

The Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament

Originally by E.W. Bullinger, revised by Bill Powell

November 1998

This work is a brief summary and revision of Bullinger's work on "The Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament".

The division of the Bible into the Old and New Testaments employs misleading terminology, incorporates a wrong division of subject matter and implies a wrong number of covenants made by God. The word testament is substituted for the word covenant. The Hebrew root word for covenant meant "cutting" and referred to the blood that was shed when a "blood covenant" was made. This type of covenant was irrevocable. Once a blood covenant was made, neither party could make alterations without breaking the covenant. In the Bible God made three covenants with man, not two. He made a covenant with Noah regarding the earth's protection from future floods, a covenant with Abraham as *El Shaddai* and a new covenant in the future, ratified with the blood of Jesus Christ and confirmed in a future administration. The "New Testament" has not yet begun but will begin after the return of Christ. In the Greek Church the term "Old Covenant" was used (from Jeremiah 31:32, Exodus 24:7 and I Corinthians 3:14). "Old Covenant" was popular in the second century and through the Vulgate has come down to us as "*vestus testamentum*" or "Old Testament".

In assessing the value of early church fathers, one must keep in mind their foundations as described in the scriptures:

Acts 20:29-31

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

II Timothy 1:15

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

By the end of the first century the only apostolic procession was by these grievous wolves. We must look to the scriptures themselves, not the church tradition laid by grievous wolves in sheep's clothing.

There is no scriptural authority for the modern terms "Bible" either. In fact, in the time of Christ the common terms were:

- The Scriptures or The writings (Matthew 22:29, Acts 18:24)
- Holy Scripture (Romans 1:2)
- Sacred Letters (II Timothy 3:15)
- The Four and Twenty Books (the true number of books from Genesis to Malachi)
- The Reading (Nehemiah 8:8)

In Luke 24:44, Jesus Christ divided the Old Testament scriptures into three groups: The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. The Hebrew names for these three divisions are: *Torah*, the Law; *Nebee-eem*, the Prophets; and *Kethuweem*, the Writings (called Psalms or *Hagiographia* by the Greeks). The initial letters of these three words spell *T'nach*, which is a common word used by Jews much like the English word Bible is used by Christians. The fact that the other writings are called "the" other writings indicates a fixed and well-known set of writings. When Christ references Abel and Zechariah together, He refers to the first and last books of the Hebrew Canon (Genesis and Chronicles) as including all the blood shed between these two men.

In comparison, with the revelation of the great mystery that had been kept secret, the word of God was made complete. The particular Aramaic word used for complete is in the extensive intensive form indicating that the revelation was completely, completely absolutely complete. New revelations are specifically precluded by this as well as other scriptures. The believer's greatest need then is not to discover new views and opinions in search of the "present truth" but to read and understand what God has already revealed in his Word.

Colossians 1:25,26

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil (complete) the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

Based on Zechariah 1:4 and 7:7,12 the Prophets could be further divided into the *Former Prophets* which were chiefly historical (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings) and the *Latter Prophets* who were chiefly predictive.

Zechariah 1:4

Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.

Zechariah 7:7

Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?

Zechariah 7:12

Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

The Torah

- 1) Genesis
- 2) Exodus
- 3) Leviticus
- 4) Numbers
- 5) Deuteronomy

The Prophets

The Former Prophets

- 6) Joshua
- 7) Judges
- 8) Samuel (One Book)
- 9) Kings (One Book)

The Latter Prophets

- 10) Isaiah
- 11) Jeremiah
- 12) Ezekiel
- 13) *The Minor Prophets* (One Book) *Minor referring to size, not significance*

The Writings (In the order given in the earliest version of the Five *Megilloth*)

- 14) Psalms (One Book)
- 15) Proverbs
- 16) Job
- 17) Song of Songs
- 18) Ruth
- 19) Lamentations
- 20) Ecclesiastes
- 21) Esther
- 22) Daniel
- 23) Ezra-Nehemiah (One Book)
- 24) Chronicles (One Book)

Genesis - "B'resheeth", the book of the beginning.

