

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THIS BOOK!

“How could I not enjoy a book that the editor says ‘is designed as a springboard for delight in God—the supreme Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier of the world’? Jason DeRouchie has a sure hand when it comes to guiding a team of scholars. The aroma of his God-centered, Christ-exalting commitments permeate this survey. This is not a book with lengthy and elaborate arguments, but a faithful and attractive rendering of conservative evangelical research into the Bible that Jesus said ‘cannot be broken’ (John 10:35). I would happily put this in the hand of every church member, praying, as the editor has, that it would ‘fuel a greater treasuring of God . . . through Jesus—the divine, crucified, and resurrected Messiah.’”

—John Piper, Founder and Teacher, *DesiringGod.org*

“Finally! An introduction to the only Bible Jesus had—a survey that tries to make sense of each book by highlighting its life-giving message. This volume is invitingly organized and composed, and delightfully illustrated. If this does not inspire the curious and the fearful to read the Old Testament, I don’t know what will. We are grateful to Jason DeRouchie and the rest of the contributors for this magnificent resource.”

—Daniel I. Block, Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament, *Wheaton College*

“No ordinary survey! This clear, concise, and easy-to-understand text will help church folks and serious students alike grasp the contribution of the Old Testament to the Bible as a single text with a unified plot structure that finds ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Beautiful pictures and helpful diagrams aid communication in a powerful way. I heartily recommend it!”

—Peter J. Gentry, Professor of Old Testament Interpretation, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

“This is one of the most user-friendly surveys of the Old Testament—Jesus’ Bible—that I have seen. Written by accomplished scholars under the able direction of Jason DeRouchie, the book is a compelling read from start to finish. DeRouchie’s vision for making this an accessible introduction to what for most Christians is an inaccessible part of our Scriptures is admirably accomplished. I highly recommend this book.”

—David M. Howard Jr., Professor of Old Testament, *Bethel Seminary*

“DeRouchie unapologetically explains that this is not a theology of the Hebrew Bible on its own but a Christian Old Testament survey. Now that we have the whole story, how can we not read the first part in light of the whole? This clear and attractive book combines academic rigor with devotional warmth. Each chapter is message-driven; it briefly addresses introductory matters such as authorship and date, but it is not preoccupied with them. The authors have taught Old Testament courses many times, and they know how to connect with students.”

—Andy Naselli, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology, *Bethlehem College and Seminary*

“Jason DeRouchie is a thoughtful man committed to Christ and his church. I’m excited to see this new resource he and his select team of contributors have put together. May the Lord use this book to further the cause of making disciples!”

—Jim Hamilton, Associate Professor of Biblical Theology, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

“This is truly a remarkable resource for the student of Scripture, especially those who’ve struggled to understand the Old Testament and how it relates to the New Testament. Jason DeRouchie has assembled an impressive team of scholars who explain the nature and flow of the Old Testament with an eye toward its fulfillment in the coming of Christ. Unlike your standard (and all too often stodgy) survey of the Old Testament, this volume is written in a vibrant and engaging style and is visually stunning. But best of all, it is distinctively Christ-centered. This will be the book to which I send all future inquisitive students of God’s Word. I highly recommend it.”

—Sam Storms, Lead Pastor for Preaching and Vision, Bridgeway Church, Oklahoma City, OK

“This book sets new standards for an Old Testament survey. The Christ-centered emphasis is a breath of fresh air. The canonical theology is deep and rich. It is exegetically faithful. The user-friendly features are not just easy to follow; they flat-out arrest your attention at times. In a crowded field of competitors, it is a standout. I commend it highly and plan to turn to it often.”

—Jason Meyer, Pastor for Preaching and Vision, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN

“*What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* is a fantastic, foundational book, well written with insightful detail into the lives and times of the Old Testament authors, yet easy to read and understand. DeRouchie did a wonderful job tying all of the chapters together into a single, well-flowing stream.”

—Noah Tremaine, Columbia International University student, Columbia, SC

“Reading this book helped me to see the beauty in the Old Testament, and it gave me a greater appreciation for the faithfulness of God. This book encouraged me to dig deeper into the Old Testament and challenged me to look for connections to the New Testament. I loved how Christ-centered it was, and through it I saw many new foreshadows of Christ in the Old Testament.”

—Elise Watters, Bethlehem College student, Minneapolis, MN

“This book was very informative, yet it was also easy to read. The conversational style of the book brought the scholarly aspect of it down to a personal level. *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* definitely contributed to how I will read the Old Testament in the future.”

—Rose Prince, Bryan College student, Dayton, TN

“The book did an excellent job introducing and explaining each individual book while simultaneously demonstrating how the whole Old Testament fits together in a compelling way. As a future pastor, this will be a go-to book for teaching my congregation to know and love the Old Testament as part of an effort to be a ‘whole-Bible people.’”

—Josh Koehn, Bethlehem Seminary student, Minneapolis, MN

WHAT
THE **OLD**
TESTAMENT

AUTHORS REALLY
CARED ABOUT

A **SURVEY** of Jesus' Bible

JASON S. DEROUCHIE

EDITOR

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Academic

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JESUS' BIBLE: AN OVERVIEW

Who?

God was the ultimate author of Jesus' Bible—what we now call the Old Testament. By his Spirit, the Lord guided dozens of prophets, usually writing in Hebrew, to disclose himself and his will for his people (Deut. 18:18; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1; 2 Peter 1:21). The numerous human authors used a variety of genres to communicate God's words, including genealogies, court annals, prophetic oracles, proverbs, prayers, priestly instructions, and much more. This diversity, however, only adds flavor to the amazing unity of message and purpose evident throughout the whole. Indeed, like its thirty-nine individual books (twenty-four by Jewish numbering), the Old Testament as a whole shows signs of intentional shaping toward a common goal—a quality testifying to the guiding hand of the supreme author.

When?

Through use of sources and under divine guidance, the Old Testament was formed over a more than a thousand-year period (ca. 1450–400 B.C.). As God's Word spoken through human words in history, every book was conditioned by the language, culture, and situations of the time. The material overviews God's perspective on and purposes in world history from creation to the initial stages of Israel's restoration after exile. During this period, five main empires dominated the world scene, each playing a key role in the developing biblical drama: Egypt, Israel, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. For dates and a sampling of biblical persons and events from these periods, see the chart in the right column.

Where?

The Old Testament arose in the heart of the Fertile Crescent, the birthplace of ancient civilization. This curved region of land stretched from the north in Mesopotamia southward through Canaan to Egypt (see the map "Israel:

The Land Between" in this chapter). In alignment with Israel's mission to serve as an agent of divine blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5–6; Deut. 4:5–8), Yahweh (the LORD) placed his people geographically in the center of the world (Ezek. 5:5; cf. 38:12). Because kingdom expansion through trade, alliance, or conquest required the northern and southern powers to travel through Israel's Promised Land ("the Land Between"), many of ancient history's major events are highlighted in the Old Testament.

Why?

What we call the Old Testament was written to guide God's people to him and his purposes and to lay a foundation for the kingdom fulfillment found in the New Testament. Through three main divisions (Law, Prophets, Writings), Jesus' Bible overviews the initial stages of God's unfolding plan of redemption and details how the old (Mosaic) covenant was established, enforced, and enjoyed, all in anticipation of God's kingdom consummation realized in Jesus and his church. The message may be summarized as God's kingdom through covenant for his glory, ultimately in Christ.

