

Introduction to the OT Survey

1.1a Discussion Q/As

1. How do we get our bearings on the use of dates like 250-100 BC?

Dates of events before the birth of Christ get smaller the closer we get to His birth: the return from Babylonian captivity began in 539 BC, later Jews dispersed to Egypt began translating the OT into Greek in 250 BC, and this translation was completed about 100 years before the birth of Christ. For the big picture, see the chart of Big Facts on the OT and NT in Discussion Qs 1.1b.

2. What is one way to begin to get clarity on the Divided Kingdom?

One way is to read the main passages that narrate the split that takes place after the death of Solomon (his death is recorded in 1 Ki 11.43). Solomon's son, Rehoboam, reigned in his place but was foolish ("I will add to your yoke...my little finger is thicker than my father's thighs," 12.10-11) so the ten tribes to the north (called Israel) made Jeroboam (an industrious leader during Solomon's reign, 11.28) their king. The narrator then says, "Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day" (12.19, the narrator speaks from a post-Babylonian captivity perspective, cf. 2 Ki 25.21, "So Judah was taken into exile out of its land").

3. How do we determine the authorship of a book of the Bible?

In some cases, we do not know the author of a book (except the important point that the Holy Spirit is the author of the exact 39 of our OT on the authority of Christ). Sometimes we have internal evidence by which the writer is identified (Jeremiah records the fact that God commanded him to take a scroll and write "all I have spoken to you," Jer 36.1-2). It may be external evidence that confirms the authorship (for example, NT quotations of the book of Isaiah attribute the writings of the book to Isaiah (cf. the Ethiopian eunuch was reading the prophet Isaiah, Acts 8.28 and mention is made of the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, Lk 4.17).

4. Do the words of Jesus (You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is *they that bear witness about me*, Jo 5.39 and everything *about me* in the Law, Prophets, and Psalms, Lk 24.44) tell us that the theme of the OT is Christ? Yes, surely this is how we can concisely summarize the nature of OT anticipation. Anticipation promises His coming, the coming of the kingdom of salvation in Christ, and the coming of a new day in the realization of God's covenant giving and keeping action as Creator on behalf of man, His image.

5. Does the promise or covenant of circumcision indicate the covenant theme of the OT?

Yes, even though circumcision appears first in Genesis 12, from that point forward the entire OT is under the promise of the Abrahamic/circumcision covenant. Within history, God's eternal covenant purposes come to realization in various covenantal ways, a central way is through the covenant of circumcision that we know as the Abrahamic covenant. As we will see, in Genesis 1-11, the realization of God's purposes in history already has a covenantal "flavor" before the time of Abraham.

6. Does anything particular strike you in reading 1 Co. 10.1-13?

The rock in the wilderness was Christ; we should read the account of the wilderness with this fact in mind.

We have the relevance of OT and the sovereignty of God orchestrating that relevance (why they happened and why the particular written record of what happened).

Paul connects the term baptism (from NT baptism) to the Red Sea crossing (though it is not called a baptism in the OT). This is “anachronistic” in order to show the relevance of that account (in the old era) to our commitment to baptism (in the new era). Like the Israelite baptism into Moses our baptism is into the name of the triune God; as they came under discipleship to Moses, we come under discipleship to the triune God, and in contrast to their disobedience, we are called to obedience to our baptismal pledge of discipleship. Our life of discipleship intertwines with our pathway in life where we may face Red Sea experiences (we have no other way to go than through the trial, through things that look impossible and that often are impossible to man but not to God). There are many lessons in dependence on the Lord that we must learn (and re-learn).

We are to look at that OT account and then look to ourselves and take heed lest we fall, but we know that God provides the way of escape (cf. the escape from Egyptian bondage in relation to our deliverance from the bondage and dominion of sin).

7. How can we apply what we learn from 1 Co 10 to the rest of OT?

Surely, we can extrapolate from this treatment of the OT account of the Sea and wilderness to the OT in general regarding the events that happened under the sovereign rule of God. This is a major OT lesson that we will see repeatedly (cf. the divided kingdom fulfills God purpose, 1 Ki 11.35-36; 12.15). It seems to me that one reason that the reformers believed so strongly in the sovereignty of God is their reading of the OT with the view that the entire Bible is the sole authority for the church of the NT. We have the writings-for us-to learn of His sovereignty in our lives and to remind us of the battle that we must wage with sin (with the world, the flesh and the devil). The physical warfare of the OT translates into the Christian’s spiritual warfare (cf. Joshua is *not* the commander of the Lord’s army, so who is? Jos 5.13-15).

The whole of OT is “for us” in ways parallel to how the Red Sea and wilderness applies.

Another text for the “harmony” looking back is 1 Peter 3.20-21 that connects the days of Noah with baptism (also cf. the references to the days of Noah in the teachings of Jesus, Mat. 24.37-39 that relate to judgment in the future).

8. How does one’s view of the unity of the Bible (old and new) show up in one’s view of God (perhaps vice versa, how does one’s view of God show up in one’s view of the old as discontinuous with the new?)?

Some speak of God in the OT as a God of justice and wrath in contrast to the God of the NT as a God of mercy and love.

Two things may result that are contrary to Christian submission to Christ.

a) We may question the very authority of the OT and relegate it to or parts of it to something lower than the NT.

b) We may question the relevance and value of the OT and thus overstate the differences between the OT and the NT.