The word "Genesis" is a transliteration from the Greek word "*genesis*" used by Alexandrian philosophers for *the origin of the universe*. The original title was *B'resheeth* means "*in the beginning*".

Genesis contains the beginning of not only the earth, life, man, sin, death and Israel, but the beginning of the subject of the whole Bible: The enmity between the two seeds: the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, who is Christ. This conflict begins in Genesis, continues throughout the Old Testament, Gospels and Acts, and is resolved in Revelation. What begins in Genesis, ends in revelation. The book of the beginning points to the fact that without what is called the New Testament, the divine revelation is incomplete. It has been rightly called the seed plot of the whole Bible.

Exodus - "V'ellesh Shemoth" - the Book of the Names

While Genesis began with man Eden and perfection, Exodus begins with Egypt and ruin. It shows how man outside of Eden is going to be redeemed. First God reveals His own name (3:13-15); further reveals it (6:3, 33:19 and 34:5-7).

He knows his redeemed by name. (33:12, 17) The names of the redeemed are on the shoulder stones (28:9-12) and on the breastplate (28:15-21). The names of the redeemed were carried into the Holy of Holies before the Mercy Seat covered with the blood of the lamb.

Redemption is first mentioned in Exodus. (15:13) The name of the Redeemer “Jah” is first revealed in Exodus. All this indicates redemption is specific and particular and that God’s people are redeemed by name. Redemption out from Egypt and into the land is described as beginning with a cry unto the Lord based on the covenant and God hearing that request according to His will and raising up Moses in response.

Leviticus - “Vayichrah” - the Book of the Calling

The English name Leviticus is from the Latin “*Leviticon*” or relating to the Levites. The Hebrew word “*Va-yich-rah*” means “And He Called”. This book shows, not just the activity of the Levites, but that access of the redeemed to the sanctuary of Jehovah in worship is predicated on God’s calling. No one can approach and truly worship without being called by the Father who is seeking them to worship him. (John 4:24)

The title begins the book when it says “And the Lord called unto Moses” and goes on to reveal how offerings are to be brought in worship if someone were to bring an offering. The “calling” then is for worship. Leviticus is the book of access, the book of the sanctuary and the book of worship.

No other book records so many of the words recorded by the Holy Spirit as spoken directly by Jehovah himself. He alone determines how He is to be approached, who should approach and how He is to be worshipped. Nothing is left to human discretion, no choice is given to man, every detail is prescribed. The most descriptive word is “must”. All exercise of the senses is contrary to spiritual this worship, and all exercise of the will or “will-worship” is branded as “the way of Cain” (Genesis 4, Jude 11) as opposed to the way of God (Acts 18:26).

John 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Even in outward matters of worship Jehovah gave the pattern of the tabernacle and temple.

(Hebrews 8:5, I Chronicles 28:19).

Numbers - “B’midbar” - The Book of the Wilderness

The title “Numbers” is from the Latin *numeri* in the Vulgate which is from the Greek *arithmoi* in the Septuagint. The idea of “numbers” is from the numberings in chapters 1-3 and 26. The book covers how Jehovah led his people by the right way through the wilderness.

It is not the shortest way, most direct way, the most logical way, the easiest way or the most pleasant to the flesh; but it is the way directed by God and protected by God and where God was the sufficiency and divine instruction and reproof were experienced. It was the right way, that ended right, as opposed to all other ways.

Deuteronomy - “Elleh Haddevareem” - the Book of the Words

The word Deuteronomy is from the Greek *deuteros* (second) and *nomos* (law). Man saw this as merely a second repetition of law to a new generation. The Hebrew title “*Elleh Haddevareem*” means “These are the Words”. It contains the

words, testimonies, statutes and judgments of Jehovah. Christ refers to Moses as the author of the Torah twelve times.

Joshua - "Y'Hoshua" - The Inheritance Possessed

This book is not named Joshua because he was necessarily the author but because he is the Prophet (speaking God's words for God) that makes up the subject of the book. The Talmud asserts that Joshua wrote all but the last 8 verses. The book shows both the conquest of the land and the partition of the land. The object of the book magnifies the inviolable covenant faithfulness of Jehovah in the fulfillment of His promises.

