

Getting to Know Your Bible -- Part 5

The Writings

Historical Books

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Definition:

These books, though “historical” do not contain history resembling 20th century standards. There are often no specific times or dates given for events, but that do not declare the events any less historical. It is imperative to note that the focus of these books is not just facts and details, but rather the religious and spiritual history of God’s people.

Historical Framework:

The historical books begin with the call of Joshua to take God’s people in to the Promised Land (Joshua 1). This entrance is recorded in stages of entrance, conquest, division of the land, and governing of the land. Once the land is settled, judges are put in place to help the people in daily and national life. After a period of several judges a monarchy (kingship) is established. There were three kings of great significance.

Saul:	He was the first king anointed by Samuel. He died by suicide.
David:	He is the most famous of Israelite leaders. His leadership was primarily military oriented, but Jesus would be declared as “the son of David” because he descended from his lineage.
Solomon:	He is known as the wisest man to ever live. He not only recorded the words of Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon, but he orchestrated the building of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The end of this historical period (I and II Chronicles) records the division of the monarchy between the Northern (10) and Southern (2) tribes and eventual captivity of both at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians.

Theological Framework:

There are three key points of theological interest within these writings:

The sin cycle:	The people of God sin, they are punished, cry out to God for help, and God provides them a redeemer.
The failed leadership:	The judges and kings were to be set apart for the service of God, but their sinful lives led to the sinful living of the entire race of

people; thus, the

God's Grace:
of

people "did evil in the sight of the Lord."

God's grace prevails throughout the historical writings. The people

God are given countless chances to repent. At the end of this literature it appears that God is through with them, but Isaiah 40-66 (written contemporaneously with these writings) records the eventual grace of God.

Poetic Books

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Definition:

These five books are sometimes referred to as "wisdom literature." This title is most fitting because the contained writings describe and elaborate on how to live and magnify God no matter the situation.

Historical Framework:

With the experiences of Job as an exception, the writings of this classification were done within the monarchy of God's people. Though Job mainly describes the experiences of a select individual the others show life from a mutual personal and communal level. The style of these writings verifies that the leadership of Israel was emphatically spiritual as well as physical (Theocracy).

Theological Framework:

These books describe various human experiences of God's people under various circumstances of earthly living. These experiences, though done in the flesh, are representative of the spiritual life within.

Specific content:

Job: This story not only describes the trials and tribulations of a man who has everything taken away from him, but it also portrays in vivid language the reality and nature of spiritual warfare.

Psalms: Primarily written by King David (72 of 150) these songs and poems describe the attributes of God, the promises of God, the grace of God, as well as the effects of sin and prophetic promises concerning the people of God and their eventual savior Jesus.

Proverbs: This book contains 31 chapters of timeless sayings and antidotes.

Ecclesiastes: This record of King Solomon explores all of the possibilities that one can partake in this

life, sinful and non-sinful. The conclusion reached is, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of Man" (12:3).

Song of Solomon:

This love story between Solomon and his first wife has been seen as scandalous and on the brink of literary pornography for years because of its graphic nature. Despite its teachings about true martial love it has also been interpreted as an allegory of the love between Christ and his bride, the church.