

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 5

The Rise and Fall of Israel

Main Idea

Israel fails in its design to be a shadow of as a nation of priests and fails in its redesign as a nation with priests, leading to its exile from the Promised Land.

Exercise

Does a failure to complete a project mean that the project cannot be done?

Core questions

1. Did Israel's rebellion against God ever stop?
2. What are Yahweh's methods for disciplining those He loves?

The Rise and Fall of Israel

Era of Conquest

- 1) Moses died on the East of the Jordan River. Joshua, one of the 12 spies, led Israel into the Promised Land. After the conquest was complete, the land was divided among the 12 tribes and the tabernacle was moved to Shechem, the place where God promised his descendants would dwell, where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were buried.
 - a) God gave Abraham a vision (Genesis 15), showing him that his descendants would be “strangers in a country not their own and they will be enslaved and mistreated there ...In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.” – meaning it’s not yet time to punish the Amorites or the Amorites have not yet been fully punished
 - b) The Amorites were descendants of the Canaanites. Their sins include sexual immorality, child sacrifice, sorcery ritual prostitution.
 - Excavated Canaanite High Place: “the sin of the Amorites”
<https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=sin+of+the+amorites&mid=8D46FA02CC0C4C65B51B&mcid=49A5DE1BA50F4FAA8F013F4A958A7C45&FORM=VIRE>
 - Complete Biblical Account of the Amorites: How the Amorites Paid the Price for their Sins!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hemuz_PCrU
 - c) “Archaeological and Cultural Corroboration - Outside the Bible, ancient Near Eastern texts confirm that the region’s religious practices included rituals many would label barbaric, such as child sacrifice, and had extensive cultic worship systems that matched the broad biblical descriptions. Excavations in areas once dominated by Amorites show evidence of infant burials and high-temperature burn sites suggestive of sacrificial rites. While not every archaeological source explicitly labels these findings as “Amorite,” they align with the activities described in Scripture attributed to Canaanite groups, including the Amorites.” (“What is the sin of the Amorites?” Biblehub.com, biblehub.com/q/what_is_the_sin_of_the_amorites.htm)
 - Amorites – a generic reference to giant clans “Michael Heiser – Gian Clans, Sins of the Amorites, <https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=sin+of+the+amorites&mid=5EEE1C2DC059EFCED5995EEE1C2DC059EFCED599&mcid=49A5DE1BA50F4FAA8F013F4A958A7C45&FORM=VIRE>)
 - Re: Joshua 7, Amos 2, umbrella term for giant clans. A conceptual play on Babylonians and their evil and chaos. Deut 2-3 punishment of Amorites by the descendants of Abraham, including Esau, was an ongoing process. Also could be a generic reference to sins of Babylon (which is source of behavior contrary to will of God), as an ongoing punishment
 - d) Cherem - to ban, devote, destroy utterly, completely destroy, dedicate for destruction, exterminate

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 5

The Rise and Fall of Israel

- i) (Hiphil) - to prohibit (for common use), ban; to consecrate, devote, dedicate for destruction; to exterminate, completely destroy
- ii) (Hophal) - to be put under the ban, be devoted to destruction; to be devoted, be forfeited; to be completely destroyed
- iii) to split, slit, mutilate (a part of the body); (Qal) to mutilate; (Hiphil) to divide
- iv) Lev 27:18, 28, 29; Num 21:2, 3; Deu 2:34; 3:6; 7:2; 13:15; 20:17; Josh 2:10; 6:18, 21, 26; 10:1, 28, 35, 37, 39, 40; 11:1, 12, 20, 21 ...
- e) God's violence is in response to the violence of the humans. Usually reduces the amount of violence that has been occurring.