He promised in Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 31:7

And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

He fulfilled it in Joshua:

Joshua 21:43-45

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

The inheritance is possessed because Jehovah promised and was faithful to his Word that those that believed and acted on the promise would receive the blessing.

Judges - "Shopheteem" - The Deliverers

The Hebrew word "*shopheteem*" does not mean to subjugate and then rule, but to set upright, put right and then to rule. This type of judge was a deliverer to those people that called upon Jehovah based on the covenant promises. The office is peculiar to Israel and stands alone in the history of the world. The function of the office of the judge is described in Judges 2:7-19. Joshua begins "Now after the death of Moses" and Judges begins "Now after the death of Joshua". The book shows that despite Israel's failure and lack of faithfulness, that anytime there was a call to God based on His covenant, that He would be faithful to His Word.

Judges 2:1

And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

In contrast to God's faithfulness to his covenant, Israel is described with the words "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." So even though they had all gone astray, God was faithful to His Word. In Exodus and Deuteronomy God had revealed that He was to be their King, but Israel did not believe the covenant.

The path away from Jehovah taken by Israel is described in detail:

1) The house of God is so neglected its position must be minutely described. (21:19)

2) Man makes his own "house of God" (17:5 *margin*) and depends on the power of shekels for its production.. He sets up his own gods and his own priest. (17:6-13)

3) He pays his priest a fixed salary, ten shekels a year, a suit of clothes and his board, which proves poor pay.

4) The blessing he "knew" he would get (17:13) does not come, he is robbed of the whole thing including his gods and his priest.

5) The priest gets a promotion and becomes priest to a whole tribe instead of a family and open idolatry continues the whole time the true house of God is neglected in Shiloh.

(18:31)

6) Mans religion ends in reducing the three feasts of Jehovah to one, the chief feature of which was girls dancing. ((21:19, 21)

Israel is stamped with the description "No King" while Jehovah is described as "faithful to His covenant". In that condition the people were so lawless that every form of error was to be tolerated at the expense of the truth and union is to be based on social and secular considerations instead of the revelation of truth. Those that have ears to hear will recognize the accepted religion of tolerance and secular humanism our day.

As Shiloh was lost in those days, so the true Shiloh is lost today.

Genesis 49:10

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Unto Christ shall the gathering of the people be when he returns and we are to wait up for it. But for many the house of God can not be found, man has made his own houses, with his own priests and ministers, who he pays with a fixed salary, and a special suit, which proves poor pay and the whole thing is steeped in idolatry marked by music and dancing and watering down the Words of God into the summarized and reduced pre-digested pabulum of theories and opinions.

Samuel - "Sh'muel" - Heard of God or Asked of God

The *Sedarim* numbers I and II Samuel as one book. The Septuagint divided it into two. This division was followed by the Vulgate and the Hebrew Bible and into the modern translations and versions. The book of Samuel is composed of the ministries of Samuel, Nathan and Gad.

I Chronicles 29:29

Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.

The two great requests heard or asked of God are Hannah's request for a son answered in Samuel and the people's request for a King. Saul afterwards asked for Samuel, but did not ask of God (I Samuel 28). The people's request for a king answered in Saul and David. Saul showed what Man's king was and David

showed what one “after God’s own heart” was. Saul finds Samuel to help him seek his fathers asses that he could not find, while David had to be found of God as he was busy keeping his fathers sheep that he had never lost. Asking is the great key to the book especially in the light of I Samuel 8, 9, 16 and I Samuel 7.

Kings - “VHamelech David” - King David

First and second Kings are one book in the Hebrew manuscripts and *Sedarim*. In the title “Now King David” we have the key to the whole book. David, the King chosen by God, is the standard by which all kings are measured. Their character is tested by the manner in which they approach or differ from David, their lives are portrayed according to how they followed or diverged from David. They are viewed as David’s successors, not as independent kings. It shows mans failure as king which came on the heels of mans failure as prophet, which was on the heels of mans failure as priest. The True David is The Prophet, The Priest and The King. Kings opens with the Temple of God built and closes with it burnt. It begins with King David and ends with the King of Babylon.

