathen court.
2. DANIEL'S PERCEPTION. Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream of a composite Colossus, interpreted as four successive world empires: the final collapse of these and the establishment of God's Kingdom.
3. The FIERY FURNACE
4. DANIEL'S PREDICTION:—of Nebuchadnezzar's madness and recovery.
5. The WRITING on the WALL.
6. DANIEL'S PRESERVATION—in the lions' den.
7. DANIEL'S PROPHECY concerning world-kingdoms and the Kingdom of God, the vision of four beasts and its interpretation, being an extension of ch: 2.
8. DANIEL'S PROPHECY concerning Medo-Persia and Greece—the vision of the ram with two horns and the he-goat.
9. DANIEL'S PRAYER and PROPHECY of seventy "weeks" (a "week" being an heptad of years): vs. 25-26-69 "weeks" or 483 years ending in the death of Christ exactly fulfilled: vs. 27—the 70th week is yet to come.
- 10-11. PROPHECIES in extension of ch. 8.
12. PROPHECY of the final resurrection and 'time of the end.'

These prophecies should be studied together with Ezekiel and Revelation.

MINOR PROPHETS: 12 BOOKS

1. HOSEA (means SALVATION) 14 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the Book. "The unfailing LOVE of GOD for a faithless people."

The Key—verse is 13.14. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death."

SUMMARY:

I ch: 1-3 The PERSONAL AFFLICTION.

II ch: 4-14 The PROPHETIC APPLICATION.

The prophet's personal experience becomes a parable of God's love for an apostate nation. Even the names of Hosea's wife and children are significant. The faithlessness of Gomer and her wonderful restoration become apt pictures most tenderly drawn of backsliding and restored Israel. Chapter 14 is a very great chapter for the backslider.

2. JOEL (the name means JEHOVAH is GOD) 3 chapters.

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The LORD'S DELIVERANCE from DESOLATION"

The Key-verse is 2.25 "I will restore to you the years the locusts have eaten."

SUMMARY:

I chs. 1 to 2.11. The VOICE of JOEL.

Locust-devastation: the terrible day of judgment compared.

II ch. 2.12 to ch. 3 The VOICE of JEHOVAH. The call to REPENTANCE (2. 12-20); REJOICING (2.21-23), REVIVAL(2.28-29: promise of the SPIRIT), RETRIBUTION and RESTORATION (ch. 2.24-27: 30-32 and ch. 3)

3. AMOS (the name means "BORNE of GOD") 9 chapters.

A farmer of the barren hill—country of TEKOA, (1.1;7.14), Amos was the last of the prophets to the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and delivered his message in the reign of Jeroboam II two years before the great earthquake (1.1b) recorded in Zech. 14.5.

Fraught with merciless clarity, fervour and power, the message contains many graphic pictures of rural as well as city-life, with its cruel slave-trade (1.6,9) and polluted worship (4.4;5.2; 7.12-13, 16-17) especially in the 'cathedral city' of Bethel.

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The LORD'S LONG-SUFFERING" (note the phrase in ch 1.3,6,9 etc " For three and for four ")

The KEY VERSE: 5.14 "Seek good and not evil that ye may live and so the Lord, the God of Hosts shall be with you " (ch. 5.4,6,8)

SUMMARY.

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|------------------|---|
| I. ch. 1 to 9.10 | RETRIBUTION. |
| (a) 1.1 to 2.3: | judgment on six nations |
| (b) 2.4 to 2.5: | judgment on Judah _ |
| (c) 2.6 to 9.10: | judgment on Israel and the priesthood. (9.1-10) . |

Five visions (7 to 9.10) illustrate the message.

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| II. ch. 9.11-15 | RESTORATION. |
|-----------------|--------------|

4. OBADIAH (means "Servant of God") 1 chapter.

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The DOOM of EDOM and the DELIVERANCE of ISRAEL.

Key Verse. vs.17 "upon Mount Zion deliverance, holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions."

Compare Obadiah's prophecy with Jer. 49.7-22; Ezekiel 35 and Mal: 1.1-5. The remarkable fulfilment of the prophecy of God's judgment on Edom is seen in the remains at Petra.

