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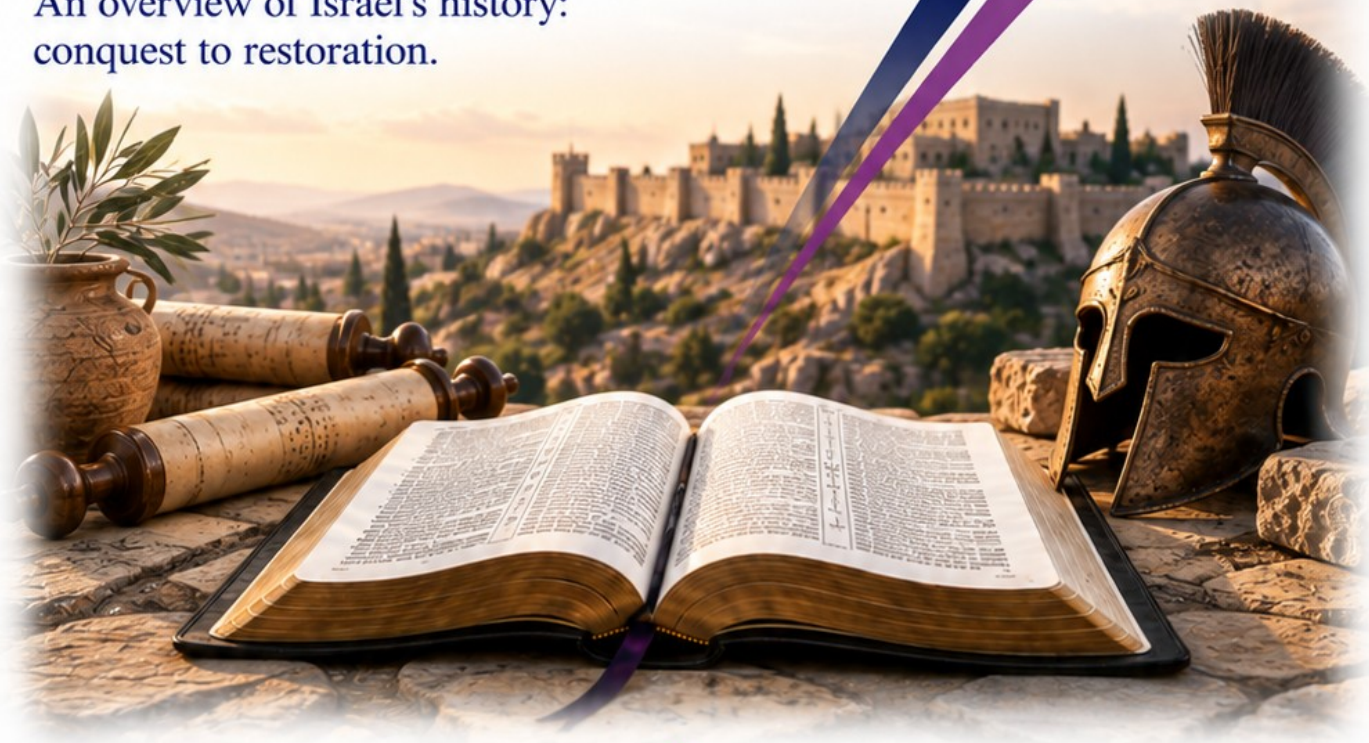
STUDY GUIDE 6

Understanding *the* Bible

STUDY GUIDE 3 OF 8:

The Historical Books — Canaan to Restoration

An overview of Israel's history: conquest to restoration.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

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PREFACE

BACK TO CONTENTS

The previous Study Guide followed the first five books of the Bible from creation to the borders of the Promised Land. Israel had been delivered from Egypt, brought into covenant with God, led through the wilderness, and prepared by Moses to enter the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This Study Guide continues that story through the twelve Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. These books record Israel entering Canaan, the period of the judges, the establishment of the monarchy, the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon, the division of the kingdom, the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, and the eventual return and restoration of the people.

The Historical Books should not be approached as twelve disconnected collections of stories. Together they form one continuing historical account, showing both the faithfulness of God and the repeated failure of His people. They record courage, faith, obedience and reform, but they also record unbelief, idolatry, rebellion, division and judgement.

Throughout this Study Guide, approximate dates will be included where they help us understand where people and events fit within the wider biblical timeline. This is especially important as the story moves through the judges, the kings, the divided kingdom, captivity and restoration.

Most importantly, we will continue to follow the principle established throughout this module: the Scriptures ultimately direct us towards Jesus Christ. The Historical Books preserve the line of promise through Judah and David, record the preservation of God's people through times of great danger, and prepare the historical setting in which the promised Christ would later be revealed.

Our aim is therefore not simply to learn Israel's history. We want to understand how the story develops, what its successes and failures teach us, and how God's purpose continues moving forward towards Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why should Israel's successes and failures be read as part of God's continuing purpose?

Personal Reflection

Which act of faith or failure in Israel's history challenges a present attitude or choice in your own life?

Action Step

Choose an event of faith or failure in Israel's history. What attitude or behaviour in your own life does it call you to examine?

INTRODUCTION: FOLLOWING THE STORY OF ISRAEL

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The twelve Historical Books continue the account that ended in Deuteronomy. Israel is standing on the borders of Canaan, Moses has died, and Joshua is preparing to lead the people across the Jordan into the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

From this point, the biblical story moves through several major stages. Israel enters and settles the land, passes through the troubled period of the judges, establishes a monarchy, reaches its greatest national strength under David and Solomon, divides into two kingdoms, enters captivity and eventually experiences a period of return and restoration.

The twelve Historical Books are:

- Joshua;
- Judges;
- Ruth;
- 1 Samuel;
- 2 Samuel;
- 1 Kings;
- 2 Kings;
- 1 Chronicles;
- 2 Chronicles;
- Ezra;
- Nehemiah;
- Esther.

These books follow Israel's history from Joshua's entrance into Canaan through the judges, the rise of the monarchy, the divided kingdoms, captivity and the return of the Jewish people.

For this Study Guide, it will be helpful to see them within five broad historical movements:

- Entering and Settling the Land: Joshua, Judges and Ruth;
- From Judges to Kings: 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel;
- The Kingdom and Its Division: 1 Kings and 2 Kings;
- Looking Back at Israel's History: 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles;
- Return and Restoration: Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

These books are not arranged simply to give us biographies of famous people. They preserve the history of God's dealings with His people and repeatedly show the consequences of faith, obedience, unbelief and rebellion.

They also help us understand the historical setting of many later Scriptures. The prophets ministered during the periods of the kings, division, captivity and restoration, while the promises connected with David and his descendants become increasingly important as the biblical story moves towards Jesus Christ.

Approximate dates will therefore be included throughout this Study Guide to help place people and events within the wider timeline. Where dates cannot be established with certainty, they will be presented as approximate rather than exact.

Most importantly, we will not study Israel's history simply as a record of the past. We will continue asking how each stage contributes to the unfolding purpose of God and how the line of promise continues moving towards Jesus Christ.

The story now begins with Joshua and Israel entering the Promised Land.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the journey from Canaan to restoration keep God's promise in view?

Personal Reflection

Have you read these events as history without asking where God's purpose was leading?

Action Step

Trace an event towards God's promise of Christ. How should recognising His continuing purpose change your response when circumstances seem uncertain?

UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

BACK TO CONTENTS

Before we begin with Joshua, it is important to understand how the Historical Books should be read. These twelve books record real people, real nations, real victories, real failures and real consequences across many generations of Israel's history.

They take us through major events such as Israel entering Canaan, the period of the judges, the establishment of the monarchy, the division into Israel and Judah, the captivities, and the eventual return from Babylon. Yet their purpose is greater than simply preserving ancient history.