World Power	Sampling of Biblical Persons and Events
Egypt (ca. 3000–1200)	Abraham (ca. 2100) Moses and exodus (ca. 1446 [1250])
Israel (ca. 1010–930)	David (ca. 1010), temple built (ca. 959) Kingdom divided (ca. 930)
Assyria (ca. 870–626)	Isaiah (ca. 740) Israel (north) exiled (ca. 723)
Babylon (ca. 626–539)	Judah (south) exiled (ca. 605; 597; 586) Temple destroyed (ca. 586)
Persia (ca. 539–323)	Initial restorations (ca. 538, 458, 444) Temple rebuilt (ca. 516)

JESUS' BIBLE: AN OVERVIEW

Jason S. DeRouchie

Carefully Crafted Verses from the Old Testament¹

“The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty” (Exod. 34:6–7).

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:4–5).

“I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:31, 33).

THE DIVINE AUTHOR OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ...

- Supplied *authoritative kingdom instruction* for God’s people.
- Recorded *the progression and purpose of God’s covenants* in redemptive history.
- Distinguished the *Law, Prophets, and Writings*.
- Highlighted *how the old (Mosaic) covenant was established, enforced, and enjoyed*.

1. If these five passages do not move you to worship, this book may cause more harm than good. This survey is designed as a springboard for delight in God—the supreme Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier of the world. Worship is the end for which this book was created. May your study fuel a greater treasuring of God and his ways, for his glory and your good, through Jesus—the divine, crucified, and resurrected Messiah.

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed (Isa. 53:5).

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! (Ps. 150:6).

The Divine Author of the Old Testament Supplied *Authoritative Kingdom Instruction* for God's People

Jesus never read Romans or Revelation. He never heard sermons on Matthew's Gospel or Peter's epistles. Indeed, the New Testament was not written in Jesus' day, so his only Bible was what we call the *Old Testament*. It was books like Genesis and Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Psalms that shaped Jesus' upbringing and that guided his life and ministry as the Jewish Messiah. It was these Old Testament "Scriptures" that Jesus identified as God's Word (Mark 7:13; 12:36), considered to be authoritative (Matt. 4:3–4, 7, 10; 23:1–3), and called people to know and believe so as to guard against doctrinal error and hell (Mark 12:24; Luke 16:28–31; 24:25; John 5:46–47). Jesus was convinced that what is now the first three-fourths of our Christian Bible "cannot be broken" (John 10:35), would be completely fulfilled (Matt. 5:17–18; Luke 24:44), bore witness about him (Luke 24:27, 46; John 5:39, 46), and called for repentance and forgiveness of sins to be proclaimed in his name to all nations (Luke 24:47). All this Jesus summarized as "the good news of the kingdom of God"

(Luke 4:43; cf. Acts 1:3). If we want to know Jesus as best as we can, we must saturate ourselves in the same Scripture he read—namely, the Old Testament!

Jesus had stressed the need for the same "gospel of the kingdom" that he taught to be "proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations" (Matt. 24:14). It was proper, therefore, that the early church continued to preach and teach from Jesus' Bible (the Old Testament), even as the New Testament was being written. For example, Peter observed that the Old Testament prophets predicted the gracious good news of salvation preached to Christians (1 Peter 1:10–12), and he charged believers to pursue holiness *because* the



"If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (John 5:46–47). *A Torah scroll.*

Old Testament called for it: “as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, *since it is written*, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1:15–16; cf. Lev. 11:44). Furthermore, Paul taught Christians that the Old Testament “was written for *our* instruction” (Rom. 15:4; cf. 4:22–23; 1 Cor. 10:11).

Like Jesus, Paul believed the Old Testament was all about “the kingdom of God” climaxing in “the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:23, 31; cf. 20:24–25, 27), and the apostle stressed how this kingdom message pointed both to the Messiah’s death and resurrection and to the fruit of global missions that would grow from it (26:23). He was also convinced that the “sacred writings” that were taught to Jewish children are “able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ” (2 Tim. 3:15; cf. 1:5; Acts 16:1). It was these “Scriptures” that were “breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). And it was this

Have you considered that you could *correct* a straying Christian brother or sister using the *Old* Testament? This appears to be what Paul teaches in 2 Timothy 3:16. It can be challenging to figure out how to do this rightly, seeing as we are no longer under the old (Mosaic) covenant, but the point still stands—the Old Testament is important for Christians!



“Word,” interpreted in the light of Christ’s coming, that Paul called Timothy to preach, so as to fight against the perversion of truth (4:2–4).

The Divine Author of the Old Testament Recorded *the Progression and Purpose of God’s Covenants* in Redemptive History

Kingdom Through Covenant Climaxing in Christ

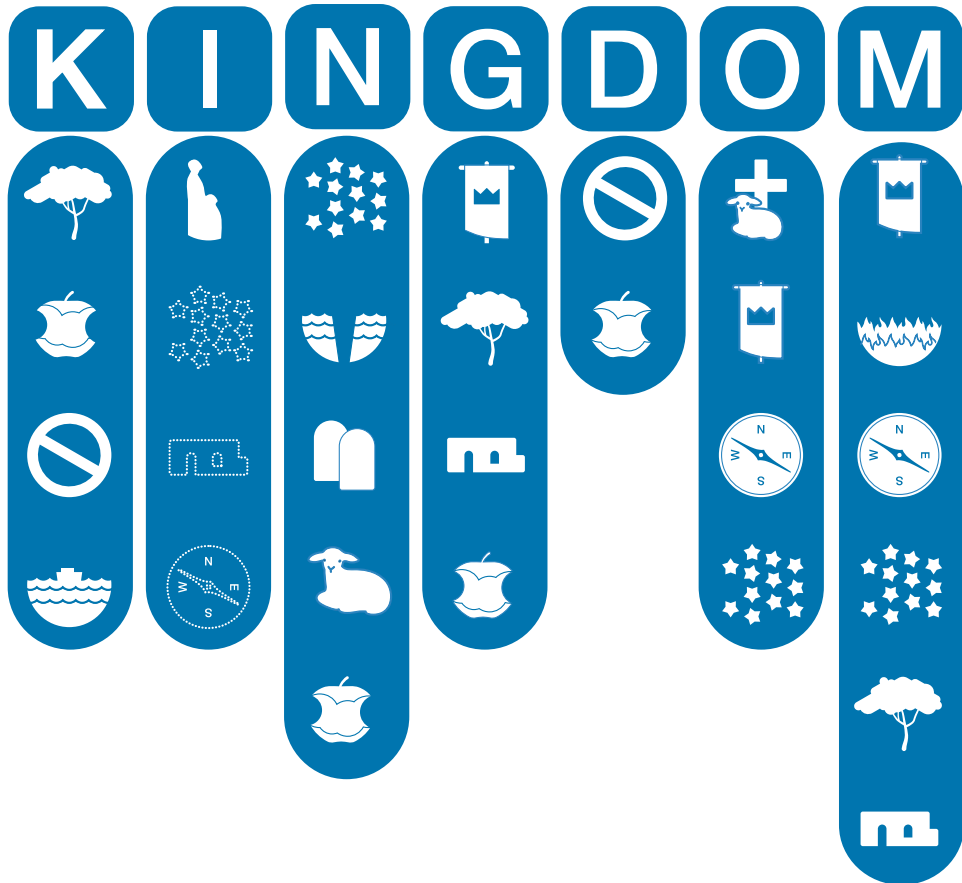
When the Old and New Testaments are read alongside one another, at least seven historical stages are apparent in God’s kingdom-building program. The initial five are the foundation for the ultimate fulfillment in the last two. Interwoven into this story of redemption is a progression of five overlapping covenants, which portray the development of God’s global purposes with humanity.

