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SCRIPTURE FACTS

from the

Old Testament

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES

- a) Read each book of the Bible or passage carefully for yourself.
- b) As soon as you read names of towns, use a Bible Atlas.
- c) Try to memorize as many passages from Scripture as possible; at least you should know the texts written in italics in this publication.
- d) During the lessons, the history of the origin and the development of the canon of the Old and New Testaments will be discussed in more detail. This is not a document about the development of the canon, but it is a document about the Holy Scriptures, which is intended to provide a solid basis of Bible knowledge.

PART I: THE OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS

Genesis (Greek) means: origin.

Generally, the book can be divided into two parts:

- A) Chapters 1 to 11: the history of the creation, fall and destruction of the early world;
- B) Chapters 12 to 50: the history of the patriarchs, in which the history of Joseph is extensively described (37 to 50); it starts with the calling of Abram in chapter 12.

A.1. - **Creation and Fall** (Gen. 1-3)

Note the parallelism in the days of creation:

1. light
2. firmament
3. sea, land, herbs, grass
4. sun, moon, stars
5. fish, birds
6. land animals and man

Memorize *Genesis 1:26-27*.

Fall: *Genesis 3*.

The first promise of redemption in *Gen. 3:15* is very important.

A.2. - **The generations of Cain and Seth** (Gen. 4,5)

Cain and Abel: *Gen. 4* (read carefully; make sure you are able to tell the story in much detail).

Remember the name of Lamech, the 'seventh' of Adam in Cain's lineage; also his wives Adah and Zillah, and their children with their jobs. Memorize Lamech's song, *vs. 23-24*.

Cain = the received one

Abel = emptiness, vanity

Seth = substitute

In *Gen. 4* and *5*, the development of the lineage of Cain and Seth is described.

Memorize the lineage Adam-Noah. Take note of *ch. 5:24*.

The Flood (Gen. 6-8)

The cause of the destruction of the early world is found in *Gen. 6:1-7*: the sons of God (the children of Seth) intermarry with the daughters of men (the children of Cain), and as a result the wickedness of man is multiplied on earth. The Lord still is patient with humanity for 120 years (*Gen. 6:3b*), during which time the ark is built.

Study the history of the raven and the dove (*Gen. 8:6-12*).

The Noahic covenant (Gen. 9)

Sign: rainbow

Promises: a) *Gen. 8:22* (memorize)

b) Gen. 9:2

- Regulations:**
- a) also meat from animals may be eaten, vs. 3.
 - b) the government; capital punishment, *Gen. 9:6*.
- N.B. Capital punishment is not part of the ceremonial laws and shadows; it is founded on man's creation in God's image.

Study Gen. 9:18-29 (note how Canaan is cursed).

Genesis 10 gives Noah's generations.

The Tower of Babylon (Gen. 11)

Study the places where the three sons of Noah lived:

Shem: Mesopotamia, Syria, Canaan.

Ham: Africa and South-Asia.

Jafeth: Europe and Northern Asia.

Abraham (ca. 2000 BC).

Abram's father: Terah. His brothers: Haran, Nahor. His calling: *Gen. 12:1* (ca. 2090).

Gen. 13: Abram and Lot (Haran's son).

Gen. 14: Abram defeats Chedor-Laomer and meets Melchizedek; comp. Hebr. 7. 'King of Salem, priest of the most high God'.

Gen. 15: God's covenant with Abram; the burning lamp passes between the pieces of offering; you should be able to relate this chapter in detail.

Gen. 16: Hagar and Ishmael; the well Beer-lahai-roi.

Gen. 17: Abram's name is changed to Abraham; Sarai is changed to Sarah. Introduction of circumcision. Read in vs. 12,13 *who* are circumcised.

Gen. 18: Announcement of Isaac's birth.

Abraham's plea for Sodom and Gomorrah (make sure you are able to tell this story in detail), vs. 23-33.

Gen. 19: Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed; Lot spared.

Birth of Moab and Ben-Ammi (Moabites and Ammonites), out of Lot's incest with his daughters.

Gen. 20: Abraham at Gerar, where again he presents Sarah as his sister to the Philistine king of Gerar, just like he did in the past before Pharaoh (comp. Gen. 12).

Isaac

Gen. 21: Birth of Isaac; Abraham 100 years old, Sarah 90 years old.

Hagar and Ishmael sent away after Ishmael's mocking Isaac. Covenant between Abraham and Abimelech at the well of *Beer-sheba* (= 'well of the oath').

Gen. 22: Abraham has to sacrifice Isaac. Make sure you are able to describe this in much detail. Memorize *Gen. 22:8a*.

Mount Moriah would become the Temple Mount, part of Mount Zion.

Gen. 23: Sarah dies, 127 years old.

She is buried at Hebron, in the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham bought from Ephron, of the sons of Heth, at the price of four hundred shekels of silver.

Joseph sold to Egypt by his brothers. Make sure you are able to give a detailed account of vs. 18-36.

- Gen. 38: Here the history of Joseph is interrupted by the history of Judah and Tamar (Pharez and Zerah are born). Tamar: wife of Er and Onan, Judah's sons.
- Gen. 39: Joseph at Potifar's house and in prison; notice vs. 9b.
- Gen. 40: The butler and the baker dream dreams (you should be able to tell the dreams).
- Gen. 41: Pharaoh dreams:
a) Seven fat cows and seven thin cows;
b) Seven full ears and seven thin ears
Joseph's interpretation: seven years of abundance, seven years of famine.
Joseph exalted: Zaphnath-paaneah, 30 years old.
Joseph marries Asenath; children: Manasseh en Ephraim.