History Written for Our Learning

Paul explains why these earlier events remain valuable to believers. He wrote in **Romans 15:4**:

> *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*

The Historical Books therefore contain lessons that reach beyond the generations who first experienced the events. We see faith and unbelief, obedience and rebellion, wise leadership and destructive leadership, together with the patience, judgement, mercy and faithfulness of God.

Paul gives a similar principle in **1 Corinthians 10:11**:

> *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."*

The history is therefore both record and instruction.

Scripture Records Both Faithfulness and Failure

The Historical Books do not hide the failures of important people. Joshua experiences victory but also encounters the consequences of disobedience within Israel. The judges deliver the people, yet the period becomes increasingly disorderly.

Saul begins as Israel's first king but eventually rejects God's command. David is a man greatly used by God, yet Scripture openly records his serious sin. Solomon receives extraordinary wisdom but later allows his heart to be turned away.

This teaches us an important principle: Everything Scripture records is not necessarily something Scripture approves. The Bible honestly records both examples to follow and warnings to avoid.

A Recurring Pattern

One pattern appears repeatedly throughout Israel's history. When the people trusted God and walked according to His Word, they experienced His help and protection. When they turned towards idolatry and rebellion, serious consequences followed.

This pattern becomes particularly clear in Judges, Kings and Chronicles:

Faithfulness → blessing and stability.

Unfaithfulness → decline and consequence.

Yet even when Israel failed, God's greater purpose continued.

The Historical Books Move Towards Jesus Christ

These books also preserve the historical line through which Jesus Christ would eventually come. The story moves from Joshua and the settlement of Canaan to Ruth, then to David and the establishment of his kingdom. God's promise concerning David's house becomes increasingly important as the Old Testament continues.

The history therefore does not move randomly. God is preserving a people, preserving the line of promise and preparing the historical setting in which Jesus Christ will ultimately be revealed.

We should therefore read these books with two questions before us: What happened in Israel's history? And how does this history continue moving God's purpose towards Jesus Christ?

With those principles in place, we can now begin the first major movement: Entering And Settling The Land

The story begins with Joshua, as Israel finally crosses the Jordan and enters the land God had promised.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the Bible record both faithfulness and failure in Israel's history?

Personal Reflection

Which repeated pattern in that history warns you about your own choices?

Action Step

Read an account of Israel's failure. Which similar tendency must you recognise in yourself, and what will you do about it?

JOSHUA: ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 1400 B.C.

Approximate Date of Writing: Traditionally associated with Joshua, with possible later additions

Place in the Biblical Story: Moses has died, and Israel is preparing to cross the Jordan and enter Canaan

Joshua is the first of the twelve Historical Books and contains twenty-four chapters. It continues directly from Deuteronomy, where Moses died on the plains of Moab and Joshua was prepared to lead Israel into the land God had promised. Major events include the crossing of the Jordan, Jericho, Rahab, the conquest of Canaan, the sun standing still and Joshua's final address.

The book marks Israel's transition from wilderness wandering to settlement in Canaan.

Joshua Succeeds Moses

After Moses died, God spoke to Joshua. **Joshua 1:1-3** states:

> *"Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses."*

The leader had changed, but God's promise had not changed.

Joshua was also commanded to remain faithful to the Law. His success would depend upon obedience to God's Word rather than confidence in himself.

Crossing the Jordan

The first great obstacle was the Jordan River. God stopped the waters, and Israel crossed on dry ground.

This marked the end of the wilderness period and the beginning of Israel's settlement in Canaan.

Rahab and Jericho

Before attacking Jericho, Joshua sent two spies into the city. They were protected by Rahab, who had heard what God had done for Israel and believed that He had given them the land.

Joshua 2:9-11 states:

> *"And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."*

Rahab and her household were spared when Jericho fell. Her story also becomes important because she later appears in the family line leading to David and ultimately Jesus Christ.

Israel then followed God's unusual instructions for Jericho. The people marched around the city, the priests blew the trumpets, and the walls fell.

Joshua 6:20 states:

> *"So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."*

The victory showed that Israel's success depended upon faith and obedience to God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What did crossing the Jordan and taking Jericho show about trusting God's direction?

Personal Reflection

When has fear made it hard for you to follow a clear instruction from God?

Action Step

Identify a clear teaching from God's Word you have hesitated to follow. What fear must you face, and how will you respond?

Victory and Defeat

The victory at Jericho was followed by defeat at Ai because Achan had disobeyed God's command.

Joshua therefore records both victory and failure. The difference was not simply military strength. Israel's relationship with God and obedience to His Word mattered.

Later, during battle with the Amorites, Joshua asked God for additional time to complete the victory. **Joshua 10:13-14** states:

> *"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies... So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."*

Again, the emphasis is that the LORD fought for Israel.

The Land Is Divided

After the major campaigns, the land was divided among the tribes of Israel. This was a significant moment in the biblical story because the descendants of Abraham were now receiving the land God had promised to their fathers.

Yet possessing Canaan did not guarantee faithfulness. Joshua knew that the greater danger was that Israel might turn away from God after becoming settled.

Joshua's Final Challenge

Near the end of his life, Joshua gathered the people and challenged them to decide whom they would serve.

Joshua 24:14-15 states:

> *"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

Joshua's final challenge brings the central lesson of the book into focus. Israel had entered the land, but the greater question remained: Would they continue to serve the LORD?

The next book, Judges, shows how quickly the nation moved away from the faithfulness Joshua urged upon them, while God's larger purpose continued moving towards Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did victory at Jericho not make Israel safe from later disobedience?

Personal Reflection

What does the account of defeat teach you about guarding your own conduct?

Action Step

Read Joshua's final challenge. Where have other priorities competed with your devotion to God, and what choice will you make?

JUDGES: THE CYCLE OF SIN AND DELIVERANCE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 1400-1050 B.C.

Approximate Date of Writing: Traditionally associated with Samuel

Place in the Biblical Story: Israel is living in Canaan after the death of Joshua, but the nation repeatedly turns away from God

Judges is the second of the twelve Historical Books and contains twenty-one chapters. It records the period after Joshua when Israel had settled in Canaan but had no king. The book repeatedly shows Israel turning away from God, suffering oppression, crying for help and then being delivered through judges whom God raised up.

The book shows how quickly a nation that had experienced God's faithfulness could move into spiritual decline when one generation failed to remain faithful.

A Generation That Did Not Know the LORD

After the death of Joshua and the elders who had served with him, another generation arose.

Judges 2:10-12 states:

> *"And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger."*

These verses explain the problem that dominates the book. The previous generation had seen God's works, but the new generation did not continue faithfully in that knowledge.

Israel then began following the gods of the surrounding nations.

The Repeating Cycle

Judges follows a recurring pattern:

Israel turns from God → enemies oppress Israel → the people cry to God → God raises up a deliverer → peace follows → Israel turns away again.

Judges 2:16-19 states:

> *"Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way."*

The judges were therefore not mainly courtroom officials as we would understand the word today. They were leaders and deliverers whom God raised up during times of oppression.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did forgetting the LORD begin the repeated cycle in Judges?

Personal Reflection

What truth are you in danger of forgetting when life becomes easier?

Action Step

Remember a truth that has slipped into the background of your life. How will it influence your next decision this week?

Deborah and Barak

One of these judges was Deborah, who served Israel during a period of Canaanite oppression. She instructed Barak to lead Israel into battle, and God gave them victory.

Judges 4:14-16 states:

> *"And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left."*

Again, the emphasis is upon God giving the victory.

Gideon and the Three Hundred

Israel later came under Midianite oppression, and God raised up Gideon. Gideon initially gathered a large army, but God deliberately reduced its size.

Judges 7:2 states:

> *"And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."*

Eventually Gideon went into battle with only three hundred men. The lesson was clear: Israel's deliverance did not depend upon military strength.

