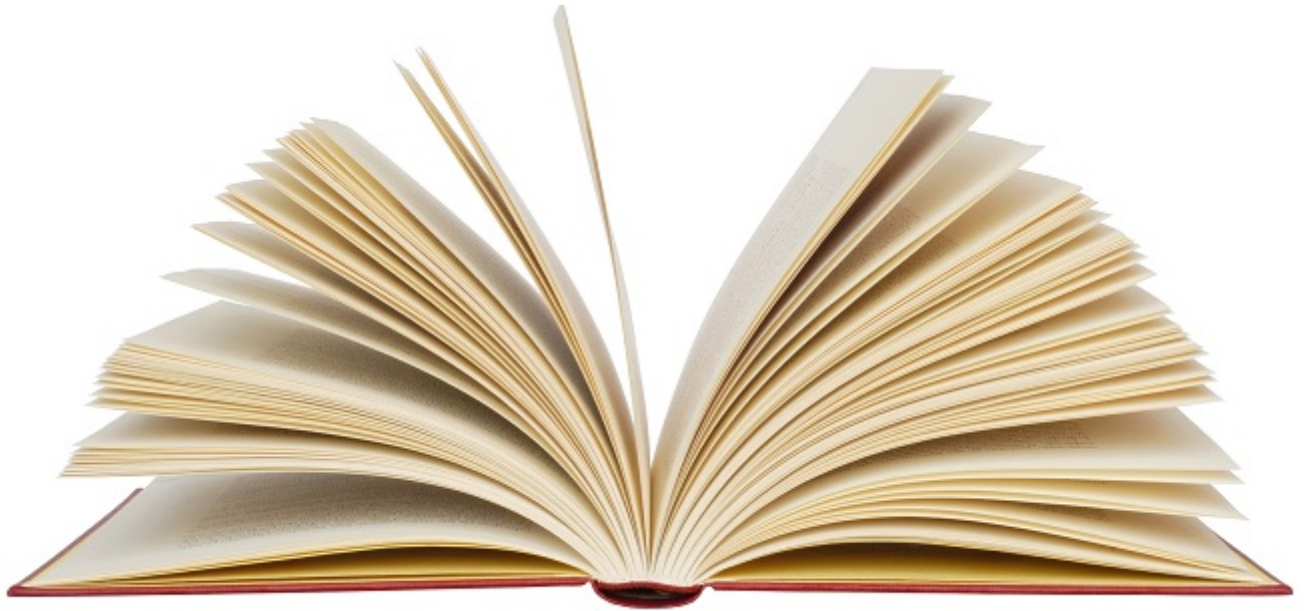

THE OLD TESTAMENT COVER TO COVER



Book Two:
Nehemiah through Hosea

Gene Taylor

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Nehemiah

I. General Data

A. Name: Nehemiah.

1. The book carries the name of its author and main character.
2. Originally the book of Nehemiah was united with the book of Ezra in the Hebrew text but was treated as a separate book when the Scriptures were translated into Latin.

B. Author.

1. Nehemiah (1:1). Some parts of the book contain his memoirs and an insight into his heart and feelings (1:1 - 7:5; 11:1-2; 12:27-43; 13:4-31).
2. "There is every reason to believe Nehemiah is the author of this book, especially those parts which are of the most interest and give it its true characteristics" (William S. Deal, *Baker's Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 122).
3. "Because Ezra and Nehemiah were treated as one book in the Hebrew text, and because the two books show certain similarities in style and outlook, many scholars have believed that Ezra and Nehemiah were originally compiled by the same person, probably Ezra. It is important that 1:1 describes the contents as 'the words of Nehemiah.' This assertion is supported by the narrative about Nehemiah being in the first person" (*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 156).

C. Time and time span.

1. Time. "The book of Nehemiah was probably written between 430 and 420 B.C." (*Nelson's*, 158).
2. Time span.
 - a. The events of the book begin in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes reign and relate two visits of Nehemiah to Jerusalem probably spanning the years 445-425 B.C.
 - b. "The time covered by this book is some twelve to fifteen years, perhaps 444-432 B.C., or 431 B.C. It is a natural sequel to Ezra" (Deal, 121-122).
 - c. "The book of Nehemiah focuses on the events surrounding the third return from the Exile, in 444 B.C. Nehemiah served twice as governor of Judah. His first time as governor spanned twelve years (5:14), and ended when he returned to Babylon (13:6). He then returned to Jerusalem 'after certain days.' If the king was still Artaxerxes I, as seems likely, then Nehemiah's second governorship began prior to 424 B.C., when the king died" (*Nelson's*, 158).

D. Historical setting.

1. Ezra and Nehemiah.
 - a. Twelve years had elapsed between the close of the book of Ezra and the beginning of Nehemiah (cf. Ezra 7:8; 10:16-17; Neh. 1:1; 2:1) with Nehemiah then recording the events of the next twenty years.

- b. Ezra and Nehemiah worked together during the reading of the Law to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and instigated the written covenant between the people and God (8:1,9; 9:3; 10:1).
 - c. They also led the processions at the dedication of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem (12:31-43).
2. Pertinent dates and events.
- a. 464 B.C. Artaxerxes I succeeds his father as king of Persia.
 - b. 458 B.C. The second return of Jews to Jerusalem under Ezra.
 - c. 446 B.C. Enemies force the Jews to halt construction on the walls of Jerusalem (Ezra 4:7-23). News of this reaches Nehemiah (Neh. 1:3).
 - d. 445 B.C. Nehemiah leads a third small group to Jerusalem to reorganize the construction effort. He is appointed as governor of Judah.
 - e. 444 B.C. The walls are erected (6:15).
 - f. 433 B.C. Nehemiah returns to the king's court (cf. 2:6; 13:6) after twelve years (5:14).
 - g. 425 B.C. (?) Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem (13:7).
- E. Nehemiah the man.
1. He was the son Hachaliah of the tribe of Judah and was likely born in Babylon during the captivity.
 - a. His family was prominent in Shushan, the capital city of Persia (1:1-2).
 - b. His brother, Hanani, had charge of the city of Jerusalem (1:2; 7:2).
 2. He was the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes (1:11). "...Being a cupbearer doesn't sound very impressive. The position sounds comparable to the dishwasher, or at best to the butler or the table waiter. But the cupbearer was far more important than that. The cupbearer tasted the wine before the king drank it and he tasted the food before the king ate it. If the dinner was poisoned...no more cupbearer, but long live the king. And through the practice of this custom, an incredible intimacy developed between the taster and the partaker, between the cupbearer and the king. In fact, it has been suggested by ancient historians that the cupbearer, like no one other than the king's wife, was in a position to influence the monarch" (Charles R. Swindoll, *Hand Me Another Brick*, 23).
 3. His character. "Nehemiah is one of the really outstanding men in Old Testament history. A man of wealth, with high rank and unquestioned character, he devoted himself without reservation to a discouraging and apparently hopeless undertaking in the interest of the religious, social, and economic welfare of his people. With almost superhuman energy in the face of determined and clever opposition, he led the people in rebuilding the walls of their city. He showed his loyalty to the law of Moses by his religious reforms. For the sake of his nation's future mission he took his stand against mixed marriages. His concern for the poor among his people is evinced by championing their cause against the abuses by their wealthy brethren. His courage, born of confidence in his own integrity, is revealed in his famous reply to the threats of his enemies—'Should such a one as I

flee?’ The quality and the depth of his spiritual life is shown in the prayers recorded in his book. His unselfish and generous nature is shown by the fact that he gave all these years of devoted service to his people without any monetary compensation whatsoever. Without his magnificent contribution one wonders if this discouraged and struggling little colony could have survived. Nehemiah deserves a place among the greatest benefactors of his race” (H.I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History*, 269-270).

4. His mission. He came to Jerusalem for no other reason than to rebuild it and its walls and to reestablish the glory of Israel (2:5,17).
5. His contemporaries.
 - a. While he served as governor of Judah, Ezra, the high priest, continued ministering to the spiritual needs of the Jews there (cf. Neh, 8,12).
 - b. He also had the assistance of the prophet Malachi who challenged the abuses of the priesthood. Many of the evils denounced in the book of Malachi are part of the historical record of Nehemiah.

F. Purposes.

1. The book of Nehemiah is about rebuilding—the walls of Jerusalem and the spirituality of the Jews.
2. “The writer desired to set forth a true historical account of one of Israel’s greatest events—the rebuilding after the restoration...
“This book also reminded people that this great work was done both at the direction of God and under His protective care. They were never to lose sight of the fact that all things which had any divine connection in Israel were done under God’s protecting, directing care” (Deal, 121).
3. “The book of Nehemiah completes the historical account of God’s people in the Old Testament, about four hundred years before the birth of the promised Messiah...While Ezra deals with the religious restoration of Judah, Nehemiah is primarily concerned with Judah’s political and geographical restoration. Great attention is devoted to the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s wall, because Jerusalem was the spiritual and political center of Judah. Without walls, Jerusalem could hardly be considered a city at all. Prominent in the book of Nehemiah, as in the rest of the Old Testament, is the concept of God’s covenant with His people. The Old Testament treats Israel’s history in terms of her faithfulness or disobedience to the covenant. Nehemiah 9:1 - 10:39 records a covenant renewal ceremony in which the people commit themselves to separate from the Gentiles in marriage and to obey God’s commandments” (Nelson’s, 158).

G. A summary of the book.

This historical narrative divides into two sections which describe the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (chs. 1-7) and the religious reformation of the Jews who had returned from exile (chs. 8-13).

The task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem began when Nehemiah received word of the distress of his people in Judah. He immediately sought God’s help in prayer (ch. 1). He requested a leave of absence and the king gave him authority

to rebuild the city (2:1-11). After arriving in Jerusalem, he surveyed the walls and called the people to work (2:12-20). The response was tremendous as all the people—priests, Jews from outlying towns, and even women—joined in an organized effort to rebuild (ch. 3). Amidst sarcasm, insults, threats, and discouragements from the enemy, Nehemiah kept the people working steadily as a portion of them kept watch over their enemies (ch. 4). He then dealt with internal problems caused by the greedy rich Jews (ch. 5). His enemies conspired against him but his dedication to the work and his faith in God led the people to complete the walls in 52 days (ch. 6). He then consulted the register of the returned exiles before he made plans to resettle the city (ch. 7; cf. Ezra 2).

Ezra and Nehemiah then concentrated on a spiritual revival. The first step was to familiarize the people with God’s law (ch. 8). They restored the Feast of the Tabernacles which had been forgotten for almost 1000 years (8:13-18). The second step was that the people confessed their sins and entered into a covenant with God (ch. 9). They sealed the covenant and the third step of their reform was to make provision for the continuance of the temple and its worship (ch. 10). Provision was made for one-tenth of the people to dwell in Jerusalem and reactivate it as the center of Jewish life (ch. 11). Nehemiah dedicated the walls as the people worshiped God and rejoiced (ch. 12).

The concluding chapter of the book mentions the final stages of Nehemiah’s reforms, some of which occurred upon his second return to Jerusalem (ch. 13). The Jews separated themselves from the mixed multitude (13:1-3). Nehemiah expelled Tobiah the Ammonite from the temple chamber (13:4-9) and made arrangements to support the priests (13:10-14). He insisted on a proper observance of the Sabbath (13:15-22), put an end to mixed marriages (13:23-27), and expelled the high priest’s son because of his marriage to the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (13:28-31).

II. An Outline of Nehemiah

- A. The Rebuilding of the Wall (chs. 1-7).
 - 1. Nehemiah permitted to go to Jerusalem (chs. 1-2).
 - 2. The construction of the wall amidst adversity (chs. 3-7).
- B. The Religious Revival (chs. 8-13).
 - 1. The law read (ch. 8).
 - 2. Confession made and the covenant renewed (chs. 9-10).
 - 3. The repopulation of Jerusalem and the dedication of its wall (chs. 11-12).
 - 4. Nehemiah’s second governorship and his reforms (ch. 13).

III. The Lessons of Nehemiah

- A. Nothing worthwhile can be accomplished, even in the service of the Lord, without hard work and dedication.
- B. Opposition to God’s work can always be expected.
 - 1. Satan still raises up enemies, both within and without, to hinder the work of the Lord just as he did then (2:17-20).
 - 2. We need to learn that opposition, no matter how strong, is no reason to stop doing the work of the Lord.

- C. If outright opposition will not cause one to stop serving the Lord, often ridicule and making fun will prove effective.
 - 1. The enemies of Nehemiah made fun of his work trying to discourage him, but without success (4:1-6).
 - 2. We must take our stand for right no matter what others may call us or how they may make fun or ridicule.
- D. When everything else failed, his enemies tried to get Nehemiah to compromise (6:2).
 - 1. An old ploy of Satan is getting the righteous to compromise.
 - 2. By this means he weakens their influence for good and the work of the Lord is hindered or completely stopped.
- E. "Much in Nehemiah is of great value to the church; it is a pattern for progress in spiritual things. It also contains truths which have excellent personal application" (Deal, 121).
- F. Worldly success and prosperity is not incompatible with godliness.
 - 1. Many want to think that one cannot be a proper servant of the Lord if he is successful in earthly endeavors but Nehemiah teaches otherwise.
 - 2. If Nehemiah could keep his conscience clean among the pagan Persians, then so can we.
- G. A reproof of premillennialist doctrine (9:8): Israel had inherited all the land God had promised.
- H. A reproof of Sabbatarian doctrine (9:13-14).
 - 1. Sabbatarians teach that observance of the Sabbath was commanded of all people from the beginning. They quote Genesis 2:3 as divine approval.
 - 2. Nehemiah says that God did not make Sabbath observance known to man until the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai when it was given only to the Jews (v. 14).
- J. The need for an active prayer life. Eight times Nehemiah was faced with an immediate crisis. Eight times he responded with prayer (2:4; 4:4-5; 4:9; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14; 13:22; 13:29).
- K. Sin is not to be tolerated (ch. 13).
 - 1. Nehemiah cleansed the temple (vv. 4-6).
 - 2. He ousted Tobiah the Ammonite from the temple chamber (vv. 7-9).
 - 3. He would not tolerate self-indulgence at the expense of the service of God (vv. 10-14).
 - 4. He would not tolerate the Sabbath being dishonored and condemned those who put business before worship (vv. 15-22).
 - 5. He would not tolerate the mixed marriages of the Jews (vv. 23-31).

Questions on Nehemiah

Chapter 1

1. What report from Jerusalem was received by Nehemiah ?”
2. For what did Nehemiah pray?

Chapter 2

3. What was Nehemiah’s official position? What sort of person would a king want in that position?
4. What attracted the king’s attention as Nehemiah carried out his duties?
5. What was the purpose of Nehemiah’s journey to Jerusalem?
6. What was the purpose of the letters requested by Nehemiah?
7. What conditions did Nehemiah find when he arrived in Jerusalem?
8. What did Nehemiah propose to the people of Jerusalem? What were the two reactions to his proposal?

Chapter 3

9. Where does the listing of workers begin and end? (vv. 1, 32) What does that let us know about this listing?

Chapter 4

10. What tactics were employed by those who were opposed to the rebuilding?
11. To whom did the workers carry their problem?
12. What reason is given for the progress of the wall? (v. 6)
13. What provisions were made for the defense of the workers?
14. What encouragement was given to the people? (vv. 14, 20)

Chapter 5

15. What problem threatened the unity of God’s people?
16. What action was taken to solve this problem?

Chapter 6

17. List four ways in which enemies attempted to undermine the work.
18. List those things found in this chapter which help to explain Nehemiah's success?
19. How long did it take to finish the walls? What effect did the completion of the walls have on the people's enemies?

Chapter 8

20. What were the positions of Ezra and Nehemiah respectively among the people?

Chapter 9

21. What is the main theme of the review of Israel's history that is given in verses 7 through 31?
22. Since the historical review led to petition (v. 32) and action (v. 38), what was their petition? What action is taken?

Chapter 10

23. What covenant is entered into by the people?
24. What two points of the law were singled out for specific mention in Israel's covenant?
25. According to verses 32 through 39, what else did Israel agree to do?

Esther

I. General Data

A. Name: Esther.

1. The book carries the name of its main character.
2. “This book was named for its heroine. Her name means ‘Ishtar’ or ‘Venus,’ probably from her great beauty. This was the Persian name given her; originally her Hebrew name was Hadassah, and it meant ‘myrtle,’ from the myrtle wood trees, which are probably in some way associated with the thought of beauty” (William S. Deal, *Baker’s Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 125).

B. Author: Anonymous.

1. He was evidently familiar with Persian life—the architectural plan of the palace and court (1:5; 2:11,21; 7:8), court etiquette (4:11; 8:11-18), palace intrigues (2:21-23; 7:9), banquet customs (1:6-8; 5:5). He also had access to official Persian court records (2:23; 6:1; 10:2) and to what Mordecai wrote concerning the regulations for the feast of Purim (9:20-23,29-32).
2. Suggested authors are Mordecai, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the men of the Great Synagogue.
3. “The authorship of this remarkable book has never been fully established. Some among the Jews assigned it to Mordecai; others to the men of the Great Synagogue who helped Ezra in establishing the canon; but neither among the Jews nor the early Christians was there a definite statement. It is apparent, however, that the book was written by a Jew, who understood Jewish customs and people, one who was a long-time resident in Persia, also understanding the customs of that land” (Deal, 127).

C. Time and time span.

1. Time. 450-440 B.C. It was probably written after the death of Ahasuerus (465 B.C.) (cf. Esth. 1:1-2; 10:2).
2. Time span.
 - a. The events of the book occur before the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. Chronologically, the events occur between chapters six and seven of the book of Ezra.
 - b. The events of Esther cover a period of ten years (483-473 B.C.), from the third year of Ahasuerus’ reign (1:3) to the twelfth (3; 7; 9:1).
 - c. “The events described in Esther occurred between 483-473 B.C., and fit between chapters 6 and 7 of Ezra, between the first return led by Zerubbabel and the second led by Ezra” (*Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 162).

D. Historical setting.

- “When Cyrus permitted the Jews in exile to return to their homeland, many of them stayed in their new places. Mordecai, Esther, and thousands of others remained in the territory of the Persians outside of Palestine. This book demonstrates God’s presence with those people as well as with the returnees to Judah” (Rubel Shelly, *A Book-By- Book Study of the Old Testament*, 63).

E. Main characters in the book.

1. Esther. Esther was an orphan who was taken into the home of Mordecai, her cousin, who raised her as his own daughter (2:7,15). Her ancestor, Kish, had been among the captives led away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (along with Ezekiel) (2:5-7). Her beautiful appearance and winsome personality, along with God's providence, caused her to be chosen as the next Queen of Persia.
2. Mordecai.
 - a. He evidently held some position in the king's palace (2:19-23; 3:1-6; 4:1-2; 5:9,13; 6:12). Later, he was appointed over Haman's house and made second in the kingdom to King Ahasuerus (10:2-3).
 - b. "While Esther stands out as the principle character, the whole story turns on the refusal of Mordecai to bow down to Haman, which would have been to show him divine honor. He did not hate Haman, but, as a Jew, could not worship any other than God and he dared to stand for principle at the risk of his life" (J.B. Tidwell, *The Bible Book By Book*, 92).
3. Haman. He was second in the kingdom and an immature, arrogant man. He boasted of his greatness (5:10-12; 6:6), and when Mordecai refused to bow to him, he convinced the king to issue a decree that all the Jews be slain (3:1-15).
4. King Ahasuerus. He is Xerxes I who ruled Persia from 485 to 464 B.C.

F. Theme.

1. The providence of God.
 - a. In this book, the hand of God is seen silently, yet powerfully guiding the course of human events to fulfill His purpose, nothing spectacular or miraculous, just the quiet guidance of a concerned, loving Father.
 - b. "It was no mere 'lucky set of circumstances' which prevented the destruction of the Jewish people in Esther's time. A key passage of the book is Esther 4: 14b...The word 'God' is nowhere in the book of Esther, but no book of the Bible shows His hand in human history more dramatically" (Shelly, 64).
2. The Feast of Purim.
 - a. This book explains and describes the institution of the Feast of Purim and the circumstances which led to its establishment.
 - b. This is a two-day celebration on the 14th and 15th of the twelfth month of the Jewish year (February-March). It commemorates the Jews' deliverance from Haman's decree.
 - c. It was instituted by Queen Esther and Mordecai (Esth. 9:18-32).