Figure 1.1. God’s Kingdom-Building Program at a Glance

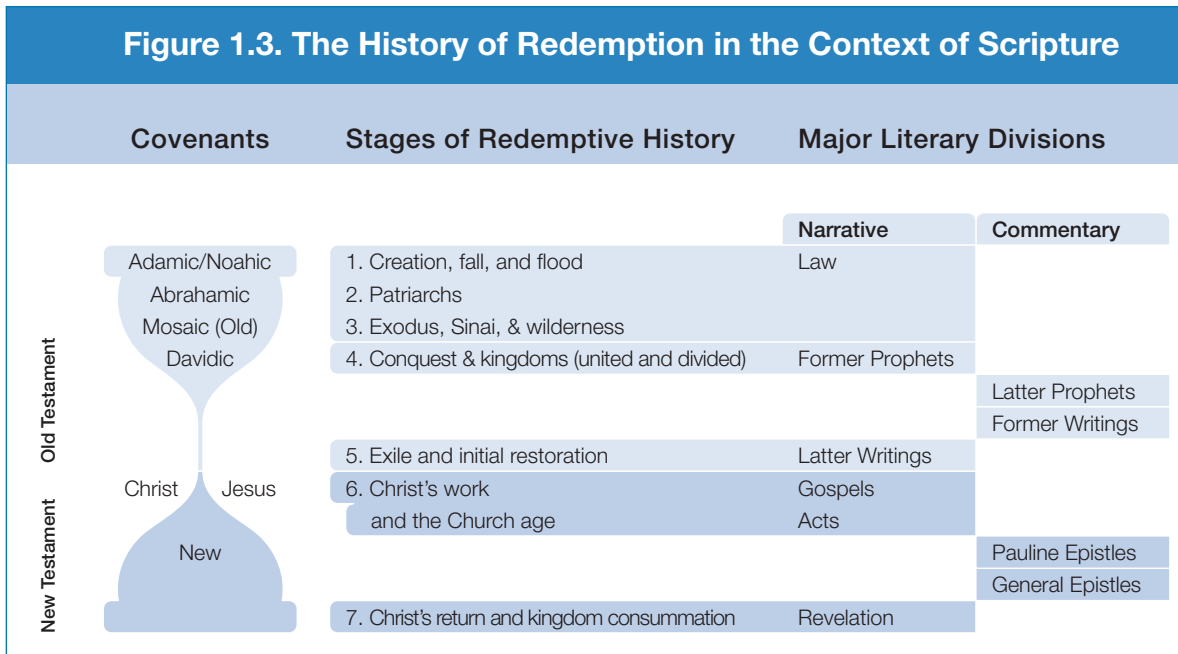
Old Testament Narrative History	K	KICKOFF AND REBELLION	1. Creation, fall, and flood (ca. ? B.C.)
	I	INSTRUMENT OF BLESSING	2. Patriarchs (ca. 2100–1850 B.C.)
	N	NATION REDEEMED AND COMMISSIONED	3. Exodus, Sinai, and wilderness (ca. 1450–1400 B.C.)
	G	GOVERNMENT IN THE PROMISED LAND	4. Conquest and kingdoms (united and divided) (ca. 1400–600 B.C.)
	D	DISPERSION AND RETURN	5. Exile and initial restoration (ca. 600–400 B.C.)
New Testament Narrative History	O	OVERLAP OF THE AGES	6. Christ’s work and the church age (ca. 4 B.C.–A.D. ?)
	M	MISSION ACCOMPLISHED	7. Christ’s return and kingdom consummation (ca. A.D. ?–eternity)

Figure 1.2. God's K-I-N-G-D-O-M Story Through Images

-  Paradise
-  Fall, sin, rebellion
-  Exile, paradise lost
-  Waters of judgment
-  Patriarchs
-  Much offspring (promise-fulfillment)
-  Land, home, rest (promise-fulfillment)
-  Blessing to all nations (promise-fulfillment)
-  Giving of the law
-  Penal substitutionary atonement
-  Conquest, kingdom established
-  Saving/atoning work of Christ
-  Fires of judgment



The interrelationship of the covenants can be portrayed like an hour-glass, with the most universal scope occurring at the two ends and the work of Christ at the center. The Adamic/Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants are all named in light of the covenant head or mediator through whom God entered into a relationship with his elect. The new covenant is titled in light of its contrast to the “old” Mosaic administration and provides climax to all God’s purposes in history (see Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:6–13).



Significantly, *Jesus’ saving work is the fulcrum upon which the entire Bible pivots*. To him all redemptive history points, and from him all fulfillment comes. As Jesus himself said, “Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt. 5:17). The Old Testament is Christo-telic (*telos* is Greek for “goal, end”). Each of the five covenants culminates in the person and work of Messiah Jesus.

- In fulfillment of the *Adamic/Noahic covenant*, Jesus is the Son of Man, last Adam, and image of God (Mark 10:45; 14:62; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 4:4).

- In fulfillment of the *Abrahamic covenant*, Jesus is the offspring of Abraham and agent of universal blessing (Gen. 22:17b–18; Acts 3:25–26; Gal. 3:16).
- In fulfillment of the *Mosaic (old) covenant*, Jesus represents Israel and stands as God's Son, Yahweh's servant, the embodiment of wisdom, the one who fulfilled the law's demands, and the substance of all covenant shadows (Exod. 4:22–23; Isa. 49:3, 5–6; Matt. 3:17; 11:2, 19; 12:42; 13:54; John 2:19–21; Acts 3:25–26; Rom. 5:19; Col. 2:17; Heb. 9:9–12; 10:1).
- In fulfillment of the *Davidic covenant*, Jesus is the King of the Jews and Son of David (Matt. 2:1; 21:9; Luke 1:32–33).
- In fulfillment of the *new covenant* promises, Jesus is the prophet like Moses who was to come and the only true mediator between God and man (Deut. 18:15, 18; Luke 7:16; 22:20; Acts 3:22–26; 7:37; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).



“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.... Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins” (Isa. 11:1, 5). *Almonds on a tree near Ajjalon.*

The Story of God's Glory in Christ

What accompanies this messianic trajectory is the sustained assertion throughout Scripture that *everything God does is for his glory*. That is, God's ultimate goal at every stage in his kingdom program is the preservation and display of himself as the supreme Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier of the world, ultimately through his messianic representative. As such, the Bible's grand narrative has rightly been called “The Story of God's Glory.”² What follows is a brief overview of each stage in God's kingdom-building plan.

The entire Bible pivots on the person and work of Jesus. To him all redemptive history points, and from him all fulfillment comes.

2. See John Piper, “The Goal of God in Redemptive History,” in *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (rev. and exp.; Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 308–21. This appendix is not found in the 2011 edition.



“The high mountains are for the wild goats.... O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (Ps. 104:18, 24). *Left: A male Nubian ibex “wild goat” at Machtesh Ramon (photo by Kim Guess); Right: a heard of male Nubian ibex at En Gedi.*

K

KICKOFF AND REBELLION (creation, fall, and flood).

As the maker and sustainer of all things visible and invisible, God deserves the highest praise (1 Chron. 29:11; Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11). God created humans to image him and commissioned them to display his greatness throughout the world from generation to generation (Gen. 1:26–28). Like a temple paradise, the Garden of Eden was to be a place where Yahweh was exalted over all, and it was to be ever expanding as the first couple would carry God’s image to the ends of the earth, thus reflecting, representing, and resembling the divine glory for all to see. However, Adam and Eve failed to honor God rightly, and in Adam, all the rest of humanity sinned, *falling short of God’s glory* (Rom. 1:21–23; 3:23; 5:12, 19). Before subjecting the world to futility in hope (Rom. 8:20–21) and before casting humanity’s parents into exile from the garden, the Lord promised to reestablish cosmic order through a male human deliverer, the ministry of whom would display *great glory* through divine grace (Gen. 3:15; John 1:14). Humanity’s sustained wickedness after the fall resulted in the flood, but God preserved a remnant whose hope was in the coming redeemer (Gen. 4:25–26; 5:22; 6:8–9), and he confirmed through Noah his covenant with creation (Gen. 6:7–9, 18; 8:21; 9:9–11). At the Tower of Babel, however, such mercy was matched by human self-exaltation over God-exaltation, resulting in more divine judgment (11:1–9, esp. v. 4).