5. JONAH (means "dove") 4 chapters.

Jonah, a contemporary of Amos, was a native of Gath-hepher, a village near Nazareth, and prophesied to Jeroboam II (II Kings 14.25) The historical character of the book has been challenged largely because of the story of the "whale" (the word so translated in Mt. 12.40 means nothing more than 'a great fish'). Careful readers will note that there are nine miracles in the book (1.4, 7b, 15b, 17; 2.10; 3.5; 4.6,7 and 8). Our Lord referred to Jonah in unmistakable, matter of fact terms (Mt. 12.39-41). The book is written as simple and accurate history e.g. the magnitude of the city of Nineveh, often denied by critics, has been demonstrated by excavation. (3.2-3).

The MESSAGE of the Book is "The LORD'S PURPOSE of SALVATION." Key Verse: 2.9b. "Salvation is of the Lord." Note the "PREPARED" things (1.17, 4.6,7,8), the most remarkable response in history of repentance and revival (3.4-5) and the Lord's gracious dealings with His missionary. As a result of Jonah's ministry, Nineveh was spared: however refer to Nahum's prophecy (ch. 2-3) of Nineveh's destruction 150 years afterwards.

SUMMARY.

- ch. 1. JONAH'S PERVERSENESS and PUNISHMENT
- ch. 2. JONAH'S PRAYER and PRESERVATION
- ch. 3. JONAH'S PREACHING
- ch. 4. JONAH'S PETULANCE

6. MICAH (means "who is like the LORD?") 7 chapters.

In the ministry of the prophets, Micah is a strong link between Hosea and Amos, prophets to the Northern Kingdom, and Isaiah, the great prophet to Judah, the southern Kingdom. Micah's message was directed mainly to Samaria and Jerusalem, the capitals of both Kingdoms. (1.1).

It is graphic (see 1.4, 2.12, 3.6, 4.13 etc.), very specific (note place-names in ch: 1; also 2.2, 4.8, 5. 10-14), vehement (1. 3-4, 5. 10-15, 6. 10-16), full of power (2.7, 3.8, 5. 2-4) and

comforting and evangelistic (compare 1.9 with Is. 1.6; 2.2 with Is. 5.8; 7.7 with Is. 12.2; 7.8 with Is. 60. 19-20; 7.14 with Is. 40.11 and Is. 65.10; 7.18 with Is. 40.2 and 7.19 with Is. 38.17 and Is. 43.25.)

Such was its power that it brought revival to the land in Hezekiah's reign, a revival which was vividly recorded by Jeremiah 120 years later (!) (Jer. 26. 18-19; II Chron. 30. 2, 6, 8-27).

The MESSAGE of the Book is "The PARDONING GOD." The meaning of Micah's name is expressed in the KEY VERSE 7. 18-19 "who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity sins into the depth of the sea."

SUMMARY. Following the title in 1.1, there are three groups of prophecies :—

I 1.2 to 2.13, addressed to the PEOPLE, (1.2 Hear, all ye 1 people) includes messages to particular places (1.5, 9-15), and of judgment (2. 1-11) and promise (2. 12-13).

II 3.1 to 5.15, addressed to the PRINCES (3.1, 9) PROPHETS (3.5) and PRIESTS (3.11), contains prophecies of judgment (3.8), Jerusalem's coming glory (ch. 4), and the COMING of CHRIST as Sovereign LORD (4.7) and mighty, eternal KING (5. 2-5), with Bethlehem as the place of His birth. (5.2)

III 6.1 to 7.20, addressed again to the PEOPLE (6. 3, 5) but against the PANORAMA of mountain (6. 1-2) foundations of the earth (6.2) and past history. (6.3. et seq.)

6. 6-8 is an unsurpassed description of man's responsibility as required by God. The prophecy closes with the revelation of God's pardoning mercy.

7. NAHUM (means 'COMPASSION') 3 chapters

A native of Elkosh (1.1), most probably in Galilee, Nahum prophesied some time between the capture of No or No-ammon (Thebes) in 664 — 3 B.C. (3.8) and the fall of Nineveh as foretold in the book.

The MESSAGE of the Book is "The PATIENCE and POWER of the LORD."

The Key-verse is 1.3 "The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power and will not at all acquit the wicked."

The prophecy of the siege and capture of Nineveh is remarkable for its detail and absolute accuracy, as confirmed by history and archaeological research.