G. Purposes of the book.

1. "Esther is to the Old Testament what John's Revelation is to the New—a message of God's protection, provision and preservation for His people" (Wilson Adams, an unpublished work, 80).
2. "The major purpose of the book of Esther is to show how a host of Jews living in exile were saved from being exterminated by the hand of a Gentile monarch. Though no name for God appears in the book, the

divine Providence pervades the narrative [Matthew Henry writes, 'If the name of God is not here, His finger is.' See 4:14 for an example of an implied divine Providence]. It is the same one who preserved the nation of Israel in the oppressions of Pharaoh, and through such devastating judgments as those of the wilderness journeys, the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70...The story of Esther concerns deliverance for the Jews during exile years. The book does not intend to extol the Jew, but to show that the fate of the nation— good or bad —is in the hands of s sovereign God" (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, 244-245).

3. "Esther contains a very important episode in Jewish history, unconnected in any way with the regular course of such history...The purpose of the book is probably twofold. First, it provided the Jewish peoples of the Persian Empire, Palestine, and elsewhere, with the correct story of the great providence by which they were spared...Second, it was doubtless written to show that the divine providence had been thrown around the Jews, by which they had been most miraculously spared from destruction...Furthermore, it shows how silently God may work for His people; the world about may never recognize His workings. It is another solemn, though unannounced, demonstration of God's intervention in the affairs of men in the carrying out of His purpose" (Deal, 125-126).

H. A summary of the book.

The book opens at the banquet of the king of Persia in the capital city of Shushan (Susa). During the drunken feast, King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) sends for his beautiful Queen Vashti who refused to parade herself as a spectacle. In his anger, he put her away (ch. 1). A replacement was sought for her and Esther, a Jewess, won the king's heart and became his queen (2:1-20). In those days, Mordecai, her cousin, discovered a plot against the king's life (2:21-23).

Then great danger came upon the Jews. After Haman's promotion to second in command, he demanded that he be worshiped as a god. When Mordecai refused, Haman plotted to kill the entire Jewish race (ch. 3). Mordecai petitioned Esther for help because even she would not be spared (ch. 4). Esther approached the king, endangering her own life (4:10-11,16), and entreated him and Haman to come to a banquet she had prepared for them. She requested their presence again the next day (5:1-8). Burning with rage because Mordecai would not bow to him, later that day Haman constructed a gallows on which to hang him (5:9-14). Suffering from insomnia that night, the king requested that the chronicles of his reign be read to him. He discovered that Mordecai had not been rewarded for thwarting an assassination plot (6:1-3). The next morning he asked Haman, who had come seeking permission to kill Mordecai, how he would honor the man in whom the king delighted. Thinking he was surely the man to whom the king referred, he was put in charge of honoring Mordecai (6:4-14).

At Esther's second banquet, she revealed the plot against her and the rest of the people and named Haman as the one responsible. Haman was hanged on his own gallows (ch. 7). Mordecai was appointed to the position Haman had held and authorized to write decrees allowing the Jews to resist on the day of the massacre (ch. 8).

The Jews were delivered and slew their tormentors (9:1-17). To remember this day of deliverance, Esther and Mordecai instituted the Feast of Purim (9:18-32). The book closes describing Mordecai's advancement, thus assuring protection and care over all the Jews scattered throughout the nations (ch. 10).

II. An Outline of Esther

- A. Esther Made Queen (chs. 1-2).
- B. The Jews In Danger (chs. 3-8).
 - 1. Haman's plot (ch. 3).
 - 2. Mordecai's appeal to Esther (ch. 4).
 - 3. Esther's banquet (ch. 5).
 - 4. The king honors Mordecai (ch. 6).
 - 5. Haman hanged (ch. 7).
 - 6. The decree allowing Jews to resist their enemies (ch. 8).
- C. The Jews Delivered (chs. 9-10).
 - 1. Their enemies slain (9:1-17).
 - 2. The Feast of Purim (9:18-32).
 - 3. Mordecai's advancement in the king's court (ch. 10).

III. The Lessons of Esther

- A. The providential care of God for His people no matter where they may be.
 - 1. Although God's name is not found in the book, a reading of it shows divine activity on every page.
 - 2. Commenting on the absence of God's name in the book, one preacher said it is "God working among the shadows."
- B. "It (the book of Esther) provides the Christian reader with a remarkable demonstration of the courage, faith, and heroic action of the persons involved in the story" (Deal, 126).
- C. The lesson from Queen Vashti.
 - 1. A lesson to young ladies: never for anyone or any occasion, descend to the depths of displaying your body for lustful purposes.
 - 2. A woman's body is sacred and no man has the right to see it disrobed except her husband.
- D. "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7-8).
 - 1. Haman is hanged on the very gallows he prepared for Mordecai because of his wickedness.
 - 2. Always remember that God, in His providence, is behind the scenes and vengeance belongs to Him (Rom. 12:19).

Questions on Esther

Chapter 1

1. When do the events in this book take place?
2. Where do these events take place?
3. Who was Vashti? What can be said of her character?
4. What did Vashti refuse to do?
5. What shows how seriously the king's advisors regarded Vashti's refusal? What effect did they foresee? What action was decided upon?

Chapter 2

6. Describe how Esther came to be queen.
7. Describe the conspiracy related in verses 19 through 23. How was it uncovered?

Chapter 3

8. Who was Haman? Why did he want to destroy the Jews?
9. What reason did Mordecai give for not bowing down to Haman?
10. Describe the charge that Haman made against the Jews in his petition to the king.
11. Why did the king give his ring to Haman?

Chapter 4

12. What two points did Mordecai use to persuade Esther to act?
13. Why was Mordecai so sure that the Jews would not perish? (v. 14; cf. Jer. 31:35-37; 33:23-36)

Chapter 5

14. What risk was Esther taking? (cf. 4:11, 16) How was she received?
15. What was Haman's attitude as he left the banquet Esther had prepared? Who did he see that caused his countenance to change?
16. Who was Zeresh? What was her advice to Haman?

Chapter 6

17. How and why did Mordecai come to be honored by the king?

Chapter 7

18. What was Esther's petition of the king? Why? What was the king's response?

19. What happened to Haman?

Chapter 8

20. Describe the elevation of Mordecai especially noting the significance of:

- a. The ring given to him.
- b. The garb of verse 15.

21. Why was Haman's decree not simply revoked? (v.8b; cf. 1:19; Dan. 6:8, 12, 15)
What measure was taken to nullify the force of that decree?

Chapter 9

22. How were the tables completely turned on the enemies of the Jews?

23. What in the text helps to explain the victory of the Jews?

24. Explain the meaning or significance of the festival of Purim?

Chapter 10

25. What was Mordecai's position? Describe his activities in behalf of the people.

Job

I. The Nature of the Book of Job

A. The name.

1. "This book bears the name of the famous patriarch about whom it is written. The name probably meant 'one persecuted,' from the old Hebrew. The meaning is a bit obscure, but possibly was taken from the fact of Job's trials" (William S. Deal, *Baker's Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 135).
2. "The name 'Job' appears in ancient Near Eastern texts, identifying a legendary wise man. Since there is no genealogical identification given for Job, some scholars believe the author is using a fictional character to make an important theological point. However, given the Bible's normal pattern of basing revelation on historical events, such an idea is questionable" (*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 169).
 - a. "Job was a true historical character. The prophet Ezekiel associated him with Noah and Daniel (Ezek. 14:14,20), as a true historical person" (Deal, 137).
 - b. The book of James refers to Job and views God's dealings with him as historical fact (Jas. 5:11).

B. The character of the book.

1. "Job, one of the most complex and interesting books in the Old Testament...The book itself, a very long and highly structured poem..." (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 194).
2. "...the literary structure of the book of Job is symmetrical. Sandwiching a series of poetic debates (3:1-42:6), a prose prologue (chs. 1-2) introduces Job, reveals God's confidence in him, and recounts the tragedies that reduced him economically, physically, and emotionally. An epilogue (42:7-17) describing Job's restoration is also in prose, and balances the prologue" (*Nelson's*, 171).
3. "The book of Job is one of the most interesting in the Bible. It is a historical poem —based on an event that actually happened" (Deal, 138).
4. "Since poetry is the language of the heart, Job reveals the innermost thoughts of men more so than outward deeds" (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, 262).

II. The Author

- A. The authorship of Job has been attributed to many different men including Moses, Elihu, Elijah, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezra, Isaiah and others.
- B. "The matter of authorship is also uncertain. No author is mentioned in the book" (Deal, 137).
- C. "The text of Job does not reveal the identity of its author, but the contents of the book indicate that its author was a profound thinker who treats some of the most crucial and difficult problems of human existence from a mature spiritual perspective. The author was also well educated and familiar with wisdom literature motifs, nature, and foreign cultures" (*Nelson's*, 169).
- D. It seems reasonable to suppose that some writer living in the "Golden Age" of Hebrew wisdom (1000-700 B.C.) wrote the book.

III. The Date

- A. The date of both the writing and of the events recorded in the book is unknown.
- B. "Critics date the composition of the book anywhere from Patriarchal times (Ebrard) to as late as 400 B.C. (Eissfeldt, Volz) or even the third century b.c. (Cornhill). Probably the most likely date is the Solomonic era, (Franz, Delitzsch, Keil) because it bears evidence of the creative beginning period of wisdom literature. It comprehends ideas similar to parts of the Proverbs (cf. Job 15:8 and chap. 28 with Prov. 8)" (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 594).
- C. "The dating of Job involves two issues: the date of the book's setting and the date of its composition. Although it is not possible to determine the precise date of the events de-scribed, several factors argue for a patriarchal date (2000-1800 b.c.): the absence of references to Israelite history or biblical law; Job's long life of over 100 years (42:16); Job's role as priest for his family, which was prohibited by Mosaic law (1:5); and the measurement of Job's wealth in terms of livestock (1:3). Suggestions for the date of the book's composition range from the patriarchal era to the post-exilic period. Most scholars today date the book between the Solomonic and exilic eras, and some points of contact between Job and Isaiah suggest that they may have been written about the same time" (*Nelson's*, 169).

IV. The Setting

- A. Job the man.
 - 1. Job was a historical person (cf. Ezek. 14:14; Jas. 5:11) and not just some character in a fable or parable.
 - 2. "Job was certainly one of the richest and most popular men of his times (1:1-3). He was a man of great mental will...He was a man of deep piety and dedication to God...The dreadful disease which Job had is now thought to have been a form of leprosy, complicated with elephantitis. This was one of the most dreaded and painful diseases known to the Oriental countries. His sickness perhaps lasted for about a year or so" (Deal, 138).
- B. The events in the book took place in the land of Uz (1:1).
 - 1. It is located somewhere northeast of Palestine, near a desert (1:19), probably between the city of Damascus and the Euphrates River.
 - 2. "The land of Uz (1:1) is believed by some to have been located along the border between Palestine and Arabia, northerly and easterly toward the Euphrates River, on the caravan route between Egypt and Babylon. Tradition assigns a place called Huran as Job's home, in a region just east of the Sea of Galilee" (Deal, 137-138).
- C. Job likely lived in the second millenium b.c. (2000-1000) during the patriarchal period.
 - 1. He was a prosperous man whose life resembles that of Abraham.
 - 2. His wealth is measured in cattle and possessions rather than in silver and gold.
 - 3. His longevity, 140 years (42:16-17), corresponds to that of the patriarchs after the flood. Soon, length of life began declining drastically (cf. Gen. 5:1-32; 11:10-26,32; 25:7).

4. No mention is made of Moses, the Law, or any other event or institution of the Israelite covenant and nation, although that may have been because he was a Gentile.

V. Summaries of the Book

- A. "The book, itself, a very long and highly structured poem, is about a man named Job who lost all that he had within a short period of time. He found himself an outcast, waiting for death near the city dump, when some of his former friends came to comfort him. The hidden backdrop to the story is the will of God and the sneering challenge of the Devil" (*Shaw's*, 194).
- B. "Set in the period of the patriarchs, the book of Job tells the story of a man who loses everything—his wealth, his family, and his health—and wrestles with the question, Why? The book begins with a heavenly debate between God and Satan, moves through three cycles of earthly debates between Job and his friends, and concludes with a dramatic diagnosis of Job's problems. In the end, Job acknowledges the sovereignty of God in his life and receives back more than he had before his trials" (*Nelson's*, 169).
- C. A summary of the text.
 1. The book opens by setting the scene for the suffering of Job (chs. 1-2).
 - a. He is introduced as a pious and wealthy man (1:1-5).
 - b. Before God, Satan challenged the genuineness of Job's faith and was granted permission to test him (1:6-12).
 - c. In one day, Job lost everything he had, yet, he did not sin (1:13-22).
 - d. Later Satan was allowed to attack Job's health and, even then in spite of the influence of his wife to curse God and die, he still did not sin (2:1-10).
 - e. Job's three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) come to comfort him (2:11-13).
 2. As Job's pain worsens, he pities himself and curses the day of his birth (ch. 3).
 3. The main section of the book involves a debate which contains three cycles of speeches between Job and his friends (turned tormentors), over the reason for Job's sufferings (chs. 4-31).
 - a. The first cycle relates the charge of Job's friends that he must be guilty of some great sin for which God is punishing him (chs. 4-14).
 - b. The second cycle consists of his friends' insistence that his claim of innocence in cycle one is added proof of his guilt (chs. 15-21).
 - c. In the third cycle, Job's friends argue that his sufferings are the kind which come upon a man who is guilty of the sin with which they have charged him, in spite of his denial. But Job continues to state his righteousness and to declare his friends are wrong (chs. 22-31).
 4. The next section relates the speeches of Elihu, a young on-looker who is enraged because of Job's self-justification and the condemnation of God and because Job's friends could not answer his arguments but still condemned him (chs. 31-37). His idea was that suffering is Divine chastisement which is designed to purge one's life of sin and bring about good results.

5. God, after human wisdom is unable to solve the problem, then breaks His silence and speaks from the whirlwind to resolve the problem (38:1 - 42:6).
 - a. Job had questioned God and His justice through the entire ordeal, now God questions him and challenges him to explain the working of His physical creation (chs. 38-39).
 - b. Job recognizes his inadequacy to answer God's challenge (40:1-5).
 - c. God again challenges Job for answers (40:6 - 41:34).
 - d. Job is brought to repentance and sees God now as he has never seen Him before. He now trusts God with the things he cannot fully grasp with his limited mind because of God's faithfulness in all other areas of His creation (42:1-6).
6. The book closes with God's rebuke of Job's friends and the twofold restoration of the things which had been taken from Job (42:7-17).

VI. The Message of the Book

- A. "The basic question of the book is, 'Why do the righteous suffer if God is loving and all-powerful?' Suffering itself is not the central theme; rather, the focus is on what Job learns from his suffering—the sovereignty of God over all creation" (*Nelson's*, 171).
- B. "There may be two or three aspects to its purpose. One of its main objectives seems to be to reveal that human suffering of itself is no evidence of the displeasure of God...A further purpose of the book may be to teach the lesson that God is with His people at all times" (Deal, 135-136).
- C. "It is generally agreed that Job is concerned with the so-called 'problem of evil'. All men suffer and ponder its significance for human existence, but one who believes in the personal God of the Bible faces a special challenge. We believe in a God who is infinite in goodness, love and power. Then why do His creatures suffer? Why do innocent people suffer? Why do innocent people suffer so much?...The response to suffering recommended by this book is as follows: Since one cannot always understand what happens to him, much less the reason behind it all, let him humble himself before God and trust the Almighty to see him through" (Rubel Shelly, *A Book-by-Book Study of the Old Testament*, 70).
- D. "The issues raised in this book are indeed among the most profound and difficult of human existence. The answer was already on Job's lips in the Prologue when he said, 'the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (1:21b); and 'Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?' (2:10). The truth Job knew was that God must be God, and that of all values and all existence only God and His glory must ultimately prevail" (*Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, 604).

VII. Some Lessons from the Book

- A. The nature of Satan. "Satan is not a name representing impersonal evil; Satan is the personal enemy of God and His children. The persons and events of the narrative of Job are real persons and actual events...(1:1,6; 2:7). This is precise, genuine history. And, lest one think that Satan is no longer active in accusing the children of God, the last book of the Bible reveals the sober truth of Satan's continuing work until end times...(Rev. 12:10; cf. I Pet. 5:8)" (Jensen, 268).

- B. The use of suffering. "Although the book does not answer the 'Why' of suffering altogether, it does answer the greater problem of suffering: 'What use shall I make of suffering?' Job is the answer. Out of the furnace of affliction he came forth a better man, possessing a deeper faith in God, a humility and trust he did not know before, nor could he have learned it in any other school than that of suffering...The solution of the 'why' would be worth little if reached. The big thing, the important thing, is to learn how to use it for the development of a deeper and more abiding trust in God, assured of the great truth that God cares, that He is mindful of every moment of that suffering, and that through it He can make it work to His glory and to the glory and development of the trusting soul that suffers" (Homer Hailey, *Hailey's Comments*, Vol. I, 347).
- C. The concept of genuine trust. "The book of Job teaches that the person with genuine trust worships God basically for who He is. That person may have unanswered questions as to why God does what He does, but he still worships God whole-heartedly for who He is..." (Jensen, 268).
- D. Lessons on comforting the bereaved.
1. Job's attitude toward his comforters.
 - a. You are all sorry comforters (16:2).
 - b. You behave as a deceitful brook (6:15).
 - c. You persecute me as God does (19:22).
 2. What to learn from the mistakes of Job's friends.
 - a. Silence is golden (2:13).
 - b. Beware of "foot in mouth" (5:25; 8:4).
 - c. Bereaved people say things they do not mean (6:26).
 - d. Bereaved people do not expect you to make it all well (6:22).
 - e. Beware of your own insecurities (6:21).
 - f. Do not try to play God (13:7-8).
 - g. Protect the dignity of the bereaved (12:4).
 - h. Weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15).

VIII. Job and the New Testament

- A. The only mention of Job in the New Testament is where his perseverance in spite of suffering is set forth as an example for Christians to follow (Jas. 5:11).
- B. Job serves, in several ways, as a type of Christ.
1. Each tested by Satan.
 2. Each a righteous sufferer.
 3. There are parallels seen in the Psalms (19:13-21; 30:9-21/ Psa. 69 and 22).
 4. Each suffered on behalf of others.
 5. Each was perceived and mocked as a sinner.
 6. Each was rejected by his own family.
 7. Each felt alienated from God (Psa. 22:1).
 8. Each interceded for those who opposed him
 9. Each received glory through suffering (1 Pet. 1:11).

Questions on Job

Chapter 1

1. Describe the character and life of Job.
2. Why is it important to know of Job's character at the beginning of the book?
3. Since the name "Satan" means "adversary." why is it such an appropriate name for him?
4. What important point lies in the fact that Satan had to come before God before he could do anything against Job?
5. What charge did Satan level against Job?
6. Considering the nature of his trial, what of Job is being tested?
7. List, in order, the things that happened to Job in verses 13-22.
8. How did Job react to this trial?

Chapter 2

9. Since Satan is not willing to admit defeat, what further proposal does he make?
10. What additional affliction was put on Job?
11. How did Job's wife become an additional trial to his faith?
12. What was Job's attitude after this second trial?
13. Why did Job's three friends come to him?
14. What was the reaction of his friends upon arriving and seeing Job?
15. What conclusion did these men reach about Job's suffering?

Chapters 38:1 - 40:5

16. What is the general subject of God's questioning directed at Job?
17. What is the purpose of this questioning? What do you think God wants Job to see?
18. What does the examination in chapters 38 and 39 cause Job to realize? (40:3-5)

Chapters 40:6 - 42:6

19. What is the implied charge against Job? (40:6-9)
20. What challenge is put to Job? Why is he challenged in this way?
21. From 42:1-6:
 - a. Summarize the state of mind to which Job had been reduced.
 - b. What is the significance of the statement made in verse five?

Chapter 42:7-17

22. Why are the friends of Job condemned? In what way had they “not spoken of me (God) what is right?”
23. Do you think Job lived in Patriarchal or Mosaic times? Support your answer.
24. What lessons does James 5:11 draw from this book?
25. Considering the entire book of Job, what is meant by “the patience of Job?”