Isaiah - The Salvation of Jehovah

Isaiah lived midway between Moses and Christ. He prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, four kings ultimately associated with the ruin and hope of the nation.

Uzziah apostatised and was “cut off from the house of the Lord” (II Chronicles 26:21). Jotham “entered not into the temple of the Lord” (27:2). Ahaz “shut up the doors of the house of the Lord” (28:24). Hezekiah “opened the doors of the house of the Lord” 29:3. In no other book of the Old Testament (except the Psalms) is the word “salvation” so frequently found. The book prophesies of the coming of Him who should be Jehovah’s salvation to the end of the earth.

(49:6). This is set against the backdrop of Israel’s condition of degradation in their religious zeal for ritual observances. Isaiah sees the king of Judah driven from among men, smitten with leprosy and cut off from the house of the Lord; and he beholds another king “the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple”. Isaiah himself confesses that he is a man of unclean lips, but immediately upon that confession it is written, “the cherubim did fly” and cleanse his lips. Several important things are mentioned for the first time in Isaiah: “the Day of the Lord”, a definite “Messiah”, the Bride, the new heavens and the new earth. The coming messiah is shown to be the coming salvation of the Jehovah.

Jeremiah - Whom Jehovah Launches Forth

Jeremiah is the one raised up by Jehovah to be his witness against man. The more faithful God’s witness is, the more he will be hated by man. Jeremiah was persecuted by kings, fellow-townsmen, and by his own family. The chief priest put him in the stocks, he is falsely accused by the priests and according to tradition he was stoned in Egypt by his own countrymen and later on his grave was stoned in Cairo. Jeremiah is the witness sent by Jehovah. During Jeremiah’s time the scriptures were found in the debris of the temple and he declared “Thy words were *found* and I did eat them, Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart”. He was the first launched forth by Jehovah. The coming Messiah is shown to be a suffering witness.

Ezekiel - Whom God Strengthens

The compound is with El, God (not Jah, Lord). El is the mighty God. God is referred to as strengthening Ezekiel. God, the strong one, strengthens His messenger against the face of his enemies and uses him to strengthen the souls of the faithful, who would see in his name and his mission and his message the blessed hope that the strength of God would bring future and final redemption for His people. Ezekiel's begins this strengthening when God tells him to eat the words of God. The coming Messiah is shown to be the ruling with God's authority, subduing all enemies under his feet, reigning in glorious peace with the ministry of "Jehovah Shammah" - "the Lord is there" - which are the closing words of Ezekiel.

There are then two captivities that occur: the Assyrian and Chaldean and then finally a "post-exile" period. The minor prophets can be divided into those periods. These twelve books are always in one book in all manuscripts, *Sedarim*, Ginsburg and the St. Petersburg Codex and early printed texts Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah and Nahum occur during the Assyrian period Habakkuk and Zephaniah occur during the Chaldean period.

Zechariah and Malachi occur during the post-exile period.

Hosea: Salvation or Deliverance

Hosea announces ruin and destruction and ends with Israel consoled with a promise of abundant fruitfulness.

Joel: Whose God is Jehovah

Joe describes the terrors of the "day of the Lord" and points out the blessing for those whose God is Jehovah. (2:18,19) It begins with a call to repentance at a time of dearth and ends with Jehovah roaring out of Zion and uttering his voice from Jerusalem. (3:16)

Amos: Burden Bearer

Amos bears the burden revealed in Joel onward. Joel opens his prophecy with the same words (1:2) and then foretells that the tabernacle of David shall be built again "that they may possess the remnant of Edom". (9:11-13)

Obadiah: The Servant of Jehovah

Obadiah repeats those words and unfolds the prophecy. "We have heard a rumor, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen". Obadiah gives an expansion of Amos 9:11-12

Jonah: A Dove or Pigeon

Jonah is that ambassador revealed in Obadiah. (1:2) Jonah declares Jehovah (4:2) as described in the law (Exodus 34:6,7). The Dove is fleeing from all unpleasantness so it is a harbinger of peace where it is found. Jonah is willing to lay his life down because he loves Israel. He does not want the gentiles blessed because he knows they will be instruments of judgment against Israel.

Micah: Who is like Jehovah?