SUMMARY.

ch: 1. The PATIENCE and POWER of the LORD.

ch: 2-3. The PUNISHMENT of NINEVEH.

8. HABAKKUK (means "EMBRACING") 3 Chapters.

Habakkuk wrote his sublime prophecy to Judah towards the end of the 7th century B.C. (note the references to the Chaldeans) and was therefore Jeremiah's contemporary.

The stirring MESSAGE of the Book is "The TEST and TRIUMPH of FAITH."

The Key Verse is 2.4b "The just shall live by faith."

The great text is repeated in the N.T. in Rom. 1-17: Gal. 3.11 and Heb. 10.38 with differing emphasis. In Rom. 1.17, this is on the word 'JUST' and the great doctrine of 'Justification' is introduced by the apostle. In Gal. 3.11, it is on the word, "FAITH" in contrast to the works of the law, and in Heb. 10.38, it is the word 'LIVE' which is most significant, for the context deals with our salvation (Heb. 10.39) and its final consummation in the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Heb. 10.37).

Here in Habakkuk all the words find a personal and intimate meaning in the word 'HIS.' "The just shall live by his faith."

SUMMARY.

Chapter 1. The CONFLICT of FAITH.

vs. 1-4 Anxiety 5-11 Answer 12-17 Assurance.

Chapter 2. The CONFIDENCE of FAITH.

vs. 1. 'watch' vs. 2 'write' vs. 3-4, 14, 20 'WAIT' vs. 5-13, 15-19 'WOE' upon the robber 5-6, the aggressor 7, the proud and covetous 9-11, the doer of violence and inhumanity (12-13, 15-17) and the idolater (18-19). Chapter 3. The CONQUEST of FAITH — expressed in a prayer set to 'Shigionoth,' (vs. 1), i.e. songs of a completely free, fervid and forceful character. (Ps. 7 is a 'Shiggaion' of David)

(a) vs. 2: The REQUEST for REVIVAL

(b) vs. 3-16: The REVELATION of God's GLORY 3-4, GOVERNMENT 5-12, GRACE 13-16.

(c) vs. 17-19: REJOICING in the LORD, who is salvation 18, strength and stability 19, even in the midst of total devastation! 17!

9. ZEPHANIAH (means 'the LORD hides and protects') 3 Chapters.

Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of JOSIAH (1.1)
(The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The DAY of the LORD.")

The KEY VERSE is 1.7 "Ho! d thy peace at the presence of the LORD GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid (margin, sanctified or prepared) the guests."

SUMMARY:

Chapter 1. The CHARACTER of RETRIBUTION.

Chapter 2.1 to 3.7. The CALL to REPENTANCE.
3.8 to 3.13. The CIRCUMSTANCES of RESTORATION.

3.14 to 3.20. The CALL to REJOICE.

10. HAGGAI (means "FEAST of the LORD") 2 Chapters

The prophecy is exactly dated (1.1; 2.1, 10, 20. As DARIUS commenced his reign in 521 B.C. these dates correspond to our months of September, October and December in 520 B.C. It should be noted here that the Jewish year contained 354 days, about 1 1/4 days less than our solar year: in a cycle of 19 years, the difference would be about 213 days

and to correct this an extra month was added about once in 3 years i.e. to 7 years of` the cycle. The first month of the sacred year—ABIB (Ex. 12.2, 13. 3-4) corresponds to March or April.)

EZRA 5 and 6 should be read for the historical background. Haggai and Zechariah, God's prophets, called the people out of their selfish indifference and neglect to rebuild the temple of the LORD.

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The BUILDING of the HOUSE of the LORD." The Key Verse is 2.4 "Be strong and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts." The command, "Be strong" " is thrice repeated, and addressed to prince, priest and people.

SUMMARY.

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|--------------------|-------------|---|
| I | ch. 1. 1-15 | The FIRST PROPHECY. |
| vs. 1-11 | | The LORD'S REBUKE of selfishness. |
| 12-15 | | The RESPONSE in submission. |
| II. ch. 2. 1-9. | | The SECOND PROPHECY.
The LORD'S RESOURCES in strength and sufficiency. |
| III. ch. 2. 10-19. | | The THIRD PROPHECY.
The LORD'S REPROOF of sin. |
| IV. ch. 2. 20-23. | | The FINAL PROPHECY.
The LORD'S REASSURANCE of salvation and security. |

11. ZECHARIAH (means "the LORD remembers") 14 Chapters

Zechariah prophesied with Haggai in similar circumstances (Ezra 6.14: Zech. 1.1: Haggai 1.1) but his remarkable visions and prophecies are distinctly Messianic and in a world-setting.