Psalms

I. The Nature of the Book of Psalms

A. The name.

1. "Psalms" is from the Greek title denoting songs adapted to music on stringed instruments. Its title in the original Hebrew simply meant "praises," denoting the general theme of the Psalms.
2. "In Hebrew this book was called 'Praises,' 'Book of Praises,' or 'Prayers.' Later it became known as the 'Book of Psalms.' In the New Testament it is called by this name by our Lord (Luke 24:44), by Paul (Acts 13:38), and by Luke (Luke 20:42) This name was used by those who produced the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament..." (William S. Deal, *Baker's Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 143).
3. "The book of Psalms was gradually collected and came to be known as *the Sepher Tehillim* ('Book of Praises'), because almost every psalm contains some note of praise to God. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) uses this Greek term *Psalmoi* as a title for this book, meaning poems sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments, and this word is the basis for the English terms 'psalter' and 'psalm'" (*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 175).

B. The character of the book.

1. "The book of Psalms is the largest and perhaps the most widely used book in the Bible. It explores the full range of human experiences in a very personal and practical way. Written over a lengthy period of Israel's history, the tremendous breadth of subject matter in the Psalms includes topics such as jubilation, war, peace, worship, judgment, messianic prophecy, praise, and lament. The Psalms were set to the accompaniment of stringed instruments and served as the temple hymnbook and devotional guide for the Jewish people...The psalms were originally individual poems. With the passing of time these were collected to form smaller books and the book of Psalms in its present form comprises five of these smaller books" (*Nelson's*, *ibid.*).
2. "The Psalms are mostly lyrical poetry, that is, poetry adapted to the harp or lyre; to be used in connexion with instrumental music; to be sung not read...Lyric poetry is, for the most part, an expression of deep feeling, and has its foundation in feeling or emotion...the authors of that poetry were inspired to prepare and transmit to future times that which, in all ages, would express the feelings of true devotion, and which might be permanently employed in the praises of God" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes on the Old Testament, Psalms Vol. I*, xix-xxi).

3. "While most of the Bible is God's voice calling to His creatures, the book of Psalms is mankind's voice raised to the Lord. As the various writers expressed their personal feelings, desires, and needs, the Spirit of God led them to strike the chords of sensitive hearts universally" (Rubel Shelly, *A Book-by-Book Study of the Old Testament*, 78).
 - a. Someone has suggested the five books of the Psalms are really a tribute to the five books of Moses (Genesis - Deuteronomy), the Pentateuch. The law is the five-fold book of God to His people while the Psalms respond by being the five-fold book of the people to God.
 - 1) Book 1 (Psa. 1-41). Corresponds with Genesis having much to say about man.
 - 2) Book 2 (Psa. 42-72). Corresponds with Exodus having much to say about redemption.
 - 3) Book 3 (Psa. 73-89). Corresponds with Leviticus and emphasizes worship.
 - 4) Book 4 (Psa. 90-106). Begins with the psalm of Moses and corresponds with Numbers stressing wandering.
 - 5) Book 5 (Psa. 107-150). Corresponds with Deuteronomy and offers thanksgiving for the Divine faithfulness with emphasis on the the word of God. Psalm 119, the longest of all the psalms, has as its theme "the word of the Lord."
 - b. "Perhaps the central thought of this book of praise is 95:6-7. 'O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand'" (Johnny Ramsey, *The Book of Psalms*, 3).
4. "Through the ages, man has found in poetry a means of expressing the deepest, most profound, and intensive feelings of the human heart. In the Psalms the Hebrew poets expressed these emotions for themselves and for the nation...when we read them we find that they expressed them for ourselves as well...In the Psalms one finds expressed the eager yearning and longing for God's presence; prayers and songs of joyous trust and praise; cries of burning complaints and bitterness against and toward enemies; times of doubt and despair; yet throughout all experiences which produced these emotions, there is dependance on God. To appreciate the Psalms, one must enter into and share the spirit of the Psalmist" (Homer Hailey, *Bible Class Notes - The Psalms*, 1).

II. The Author

- A. The book of Psalms is a compilation of the songs of various Hebrew authors including, according to the superscriptions heading many of the psalms, Moses (90), Asaph (50, 73-83), Sons of Korah (42; 44-49; 84-85; 87-88), Heman the Ezrahite (88), Ethan the Ezrahite (89), Solomon (72; 127), and David (writer of at least 73 of the psalms) while the rest are anonymous.

- B. The book is commonly referred to as belonging to David because he wrote about half of the psalms.
1. The headings attribute 73 to him but he probably wrote more (cf. Psalm 2 with Acts 4:25-26 and Psalms 105 and 96 with 1 Chron. 16:7-36).
 2. He is known as “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Sam. 23:1; cf. also 1 Sam. 16:18; 2 Sam. 6:5,15; 2 Chron. 7:6; 29:25; Amos 6:5).
 3. He arranged the temple song service (1 Chron. 25) and also commissioned men including Asaph, Ethan, Heman and Jeduthun, to compose songs for the temple worship (1 Chron. 15:19; 16:4-6; 25:1; cf. Kings 4:31; 1 Chron. 2:6; 26:1).
- C. “No other book of the Bible has as many different authors as does Psalms. Seventy-three psalms are attributed to David in the superscriptions, and an additional two, Psalms 2 and 95, are ascribed to David in the New Testament. In addition to the seventy-five by David, twelve are ascribed to Asaph, a priest who headed the service of music. Ten were by the sons of Korah, a guild of singers and composers, and other psalms are ascribed to Solomon, Moses, Heman the Ezrahite and Ethan the Ezrahite, Fifty of the psalms are anonymous, although some of these are traditionally ascribed to Ezra” (*Nelson’s*, 175).

III. The Date

- A. “The Psalms were written over a long period of time, perhaps 600 years” (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 196).
- B. “The time covered by Psalms is a long span. They reach from the days of Moses in the wilderness to the days of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. While the range of writing extends over many hundreds of years, it is remarkable how little variation there is in the general expressions of the writers and the truths they taught” (Deal, 143).
- C. “The earliest individual psalm is probably that of Moses (Ps. 90); the latest is probably Psalm 137, which could not have been written before the sixth century b.c. Though many of the psalms were written and collected during the Davidic era, or shortly thereafter, the final compilation of Psalms was probably not complete until the latter half of the fifth century B.C. during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (450-425 B.C.)” (*Nelson’s*, 175, 177).

IV. Characteristics of the Book of Psalms

- A. Five divisions. The book of Psalms is a collection of five smaller books of songs each of which ends with a doxology—a hymn of praise to God.
1. The divisions are as follows:
 - a. Book I: Psalms 1-41.
 - b. Book II: Psalms 42-72.
 - c. Book III: Psalms 73-89.
 - d. Book IV: Psalms 90-106.
 - e. Book V: Psalms 107-150.

2. "The book is divided in the Hebrew into five minor books or collections, sufficiently marked in their character, and so indicated at the close of each as to make it every way probable that these may have been published, so to speak, in the form of different books, or that the latter were additions to the first collection or volume" (Barnes, xiii-xiv).
 3. G. Campbell Morgan believes the key to the content of each division or book is found in the closing doxologies "and an examination of these will reveal a certain conception of God, and an attitude of the soul in worship resulting from such a conception" (*Notes on the Psalms*, 9-10).
- B. Psalm headings.
1. Many of the psalms have superscriptions before the actual poetry which have generated much debate over their origin and authenticity.
 2. Although not inspired, they are undoubtedly of ancient origin because they were in existence when the Septuagint (Greek) Version of the Old Testament was translated (280-180 b.c.). By that time many of the words concerning the musical score and musical instruments were unknown, implying a much earlier source.
 3. These headings indicate:
 - a. Authorship.
 - b. Occasion of the psalm (cf. 34; 51; 52; etc.).
 - c. Their intended use (cf. 30; 92; etc.).
 - d. The type of psalm—a prayer, meditation, etc. (cf. 32; 42-45; etc.).
 - e. Musical instructions.
 - 1) To the choir director.
 - 2) The tune to which the psalm was to be played (cf. 22; 56-57 ; etc.).
 - 3) The musical instruments to use in accompaniment (cf. 4; 5; 6; 8; 54-55; 81; etc.).

V. Types of Psalms

- A. Individual and communal lament psalms, or prayers for God's deliverance (3-7; 12; 13; 22; 25-28; 35; 38-40; 42-44; 51; 54-57; 59-61; 63; 64; 69-71; 74; 79; 80; 83; 85; 86; 88; 90; 102; 109; 120; 123; 130; and 140-143).
- B. Thanksgiving psalms consisting of praise to God for His gracious acts (8; 18; 19; 29; 30; 32-34; 36; 40; 41; 66; 103-106; 111; 113; 116; 117; 124; 129; 135; 136; 138; 139; 146-148; and 150).
- C. Enthronement psalms which describe God's sovereign rule (47; 93; and 96-99).
- D. Pilgrimage psalms which were sung by worshipers as they traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish festivals (43; 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; and 120-134).
- E. Royal psalms which portray the reign of the earthly king as well as of the heavenly king of Israel (2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 110; 132; and 144).
- F. Wisdom psalms which instruct the worshiper in the way of wisdom and righteousness (1; 37; and 119).

G. Imprecatory psalms in which the worshiper invokes God's wrath and judgment against His enemies (7; 35; 40; 55; 58; 59; 69; 79; 109; 137; 139; and 144).

H. Messianic psalms.

1. Many of the psalms specifically anticipate the life and ministry of Jesus who came centuries later as the promised Messiah.
2. "Next to Isaiah, the Book of Psalms is the most expressive of the Messianic prophecies and message in the Old Testament. The light of the covenant, to be fulfilled in the coming Messiah, here shines with an extra brilliance" (Deal, 147).
3. The Messianic prophecies in the psalms take a variety of forms and refer to Christ in a variety of ways.
 - a. Typical Messianic. The subject of the psalm is in some respects a type of Christ (34:20; 69:4,9).
 - b. Typical Prophetic. Language is used which describes the psalmist's present experience but which points beyond his own life and becomes historically true only in Christ (22).
 - c. Indirectly Messianic. At the time of the psalm's composition, it referred to a king or the house of David in general but it awaited final fulfillment in Christ (2; 45; 72).
 - d. Purely Prophetic. Refers solely to Christ without reference to any other son of David (110).
 - e. Enthronement. Anticipates the coming of God and the consummation of His kingdom in the person of Jesus Christ (96-99).

VI. The Uses of the Book of Psalms

A. The Jews.

1. The psalms were originally designed to be a hymnal for use in the temple and synagogue worship.
 - a. Musicians were provided to worship God in the temple and the psalms were composed to be used there.
 - b. The book of Psalms became a manual and guide for the devotional life of the Jews.
2. According to the Mishnah, certain psalms were recited on certain days of the week in the temple: "The following are the Psalms that were chanted in the Temple. On the first day, they used to say, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein' (Psalm 24). On the second day, they used to say, 'Great is the Lord and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, His Holy mountain' (Psalm 48). On the third day, they used to say, 'God standeth in the congregation of God, in the midst of the judges He judgeth' (Psalm 82). On the fourth day, they used to say, 'O Lord, Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth' (Psalm 94). On the fifth day, they used to say, 'Sing aloud unto God our strength, shout aloud to the God of Jacob' (Psalm 81). On the sixth day, they used to say, 'A Psalm. A song for the sabbath day (Psalm 92). A Psalm, a song for the time to come, for the day that will be all sabbath and rest for everlasting life" (via "Interesting Facts About The Book Of Psalms," Stuart Dauermann, *Jews for Jesus Newsletter*).

B. First century Christians.

1. The early church recognized the value of the psalms in praising God and expressing their faith and trust in Him and used them in their public worship (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13).
2. "After Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper, he and the Twelve sang a hymn (Matthew 26:30). This consisted of the latter half of the Hallel (or Hallelujah) psalms (Psalms 115-118), which the Jews sang after eating the Passover meal" (John T. Willis, *The Way of Life Series: Insights from the Psalms*, Vol. I, 1).
3. "Christ's favorite Old Testament section must have been Psalms because He quoted from it more often than any other book!" (Ramsey, 3).
4. "That Psalms was a favorite book of the first-century believers is shown by the fact that of the New Testament's 283 direct quotations from the Old Testament, 116 are from Psalms" (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, 272).

C. Christians today.

1. It is important to remember that the psalms were also written for our benefit (Rom. 15:3-4; cf. Ps. 69:9).
2. "The book of Psalms is a record of deep religious experience...It is the guide of young believers; and it becomes more and more the companion, the comforter and the counsellor, as the believer moves along through the varied scenes of life, and as grey hairs come upon him, and as the infirmities, which pre-intimate the approaching close of all things, press him down" (Barnes, xlii).
3. "In these busy days, it would be greatly to the spiritual profit of Christian men if they were more familiar with the Book of Psalms, in which they would find a complete armoury for life's battle, and a perfect supply for life's needs. Here we have both delight and usefulness, consolation and instruction. For every condition there is a Psalm, suitable and elevating. The Book supplies the babe in grace with penitential cries, and the perfected saint with triumphant songs...He who is acquainted with the marches of the Psalm-country knows that the land floweth with milk and honey, and he delights to travel therein" (Charles Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, Vol. 6; preface).

VII. Some Teachings Found in the Book of Psalms

- A. "Underlying the psalmist's outlook is the concept of the power of God. God is in control of this universe. Although it may appear at times that things have gotten out of hand, this is not so. God is beyond our knowing, but we are not beyond his power...God's providence, or effective working, is also prominent in the book. He works like a master craftsman, weaving his will in and out of our free choices, so that in the end we have a blend of divine and human activity. Indeed, he works in our free choices as well, accomplishing his own good purposes...The tenderness of God is constantly emphasized. Like a father who pities his children, or a hen who gathers her chicks under her wings, so God deals with us...God is also depicted as just. No wrongs will go unrighted. No evil done to

God's people is unseen. In due time, all will be made right...The proper response of God's people is also evident. We are to live lives of prayer, praise, humility, thanksgiving, and faith...The beauty of the world, the value of life, the goodness of the natural order, and the sheer joy of living are also described. From the grass that grows beneath our feet to the loftiest thoughts in our heads or the highest stars in the sky, the majesty that God wrote into the world is undeniable" (*Shaw's*, 197-198).

- B. "1. The Psalms furnish mankind, especially those who love God, with a sort of emotional guidance. They plumb the depths of man's nature and bring up almost every color of feeling and expression. They serve as a guide in the emotional patterns much as other portions of Scripture do for faith and actions...
"2. The Psalms also abound in devotional warmth and energy. One can always find there the inspiration for deep meditation, high resolve, and the finest of noble ambitions. No other portion of the Scriptures is so filled with devotional materials and expressions as this book...
"3. In the Psalms there are little additions to great historical facts—for instance, that of Joseph being bound in fetters while in prison and being tried by God's word (105:17,18). Apparently the rock from which Moses got water in the wilderness was a 'flint' rock (114: 8)...
"4. Another great area is the deep psychological insight into the nature of mankind... Almost every psychological problem in normal life may be found in the Psalms...
"5. Every great doctrine in the Bible is either taught, expressed, or implied in the Psalms. Such basic doctrines as sin, atonement (by sacrifice), guilt, forgiveness, justification, restoration, repentance, confession, cleansing from sin...faith, and the mercy of God are found in this great fountain of truth...
"6. Every attribute or characteristic of God as the Divine Being is found here. The moral attributes of holiness, justice, mercy, truth, goodness, and righteousness, as well as the personal attributes of eternity of being, spirituality, omnipotence (all-powerfulness), omni-science (infinite knowledge), omnipresence (presence everywhere), immutability (unchangeableness) are ascribed to God in many places.
"7. Every phase of religious experience is either described or anticipated in the Psalms. Such experiences as sin, guilt, repentance, confession, forgiveness, cleansing, restoration, faith, joy, peace, grace, hope, love...are all found in abundance" (Deal, 148-149).

VIII. Psalms and the New Testament

- A. There are 116 direct quotations from the Psalms in the New Testament.
B. Many Messianic prophecies from the Psalms find their fulfillment in the New Testament.
1. The Son of God (2:7; Matt. 3:17).
2. Praised by children (8:2; Matt. 21:15-16).
3. Ruler of all (8:6; Heb. 2:8).
4. Rises from death (16:10; Matt. 28:7).

5. Forsaken by God (22:1; Matt. 27:46).
6. Derided by enemies (22:7-8; Luke 23:35).
7. Hands and feet pierced (22:16; John 20:27).
8. Lots cast for clothes (22:18; Matt. 27:35-36).
9. Bones unbroken (34:20; John 19:32-33,36).
10. Accused by false witnesses (35:11; Mark 14:57).
11. Hated without cause (35:19; John 15:25).
12. Delights in God's will (40:7-8; Heb. 10:7).
13. Betrayed by a friend (41:9; Luke 22:47).
14. The eternal King (45:6; Heb. 1:8).
15. Ascends to heaven (68:18; Acts 1:9-11).
16. Zealous for God's house (69:9; John 2:17).
17. Given vinegar and gall (69:21; Matt. 27:34).
18. Prays for enemies (109:4; Luke 23:34).
19. His betrayer replaced (109:8; Acts 1:20).
20. Rules over His enemies (110:1; Matt. 22:44).
21. A priest forever (110:4; Heb. 5:6).
22. The chief stone of God's building (118:22; Matt. 21:42).
23. Comes in the name of the Lord (118:26; Matt. 21:9).

Questions on Psalms

Psalm 1

1. Describe the character of the righteous man as set forth in verses one and two.
2. Contrast the fate of the wicked to that of the righteous. What is the reason(s) for the difference between the fate of the wicked and that of the righteous?

Psalm 6

3. Why was the psalmist seeking the mercy of God?
4. What, in the psalm, showed the psalmist to be suffering?
5. What resulted when the Lord heard this prayer?

Psalm 8

6. According to this psalm, why is God worthy of praise?
7. How were the heavens made? How should the earth's inhabitants respond to that fact?

Psalm 19

8. List the two ways in which God has revealed Himself that this psalm sets forth.
9. Name the characteristics, values and uses of God's law as found in verses 7 through 11?

Psalm 23

10. In what way could God be described as a "shepherd?"
11. What is the meaning of the phrase "I shall not want" in relation to God as a shepherd?
12. What is the basic lesson this psalm teaches?

Psalm 33

13. How is the earth "full of the goodness of the Lord?"
14. How were the heavens made? How should the earth's inhabitants respond to that fact?

Psalm 51

15. What prompted the writing of this psalm?
16. What is the chief lesson to be learned from this psalm?

Psalm 100

17. How is God to be praised? By whom is God to be praised?
18. For what reason is God to be praised?

Psalm 119

19. Since this psalm teaches the importance of understanding the word of God, what do the following verses teach about understanding God's word?
- a. Verse 34.
 - b. Verse 73.
 - c. Verse 144.
 - d. Verse 104.
 - e. Verse 130.
20. Since this psalm shows the word of God to be the answer to man's problem with sin, what do the following verses teach about how God's word can keep one from sinning?
- a. Verse 11.
 - b. Verse 133.
 - c. Verse 128.

Psalm 133

21. What are some of the "good" and "pleasant" consequences of brethren dwelling together in unity?

Psalm 139

22. What characteristics of God are emphasized in this psalm?
23. What effect do each of the characteristics of God you have listed above have on a person?

Psalm 148

23. Since this psalm calls upon the entire creation to praise God, what reasons does it give as to why He should be praised?
25. In what way(s) do such things as the sun, moon, stars, fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind, etc., praise God?

Proverbs

I. The Nature of the Book of Proverbs

A. The name.

1. The book gets its name from the short, pithy sayings of wisdom which constitute the greatest part of the book.
2. "Because Solomon, the prototype of Israel's wise man, was the principle contributor, the Hebrew title of the book is *Mishle Shelomoh* ('Parables of Solomon'). The English title of the book is derived from the Latin *Liber Proverbiorum*, or 'Book of Proverbs'" (*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 183).

B. The character of the book.

1. "The book of Proverbs embodies the collective wisdom of Israel. Usually attributed to Solomon, it is a collection of sayings that reflects Israel's views about how one was to live life in the presence of God. To live this way was wise..." (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 199).
2. "Proverbs provides God's detailed instructions for His people to deal successfully with the practical affairs of everyday life: how to relate to God, parents, children, neighbors, and government. Solomon, the principle author, uses a combination of poetry, parables, pithy questions, short stories, and wise maxims to give in strikingly memorable form the common sense and divine perspective necessary to handle life's challenges" (*Nelson's*, 183).
3. The book of Proverbs has five main divisions indicated by where the book ascribes the authorship (1:1; 10:1; 25:1; 30:1; 31:1).