God reduced the army so that the people would understand that the victory came from Him.

Samson: Strength and Weakness

Another well-known judge was Samson. God gave Samson extraordinary physical strength, and he fought against the Philistines.

Yet his life also demonstrates how personal weakness and poor choices can damage a person who has been greatly gifted. His relationship with Delilah eventually led to his downfall.

Samson's story therefore teaches an important lesson: Spiritual usefulness does not remove the need for personal faithfulness. A person may possess great ability and still suffer serious consequences when character does not remain under God's direction.

Every Man Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes

As Judges progresses, the spiritual condition of Israel becomes increasingly disorderly. The final verse summarises the problem.

Judges 21:25 states:

> *"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."*

This does not simply describe the absence of a human king. It describes the deeper problem of people choosing their own standard rather than submitting to God's Word.

The book begins with Israel living in the land God had promised, but it ends with the nation spiritually confused and divided.

God Continued to Show Mercy

Despite Israel's repeated failure, God repeatedly raised up deliverers when the people cried to Him. Judges therefore reveals both the seriousness of rebellion and the mercy of God.

Israel's faithfulness was inconsistent, but God's purpose continued.

The story is now moving towards another major change. Israel will eventually ask for a king, and the period of the judges will give way to the monarchy.

Before that transition, however, the book of Ruth gives us a quieter story of faithfulness and redemption during these troubled days. Most importantly, Ruth will continue the family line leading to David and ultimately to Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What do the judges' strengths and failures show about the need for faithful leadership?

Personal Reflection

Are you tempted to follow your own view of what is right without seeking God's Word?

Action Step

Before making a present decision, compare it with the Bible. What preference will you set aside if God's Word challenges it?

RUTH: FAITHFULNESS AND REDEMPTION

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 1300-1100 B.C.
Approximate Date of Writing: Traditionally associated with Samuel
Place in the Biblical Story: During the period of the judges, before the establishment of Israel's monarchy

Ruth is the third of the twelve Historical Books and contains only four chapters. It takes place during the troubled period of the judges, yet its story is very different from the disorder and rebellion that dominate the book of Judges.

Ruth records faithfulness, loyalty, redemption and God's quiet working through an ordinary family.

Ruth Chooses Naomi's God

Ruth was a Moabite woman whose husband died. Her mother-in-law Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem and encouraged Ruth to remain in Moab, but Ruth refused to leave her.

Ruth 1:16-17 states:

> *"And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."*

Ruth's decision involved more than loyalty to Naomi. She also identified herself with Naomi's people and with Naomi's God.

Together they returned to Bethlehem.

Ruth Meets Boaz

Ruth began gathering grain left behind by the harvesters so that she and Naomi could survive. She came to the field of Boaz, a relative of Naomi's deceased husband.

Boaz had heard of Ruth's faithfulness and treated her with kindness. **Ruth 2:11-12** states:

> *"And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."*

Boaz recognised that Ruth had placed her trust under the protection of the God of Israel.

The Kinsman-Redeemer

Boaz was in a position to act as a kinsman-redeemer. Redemption is one of the central themes of Ruth and connects with the greater redemption found in Jesus Christ.

Boaz accepted the responsibility and eventually married Ruth. Their son was named Obed.

Ruth 4:17 states:

> *"And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David."*

Ruth therefore became part of the family line leading to King David and, through that line, ultimately to Jesus Christ.

Faithfulness During a Dark Period

Ruth is important partly because of where it appears in the biblical story. Judges ends with the statement that *"every man did that which was right in his own eyes."* Yet during those same troubled years, Ruth shows that individuals could still live with faithfulness, kindness and trust in God.

The book also moves the story significantly forward. Israel is still in the period of the judges, but the final genealogy points towards David.

The next stage of Israel's history will bring the period of the judges to an end and introduce the monarchy. That transition begins in 1 Samuel.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Ruth's faithfulness during a dark period point to God's work of redemption?

Personal Reflection

What does Ruth's loyalty teach you about faithfulness in an ordinary relationship?

Action Step

Consider Ruth's loyal care for Naomi. Whose needs have you overlooked, and how can Christ's servant life within guide your response?

1 SAMUEL: FROM JUDGES TO KINGS

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 1100-1000 B.C.
Approximate Date of Writing: Traditionally associated with Samuel, Nathan and Gad
Place in the Biblical Story: The period of the judges is ending, Israel asks for a king, Saul becomes the first king, and David is chosen to succeed him

1 Samuel is the fourth of the twelve Historical Books and contains thirty-one chapters. It records one of the greatest transitions in Israel's history: the movement from the period of the judges to the establishment of the monarchy. The book begins with the birth of Samuel and ends with the death of Saul, preparing the way for David to become king.

The three principal figures are Samuel, Saul and David. Through their lives, the book shows the importance of hearing God, obeying His Word and recognising that outward position is never a substitute for inward faithfulness.

Samuel Is Given to the LORD

Samuel was born after his mother Hannah had prayed earnestly for a child. She had promised that if God gave her a son, she would dedicate him to the LORD.

After Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him to serve at the house of God under Eli the priest. As a boy, Samuel heard God calling him.

1 Samuel 3:9-10 states:

> *"Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth."*

Samuel eventually became an important prophet and judge in Israel. His ministry would bridge the period of the judges and the beginning of the kings.

Israel Asks for a King

As Samuel grew old, the elders of Israel asked him to appoint a king. Their request revealed more than a desire for orderly government. They wanted to become like the surrounding nations.

1 Samuel 8:6-7 states:

> *"But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."*

God permitted Israel to have a king, but their request revealed a deeper spiritual problem. They were not simply replacing Samuel.

God said, *"they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why was Israel's request for a king a question about trust as well as government?

Personal Reflection

Where do you look for security before seeking God's direction?

Action Step

Identify something you are trying to control without seeking God. How will you place that concern before Him and respond with trust?

Saul Becomes Israel's First King

Saul was chosen as Israel's first king. He appeared to possess many of the qualities people expected in a ruler and initially showed promise.

However, Saul increasingly acted according to his own judgement rather than obeying God's command. One of the decisive moments came when he failed to carry out what God had instructed concerning Amalek.

Samuel confronted him in **1 Samuel 15:22-23**:

> *"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."*

Saul attempted to justify what he had done, but religious activity could not replace obedience.

The principle is clear: *"to obey is better than sacrifice."*

David Is Anointed

Because Saul had rejected God's command, God sent Samuel to the family of Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint the man He had chosen as the future king.

Samuel initially looked at Jesse's older sons, but God corrected his thinking. **1 Samuel 16:7** states:

> *"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."*

The chosen son was David, the young shepherd.

David did not immediately become king. His anointing began a long period in which he would be prepared while Saul continued to reign.

David and Goliath

One of the best-known events in 1 Samuel is David's confrontation with Goliath. While the Israelite army feared the Philistine champion, David trusted that God would give the victory.

1 Samuel 17:45-47 states:

> *"Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand... And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands."*

David's confidence was not primarily in his sling or his own courage. He declared, *"the battle is the LORD'S."*

Goliath was defeated, and David's reputation grew throughout Israel.

Saul Turns Against David

As David became increasingly successful, Saul became jealous and fearful of him. Saul repeatedly attempted to kill David, forcing him to flee.

Yet David refused to take Saul's life when opportunities arose. Although David knew that God had chosen him to become king, he would not seize the throne through his own violence.

This period became part of David's preparation for future leadership.

Saul's Final Decline

Near the end of the book, Saul's spiritual condition had deteriorated greatly. Before a battle with the Philistines, Saul sought guidance from a woman at Endor who practised forbidden spiritual activity.