What follows are the **three journeys to Egypt**:

- a) the first journey of Joseph's brothers (Gen. 42); Simeon remains in Egypt.
b) the second journey of Joseph's brothers (Gen. 43-44); Benjamin also comes along.
c) Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers (Gen. 45).
d) Jacob moves to Egypt with his sons and possessions (Gen. 46).
You need to know the contents of chapters 42-45 in particular. Notice Jacob's comfort at Beer-sheba, in Genesis 46:1-4.

- Gen. 47: Jacob at Pharaoh. He is 130 years old now.
Famine in Egypt; grain could be bought with:
(A) Money;
(B) Cattle;
(C) Land;
(D) Persons.
- Gen. 48: Jacob blesses Joseph's sons (Ephraim before Manasseh).
- Gen. 49: Jacob blesses his sons; study vs. 10-18.
After 17 years in Egypt, Jacob dies when he is 147 years old.
- Gen. 50: Jacob is buried in the Cave of Machpelah. Study vs. 20.
Joseph dies when he is 110 years old; not buried in Egypt.

EXODUS

Exodus means: departure.

A general outline can be given as follows:

- (A) 1 - 6 Israel oppressed in Egypt;
(B) 7-12 Ten plagues and establishment of the Passover;
(C) 13-19 Journey through the wilderness to Horeb;
(D) 20-40 Lawgiving and events at Mount Sinai.

A.1. - Israel oppressed

- Ex. 1: A new king of Egypt, who oppresses Israel. Pharaoh's treasure cities: *Pithom and Raamses*.

- Ex. 2: Birth of Moses; ark of bulrushes; brought up at Pharaoh's court. Moses flees to Midian and marries Zipporah, a daughter of Reuel. Also study Moses' family, parents and sons.
- Ex. 3: Moses called at Horeb (burning bush). Very important: vs. 14.
- Ex. 4: Two signs of God: a) his rod becomes a serpent,
b) the leprous hand is healed.
- The Lord confronts Moses, who has been very negligent in failing to circumcise one of his sons ('bloody husband', comp. vs. 26). Aaron travels to meet Moses.
- Ex. 5: Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh. The burden is made heavier: no straw anymore.
- Ex. 6: Genealogy of Moses and Aaron.
Aaron's wife: Elisheba. Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

B.1. - The ten plagues (Ex. 7-12)

1. Water changed into blood;
2. Frogs throughout the land;
3. Lice among people and cattle;
4. Flies;
5. Disease in the livestock;
6. Boils;
7. Fire and hail;
8. Locust;
9. Three days of darkness;
10. Death of the first firstborn among people and animals.

B.2. – Establishment of the Passover (Ex. 12)

Blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts.

A male lamb without blemish is roasted and the people eat hurriedly with girded loins and shod feet; unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The firstborn are sanctified. The Israelites take silver, gold and clothes from the Egyptians.

C I. - Journey through the wilderness to Horeb (Ex. 13-19)

N.B. Now study a map.

Ex. 13: Journey to the Red Sea. Pillar of cloud and pillar of fire.

Ex. 14: Through the Red Sea; Pharaoh and his army are drowned.

Ex. 15: Songs of Moses and Miriam.

Important places between the Red Sea and Sinai:

- a) Mara: bitter waters are made sweet (Ex. 15);
- b) Elim: an oasis with 12 wells and 70 palm trees (Ex. 15);
- c) Sin: quails and manna (Ex. 16); comp. vs. 32-34 to Hebr. 9:4;
- d) Rafidim: water, after Moses strikes the rock at God's command; here Amalek is defeated by Israel (Aaron and Hur); comp. Ex. 17.

Ex. 18: Jethro takes Zipporah and her two sons to Moses. He advises Moses to appoint deputies to assist in dealing with legal duties.

Ex. 19: In the Wilderness of Sinai; Moses climbs Mount Horeb.

N.B. With respect to this part of the journey through the wilderness, chapters 14 and 17 should be read with special attention.

D.1. - Laws (Ex. 20-40)

It would not be right to say that the second part of the book of Exodus only contains ceremonial laws.

After all, the Lord gave Israel on Mount Sinai:

- a) The Moral Law or the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20: memorize them).
- b) Civil laws: guidelines for society, politics and economy;
- c) Ceremonial laws, concerning holy people, holy places, holy times etc.

Yet in Ex. 20-40 we find mainly ceremonial laws.

Besides this, there are several historical chapters, namely:

Ex. 24: Moses and the elders on the mountain;

Ex. 32: The golden calf; many worshippers of images killed by the Levites;

Ex. 33: Moses' intercession for the people;

Ex. 34: Moses receives two new tables of stone and the Lord appears to him.

D.2. - Civil laws

These laws are found in the book of Exodus in chapters 21, 22 and 23. These chapters, which are called the "Book of the covenant" (Ex. 24:7), contain regulations concerning personal affairs and business affairs, procedural law and sacred law, as well as regulations concerning worship.

D.3. - Ceremonial laws

These laws contain regulations for:

a) the building of the tabernacle:

In Ex. 25-31 the command to build, in Ex. 35-40 building itself (Bezaleel and Aholiab).

Here you should know the division into court, holy place and most holy place, as well as the fact that the court contained the laver of brass and the altar of burnt offering; the holy place contained the golden candlestick, the altar of incense and the table with showbread; in the most holy place was the ark of the covenant.

b) priests' clothes:

Firstly, the required clothes of the high priest are mentioned in Ex. 28. Secondly also the ordination of priests is described in a separate chapter, Ex. 29.