II. The Author

A. Solomon (1:1; 10:1; 25:1).

1. "From the most ancient times since Solomon's day, the Book of Proverbs has been received by the Jews as work done by him. Certain parts in the book are said to have been written by others, but Solomon was doubtless responsible for their collection into the original volume" (William S. Deal, *Baker's Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 150).
2. "Solomon's name appears at the beginning of the three sections he wrote: chapters 1-9; 10:1-22:16; chapters 25-29. According to I Kings 4:32, Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs, of which about 800 are included in Proverbs. It is likely that Solomon collected and edited proverbs other than his own (Eccl. 12:9)" (*Nelson's*, 183).
3. Solomon's qualifications.
 - a. When God appeared to Solomon, the third king of Israel (970-930 B.C.), and gave him the choice of any gift from His hand, he humbly chose wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-15).

- b. His fame for wisdom spread over all the world and, aside from Jesus (Matt. 12:42), he became the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 4:29-34; 10:1-10,24-25).
 - c. "Solomon is the wise man par excellence in the history of the Jewish people...He collected and composed some 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs (1 Kings 4:32). He is the central personality to whom Israel's wisdom literature traces...In spite of his personal failings, benefits of the wisdom given Solomon are preserved for us in these three books" (Rubel Shelly, *A Book-by-Book Study of the Old Testament*, 79).
- B. "The book itself tells us that certain parts were written by other writers than Solomon" (Deal, 151).
- 1. "Proverbs 22:17–24:34 consists of 'the words of the wise' (22:17; 24:23)" (Nelson's, 183).
 - 2. "Chapters 25-29 are a selection of Solomon's proverbs which the 'men of Hezekiah copied out'" (cf. 25:1) (Deal, 151).
 - 3. "Chapter 30, written by Agur, was directed to his pupils Ithiel and Ucal and is intended for youth at large. Chapter 31 contains the instructions of an unnamed mother to her son called Lemuel (vv. 1-9). The last part of the chapter is the description of a 'virtuous woman,' or the picture of an ideal wife" (Deal, 151).

III. The Date

- A. "Solomon's proverbs were written before 931 b.c., and his proverbs in chapters 25-29 were collected by Hezekiah about 230 years later. Thus portions of the book were completed no earlier than the time of the reign of Hezekiah and a reasonable date for completion is sometime in the fifth century B.C." (Nelson's, 183).
- B. "Solomon reigned as king of Israel from about 970 B.C.—930 B.C. The largest share of the work of Proverbs was probably done during this period" (Deal, 150).
- C. The section copied by the men of Hezekiah (716-686 B.C.) was finished sometime around 700 B.C.
- D. The date of the completed book is unknown.

IV. Characteristics of the Book of Proverbs

- A. Proverb defined.
 - 1. "A proverb, then, may be regarded as a short, pithy sentence, containing a complete and valuable thought" (D.R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics*, 314).
 - 2. "A proverb is defined as 'an allegorical saying, where more is meant than meets the eye.' It is a short saying which stands for a whole discourse or lecture" (Deal, 149).
 - 3. "The proverb of the Israelites and other people of the East was primarily and essentially a 'similitude'. It was thus a condensed parable or fable, capable at any time of being expanded, sometimes presented with the lesson clearly taught, sometimes involved in greater or less obscurity, that its very difficulty might stimulate the desire to know, and so impress the lesson more deeply on the mind" (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 896).

4. "Some Christians read the proverbs as if they were inflexible laws of God's creation, admitting no exceptions...Proverbial wisdom isolates and names the underlying patterns and principles which abide more or less constant in the flux of human living" (William E. Mouser, Jr., *Walking in Wisdom: Studying the Proverbs of Solomon*, 13-14).
- B. Types of proverbs.
1. Contrastive.
 - a. These present a striking contrast.
 - b. They can be recognized by the word "but" which starts the second line.
 - c. Examples: 17:22; 21:2; 28:13; 29:23.
 2. Completive.
 - a. In completive proverbs, the second line agrees with the first and usually adds emphasis to it.
 - b. They can be noted by the word "and" which starts the second line.
 - c. Examples: 16:18; 20:1.
 3. Comparative.
 - a. In comparative proverbs, the second line compares with the first.
 - b. Some of these are very striking in comparison and may generally be noted by the word "than" which starts the second line.
 - c. Examples: 15:17; 16:8; 19:1.
- C. The literary form of the book. "The two prevalent literary forms in Proverbs are: (1) the short, pithy sayings used to impart wisdom (the true 'proverb') and (2) the long didactic discourse, of which...chapters 1-9 and...chapters 30-31 are examples. Practically all of the rest of the book falls into the category of 'proverbs'" (*Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 4, 919).
- D. The wisdom of Proverbs.
1. The main theme of the book is wisdom, its acquisition and its application.
 - a. In the book, the morally wise is contrasted with the fool.
 - b. The book reveals a way of wisdom which God teaches while at the same time exposing a way of folly which the fool teaches.
 2. "There is a voice of wisdom which speaks words of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, prudence, subtlety, instruction, discretion, and the fear of Jehovah, and furnishes us with good advice for every condition of life. There is a voice of folly, which speaks words of folly, simplicity, stupidity, ignorance, brutishness, and villainy, and lifts her voice whenever wisdom speaks" (J.B. Tidwell, *The Bible Book By Book*, 102).
 3. "In the Bible, wisdom is always God-oriented and practical. It is not entirely co-extensive with knowledge, for a knowledgeable person may be very deficient in wisdom. Wisdom is the right use of one's knowledge, insight and skill to the glory of God. It originates in the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; cf. Job 28:28; Psa. 111:10). Thus the Bible defines wisdom in terms of one's relationship with God rather than formal education or attainments before men (cf. James 3:13-18). Worldly wisdom is knowledge apart from divine revelation and is often God-opposing in nature. True wisdom is the ordering of one's life by God-given counsel" (Shelly, 81).

- E. The practical nature of Proverbs.
1. "The book is not theoretical or speculative, but it is exceedingly practical in nature. It is concerned with conduct, behavior or wise living" (H.I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History*, 310).
 2. "The book of Proverbs is very practical because it concerns the believer's daily walk. It does not include much doctrine, but it does emphasize practice...We look into this book, and, as by the aid of a microscope, we see the minuteness of our Christian obligations; that there is not a temper, a look, a word, a movement, the most important action of the day, the smallest relative duty, in which we do not either deface or adorn the image of our Lord, and the profession of His name'. Proverbs truly shows how the believer 'may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things' (Titus 2:10, KJV)" (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, 293-294).
- F. Proverbs: a guide for youth.
1. "Proverbs, more than any other, is the young people's book of the Bible. It addresses youth and deals with matters of youth more often than any other of the sacred books. Almost the entire pattern of the book is arranged for the instruction of youth. Its most important sections are addressed directly to youth...As used here, 'youth' does not mean merely children and teenagers. The ancient Greeks considered youth lasting until the age of forty...Proverbs appeals to those from the early teens to this more advanced age" (Deal, 150).
 2. "It (the book of Proverbs - gt) has been called 'A Business Manual For Young Men' since its constant appeal is to young men. The object seems to be to inspire young men to honesty, purity, and industry" (Hester, 310).

V. The Purpose of the Book of Proverbs

- A. "Proverbs is one of the few biblical books that clearly spells out its purpose: to impart moral discernment and discretion (1:3-5), and to develop mental clarity and perception (1:2,6). The 'wisdom' of which Proverbs speaks is literally 'skill' in living...Proverbs deals with the most fundamental skill of all: practical righteousness before God in every area of life" (*Nelson's*, 185).
- B. "The author of Proverbs 1:2-4 clearly states his aim, namely, to impart wisdom and discretion to men, especially the simple. This also may be the purpose of the entire collection. It is designed to guide men in practical everyday conduct. Such wisdom is needed for the formulation of sound character. The collection would be a useful sourcebook for public or private study. It inculcates personal morality and plain 'horse sense.' Paterson aptly states its aim 'to subtract from the number of fools and add to the number of the wise' (p. 54)" (*Zondervan's*, 917).
- C. "The purpose of the book, beyond doubt, was to give youth the necessary instructions, information, counsel, and advice which they needed to make good in life. It has a message, likewise, for older people. All will profit from its pages. The rich and poor, learned and ignorant, the wise and the foolish alike need messages of this book....In fact, there is hardly an aspect of life for which Proverbs does not have some specific message or counsel" (Deal, 150).

VI. An Outline of the Book of Proverbs

- A. The Purpose of Proverbs (1:1-7).
- B. Proverbs to Youth (1:8 - 9:18)
 - 1. Obey parents (1:8-9).
 - 2. Avoid bad company (1:10-19).
 - 3. Seek wisdom (1:20 - 2:22).
 - 4. Benefits of wisdom (3:1-26).
 - 5. Be kind to others (3:27-35).
 - 6. Father says get wisdom (4:1-13).
 - 7. Avoid the wicked (4:14-22).
 - 8. Keep your heart (4:23-27).
 - 9. Do not commit adultery (5:1-14).
 - 10. Do be faithful to your spouse (5:15-23).
 - 11. Avoid surety (6:1-5).
 - 12. Do not be lazy (6:6-19).
 - 13. Do not commit adultery (6:20 - 7:27).
 - 14. Praise of wisdom (8:1 - 9:12).
 - 15. Foolish woman (9:13-18).
- C. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1 - 24:34).
 - 1. Proverbs contrasting the godly and the wicked (10:1 - 15:33).
 - 2. Proverbs encouraging godly lives (16:1 - 22:16).
 - 3. Proverbs concerning various situations (22:17 - 24:34).
- D. Proverbs of Solomon Copied by Hezekiah's Men (25:1 - 29:27).
 - 1. Proverbs regulating relationships with others (25:1 - 26:28).
 - 2. Proverbs regulating various activities (27:1 - 29:27).
- E. The Words of Agur (30:1-33).
- F. The Words of King Lemuel (31:1-31).
 - 1. Wisdom for leaders (31:1-9).
 - 2. The wise woman (31:10-31).

VII. Proverbs and the New Testament

- A. Proverbs and the Messiah.
 - 1. "There is no Messianic message in this book. Its message has to do with moral, social, and civil righteousness, by means of pithy bits of wisdom. It does not deal with the matter of redemption as such, but rather with practical righteousness applied to daily living" (Deal, 153).
 - 2. "The relation of Proverbs to Christ is deeper than it appears on the surface. Some see Christ foreshadowed in such explicit passages as 8:22-31; 23:11; and 30:4. A foundational connection is that the wisdom spoken of in Proverbs is found completely in Christ (I Cor. 1:30). The 'aspiration in Proverbs is for wisdom to become incarnate (Prov. 8), as indeed it did when 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' became flesh in Christ (Col. 2:3)'" (Jensen, 88).

B. New Testament references.

1. 3:11-12 — Hebrews 12:5-6.
2. 3:34 — James 4:6; I Peter 5:5.
3. 10:12 — 1 Peter 4:8.
4. 11:31 — 1 Peter 4:18.
5. 25:21-22 — Romans 12:20.
6. 26:11 — 2 Peter 2:22.

C. "The book of Proverbs is one Old Testament book that has received less than its share of attention at the hands of Christians. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that most want to relegate it to an abrogated law. This is a mistake. For there is very little peculiar to the Mosaic economy that characterizes the wisdom of Solomon. Neither temple, priest, nor Levite is mentioned in either of Solomon's three books. Hence, he did not write for the Jew alone. This is a tragic mistake, because his practical knowledge is one of the greatest needs of our hour...His concern is the everyday need of an applied religion. He helps us deal with today's task, today's trial, today's dilemma, and today's opportunity" (Maurice A. Meredith, *Studies in Proverbs*, 4).

Questions on Proverbs

Chapter 1

1. According to this chapter, what is the “fear of the Lord?”
2. What is meant by the “instruction of a father” and the “law of a mother?”
3. Why would one be “enticed” by sinners? What reason is given in this chapter for avoiding them?

Chapter 3

4. Why does obedience to parents make life longer and better as a general rule?
5. List as many points as you can from verses three through ten which define the proper relationship to God?
6. What benefits come to the one who, in relation to God, lives right?

Chapter 4

7. What is implied in this chapter as to the responsibility of a father?
8. What does verse three suggest as to why parents teach and guide children as they do?
9. What good results can be expected from following “the way of wisdom?”
10. Discuss the meaning and application of the wise counsel (vv. 20-27) with regard to:
 - a. Heart.
 - b. Mouth.
 - c. Eyes.
 - d. Feet.

Chapter 5

11. What shows the complete folly of falling for the seductive woman of verse three?
List the consequences of yielding to her seductions.
12. What is the divine alternative to being with the sinful woman?

Chapter 6

13. What seven things listed in this chapter are an abomination to God?

14. In relationship to the commands of the law of the God, what does it mean
 - a. Bind them continually upon your heart?
 - b. Tie them around your neck?
15. How will the commands of the Lord:
 - a. Lead you when you roam?
 - b. Keep you while you sleep?
 - c. Speak with you when you awake?
16. What results of sexual immorality are listed in this text?

Chapter 7

17. What is set forth in this passage that provides protection against sin?
18. What is the meaning of verse four?

Chapter 20

19. By what is a child known?

Chapter 30

20. List all the phrases which describe the worthy woman's care of her family.
21. List all the phrases which describe the worthy woman's personality traits.
22. List all the phrases which describe the worthy woman's attitude toward herself.
23. What are the implications of this passage for a young woman?
24. What are the implications of this passage for an older woman?
25. What are the implications of his passage:
 - a. For a young man of marriageable age who ought to consider "What am I looking for in a woman?"
 - b. With regard to an older, married man who has such a wife as described in this passage?

Ecclesiastes

I. The Nature of the Book of Ecclesiastes

A. The name.

1. The book derives its name from the Preacher named in it (1:1, 2, 12; 7:27; 12:8,9,10).
 - a. The Hebrew title is “Qoheleth.” In Old Testament times a “qoheleth” was an official speaker to an assembly of people.
 - b. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, it was given the name “Ekklesiastes.” In the English Bible, the title was transliterated and called “Ecclesiastes.”
 - c. The name of the book translated into English would be “The Preacher.”
2. “The name ‘Ecclesiastes’ is derived from the Greek word *ekklesia* (‘assembly’) and means ‘one who addresses an assembly.’ This Greek term translates the Hebrew title Qoheleth, which is often rendered ‘Preacher’ or ‘Teacher’ in English” (*Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 188).

B. The character of the book.

1. “The literary character of Ecclesiastes is complex. It seems to be a collection of various types of literature, all making the same general point. There are wise sayings (proverbs) as well as sections that are reflective and meditative. Over one third of the book is poetry, but narrative passages are also included” (*Nelson’s*, 188).
2. Ecclesiastes is a sermon by the preacher (1:1). It has an introduction, the developing of a central theme and a practical application in conclusion.
3. Key words and phrases:
 - a. God (40 times) but not “Jehovah.”
 - b. Vanity (39 times).
 - c. Under the sun (29 times).
 - d. Wise, wisdom (53 times).
 - e. Folly (7 times).
 - f. Grasping for wind (9 times) (KJV: “vexation of spirit”).
 - g. What is good for the sons of men to do.
4. “For all that I have ever seen or learned, that book seems to me the noblest, the wisest, and the most powerful expression of man’s life upon this earth—and also the highest flower of poetry, eloquence, and truth. I am not given to dogmatic judgments in the matter of literary creation, but if I had to make one I could say that Ecclesiastes is the greatest single piece of writing I have ever known, and the wisdom expressed therein, the most lasting and profound” (Thomas Wolfe, *You Can’t Go Home Alone*, 732).

II. The Author

- A. The internal evidence of the book points to Solomon as the author.
 - 1. It was written by “the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1).
 - 2. The life of the author coincides with the life of Solomon.
 - a. Great, unrivaled wisdom (1:16).
 - b. Extensive building projects (2:4-6).
 - c. Incomparable wealth (2:7-9).
 - d. Many proverbs (12:9).
- B. “Since ancient times the Jews have traditionally thought Solomon to be the writer of this book; it is so received today. Its language and nature are more befitting to Solomon than to any other Old Testament person. The philosophical turn of the book and its wide acquaintance with the ways of the extremely wealthy, as well as its depths of wisdom, all point strongly to Solomon as the writer” (William S. Deal, *Baker’s Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 162).
- C. “Because of the opening words of the book (‘The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem’), Ecclesiastes has traditionally been credited to Solomon, who is thought to have written it in his old age. The pessimistic tone that pervades the book would be in keeping with Solomon’s spiritual state at that time (see I Kin. 11)” (*Nelson’s*, 188).

III. The Date

- A. The book is generally dated somewhere around 940 b.c.
 - 1. This book records the words of Solomon as he looks back over his life in order to give counsel to the young who are standing at the same crossroads where he once stood (11:9 - 12:7).
 - 2. Solomon made many mistakes and pours out his heart to all who will heed wisdom.
- B. “Most scholars think Solomon wrote this book toward the close of his life. Some believe that this book was written after Solomon was drawn away from the Lord by his sinful wives” (Deal, 162).

IV. The Message of the Book of Ecclesiastes

- A. “Ecclesiastes is a profound and problematic book. It records an intense search for meaning and satisfaction in life on this earth, especially in view of all the injustice and apparent absurdities that surround us” (*Nelson’s*, 188).
- B. “The theme: The Quest For The ‘GOOD LIFE.’ Such makes Ecclesiastes the ‘most modern book of the Bible’ for that is the perplexing riddle of every generation. Like Ponce de Leon’s famous pursuit of the ever evading fountain of youth, men in every age have searched, being equally determined, to find the ‘good life’” (*Wilson Adams, Bible Survey*, [An unpublished work], 98).
- C. “The key thought of the book is expressed in the term ‘under the sun’ (1:14). This phrase may be taken to mean apart from God—living life without serving God...The key word to the book is ‘vanity’ (or vanities)...This word suggests futility, vainness, uselessness, nothingness” (Deal, 162).
- D. Ten “vanities” are presented by which the author shows the emptiness of life when lived for self and for pleasure using only the wisdom of this world.
 - 1. Human wisdom (2:15-16). The wise and foolish have one like end—death.

2. Human labor (2:19-21). The worker is no better than the lazy man in the end.
 3. Human purpose (2:26). Although man proposes it is God who disposes.
 4. Human rivalry (4:4). Success brings more envy than joy.
 5. Human greed (4:8). Much feeds lust for more and there is no satisfaction.
 6. Human fame (4:16). It is brief and uncertain.
 7. Human wealth (5:10). It never satisfies.
 8. Human coveting (6:9). Gain often cannot be enjoyed because of how it is obtained.
 9. Human foolishness (7:6). It only camouflages the sad end.
 10. Human rewards (8:10,14). The bad are often honored.
- E. "Two theological points stand out in the book of Ecclesiastes. First, the power and redemption of God are the ever-present background for all that is said. God is there, always available, waiting for the moment when wayward seekers after pleasure realize that this world cannot really satisfy. Second, there is the fact that life is not able to meet our needs if we go at it in the wrong way. Not being ultimate, it cannot provide for our ultimate longings and needs. If, however, we see life as under God's control, it may be used by us in the proper way. The world makes a very good servant, but a very hard taskmaster" (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 203-204).
- F. "The author is dealing with the misfortunes and hardships that befall mankind generally as individuals rather than as nations...Even though prosperity and peace prevailed during most of Solomon's reign, his recollection of the harrowing experiences of his father during Absalom's revolt, and his knowledge of the tides of invasion and bloodshed that had always characterized the history of the Near East, all served to give him a realistic understanding of the afflictions of mankind. Indeed it was these afflictions which posed the anguished questions of meaning and value without which the adventure of life made little sense" (*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 2, 187).
- G. "The book presents the inward struggle of an honest man seeking to find the true meaning of life. He has faith in God, he is not a skeptic, nor is he a pessimist. The book seeks to teach us our right relation to the earth life." (Homer Hailey, *Bible Class Notes - Wisdom Literature*, 13).
- H. "We are shown that man was not made for this world alone and not for selfish achievement or gratification, but to fulfill some great plan of God for him which he will accomplish through obedience and Divine service" (J.B. Tidwell, *The Bible Book By Book*, 106).