The Rebellion Continues: The Judges

Judges 21:25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

- 2) After entering the Promised Land, God's people would continually put **God** to the side and follow after the **idols** of their neighbors, causing God to allow them to be overrun by their neighbors.
 - a) By the time Joshua died, the Israelites had not yet occupied the entire country. The first book of Judges describes the lack of faithfulness of Israel. So when Joshua died, the people from the surrounding cultures influenced Israel, and Israel became less faithful about following YHWH. This problem would exist all through Israel's history.
 - b) The corrective remedy was for God to allow the neighboring tribes to harass and sometime battle the Israelites. After being under the subjection of the other tribes for a long time, Israel would complain, and God would raise up leaders (called judges because they had a dual role of governing and judging) to fight off the other tribes. After successful battles things would be temporarily alright but Israel would soon fall back into idol worship and the cycle would repeat.
- 3) After spending time in **subjection** they would repent and God would **rescue** them, but they would **repeat** this same cycle over and over again.
- 4) After many cycles of rebellion, repentance and rescue, instead of thinking about where they fell **short** of God's laws, they instead insisted that their problem was the lack of having an **earthly king** like **everybody** else.
- 5) When God finally did provide kings, they discovered that having an earthly king did not resolve their problems. After only three kings, the sins of the kings would cause the kingdom to get split into two parts.

The Rebellion Continues: The United Kingdom

- 6) King Saul was a king – like all the **other** kings. He was **tall** and **handsome** – and had some **character** flaws. He could not be **patient** and wait for God and so he went his own way.
- 7) King **David** also had some character flaws, but when confronted by his sin he responded by **repenting**.
 - a) Early on in his career, when Saul was pursuing David to kill him, and David had the opportunity to kill Saul, he did take the opportunity, instead he waited for God to provide the kingship. This action was opposite to the continual problem since Adam and Eve, which was to not wait for God but to see, then desire, then succumb to temptation and grab for yourself. This was likely the reason David was called a man after God's own heart – even though David would later succumb to the same problem.
 - https://www.systematicbiblestudy.com/uploads/1/3/2/6/13267775/chronology_of_davids_life.pdf
 - http://www.kelham.org/documents/King_David-Timeline.pdf
- 8) King **Solomon** started out well, by asking for **wisdom**, but then he let his **heart** lead him astray.
 - a) King Solomon had way too many wives and concubines (1000+). While the Bible does not explicitly condemn polygamy, all the examples of polygamy that are presented show the problems with that practice. King Solomon did love his wives, not a bad thing inherently, but unfortunately he allowed the love for his wives to overshadow his love for God. Many of his

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 5

The Rise and Fall of Israel

wives and concubines were from other kingdoms and he began to practice the worship of the gods and idols of his wives. In essence he loved his wives more than he loved God and there were consequences for that.

- b) God removed his presence and set up Jeroboam to rebel against the next king

The Rebellion Continues: The Divided Kingdom

- 9) Solomon's son, **Rehoboam**, followed **foolish** advice and caused the kingdom to split into two
 - a) When Solomon was king, he had extensive building projects besides the temple, and for that he need to have high taxes
 - b) When Rehoboam became king many people were complaining about the high taxes. Rehoboam pulled together two groups of advisors. The group of older advisors recommended reducing the taxes, while the group of younger advisors recommended making the taxes even more severe. Rehoboam followed the advise of the younger advisors causing a rebellion – and this with Jeroboam ready to respond.
- 10) The Northern Kingdom with 10 tribes broke away, leaving Rehoboam with only 2 tribes.
- 11) The Northern Kingdom never had **good** kings. The Southern Kingdom had only a **few** good kings.
- 12) Throughout the United and Divided Kingdoms, God continuously pled through many **prophets** for His people to **repent**. But the sins of the kings and their people would **persist**.
 - a) Archaeologists have a hard time finding evidence for monotheism in the land of Israel. The history we've looked at so far supports that.
- 13) God responded by disciplining His people with **temporary** exile from the Promised Land. It was only then, with the **discipline** of the exile, that Israel would finally turn from their **polytheism**. It was at this time that **synagogues** were formed as a way to continue to worship God and maintain their identity as Jews.
 - a) The exile lasted 70 years. That number corresponds to the number of Sabbath years that Israel did not keep. Every 7 years, the Israelites were told to let their land rest. Then every 50 (7x7+1) years, not only would the land rest, but property was to be restored to those who had lost it and people could return to the land they had lost, people were supposed to be freed from their debts, and slaves were to be freed. So the Israelites were exiled for all the years they did not practice the Sabbath and Jubilee years.