LEVITICUS

Leviticus is a Latin adjective meaning: the Levite (book).

Generally, the book can be divided as follows:

(A) 1-7: sacrificial laws;

(B) 8-9: consecration of Aaron and his sons;

- (C) 10: a historical chapter about Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron who offer strange fire before the Lord and are killed;
- (D) 11-15: **purification laws**; regulations about the unclean things, which Israel should abstain from or purify themselves from: eating unclean animals and touching carcasses, Lev. 11; purification after childbirth, Lev. 12; leprosy, Lev. 13 and 14; regulations concerning bodily discharges, Lev. 15;
- (E) 16: The Day of Atonement;
- (F) 17-27: the so-called '**Holiness Code**', which is so called due to the repeated words "Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy". In these eleven chapters, we find different types of regulations, such as the regulations concerning wrong sacrificial practices (Lev. 17), marriage and family life (Lev. 18-20), the major feasts of Israel (Lev. 23; study this chapter carefully). The book ends with promises and threats (Lev. 26) and regulations concerning vows (Lev. 27).

For a more thorough study of the ceremonial laws, refer to the textbooks about Biblical Archaeology.

You should be able to describe the differences between the five most important sacrifices mentioned in the first chapters of Leviticus:

Burnt offering: (Lev. 1) the sacrifice that is 'wholly burnt' (Psalm 51:21). Young bullock, an offering from the flock or a pigeon (always male). The person who is sacrificing puts his hand on the head of the offering. Blood is sprinkled round about the altar; the intestines are completely burnt on the altar.

Meat offering: (Lev. 2) an offering without blood, for example consisting of flour. Salt and olive oil – sometimes incense – is added to the sacrifice. If wine is offered instead of meat, it is called a drink offering of libation. Part of the meat offering is burned on the altar, the rest is eaten by the priests.

Peace offering: (Lev. 3 and 7) An offering which is always combined with a meal, a meat offering and a drink offering. There are three types of peace offerings: sacrifice of thanksgiving, vow offering and voluntary offering. In contrast to the burnt offering, only the fat is burnt on the altar. The breast and the right shoulder were for the priests; the breast was "wave offering". The other parts were for the person who brought the sacrifice.

Sin offering: (Lev. 4) Atonement for a committed transgression. Different animals could be sacrificed, even some flour. Offered during the ordination of priests and Levites, healing of lepers etc. All the fat on the altar was burned. Blood was put on the horns of the altar of incense (in the case of sin of the high priest or community).

Trespass offering: (Lev. 5) atonement for damages. A ram was sacrificed and publicly confessed, and a compensation of the damages of 120% was given. Blood was sprinkled around the altar, fat was burned, the rest was eaten by the priest.

NUMBERS

Numbers (Latin: Numeri) simply means what it says: numbers.

A general outline can be made as follows:

- (A) 1 and 26 numbering of the people (not of the Levites)
- (B) 2 camps of the tribes during the journey through the wilderness;
- (C) 3-8 several chapters with ceremonial laws: numbering of the Levites, their divisions, civic laws, the law of Nazarites (Num. 6), etc.
Memorize *Numb. 6:24-26* (the priestly blessing);
- (D) 9-25 A largely narrative part, describing the journey of the Israelites from Mount Sinnai to Shittim. These chapters also include sacrificial laws (Numb. 15), requirements for priests and Levites (Numb. 18-19);
- (E) 27-30 laws concerning inheritance right (the daughters of Zelaphead, Numb. 27), sacrificial laws, etc.
- (F) 31 Israel's revenge on the Midianites;
- (G) 32 Reuben and Gad request their inheritance;
- (H) 33 a survey of all places that the children of Israel visited between Egypt and Canaan;
- (I) 34, 35 Canaan divided; the 6 cities of refuge are commanded to be built (they are mentioned in Joshua 20: Kedesh, Shechem, Kirjath-arba = Hebron and Bezer, Ramoth in Gilead, Golan; find them on the map); also 42 cities for the Levites are commanded to be built;
- (J) 36 prohibition on marriage for female heirs outside their own tribe.

We will only discuss **part D** in more detail. You need to know the most important places that the children of Israel visited between Sinai and Canaan, as well as the historical accounts belonging to each of these places.

We mention the following (also refer to an atlas here):

- (a) **The wilderness of Paran** (after the Passover is celebrated in the wilderness of Sinai);
- (b) **Kibroth-hattaavah**; comp. chapter 11. The people desire meat. After Moses' despondent complaint to the LORD, 70 elders are chosen, compare vs. 16-17. Eldad and Medad prophesy in the camp. The LORD sends quails; the people are plagued by a very serious plague.
- (c) **Hazereth**; here Miriam and Aaron murmur against Moses. Miriam is punished with leprosy (temporary), comp. chapter 12.
- (d) **Kadesh**; Numb 13: twelve spies are sent out, including Caleb, the son of Jephunneh (from Judah) and Joshua or Oshea, the son of Nun. Carefully read vs. 17-33. In chapter 14 we read how the murmuring people are punished after the reports of the spies: the spies, except for Joshua and Caleb, die immediately; all adults (20 years old and above) will die in the wilderness. Then follows the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, chapter 16. Study this chapter carefully. The Lord confirms Aaron's priesthood by causing his rod to flourish, chapter 17;
- (e) **The deserts of the Sinai Peninsula**; here the people wandered for 38 years, probably near Kadesh. During the first month of the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt, the people once more reach:
- (f) **Kadesh**. Miriam dies. The people murmur because there is no water. Moses strikes the rock; therefore Moses and Aaron are not allowed to lead the people into Canaan (Meriba); chapter 20;