V. The Purpose of the Book of Ecclesiastes

- A. "The purpose of the book seems to be to show that self-gratification and successful worldliness do not bring satisfaction to the human heart. Life without a knowledge of and fellowship with God is empty and meaningless. Man has a destiny which calls for cooperation with God in some worthy enterprise, and in this he finds abiding peace of soul..." (H.I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History*, 311).
- B. "The purpose of Ecclesiastes is to demonstrate the thesis: 'All is vanity' (1:2). This stands in contrast to the book of Proverbs, where an optimistic confidence assumes that life is fundamentally logical and consistent, with wise choices producing good results and foolish choices producing bad results. Ecclesiastes

recognizes that this is frequently not the case. Here Ecclesiastes does not simply contradict Proverbs, but supplements it with a different but equally necessary perspective. There are inexplicable mysteries about life which defy easy solutions. Despite the unanswered questions, it is still best to fear God, keep His commandments, and thus enjoy life (3:12; 12:13). (*Nelson's*, 188)

- C. "The basic theme of Qoheleth is the ultimate futility of a life based upon earthly ambitions and desires. Any world view which does not rise above the horizon of man himself is doomed to meaninglessness and frustration. To view personal happiness or enjoyment as life's greatest good is sheer folly in view of the transcendent value of God Himself as over against His created universe. Happiness can never be achieved by pursuing after it, since such a pursuit involves the absurdity of self-deification...Transient mortals must realize that they are mere creatures, and that they derive importance only from their relationship to the almighty Creator...In other words Ecclesiastes is really intended to be a tract for the conversion of the self-sufficient individual; it compels him to discard his comfortable, self-flattering illusions and face honestly the instability of all those materialistic props on which he attempts to base his security...Only as one finds a new meaning for life in surrendering to the sovereignty of God and faithful obedience to His will in moral conduct can one find a valid principle and goal for responsible human living" (*Zondervan*, 187-188).
- D. "It is evident that it aims to show the futility of life without God's love and grace in the heart. But it also represents one of the most baffling subjects occupying the most brilliant minds through the ages—the 'why' of human existence. Why are we here? For what purpose? The writer shows that one may have every physical, mental, and social pleasure amidst riches, honor, fame, and every worldly joy, and yet never come to know the real purpose of life nor gain any really solid, lasting joy. God prospered Solomon until he was considered the richest and wisest man on earth in his day. He allowed him to drink of every pleasure of earth to his satisfying full...It seems that God permitted Solomon to experience this that he might warn others of the emptiness of life without God in the heart and life" (Deal, 161).
- E. "His (Solomon's—gt) immediate object would seem then to be to relieve his mind by pouring out the results of his own life, to comfort those who bore the same burden of humanity, and to lift up those who were naturally feeble or depressed by circumstances and to lead them in the way of God's commandments...If the book was composed, as seems probable, towards the end of Solomon's reign, its direct tendency is obvious. In an age when 'silver was as stones in Jerusalem' no lesson was more necessary, and none would tell with deeper effect, than those powerful and touching declarations of the vanity of wealth and grandeur which are perhaps the most conspicuous feature in this book" (Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament, Proverbs-Ezekiel*, 89, 90).

VI. Ecclesiastes and the New Testament

A. Ecclesiastes and the Messiah.

- "This book has no Messianic message nor reference to the covenant. It is a wisdom book, showing mankind the follies of sinful life and pointing to the better way. It does not deal with redemption as such, but it is still worthy of a place in the Bible for the contribution it makes to life" (Deal, 163).

- B. "There is one book of the Old Testament that is written particularly to furnish guidance and counsel for God's people in evil days and times of depression. Its counsel is as timely now as it was when the book was written, for this old world has changed but little except for the dress in which it is clad. This book is Ecclesiastes. But unfortunately, it is so little understood that few of its interpreters and readers seem to have recognized that it is a living message that meets the special problems also of our age" (H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Ecclesiastes*, Foreward).

Questions on Ecclesiastes

Chapter 1

1. What basic view of the world is set forth in verses one through eleven?
2. Explain the word “vanity.”
3. According to verses 12 through 18, for what was the writer of the book looking?
4. To what extent did the writer go in his above investigation? What were his results?

Chapter 2

5. What was the author now testing? For what was he striving? What did he want to find out?
6. How is the thoroughness of his quest brought out? What conclusion was reached?
7. What is the author’s comparative evaluation of wisdom and folly?
8. Why is even wisdom not satisfying?
9. Why does the author see that hard work and accumulation of wealth on the part of a wise man does not provide ultimate satisfaction?
10. According to verses 24 through 26, what is necessary to the enjoyment of life?

Chapter 3

11. What is meant by the statement in verse one, which is elaborated in verses two through eight, that there is a time for everything?
12. What characteristics of divine providence are set forth in verses 11 through 14?
13. With God having such control as set forth in this chapter, what would seem to be essential to human happiness in the world?
14. What confidence does the believer have to keep him from being overwhelmed with frustration over the problem of injustice? (vv. 16-22)
15. What divine purpose is seen in such world conditions as described in verse 16?
16. In what way are people like beasts?

Chapters 4-6

17. Describe the author's treatment of the following by explaining each.
 - a. The futility of earthly endeavor. (4:4-6)
 - b. The futility of the acquisition of wealth. (4:7-12)
 - c. The vanity of the quest for high position. (4:13-16)
 - d. The warning against vanity in religion. (5:1-17)
 - e. The vanity of riches. (5:10-20)
 - f. The possession of wealth without the enjoyment of it. (6:1-6)
 - g. The insatiability of human desire. (6:7-9)
 - h. Man's limitations. (6:10-12)

Chapter 7

18. Summarize the three comparisons made in verses one through ten as to some things which were "better." Why are they considered better?
19. Of what value is wisdom? (vv. 11-12) According to verses 13-14, why is complete understanding beyond man's reach?
20. What are the findings of the author's search for wisdom? (vv. 27-29)

Chapters 8-9

21. What is the wise person's position in relation to government? (8:2-8)
22. List two points that a wise person must realize with regard to the work of God under the sun. (8:16 - 9:1)

Chapters 11-12

23. What view of life is taken in 11:1-8?
24. What reason is given in 11:9 through 12:8 as to why one should begin early in life to serve God?
25. What is the author's final conclusion on life and living? Why is this a valid conclusion?

Song of Solomon

I. The Nature of the Song of Solomon

A. The name.

1. The Hebrew name “The Song of Songs” is taken from 1:1 and is a way of expressing the superlative, making this the best or most exquisite of songs – whether Solomon’s or any other’s.
 - a. Solomon wrote 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32).
 - b. This song, the only surviving one, is Solomon’s best.
2. The more common title is “The Song of Solomon” which is also from 1:1.
3. “The book draws its name from the nature of the book. In the original Hebrew it was ‘The Song of Songs’ or an ‘Ode of the Odes,’ much like other Scripture superlatives such as ‘heaven of heavens,’ ‘King of kings,’ or ‘Lord of lords.’ These mean the highest, best, supreme. Solomon wrote 1,005 songs in all (I Kings 4:32). Only this one survives. The name ‘Canticles’ has sometimes been attached to the book; it is derived from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate Version” (William S. Deal, *Baker’s Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 164).

B. The setting of the book.

1. “The pastoral qualities of the poetic imagery suggest a lengthy interlude of peace in the land during which the (tranquil) ideals of the Israelites were being realized, and this situation would accord with the ‘golden age’ of David and Solomon very well...The various geographical allusions in the book seems to indicate a phase of Hebrew history in which the kingdom had not yet been divided...” (*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 5, 487).
2. “The name ‘Shulamite’ appears only in 6:13 (KJV). It is probably derived from the place called Shunem, located a short distance north of Jezreel, near the plain of Megiddo (cf. Josh. 19:18; I Sam. 28:4; I Kings 1:3; 2 Kings 4:8)” (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen’s Survey of the Old Testament*, 308).
3. “The text of the Song of Solomon mentions fifteen geographic locations from Lebanon and Syria in the north to Egypt in the south. The term “Shulamite,” identifying the king’s lover, appears only in 6:13 and may be derived from the town of Shumem which was southwest of the Sea of Galilee in the tribal area of Issachar” (*Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 196).

II. The Author

- A. “This book has been credited to Solomon by most of the ancient Jews and by the early Christian church. The book is also ascribed to Solomon in the opening words (1:1), which settles this question” (Deal, 165).

- B. "The book is traditionally attributed to Solomon, although some reject Solomonic authorship and consider the phrase 'which is Solomon's' a dedication rather than a designation of authorship. If Solomon is the author, this book constitutes one of the 1,005 songs he is known to have composed (I Kin. 4:32)" (*Nelson's*, 193).

III. The Date

- A. "Solomonic authorship demands a tenth-century B.C. date. Jewish tradition considers the book a product of Solomon's early years (cf. 6:8), before his excessive multiplying of wives and concubines due to political expediency and sensual indulgence. Those who reject Solomonic authorship date the book to the post-exilic period, contending that certain Hebrew grammatical constructions suggest a relatively late date of origin. Regardless of its exact date of composition, the Song of Solomon reflects the setting of Solomon's era, and the glory of the Solomonic period is essential to the symbolism of the work" (*Nelson's*, 196).
- B. "This book has generally been assigned to Solomon's early days as king of Israel. The very nature of the writing calls for youthful vigor and imagination" (Deal, 165).

IV. The Message of the Song of Solomon

- A. Some characteristics of the book.
1. The Song of Solomon is one of the most misunderstood books of the Bible and, as a result, one of the most neglected.
 2. Its oriental expressions of love also contribute to modern confusion, yet, no other book emphasizes human love as this book does.
 3. The speakers in the book are not identified by name in the song, which leads to various interpretations.
 4. Omissions of the book.
 - a. The book contains only one direct reference to God (8:6) and that is not found in the KJV.
 - b. No mention is made of sin or religion or anything pertaining to the Mosaic economy.
 - c. The book is not alluded to by Jesus nor is it quoted anywhere in the New Testament.
- B. "The Song of Solomon is a love song abounding in metaphors and oriental imagery. It depicts the wooing and wedding of a shepherdess by King Solomon and the joys and heartaches of wedded love. The book is arranged like scenes in a drama with three main speakers: the bride, the king, and a chorus (the daughters of Jerusalem)...The Song is a type of Semitic wisdom literature, and it parallels the book of Proverbs in a number of ways. As is true of much Hebrew poetry, the book is characterized by parallelism, the stating and restating of an idea in close context. Key images in the book include wine, the garden, the kiss, various spices and fruits, the countryside or pastoral metaphors. Of special note is the fact that the name of God does not appear directly in the book" (*Nelson's*, 193, 195).
- C. "Song of Solomon tells about a Shulammitte woman and her beloved. There is the mutual admiration expressed by each one for the other, as well as descriptions of their physical love. It is a beautiful and touching picture, going to the heart of human emotion and life" (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 205).

- D. "...it describes dramatically an Oriental courtship and marriage upon the vast scale which Solomon was capable of executing" (Deal, 164).

V. The Purpose of the Song of Solomon

- A. "Since the writer has neither stated his purpose nor given inferences of it in the book, for centuries it has been a subject of considerable debate. In this light, the interpretation of the book has varied considerably. At various times it has been considered as:
1. A plain congratulatory song or poem of the historical events of the courtship and marriage of Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter. It may have been used as a drama for this occasion.
 2. An allegory of God's dealings with Israel in bringing them out of Egypt into Canaan.
 3. An allegory of Christ's relationship to His church, under the imagery of an Oriental love-making situation.
 4. A description of the love and joyous experiences of true lovers in romance and marriage, intended to show the ideal relationship of marriage.
- Earlier among the ancient Jews much consideration was given to the first theory as the correct one. Later, however, there was superimposed the idea that this poem represents God's love for and dealings with His ancient Hebrew people. This spiritualization was first sponsored by Josephus, the learned Jewish historian of later Jewish times" (Deal, 164).
- B. "Probably the best way to take the Song of Solomon is at face value. It deals with human love and the beauty of it. When God made humankind he made us 'male and female' (Gen. 1:27). That is a simple and fundamental fact of existence. That two people should love each other, and that their love should express itself physically ought to embarrass no one. The Song of Solomon celebrates that love in what could be called a collection of love poems or reflections...The basic truth taught in this book is that the structures of our humanity (psychological, physical, emotional, etc.) were created and blessed by God. The proper human response is to accept ourselves as we are in glad thankfulness for the way God made us" (Shaw's, 206).
- C. "...this poem was written to celebrate the strength, the beauty and the constancy of human love. Those who hold this view contend that the importance of a strong, clean love between man and woman, on which the home is built, is sufficient justification for placing this book in the list of inspired writings in the Bible" (H.I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History*, 312).

VI. Lessons From the Song of Solomon

- A. Lessons on human sexuality.
1. "Although the poetic images are almost completely alien to modern tastes, the composition is never lewd or obscene, even by the standards of western civilization. In fact, Canticles reflects the traditional canons of sexual morality contained in the Mosaic law, and never countenances anything which could be described on such a basis as immorality. It

reflects the traditions of Genesis 2:24...and its discussion of the whole range of the emotion of lovers is conducted at a high level of sensitivity and morality. The purity and beauty of human love as a divine gift is the dominant theme of the book" (*Zondervan's*, 493).

2. "The notion that Christianity views the body as evil and sex as nasty is traceable to religious folk who have mistakenly advanced such ideas and not to the Bible itself. The Bible has a very positive view of sexuality. It speaks candidly of the sexual nature of God's human creatures (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18-25; I Cor. 7:3-5; Heb. 13:4). Song of Solomon encourages the cultivation of an exclusive (Song 4:12) and unconquerable (Song 8:6-7) attachment of two people to each other within legitimate marriage. It endorses physical love within this setting and makes sensuality and infidelity appear hateful" (Reubel Shelly, *A Book-By-Book Study of the Old Testament*, 82).

B. Lessons on romantic love.

1. Love is spontaneous.
 - a. It cannot be bought nor excited by unnatural stimulants. Real love, without explanation, just happens.
 - b. Solomon tried to buy the maiden's love (1:9-11), but could not (8:7). Love cannot be sparked through flattery, compliments or gifts.
 - c. It cannot be forced. You cannot make someone fall in love with you.
2. Love is based on mutual satisfaction.
 - a. It is reciprocal (2:2-3).
 - b. The love of one supplements the love of the other and serves to exclude the love of anyone else.
3. Love is strong.
 - a. It is an unconquerable force.
 - b. Its grip is as strong as the grip of death and is an unquenchable fire in one's heart (8:6-7).
4. Love is a blessing. To one who experiences it, love is the greatest source of joy, rest, peace, and warmth in this world (cf. Eccl. 9:9).

Questions on Song of Solomon

1. Who is the author of this book?
2. How many songs did Solomon write? (1 Kings 4:32)
3. What is the generally accepted date for the writing of this book?
4. Briefly describe the theme of this book.
5. What do you think is the possible connection of this book with the other books in the Bible, i.e., why do you think it is included in Scripture?
6. How many geographic locations are mentioned in this song?
7. What are some of the suggested purposes of this book?
8. What lessons did Solomon learn which he tries to teach in this song?
9. What does 8:6-7 teach about love and the person one marries?
10. How different are lust and love? Which one gives fulfillment? Explain.
11. What applications can be made of the teachings of the Song of Solomon today?
12. How does this book show that romantic love is:
 - a. Spontaneous?
 - b. Based on mutual satisfaction?
 - c. Strong?
 - d. A blessing?

Isaiah

I. The Man

- A. His name: "Isaiah."
 - 1. It means "salvation is of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation."
 - 2. It "indicates that his mission was to point the people to the Lord, the only source of salvation" (Homer Hailey, *A Commentary on Isaiah*, 26).
- B. Little is known of his personal life except for his family.
 - 1. He was married to a woman who was a prophetess (8:3).
 - 2. He had at least two sons who had prophetic names, the first a promise of mercy, the latter of judgment.
 - a. Shear-jashub: "a remnant shall return" (7:3).
 - b. Maher-shalal-hash-baz: "the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth" (8:3).
- C. He was a prophet of God who was:
 - 1. A prophet of the future, even though he addressed himself to the Jews of his day.
 - a. He constantly pointed to events to come.
 - b. He prophesied of the future of Judah and the destruction of the heathen nations.
 - c. He spoke of the coming of a King, the Messiah, who would rule in righteousness (cf. John 12:41).
 - 2. A great statesman who had great insight into the affairs of his day.
 - 3. An advisor to kings meeting them as their equal.
 - 4. A great reformer.
 - a. He condemned the errors of the people.
 - b. He pointed to God as the source of all right conduct.
 - 5. Without peer in relation to his insight into the true nature and character of God.
 - a. He recognized the Lord's absolute holiness and righteousness.
 - b. He emphasized God's control over the nations and their destiny.
- D. There is no account of his death.
 - 1. Tradition, based on an apocryphal book, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, says he was sawed asunder on the order of Manasseh.
 - 2. Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, reproaches the Jews with the accusation "whom (Isaiah) you sawed asunder with a wooden saw" (Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 120, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, 259).

II. The Date

- A. The probable length of Isaiah's ministry was fifty years, 740-690 B.C.
 - 1. He was a prophet during the reigns of Uzziah (767-740 B.C.), Jotham (740-732 B.C.), Ahaz (732-716 B.C.), and Hezekiah (716-687 B.C.) in Judah.
 - 2. He was a contemporary of the prophets Amos (760-750 B.C.), Hosea (750-725 B.C.), and Micah (735-700 B.C.).

- B. "The book of Isaiah is basically a series of discourses by the prophet delivered at different times and on different occasions. The arrangement of these discourses is generally chronological whenever history is involved" (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, 329).
- C. The book of Isaiah in relation to certain historical dates and events.
1. 1:1 (740-690 B.C.). The scope of Isaiah's ministry.
 2. 6:1 (740 B.C.). Isaiah's call and commission as a prophet in the year king Uzziah died.
 3. 7:1 (734 B.C.). The Syro-Ephraimitic War. Syria and Israel formed an alliance against Assyria and when king Ahaz of Judah refused to join them, they conspired to kill him.
 4. 14:28 (727 B.C.). In the year king Ahaz died, Isaiah prophesied against the surrounding nations.
 5. 20:1 (711 B.C.). Sargon invaded the region of Palestine and conquered Ashdod, a Philistine city which had revolted against Assyria.
 6. 36:1 (701 B.C.). Sennacherib invaded Palestine and besieged Jerusalem. After an angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in their camp, the Assyrians fled.

III. The Setting

A. Politically.

1. "During the time Judah had become the battle-ground of the two great powers of the ancient world, Assyria and Egypt...Like the iron upon the anvil, therefore, Judah lay between two hostile forces, one of which (Assyria) was burning with the youthful fires of enterprise and lust of conquest, while the other (Egypt) still remembered its former glories and the empire it had wielded in Asia" (A.H. Sayce, *The Life and Times of Isaiah*, 21).
2. Egypt's influence.
 - a. Because Egypt feared the growing power of Assyria, she began to meddle in the politics of Palestine.
 - b. Under the rule of Tirhakah, Egypt sought to form a league with Jerusalem against Assyria (see Isaiah 30).
3. Assyria's influence.
 - a. When Judah was threatened by a coalition of Israel and Syria because she would not join them in an alliance against Tiglath-Pileser III, king of Assyria, king Ahaz of Judah appealed to Tiglath-Pileser for help resulting in Judah paying heavy tribute and losing her independence to Assyria.
 - b. Sargon II, successor to Tiglath-pileser, invaded Judah in 712/711 B.C. to quell a state of revolt (see Isaiah 20).
 - c. Sennacherib, successor to Sargon II, invaded Judah in 702/701 B.C. to aid in securing his western provinces.
4. There were three political parties in Judah in the time of Isaiah.
 - a. The Egyptian party. It advocated an alliance with Egypt against Assyria.
 - b. The Assyrian party. It advocated submission to Assyria.

- c. The Nationalistic or “Jehovah” party.
 - 1) Led by Isaiah, it urged loyalty to the Lord as the only way to salvation.
 - 2) It opposed any alliance with either Egypt or Assyria.
- B. Religiously.
 - 1. “The moral and spiritual conditions in Judah were little better than they were in Israel” (Hailey, 20).
 - 2. During the reign of Uzziah, Judah enjoyed prosperity and strength not known since the days of Solomon but it brought with it the sins of greed, oppression, religious formality, and corruption.
 - 3. The reforms of Hezekiah brought sweeping changes (2 Chronicles 29-31).
 - a. They were not taken to heart by the people.
 - b. They accounted for only a superficial religious fervor among the people but no permanent results.