I **INSTRUMENT OF BLESSING** (patriarchs). It was *to the praise of his glorious grace* that God elected and created a people for himself (Jer. 13:11; Isa. 43:6–7; Eph. 1:4–6). *God's glory* compelled Abraham to leave Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2), so that through Israel the nations of the earth could be restored into relationship with their Creator (Gen. 12:3). Though it would take a miracle, Abraham believed God could do for him what he could not do on his own, and his faith in Yahweh's promise of offspring was counted as righteousness (15:6; cf. 18:14). To exalt his faithfulness and in anticipation of future mercy, Yahweh vowed to fulfill his promise of land to Abraham's offspring (15:17–18) and provided a substitute sacrifice in the place of Isaac (22:12–14). He also reaffirmed that his blessing of the nations would be accomplished through a royal representative, now known to be from Judah, who would destroy evil and reestablish world peace (22:17b–18; 24:60; 49:8–10). For such ultimate good, God sent Joseph to Egypt, preserving the children of Jacob/Israel alive in the midst of famine, while they awaited the Promised Land (45:7–8; 50:20, 24–25).

Patriarchs

Much offspring promised

Land, home, rest promised

Blessing to all nations promised



N **NATION REDEEMED AND COMMISSIONED** (exodus, Sinai, and wilderness). In fulfillment of his promises, God sustained and multiplied Israel through four hundred years of Egyptian bondage (Exod. 1:7; cf. Gen. 15:13–14). *For the sake of his name and reputation*, God brought the plagues on Egypt, redeemed Israel from slavery through the Red Sea, and preserved his people after their sins in the wilderness (Exod. 9:15–16; 14:4; 32:11–13; Num. 14:13–19; 2 Sam. 7:23; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 21–22; Ps. 106:7–8). *For the display of his holiness*, he gave Israel his law through Moses, called his people to radical love overflowing in obedience, and provided a means of atonement so that they could be near him, his presence alone distinguishing them from the nations (Exod. 19:4–6; 20:3–5; 33:16; Lev. 10:3; Deut. 4:5–8; 6:4–5). He also restated his promise that a deliverer would arise from Jacob who would exercise international influence (Num. 24:17–19). Nevertheless, he did not overcome Israel's hard-heartedness (Deut. 29:4), but he foretold Israel's sustained rebellion and exile (31:16–17, 29) and promised restoration that would exalt God alone as the enabler and gracious sustainer of love for him, of commandment keeping, and of the covenant (30:6, 8).

Much offspring initial fulfillment

Waters of judgment

Giving of the Law

Penal substitutionary atonement

Exile; paradise lost





The LORD said to Pharaoh, “By now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (Exod. 9:15–16). *Chefren’s Pyramid from Egypt’s Old Kingdom (third millennium B.C.). Already built during the days of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, this is the second largest of the great pyramids in the Giza necropolis on the outskirts of Cairo, Egypt; archaeological excavations are in the foreground.*



GOVERNMENT IN THE PROMISED LAND (conquest and kingdoms). Through the conquest, Yahweh exalted himself before the nations as the only true God, fulfilling his promises to give Israel rest in the land as an echo of the Edenic paradise (Josh. 11:23; 21:43–45; cf. Exod. 15:17).

In the Canaanite Rahab’s words, “The LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath” (Josh. 2:11; cf. 8:24). The majority of the twelve tribes of Israel, however, soon forgot the Lord and progressively became Canaanized (Judg. 2:10–23), which ultimately resulted in

their ruin. Refusing to listen to God's gracious appeal via his prophets, the united and divided kingdoms all came to an end, climaxing in the destruction of the temple and exile (2 Kings 17:13–23; ch. 25).

Nevertheless, in the midst of Israel's rise and fall, the Lord graciously renewed his promise of a coming royal redeemer (1 Sam. 2:10), raised up King David as a foreshadow of this deliverer, and declared that through him God's universal kingdom purposes would find fulfillment (2 Sam. 7:12–16; cf. Ps. 2; 72:17). The anticipated savior-king would proclaim Yahweh's end-times reign—the year of his favor and the day of his vengeance (Isa. 52:7; 61:2). He also, while himself guiltless (50:9; 53:9), would, through a substitutionary death, satisfy God's wrath against sin and would, by his righteousness, “make many to be accounted righteous” (53:5, 10–11; cf. John 11:50–52; Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:21).

In all, one principle governed God's actions during the united and divided kingdoms: “Those who *honor me* I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sam. 2:30). Whether dealing with barren woman or priest, prophet or king, shepherd or warrior, Israelite or foreigner, God acted *for his glory* (Josh. 24:14; 1 Sam. 2:1–10; 6:5–6, 19–20; 12:20–22; 15:22–23; 17:46; 1 Kings 8:43; 18:36–39; 2 Kings 19:19, 34).



DISPERSION AND RETURN (exile and initial restoration). Yahweh cast Israel from the Promised Land because of their failure to live for him (2 Kings 17:7; 2 Chron. 36:16), but he also promised that, in the latter days, “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be

destroyed” and that “one like a son of man” would receive “dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him” (Dan 2:44; 7:13–14). Isaiah had anticipated *that for his own sake*, the Lord would sustain Israel through exile, return a remnant to the land, and use them as missionaries to represent him rightly in the world (Isa. 48:9, 11): “*For my name's sake* I defer my anger, *for the sake of my praise* I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off.... *For my own sake, for my own sake*, I do it, for how should *my name* be profaned? *My glory* I will not give to another.” Similarly, Ezekiel stated (Ezek. 36:23): “I will vindicate *the holiness of my great name*, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD ... when *through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.*” So it is that Daniel prayed that God would act “for your own sake,” redeeming

Exile; paradise lost

Fall, sin, rebellion



his people and forgiving their sin (Dan. 9:15–19). Upon the initial restoration, God called the Jews to rebuild the temple “that I may be glorified” (Hag. 1:8), and he also charged them to *honor and fear him* as the “great King” over all (Mal. 1:6, 14). Sadly, the majority of the restored remained cold to God, and the light of kingdom hope was dimmed in the darkness of sustained slavery (Ezra 9:8–9; Neh. 9:36).