The account records Saul receiving the message that Israel would be defeated and that his own death was near. This tragic scene demonstrates how far Saul had moved from the man first chosen as king.

The book ends with Saul and his sons dying in battle against the Philistines.

The Way Is Prepared for David

1 Samuel therefore begins with Samuel and ends with Saul's death. Between those events, Israel moves from judges to kings, and David is anointed as the man who will eventually rule the nation.

The contrast between Saul and David prepares an important theme for the books that follow. Saul repeatedly chose his own way, while David was chosen within the line through which God's promise would continue.

David himself would later fail seriously, but God's purpose was greater than the faithfulness of any one human king. The historical line was continuing towards the promise connected with David's house.

That line becomes increasingly important because through David's house, the biblical story will move another major step towards Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do David's rise and Saul's decline show the difference between trust and disobedience?

Personal Reflection

Which response to correction in these accounts is most like your own?

Action Step

Recall a time you resisted correction. How will you respond differently when God's Word next shows that you are mistaken?

2 SAMUEL: DAVID AND THE KINGDOM

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 1010-970 B.C.

Approximate Date of Writing: Traditionally associated with records from Samuel, Nathan and Gad

Place in the Biblical Story: David becomes king over Israel, establishes Jerusalem as his capital, receives God's promise concerning his house, and faces the consequences of serious personal failure

2 Samuel is the fifth of the twelve Historical Books and contains twenty-four chapters. It continues directly from 1 Samuel, beginning after the death of Saul and following David from his early reign in Hebron to his rule over the united nation. Major events include David's leadership, the ark being brought to Jerusalem, his sin with Bathsheba, family turmoil and Absalom's rebellion.

David becomes one of the most important figures in the Old Testament because God's promise concerning his house and kingdom will eventually lead directly to Jesus Christ.

David Becomes King

After Saul's death, David first became king over Judah and ruled from Hebron. Later, the tribes of Israel recognised him as king over the whole nation.

2 Samuel 5:3-5 states:

> *"So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah."*

The monarchy was now united under David. He captured Jerusalem and made it the centre of his kingdom.

Jerusalem would become increasingly important throughout the remainder of the Old Testament.

The Ark Comes to Jerusalem

David desired Jerusalem to become not only the political centre of Israel but also closely connected with the worship of God. He brought the ark of the covenant to the city with great rejoicing.

2 Samuel 6:14-15 states:

> *"And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet."*

The ark formed an important part of Israel's covenant worship, and bringing it to Jerusalem strengthened the city's place within the national story.

God's Promise to David

Some of the most important verses in 2 Samuel come when David desires to build a house for God. Instead, God promises to establish David's house.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 states:

> *"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."*

This promise had an immediate connection with David's descendants and the kingdom that would continue through Solomon. But the promise reaches much further.

The New Testament identifies Jesus Christ as the Son of David, showing that God's promise concerning David's house ultimately points towards Christ and His kingdom.

The line of promise has therefore moved from Abraham → Isaac → Jacob → Judah → David → Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did God's promise to David matter beyond David's own reign?

Personal Reflection

When promises take longer than expected, do you trust God's faithfulness as revealed through the promise to David?

Action Step

Read God's promise to David. How does its fulfilment in Jesus change where you place your hope and security?

David and Bathsheba

The second half of 2 Samuel reveals that even a greatly used man could fall into serious sin. David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then arranged for her husband Uriah to be placed where he would be killed in battle.

God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him. **2 Samuel 12:7, 9** states:

> *"And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man... Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife..."*

David's position as king did not place him above God's Word. He acknowledged his sin, but the consequences affected his family deeply.

The account again reminds us that everything Scripture records is not necessarily something Scripture approves. The Bible does not hide the serious failures of its major figures.

Trouble Within David's Family

After David's sin, serious conflict developed within his household. One of the greatest crises came when his son Absalom rebelled and attempted to take the kingdom.

David was forced to leave Jerusalem, and civil conflict followed. Absalom was eventually killed during the rebellion.

David's grief is expressed in **2 Samuel 18:33**:

> *"And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"*

The powerful king who had defeated armies could not escape the sorrow caused by division within his own family.

David's Greater Importance

David was an important king, but Scripture does not present him as perfect. His importance lies not in sinless leadership, but in the place God gave him within the unfolding biblical story.

From David would come the royal line through which Jesus Christ would be revealed.

The New Testament opens by identifying Jesus in **Matthew 1:1**:

> *"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."*

The connection is deliberate. The promise to Abraham and the promise to David come together in Jesus Christ.

2 Samuel therefore moves the biblical story another major step forward. Israel now has an established kingdom, Jerusalem has become its centre, and God's promise concerning David's house has been given.

The next book, 1 Kings, begins with Solomon and shows both the height of Israel's united kingdom and the division that follows.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does David's sin remain part of the record of his kingdom?

Personal Reflection

What does his failure teach you about the danger of excusing sin in a respected leader?

Action Step

Consider David's failure. Is there a wrong choice you are excusing? What honest response does God's Word require of you?

1 KINGS: SOLOMON AND THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 1000-850 B.C.
Approximate Date of Writing: c. 550 B.C., writer unknown
Place in the Biblical Story: David's reign ends, Solomon becomes king, the Temple is built, and after Solomon's death the nation divides into Israel and Judah

1 Kings is the sixth of the twelve Historical Books and contains twenty-one chapters. It begins with the closing years of David's life and the accession of Solomon, then follows the kingdom through its division into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Important events include Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal and the repeated assessment of whether Israel's kings did good or evil before the LORD.

The book therefore records both the height of Israel's united kingdom and the beginning of its decline.

Solomon Becomes King

After David's death, his son Solomon became king. Early in his reign, God appeared to Solomon and invited him to ask what he desired.

Rather than requesting wealth, long life or victory over his enemies, Solomon asked for wisdom. **1 Kings 3:9** states:

> *"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"*

God was pleased with Solomon's request and gave him exceptional wisdom. His reign became known for prosperity, organisation and influence, and people travelled from other nations to hear his wisdom.

Yet even Solomon's greatness pointed beyond himself. Jesus later said in **Matthew 12:42**:

> *"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."*

Solomon was renowned for wisdom, but Jesus Christ is greater than Solomon.

Solomon Builds the Temple

One of Solomon's greatest achievements was the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. David had desired to build it, but the work was entrusted to Solomon.

When the Temple was completed and dedicated, the glory of the LORD filled it. **1 Kings 8:10-11** states:

> *"And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD."*

The Temple became the centre of Israel's national worship and remained extremely important throughout the history that follows.

Yet the physical building was not the final expression of God's purpose. The biblical story would eventually direct us beyond an earthly Temple to the greater spiritual reality revealed through Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did Solomon's building of the temple not guarantee lasting faithfulness?

Personal Reflection

Do you value outward religious work while neglecting your own obedience?

Action Step

Examine whether outward service has replaced inward faithfulness in one area. How will the indwelling life of Christ govern your conduct?

Solomon's Heart Turns Away

Despite Solomon's wisdom and remarkable beginning, the later years of his reign reveal serious failure. He formed many foreign marriages, and these relationships influenced him towards idolatry.

1 Kings 11:4 states:

> *"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father."*

Solomon's life provides an important warning: A strong beginning does not guarantee a faithful ending.

Wisdom, position and blessing could not replace continuing obedience to God. His departure also prepared the way for the division that followed his death.

The Kingdom Divides

Solomon's son Rehoboam became king after him. The people asked Rehoboam to reduce the heavy burdens imposed during Solomon's reign.

The older men advised him to respond graciously, but Rehoboam rejected their counsel and followed the advice of younger men who urged him to increase the burden. The result was national division.

1 Kings 12:16 states:

> *"So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents."*

From this point forward, students must remember an important distinction:

Israel refers mainly to the northern kingdom.