IV. The Message

- A. According to Melvin Curry in “The Forward” to *A Commentary on Isaiah* by Homer Hailey (11-12), the book of Isaiah:
 - 1. “...portrays the tense conditions in Judah during the Assyrian invasions in a gripping way.”
 - 2. “...contrasts the faith of the few who trusted in the Lord with the unbelief of the many who feared the king of Assyria.”
 - 3. “...contrasts the gloom of Judah’s present sinful condition with the glory of its future restoration from captivity and the eventual establishment of the messianic kingdom.”
- B. “Amos emphasized the righteousness of Jehovah; Hosea his lovingkindness; Isaiah saw the source of these qualities in the divine holiness...In all his teaching he gives special emphasis to the two phases of the divine character that were burned into his innermost soul during his inaugural vision, namely, the divine holiness and the divine majesty” (Frederick Carl Eiselen, *Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, 200, 202).
- C. “The central message is—‘JEHOVAH IS SALVATION.’ In part one the key chapter is the sixth, where Isaiah sees the vision of Jehovah as King. In part two the key chapter is the fifty-third, where he sees the Lamb suffering and then triumphing” (Wilson Adams, *A Survey of the Old Testament* [an unpublished work], 115).
- D. “He saw the Lord as King, high and exalted above all creation and absolute in holiness and righteousness...The words righteousness and justice, the principles on which God always acts occur repeatedly in the predominant thought and emphasis in this book” (Hailey, 27).
- E. The two main divisions of the book are:
 - 1. Sermons of present judgment and future glory (chs. 1-39).
 - 2. Sermons of God’s greatness (chs. 40-66).

V. The Lessons

- A. Salvation is by faith.
 - 1. It was on the basis of faith in God that the people would be saved from their guilt and its consequences.

2. The people are encouraged to wait earnestly, expectantly, and hopefully in faith for the Lord to deliver them.
- B. The oneness of Jew and Gentile under the Messiah's rule.
1. The coming Messiah would bring salvation to people of all nations.
 2. The Messiah's spiritual kingdom would be universal in its scope.
- C. "The Bible in Miniature. As there are 66 books in the Bible, so there are 66 chapters in the book of Isaiah. As the 66 books are divided into 39 (Old Testament) and 27 (New Testament), so the 66 chapters of Isaiah are divided into 39 and 27. Furthermore, as the 39 Old Testament books are mainly concerned with the Law and the judgment that befalls those who disobey it, so the first 39 chapters of Isaiah are concerned with the thought of judgment on the covenant people because of their disobedience to the Law; and as the 27 books of the New Testament are mainly occupied with the message of Divine grace and salvation, so the last 27 chapters of Isaiah speak of the coming day when that grace and salvation will be made available to all men through Christ. Thus, Isaiah is a kind of Bible all in itself" (Adams, 114-115).

VI. Isaiah in the New Testament

- A. "Isaiah presented the most vivid picture of the Messiah and His kingdom of any of the prophets" (Hailey, *Hailey's Comments*, Vol. 1, 143).
- B. References to the Messiah and His kingdom:
- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|----------|
| 2:1-4 | 32:1-4,16-19 | 42:1-9 |
| 4:2 | 33:17-24 | 49:1-13 |
| 7:14 | 35:5-10 | 50:4-9 |
| 9:1-2,6-7 | 40:3-5 | 53:1-12 |
| 11:1-11 | 42:1-9 | 55:1-5 |
| 16:5 | 49:1-13 | 60:18-22 |
| 28:16-17 | 50:4-9 | 61:1-3 |
- C. Some fulfilled prophecies.
1. The virgin birth (7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-28).
 2. The Lord on His throne (6:1ff; John 12:41).
 3. Every knee bowing to Jesus (45:23; Philippians 2:10).
 4. Jesus to sit and rule on David's throne (9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33).
 5. Jesus of the lineage of David (11:1-2; Romans 15:2).
 6. Jesus, the cornerstone laid in Zion (28:16; 1 Peter 2:6).
 7. John the Baptist's preparatory work (40:3-5; Matt. 3:3).
 8. Christ's death on the cross (53:1ff; Acts 8:32-35).
 9. The Messiah's kingdom established (2:2-4; Acts 2:16; 1 Timothy 3:15; Eph. 2:13).

Questions on Isaiah

1. What is the meaning of the name “Isaiah??”
2. What, if anything, does his name say about Isaiah’s mission as a prophet?
3. What are the names of Isaiah’s two sons?
4. What prophetic messages were contained in the names of Isaiah’s sons?
5. Who were kings in Israel during Isaiah’s prophetic ministry?
6. Who were kings in Judah during Isaiah’s prophetic ministry?
7. What prophets were contemporary with Isaiah?
8. What was the date of Isaiah’s ministry?
9. What two nations were the preeminent world powers during Isaiah’s ministry?
10. Describe the influence of the above nations on Israel and Judah at that time.
11. What three political parties existed in Judah in the time of Isaiah?
12. Briefly describe those political parts and state the purpose of each?
13. Of which political party was Isaiah the head?
14. What were the religious conditions during Isaiah’s ministry in:
 - a. Israel?
 - b. Judah?
15. What king of Judah sought reforms during the ministry of Isaiah?
16. How did the people of Judah react to the above reforms?
17. During Isaiah’s ministry, who besieged Jerusalem? What was the outcome of that event?

18. Briefly state what you believe to be the basic message of the book of Isaiah.
19. What two phases of the divine character did Isaiah emphasize?
20. What are the two main divisions of the book?
21. Why is it fair to refer to Isaiah as “the Messianic prophet?”
22. What is taught in 2:1-4 that makes it such a key Messianic prophecy?
23. Since it is obvious that 7:14 is a Messianic prophecy, what meaning did it have to the people of Isaiah’s day?
24. Why is it fair to refer to the book of Isaiah as “the Bible in miniature?”
25. How is it supposed that Isaiah died?

Jeremiah

I. The Man

- A. His name means “Jehovah will lift up.”
- B. His personal life.
 - 1. He was the son of Hilkiah, a priest, and may have been a priest himself (1:1).
 - 2. He lived in Anathoth, his hometown, until he had to escape because of persecution by his own towns-people (11:18-23) and his own family (12:6).
 - 3. He was forbidden by God to marry a wife or have children to symbolize God’s removal of the joy of mirth, gladness and marriage from Judah (16:1-4,9).
 - 4. He was a “loner” (16:5,8).
 - 5. “He was of a sensitive nature, mild, timid, and inclined to melancholy...He was uncommonly bold and courageous, although it was unpopular and subjected him to hatred and even to suffering wrong...He is also called the weeping prophet” (J.B. Tidwell, *The Bible Book by Book*, 118).
 - a. He describes himself as “the man who has seen affliction” (Lamentations 3:1).
 - b. “It is noteworthy that when people were trying to account for Jesus, Jeremiah was one of the names put forward (Matthew 16:13-14)” (Eugene H. Peterson, *Run with the Horses: A Quest for Life at Its Best*, 16).
- C. His prophetic ministry.
 - 1. God chose him before birth to be a prophet (1:5).
 - 2. He was ordained to be a prophet while still young (1:6).
 - 3. He seemed constantly torn between his love for God and faithfulness to Him and his love for and patriotic duty to his country (4:19; 8:20-22; 9:1).
 - 4. He was so totally devoted to his duty as a prophet and so dedicated to his God-given mission that he could not stop speaking the message of God even though at times he felt like giving up (20:7-9).
 - a. In his forty years of ministry he never once saw any positive response to his message, yet he patiently and bravely persisted in his mission despite the fact that he was unheeded, humiliated and even persecuted (6:16-19; 25:4-11; 26:12-13).
 - b. Even though at times it broke his heart to do so, he continually declared the whole counsel of God to an unrepentant people.

II. The Date

- A. Jeremiah began his work as a prophet during the reign of Josiah (1:2) in 627 B.C. and prophesied for the next forty years to 586 B.C.
 - 1. His work spanned the reign of the last five kings of Judah (1:1-3).
 - 2. He prophesied during the forty years which led up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its inhabitants to Babylonian captivity.
- B. He was a contemporary of Ezekiel (597-575 B.C.) and Daniel (605-536 B.C.).

III. The Setting

A. Politically.

1. "The tense three-sided contest for world dominion between Assyria, Egypt and Babylon form the background of (Jeremiah's) prophetic career" (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 571).
 - a. Assyria. Her power and dominion were waning because of revolts throughout her empire, especially that of Babylon. After Ashurbanipal's death (633 B.C.), she declined rapidly until Nineveh was destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians in 612 B.C.
 - b. Egypt. She was growing in power. Pharaoh Necho came to Assyria's aid against the Medes and Babylonians in 609 B.C., killing king Josiah of Judah in Megiddo when he tried to stop him (2 Chronicles 35:20-35). He took Jehoahaz, Josiah's successor, captive (Jeremiah 22:11-17) and replaced him with Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:31-34; 2 Chron. 36:1-5). Babylon defeated the Egyptian armies at Carchemish in 605 B.C. and became the dominant world power (Jer. 46:1-26).
 - c. Babylon. She subdued Assyria and then Egypt. She collected tribute and took hostages from Judah under king Jehoiakim in 605 B.C. She also deported Jews from Jerusalem on two other occasions (Jer. 52:28-30) and then in 586 B.C. destroyed Jerusalem (2 Kings 25; Jer. 52).
2. Judah.
 - a. Judah had turned away from God and had made alliances, at various times, with Assyria, Egypt and Babylon.
 - b. Following the death of Josiah, who was the last good king of Judah, all her kings were wicked and led her away from God.
 - 1) Jehoahaz (609 B.C.) reigned three months until Pharaoh Necho carried him away to Egypt (2 Kings 22:1 - 23:30; 2 Chron. 34-35).
 - 2) Jehoiakim (609-597 B.C.), brother of Jehoahaz, was set up as king by Necho and paid him heavy tribute until Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, overran Judah and he became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 23:35 - 24:7; 2 Chron. 36:5,8). He was taken to Babylon in chains in 597 B.C.
 - 3) Jehoiachin (597 B.C.) reigned three months after which Jerusalem was captured and another group of captives were taken to Babylon (2 Kings 24:8-16; 2 Chron. 36:9-10).
 - 4) Zedekiah (597-586 B.C.), Jehoiachin's uncle, was made king by Nebuchadnezzar. When he rebelled against him, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and destroyed it and then carried Zedekiah and all the people of the city captive to Babylon in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 24:17 - 25:21; 2 Chron. 36:11-21; Jer. 52:1-30).

B. Religiously.

1. Judah had forsaken God and turned to idols (Jer. 2:13).
2. The extent of the wickedness of the people is seen in the fact that three times in the book it is said that the people are past praying for (7:16; 11:14; 14:11).

3. The wickedness and impenitence of the people are drawing them closer to the inevitable judgment of God, Babylon being the instrument of His providence.

IV. The Message

- A. The basic message of Jeremiah's prophetic work can be seen in 25:11 and 30:11.
 1. 25:11. "And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."
 2. 30:11. "...though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished."
- B. Jeremiah's message can be summarized as "Repent or perish" (3:25 - 4:2) but sadly it went unheeded (6:16-19; 25:4-11; 26:12-13).
- C. "His was principally a message of stern warning against the inevitable doom of the Babylonian Captivity (25:1-14), if the people did not repent of idolatry and sin. The menacing doom of an (unorthodox) message (1:10) was highlighted, however, by bright Messianic flashes (23:5-8; 30:4-11; 31:31-34; 33:15-18). Final restoration of Israel was to be accomplished after a period of unparalleled suffering (30:3-10), through the manifestation of David's righteous Branch, the Lord (23:6; 33:15)" (*Unger's Bible Handbook*, 344).
- D. While his message is basically one of gloom and judgment, there are brief glimpses of the future hope in the Messiah, Jesus Christ (23:1-6; 31:31-34).

V. The Lessons

- A. "Every concerned Christian in America would do well to ponder long over Jeremiah's book for there are striking similarities between his day and ours on nearly every page—a corrupt leadership (23:1-2), a general condoning of immorality among the populous ('neither could they blush...' 8:12), and even a spiritual breakdown among religious leaders—all find their comparisons in our own day. (See 5:30-31)" (*Wilson Adams, A Survey of the Bible*, [an unpublished work], 118).
- B. Devotion to duty to the Lord as depicted by Jeremiah's persistent perseverance (20:7-9).
- C. National sin brings national judgment (2:8,19,25).
- D. The impossibility of Christ reigning on the earthly throne of David as the premillennial theory demands Him to do (22:28-30).
 1. Coniah (Jeconiah) would have no descendants on the throne of David who would rule in Judah.
 2. Jesus Christ was a descendant of Jeconiah (Matthew 1:1-11), therefore, He could not sit on an earthly throne in Jerusalem.
- E. Jeremiah speaks of the sorrow, patience, grace and self-sacrificing love of Jesus for His people. Compare 9:11 with Matthew 23:37.

Questions on Jeremiah

1. What does the name “Jeremiah” mean?
2. Who was the father of Jeremiah? What was he?
3. What was Jeremiah’s hometown? Why did he leave it?
4. When did God choose Jeremiah as a prophet? (1:5)
5. How old was Jeremiah when he was ordained as a prophet? (1:6)
6. Describe the call of Jeremiah to be a prophet.
7. Why did God forbid Jeremiah to marry and have children?
8. During what time did Jeremiah prophesy?
9. How long was Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry?
10. What three nations were world powers during the ministry of Jeremiah?
11. Describe the situation of each of the above world powers and their influence on Judah.
12. Who were the kings of Judah during Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry?
13. With what prophets was Jeremiah a contemporary?
14. Describe the political situation in Judah during Jeremiah’s ministry.
15. Describe the spiritual condition of Judah during the time of Jeremiah.
16. What illustrates the wickedness of Judah during Jeremiah’s ministry? (7:16; 11:14; 14:11)
17. During his ministry, between what was Jeremiah constantly torn? (4:19; 8:20-22; 9:1)
18. What was the basic message of Jeremiah’s prophetic work? (25:11; 30:11)

19. How was Jeremiah's message received by the people?
20. Why is it correct to characterize Jeremiah as "the weeping prophet?"
21. What occurred to Judah at the end of Jeremiah's ministry?
22. Who was to be God's instrument of His judgment against Judah?
23. How is Jeremiah an example of devotion to duty? (20:7-9)
24. In what ways can Jeremiah be compared to Jesus?
25. Do you believe the times in which Jeremiah lived could be compared to our times today? If not, why not? If so, what consequences might that have on our nation?

Lamentations

I. The Author

- A. Jeremiah (cf. 3:1, 8, 14-17, 48-51, 52-57, 60-63).
 - 1. Though he is not named in the text, his authorship has never been questioned.
 - 2. The very nature of this book shows a kinship to the book of Jeremiah.
- B. Evidence which suggests Jeremiah as author.
 - 1. The Septuagint names Jeremiah as author and introduces the book by saying, "Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented with his lamentation over Jerusalem, and said..."
 - 2. Early church fathers such as Origen and Jerome identify him as author.
 - 3. Jeremiah, like the writer of Lamentations, had a sensitive nature (cf. Jeremiah 8:21 - 9:1; 14:17-22).
 - 4. The scenes depicted of the destruction of Jerusalem are so life-like and stirring that they suggest an eyewitness.

II. The Date - 586 B.C.

- A. "The time of the composition of these poems is certainly the period immediately after the capture of Jerusalem, and probably during the month which intervened between the capture of Jerusalem and its destruction (see passages which show that famine and hunger were still raging in the city, 1:11,19; 2:19,20; 4:4; etc.)" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes on the Old Testament*, 281).
- B. "It is quite probable that this book was written during the three months between the time the first group of captives were taken to Babylon and the time when the second group left Jerusalem, fleeing into Egypt in 586 B.C., taking Jeremiah with them" (William S. Deal, *Baker's Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 188).
- C. "The vivid and passionate tone of the author gives a strong impression of one who had just experienced the horrors of the destruction of the Holy City and the temple" (*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 219).

III. The Setting

- A. Read 2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21 and Jeremiah 34,37-39,52 concerning the fall of Jerusalem (Lamentations 1:1-3). The siege against Jerusalem lasted a year and a half.
- B. "The fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., is the historical event common to the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations. Jeremiah prophesies and anticipates the fall and Lamentations looks back at the holocaust in utter distress. Knowing from his prophecies how Jeremiah wept over his people before judgment fell, it is not difficult for us to imagine the depths to which his soul sank in utter grief as he watched the holy city burning and his people being ravished. Lamentations reveals something of the pathos of that experience" (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, 351).

IV. Composition and Style

- A. "The five chapters of Lamentations consist of five mournful poems which can be entitled: (1) the destruction of Jerusalem, (2) the anger of Yahweh, (3) the prayer for mercy, (4) the siege of Jerusalem, (5) the prayer for restoration" (*Nelson's*, 219).
- B. "'Lamentations' is a set of five short poems of mourning. They are funeral songs. The first four follow an acrostic pattern. Lamentations 1, 2, and 4 each have 22 verses, with each successive verse beginning with each successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Lamentation 3 has three verses allotted to each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and every group of three begins with the same letter. Lamentation 5 balances out the other poems with 22 verses, but is not an alphabetical acrostic. The songs are composed using a special arrangement suitable for mourning. It is called a 'limping meter' with three beats in the first line, trailing away to a distressed two-beat line. When publicly read in the Hebrew language, it gave the effect of a faint dying away. It would be a very depressing song to hear. Various views are held as to why the author used this acrostic device. Among them are: (1) as an aid to memorization; (2) as a symbol of the fullness of the people's grief (i.e. from A to Z); (3) to confine the expression of boundless grief by the limiting device of acrostic" (Jensen, 353).

V. The Message

- A. "Behind the writing was the intention to produce in the sinful Jewish people that element of true repentance necessary before God could work out their restoration to their home-land. Jeremiah had prophesied that there would be a return. He must now set about helping to prepare them for this fulfillment. One sees in the book, also, the personal heartbreak and deep sorrow of the prophet personally, for his love for his city never ceased to well up from within him" (Deal, 188).
- B. "Lamentations portrays the reaction of a devout Israelite toward the destruction of the theocracy. The tragic scene presents God's people so corrupt that Jehovah has forsaken His sanctuary and abandoned it to their enemies...The whole note is one of deep tragedy" (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 641).
- C. "What Jerusalem's fall meant to the Jews of the Old Testament is hard for us to imagine... To them it was the loss of everything—their Temple, priesthood, sacrificial system, capital city, nation, and, in most cases, large numbers of their loved ones. For the survivors of the destruction, it meant a forced march of about 2,000 miles to Babylon, where they then had to live in exile, servitude, and misery. Lamentations was written to bewail those awful facts" (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 214).
- D. "The name of this book reflects the fact that the book is a sort of funeral dirge, a song of heartbreak, over the destruction of Jerusalem. In the most ancient Hebrew groupings of Scripture, this book is listed with Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Ruth, and Esther, which were known as 'The Writings'" (Deal, 186).
 - 1. It was listed there because, like these books, it was used for special readings in the synagogues.
 - 2. Starting in the Middle Ages, the Jews read "Lamentations" every Sabbath eve at the Western Wall (Wailing Wall) in Jerusalem to commemorate the city's fall.

VI. A Summary

- A. Lamentation 1 (ch. 1). Jerusalem's terrible condition after her destruction is portrayed.
 - 1. The author is despondent over her emptiness (vv. 1-11).
 - 2. The city is personified so that she cries her own song of mourning for her dreadful condition (vv. 12-22).
- B. Lamentation 2 (ch. 2). God's anger and punishment upon Jerusalem for her sins is depicted.
 - 1. It explains this destruction is a judgment from God (vv. 1-10).
 - 2. The prophet's heart is broken so he is powerless to console the people (vv. 11-17).
 - 3. The people cry out to the Lord because of their horrible plight (vv. 18-22).
- C. Lamentation 3 (ch. 3).
 - 1. The prophet cries out in anguish for his own affliction during his life and ministry but he also sings of the hope he has because of God's faithfulness and mercy (vv.1-39).
 - 2. God's chastisement for their sins was just (vv. 39-47).
 - 3. The prophet prays for vengeance upon his adversaries (vv. 48-66).
- D. Lamentation 4 (ch. 4). The reason for their punishment is told—their degradation and affliction is because of their sins.
- E. Lamentation 5 (ch. 5). This is the prophet's prayer for mercy and restoration.
 - 1. He reminds God of the affliction of the survivors (vv. 1-18).
 - 2. He pleads for God to ultimately deliver and restore them (vv. 19-22). He would in 70 years (Jeremiah 25:8-11).