“I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another” (Isa. 48:10–11). *A spouted silver jar and a silver bowl from Ur, dated by some to ca. 2600 B.C., almost two-thousand years before Isaiah (from the British Museum).*



Saving/atoning work of Christ

Spiritual conquest; kingdom initiated

Blessing to all nations initial fulfillment

Much offspring initial fulfillment

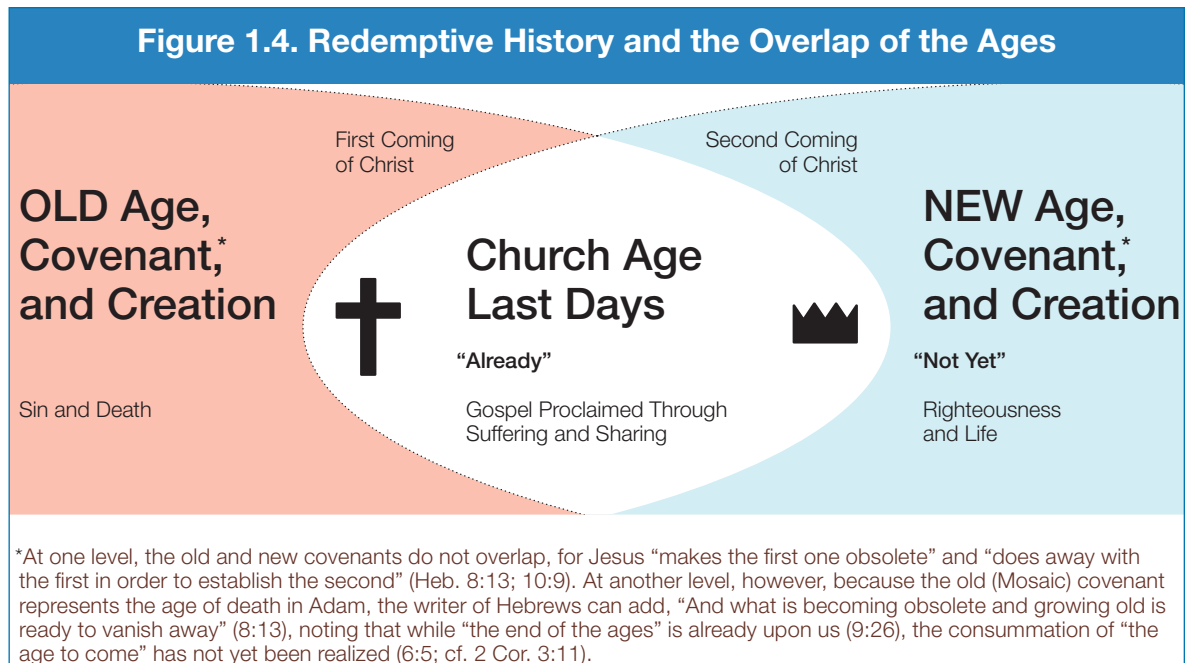


OVERLAP OF THE AGES (Christ’s work and the church age). “But when the fullness of time had come” (Gal. 4:4), God caused the light to dawn in the person of Christ (Matt. 4:16–17; John 8:12). One of the mysterious parts of God’s kingdom program was the way Jesus’ first coming was as suffering servant, and only in his second coming would he show himself fully as conquering king. In his initial appearing, he proclaimed “the year of the LORD’s favor,” and only later would he bring “the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa. 61:2; cf. Luke 4:19). “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Heb. 9:28). Today we rest in

an overlap of the ages, with Christ having delivered us from “the present evil age” (Gal. 1:4) yet only in a way that lets us taste “the powers of the age to come” (Heb. 6:5). Figure 1.4 attempts to visualize the already-but-not-yet aspects of the kingdom in this overlap of the ages (see esp. Rom. 8:18–24; Eph. 1:3–14; 1 Peter 1:3–13).

With respect to the *already* aspect of the kingdom, for God’s reign to be celebrated on earth, his wrath toward the sin of Israel and the world needed to be appeased. So in the fullness of time, after four hundred years of prophetic silence but in direct fulfillment of Old Testament hopes, God the Father sent his eternal Son to earth as the promised, royal deliverer “to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). In the “great exchange” of the ages, God counted every believer’s sin to Christ, and Christ’s righteousness to every believer:

- “For our sake [the Father] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21).
- “And because of [God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).



- “For as by the one man’s disobedience [i.e., Adam] the many were made sinners, so by the one’s man’s obedience [i.e., Jesus Christ] the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

The good news of God’s end-times reign is nothing less than “*the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor. 4:6; cf. 1 Tim. 1:11). Jesus lived

for the glory of his Father (John 7:18; 17:4), and his death and resurrection vindicated *God’s righteousness* and exalted *God’s glory* (John 12:27–28; 17:1; Rom. 3:25–26). God forgives sins and welcomes believers *for his glory* (Isa. 43:25; Ps. 25:11; Rom. 15:7), and he calls everyone to live *for his glory* always (Matt. 5:16; John 5:44; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 1:11; 1 Peter 4:11), which includes a radical commitment to spreading a passion for God’s supremacy throughout the world, both through sharing and suffering (Matt. 5:11–12; 28:18–20).

Within this context, God promises to honor all who *seek to exalt him* and not themselves (1 Sam. 2:30; Luke 18:14; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5), even as they await the “blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

It is *right*, *necessary*, and *loving* that God act for his own glory and call us to do the same. It is right because Yahweh alone is preeminent over all things and is therefore worthy of worship (Exod. 34:14; Deut. 32:39). It is necessary because if Yahweh gave his glory to another, declaring something else as being worthy of highest praise, he would stop being God (Isa. 42:8; 48:11). It is loving because Yahweh alone can save (43:10–12) and because in his presence is fullness of joy forever (Ps. 16:11; cf. Matt. 13:44).



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED (Christ’s return and kingdom consummation). God’s mercy, wrath, and power are all directed at making known “the riches of his glory” (Rom. 9:22–23), and only those who “fear God and give him glory” will escape divine wrath when the Son of Man returns

to be glorified in his saints (Rev. 14:7; 2 Thess. 1:9–10; cf. Matt. 16:27; 24:30; 25:31; John 17:24). Judgment day will come (Rom. 2:5; 2 Peter 3:7), and with it the consummation of the new creation, when the righteous will be perfected (1 Thess. 5:23–24; Heb. 12:23) and *the glory of God* will give light to all (Rev. 21:24). In this day, those ransomed “from every tribe and language and people and nation” will celebrate eternally in the presence of God, declaring, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Rev. 5:9; 7:10). Here all rest will be realized, pleasures perfected, the curse conquered, and Jesus exalted and treasured forevermore (21:3–4; 22:3–4).





“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: ‘We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in.... Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD God is an everlasting rock’” (Isa. 26:1–2, 4). *Jerusalem’s Old City walls.*

The Divine Author of the Old Testament Distinguished *the Law, Prophets, and Writings*

The Arrangement of Jesus’ Bible

Having overviewed God’s kingdom agenda as disclosed in the Bible’s narrative history, it is important to consider the shape and significance of the Old Testament’s structure. You have probably already noted that the arrangement of books in this survey is different from the order of Old Testament books in most Christian Bibles, which distinguish Law, History, Poetry and Wisdom, and

Prophecy. The reason for the distinction is that the Jewish Bible legitimated and used by Jesus and the apostles appears to have been structured differently.

Specifically, while the Jewish Scriptures contain the same thirty-nine books found in our English Old Testaments, the books themselves are ar-

The order of our English Bible is patterned after the Latin Vulgate, which was structured after some arrangements of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The sequence of Law, History, Poetry and Wisdom, and Prophecy is likely derived from the Greco-Roman tendency to arrange collections according to chronology and genre. Nevertheless, because the Bible of Jesus and the apostles was arranged according to the Law, Prophets, and Writings (Luke 24:44), doesn't it make sense that we would want to read it in the same order?

anged in a different order and grouped in three main divisions: the Law (*tôrâ*), the Prophets (*nēbî'im*), and the Writings (or “the *other* Scriptures,” *kētûbîm*).³ It is this three-part canon that Jesus appears to have referred to after his resurrection when he clarified how “everything written about me in the *Law* of Moses and the *Prophets* and the *Psalms* must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44). In most reckonings, Psalms is the first main book in the Writings (though prefaced by Ruth), and in Jesus' words it appears to provide a title for the whole third division. Because of this three-part structure, the Hebrew Bible is commonly referred to

as the TaNaK (or Tanach), an acronym derived from the first Hebrew letters of each of the three major section titles.⁴