Judah refers to the southern kingdom, centred upon Jerusalem and the line of David.

This distinction becomes essential for understanding the remainder of Kings and many of the prophets.

Jeroboam Leads Israel Into Idolatry

Jeroboam became king over the northern tribes. Fearing that the people might return their loyalty to the house of David if they continued worshipping at Jerusalem, he established alternative centres of worship and made golden calves.

This decision had long-lasting consequences. Many later kings of Israel are judged according to whether they continued in *"the sins of Jeroboam."*

The northern kingdom therefore began its separate history with a corrupted system of worship.

Ahab, Jezebel and Elijah

Among the later kings recorded in 1 Kings was Ahab, whose reign was strongly influenced by Jezebel and the worship of Baal.

God raised up the prophet Elijah during this period. One of the greatest confrontations occurred on Mount Carmel, where Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal.

After they failed to receive any answer from their god, Elijah prayed and God answered. **1 Kings 18:38-39** states:

> *"Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God."*

The issue was clear: Who is truly God?

Elijah called Israel away from divided loyalty and back to the LORD.

The Kingdom Has Entered a Dangerous Period

1 Kings begins with the united kingdom under Solomon at the height of its prosperity. It ends with two divided kingdoms, repeated idolatry and increasing spiritual decline.

Yet God's purpose has not failed. The house of David continues in Judah, the prophets continue speaking God's Word, and the line through which Jesus Christ, the Son of David, will eventually come remains preserved.

The next book, 2 Kings, continues the history of both kingdoms and follows their decline towards Assyrian and Babylonian captivity.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What did Solomon's divided heart and the split kingdom show about disobedience?

Personal Reflection

What warning do you take from the way idolatry spread through Israel?

Action Step

Identify an influence drawing your attention away from God. How will you refuse that influence and direct your heart back to Him?

2 KINGS: DECLINE, CAPTIVITY AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 850-560 B.C.
Approximate Date of Writing: c. 550 B.C., writer unknown
Place in the Biblical Story: The divided kingdoms continue their decline. Israel falls to Assyria, Judah later falls to Babylon, and Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed.

2 Kings is the seventh of the twelve Historical Books and contains twenty-five chapters. It continues the history of the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, following both nations through periods of idolatry, reform, prophetic ministry and eventual captivity. Important events include Elisha's ministry, Naaman's healing, the fall of the kingdoms and the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem.

The book records one of the darkest periods of Israel's history. Yet even during national decline, God continued sending prophets, calling His people to repentance and preserving the line through which Jesus Christ would later come.

Elijah Is Taken Up

2 Kings begins near the end of Elijah's ministry and records Elisha taking over the prophetic work. Elisha had followed Elijah and desired a double portion of his spirit, and after Elijah was taken, Elisha continued ministering to Israel.

2 Kings 2:11-12 states:

> *"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces."*

Elisha's Ministry

Elisha's ministry occupies a major part of the early chapters of 2 Kings. God worked through him in many remarkable ways, including multiplying a widow's oil, raising the Shunammite woman's son, providing food and helping Israel during times of danger.

These miracles were not simply displays of power. They showed that God had not abandoned His people even while the nation was moving through serious spiritual decline.

Naaman Is Healed

One of the best-known events concerns Naaman, commander of the Syrian army, who suffered from leprosy. Elisha instructed him to wash seven times in the Jordan River.

Naaman initially resisted because the instruction appeared too simple, but eventually obeyed. **2 Kings 5:13-14** states:

> *"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."*

Naaman's healing teaches an important lesson concerning humility and obedience. His position and strength could not cure him, but when he obeyed the word given through God's prophet, he was healed.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did Elijah, Elisha, and Naaman show that God still called people to hear Him?

Personal Reflection

Where might pride keep you from receiving a simple instruction from God?

Action Step

Read an instruction that confronts your pride. What condition have you placed upon obedience, and how will you let go of it?

The Northern Kingdom Continues in Rebellion

The northern kingdom of Israel continued through a succession of kings, but most persisted in idolatry. Again and again, Scripture measures the kings according to whether they obeyed or rejected God.

The nation had been warned repeatedly through prophets, but the people continued turning away. **2 Kings 17:13-14** states:

> *"Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God."*

Their captivity therefore did not come without warning. God had repeatedly called them to return.

Israel Falls to Assyria

Eventually the northern kingdom came to an end. Around 722 B.C., Assyria conquered Samaria and carried many of the people away.

2 Kings 17:6 states:

> *"In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."*

This marked the end of the northern kingdom as an independent nation. The repeated warnings of the prophets had become historical reality.

Judah Remains for a Time

The southern kingdom of Judah continued after Israel's fall. Some kings genuinely sought to reform the nation.

Hezekiah trusted God during the Assyrian threat, while Josiah later led an important religious reform after the book of the Law was found.

Yet periods of reform did not permanently change the direction of the nation. Judah repeatedly returned to idolatry and disobedience.

Jerusalem Falls to Babylon

Eventually Judah also came under judgement. Babylon invaded Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and carried many of the people into captivity.

2 Kings 25:8-10 states:

> *"And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about."*

The consequences were devastating. The city was broken down, the Temple was destroyed, the kingdom of Judah had fallen, and many of the people were carried into captivity.

The people who had once entered Canaan under Joshua were now being carried away from the land.

God's Purpose Had Not Failed

At first sight, the ending of 2 Kings appears almost hopeless. Israel has fallen, Judah has fallen, Jerusalem has been destroyed and the Temple has been burned.

Yet God's greater purpose had not failed. The line of David still existed, the promises of God remained, and the prophets continued pointing forward.

Captivity was not the end of the story.

The Historical Books will next look back over much of this history through 1 and 2 Chronicles, before following the return and restoration of God's people.

Most importantly, the failure of Israel's kings increases the expectation of a greater King. Jesus Christ, the Son of David, would possess a kingdom that would not fail.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did the falls of Israel and Judah follow repeated warnings?

Personal Reflection

How do you respond when God's Word warns you more than once?

Action Step

Return to a warning you have ignored. What will change in your response now rather than after further consequences?

1 CHRONICLES: DAVID, WORSHIP AND THE TEMPLE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: From Adam to c. 970 B.C., with particular emphasis on David's reign

Approximate Date of Writing: c. 450 B.C., writer unknown

Place in the Biblical Story: After the captivity, Israel's history is retold with particular emphasis upon David, worship, the Temple and the identity of God's people

1 Chronicles is the eighth of the twelve Historical Books and contains twenty-nine chapters. Much of its history overlaps material already recorded in Samuel, but its purpose and emphasis are different. Chronicles looks back over Israel's history after the Babylonian exile, reminding the remnant of God's faithfulness, promises, power and their identity as His people.

The book begins with genealogies stretching back to Adam and then concentrates increasingly upon David and preparation for the Temple.

Remembering Where Israel Came From

The opening chapters contain extensive genealogies. To a modern reader, long lists of names can appear unimportant, but to a people returning from captivity they answered an important question: Who are we, and where do we belong in God's unfolding purpose?

The genealogies connect the restored community with the generations that came before them. They trace Israel's history back through the tribes, the patriarchs and ultimately to Adam.

They also preserve the family line that becomes increasingly important in the biblical story. From Abraham, the line moves through Judah and David and ultimately towards Jesus Christ.

The genealogies therefore do more than preserve family records. They show continuity in God's purpose across generations.

David Becomes the Main Focus

After the genealogies, the book concentrates heavily upon David. 1 Chronicles does not retell every event from his life. Instead, it gives particular attention to David's leadership, worship, the ark of the covenant and his preparation for the Temple.

David brought the ark to Jerusalem and organised singers, musicians, priests and Levites for worship. This emphasis reminds the restored people that their history was not only political.

Worship and relationship with God stood at the centre of Israel's identity.