VII. An Outline

- A. The Affliction and Misery of Jerusalem (ch. 1).
- B. Jehovah's Anger and Punishment (ch. 2).
- C. The Prophet's Anguish and Hope (ch. 3).
- D. The Horrors and Degradation of the Siege (ch. 4).
- E. A Prayer for Restoration (ch. 5).

VIII. Some Lessons from Lamentations

- A. "The spirit of the book of Lamentations goes beyond merely weeping over the past. Here we have an implicit warning that to transgress is to invite disaster. The prophets had predicted that God would judge the sins of his people if they did not repent. Now, the ashes of the city were testimony to the fact that God had spoken and was true to his word. His-story was thus a vindication of God and his righteousness. It was also a declaration of the wrath of God, never a popular concept. Most people choose to emphasize the softer side of God, and properly so, but that understanding must never obscure the fact that God is not to be trifled with...Lamentations has another side, however. Although the nation of Judah is cast down, it is not without hope. The people may yet trust God and find pardon. God is one whose mercies are renewed every morning, whose faithfulness is great (3:19-39). We see the value of patience, prayer, and confession of sin. God does not hold grudges and is willing to start over anytime we are willing to acknowledge our errors and resubmit ourselves to him" (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 214-215).

- B. "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7) is forcefully illustrated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of her people. God will deal with sin with dreadful justice when it is not repented of and forsaken.
- C. Bearing the "yoke" in youth is a great blessing (3:27).
- D. Amid the most darkening gloom he could imagine, the prophet retained his faith in God.

Questions on Lamentations

1. Who is the author of Lamentations?
2. How does the nature of Lamentations show kinship to the other book this prophet authored?
3. What does the name “Lamentations” mean? Why is it an appropriate title for this book?
4. When was Lamentations written?
5. What important event in Judah’s history had just taken place?
6. What had caused the above event?
7. How long did the siege against Jerusalem last?
8. Of what do the first five chapters of Lamentations consist?
9. Why is it proper to refer to the five poems of Lamentations as “funeral songs?” Over what, or whom, were they mourning?
10. What are some of the basic messages of Lamentations?
11. Why did the Hebrews group this book with the other “writings?”
12. What is presented in chapter one?
13. What is presented in chapter two?
14. What is presented in chapter three?
15. What is presented in chapter four?
16. What is presented in chapter five?
17. Is there any message of hope in Lamentations? If so, what is it?
18. Why is the prophet powerless to console the people? (2:11-17)
19. When would God restore His people? (Jer. 25:8-11)
20. What are some lessons to be learned from Lamentations?

Ezekiel

I. The Man

- A. His name: “Ezekiel.”
 - 1. It means “God strengthens” or “God will strengthen.”
 - 2. He would need the Lord’s strength in order to preach the message God had him to speak (3:8-11,14). Also, his task seemed to be to strengthen the exiles and turn them back to God.
- B. His personal life.
 - 1. He was born in 622 B.C., the son of Buzi, a priest, possibly of the lineage of the righteous Zadok (1:3; cf. 40:46; 44:15).
 - 2. He was undoubtedly a priest himself.
 - 3. He was married to a woman who died suddenly on the day Nebuchadnezzar began to put Jerusalem under siege (24:2, 15-18).
 - 4. In 597 B.C. at age 25, he was one of the Judeans taken captive to Babylon.
- C. His prophetic ministry.
 - 1. At age 30, five years after his exile, he was called to be a prophet (1:1-3).
 - a. He, it seems, had been preparing for the priesthood (4:14).
 - b. He should have entered into service as a priest at age 30 (Numbers 4:3,23, 30). Instead, he became a spokesman for God to an exiled people.
 - 2. He saw the vision of God’s glory and God commissioned him to be a “watchman” for the house of Israel (2:1 - 3:21).
 - 3. His prophetic ministry spanned at least 22 years (1:1-3; 29:17).

II. The Date

- A. The likely date for the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel was 592-570 B.C. (1:1-2; 29:17).
- B. “Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry falls into two major periods. The first included the years 592-586 B.C., during which the prophet’s message—directed toward Jerusalem—consisted of reiterated warnings and symbolic actions designed to bring Judah to repentance and back to her historic faith in God. The second period, which began with the year of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, included the years 586-570 B.C. In the course of these years, Ezekiel was a pastor to the exiles and a messenger of comfort and hope (Ezek. 33-48)” (*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. II, 455).
- C. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah (627-586 B.C.) and Daniel (606-536 B.C.).
 - 1. Jeremiah preached to the Jews in Judah before Jerusalem’s fall.
 - 2. Daniel spoke God’s messages to the royal courts of the kings of Babylon.
 - 3. Ezekiel was prophet to the exiles in Babylon before and after the fall of Jerusalem.

III. The Setting

- A. Politically.
 - 1. Previous to the exile.
 - a. God refused to defend Judah against Babylon because of her sins.
 - b. Other nations refused to come to Judah’s aid militarily.

2. During the exile.
 - a. The Jews were captives living in Babylon.
 - b. The Babylonians did not treat the Jews as slaves.
 - 1) They were allowed to buy land, enter into business and accumulate wealth.
 - 2) Some, such as Daniel, attained high political offices with the Babylonian government.
- B. Religiously.
1. Previous to the exile.
 - a. Even after witnessing two previous deportations to Babylon (606 and 597 B.C.), the people remained impenitent.
 - b. They continued to go even deeper into wickedness and idolatry.
 - c. Two common false notions existed during this period.
 - 1) Those left behind in Jerusalem thought their kinsmen who had been deported were probably being justly punished for their sins while they themselves, since they remained in the city, were still in God's favor.
 - 2) Those already exiled thought their captivity would end quickly and that God would never allow His chosen city, Jerusalem, to burn.
 - 3) Both of these ideas were proven false when Nebuchadnezzar, in 587-586 B.C., destroyed Jerusalem, burning it to the ground and massacring its citizens.
 2. During the exile.
 - a. The people enjoyed religious freedom.
 - b. During this period they forever gave up idolatry.
 - c. They sought out the law of God.
 - d. It was most likely during this time that synagogue worship was inaugurated.

IV. The Message

- A. Ezekiel's message was different to different Jews.
 1. To those in exile who thought they would shortly be returning to Jerusalem, he proclaimed that they would not be going home.
 2. To those who blamed God for their exile, he announced that the judgments of God were just and deserved.
 3. To those who had given up and were filled with despair, he spoke of hope for the future.
- B. A summary of the book identifies Ezekiel and his message.
 1. Section one (chs. 1-3). It introduces Ezekiel and describes his call and commission to be a prophet.
 2. Section two (chs. 4-24). It details prophecies made against Jerusalem before her fall.
 3. Section three (chs. 25-32). It contains prophecies against foreign nations.
 - a. There were nations happy to see Judah fall.
 - b. The premise: If God was punishing His own nation for her disobedience, how much more would He punish the heathen nations?

- c. The nations included are Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt.
- 4. Section four (chs. 33-48).
 - a. Written after the fall of Jerusalem, it is a message of hope for the future.
 - b. It concludes with Ezekiel's vision of a new city and temple which were to be glorious and splendid (chs. 40-48).
 - 1) This was not the temple which was to be rebuilt in Jerusalem following the release from captivity.
 - 2) This vision was of the spiritual temple to be built by the Messiah where God would again dwell among men (48:35).
- C. The overall theme of Ezekiel's message seems to be "They shall know that I am the Lord."
 - 1. This phrase is repeated over 70 times in the book.
 - 2. See, for example: 6:7, 10, 13-14.
- D. "The mission of Ezekiel was to save from complete apostasy the group in Babylon that had been carried away in 597 B.C. Also he labored to prepare them against the corruptions of those left in Jerusalem when they should be brought to Babylon. At this point one should read carefully Jeremiah 24. The good figs were the captives taken to Babylon in 597; the bad figs those taken in 586. Out of the first group God would find the remnant that should return to Jerusalem. It was Ezekiel's work to preserve this remnant" (Homer Hailey, *Hailey's Comments*, Vol. I, 188).

V. The Lessons

- A. The importance of preaching (2:3-7; 3:4-11).
 - 1. Sent by God into a true "mission field," Ezekiel's work would be disappointing, discouraging and received apathetically.
 - 2. In spite of adversity, Ezekiel stayed with his God-given task of preaching God's message.
- B. Personal accountability (ch. 18).
 - 1. "Ezekiel emphasized the doctrine of personal responsibility for sin in the most vigorous terms. 'The soul that sins shall die' (18:4). The message of Ezekiel in this respect constituted an important turning point in the prophetic message. With the destruction of the nation, the emphasis on national responsibility gave way to an emphasis on individual responsibility" (*Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, 456).
- C. No nation is indestructible (chs. 25-32).
 - 1. The principle found in James 4:6, while true of individuals, is also true of nations.
 - 2. God's judgment upon a nation will destroy it no matter how strong it is or seems to be.
- D. Salvation is of the Messiah.
 - 1. Chapter 34 speaks of a new and glorious day for Israel when God would set a new "David," the Messiah, over them, give them a new covenant, and cause there to be a blessing in the land again.
 - 2. The vision of the dry bones in chapter 37 speaks of a day when God would cause spiritual life to enter into His people.
 - 3. The spiritual temple, described in chapters 40 through 47, would be built by God for man providing "living water" (47:9) to man.

Questions on Ezekiel

1. What does the name “Ezekiel” mean?
2. In what way does his name apply to his God-given work?
3. Who was Ezekiel’s father?
4. Besides being a prophet, what else was Ezekiel?
5. When did Ezekiel’s wife die? (24:2, 15-18)
6. How old was Ezekiel when he was taken captive to Babylon?
7. What was the likely date of the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel?
8. With what prophets was Ezekiel contemporary?
9. Compare Ezekiel’s mission and message with those of his contemporaries.
10. What was the political situation of the Jews before their exile to Babylon?
11. What was the spiritual situation of the Jews before their exile to Babylon?
12. What was the political situation of the Jews during their exile in Babylon?
13. What was the spiritual situation of the Jews during their exile in Babylon?
14. What was the message of Ezekiel to those exile who thought they would shortly return home?
15. What was the message of Ezekiel to those who blamed God for their exile?
16. What was the message of Ezekiel to those who had given up and were filled with despair?
17. How did God describe Ezekiel’s position on behalf of Israel? (3:17-21; 33:1-11)
18. What was the overall theme of Ezekiel’s message?

19. Since God could no longer reach Israel as a nation, how, in Ezekiel, does He reach them? What principle underlies this attempt?
20. How does Ezekiel's work demonstrate the importance of preaching? (2:3-7; 3:4-11)
21. What is the significance of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones? (ch 37)
22. What did Ezekiel's vision of the new temple and the new city signify?

Daniel

I. The Man

- A. His name “Daniel” means “God is my judge.”
- B. His personal life.
 1. He may have descended from a noble family, perhaps he was even a prince, since normally the prominent people of a nation were taken captive (1:3,6). This would have fulfilled Isaiah’s earlier prophecy (Isaiah 39:7; 2 Kings 20:18).
 2. He was carried away while a youth, about 15 years old, to Babylon during the third year of Jehoiakim (609-558 B.C.), along with the other elite young men of Judah.
 3. Given the name “Beltshazzar,” he was instructed in the wisdom and science of the Chaldeans.
 - a. His study was probably in preparation for royal service.
 - b. During that time, he was allowed by his advisor to live on vegetables and water rather than eating rich food and wine.
 - c. Daniel’s dedication made him a better student than his Babylonian counterparts.
 4. He remained steadfast in his devotion to God and distinguished himself by his ability and understanding.
 5. God gave him gifts in the understanding of mysteries and the interpretation of dreams. He used them to interpret two dreams for Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (chs. 2 and 4).
 6. He was made ruler over the province of Babylon and chief of the governors over its wise men.
 7. He interpreted writing for Belshazzar, probably the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, and was further honored (ch. 5).
 8. Under Darius the Mede, who succeeded Belshazzar, he was one of three presidents of the satraps (ch. 6).
 9. His enemies made an attempt to do away with him and he was cast into a den of lions from which he was miraculously delivered (ch. 6).
 - a. His opponents, knowing Daniel prayed three times daily to Jehovah, had tricked Darius into issuing an edict which prohibited anyone from praying to any god or man for 30 days.
 - b. Though Darius rued his command, he could not legally change it and, therefore, had to cast Daniel into the lions’ den.
 - c. Darius believed Jehovah would deliver Daniel. After a sleepless night, he arose early in the morning and saw that Daniel had been preserved by God.
 - d. The enemies of Daniel, along with their wives and children, were cast into the den of lions and were immediately consumed.
 10. He continued in high office until the first year of Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian empire which conquered Babylon (538 B.C.).

11. Apparently he did not return to Palestine with the Jews. Most likely he spent his last days in Babylon.
 12. "Daniel is one of the few well-known biblical characters about whom nothing negative is written. His life was characterized by faith, prayer, courage, consistency, and lack of compromise. This 'greatly beloved' man (9:23; 10:11, 19) was mentioned three times by his sixth-century B.C. contemporary Ezekiel as an example of righteousness" (*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 233).
- C. His prophetic ministry.
1. As a prophet, he served from 605-536 B.C.
 2. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah (628-586 B.C.) and Ezekiel (593-570 B.C.), a fellow exile (cf. Ezekiel 14:20).
 3. Unlike the other prophets, such as Ezekiel who ministered directly to the people, he was primarily God's representative in the king's court of the ruling nation.
 4. "Daniel ministered for the full duration of the Babylonian captivity as a prophet and government official, and he continued on after Babylon was overcome by the Medes and Persians in 539 b.c. His prophetic ministry was directed to the gentile courts of Babylon and Persia, as well as to his Jewish countrymen" (*Nelson's*, 235).
- D. Author of the book which bears his name.
1. "That Daniel is the author of this book has been received both by the Jews and the Christian church throughout the centuries" (William S. Deal, *Baker's Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 200).
 2. "The authorship and date of Daniel are two of the more contested issues in the field of biblical studies...Daniel claimed to write this book (12:4), and he used the autobiographical first person from 7:2 onward. The Jewish Talmud agrees with this testimony, and Christ attributed a quote from 9:27 to 'Daniel the prophet' (Matt. 24:15)" (*Nelson's*, 233).

II. The Date

- A. 606-536 B.C. or later (1:1; 10:1).
- B. The events and prophecies of this book cover at least the full length of the 70 year exile in Babylon, from the first deportation of Hebrew captives (2 Chron. 36:5-8; Dan. 1:1-2) to the first return of the captives to their homeland (Ezra 1-2).
- C. "The events of the book occurred during the Babylonian captivity, 605-536 B.C. Much of the book sets its own historical timetable by such references as those to Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede. Daniel had been in Babylon sometime before the burning of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the bringing of the last captives to Babylon. The book itself contains no date as to when it was written. It is clear, however, that the events making up the book occurred over a period of some time. It will be noted, though, that there is no progressive chronology in Daniel. For example, Belshazzar's tragic end is described in chapter 5, while in chapter 8 Daniel is talking about a vision which he had during the third year of Belshazzar's reign... The reference to the instruction to Daniel to go and stand in his lot (12:13) may indicate that he was a very old man when he finished his prophetic work. It is thought that his book was written in its final form just before the close of the captivity, possibly not long before his death" (Deal, 199-200).

III. The Setting

A. The Judean exiles.

1. Nebuchadnezzar, returning from Jerusalem to Babylon to assume the throne following the death of his father, Nabopolassar, took with him a number of captives, including Daniel and his three friends, in 606 B.C.
2. A second group was exiled with King Jehoiachin, including Ezekiel, in 597 B.C.
3. A third group was carried away with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (cf. Jeremiah 52:28-30).
4. Jeremiah had cautioned the captives to live in Babylon peaceably and prosper because after 70 years they would return to their homeland (Jer. 29:1-20).
 - a. From the captivity of the first group (606 B.C.) to the return of the first group of captives (536 B.C.) was 70 years.
 - b. From the destruction of Jerusalem and razing of the temple (586 B.C.) to the return of the final group of captives and completion of the temple (516 B.C.) was 70 years.

C. Babylon.

1. Some important historical dates.
 - a. 625 B.C. Nabopolassar (625-605 b.c.) rebelled against Assyria.
 - b. 612 B.C. Babylon destroyed Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, during war.
 - c. 609 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, Nabopolassar's son, destroyed the Assyrian army leaving Babylon the power in the east.
 - d. 606-605 B.C. Pharaoh-necho attacked Babylon and was defeated. He returned to Egypt.
 - e. 605 B.C. Nabopolassar died. Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 B.C.) returned to Babylon to assume the throne. He brought the elite of Judah, including Daniel, with him.
 - f. 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Judah and carried away Ezekiel and Jehoiachin and 10,000 artisans of Judah.
 - g. 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem a third time. Jerusalem fell, the temple was destroyed, and Judah was taken captive.
 - h. 539 B.C. Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians under the reign of Cyrus the Great (538-530 B.C.).
 - i. 536 B.C. A group of exiled Jews returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua.
 - k. 516 B.C. The temple was rebuilt.
2. "What kind of a world was this new home of theirs? Compared to the poor little country of Palestine it was a big, rich, and prosperous country. Here the Jews found an advanced culture, big business and material splendor. Babylon, the chief city, was one of great wealth and magnificence. It was the center of a vast empire including all of Mesopotamia and the highlands beyond, as well as Syria and Palestine. The city of Babylon was on the monotonous plains of the banks of the Euphrates River. Ancient writers describe it as a city surrounded by four walls, each fifteen miles in length. Twenty four streets ran north and south

and the same number east and west. In this way each street terminated at a gate in the wall (100 of these) and the city was thus made up of more than six hundred square blocks. It is said that in the center of each square was a garden. The city contained many elaborate and expensive buildings such as palaces and temples. To relieve the homesickness of his wife for her native hills Nebuchadnezzar constructed, at great expense, the famous hanging gardens. In reality these were immense terraces placed on top of each other until they reached the height of the city walls. On these were planted beautiful shrubs and flowers” (H.I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History*, 251-252).

D. The visions of future world empires.

1. God gave Daniel insight into the kingdoms of the future to show the weakness of the kingdoms of men and the permanence and glory of the kingdom of God (2:24-25; 7:1-28; 8:1-27; 9:20 - 11:45).
 - a. Babylon (625-536 B.C.). With the great Nebuchadnezzar as its main leader, it was the head of gold.
 - b. Medo-Persian (536-330 B.C.). Established by Cyrus, king of Persia, and Darius, the king of Media, it was represented by the breast and arms of silver.
 - c. Macedonia [Grecian] (330-168 B.C.). Established by Alexander the Great and then divided among his four generals in 323 B.C., it was conquered by the Romans in 168 B.C. It was represented by the belly and thighs of bronze.
 - d. Rome (30 B.C. - AD 330). Established as the world power by Octavius Caesar, Rome was the legs of iron and feet and toes of iron and clay.
 - e. The kingdom of God. It would be established during that fourth world empire and it would never be destroyed (2:44-45; 7:9-27).
2. “The four kingdoms of the image were Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Macedonian, and Roman. These pagan empires were human in their origin, temporary in their nature, and would be overcome in their weakness. Over against these God would set up a kingdom, which should be divine in its origin, eternal in its nature, and unconquerable in its strength. This kingdom is the kingdom of Christ and God today, established on Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, which has endured the attacks of Satan, the vicissitudes of time, and is destined to be presented unto God the Father (I Cor. 15:24-28). The book of Revelation is God’s moving picture in symbols of the testing of that kingdom’s claim to divine origin and permanence and the proof of its divine character as it withstood each onslaught from every quarter that the Devil could bring against it” (Homer Hailey, *Hailey’s Comments*, Vol. I, 236-237).

IV. A Synopsis of the Book

- A. Chapter 1. Introduction. The development of Daniel and three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to serve in the court of the king of Babylon.