This survey follows the most ancient complete listing of the Jewish canonical books, which most likely dates from before the time of the New Testament, perhaps as early as the second century B.C. (*Baba Bathra* 14b) (see Fig. 1.6).⁵ Along with the three-part arrangement, the list treats as single

3. For examples of the three-fold division outside the Bible, see the prologue to Ben Sira and 4QMMT C.10 in the Dead Sea Scrolls.
4. The biblical evidence also suggests that Jesus' Bible began with Genesis and ended with Chronicles. This fact is clarified in one of Jesus' confrontations with the Pharisees, in which he spoke of the martyrdom of the Old Testament prophets “from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah” (Luke 11:51; cf. Matt. 23:35). This is not a simple “A to Z” statement, for Zechariah's name does not begin with the last letter of any biblical language alphabet. Also, it is not strictly a chronological statement, for while Abel was clearly the first martyr (Gen. 4:4, 8), the Old Testament's last martyr with respect to time was Uriah the son of Shemaiah, who died during the reign of Jehoiakim (609–598 B.C.; see Jer. 26:20–23). Instead, Jesus appears to have been speaking *canonically*, mentioning the first and last martyr in his Bible, for just as Genesis recorded Abel's murder, the end of Chronicles highlighted a certain Zechariah who was killed in the temple court during the reign of Joash (835–796 B.C.; see 2 Chron. 24:20–21).
5. *Baba Bathra* 14b is a baraita, which is an ancient tradition found in the Babylonian Talmud (ca. A.D. 500) that dates from around the time of the Mishnah but was not included in it. Roger Beckwith provides a complete evaluation of the textual data and posits that the arrangement of biblical books in *Baba Bathra* 14b most likely originated from a list drawn up by Judas Maccabaeus around 164 B.C. (see 2 Macc. 2:14–15) (*The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985], 121–27, 152–53, 198). For a popular-level, succinct summary of Beckwith's conclusions,

books some of those that our English Bibles separate (i.e., 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Ezra–Nehemiah, 1–2 Chronicles).⁶ Furthermore, the major prophets are out of chronological order, Ruth is totally separated from its temporal context after Judges, Daniel is not among the Prophets, and Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah are placed in reverse chronological order. Is there any logic to this structure?

Figure 1.5. The Structure of the English Old Testament and Jesus' Bible

English OT	Jesus' Bible
Law: Genesis–Deuteronomy	Law (tôrâ): Genesis–Deuteronomy
History: Joshua–Esther	Prophets (nēbî'îm): Joshua–Kings (Former); Jeremiah–Malachi (Latter)
Poetry and Wisdom: Job–Song of Songs	Writings (kětûbîm): Ruth/Psalms–Lamentations (Former); Daniel–Chronicles (Latter)
Prophecy: Isaiah–Malachi	

Anticipations of the Arrangement's Significance

At least two points of significance are readily apparent as one looks at the organization of Jesus' Bible. First, reading the Old Testament through the lens of *God's program of redemption* is both justified and necessary, for the whole Bible is held together by a historical narrative that sketches in chronological order the initial stages of this story.⁷ The biblical narrative it-

see his "The Canon of Scripture" in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000]), 27–34.

- At least in the case of the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, the reason for the separation appears to be merely pragmatic: the Hebrew Bible used only consonants, and when it was translated into Greek, which included vowels, the books got too long for single scrolls.
- The only narrative books out of temporal succession are Ruth and Chronicles, which bookend the Writings, the final section of Jesus' Bible. Ruth serves as a preface to the Writings, turning the readers eyes away from the despondency at the end of the Twelve (Minor Prophets) to the hope of complete restoration through the Davidic Messiah. Conversely, Chronicles comes at the end of the Writings and provides an apt conclusion to the Old Testament by summarizing the whole (it begins with Adam and ends with the call to return to Jerusalem from exile) and by heightening anticipation for complete kingdom fulfillment.

self begins in the Law and continues through the Former Prophets and the Latter Writings, into the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. This (true) story clarifies God's perspective on how the peoples and events of space and time relate to his kingdom purposes, which move from original creation to new creation, from the old (cursed) world in Adam to the new (blessed) world in Christ. As will be made clear, the main character in the redemptive drama is God, who stands supreme over all and who graciously set Israel apart to serve as the channel through which he would overcome the world's plague of sin and replace it with the blessing of salvation.



“The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt.... Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth” (Isa. 24:5–6; 65:17). *A cross at Dominus Flevit with Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock in the background (photo by David Gunderson).*

English Classification/Arrangement			Hebrew Classification/Arrangement		Approx. Dates (all B.C.)	
LAW	Genesis		LAW (<i>tōrā</i>)	Genesis		The beginning to 1406
	Exodus			Exodus		
	Leviticus			Leviticus		
	Numbers			Numbers		
	Deuteronomy			Deuteronomy		
HISTORY	Joshua		PROPHETS (<i>nəbī'īm</i>)	Former		1406–1380
	Judges			Judges		1380–1050
	Ruth			1–2 Samuel		1100–1010 / 1010–970
	1 Samuel			1–2 Kings		970–853 / 853–560
	2 Samuel			Jeremiah		627–580
	1 Kings		Ezekiel		593–570	
	2 Kings		Isaiah		740–700	
	1 Chronicles		Hosea		760–730	
	2 Chronicles		Joel		600 (?)	
	Ezra		Amos		760	
Nehemiah		Obadiah		586 (?)		
Esther		Jonah		770		
POETRY/ WISDOM	Job		Latter		The Twelve	737–690
	Psalms		Micah			650
	Proverbs		Nahum			630
	Ecclesiastes		Habakkuk			627
	Song of Solomon		Zephaniah			627
PROPHETS	Major	Isaiah		Haggai		520
		Jeremiah		Zechariah		520–518
		Lamentations		Malachi		433
		Ezekiel				
		Daniel				
	Minor	Hosea		Former		1200–1150
		Joel		Ruth		
		Amos		Psalms		
		Obadiah		Job		
		Jonah		Proverbs		
		Micah		Ecclesiastes		No specific historical period covered
		Nahum		Song of Songs		
		Habakkuk		Lamentations		
		Zephaniah		Daniel		
		Haggai		Esther		
Zephaniah		Ezra–Nehemiah		586		
Malachi		1–2 Chronicles		605–530		
				483–474		
				538–450 / 444–410		
				1010–970 / 970–538		

Prepared by Jason S. DeRouchie; many of the dates are taken from John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 12. The Hebrew ordering is from the Jewish baraita *Baba Bathra* 14b.

Second, Jesus' Bible was more than narrative, for it included both the Latter Prophets and the Former Writings (in light brown in Fig. 1.6), two large groupings of mostly poetic books that stand *within* the main storyline and are arranged in descending order of size (Jeremiah to the Twelve and Psalms to Lamentations).⁸ As such, we will grasp Scripture's overarching message most clearly only when the history of redemption is read alongside the additional material and placed within the three-part structure. It is through this lens that Jesus and the apostles preached the good news of God's kingdom, manifest in a message of the messiah and missions (Luke 24:44–47; Acts 26:22–23; 28:23).

The Divine Author of the Old Testament Highlighted How the *Old (Mosaic) Covenant Was Established, Enforced, and Enjoyed*

All five of the major covenants play key roles in the unfolding of the seven-stage redemptive drama. However, the most dominant from a literary perspective are the *old* (Mosaic) covenant and the *new* covenant in Christ. Indeed, the early church named the two parts of the Bible after these covenants (*Old Testament* and *New Testament*).⁹

On the whole, the old (Mosaic) covenant represented an age of death. It is true that Jesus' Bible testifies that God always preserved a faithful remnant, and it is only because of this group who preserved and held fast to God's Word—loyal parents, priests, prophets, politicians, and the like—that the first three-fourths of the Bible even exists! Nevertheless, for the majority of Israel, God's call to love him from the heart and to serve as his witnesses in the world was met with stubbornness and lack of faith, which resulted in the breaking of the covenant and the need for a new one (Jer. 31:31–32).

