

Who Am I?

Unlocking and Understanding the Mystery of Christ

Week One

Day Five

Tell It Like It Is

Job - Malachi

“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”
(Hebrews 4:12-13)



Unlocking the Mystery

It’s a mysterious but wonderful thing that we can go back in history to read the thoughts of man and the comfort or commands of God given to man in the context of their day; have it be relevant still in the day of Jesus’ first advent; and yet remain completely relevant for us today as we await Jesus’ second coming. I praise God that He is unchanging and doesn’t treat people differently. Many of the words you read in this portion of Scripture were directed to or written by the kings of Israel but remain true and unchanging to each of us still today.

On day One of this week, I showed you a book case that helped me visualize the books of the Bible. Looking back at that bookcase, you will see that the first two lessons this week came from the books of the Law—there are five books of Law. The next two lessons came from the twelve history books that tell of Israel’s history and show how Israel was in desperate need of a Messiah or Savior that could redeem them back to God once for all. Today’s lesson will touch very briefly on the remainder of the Old Testament, the five books known as the Poetry or Wisdom books and the five Major/12 Minor Prophets. These books do not add more time in history. They are products of that history. Today’s lesson will also contain a lot of reading with very little to look up. It is my hope to unlock some understanding of these books for you. As you begin to gain understanding of these books, you will unlock more and more understanding of the love of God for you, of the sovereignty of God, and of the stage which was set for the soon coming Messiah.

POETRY



Understanding the Word

The next five books you come to are called the books of Poetry or books of Wisdom. These books are poetical in form but practical in content and offer guidelines for a successful life in serving our LORD. These books offer reflection on the deeper issues such as the value or meaning of life, the existence of evil in the world, and the greatness of our God.

JOB

DIGGING DEEPER: The book of Job

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Job
42:1-3

The book of Job gives much instruction on what to do and what not to do as a suffering child of God. The age old question always arises, “If God is so loving, why does He allow so much suffering in this world?”

In one day, Job’s world was completely devastated. All of his flocks and herds were carried off, all the servants of those animals plus all 10 of his children were killed, and he was struck with a severe disease. He sought council from his three friends that led to the conclusion that he is being punished for his terrible sin. Another man then steps in and offers his explanation. Job was confused by all this, so he finally, after some self-righteous statements, repents and humbles himself before God. We learn that we don’t know God’s ways. Job was actually a demonstration of faithfulness between Satan and God. God is the giver of life and has ordained our steps.

From Job, we can learn to trust in Him even when we don’t understand and walk by faith with our LORD during those terrible times. Evil and suffering exist in this world because Satan directs those worldly ways. When we encounter times of suffering just know that Satan will try to steal, kill, and destroy your faith in God, but also know that the all-powerful and all-knowing God will work it out for good according to His plans. Stay faithful, check yourself... Is there any sin in my life? If so, repent and get rid of it. Are there areas He may be refining me to accomplish a future task? If so, hold on and stay the course. Could I be an instrument God is using to demonstrate Satan’s defeat or am I suffering for the sake of Christ? You could be, so stand strong, remember God’s ways are higher than our ways, hang on, and remain faithful. Your blessing is on its way.

Job

Psalms

Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

UNITED KINGDOM

Saul

David

Kings

Solomon

DIVIDED KINGDOM

V. 42:1-3 Then Job replied to the LORD: “I know that You can do _____ things; no plan of Yours can be thwarted. You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures My counsel without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not _____, things too wonderful for me to know.”

PSALMS

DIGGING DEEPER: The book of Psalms

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Psalms 91:1-2; 22:1, 16, 18 (Matthew 27:46, 35; John 20:25)

V. 91:1-2 He who dwells in the _____ of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, “He is my _____ and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

The book of Psalms is next. Since the majority of the Psalms are attributed to King David, we associate him with them. These are poems that were put to music and aided in the temple worship. Many were written out of David’s heart as he stayed close to God through the trials of his life. We can find prayers and praise, thanksgiving and adoration, and even discouragement, distress, and cries for deliverance. We learn how David and the others trusted and rejoiced in all situations. We learn that the emotions we have and the situations we face are much like the ones the psalmists shared; therefore, we can use these psalms as our own prayers and songs of praise. We can give thanks through them and adore our Lord, as well as, cry for help in times of discouragement and distress.