- B. Chapter 2. Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's vision. Divine judgment brought four kingdoms to an end.
- C. Chapter 3. Nebuchadnezzar sets up a gold image. Three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, are cast into a furnace for refusing to bow down to it. They, by the providence of God, come out unscathed.
- D. Chapter 4. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great tree. Its lesson: God is able to debase the proud.
- E. Chapter 5. Belshazzar, probably grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, sees the hand-writing on the wall. Darius received the kingdom.
- F. Chapter 6. Daniel is made one of three presidents over the satraps. After the plotting of his enemies, he is cast into a den of lions. He, like his three friends, is preserved by God.
- G. Chapter 7. Daniel's dream of the four great world empires (The key to understanding the book of Revelation).
 - 1. Beasts come up out of the sea.
 - 2. Judgment of the beasts.
 - 3. One like the Son of man.
- H. Chapter 8. A vision of Daniel. Alexander the Great (destruction of the Medo-Persian empire by the Macedonian empire). Broken up into four divisions (Syria and Egypt most notable).
- I. Chapter 9. The prayer of Daniel answered in the latter part in the definition of the Messianic kingdom.
- J. Chapter 10. Conflict between Egypt and Syria (Judah under the Syrians).
- K. Chapter 11. The coming of the Romans.
- L. Chapter 12. The time of the end (brought down to Christ).

V. The Message

- A. "...the theme of this book is the sovereignty of the God of Israel. Nations are under His power. The destinies of individuals are under His control. The message served to comfort the exiles and to encourage them to look beyond their present dark hour in confident faith" (Rubel Shelly, *A Book-By-Book Study of the Old Testament*, 99-100).
- B. "Daniel, the 'Apocalypse of the Old Testament,' presents a surprisingly comprehensive sweep of prophetic history. After an introductory chapter in Hebrew, Daniel switches to the Aramaic language in chapters 2-7 to describe the future course of the gentile world powers. Then in chapters 8-12, Daniel reverts to Hebrew to survey the future of the Jewish nation under gentile domination. The theme of God's sovereign control in the affairs of world history clearly emerges and provides comfort to the future church, as well as to the Jews whose nation was destroyed by the Babylonians. The Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans will come and go, but God will establish His kingdom through His redeemed people forever. Another theme of this book is the emphasis on separation to God, with Daniel as the ultimate example. From his decision not to eat the king's food (1:8-16), to his refusal to pray to the king (6:4-24), Daniel displayed such an uncompromising spirit that spectacular opportunities were opened for God to display His power on Daniel's behalf" (Nelson's, 236).

- C. “We can see four elements in the message of Daniel. First, God is all-knowing. He can predict future events, and he revealed some of those secrets to the prophets. Second, God rules over human affairs. This does not mean that we are not free to act, but it does mean that God works in and through our choices. This gives us confidence to live because ultimately no one can defy God and get away with it. God is still on the throne. Third, evil will ultimately be overcome. Although God’s enemies may get the upper hand at times in history, the final chapter has not yet been written. When it is, God will come out the victor, along with those who have chosen to live for him. Finally, God’s Messiah, Jesus, is vital in his plan for the world; Daniel had an intimation of that redemptive mystery” (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 221).

VI. The Lessons of Daniel

- A. God rules in the kingdoms of men.
1. Nebuchadnezzar did not “take” Jerusalem. God gave it to him (1:2).
 2. Amidst the thrones of the world, wherever they may be, there is one throne that reigns supreme over all upon whom sits the King of Kings and Ancient of Days (2:21; 7:9-10).
 - a. It is by the will of God that kings are raised or deposed (2:21; 4:17,25).
 - b. The destiny of the nations is within his hands (5:18ff; cf. Acts 17:26).
 - c. No battle or siege is successful unless God wills it (1:2a; 5:25-30).
 3. God shows that all heathen nations and individuals were still accountable to His moral law (4:27; 5:22-23, 27).
- B. God cares for His own.
1. The Jews of the captivity were tempted to think that God had forgotten them.
 2. God’s deliverance of the three men from the furnace and Daniel from the lions’ den would serve as proof that God still loved and cared for His people—whom the Lord loves He chastens and disciplines (Hebrews 12:6).
- C. The superiority of the kingdom of God to the kingdoms of men.
1. All the world kingdoms would be earthly and devilish while the kingdom of God would be heavenly.
 2. The kingdoms of men were destined for destruction while the kingdom of God under the rule of the Messiah was destined for glory (2:24-25; 7:1-28).
- D. Faithfulness under trying circumstances.
1. In contrast to the worldly who tend to go with the crowd and follow the path of least resistance, Daniel and his three friends illustrate that we can live righteously in spite of our surroundings (1:8; 3:13-18; 6:10-17).
 2. As God rewarded them for such faithfulness, He will also reward us.
- E. Divine protection.
1. God does not leave the faithful to the mercy of their enemies.
 2. When Daniel and his friends were faithful, God protected them (1:18-20; 2:12-13; 3:19-27; 6:10-23).

Questions on Daniel

Chapter 1

1. Briefly describe the historical setting in which the events of this chapter take place.
2. Who were the four young men described in this chapter as being exiles in Babylon?
3. What was the proposal of the Babylonian king in relation to these young men?
4. Why did Daniel not want to partake of the king's food and drink?
5. What God-given skills accounted for Daniel's rise in Babylon?

Chapter 2

6. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's dream found in verses 31 through 35.
7. Give the interpretation of the dream.
8. List some consequences of Daniel's interpretation of the dream.

Chapter 3

9. How was the faith of God's people sorely tested?
10. Tell what happened to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego and why it happened.
11. Since the men were protected from the furnace, what is revealed which shows it to be a genuine test of their faith and conviction? (vv. 17-18)

Chapter Four

12. Briefly summarize the main features of Nebuchadnezzar's dream that is found in this chapter.
13. What was interpretation of the dream? What did God want to impress upon Nebuchadnezzar? How did God get him to see that point?
14. What in the character of Nebuchadnezzar explains why God brought him down to the level of a beast?
15. What in the text shows that God succeeded in His purpose?

Chapter 5

16. Who was Belshazzar?
17. Briefly summarize the events of this chapter.
18. What was the meaning of the words on the wall? Why were they put there?
19. What happened to Belshazzar that very night? By whom was he succeeded?

Chapter 6

20. Who plotted against Daniel? Why? What did they plot?
21. What decree was issued by Darius? Why did he issue such a decree?
22. What was Daniel's reaction to the decree? What were the consequences of his actions?
23. What dilemma did Daniel's actions pose for Darius?
24. How was Daniel's faith shown in this chapter? How would you describe his faith?
25. How is Darius' faith in Daniel and in God seen in this chapter?
26. What happened to Daniel's accusers?

Chapter 9

27. What did Daniel discover in the first year of the reign of Darius? What was his reaction?
28. Briefly summarize Daniel's prayer found in this chapter.
29. Who appeared to Daniel when he was praying? Why was he sent? What was his purpose in coming?
30. What was the basic message of the prophecy spoken to Daniel in verses 24 through 27?

Hosea

I. The Man

- A. His name means “salvation,” “deliverance,” “help,” or “God is salvation.”
1. In the Hebrew, though translated differently into English, his name is the same as that of the last king of Israel, Hoshea.
 2. “The name Hosea means salvation. His prophetic ministry was an attempt to see Israel delivered from sin and brought back to proper relationship with God” (William S. Deal, *Baker’s Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 209).
- B. He was a prophet of the Northern Kingdom.
1. His addresses were occupied with the northern tribes and seems to have an intimate knowledge of the northern kingdom (5:1; 6:8-9; 12:12; 14:6).
 2. He also makes reference to “our land” and “our king” in his prophecy to the north (1:2; 7:5).
 3. He characteristically refers to Israel by the name of its largest tribe, Ephraim (cf. 4:17; 5:3, 5; etc.), therefore, he may have been an Ephraimite.
 4. As a prophet, he was a contemporary of Amos.
 - “Whereas Amos had denounced the social inequalities of his day and the exploitation of the lower classes, Hosea was primarily concerned with the political, religious, and moral evils of the nation” (*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. III, 211).
 5. Nothing is known of any other occupation.
- C. He was the son of Beeri (1:1) and husband of Gomer, daughter of Deblaim (1:3).
1. Gomer was a wife of harlotry (1:2), who bore him two sons and a daughter whose God-given names represented different aspects of God’s relationship to Israel.
 2. Being unfaithful to him, Gomer left Hosea and played the harlot with many different lovers.
 3. Hosea was then instructed to buy her back and love her again as he did at the beginning (3:1). This he did (3:2-3).
 4. “This bitter tragedy did something for Hosea that nothing but suffering and sorrow can do...This experience enabled him to understand something of God’s immeasurable love for his people. It enabled him also to plead with his people effectively to return to their God who loved them” (H.I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History*, 283).
 5. “Hosea had a real compassion for his people, and his personal suffering because of the behavior of his wife gave him insight into God’s grief over Israel’s sin. Thus, his words of coming judgment are passionate but tempered with a heart of tenderness” (*Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 241).

II. The Date

- A. The date is somewhere between 750 and 727 B.C. shortly after the prophecy of Amos and shortly before the fall of Israel to Assyria (722 B.C.).
- B. “The work of Hosea occurred in the last generation of the history of the northern kingdom ...The reference in Hosea 1:4 indicates a date prior to the death of Jeroboam II for the start of the ministry...and if the tribute to Assyria (8:9) is to the tribute paid to Tiglath-Pileser III by Menahem about 739 B.C. (cf. 2 Kgs. 15:19-20), this would indicate that the ministry of Hosea was well established by 743 B.C...Furthermore, the mention of relations with Egypt (7:11; 9:6; 12:1) would point to the political activity of Hoshea, the last king of Israel (cf. 2 Kgs. 17:3-4), who ruled for a decade prior to the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C.” (*Zondervan’s*, Vol. III, 210).
- C. “Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel for about 50 years. His ministry began during the reign of Jeroboam II, making him a contemporary of Amos who also preached to the North, and of Isaiah and Micah, who preached to the southern kingdom of Judah. Hosea lived to see the fall of his nation to the Assyrians in 722 B.C.” (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, 222).
- D. “Hosea evidently compiled this book during the early years of Hezekiah, and his ministry stretched from about 755 B.C. to about 710 B.C. When Hosea began his ministry, Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.) was still reigning in Israel. Hosea’s ministry spanned the reigns of the last six kings of Israel from Zechariah (753-752 B.C.) To Hoshea (732-722 B.C.)” (*Nelson’s*, 241).
- E. “Hosea ministered during the last forty years of the Northern Kingdom—around 760 B.C. He began his ministry when Jeroboam II was at his height as king. Hosea was a younger contemporary of Amos and somewhat older than Isaiah and Micah. As a boy, he may have known the prophet Jonah, who had flourished somewhat earlier” (Deal, 210).

III. The Setting

- A. Religiously.
 1. Jeroboam I (931-910 B.C.) had introduced calf worship and Ahab (874-853 B.C.) and Jezebel led the people into Baal worship.
 2. Hosea summarized the indictments against Israel in one word, “harlotry.” Israel had joined herself to false gods as a prostitute would join herself to many men (2:5,12-13). Her spiritual whoredom included:
 - a. A lack of knowledge (4:1,6).
 - b. Idolatry (8:4; 13:2).
 - c. Revolts (5:2; 9:15).
 - d. Pride (5:5).
 - e. Transgressing the covenant (6:7; 7:13; 8:1,12).
 - f. Speaking lies against God (7:13).
 - g. Continually turning back from God (11:7).
 3. Israel had committed spiritual adultery so long, she forgot who her God really was and knew nothing about Him (4:6; 5:4; 8:12).

B. Morally.

1. Morally, Israel was in ruin and decay. They had:
 - a. Mixed with the world (7:8).
 - b. Corrupted themselves (9:9).
 - c. Practiced fraud and deceit (12:7-8).
 - d. Trafficked with women at shrines (4:14).
2. They attempted to be religious even though they were vile, immoral and ungodly (4:1-2; 6:8-9).

C. Politically.

1. Israel was in turmoil and upheaval.
2. "Conspiracy is the keyword of the history of the period" (George Robinson, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*).
3. These were years of conniving, treachery, treason and murder. Assassination was the main political tool.
 - a. Zechariah (753-752 B.C.) reigned only 6 months (2 Kings 15:8-12) then was murdered by Shallum.
 - b. Shallum (752 B.C.) only reigned 1 month (2 Kings 15:13-15) then was murdered by Menahem.
 - c. Menahem (752-742 B.C.) reigned 10 years (2 Kings 15:16-22) and paid tribute to Pul, King of Assyria.
 - d. Pekahiah (742-740 B.C.), son of Menahem, reigned 2 years (2 Kings 15:23-26) and was killed by a conspiring captain, Pekah.
 - e. Pekah (740-732 B.C.) reigned 8 years (2 Kings 15:27-31). During his reign Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria, began his conquest of Israel. Hoshea then conspired and killed Pekah.
 - f. Hoshea (732-723 B.C.) reigned 9 years (2 Kings 17:1-6) and became subject to Assyria. He conspired with Egypt against Assyria and Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, laid siege against Samaria in 722 B.C.. The city fell to Sargon II, King of Assyria in 721 B.C. and Israel was taken captive as a result of her sins (2 Kings 17:5-23).

D. In summary.

1. "The picture painted in the Book of Hosea is truly that of a nation in decay" (Homer Hailey, *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, 129).
2. "When Hosea began his ministry, Israel was enjoying a temporary period of political and economic prosperity under Jeroboam II. However, the nation began to crumble after Tiglath-Pileser II (745-727 B.C.) strengthened Assyria" (*Nelson's*, 241).

IV. The Message

A. A summary of the book.

1. The first three chapters of Hosea relate Hosea's personal experience with Gomer to impress in his mind God's feeling for His people who had committed spiritual adultery.
 - a. He had three children by Gomer each with symbolic names.
 - 1) A son named "Jezreel" implying that God would punish the dynasty of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel (cf. 2 Kings 10:1-31).

- 2) A daughter named “Lo-ruhamah” which literally means “no mercy.” It was a prophecy of the Assyrian captivity (1:6-7).
 - 3) A son named “Lo-Ammi” which literally means “not my people.” It indicated the temporary rejection of Israel (1:8-9). Israel would be restored and the children’s names would be changed (See 1:11; 2:22-23; 2:1,23).
2. Israel would be cast off for a time because of her whoredoms against her husband, God (2:2-13), but after a time, God would love her again and take her back to be His wife (2:14-23). Hosea is instructed to take Gomer back (3:1-3) as a symbol of God’s mercy to Israel (3:4-5).
 3. The messages of chapters 4-14 were apparently not compiled with an outline in mind. One writer observes, “The sentences fall from him like the sobs of a broken heart” (James Robertson, *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 3, 1426).
- B. “The book of Hosea is a story of a one-sided love and faithfulness that represents the relationship between Israel and God. As Gomer is married to Hosea, so Israel is betrothed to God. Both relationships gradually disintegrate—Gomer runs after other men, and Israel runs after other gods. Israel’s spiritual idolatry is illustrated by Gomer’s physical adultery. The development of the book can be traced in two parts: the adulterous wife and faithful husband (chs. 1-3), and the adulterous Israel and faithful Lord (chs. 4-14)” (*Nelson’s*, 243).
 - C. “Hosea’s main purpose seems to have been to awaken Israel from her sinful condition and bring her back to God..Hosea makes clear his purpose is to warn and bring Israel back to God, if possible, but if not, to announce to them God’s intention to punish them, to dispossess them finally, and to replace them with another people who love and obey Him” (Deal, 209-210).
 - D. “The message of Hosea stresses the steadfast love of God, who continues to care for his people despite every provocation imaginable. There was simply no reason why God should continue to love his people, but because his love was steadfast he did. A touching illustration of this can be found in 11:1-4. A second theme is that God takes the lead in his dealings with his people. Grace is mercy extended to those who do not deserve it. Like Gomer, Israel qualified on that count. Third, Hosea emphasized the reality and enormity of Israel’s sin. He was not blind to the fact that what Gomer and Israel were doing was wrong and he could not ignore this in the name of sentimentality mistaken for love. True love sees what is really at stake and calls things by their right name. What Israel and Gomer were doing was sin and would ultimately be their undoing. Fourth, Israel’s basic problem lay in their having ‘rejected knowledge’ (4:6). Knowledge in this instance means understanding, not so much recollection of facts. Israel did not understand God at all. Neither did Gomer understand Hosea. Fifth, repentance must precede renewal. God asked Israel to acknowledge its sin and return to him” (*Shaw’s*, 223-224).

V. The Lessons

- A. The downfall of a nation. Hosea’s message to us is that inward corruption in a nation is more dangerous to its existence than its external enemies (cf. Prov. 14:34; Jer. 18:1-10; Rom. 1:18). The steps of Israel’s downfall were:
 1. Lack of knowledge (4:6).

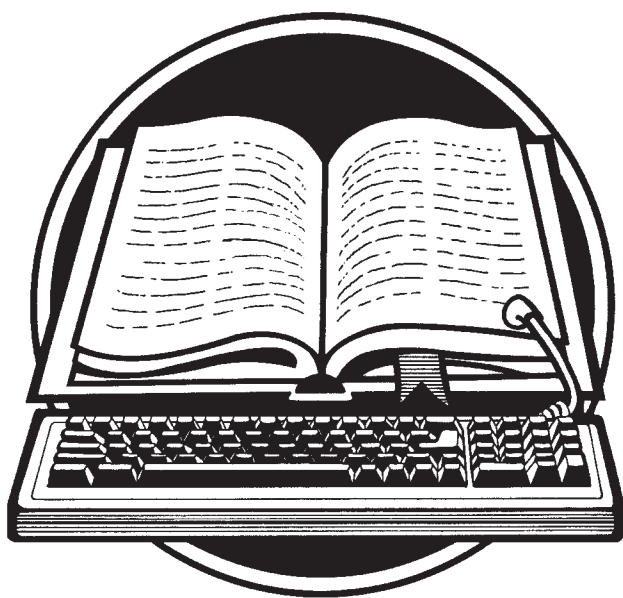
2. Immorality (4:1-2,13-14).
 3. Pride (5:5; 7:10).
 4. Insincerity (6:4,6).
 5. Worldliness (7:8).
 6. Corruption (9:9).
 7. Backsliding (11:7).
 8. Idolatry (13:2-3).
- B. "Hosea provides one of the Old Testament's most eloquent expressions of God's mercy. It is embodied in the Hebrew word *hesed*, variously rendered 'mercy,' 'loving kindness,' or 'steadfast love.' It involves loving loyalty to covenant commitments, well illustrated by the marriage vow. But from Hosea's perspective, God's faithful love would not permit Him to easily divorce His people" (*Nelson's*, 243).
- C. Even God's people can be destroyed for lack of knowledge (4:6).
- D. Adversity turns people to God (5:15) while prosperity turns them from God (13:6).
- E. God looks on the inner man (6:6).
- F. Those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind (8:7).

VI. Hosea in the New Testament

- A. "Hosea is highly regarded by New Testament writers and quoted many times (Matt. 9:13; 12:7; Luke 23:30; Rev. 6:16)" (Deal, 210).
- B. "Not my people" (Rom. 9:25-26; 1 Pet. 2:10; cf. 2:23; 1:10).
- C. "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (6:6; Matt. 9:13; 12:7; cf. Mark 12:33).
- D. "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (11:1; cf. Ex. 4:22f; Matt. 2:15).

Questions on Hosea

1. What does the name "Hosea" mean?
2. How does Hosea's name relate to his work as a prophet?
3. To what nation was Hosea a prophet? Of what nation was he a citizen?
4. Who was Hosea's father?
5. When did the ministry of Hosea take place?
6. Who were the kings of Israel during Hosea's ministry?
7. With what prophet was Hosea contemporary? How do they compare? How do they differ?
8. Describe the religious situation in Israel during Hosea's ministry.
9. Describe the moral situation in Israel during Hosea's ministry.
10. Describe the political situation in Israel during Hosea's ministry.
11. Who was Hosea's wife? Describe her background and character?
12. After his wife left him, what was He told by God to do in relation to her? Why?
13. Give the names of Hosea's children and the meaning of each.
14. What lesson did God teach by using his family situation?
15. What is the basic message of the book of Hosea?
16. How does the personal life of Hosea relate to the message of the book?
17. List the contributing factors to the downfall of Israel as seen in Hosea.
18. Why, according to 4:6, were God's people being destroyed?
19. How does the book of Hosea illustrate the love and mercy of God?
20. What lessons in Hosea have application today?



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