

The Bible The Historical Books

The Historical Books span the Old Testament starting from Joshua and ending with Esther. The focus of these twelve books is to give detailed account of God's character, judgment, discipline, and faithfulness to the nation of Israel. They begin with the account of Joshua's transition as God's appointed leader over the nation of Israel and end with God saving the Jews from the evil hands of Haman.

The book of Joshua records the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land, their victories over its cities, and how each portion of the Promised Land was assigned to the twelve tribes of Israel. Much like the book of Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses, the book of Joshua ends with the death and burial of Joshua.

The book of Judges focuses on how God works in human history. It identifies the way that God rescued Israel when they repeatedly served Him, turned from Him, suffered the consequences of their sin, received discipline from God for their disobedience, and were sent a deliverer when they repented and cried out to God. When man rejects serving God they follow the same pattern as Israel.

Ruth follows Judges and it records the story of overcoming disaster amidst chaos. It shows that trusting God can turn around even the most disastrous situations. Despite beginning with famine and death, the book of Ruth connects the line of Christ through Ruth, a pagan who stayed loyal to her family.

The next two books are the books of 1st and 2nd Samuel. They pick up after the period of the judges with Samuel, who was the final deliverer for Israel in that time period. The people demanded a king like the other nations, so God gave them what they asked for. There were good kings and bad kings. 1st Samuel deals with God's rule through King Saul, and 2nd Samuel records God's rule through King David.

1st Kings and 2nd Kings detail the story concerning the other kings of Israel. Halfway through 1st Kings the nation of Israel loses its unity and divides into two kingdoms, Israel being the northern and Judah being the southern kingdom. Two kingdoms means more kings. God's interaction with these kings of Israel is recorded in these books.

1st and 2nd Chronicles record the genealogies of Israel and Judah, while focusing and stressing more on the kingdom of Judah. They are an important book, in spite of repeating some of the information from 1st and 2nd Kings, because they detail the line of Christ. Because of this God's promises are able to be seen as fulfilled.

Ezra records the return of Israel to their land after the northern kingdom had been destroyed and its people dispersed. It starts with the preparation for return to the land and ends with instruction on keeping Israelites purely Israelite.

Nehemiah records the rebuilding of Jerusalem ending with the dedication of its walls. In spite of being very different than Ezra, God used Nehemiah. This book stands as an example that God will use anyone who will obey Him.

Lastly, the book of Esther details the attempted destruction of the Jews through Haman's wicked plan. It details the story of an Israelite woman brought in to Persia and made queen to King Xerxes. Her position and shrewdness allowed her to be used by God to save her people, but not without the risk of her own life hanging in the balance. Yet God proved faithful as He always does, and her life and the life of the Jews were spared by her obedience and faithfulness.