

What is the Bible? - 1 Kings -Esther

1 and 2 Kings

Theme: "The Lord faithful calls out to his people, but finally their rejection of him brings their end."

- I. Solomon and the temple (1 Kings 1-11)
(Queen of Sheba, dividing the child)
- II. The early divided kingdom (1 Kings 12-16)
(Rehoboam, Jeroboam, the golden calves at Dan and Bethel)
- III. The ministry of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17-2 Kings 8)
(Ahab, Jezebel, Zarephath, Naboth, fire from heaven, still small voice, more fire from heaven, chariot of fire, bear attack, the Shunammite's son, the feeding of the 100, Naaman, a floating axhead, angels in the hills, cannibalism)
- IV. The north falls to Assyria (2 Kings 9-17)
(Jehu, Athaliah, Joash, Samaria falls to Assyria 722 B.C.)
- V. Despite some reform, Judah too falls away and is exiled (2 King 18-25)
(Hezekiah, Isaiah, Josiah, Nebuchadnezzar, temple destroyed 586 B.C.)

Time: about 970 to 586 B.C. (the fall of Jerusalem)

Author: maybe Jeremiah? after the fall of Jerusalem

Summary: The Lord establishes the kingship of Solomon and the temple. But after Solomon the kingdom divides. The northern kingdom of Israel wanders farther and farther from the Lord, even though he sends them prophets like Elijah and Elisha. Finally the northern kingdom is destroyed by Assyria. The southern kingdom of Judah has good kings and bad. But eventually they too fall so far away from the Lord that he exiles them to Babylon and the temple is destroyed.

1. Choose a figure from Kings. What have you learned from his/her example (positive or negative).

1 and 2 Chronicles

(The theme and outline are taken from *The People's Bible: 1 Chronicles* by Paul O. Wendland, Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI (c) 1994)

Theme: "Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom" (1 Chronicles 29:11 NIV)

- I. Any overview of God's kingdom from the beginning to the restoration (1 Chronicle 1-9)
- II. God establishes his kingdom in Israel under David (1 Chronicels 9:35-29)
- III. God exalts his kingdom under Solomon (2 Chronicles 1-9)
- IV. God preserves his kingdom in Judah until the return from exile (2 Chronicles 10-36)

Summary: After Israel returns from exile, the Chronicler reviews how God has worked out his royal rule in the lives of his people. History is HISstory.

Author: maybe Ezra? after the return from exile (about 450 B.C.)

2. Agree/Disagree: History is bunk.

Ezra

Theme: "The Lord brings his people back to the Promised Land"

- I. The first return (Ezra 1-6)
(Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, temple rebuilt)

II. Ezra lead's a return (Ezra 7-10)
(Ezra, intermarriage)

Time: about 540 - 450 B.C.

Author: probably Ezra

Summary: Faithful to his promise, the Lord brings his people back to Jerusalem after seventy years of exile. The temple is rebuilt. Yet although the Lord is faithful, the people struggle to follow him faithfully.

3. Your parents had been born in Jerusalem and resettled where you and your family now live in Babylon. Cyrus issues the decree that Jews like you may return to rebuild Jerusalem and temple for scratch. Do you leave you settled, comfortable home or not? Why?

Nehemiah

Theme: "This layman furthers God's kingdom work by rebuilding Jerusalem's walls."

(Outline taken from *The People's Bible: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* by John F. Brug, Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI (c) 1985)

- I. Rebuilding the physical walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1-7)
- II. Rebuilding the spiritual walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8-13)

Time: about 430 B.C.

Author: probably Nehemiah

Summary: Nehemiah, cup bearer to the Persian King, receives permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Relying on the Lord's help, he leads the rebuilding despite opposition and serves God's people as their governor.

4. How does the book of Nehemiah illustrate Romans 12:3-8?

Esther

Theme: "God arranges all things so that his promises cannot fail"

(Outline taken from *The People's Bible: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* by John F. Brug, Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI (c) 1985)

- I. The plot against the Jews (Esther 1-4)
(Xerxes, Mordecai, Esther, Haman)
- II. The delivery of the Jews (Esther 5-10)
(Purim)

Time: about 470's B.C.

Summary: Esther uses her position as Queen to save God's people from the plot of Haman to destroy all the Jews.

5. Agree/Disagree: Esther was a proper Jewish girl.

6. **The Bible is sufficient.** *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16, 17 NIV).
Respond: Just as blind men touching only one part of an elephant fail to know what they are really touching, so also we cannot know God without taking into account all the truths the various religions teach about him.