Micah takes up the attributes of Jehovah (Exodus 34:6,7) where Jonah left off. (7:18). He declares the word against Samaria and Jerusalem (North and South Israel). His prophecy is three parts each beginning with "Hear". (1-chapters 1&2, 2- chapters 3 through 5, and 3- chapters 6&7). This is similar to Micah in Kings (I Kings 22:28)

Nahum: Consolation or Comforter

Nahum takes up the theme where Jonah left off. (c.f. Jonah 4:2 & Nahum 1:2). Nahum is a burden depicting the judgment of Nineveh. The burden against Nineveh (1:2) is a consolation to Israel. (1:7)

Habakkuk: An Embraced One

Two thirds of the prophecy is a conversation between God and the prophet written as discourse between friends. It is here we see the justification by faith principle (2:4) which was alike the possession Abraham the friend of God (James 2:23, II Chronicles 20:7) and all his spiritual seed.

The just shall live by faith is quoted (each with emphasis on a different word) in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38). Habakkuk is a burden concerning the Chaldeans who executed that judgment on Nineveh. Habakkuk calls for silence on account of the presence of the Lord. (2:20)

Zephaniah: Jehovah Protects

Zephaniah repeats the call for silence (2:20 and 1:7) The coming judgment of God is described as well as how His people would be hidden, protected and saved. Jehovah is revealed three times as “in the midst” of his people. (3:5, 15, 17). They are hidden in him, he is amidst them, and therefore they are protected. Zephaniah 3:8 contains every letter of the Hebrew alphabet including the five finals. The Massorah calls attention to this fact.

Haggai: My Feast

There were 70 years of captivity and the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel between Zephaniah and Haggai. The time had come for the temple to be rebuilt and the feasts of Jehovah restored. His mission and prophecy correspond to the name.

Zechariah: Jehovah Remembers

Zechariah shows that the prophecies of the coming glory for Israel are ALL based on Jehovah’s remembrance of His covenant. Again and again He promises to return and will yet comfort Zion, and will yet choose Jerusalem. (1:3, 16, 17; 2:5,8,10,11; 6:12,13; 8:3; 9:9,10,16; 12:10; 13:9; 14:3,4,9)

Psalms: Kethuveem - The Other Writings

The book of Psalms Hebrew title is *T’hilleem*. It is derived from a noun that also forms part of the English word hallelujah - praise to Jehovah. The root meaning is to jump or dance about as light does, then to throw light on anything so as to illuminate it or glorify it. The transition then is easy to praising and praising by setting anything in the light. The Psalms set forth God’s purposes in the light and illustrate them by causing them to shine forth to His praise. They cover the entire field of Old Testament revelation.

The Massorah, Talmud, Septuagint and other ancient manuscripts divide Psalms into 5 books:

Book I 1-40 Genesis Book *The Book of the beginning*

Adam, Man, Creation, Christ and

AntiChrist

Book II 41-72 Exodus Book *The Book of Redemption*

Ruin, Redeemer, Redemption

Book III 73-89 Leviticus Book *The Book of The Sanctuary*

Congregation, Sanctuary

Book IV 90-106 Numbers Book *The Book of the Wilderness*

The earth, mountains, hills Grass. Blessing for the earth is needed, anticipated and enjoyed

Book V 107-150 Deuteronomy Book *The Book of the Word*

Blessing and ruin to man, Israel and earth based on adherence to or departure from the Word

The Proverbs of Solomon - "Mishlai" - The Rules of Life

The title is from the Hebrew word *Mashal* - to rule, to have or exercise rule. They are words that are to govern or rule the life. It is the book of God's moral government of the earth. Man under rates the power of the tongue, the power of fools and the power of women. God shows the power of each and warns of their dangers. Wisdom is personified throughout Proverbs. God's wisdom is a faithful and virtuous woman while world wisdom is a strange woman. Christ is the Wisdom of God and is shown in Proverbs through a double personification.