- (g) **A detour around Edom**, which refuses to allow the people to pass. Aaron dies on Mount Hor during this detour. Carefully read Numb. 20:29; also during this detour, the Lord punishes the murmuring people with fiery serpents, and Moses must make a serpent of brass, chapter 21 (comp. 2 Kings 18:4 and John 3:14);
- (h) The brook of Zered is crossed at the southern border of Moab; now they are in the
- (i) **Land east of the River Jordan**. Israel moves around the area of Moab and Ammon (refer to the atlas) and defeats the Amorites, who live between the Jabbok and the Arnon. Two kings defeated: Sihon, king of the Amorites and Og, the king of Bashan, compare Numb. 21.
- (j) Numb. 22-25 describes *the battle with Moab*, the other enemy in the land east of the River Jordan. The king of Moab, Balak, the son of Zippor, calls Balaam, the son of Beor.

Study thoroughly: chapters 22-24. Memorize: *23:19,21 and 24:17b*. Numbers 25 describes how Balak, advised by Balaam, tempts the Israelites into idolatry (Pinehas, the son of Eleazar). Balaam is killed when Israel takes revenge on the Midianites, who were very closely connected with the Moabites (chapter 31).

DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy (a word of Greek origin) means: “Repetition of the Law” or “Second Lawgiving”.

The history of the conquest of Canaan, that the book of Numbers mainly deals with, is interrupted in the fifth book of the Pentateuch and continued in the book of Joshua. The book is a final exhortation and instruction from Moses, to the people, spoken in the land of Moab after the forty years in the desert.

A general outline:

- A) 1-3: a *historical survey* of the journey through the desert from Mount Sinai to Beth-Peor in the fields of Moab;
- B) 4-11: repeated, serious *exhortations* to keep God's commandments in the book of promise, and to make no graven images (ch. 4); a repetition of the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments (ch. 5); a reminder of the events surrounding the golden calf and the tables of stone (ch. 9 and 10); Memorize ch. 6:4-5;
- C) 12-26: a large *collection of ceremonial and civic laws*. N.B.: Moses speaks of “the place which the LORD your God shall choose” (ch. 12), without mentioning the name (Jerusalem).
The so-called “kingdom law” in chapter 17:14-20 is very important (study it carefully). Memorize ch. 18:15. The major feasts are discussed in chapter 16;
- D) 27-28: curses and blessing are announced on Ebal and Gerizim, comp. Joshua 8;
- E) 29-30: the conclusion of Moses’ address. Memorize ch. 29:29;
- F) 31: Joshua succeeds Moses; Israel’s apostasy announced;
- G) 32: the song of Moses;
- H) 33: Moses blesses the tribes (comp. Gen. 49);
- I) 34: death of Moses.

JOSHUA

General outline of the book:

- (a) 1-12: the great conquests of the land of promise under Joshua;
- (b) 13-22: the division of the land among the tribes;
- (c) 23,24: concluding chapters.

A more *specific* outline can be made as follows:

- (A) 1: the Lord commands Joshua to lead Israel into Canaan.
- (B) 2: the spies at Jericho (make sure you are able to describe this chapter in detail).
- (C) 3: the people cross the Jordan River without even getting their feet wet.
- (D) 4-5: after the crossing of the Jordan, the people assemble at Gilgal (atlas) at the tenth day of the first month (so four days before the Passover).

Comp. Micha 6:5.

Three things happen there:

1. The covenant is renewed, after 12 stones from the Jordan River are erected, by the circumcision of the children of Israel;
2. The people celebrate the Passover;
3. They do not receive manna anymore, because the people may eat from the revenue of the land of Canaan;

- (E) 6-12: the *land West of the Jordan River* is conquered in three *campaigns*:

1. First the central part is conquered; several cities can be mentioned: **Jericho** (ch. 6; study carefully), **Ai** (ch. 7 and 8; Ahan's sin), **Gibeon** (ch. 9; the Gibeonite deception saves their lives and makes them serve as woodcutters and water carriers).

In chapter 8 we read how Joshua pronounced the blessing and curse announced in Deut. 27,28 on Ebal and Gerizim;

2. Then the *south* is conquered. Joshua's armies defeat a group of kings led by Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem, ch. 10. Memorize *12b*.
3. In the *north* of the promised land, Joshua defeats Jabin, the king of Hazor, ch. 11.

In Joshua 12, a list of the conquered kings follows. Sadly, the tribes have not been obedient to the command to expel the remaining Canaanites.

- (F) 13-22: **the land is divided**. Refer to a Biblical atlas, and make sure that you are able to give an indication of the places where the different tribes lived. For example, you should be able to answer the question: which tribes did a traveller have to pass through if he took the shortest way from Mount Tabor to Bethlehem?

Caleb and Joshua receive a special part:

Caleb receives Hebron (take note of the history of Achsah, Caleb's daughter, ch. 15:15-19) and Joshua receives Timnathserah. .

The Levites receive 48 cities, 6 of which are cities of refuge (comp. for the names to Numb. 35).

The tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh return to their tents on the east side of the Jordan River, comp. ch. 22. At the Jordan River, they build a large altar. This gives occasion to the other tribes to approach them with a large army. To see how this conflict ends, study chapter 22 carefully. Notice the new place of the tabernacle: Silo.

(G) 23: Joshua urges the people to keep the Law of the LORD.

(H) 24: Joshua renews the covenant with Israel at *Shechem*. Take note of vs. 15. A stone is erected near the sanctuary.

Joshua dies when he is 110 years old. Buried in his inheritance.