God is never changing...what He did for the King of Israel, He will do for us. Sometimes, we just don’t have the words to express how we are feeling, and when we open the book of Psalms we find those words and can use them to allow God to minister to us and for us to minister to our God.

Another type of psalm is the ones that spoke directly of our Savior. These were written approximately 1,000 years prior to Jesus walking on this earth, but when you read them you can visualize exactly what our Savior went through. There is even a peek at what to expect when He comes again.

V. 22:1 “My God, my God, why have you _____ me?”

V. 22:16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have _____ my hands and my feet.

V. 22:18 They _____ my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Matthew 27:46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” –which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Matthew 27:35 When they had crucified Him, they divided up His clothes by casting lots.

John 20:25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he [Thomas] said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it.”

PROVERBS

DIGGING DEEPER: The book of Proverbs; 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:4

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 9:10; 1 Corinthians 1:30

As the Psalms help us in our devotion to God, the book of Proverbs help us with our walk by providing practical ways to live for Him.

King Solomon, David’s son and the last king over the united kingdom of Israel was given the gift of extreme wisdom. It’s said that he produced 3,000 proverbs... many of which make up this book. There were a few other authors, as well, but this book is often referred to as the Wisdom of Solomon.

The foundation to living by the words in this book is to be kept at the forefront of your mind – “The fear of the Lord!” If we humble ourselves before God and walk in fear and reverence before Him these proverbs will flow in and out of every area of your life. Submission to God will prepare our minds to receive the instruction given, therefore, producing a wisdom from God that meets His righteous standards.

V. 9:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of _____, and knowledge of the Holy One is _____.”

Jesus personified wisdom in the New Testament. He claims He was the wisdom of God and in Him are all the hidden treasures of God’s wisdom and knowledge. When reading the proverbs, try substituting “Jesus” in place of “wisdom” and then reflect on the power brought to your understanding.

1 Corinthians 1:30 It is because of Him [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God -that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

ECCLESIASTES AND SONG OF SOLOMON

DIGGING DEEPER: The books of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 1:1-2; 12:13-14

Not only was Solomon the author of the majority of the proverbs accumulated, but he also authored Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. Each of these books are believed to be written at different times in his life. Song of Solomon was written early in his life, perhaps even before he became king. Proverbs was written in the early and middle years of his reign as king and Ecclesiastes at the end of his life.

Solomon started out strong; he had a relationship with God. He knew the love of a godly woman producing his song about marital love. God granted Solomon wisdom and riches beyond measure. He produced this wisdom so others could learn, but he didn't necessarily abide by the wisdom. He then took hundreds of wives and concubines over the years, and he allowed himself to be swayed into idol worship of these foreign wives which led him away from God. He tried everything he could think of to be content in this world, but nothing could bring the contentment he longed for. The book of Ecclesiastes is the result of his search for this contentment. Everything he tried was meaningless apart from God. That was a lesson he wanted to forward to future generations. "I've been there...done that, and it didn't work." He encourages us to stay close to God, walk in His ways so that will bring life's fullest contentment ever.

V. 1:1-2 The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! _____ is meaningless."

V. 12:13-14 Now all has been heard; here is the _____ of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Solomon's Song reflected on his great love for his wife, a relationship God ordained for one man and one woman to share. Both Jews and Christians took this example of marriage to another level - God and His people and Christ and His church, respectively. Marriage is a beautiful union of two people devoted to Christ first to understand the fullness of love God has for us. We will not be able to grasp the complete fullness of this union, but I am thankful He gives us a glimpse of that love through our earthly relationship of marriage.