God's Promise Concerning David

Chronicles repeats the important promise God had made concerning David's house. **1 Chronicles 17:11-14** states:

> *"And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore."*

The immediate continuation of David's kingdom would come through Solomon. Yet the promise of an enduring throne reaches beyond Solomon and becomes part of the Old Testament expectation that ultimately points towards Jesus Christ, the Son of David.

David Prepares for the Temple

David desired to build the Temple, but that responsibility was given to Solomon. David therefore spent his later years making extensive preparations for the work. He gathered materials, organised responsibilities and instructed Solomon concerning what lay ahead.

1 Chronicles 28:9-10 states:

> *"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it."*

David's greatest concern was not simply that Solomon complete a building. He told his son to know God and serve Him with a perfect heart.

The Temple was important within Israel's covenant worship, but outward work could not substitute for faithfulness to God.

Looking Back in Order to Move Forward

1 Chronicles therefore looks backwards for a purpose. The restored people needed to remember where they had come from, what God had promised, the importance of worship, the significance of David's line and the central place of faithfulness to God.

The book ends with Solomon prepared to become king and build the Temple. God's purpose has continued through generations, and the promise connected with David's house remains before us.

The next book, 2 Chronicles, will continue from Solomon through the history of Judah, eventually bringing us again to captivity and the promise of restoration.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why do the records of David, worship, and the temple matter to Israel's continuing story?

Personal Reflection

Do you see worship as an outward task or as part of faithful response to God?

Action Step

Read about David's worship. What does it show about the attitude behind your own worship, and what should change?

2 CHRONICLES: FROM SOLOMON TO CAPTIVITY

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 970-538 B.C.

Place in the Biblical Story: Solomon builds the Temple, Judah passes through generations of kings, Jerusalem falls to Babylon, and the book ends with Cyrus permitting the people to return

2 Chronicles is the ninth of the twelve Historical Books and contains thirty-six chapters. It continues from the end of 1 Chronicles with the reign of Solomon and follows the history of Judah until the Babylonian captivity. Unlike Kings, its attention is concentrated mainly upon Judah, Jerusalem, the Temple and the line of David.

The book therefore looks back over many of the events already recorded in Kings, but with particular emphasis upon worship, faithfulness, reform and the consequences of turning away from God.

Solomon and the Temple

Solomon begins his reign by asking God for wisdom. He then undertakes the great work prepared by David: building the Temple in Jerusalem.

After the Temple was completed and dedicated, God answered Solomon and reminded him that Israel's relationship with Him required faithfulness.

2 Chronicles 7:14 states:

> *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."*

The Temple was important, but the building itself could not substitute for obedience. God's people were still required to seek Him and turn from their wicked ways.

The Kings of Judah

After Solomon's death, the kingdom divided. 2 Chronicles then follows the kings of Judah, the southern kingdom.

Some kings sought God and led the people towards reform, while others encouraged idolatry and rebellion. This creates a recurring pattern throughout the book.

When kings humbled themselves and sought God, restoration followed. When they rejected His Word, spiritual and national decline increased.

The history therefore shows that outward possession of Jerusalem and the Temple could not protect a people who continually turned away from God.

Times of Reform

Several kings attempted to bring Judah back to God. Hezekiah restored worship and called the people to return to the LORD.

Later, Josiah led another major reform after the book of the Law was found during work on the Temple.

These periods show that even during national decline, God continued calling His people back to His Word. Yet the reforms did not permanently change the direction of the nation. After faithful leaders passed away, later generations repeatedly returned to disobedience.

Judah Goes Into Captivity

Eventually Judah's rebellion brought severe consequences. Babylon invaded Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and carried the people into captivity.

2 Chronicles 36:15-17 states:

> *"And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand."*

The captivity did not come without warning. God had repeatedly sent His messengers because *"he had compassion on his people."*

But the people rejected His Word, and the consequences eventually came.

The Book Ends With Hope

2 Chronicles does not end with destruction alone. The final verses record Cyrus king of Persia permitting the people to return and rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem.

This decree marks the great transition from captivity towards restoration. The ending therefore points directly into the next stage of Israel's history.

Judah had failed, Jerusalem had fallen and the Temple had been destroyed. Yet God's purpose had not ended.

The line of David had been preserved, the people would return, and the biblical story would continue moving towards the promised Jesus Christ.

The next book, Ezra, records that return and the rebuilding of worship in Jerusalem.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do reform, captivity, and Cyrus's decree show both human failure and God's continuing purpose?

Personal Reflection

What does this history teach you when a good beginning is followed by failure?

Action Step

Consider a setback that has discouraged you. How will God's faithfulness, rather than your feelings, govern your next step?

EZRA: RETURN AND RESTORATION OF WORSHIP

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 538-450 B.C.

Place in the Biblical Story: Jewish exiles begin returning from Babylon, the Temple is rebuilt, and Ezra later leads a further return centred upon restoring the Law and the spiritual life of the people

Ezra is the tenth of the twelve Historical Books and contains ten chapters. It records the return of Jewish exiles after the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of worship in Jerusalem. The return is presented in two major stages: the first associated with Zerubbabel under Cyrus, and the later return led by Ezra under Artaxerxes.

This return under Artaxerxes is also important prophetically. The decree issued in 457 B.C. provides the starting point for the seventy-week prophecy recorded in Daniel.

Daniel wrote in **Daniel 9:25**:

> *"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."*

The command connected with Ezra's return therefore becomes an important chronological marker in the biblical story. We will examine Daniel's seventy-week prophecy in detail in a later Study Guide, but for now it is important to recognise that the restoration under

Artaxerxes begins the prophetic countdown leading towards Jesus Christ, the Messiah the Prince.

The Temple itself was completed before Ezra personally arrived in Jerusalem. Ezra's later ministry centred particularly upon the Law, worship and the spiritual condition of the restored people.

Cyrus Permits the Return

The book begins with Cyrus king of Persia permitting the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem.

Ezra 1:1-3 states:

> *"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem."*

The captivity had not ended God's purpose. The people had been removed from the land because of persistent rebellion, but God now opened the way for their return.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why was Cyrus's permission to return a beginning rather than a complete restoration?

Personal Reflection

Where have you treated a first step as if no further obedience were needed?

Action Step

Identify work you began but left unfinished. What is the next faithful step, and what has delayed you from taking it?

Zerubbabel and the Rebuilding of the Temple

The first major return was led by Zerubbabel. One of the principal tasks was rebuilding the Temple that had been destroyed by Babylon.

When the foundation was laid, the people worshipped God. **Ezra 3:10-11** states:

> *"And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid."*

The rebuilding faced opposition and delay, but the work eventually continued. Under the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the Temple was completed.

Ezra Returns to Jerusalem

Years later, Ezra came to Jerusalem during the reign of Artaxerxes. His return formed an important part of the restoration of Israel's religious and covenant life.

Ezra was not simply a political organiser. His primary concern was the Word of God.

Ezra 7:10 states:

> *"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."*

Notice the order: seek → do → teach.

Ezra did not study the Law only so that he could instruct others. He first prepared his own heart to seek God's Word and live according to what he learned.

Spiritual Restoration Was Also Needed

Returning to Jerusalem and rebuilding the Temple did not automatically restore the spiritual condition of the people. Ezra discovered serious problems among those who had returned, including marriages that had drawn families towards the idolatrous practices of surrounding peoples.

Ezra's response included deep grief, prayer and a call to repentance. He responded with sorrow before God because of the spiritual condition he found among the people.

Ezra 9:6 states:

> *"And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens."*

The issue was not simply rebuilding buildings. The people themselves needed restoration.

This becomes one of the central lessons of Ezra.

