

PREFACE

These notes on *Old Testament I* represent class notes that I have developed and used over the past twenty years. This present notebook is an attempt to make my notes available not only to my own students, but also to those who may not have the opportunity to study the Old Testament with me in a formal course. In their present form, these notes are still in “rough draft” mode. A word of explanation is due concerning the page numbering. The pages are not uniformly numbered, but were originally numbered by session number. Hence, page 1.3 would represent the third page of session one, and page 9.6 would represent the sixth page of session nine, etc. Hopefully, reference to the Table of Contents will provide the reader an avenue of finding the desired section.

In my years of teaching the Old Testament at the graduate level, I have taught from the viewpoint of “progressive revelation.” By that I mean that God progressively revealed more and more of His truth to man throughout history. Unfortunately, the Bibles we use today do not reflect this, for they are not arranged chronologically but topically. We will try (as much as possible) to study the Old Testament in the order in which God would have given it to man, so as to sense His revelation progressively unfolding. This may mean at times that we will part from the canonical order. Hence, for example, our study of Chronicles will not come until near the end of our study of the Old Testament (rather than after Kings according to the canonical order).

This study of the Old Testament will be divided into approximately 94 sessions, comprising three volumes of notes. These notes on *Old Testament I* cover the material from Genesis through Ruth, i.e., from the time of creation and Israel's election until the close of the period of the judges. With the close of the period of the judges, the nation of Israel shifted from a form of government known as a *theocracy* (direct rule by God) to a *monarchy* (rule by human kings). Volume 2 will commence with 1 Samuel and the initiation of the monarchical arrangement.

The emphasis of these notes will be given to tracing the theological development of the Old Testament, so as to see how each of the Old Testament books contributes to the overall plan of God. This will center around God's plan for worldwide “salvation” and blessing as it is inaugurated through Abram and carried out through his descendants and eventually the nation of Israel as His kingdom of priests. In essence, we will study the outworking of the “Abrahamic Covenant,” as it progressively builds toward the coming of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, who will take away the sins of the world as a prelude to bringing universal peace, righteousness, and justice. Although the climax to this plan will not be realized until the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus and the formal inauguration of His kingdom, the Old Testament will serve to pave the way for this latter development when the glorious realization to all God's promises of the Old Testament will be achieved. Notes are also included that give discussion and evaluation (from a conservative evangelical viewpoint) of what have been termed the source analysis of the Old Testament and the deuteronomistic theory. Finally, I would like to add that my own personal approach to the Bible is unapologetically evangelical, with a firm belief that both the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, without error in the original manuscripts. My notes also represent an expression of premillennial theology, believing that the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be followed by the commencement of His personal reign on earth for 1000 years. Many of the prophetic references of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in this unique period to come.