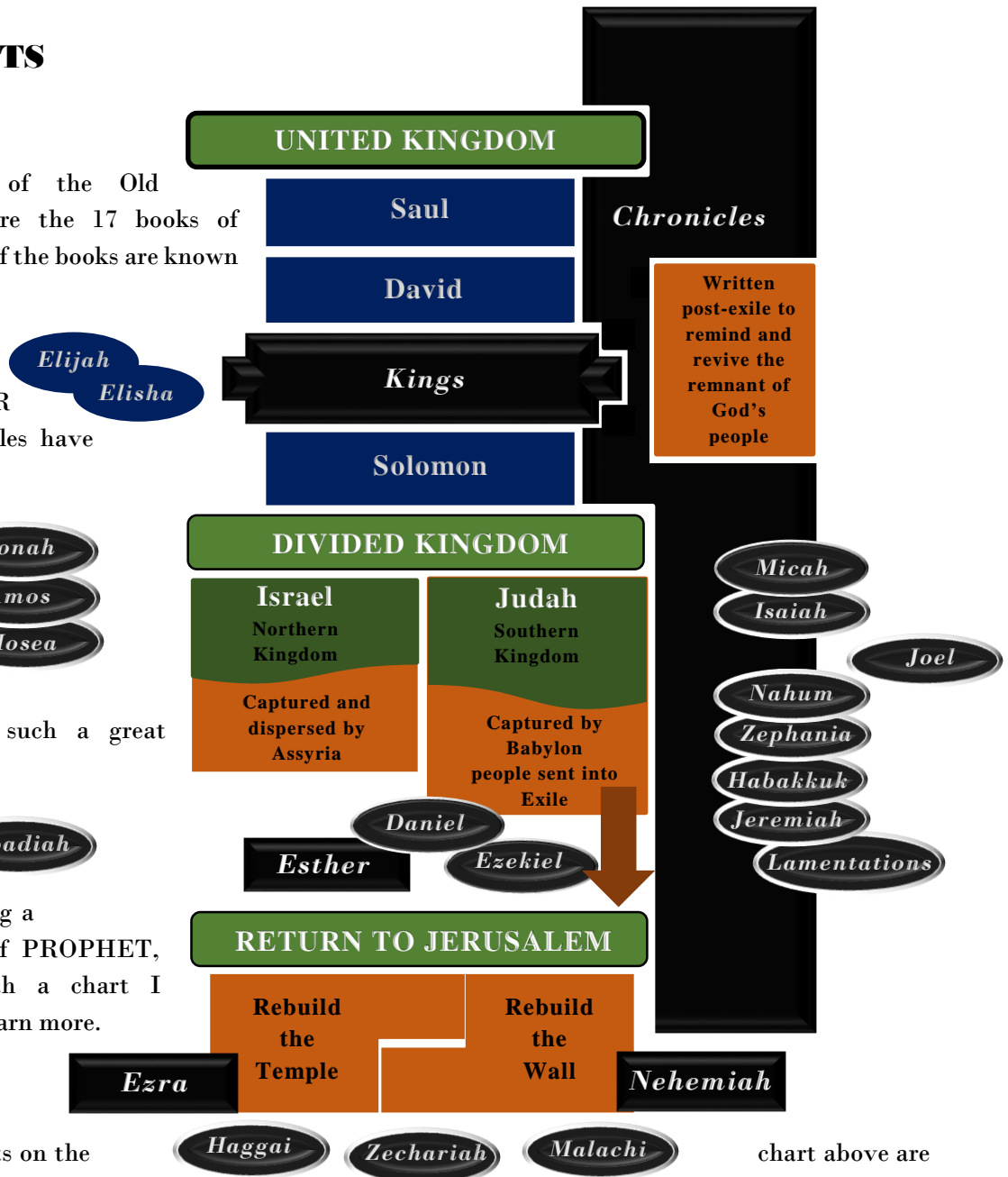
SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Song of Songs 6:3; Revelation 19:6-9

V. 6:3 I am my lover's and my _____ is mine;

Revelation 19:6-9 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

PROPHETS

The last portion of the Old Testament to unlock are the 17 books of prophecy. The first five of the books are known as the MAJOR PROPHEETS, and the 12 that follow are known as the MINOR PROPHEETS. These titles have nothing to do with the importance of the man or the message but rather the length of the book. Each book is filled with so much content and such a great message that I can only touch briefly on the actual content. We will begin by learning a little about the office of PROPHET, then follow it up with a chart I constructed to help me learn more.