Restoration Was More Than Returning Home

The book of Ezra shows several connected aspects of restoration:

- Return to the land;
- Rebuilding the Temple;
- Restoration of worship;
- Return to the Law;
- Repentance before God.

Physical restoration without spiritual restoration would have been incomplete. The people needed more than Jerusalem and a rebuilt Temple.

They needed to return to God.

God's Purpose Continues

Ezra therefore shows that captivity had not cancelled God's promises. The Jewish people returned, the Temple was rebuilt, worship was restored and the Law was again taught.

Most importantly, the people through whom the promised Christ would come were preserved. God's purpose was continuing through restoration, and the historical line was still moving towards Jesus Christ.

The next book, Nehemiah, continues this period by recording the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls and the continuing effort to restore the spiritual life of the people.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did rebuilding the temple also call for spiritual restoration?

Personal Reflection

What does Ezra's work show you about the need to hear and obey God's Word?

Action Step

Read Ezra's emphasis on hearing and obeying God's Word. What truth needs a definite response in your present life?

NEHEMIAH: REBUILDING JERUSALEM

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 450-400 B.C.
Approximate Date of Writing: c. 425-400 B.C., associated with Nehemiah
Place in the Biblical Story: The Temple has been rebuilt, but Jerusalem's walls and the spiritual condition of the people still require restoration

Nehemiah is the eleventh of the twelve Historical Books and contains thirteen chapters. Nehemiah follows Ezra and continues the story of restoration. He served as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes and became a leading figure in the continuing restoration of Jerusalem.

Ezra had concentrated particularly upon the Law, worship and the spiritual condition of the returned people. Nehemiah's work now centres upon rebuilding Jerusalem's walls while continuing the longer work of restoring the people themselves.

Nehemiah Serves the King

Nehemiah held the responsible position of cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. Although he lived within the Persian Empire, his concern remained with Jerusalem and the condition of his people.

Nehemiah led a later return to Jerusalem and organised the rebuilding of the city's walls. His story therefore belongs to the same broad period of restoration as Ezra, but his particular responsibility was different.

Ezra had been especially concerned with restoring the people's relationship with God's Law. Nehemiah became especially associated with rebuilding and protecting Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's Walls Had to Be Rebuilt

The Temple had already been restored, but Jerusalem remained vulnerable because its walls were broken down. Nehemiah organised the people and began the work of rebuilding.

This was not simply a construction project. Restoring the walls represented another stage in the recovery of Jerusalem after the devastation of the Babylonian conquest.

The people who had returned from captivity were therefore rebuilding their community step by step:

- The people returned to the land;
- The Temple was rebuilt;
- Worship was restored;
- The Law was taught;
- The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt.

The restoration was taking place in stages.

Opposition Did Not Stop the Work

The rebuilding faced significant opposition. Yet the opposition did not prevent the work from being completed.

The walls were rebuilt in only fifty-two days. Nehemiah records the response of those who had opposed the work.

Nehemiah 6:16 states:

> *"And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God."*

Even the enemies of the people recognised that something remarkable had taken place. They *"perceived that this work was wrought of our God."*

The achievement therefore became a testimony not simply to organisation or determination, but to God's help in the restoration.

Physical Restoration Was Not Enough

One of the most important lessons from Nehemiah is that the walls could be rebuilt much faster than the spiritual condition of the people could be restored.

The physical work took fifty-two days, but the spiritual work took much longer. A city could be rebuilt outwardly while the people living within it still required inward change.

A Temple could stand, walls could be repaired and public worship could resume, yet God's people still needed to hear His Word, obey it and live faithfully before Him.

The restoration of Jerusalem therefore involved more than stones and buildings. God was dealing with people.

Ezra and Nehemiah Belong Together

Ezra and Nehemiah should be understood as closely connected parts of the restoration story.

Ezra particularly emphasises the Law, worship and spiritual reform, while Nehemiah particularly emphasises Jerusalem, rebuilding and continuing spiritual restoration.

Together they show that returning from captivity did not instantly solve every problem. God's people had to rebuild both their surroundings and their faithfulness.

Nehemiah's Place in the Wider Biblical Story

Nehemiah does not contain a direct prophecy of Jesus Christ in this section of the historical account. Its importance lies in its place within the continuing history of God's people.

Jerusalem was being restored, the returned community was being re-established, and the people through whom the promises had been carried were being preserved.

The biblical story therefore continued moving forward rather than ending in Babylonian captivity. The restoration was not the final fulfilment of God's purpose, but it preserved the historical setting from which the story would continue towards Jesus Christ.

The final Historical Book, Esther, will show God's people facing another threat during the Persian period and being preserved from destruction.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why were rebuilt walls not enough for Jerusalem's lasting good?

Personal Reflection

Do you give more attention to visible results than to faithfulness before God?

Action Step

Compare the importance you give to visible results with inward faithfulness. What priority will you correct this week?

ESTHER: PRESERVED FOR GOD'S PURPOSE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Approximate Historical Setting: c. 480-460 B.C.
Approximate Date of Writing: c. 450 B.C., writer unknown
Place in the Biblical Story: During the Persian period, many Jewish people remain scattered throughout the empire while others have returned to Jerusalem

Esther is the final book of the twelve Historical Books and contains ten chapters. It records a serious threat against the Jewish people living throughout the Persian Empire and shows how Esther and Mordecai became central to their preservation. Major events include Haman's plot, Esther's courage, the preservation of the Jewish people and the establishment of the Feast of Purim.

Esther is unusual because the name of God does not appear explicitly in the book. Yet the sequence of events continually shows circumstances working together for the preservation of His people.

Esther Becomes Queen

Esther was a young Jewish woman being raised by her cousin Mordecai. When King Ahasuerus sought a new queen, Esther was chosen, although her Jewish identity was initially kept secret.

Meanwhile, Mordecai uncovered a plot against the king and reported it. His action was recorded in the royal records, although he received no immediate reward.

This apparently small event would later become extremely important.

Haman's Plot

Haman rose to a powerful position within the Persian Empire. When Mordecai refused to bow before him, Haman became enraged and determined not only to punish Mordecai but to destroy the Jewish people throughout the empire.

A decree was issued authorising their destruction. Mordecai then urged Esther to use her position before the king.

Esther 4:13-16 states:

> *"Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."*

Esther understood that approaching the king without being summoned could cost her life. Nevertheless, she chose to act on behalf of her people.

The Situation Is Reversed

Esther approached the king and was received favourably. Through a series of events, Haman's plot was exposed, Mordecai was honoured, and Haman himself suffered the judgement he had intended for Mordecai.

Esther said to the king in **Esther 7:3-6**:

> *"Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage. Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen."*

The threat that had appeared certain was overturned, and the Jewish people were preserved.

The Feast of Purim

The deliverance was remembered through the establishment of Purim, a feast commemorating the reversal of the decree and the preservation of the Jewish people.

The book of Esther continues to be read during the observance of Purim. The story therefore became part of Israel's continuing memory of preservation during a time of great danger.

Preserved Within God's Continuing Purpose

Esther does not contain a direct prophecy concerning Jesus Christ, and we should not force symbolic meanings upon every person or event. Its importance lies in showing that the Jewish people were preserved during the Persian period despite a serious attempt to destroy them.

That preservation also mattered within the larger biblical story. The promises given through Abraham and David had not disappeared during captivity, and the people through whom the promised Christ would come continued to exist.

The Historical Books therefore end with God's people preserved rather than destroyed.

From Joshua to Esther, nations rose and fell, kings succeeded and failed, Jerusalem was destroyed and rebuilt, and God's people experienced both judgement and restoration. Yet through it all, God's purpose continued moving forward towards Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did Esther's place and actions help preserve God's people?

Personal Reflection

What responsibility before you may require courage at the right time?

Action Step

Consider Esther's courage. What responsibility have you avoided, and how will you respond when the opportunity comes?