Job - "Ey-yon": An Oppressed One

The name is the masculine for which the feminine is the enmity of Genesis 3:15. As a passive participle, the name implies that Job is one on whom the enemy seeks to put forth his power, an oppressed one. Job was delivered when he realized he was vile and abhorred himself and did not think of himself more highly than he ought to think but rather started thinking soberly according to God and what God has done. When took his eyes off of himself and his good works, realized his true condition as a sinner, in spite of good works and put his eyes on the immense greatness of God and his power, he was delivered.

The Song of Songs - "Sheer Hasheereem" - by the figure Enallage, the Most Beautiful Song, or Most Excellent Song

Three individuals are the principal persons, and not two as is generally supposed; a shepherd, a shepherdess, and a king. The shepherd is the object of the maiden's affection, and not the king. This song records the real history of a humble but virtuous woman, who, after having been espoused to a man of like humble circumstances, had been tempted in a most alluring manner to abandon him, and to transfer her affections to one of the wisest and richest of men, but who successfully resisted all temptations, remained faithful to her espousals, and was ultimately rewarded for her virtue. The maiden is the one who is beloved; the shepherd is the one who loves her; and the king, the one who would come between with temptations and allurements. While this is the interpretation, the application is varied. The Jews read it at the Passover and apply it to Israel going forth to the one described as "He loved the people", and despising all the riches and treasures of Egypt. A general application may be to the Church of the Bride of Christ and the Bridegroom.

Ruth - A Friend

The book tells how Jehovah delighted to take this Moabite stranger and bring her into blessing with His chosen people when one condition was met - her believing. Ruth becomes the ancestress of David as well as David's son and Lord despite her inherent unworthiness as a Moabite gentile. She like Habakkuk and Abraham become friends by believing. Being read at Pentacost it intimates how Jehovah would pour out His spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28 and

Acts 2:16-21) and in so doing bring the gentiles into the blessing of Abraham. The offer of Acts 3:19-26 was rejected by the time of Acts 13:45-52. The Mystery or secret of the Church was revealed about this time. Acts 13 was about fourteen years before II Corinthians 12:3 when Paul had received the abundance of the revelation. The Mystery was not made known in writing until after the final rejection of the offer in Acts 28:30-31. Ephesians was probably written during the house arrest in Rome in Acts 28:30-31

Lamentations - "Ey-chah" - Alas! Or O How!

This is an exclamation of pain and grief - a howling, a wailing cry. It is preserved in our word jackal. It is the first word in the book and aptly describes its character. The word is used by three prophets:

- 1) Moses, of Israel in her glory and pride. (Deuteronomy 1:12)
- 2) Isaiah, of Israel in her dissipation and sin. (Isaiah 1:21)
- 3) Jeremiah, of Israel in her desolation. (Lamentations 1:1)

It is read on the fast of the 9th of Abib. Five great calamities are commemorated on that day.

- 1) The return of the 12 spies, and the decree of the 40 years' wanderings in consequence of the rebellion of the people
- 2) The destruction of the first Temple by Nebuchadnezzar.
- 3) The destruction of the second Temple by the Romans under Titus.
- 4) The taking of Bethel by Romans under Hadrian, when 580,000 were slain.
- 5) The ploughing of Zion like a field, in fulfillment of Jeremiah 26:18, &c.

The first two chapters consist of 22 long verses of three lines each, each verse respectively commencing with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The third chapter consists of 66 verses (3x22), each triad of verses commencing with the same letter; e.g. the first three lines commence with *Aleph*, the next three with *Beth*, and so on through the 22 letters of the alphabet.

The fourth chapter is arranged in 22 long verses of two lines each, also arranged acrostically.

The fifth lamentation (chapter 5) is resolved into a prayer, and the acrostic arrangement gives way before the outburst of emotion. The only connection with the alphabet is that the number of the verses corresponds with the number of letters (22).

Ecclesiastes - "Cohelath" - The Assembler

The assembler collects persons, especially for religious purposes. The assembler is "an assembler of scattered people into the more immediate presence of God; a gatherer of those that are far off from God. Solomon did thus gather the people in I Kings 8:1,2,5. This book is read at the feast of Tabernacles. Here, under the sun, we dwell only in tabernacles and wait for the greater realities when the "greater than Solomon" will assemble and gather His people unto himself.