Eleazar, Aaron's son, dies.

Josephs bones are buried at Shechem.

JUDGES

The time between Joshua and Saul is called the days of the judges.

A part of this time is also described in the first book of Samuel.

The days of the judges are time of by turmoil and confusion and are best characterized by the words of *chapter 21:25*.

The book of Judges has a continually recurring theme:

- a) Apostasy from the Lord;
- b) The Lord sends enemies, Who oppress His people;
- c) In their oppression, the people call upon God;
- d) The LORD sends a judge who delivers the people from their enemies;
- e) Some rest in the land.

Chapters 1 and 2 describe how the tribe of Judah (and Simeon) makes an attempt to cleanse his part of the land from the Canaanites (battle against Adoni-Zedek). Also the house of Joseph (= Ephraim and Manasseh) go to war.

The other tribes, in particular Asher and Naphtali, are very negligent. The angel of the Lord rebukes them at Bochim.

The following judges judged Israel (from ca. 1370-1080 BC):

1. **OTHNIEL** ch. 3. He is Caleb's cousin and son-in-law and delivers the people from Cushan-rishataim, king of Mesopotamia. See also ch. 1:11-15. (Achsah, comp. Josh. 15:15-19).
2. **EHUD** ch. 3. Left-handed. He kills Eglon, king of the Moabites.
3. **SAMGAR** ch. 3. He kills 600 Philistines with an ox goad.
4. **DEBORAH,**
5. **BARAK** Ch. 4. Jabin from Hazor oppresses the people. The prophetess Deborah incites Barak (from Naphtali) to fight Jabin and his captain Sisera, with his 900 iron chariots. Sisera is defeated and is killed by Jael, Heber's wife, the Kenite, in her tent.
In Judges 5 we read the song of Deborah.
Date: ca. 1205 BC.
6. **GIDEON** Ch. 6-8. This judge from the tribe of Manasseh and the family of Abiezer, defeats the Midianites with 300 men. You need to know chapters 6 and 7 thoroughly. *Memorize chapter 8:2b.*
Chapter 8 describes for us how Gideon refuses to become a king when it is offered to him, and how his ephod becomes a snare both for himself and for his family. Killed Midianite princes:
Killed Midianite princes: Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna.
7. **TOLA** Ch. 10. A judge from Issachar.
8. **JAIR** Ch. 10. A judge from Gilead.
9. **JEPHTHAH** Ch. 11, 12. This judge is an illegitimate child of Gilead. He defeats the Ammonites in the land east of the Jordan River and he makes a vow, ch. 11:30, 31.
In Judges 12, we read of Ephraim's rebellion against Jephthah, which ends in victory for the Gileadites. Shibboleth - Sibboleth.
Date: ca. 1100 BC.
10. **IBZAN** Ch. 12. A judge from Bethlehem with 30 sons and 30 daughters.
11. **ELON** A judge from Zebulun, ch. 12.
12. **ABDON** Ch. 12. A judge, probably from Ephraim, with 40 sons and 30 grandsons, riding 70 ass colts.
13. **SAMSON** Ch. 13-16. A Nazarite unto God from the tribe of Dan. Carefully study the four chapters, which deal with Samson's birth, life and death. His actions focus on the Philistines.

Several *separate parts* in the book of Judges:

- Ch. 9 The history of Abimelech, son of Gideon (Jerubbaal). He becomes king in Shechem and kills his 70 half-brothers, except for *Jotham*, the youngest one. Jotham's fable is well-known. Make sure you know it very well, vs. 7-15. Abimelech dies during the siege of Thebez.
- Ch. 17 Idolatry of Micah, the Ephraimite;
- Ch. 18 Idolatry of the Danites: Lais taken by them.
- Ch. 19 Rape by the Gibeans.

Ch. 20-21 The tribe of Benjamin is almost exterminated, but is restored. In particular the last chapters clearly show us the terrible religious and moral degeneration in the days of the judges.
The next book of the Bible tells us that there were still people in which the LORD glorified His grace.

RUTH

In the Hebrew canon, the book of Ruth is part of a collection of five short scrolls which are called the Megillot (= scrolls). Written on parchment scrolls, they are read in the synagogue on five Jewish feasts. They are:

Ruth, read on the Feast of Pentecost;

Song of Solomon, read on the Feast of Passover;

Ecclesiastes, read on the Feast of Tabernacles;

Lamentations, read on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem, the 9th of the month Av;

Esther, read on Purim.

Elimelech and Naomi, Mahlon and Ruth, Chilion and Orpah.

There is no need to give a general outline, because this book is one story. You should be able to tell the story in detail. Memorize *ch. 1:16*.

SAMUEL, KINGS AND CHRONICLES

These six books of the Bible mainly describe the time of the kings of Judah and of Israel. We will not divide these books according to the chapters, but according to people and events.

The character of Samuel only occurs in the first book of Samuel. The two books of Samuel mainly deal with three persons:

- A) Samuel: 1 Sam. 1-12
- B) Saul: 1 Sam. 9-31
- C) David: 1 Sam. 16- 2 Sam. 24

A) SAMUEL

He actually belongs to the judges, comp. 1 Sam. 7:15.

Born in Ephraim, son of Elkanah and Hannah. He was devoted to the LORD even before he was born.

His *birth* (ca. 1100): 1 Sam. 1.

We read in chapter 2:

- a) Song of Hannah (comp. Luke 1:46-55);
- b) The sins of Hophni and Phinehas, sons of Eli, the high priest at the tabernacle at Shiloh.