THE GREAT MOVEMENTS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

BACK TO CONTENTS

The twelve Historical Books cover several centuries and many different people, yet together they tell one continuous story. The major movements are Israel entering Canaan, the period of the judges, the establishment of the monarchy, the division of the kingdom, captivity and eventual return.

Seeing these movements together helps us understand where each book belongs and how Israel's history develops.

Entering the Promised Land

The story begins with Joshua. Moses has died, and Israel crosses the Jordan into Canaan. The land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is now being occupied by their descendants.

Joshua records conquest and settlement, but it also establishes an important principle: Israel's success depended upon faith and obedience to God.

The Period of the Judges

After Joshua's generation passed away, Israel repeatedly turned away from God. Judges records a continuing cycle:

Rebellion → oppression → crying to God → deliverance → renewed rebellion.

Ruth takes place during this same broad period but provides a very different picture of faithfulness, loyalty and redemption. The book also moves the family line towards David.

The Monarchy

1 Samuel records Israel's transition from judges to kings. Saul becomes the first king, but his repeated disobedience leads to rejection.

God then chooses David, who becomes king in 2 Samuel. David establishes Jerusalem as the centre of the kingdom, and God gives him an important promise concerning his house and throne.

That promise becomes increasingly significant because the line of David ultimately leads to Jesus Christ.

The United Kingdom Divides

David is followed by Solomon, whose reign brings extraordinary wisdom, wealth and the construction of the Temple. Yet Solomon's later unfaithfulness prepares the way for national division.

After his death, the kingdom separates into:

- Israel: The Northern Kingdom;
- Judah: The Southern Kingdom.

From this point onward, understanding this distinction is essential. 1 and 2 Kings follow the histories of both kingdoms, recording their kings, prophets, reforms, idolatry and eventual decline.

Captivity

The Northern Kingdom of Israel eventually falls to Assyria. Judah survives longer, but repeated rebellion eventually results in Babylon conquering Jerusalem, destroying the Temple and carrying many of the people into captivity.

The historical movement appears to have reached disaster. The land has been lost, the Temple has been destroyed and the kingdom has fallen.

Yet God's purpose has not ended.

Looking Back and Returning

1 and 2 Chronicles retell much of Israel's history with particular attention to Judah, David, worship and the Temple. For a people recovering from captivity, these books reminded them of their identity and God's continuing promises.

Ezra and Nehemiah then record important stages of return and restoration. The Temple is rebuilt, Jerusalem's walls are restored and the Law is taught again.

Esther shows Jewish people still living elsewhere within the Persian Empire and records their preservation from destruction.

One Continuing Story

The movement of the Historical Books can therefore be remembered simply:

Canaan → Judges → Saul → David → Solomon → Divided Kingdom → Assyrian Captivity → Babylonian Captivity → Return → Restoration.

Through every stage, human leaders rise and fall. Some obey God, while others rebel. Kings fail and nations are judged.

Yet God's purpose continues.

The line of promise is preserved through Judah and David, and Israel's history continues preparing the way for Jesus Christ.

The Historical Books therefore do more than tell us what happened to Israel. They show us God faithfully carrying His purpose forward through history.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do monarchy, division, captivity, and return form one continuing story?

Personal Reflection

When other people fail, does your trust rest in them or in the purpose God is fulfilling in Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Trace a promise through Israel's changing history. How will this strengthen your response when human leadership fails you?

CONCLUSION: GOD'S PURPOSE CONTINUES

BACK TO CONTENTS

The twelve Historical Books have taken us from Israel entering Canaan under Joshua to the preservation of the Jewish people during the Persian period. Across these books we have followed judges, kings, prophets, divided kingdoms, captivity, return and restoration.

The story has included remarkable victories and serious failures. Some leaders trusted God and brought periods of reform, while others encouraged idolatry, rebellion and spiritual decline. Yet through every change, one truth has remained clear: God's purpose continued.

Human Leaders Failed

Joshua was faithful, but the generations that followed quickly turned away. The judges repeatedly delivered Israel, yet the people returned to rebellion.

Saul became king but rejected God's Word. David was greatly used by God but also fell into serious sin. Solomon possessed remarkable wisdom, yet his heart was later turned away.

The later kings of Israel and Judah repeatedly demonstrated that no human ruler could provide the final answer. The history of Israel therefore creates an increasing need for a greater King.

God's Promise Remained

Although human leaders failed, God's promises did not fail. The line first traced through Abraham continued through Judah and David.

God had promised David that his house and kingdom would continue, and the New Testament later identifies Jesus Christ as the Son of David.

The Historical Books therefore do more than preserve national history. They preserve the line through which the promised Christ would come.

Captivity Was Not the End

The fall of Israel and Judah might have appeared to be the end of the story. The Northern Kingdom was carried away by Assyria, Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylon, the Temple was burned and Judah went into captivity.

Yet God's purpose continued.

The people returned, the Temple was rebuilt, Jerusalem's walls were restored and the Law was taught again. The Jewish people were also preserved during the events recorded in Esther.

Judgement had come, but God had not abandoned His purpose.

History Continues Towards Jesus Christ

The Historical Books therefore form one great movement:

Canaan → Judges → Kingdom → Division → Captivity → Return → Restoration.

Through every stage, the biblical story continues moving towards Jesus Christ. The failure of judges, kings and nations shows the limitations of human leadership, while the preservation of Judah and David's line keeps the promise before us.

The restoration after captivity prepares the historical setting for what will follow. The Historical Books end, but the Old Testament story is not finished.

The next Study Guide will turn to the Books of Wisdom and Poetry, where we will encounter suffering, worship, wisdom, the meaning of life and the experiences of those who sought to walk with God.

Yet the same principle will continue to guide us: The Scriptures ultimately direct us towards Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did failed leaders and captivity not end God's promise?

Personal Reflection

What has this history taught you about trusting God's purpose through human failure?

Action Step

Look back on God's work through Israel's failures. Which fear or doubt should you bring into agreement with His faithfulness?

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

How do the Historical Books trace God's purpose from Joshua entering Canaan, through Israel's kings, captivity and return, toward Jesus Christ through Judah and David? Explain why both faithfulness and failure belong in that account.

2. Understanding

What do the repeating rebellion in Judges, Ruth's faithfulness during that period, Saul's disobedience and David's serious sin teach about obedience and God's continuing promise?

3. Personal Reflection

Which account most challenges you personally: Joshua's call to serve the LORD, Ruth's loyalty, Saul's refusal to obey, David's failure, or Esther's courage? Explain the response it calls for in your own life.

4. Response to Truth

How should the warning that the Bible records actions it does not approve change the way you read the lives of Israel's judges and kings, especially Saul, David and Solomon?

5. Action Step

Choose a teaching in Ezra about hearing and obeying God's Word. What personal attitude or conduct requires correction, and how will you respond through the life of Christ within?

6. Early Response

Have you begun responding to that truth from Ezra? Explain what changed in your attitude or conduct. If not, explain what prevented you from acting.

7. Ongoing Practice

What ongoing practice will help you remember the difference between outward worship and inward faithfulness shown in Solomon, the Temple, Ezra and Nehemiah? Describe how you will sustain it.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How do God's promise to David, the preservation of his line through the divided kingdom and captivity, and the return from exile help explain why the Historical Books point toward Jesus Christ?

9. Living the Truth

Where could you show the same faithfulness seen in Ruth or the courage seen in Esther while facing an ordinary duty or a serious risk? Explain how the warnings from Israel's decline shape your choice.

10. Final Response

Bring together Joshua's entry into Canaan, the failures of Israel's leaders, God's promise to David, captivity, and the return. What do these events show you about God's continuing purpose towards Christ, and how should that truth affect your trust and conduct?