

# ***Written For Our Admonition: A Survey of the Old Testament Series Introduction***

by Dr. Ken Casillas

Reflecting on the experiences of Israel in the wilderness, Paul wrote that the Old Testament Scriptures are written for the “admonition” of believers in the New Testament age (1 Corinthians 10:11, KJV). Following the apostle’s encouragement, this series of lessons is designed to give laypeople a working knowledge of the books of the Old Testament. Specifically, the series aims to help the student to—

- Master the timeless, God-centered theme of each Old Testament book
- Develop a broader foundation for studying the Bible and listening to preaching
- Appreciate the practical value of the Old Testament

With these objectives in mind, the lessons center on four elements essential to understanding each book:

- Background: author, date, audience, occasion
- Structure: outline or plot or basic flow of thought
- Theme: primary message in terms of timeless truth
- Application: relation of the book to the believer today

These factors are explored in varying orders and to varying lengths, as seemed most efficient for each book. Technical issues and debated points are kept to a minimum. The size of each book was a significant consideration in determining how much detail to include. For example, the lessons on the Major Prophets tend to be more suggestive than the lessons on the Minor Prophets because there is so much more material to overview.

As with most Sunday school curricula, the lessons contain more information than the teacher will be able to communicate in his allotted time. He should decide in advance which facts to explain and consider what illustrations and applications he can add to tailor the lesson to his class. In making these decisions, the teacher should keep in mind that his main goal is to present a “bird’s eye view” of each book’s unique contribution to the canon. If additional material is desired, the following survey books are recommended (without implying full endorsement):

- Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (Zondervan)
- Andrew Hill & John Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Zondervan)
- Alec Motyer, *The Story of the Old Testament* (Baker)
- John Walton & Andrew Hill, *Old Testament Today: A Journey from Original Meaning to Contemporary Significance* (Zondervan)

The list below enumerates the thirty lesson titles. Rather than following the arrangement of the English Bible, the lessons generally follow the chronology of the Old Testament period. This

series was originally developed to be taught in two fifteen-lesson cycles, with the major break placed at the fall of the Northern Kingdom (722 B.C.). However, the material could be easily adapted to other schedules.

1. Is the Old Testament Relevant for the Christian?
2. Genesis
3. Exodus
4. Leviticus
5. Numbers
6. Deuteronomy
7. Joshua
8. Judges, Ruth
9. 1 & 2 Samuel
10. Psalms
11. Proverbs
12. Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
13. Job
14. 1 & 2 Kings
15. Prophets to the Northern Kingdom (Amos, Hosea)
16. Joel
17. Prophets to Gentile Nations (Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum)
18. Isaiah
19. Micah
20. Zephaniah, Habakkuk
21. Jeremiah, Lamentations
22. Ezekiel
23. Daniel
24. 1 & 2 Chronicles
25. Ezra
26. Haggai, Zechariah
27. Esther
28. Nehemiah
29. Malachi
30. The Old Testament Summarized

This series makes no claim to originality. As evident from the lessons, material has been borrowed from a variety of sources. For data on book themes, there is particular indebtedness to articles in *Biblical Viewpoint*, former journal of the Bob Jones University Seminary, which is used by permission. Our prayer is that as Christians grow in their knowledge of the Old Testament, they will grow primarily in their knowledge of God and in their reflection of His character. May the unfolding of God's Word give light to you and to those under your ministry (Psalm 119:130)!