The first two prophets on the chart above are in blue. These represent the many prophets that spoke their messages but did not write them down. They spoke primarily to the existing king to help guide them with the very words of God. Samuel spoke to King Saul; Nathan to King David; Ahijah to King Jeroboam. The two mentioned

above, Elijah and Elisha, ministered to the northern kingdom's King Ahaz. Their ministry was documented by another rather than them writing down the message they proclaimed.

The chart above was made to help me keep Israel's history clear in my mind. I am a very visual person; therefore, I used shapes, colors, and positions to help me remember. The names in the black ovals are the writing prophets which means we have their message written in our Bible. The placement on the chart was determined by whom their message was delivered. The few black ovals on the left were the prophets that ministered to the northern kingdom of Israel, and the many on the right spoke to the southern kingdom of Judah. Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel ministered through the time of the Exile. Jeremiah stayed in Jerusalem (eventually taken captive to Egypt). Daniel was in Babylon and spoke to the royalty there (King Nebuchadnezzar), and Ezekiel was in Babylon and spoke to the Judean captives. Following the exile, God allowed His people to come home to Jerusalem so He sent three more prophets to speak to them; they are the three black ovals at the bottom of the page.

The prophets in general were CALLED by God into this position. Upon reading and studying, you will learn some came from royalty and some came from the fields of a shepherd. Each person recognized that God called them and then gave them the words to declare. Each prophet had a DISTINCTIVE LIFESTYLE that abandoned the worldly ways to live exclusively for God. God EMPOWERED them with His words/message and then the means to declare it. For some, it was preaching. Others lived their message, and for others, they demonstrated through illustrations or object lessons. The MESSAGE details were specific to the issue addressed yet represented the voice of the covenants made by God. That means each prophet would tell the people what to *repent* of... in what ways they displeased God. Then they would tell what needed to happen to *restore* them back to Him. It was always up to the people and the big picture was...*walk in His ways through obedience and have blessing on your life; reject His way through disobedience and prepare to be cut off from Him.*

Some of the prophets spoke of the captivities: Israel taken by Assyria, Judah by Babylon. Some spoke of the Jews being scattered and some spoke of the dread of judgement on them or the neighboring kingdoms around them. Some spoke of the Messiah that was going to come and restore the people but ALL spoke of reconciliation with God IF the people would only turn to Him. Doom and gloom followed by HOPE and PROMISE.

Whatever the message was or who it was to, you will find that some part of it was for the specific time and issue at hand and some part of it was for the immediate or near future. What is so amazing is that many of them spoke messages that are still yet to be fulfilled...the fulfillment that will only come with Jesus' second coming!

The chart below is the second chart made to help me visualize the message or audience of the individual prophet. Color is used to create a distinct visual separation in history. PINK- the time leading to or shortly after Israel's captivity by Assyria. YELLOW- the two prophets that never mentioned a king so their timing in history is debatable. GREEN - the time Judah was about to enter into exile in Babylon. ORANGE- the time during the exile. BLUE- the time of the restoration of Jerusalem...the city with name of God on her. Following Malachi there are 400 years of prophetic silence. The next time a prophetic word came, it was from John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus.