N.B.: In the time of the Judges, the high priests (Eli and other high priests) are descendants of Aaron's son Ithamar.

However, when Abiathar (descendant of Eli) takes side with Adoniah and when Zadok (descendant of Aaron's son Eleazar) sides with Solomon, Abiathar is exiled and the line of high priests continues in the genealogy of Eleazar.

- c) Eli warned by a man of God (memorize vs. 30b).

The *calling* of Samuel is described in 1 Sam. 3.

In 1 Sam. 4-6 we find the well-known history of the *ark of the LORD*.

Main events:

- a) The battle at Aphek (ca. 1080 BC);
- b) The ark captured;
- c) A new defeat: Hophni and Phinehas are killed, the ark is carried away;
- d) Eli dies (98 years old);
- e) Birth of Ichabod;
- f) The ark stays in the land of the Philistines for seven months (idol Dagon);
- g) The ark is returned to Israel;
- h) The inhabitants of Bethshemesh look inside the ark and die;
- i) The ark stays in Kirjathjearim, with Abinadab.

In 1 Sam. 7 we read that the Philistines are defeated at Mizpeh (Ebenezer = stone of help, vs. 12). Date: ca. 1060 BC. In 1 Sam. 8, the people ask for a king.

B) SAUL

The king by Gods permission.

His *anointing* in 1 Sam. 10, followed by three signs (study vs. 2-7).

His *appointment* by casting lots during a gathering of the people at Mizpeh, in 1 Sam. 10.

In 1 Sam. 11 we read of deliverance of Jabesh-gilead, threatened by Nahash, the Ammonite. Then Samuel takes leave of the people at Gilgal, under powerful signs (ch. 12, comp. vs. 17-18), after the kingship has been renewed there.

Saul's *wars* are described in 1 Sam. 13 and 14 (battle against the *Philistines*; Saul sacrifices before Samuel's coming; Jonathan's great courage) and in 1 Sam. 15 (battle against the *Amalekites*; Saul spares king Agag and the best part of the livestock. God has a messenger tell him that he is rejected as a king.

Samuel goes to Ramah, Saul to Gibeah: a final separation. Memorize vs. 22b. After this, the Lord leaves Saul more and more.

The events surrounding Saul's death are found in 1 Sam. 28 and 31 and in 1 Chron. 10: his last battle against the *Philistines* is fought on Mount Gilboa. During the night before the battle, Saul attempts to come into contact with the deceased Samuel, at the witch of Endor (ch. 28).

Israel is defeated; three of Saul's sons die, one of whom is Jonathan. Saul commits suicide. The inhabitants of Jabes bury Saul's mutilated body; Later David buried his remains in the sepulchre of his father Kish.

For David's well-known *lamentation* about Saul and Jonathan, see 2 Sam. 1.

Finally, some details about Saul that you should know:

father: Kis (Benjamin); wife: Ahinoam; concubine: Rizpah; general: Abner; sons: Jonathan, Abinadab, Malchishua, Ish-bosheth; daughters: Merab, Michal.

C) DAVID

We will discuss David's life as follows:

1. His youth;
2. His wanderings;
3. King at Hebron;
4. King at Jerusalem.

First some personal details about David (not complete): father: Jesse; grandfather: Obed; great-grandparents: Boaz and Ruth; wives: Michal, Abigail, Ahinoam, Haggith, Bathsheba, Maacah; sons: Absalom, Adoniah, Amnon; general: Joab.

1) David's youth

- a) David is anointed by Samuel with oil from a horn, in 1 Sam. 16. (Saul had been anointed from a breakable flask).
- b) He arrives at Saul's court as a harpist, because Saul is terrified by an evil spirit; 1 Sam. 16.
- c) His victory over Goliath (make sure you can tell the story in detail) in 1 Sam. 17.
- d) His second time at Saul's court, 1 Sam. 18. David is favoured by the people: memorize vs. 7. Saul begins to hate David and tries to kill him twice. David marries Michal.
- e) His flight to Samuel, after Michal has saved his life (see the very remarkable history in vs. 19-24: Is Saul among the prophets?) 1 Sam. 19.
- f) David makes a covenant with Jonathan and flees to Nob (1 Sam. 20 and 21). Using arrows, Jonathan shows him that he must flee, comp. 20:38.

2. David's wanderings

David visits the following places, chased like "a partridge in the mountains" (1 Sam. 26:20):

Nob	at the priest of Ahimelech, who is killed because he gives David the showbread and the sword of Goliath (Doeg, Edomite); 1 Sam. 21 and 22.
Gath	At Achis, king of Gath; comp. Psalm 56. Pretends to be a madman.
Adullam	in the cave. Take note of 22:2. Here Psalm 34.
Moab	He takes his father and mother here.
Chereth	In this wood he hears that Ahimelech is killed and Nob is massacred.
Kehila	This city, liberated by David from the Philistines, still wants to hand him over to Saul; 1 Sam. 23.
Zif	An encounter with Jonathan.
Maon	David escapes from Saul.
Engedi	In the cave, he cuts the edge of Saul's garment; 1 Sam. 24. Samuel dies in these days and is buried at Rama.
Paran	After Samuel's death, David travels to this desert; Nabal dies; David marries his widow, Abigail; 1 Sam. 25.
Hachilla	Again, the sleeping Saul is spared; now David takes his spear and cruse of water; 1 Sam. 26.

Ziklag David serves Achish for sixteen months. The city is burned by the Amalekites. Then David moves to Hebron, after he has punished the Amalekites; 1 Sam. 27,29.

