

# OUTLINE STUDIES IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

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## CHAPTER ONE

### BIBLE STUDY

The object of the following pages is to furnish the student of Scripture with the outlines of the Old Testament books. The design, analysis and principal subjects of each book are given as fully as the prescribed limits will permit.

But before we enter upon these studies some preliminary matters require brief mention.

#### I. THE TEMPER OF MIND WITH WHICH SCRIPTURE SHOULD BE STUDIED

In its origin and contents the Bible differs from other books. It comes to us with divine sanction. It claims to be the word of the living God. It asserts that God has attested the validity of its claims by signs and wonders and mighty deeds. Assuming its plenary inspiration, it follows obviously that the Bible should not be taken up in the spirit in which we approach other books. How shall we read it?

1. *The Bible should be studied with the profound conviction that it is the word of God; that it contains a revelation from Him, a revelation of Him, and a revelation of ourselves, likewise, II Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2 Peter 1:20, 21, etc.*

We want to settle it definitely with ourselves that this book primarily is not made up of the words of the various writers whose names it records—not of the words of Moses, David, John and Paul—but of the words of God.

The inspired writers affirm that these are not their utterances, that they are not the originators of the messages they deliver. Thus the apostle Peter writes: “**Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation,**” II Peter 1:20. By this is meant that it did not originate with the prophet himself, nor is it tied up to the times of the prophets, I Peter 1:10, 11.

Of course, there is a human element in the Bible. Its language is human, else there would be no revelation at all. Its truth enters into the realm of human reason and intelligence. Nevertheless, let the conviction take firm hold on us when we open the Bible, that God is here speaking to us.

2. *In our study of the Book its unity should not be overlooked.*

The Author of the New Testament is also the Author of the Old. One mind pervades them both, the mind of God. The Epistle to the Hebrews opens with this sublime announcement: “**God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son**”—in each case, whether by the prophets or by the Son, the Speaker was God.

The Old Testament is the promise and prophecy of the New, and the New is the promise and prophecy of glory. The great subjects of the one are identical with those of the other. What lies in the one as buds, blooms into mature foliage and fruit in the other. As an ancient Latin father has well said:

“The New Testament lies concealed in the Old,  
And the Old stands revealed in the New.”

3. *Christ is the center of Scripture, its one preeminent theme, John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 28:23, etc.*

The Book had a great variety of penmen, and these differed from each other very widely as to gifts, natural and acquired. They range all the way from the highest poet and thinker like Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul down to the humblest artisan and rustic, as were Amos, Matthew, Mark and Peter. It stretches over a period of some 1600 years in its composition. And yet it is a book essentially of one idea—one majestic thought runs through it all from first to last, binding together its diversified parts into a single and harmonious whole.

Jesus Christ, in His person and work, in His mission and offices, in His first and His second advents, is the one glorious topic of the Bible, its sum.

- Toward Him all its lines converge;
- In Him all its strange voices harmonize and blend;
- In Him its promises and predictions have their fulfillment.

If we fail to find Him in the Old Testament, it will become a meaningless and wearisome book to us; for it is a sort of skillfully arranged lattice-work through which the devout reader may always see the Redeemer in His wondrous ways with His people.

4. *We should come to the Bible remembering the functions it fulfills in our redemption.*

Most conspicuous is the place it holds in the salvation of men.

- By it, as the means in the hands of the Spirit, regeneration is effected, James 1:18; I Peter 1:23.
- By it faith is nourished, Romans 10:14, 17; John 5:24.
- By hearing the words of Satan man was lost; by hearing the words of God men are saved; “**He that heareth my words and believeth him that sent me hath everlasting life.**”

- By the testimony of Scripture we are justified. Romans 4:3; “**Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**”
- By it we also believe the same divine testimony as to the righteousness of God in Christ, and are justified.
- By it we are sanctified. John 17:17; II Thessalonians 2:13.
- By it we grow. I Peter 2:1-3.

It is the sure remedy for sins. Psalm 119:11. But why continue the recital? There is no stage in our career, there is no circumstance, or condition, or relation possible to us, but some word of God is exactly adapted thereto; and the chief aim of Bible study is to lead us into so large and accurate acquaintance with the Scriptures as that we shall know how to use them for our guidance and growth.