The Empires

- 14) ASSYRIAN EMPIRE: The Northern 10 tribes were **conquered** by the Assyrians. Most of the Northern tribes were **scattered** throughout the Assyrian empire never to be heard from again in history, but some of the poorest were left behind.
 - a) The “Lost Tribes of Israel” refers to these tribes. It was the Assyrian practice to pull the influential people out of their homeland so that they could be more easily integrated into the culture of the Assyrians. The displaced people would then be replaced by Assyrians.
 - b) The poor people left behind did not stop practicing their faith. They accepted the books of Moses but not the others and practiced sacrifices (and still do) on Mount Gerizim, which is in an area called Samaria – hence they are called Samaritans. They do not think Jerusalem should be the capital of Israel.
 - <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/archaeology-today/biblical-archaeology-topics/ancient-samaria-and-jerusalem/>
 - <https://www.learnreligions.com/history-of-samaria-4062174>
- 15) BABYLONIAN EMPIRE: The Babylonian Empire then overtook the Assyrian empire and then **conquered** the Southern 2 tribes, **Judah** and **Benjamin**, taking the best and brightest of those tribes into captivity. It was at this time that the Israelites, now predominately from the tribe of Judah, were called **Jews**.
 - a) There were waves of exiles that happened over the course of many years (597-586 BC)

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 5

The Rise and Fall of Israel

- b) The exiles include Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (commonly called by their Babylonian names: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego).
- c) God used Jeremiah to warn the Israelites of their impending captivity by the Babylonians, but they had a hard time accepting that and persecuted Jeremiah. Jeremiah eventually ended up in Egypt.

16) PERSIAN EMPIRE: The Persian empire then overtook the Babylonian empire and allowed the exiled Jews to return. After being settled in Babylonia for many years, most of the Jews decided to stay in Babylonia – only a few returned. This is the last empire mentioned in the Old Testament.

- a) It was a practice of the Persians to allow captivated people to be returned to their homeland.
- b) After this point, most Jews have not lived in their homeland.
- c) The returns happened in waves: the first to rebuild the temple, the second to restore worship, the third to rebuild the city walls.

17) GREEK EMPIRE: The Greek empire overtook the Persian empire and tried to enforce a Greek culture and language on all the kingdoms. When the Greeks tried to force the Jews to sacrifice pigs in the temple, the Jews successfully revolted and established their independence: the Hasmonean kingdom

- a) The Greek practice of imposing their culture on all people in their empire was called Hellenization.
- b) The term "Hellenization" comes from the Ancient Greek word "Hellēnizō" which means "to speak Greek, to make Greek, to become Greek". Hellenization is the adoption of Greek culture, religion, language, and identity by non-Greeks.

18) ROMAN EMPIRE: The Roman empire overtook the Greek empire, including the Hasmonean kingdom, but kept Greek as the international language. This empire, with King Herod established as the "king of the Jews" was in place at the time of Jesus.

- a) The Romans were not as creative as the Greeks. Their culture was more practical and their language was more limited and conducive to legal uses but not for creative thinking. The Roman practice was to leave cultures alone unless they presented threats, and so they allowed Greek to remain the international language.

The Jewish Sects

19) The Samaritans were a mix of the Jews left behind during the exile some of whom intermarried with the other tribes. They established their own temple on Mt Gerizim, near Shechem.

- a) The Geographical, Historical, & Spiritual Significance of Shechem.
<https://bible.org/article/geographical-historical-spiritual-significance-shechem>

20) The Sadducees were Jewish leaders who aligned themselves with the Greeks. Like the Greeks, they did not believe in the Resurrection. Their main role was in Temple worship.

- a) The Sadducees were considered to be the elites and willing to collude with the Greek overlords.

21) The Pharisees arose in opposition to the Sadducees and tried to purify the faith. They were more aligned with the common people.

- a) The Pharisees were more liked than the Sadducees.