It is Yahweh's special covenant relationship with Israel, instituted at Sinai, that controls the Old Testament's three divisions. The old (Mosaic) covenant is *established* in the Law, *enforced* in the Prophets, and *enjoyed* in the Writings.

8. Lamentations is a little longer than the Song of Songs (2011 words vs. 1662 words). Its placement after the Song was likely driven by some of the following desires: (1) to keep together the three books traditionally assigned to Solomon (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs), (2) to allow the Old Testament's commentary section (the Latter Prophets and Former Writings) to begin and end with books assigned to the prophet Jeremiah, and (3) to provide a transition at the end of the commentary section back into the exilic context departed from at the end of 2 Kings.

9. From the Latin *testamentum*, meaning “will, covenant.”

The Law: The Old (Mosaic) Covenant Established

The Law, also called the Pentateuch, is the Bible's first five books. It is devoted to clarifying God's relationship with and purpose for Israel in the context of the world. Genesis provides a "kingdom prologue" that sets the stage for Israel's mission, which is then detailed in Exodus through Deuteronomy. Israel enjoys God's favor for the sake of the nations (Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:4–6; Deut. 4:5–8), and through Israel God would raise a royal deliverer who would defeat evil and establish universal blessing (Gen. 3:15; 22:17b–18; 49:8, 10; Num. 24:17–19). While Israel's own stubbornness would result in their exile (Deut. 31:16–17, 29), the mercy of Yahweh would triumph in an age of restoration blessing that would benefit Israel and, ultimately, the nations (4:30–31; 30:1–10 with 4:5–8; 32:21).

The Prophets: The Old (Mosaic) Covenant Enforced

The Prophets contain two sections, the first a *narrative history* of Israel's covenant failure and the second a *prophetic commentary* on the people's rebellion that places their sin within the overall scope of God's redemptive plan. Whereas the Former Prophets (Joshua–Kings) focus on *what* happened in Israel's downward spiral from conquest through monarchy to exile, the Latter Prophets (Jeremiah–The Twelve [Minor Prophets]) develop *why* the drama went the way it did. God's covenant enforcers, the prophets, colored Israel's history as an age of darkness, the old (Mosaic) covenant resulting



"This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:2). *Machtesh Ramon in the Negeb with sunrise.*

in Israel's condemnation (2 Kings 17:14–18; 2 Cor. 3:9). Nevertheless, the narrative and sermons also offer glimmers of light, heightening anticipation for full kingdom fulfillment in a new covenant and setting the stage for the testimony of the Writings.

The Writings: The Old (Mosaic) Covenant Enjoyed

Like the Prophets but in reverse order, the Writings include both commentary and narrative. Unlike the Prophets, however, the Writings are dominated by a positive thrust, giving voice to the faithful remnant who hoped in the consummation of God's kingdom. The commentary of the Former Writings opens with Ruth, which colors all that follows in messianic anticipation. Psalms through Lamentations then clarify *how those hoping in God's kingdom were to live*—that is, how they could maintain satisfaction in God amidst life's pleasures and pains. Following Lamentations, which resituates the reader in the exilic context highlighted at the end of 2 Kings, the narrative resumes in Daniel and continues through Chronicles, detailing God's preservation of a remnant in exile, the people's initial restoration to the land, and the promise of complete kingdom realization. Because the story is unfinished at the end of Chronicles, the reader is pushed into the New Testament for fulfillment, which is ultimately realized in the person of Christ and his church.

The New Testament's Parallel Structure

Intriguingly, the arrangement of the New Testament books in many ways parallels that of the Old. Not only is the narrative-commentary pattern the same (see Fig. 1.7), but also the covenantal structure can be viewed as parallel. The new covenant is *established* in the Gospels, *enforced* in Acts and the Pauline Epistles, and *enjoyed* in the General Epistles and Revelation. The last category may be the most questionable, for the General Epistles and Revelation include covenant enforcement and regularly address tribulation. Can you really call this “joy”? In response, like the Old Testament Writings, which are future-oriented and loaded with trials, joy in the last section of the New Testament is one of persevering hope, experienced through suffering and in light of the glory that is to be revealed at the consummation of the kingdom (Heb. 12:2–3; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6–8; 4:13; 1 John 1:4; 2 John 4, 12; 3 John 3–4; Jude 24; Rev. 18:20; 19:6–8).¹⁰

10. David Trobisch argues that the New Testament canon was fixed as early as A.D. 125 and originally bore a different arrangement in the commentary section: Matthew, Mark, Luke,

Figure 1.7. The Bible's Covenantal Structure

	Established (Savior)	Enforced (Sovereign)		Enjoyed (Satisfier)	
OLD COVENANT	Law	Former Prophets	Latter Prophets	Former Writings	Latter Writings
NEW COVENANT	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation ¹¹
	Narrative	Narrative	Commentary	Commentary	Narrative

Synthesis and Conclusion

The Bible's Frame, Form, Focus, and Fulcrum

In order to synthesize the Old Testament message, it will be helpful to review what we have already learned regarding what the Bible is about (its *frame*), how it is transmitted (its *form*), why it was given (its *focus*), and around whom it is centered (its *fulcrum*).

- **The Frame (Content: What?).** The Bible is the revelation of God, who reigns over all, standing as the source, sustainer, and goal of all things (Rom. 11:36). Through creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, this supreme Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier has been shaping a people for himself in the context of the world. The Bible is about his kingdom building process—God's reign over God's people in God's land for God's glory (Luke 4:43; Acts 1:3; 20:25; 28:23, 31).

John, Acts, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Revelation (*Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994]; idem, *The First Edition of the New Testament* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000]; cf. C. E. Hill, "The New Testament Canon: Deconstructio ad Absurdum?" *JETS* 52 [2009]: 101–20; idem, *Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010]). Significantly, regardless of how the New Testament commentary books are ordered, the general pattern "narrative → narrative → commentary → commentary → narrative" remains parallel to the structure of Jesus' Bible.

11. Although Revelation is not strictly "narrative," it does complete the storyline begun in the Old Testament and carried on in the Gospels and Acts. Furthermore, like Chronicles at the end of the Old Testament, which reviews all history from Adam to the initial restoration, Revelation at the end of the New Testament reviews redemptive history from the first coming of Christ unto eternity.

- **The Form (Means: How?).** Throughout redemptive history, God's relationship with his people has been maintained through a series of covenants. The most dominant of these are the old (Mosaic) covenant and the new covenant in Christ, which together provide the thematic structure of the Christian Bible's two parts. Addressing the age of death, the old covenant was *established* in the Law, *enforced* in the Prophets, and *enjoyed* in the Writings. In contrast, the new covenant, which oversees the age of life, was *established* in the Gospels, *enforced* in Acts and the Pauline Epistles, and *enjoyed* in the General Epistles and Revelation.



"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!" (Ps. 150:6). A close-up of a camel in the Judean wilderness.

- **The Focus (Purpose: Why?).** The ultimate goal behind all God's actions is the preservation and display of his glory, and it is to this end that all Scripture points. Because all things are from him, through him, and to him, God's glory is exalted over all things (Rom. 11:36) and should be the goal of our lives (1 Cor. 10:31).