2) David's kingship at Hebron (1010-1003 BC)

- 2 Sam. 1: At Ziklag, David hears the tidings of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. The messenger of death, an Amalekite, is killed.
- 2 Sam. 2: At Hebron, David is anointed by the men of Judah, where he reigns for 7 and a half years. The men of Jabesh are honoured by David. Ishbosheth king at Mahanaim, Abner general. Joab defeats Ishbosheth's army. N.B. you need to know the names of the sons of Zeruiah, David's sister: Joab, Abishai and Asahel.
- 2 Sam. 3: Abner joins David, who requires Michal back from him. Joab takes revenge for Asahel's blood. David's mourning about Abner proves his innocence in this murder.
- 2 Sam. 4: Ishbosheth killed by two of his henchmen. Ishbosheth's head is taken to David, but they must pay for it with their own lives.

4) David's kingship in Jerusalem

2 Sam. 5: anointed king of Israel; Jerusalem becomes the residence: comp. 1 Chron. 11.

The following themes must be pointed out:

his wars: he fights against the Philistines (comp. in particular 2 Sam. 5:24), Moabites, Ammonites (2 Sam. 10), Syrians, Edomites (2 Sam. 8).

his piety: he takes the ark to Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 6 (you should be able to tell the story in detail); he would like to build a temple for the Lord, which is not permitted (Nathan), 2 Sam. 7 and 1 Chron. 17; he shows kindness to Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. 9 (also carefully read the history of Rizpa in 2 Sam. 21); he humbles himself in his dying words, 2 Sam. 23 (memorize vs. 5). Also compare his psalm in ch. 22, comp. **Ps. 18**.

his sins: There is the sin with *Bathsheba*, 2 Sam. 11, followed by the death of Uriah, the Hittite. Read Nathan's rebuke in ch. 12 and David's repentance (comp. Ps. 51). There is also the sin of the *census*, 2 Sam. 24 and 1 Chron. 21. Also note the remarkable contrast between 2 Sam. 24:1 and 1 Chron. 21:1.

his afflictions:

- a) *Bathsheba's child* dies; take note of 2 Sam. 12:22-23.
- b) *Amnon* commits incest with Tamar and is killed by Absalom's servants, 2 Sam. 13. In a cunning way, Joab, helped by a woman from Thekoah, manages to get Absalom back in Jerusalem after he has stayed east of the Jordan River for three years, ch. 14.
- c) Absalom rebels against his father David. Carefully study this history (2 Sam. 15-19):
 - The rebellion starts at Hebron. Absalom supported by Ahithophel.
 - David flees to the land east of the Jordan River, with his bodyguards and the men of Ithai, the Gethite (Philistines). Carefully study the role that

Ahithophel, Hushai, Zadok, Abiathar, Ahimaaz, Jonathan, Ziba, Simei, Abisai and Barzillai played.

- Hushai's counsel is followed by the battle with Absalom's troops near the woods of Ephraim. Joab kills Absalom. See David's sorrow after the message, 18:19-33.
 - David returns to Jerusalem (Shimei, Zibah, Mephibosheth and Barzillai).
 - Sheba, the Benjaminite, revolts against David (2 Sam. 20) and is supported by the northern tribes. Amasa has to end the revolt, but he does not arrive in time and Joab kills him out of envy. Sheba, followed by Joab, is killed.
- d) *Adonijah*, the eldest prince, wants to become king instead of Solomon, who had been appointed by God, 1 Kings 1. This revolt fails. Adonijah is spared for now. Abishag takes care of David.

his death:

1 Kings 2; 1 Chron. 28 and 29.

SOLOMON

Comp. 1 Kings 2-11 and 2 Chron. 1-9 (970-930 BC)

After he has accepted his kingship, he kills Adonijah, Joab and Shimei and exiles Abiathar, 1 Kings 2. In a dream vision at Gibeon, Solomon asks God to give him *wisdom*, which is clear in his decision in the case of the two women, 1 Kings 3, in the queen of Sheba's visit, 1 Kings 10, and in the books that he wrote (comp. 1 Kings 4:32).

We should also point out:

Solomon's piety:

He built the temple, 1 Kings 5-8; the building started during the fourth year of his reign and was completed in the eleventh year. In chapter 8 we read about the solemn dedication of Solomon's Temple, comp. 2 Chron. 6.

Then the Lord appears to him for the second time (1 Kings 9).

For the building of Solomon's palace see 1 Kings 7.

Solomon's piety is also seen in the name of Jedediah (friend of the LORD) which was given to him by Nathan, at God's command (2 Sam. 12).

Solomon's sins:

Against the law of Deut. 17:17 (the law concerning kings), he has many wives, who draw him after the idols.

Consequences: rebellion in Edom and Syria.

The prophet Ahijah points out Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, as the future king of the ten tribes, 1 Kings 11.

Solomon's death:

He dies after he has reigned for forty years, 1 Kings 11.

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

(1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17)

After Solomon's death, the kingdom is divided: the ten tribes (called Israel and Ephraim) in the north; the two tribes Judah and Benjamin in the south (called Judah).

I will give a *separate overview* of the histories of both kingdoms. You are advised to always compare the situation in one kingdom to the situation in the other one. The kingdom was divided *around 930 BC*, comp. 1 Kings 12.

JEROBOAM I

1 Kings 12-14.

"The son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin." This sin particularly consisted of the introduction of the worship of calves at Dan and Bethel, to keep the people from going to Jerusalem. Read *both warnings* against Jeroboam and 1 Kings 13 (the remarkable history of the prophet from Judah, who rebukes the sacrificing Jeroboam at Bethel; heals his hand; is then disobedient to the Lord and is killed by a lion) and in 1 Kings 13 (the rebuke by blind Ahijah; death of Abijah, Jeroboam's son – take note of vs. 13 – *NB*: Rehoboam also had a son whose name was Abijah).