22) The Sanhedrin consisted of Sadducee and Pharisee leaders who exerted religious control over Israel.

- a) The Great Sanhedrin were a group of 70 who ruled in the Temple - only the Sanhedrin had authority over cases involving the king, capital crimes committed by the high priest, or crimes committed by an entire tribe or city. The Lower/Lesser Sanhedrin was a Rabbinical Court of 23 judges (the minimum number required for a death penalty) located at the entrance to the Women's Court. Then there was the Rabbinical Court which had 3 judges and could rule on most, non-capital matters. These lower courts could be found in all towns and villages.
- b) When the Romans ruled Israel, the Sanhedrin could not impose the death penalty, so they needed the Roman Government to impose the death penalty on Jesus. This probably negated the need for the 23 member Lower Sanhedrin.

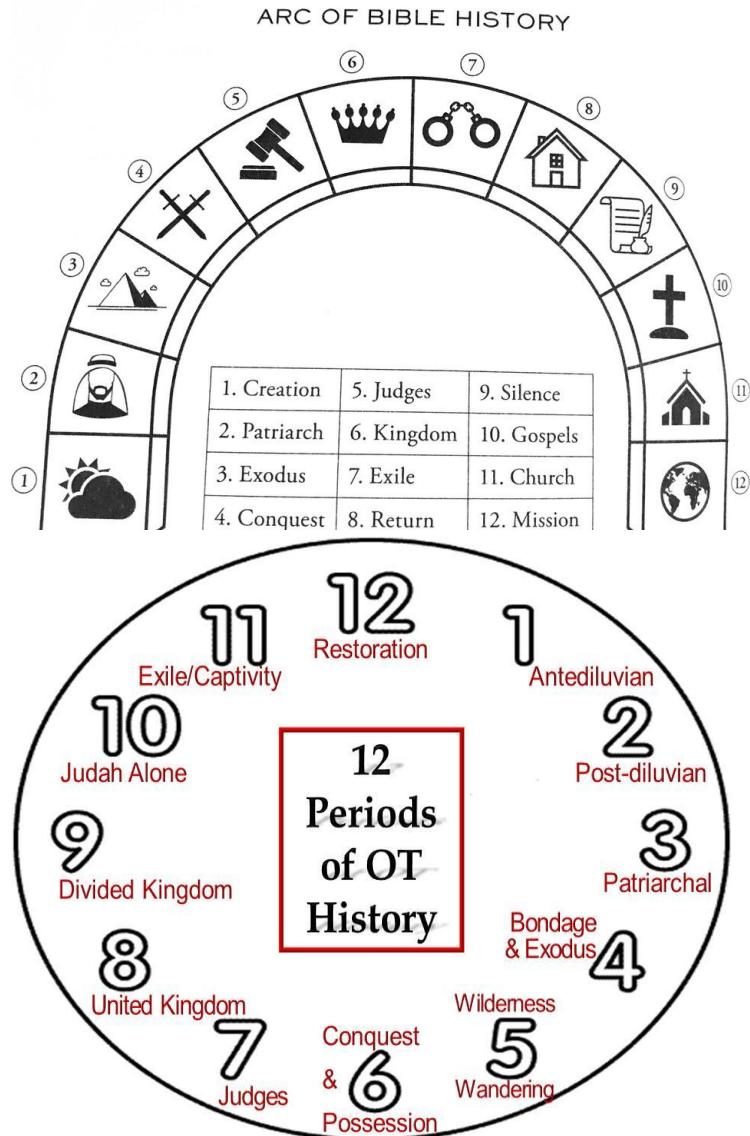
Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 5

The Rise and Fall of Israel

23) The **scribes** were trained in writing **legal** documents, deeds and copying scriptures and, because of their knowledge of **scripture**, they sometimes acted as **interpreters** and teachers of the Law.

24) The **Herodians** aligned themselves with King Herod and the Roman government while the **Zealots** were interested in forcing out the Romans so that they could establish a Jewish kingdom like the Hasmoneans did under the Greeks.

Appendix – Review of the Old Testament Story



<https://home.snu.edu/~HCULBERT/eras.pdf>