*5. Recognition of the doctrine of progress in the revelation contained in the Bible is another requisite to a right study of the Word.*

The Book is one of growth. Not all the truth was given at once. Gradually God communicated His mind to men, Hebrews 1:1.

Genesis contains in germ all that the books which follow unfold; the Pentateuch holds in latency all the prophetic writings. Thus the Bible becomes a living organism. Men build their systems much as they build a house, laying beam on beam. God constructs His revelation as He does the oak of the forest. He plants the germinal seed amid the clods of a wasted Eden and it grows and expands parallel with the development of the race. We see the progress referred to in the revelation of the law of love, man’s first duty to man. What progress there is from Genesis to I Corinthians 13; and yet the love so wonderfully opened in this chapter lies in germ in the oldest records of the Bible. The same truth is seen likewise as to the doctrine of the Godhead, the divine Unity being first insisted on, and then the later revelation of the Trinity. In fact, progress touches every doctrine and duty of which the Scriptures treat.

*6. Another thing to be borne in mind is the supreme authority of the Bible.*

God has spoken in His word, now speaks. Our duty is to hear and obey. The Bible is not simply a book of opinions; it is not only true, it is the truth, absolute and final. Nothing is to usurp its functions or authority; nothing must be suffered to become its rival. Man’s reason and word lead to darkness and infidelity. Man’s word mixed with God’s is superstition; God’s Word alone is the exact truth, from which there is no appeal. Whatever this Book repudiates is heresy; whatever it condemns is sin; whatever it is silent on is not essential to salvation. Of all preached from the pulpit, spoken from the platform, read from the press, the prescription is “**Take heed what ye hear.**” Of all spoken by the Lord, recorded by the Spirit, written in the Bible, the injunction is, “**Take heed how ye hear.**” The first may be truth mingled with error, and the duty is to sift it, and to separate what is precious from what is vicious. The last is the pure truth, and the duty lies not in discriminating where there is nothing to discriminate, but in the posture of mind we maintain toward it. To allow the Book to have supreme sway over us is a vital point, Obedience to the Word as we come to know the Word is an essential element in Bible study.

**“If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself,” John 7:17.**

This “obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge.” Singleness of heart to please God is the grand inlet for further knowledge. He that honestly uses the light he has shall have more light, and still more. **“Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.”** He who refuses to do God’s will, as he comes to know that will, need not be surprised if in process of time the Bible becomes to him a sealed book, and the light that was in him becomes darkness.

## **II. THE NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

His name is that whereby He makes Himself known. His name is a revelation of Himself.

*God* (Elohim), the first divine name we encounter in the Bible, Genesis 1:1, the most comprehensive, perhaps, of all. It is God who creates, who judges, delivers, and executes punishment on evildoers.

*God Almighty* (El Shaddai), the all-sufficient One, the infinitely Able One. It expresses a double idea, viz: God’s almightiness, His power to fulfill every promise He has made His people; and His faithfulness in performing every word He has spoken, Genesis 17:1, 2; 48:3, 45 49:25, etc.

*LORD* (Jehovah), a name expressive of covenant relationship, Exodus 3:14, 16; 3:4; Leviticus 16; Isaiah 53: etc. The LORD is the Self-existent and unchangeable One who enters into covenant engagement with those who are the objects of His pity and love. Perhaps it is not too much to say that Jehovah is God entering into history in His redemptive relations with His people.

*Lord* (Adonai), Master, Owner, Genesis 15:2-8; Malachi 3:1, etc. In Ezekiel 16:8, 14, 19, 23, 30, we find the two names, Jehovah and Lord, united together, and they appear to denote God as the Master and Husband of His people Israel. The attentive reader of the Bible will easily distinguish between the two names last mentioned by noting that Jehovah is always printed in capitals, thus: LORD, whilst the other (Adonai) is printed Lord.

All these great titles of God, and others, are given in the Old Testament as revelations and manifestations of Him whom to know is eternal life. They designate God’s various relations to men. The same thing obtains among us. My father is a man; he is likewise a citizen, an office-bearer, and a man of affairs. But he is especially my father, without ceasing to maintain his other relations. God is the Creator, Sovereign and Judge; but He is the Father of believers without ceasing to be all that is implied in the other titles he takes.

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