Esther - A Star

The book begins with the phrase "*va-yehee beemai*", the first of these words means, "now it came to pass". A tradition from the time of the Great Synagogue says that whenever a scripture commences with those words it always marks

impending catastrophe. Five scriptures are pointed out that begin with this phrase that commence an impending catastrophe but that end in blessing.

- 1) Genesis 14:1 War and blessing by the Priest of the Most High God
- 2) Ruth 1:1 Famine and the joy of marriage
- 3) Isaiah 7:1 Way and “behold a virgin shall conceive...Immanuel”
- 4) Jeremiah 1:3 The carrying away captive and promise of restoration
- 5) Esther 1:1 Threat of being cut off and joyful deliverance

The blessing stands out more glorious against the trouble that preceded. Luke 2:1 is a 6th example of this. The name of God is not written in Esther. According to Deuteronomy 31:18, “I will surely hide my face”. In Esther the people had forsaken God and God’s face was hidden from them. His name is hidden in the book in the form of four acrostics which are also the pivots on which the whole history of turns. These are explained in detail in the Companion Bible by E.W. Bullinger.

Daniel - God will Judge

Dani-el means God is Judge or God will judge, *Bab-el* means the judgement of God. The part dealing especially with Gentiles and the course and character of Gentile power is written, not in Hebrew but in *Chaldee* (2:4-7:28). So also Ezra 4:8-6:19 and 7:12-27, where Israel is under Gentile power; and Jeremiah 10:11 which is a message to the Gentiles.

The book reveals God’s judgment of Israel and Jerusalem in delivering them into the power of the Gentiles; and God’s judgment of the Gentiles as given into the hands of the son of man. (7:9- 13,22). The title carried by the coming Messiah is “son of man” because that is his title as the judge and second Adam. Daniel is referred to by Ezekiel (14:14-20) and by Christ (Matthew 24:15). As other scriptures, Daniel is genuine and authentic.

Ezra-Nehemiah - The Protection and Consolation of Jehovah

These two books are always presented as one in the manuscripts and early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. The Massorah treats them as one book with the title of Ezra. The *Sedarim*, or order of sections for public reading are ten in number run from Ezra 1:1 through Nehemiah 1:1 to the end.

Ezra means surrounded, protected or helped, while Nehemiah means comforted by Jehovah, or the consolation of Jehovah. These books record the events which show how Jehovah protected and comforted His people in times of trouble and difficulty, delivering them out of the hand of all their enemies.

Chronicles - “Divrai Hay-yahmeem” - The Lords Words on Man’s Works

The two books of Chronicles (like Samuel, Kings and Ezra-Nehemiah) form a single book in the manuscripts and early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. The enumeration of the Sedarim runs through both books without a break. It is named from the principle subject matter. There is no indication of who named it. The title comes with the same authority as the text. The title literally means “The words of the days”, somewhat similar to “the course of events” or “current events” or “annals” but with the added notion that these are divine words concerning those events. This book contains the divine comment and judgement on those works, rather than a mere historical chronicle of them.

In Samuel and Kings we have the same events recorded as facts of the history and from man's standpoint. In Chronicles we have those events from a different perspective, a different stand point or point of view. In Chronicles you have Divine words and thoughts about those facts from God's point of view. In I Samuel 31 you have the facts of Saul's death, but in I Chronicles 10:13,14 we have the Divine words on that event. "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it and enquired not of the Lord; therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

In Samuel we have the bare facts, in Chronicles we have the truth behind the facts revealed.

Actions of kings are represented in connection with the Lord or with His service. In Kings the religious reformation of Hezekiah is briefly mentioned in three verses' while the secular history has eighty-eight verses, or three chapters devoted to it (II Kings 18:7-30, 19 and 20).

In Chronicles it is just the opposite. Three chapters (II Chronicles 29-31) or eighty-four verses are devoted to the great religious reformation; while one chapter (32) records the secular history. The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. (I Samuel 16:7).

Copying is permitted for noncommercial, educational use by individual scholars and libraries. This message must appear on all copied material. All commercial use requires permission of the author.

Truth For Today

P. O. Box 6358

Lafayette, Indiana 47903