| Name | Meaning of name | Prophecy to | General information | Reigning King |
|--------------|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| Jonah | Dove | Nineveh Capitol of Assyria | Belly of a fish Nineveh actually repents | Jeroboam II |
| Amos | To lift/carry burden | Israel | 5 Visions (plumb line) Last attempt for Israel to repent prior to captivity | Jeroboam II |
| Hosea | Salvation | Israel | Redeeming Love (marriage as object lesson) Last attempt for Israel to repent prior to captivity | Jeroboam II |
| Isaiah | God is Salvation | Judah | Judgement and Salvation Book is like mini Bible Coming Messiah | Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah |
| Micah | Who is like God? | Judah | Court Case Messiah born in Bethlehem | Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah |
| Joel | Yahweh is God | Judah | Locust devastation Outpouring of Holy Spirit | ? some say Joash some say post exile |
| Obadiah | Worshiper/servant of God | Edom | Edom; as you have done, it will be done to you | ? some say at time of exile |
| Nahum | Comfort of God | Nineveh Capitol of Assyria | About 150 years after Jonah Assyrians plundering parts of Judah... Comforts Judah that God will destroy Assyria | Josiah |
| Habakkuk | Embrace | Judah | Conversation between Habakkuk and God Questions/Answers | Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim |
| Zephaniah | God has hidden | Judah | The Day of the Lord A Remnant will be protected | Josiah |
| Jeremiah | God establishes/sends | Judah Left in Judah during Exile (taken to Egypt) | Weeping prophet Harsh message/sensitive heart Symbolic actions to illustrate messages | Josiah to end... Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah Babylonian King |
| Lamentations | (to cry out loud) | | 5 laments to express intense sorrow over Jerusalem downfall | |
| Daniel | God is my Judge | Judah to B. King Taken to Babylon First deportation | Fiery furnace and lion's den Dream interpretation of King End time prophecy/Revelation | Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar |
| Ezekiel | God Strengthens | Judah to Jewish captives Taken to Babylon Second deportation | Dry Bones and scroll to eat... symbols and visions; parables, poems, and proverbs... End time prophecy | Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar |
| Haggai | Festival of God | Israel/Judah Time of Ezra Finish the Temple! | Coming Messiah Shaking of heavens and earth Zerubbable's signet Ring | Return from Exile Persian Kings |
| Zechariah | God Remembers | Israel/Judah Time of Ezra Finish the Temple! | Future of the temple and the coming Messiah... First and Second comings At least 12 Messianic prophecies | Return from Exile Persian Kings |
| Malachi | Messenger of God | Israel/Judah Time of Nehemiah | Debate format Tithes/Marriage Foretold forerunner of Messiah Spirit of Elijah | Return from Exile Persian Kings |

Who Am I? Understanding and Unlocking the Mystery of Christ
Week One: An Old Testament Survey **Day Five: Tell it Like it is**
Job - Malachi



God gave the Promise Land to His people. He had a requirement that they not intermarry with the current residents. The Israelites were told, “COME OUT AND BE SEPARATE.” They were to be a people belonging to God. God gave the Law to them to give the people a way to worship and fellowship with their LORD. However, the Israelites as a whole never completely shut out the worldly or pagan ways. During their time of residence in the land, they left pockets of pagans to live among them instead of destroying or sending them away. Instead of having nothing to do with them, they began to take on their ways and intermingle with their gods. The way of God Almighty is holy and righteous. It takes effort to stay pure in His ways. Generation after generation lost sight of the works of His mighty hand. Instead of the miraculous works becoming a part of their genetic make-up, they became stories that were hard to believe.

Isaiah 29:13 “The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.’” So many times I have caught myself judging the Israelites or the Hebrew people or the Jews (all the same people). How could they not hold tight to that miracle or promise? It came directly from God Himself to His people. How could the people not take heed of the message of the prophets? They knew they spoke from God, yet they chose to ignore or neglect the message. God really opened my eyes and showed me that we are no different than the people of long ago. I look at the world around me and ask myself, “Why, after being touched by God, would they allow themselves to become discouraged and either turn their back on God or walk in apathy?” “Where is the fire in the hearts of His children?” “Why aren’t we experiencing constant revival?” “Why do so many people claim to be Christians and not serve Jesus?”

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’ ‘Therefore, come out from them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”

This whole study has been written from my heart to yours to help strengthen you in your profession of Jesus Christ as Lord of your life. It was meant to draw you close to our Savior by getting to know Him more and more. It was meant to encourage you that there is never a cap on the amount of Jesus you can have in your life. It was meant to remind you that we MUST put off our old ways and purify ourselves before our Lord. It takes effort, energy, and purpose to walk in a life of INTEGRITY. You and I can do this IF we devote our lives to Him and make Him our God and Lord each and every day of our lives. We must not dabble in sinful pleasures because Satan will see it and use it as a foothold in the doorway to our hearts and minds. Child of God, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength... Fear the Lord and work out your salvation with fear and trembling. God loves you so very much. Yes, we have grace, but there is only so much God will allow and He will take His hand away.