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The LORD—SHEPHERD, SAVIOUR, PRIEST, is SOVEREIGN."

Key Verse: 14.9. "The LORD shall be King over all the earth" "

I. The VISIONS of the LORD. 1.7 to 6.8.

- (i) 1. 7-17. The angel among the myrtle-trees— the PROTECTION of the LORD and the PROMISE of Jerusalem's PROSPERITY.
- (ii) 1. 18-21. The four horns and four carpenters — interpreted in vs. 19, 21 —the PURPOSE of the LORD in world-history.
- (iii) ch. 2. The man with the measuring line- the PLAN of the LORD for Jerusalem fulfilled.
- (iv) ch. 3. Joshua vindicated against Satan — the PRIESTHOOD of CHRIST, the BRANCH (v. 8 — see also 6. 12-13).
- (v) ch. 4. The lampstand and olive trees —the POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT (vs. 6).
- (vi) 5. 1-4. The flying roll — The PENALTY of sin.
- (vii) 5. 5-11. The ephah — The PERSONIFICATION and PASSAGE of wickedness.
- (viii) 6. 1-8. The four chariots—the POWERS of the LORD in the heavens. (v. 5; Ps. 104.4; Heb. 1.7).

II. The VOICE of the LORD.

6.9 to 8.23. ("The word of the LORD" and " saith the Lord " or "speaketh the Lord" occurs 20 times in this section)

- (i) 6. 9-15. The PRIEST REIGNING—symbolic coronation of Joshua foreshadowing our Lord Jesus Christ vs. 12-13. "Behold the man the BRANCH shall rule upon his throne a priest upon his throne."
- (ii) Chapter 7. The PROPHETS REJECTED (7.7. "the words which the LORD hath cried by the former

prophets) judgment on selfcentred fasting and feasting.

- (iii) Chapter 8. The PROSPERITY of Jerusalem RESTORED in the MILLENIAL AGE.

III. The VICTORIES of the LORD. ch: 9 to 14.

- (i) ch. 9 and 10. REJOICING and REFRESHMENT in the VICTORY of the KING.
- (ii) ch. 11. REJECTION of the SHEPHERD-SURE JUDGMENT.
- (iii) ch. 12-14. Note the key-phrase "in that day" i.e. the day of the LORD, 14.1, and the VICTORIES of the LORD-
 - (i) in the defence of Jerusalem (ch. 12) (Note the prophetic statement of the crucifixion in 12.10)
 - (ii) in the cleansing through the wounding and smiting of the shepherd. (ch. 13)
 - (iii) in the defeat of Jerusalem's enemies, finally at the second coming of the LORD in glory. (14.4 et seq.)
 - (iv) in the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom — and complete submission to the KING and sanctification unto the LORD.

12. MALACHI (means "My messenger") 4 Chapters.

Malachi prophesied after the rebuilding of the Temple in Nehemiah's time (compare 2.8 with Neh. 13.29, 2. 10-16 with Neh. 13. 23-28, 3. 8-10 with Neh. 13. 10-12)

The MESSAGE of the BOOK is "The MESSAGE of the LORD."

Key Verse: 3.1. "Behold I will send my messenger the messenger of the covenant." See also 2.7.

SUMMARY.

Chapter 1. The LORD'S CHOICE: the priests rebuked.

Chapter 2. The LORD'S COVENANT (2. 4-7): the priests renounced.

Chapter 3-4. The LORD'S COMING (3. 1-3; 4. 1-2) the people reprov'd and called to repentance and blessing. (3. 1-12): the faithful ones remembered (3. 16-18).

3.10 is a great message for the revival of God's people. Finally, 4.2, a verse so full of the light and glory of the "Sun of righteousness" at His second coming in power, is applicable morning by morning to everyone of us who have "CHRIST in us, the hope of glory," of whom these Books of the Old Testament testify to our minds and hearts.