- **The Fulcrum (Sphere: Whom?).** Jesus Christ is the one to whom all redemptive history points, and the one from whom all fulfillment comes. The entire Bible is centered on him, who stands as the promised messianic deliverer and who secures reconciliation with God for all who believe in him as the divine, crucified Messiah. A universal call to repentance and whole-life surrender is the natural overflow of Jesus' redemptive, kingdom work.

Figure 1.8. The Bible's Frame, Form, Focus, and Fulcrum

Frame	God's Kingdom
Form	through Covenant (Established, Enforced, and Enjoyed)
Focus	for God's Glory
Fulcrum	in Christ (Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier)

Stated succinctly, the message of the Christian Scriptures can be synthesized as *God's kingdom through covenant for his glory in Christ*.¹² Or, put another way, the Bible's call is for Jew and Gentile alike to magnify God as the supreme Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier of the world through Messiah Jesus. The Old Testament provides the foundation for this message; the New Testament supplies the fulfillment. Although every synthesis can be found wanting in light of the depths of God's greatness and mankind's fallen state, Figure 1.9 is an attempt to capture the entire Bible's message in a single graphic.

How would you summarize the Bible's message? Here is my attempt: *God's kingdom through covenant for his glory in Christ*.

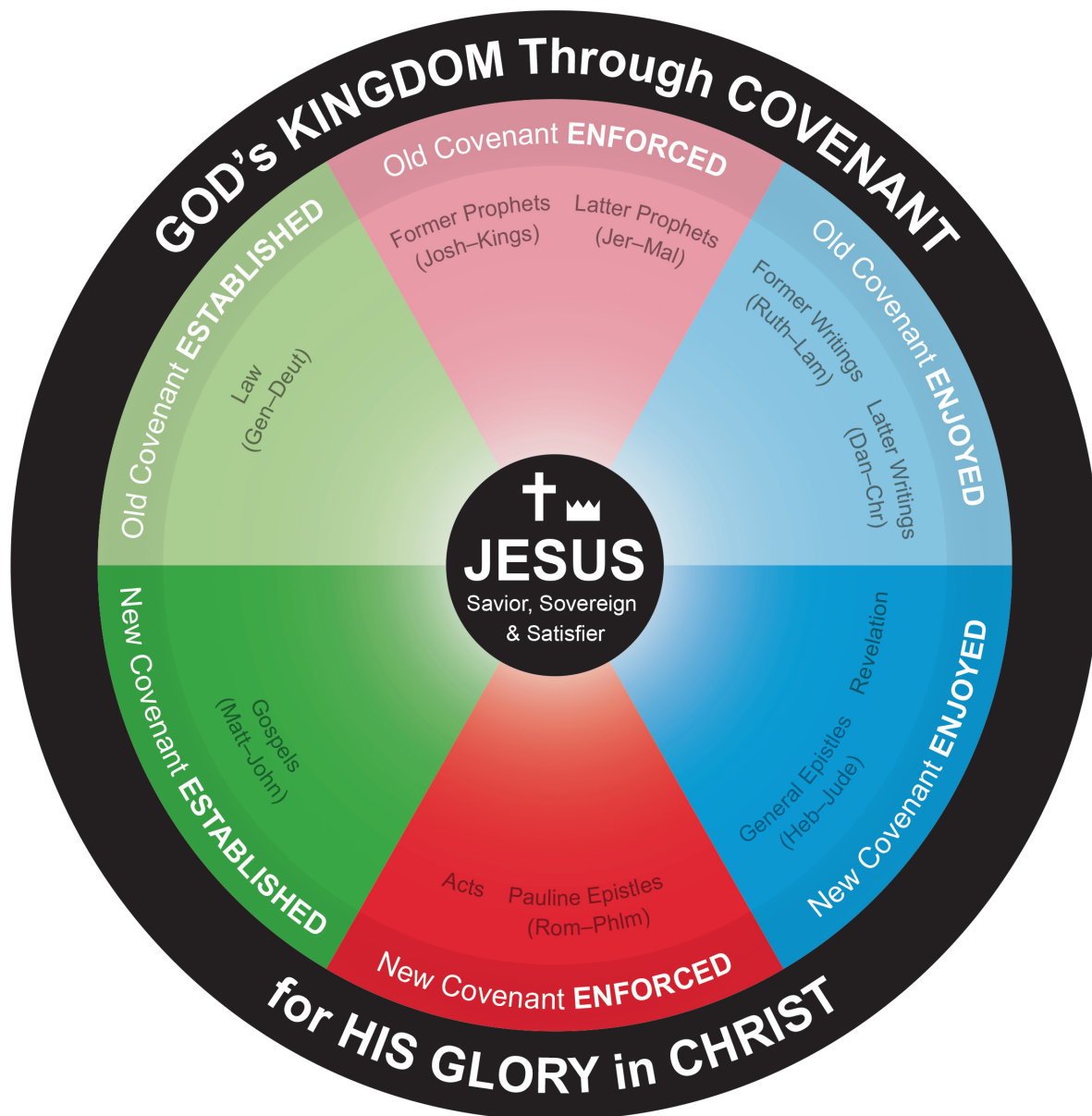
A Commencement Challenge

As you read through this Christian interpretation of the Old Testament, my prayer is that you will encounter God and find yourself changed more into his likeness. As you revel in the message of his Word, your life should develop heightened gratitude and hope, greater surrender and commitment, more intense delight and passion, all toward God in Christ. You should become more God-exalting and less dependent on things of this world. You should find yourself less self-absorbed and more ready to pour your life out in love for others, all in the strength that God supplies.

The prophet Isaiah foretold that, in the age of restoration, the remnant of Israel and the nations would all “be taught by the LORD” (Isa. 54:13; cf. Jer. 31:34). John 6:44–45 records Jesus citing this passage and then saying, “Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me” (John 6:45). May the Lord now grant you ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart to understand, all in a way that helps you move toward Christ in heart and soul, “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18).¹³

12. I thank my friend and colleague Jason C. Meyer, who first presented to me the simple but profound multi-orbed synthesis of the Bible's message as “God's kingdom through covenant for his glory (What? How? Why?).”

13. This gift was not granted to most of old covenant Israel (Deut. 29:4; Rom. 11:8), but God promised it for all in the new covenant (Deut. 30:6, 8; 2 Cor. 4:6). May it be so for you, even as you wait “for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

Figure 1.9 The Bible's Structure and Message¹⁴

14. I thank my friend Miles V. Van Pelt, whose lectures and charts on Old Testament biblical theology at www.biblicaltraining.org initially sparked my vision for this diagram.

KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS FOR REVIEW

Five world powers	Already but not yet
Fertile Crescent	Law, Prophets, Writings
The Land Between	Program of redemption
For our instruction	Covenant established, enforced, enjoyed
Seven historical figures	Frame, form, focus, and fulcrum
K.I.N.G.D.O.M.	Foundation and fulfillment
Five main covenants	
Story of God's glory	

KEY RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY¹⁵

- Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009.
- Carson, D. A. *The God Who Is There: Finding Your Place in God's Story*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.
- Dempster, Stephen G. *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*. NSBT. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Dumbrell, William J. *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Gentry, Peter J., and Stephen J. Wellum. *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme. *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.
- Hafemann, Scott J. *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001.

15. As editor of this survey, I have included books in the “Key Resources” lists at the end of each chapter that I believe will be helpful in various ways to the student of the Scriptures. Not all the books listed are unified in their theological perspectives or interpretive approaches, and all claims need to be evaluated carefully up against the Bible, which supplies the highest authority for the Christian.

- Hamilton, James M., Jr. *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- House, Paul R. *Old Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998.
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006.
- Williamson, Paul R. *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose*. NSBT. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992.