Jeroboam dies after having reigned for 22 years. He was an Ephraimite. Residence: first Shechem, later Thirza.

NADAB

1 Kings 15

Reigned for two years. Killed by his successor. *End of Jeroboam's house.*

BAASHA

1 Kings 15-16.

Reigned for 24 years; kills the entire house of Jeroboam, but walks in his ways. Rebuked by the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani. Asa of Judah and Benhadad I of Syria wage war against Baasha (see Asa of Judah).

ELAH

1 Kings 16.

Son of Baasha; is killed by Zimri after 2 years in his residence in Thirza. *End of the house of Baasha.*

ZIMRI

1 Kings 16

Reigns only for 7 days; commits suicide when the army, which has proclaimed Omri counter-king, sieges Thirza.

OMRI

1 Kings 16

Reigns for 12 years; first he has to overcome the counter-king Tibni; then he becomes an absolute ruler. He makes *Samariah* his residence (ca. 880 BC). He becomes allies with Tyrus, to be strong against Syria. A serious consequence of this alliance: the Phoenician idols Baal and Astarte are worshipped in Israel; temples for idols are built in Samaria.

AHAB

1 Kings 16-22.

Son of Omri; reigns for 22 years, from 875-854 BC. Marries Jezebel from Tyrus. His daughter Athaliah marries prince Jehoram from Judah. The worship of Baal becomes the state religion.

Foreign politics in the genealogy of Omri: peace with Judah, an alliance with Tyrus, war with Syria (Benhadad II), Moab subjected.

The ministry of the prophet **ELIJAH**, the Tishbite ('Tishbite' means: from Thisbe in Gilead) takes place during the reign of Ahab (1 Kings 17-19, 2 Kings 2). He announces a drought as God's punishment for the people's idolatry. At the brook Cherith, the Lord preserves Elijah in a miraculous way with bread and meat, by means of ravens.

Later, the prophet visits the widow of Zarephath, whose son is raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:8-24, make sure you are able to tell the story in detail). After a drought of three years and a half, Elijah kills the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel; also make sure you are able to tell 1 Kings 18 in detail).

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah flees to Mount Horeb, where the LORD appears to him, not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in a still small voice. Memorize vs. 7b, 18. Study the threefold task that Elijah receives in vs. 15 and 16.

In 1 Kings 21, Elijah announces God's judgement upon Ahab and his house, after the murder of Naboth, who refused to sell his vineyard (heritage).

In 2 Kings 2: Elijah's ascension, memorize vs. 12a.

Ahab waged *three battles* against the Syrians: in the first battle (1 Kings 20), Ahab, advised by a prophet of the Lord, assaults the drunk Benhadad II, who had besieged Samaria.

In the second war (1 Kings 20), Ahab defeats the Syrians at Aphek, at the same prophet's command. The Syrians flee to Aphek; the wall of the city falls down.

Read vs. 30-34, how Benhadad is spared by Ahab, against the Lord's will.

See Ahab's punishment in vs. 42.

In the third war (1 Kings 22), Ahab, although warned by Micah, together with Judah's king Jehoshaphat, goes to battle against the Syrians and dies. Study this chapter carefully.

AHAZIAH

2 Kings 1

Son of Ahab; reigns for 2 years, and walks in the ways of his father. He becomes sick after falling through a lattice in his palace; does not ask the Lord, but Baal-Zebub, the God of Ekron, to help him. When Elijah rebukes him because of this, he wants to kill him (twice are captains and fifty men consumed by fire); eventually, Ahaziah dies as a result of his injuries.

JEHORAM

2 Kings 3-9

Son of Ahab, brother of Ahaziah, reigns for 12 years. He breaks with Ahab and Jezebel's worship of Baal, but he returns to Jeroboam I's worship of calves.

Just as Ahab's reign was closely connected with the ministry of the prophet Elijah, Jehoram's reign is connected with the ministry of the prophet

ELISHA, 2 Kings 2-13. He prophesies during the reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash.

We organise his ministry according to the *signs* which are written about him:

- a) After Elijah's ascension, he goes through the Jordan River with Elijah's cloak (read 2 Kings 2:14; see his calling already in 1 Kings 19:19-21).
- b) Healing of the bad water of Jericho (rebuilt under Ahab, see 1 Kings 16:34), 2 Kings 2.
- c) At his command, 42 mocking children at Bethel are mauled by two bears, 2 Kings 2.
- d) He helps the allied armies of Israel, Edom and Judah (Jehoshaphat), who have no water during a campaign to Moab, 2 Kings 3.
- e) The widow of a God-fearing prophet receives oil in her jar, 2 Kings 4.
- f) The hospitable woman from Shunem, who made a room for him, receives a son, 2 Kings 4.
- g) The child of this Shunamite woman dies and is raised up, 2 Kings 4.
- h) Poisonous food is healed in Gilgal, 2 Kings 4.
- i) 100 men are fed with 20 loaves of barley bread, 2 Kings 4.
- j) Naaman, the Syrian, is healed from his leprosy, 2 Kings 5.
- k) Gehazi punished with leprosy, 2 Kings 5.
- l) Elisha makes an axe head float on the water of the River Jordan, 2 Kings 6.
- m) Benhadad II sends the army of the Syrians to Dothan to capture Elisha, because he informs Jehoram about the positions of the Syrians, and the army is blinded, 2 Kings 6.
- n) Elisha predicts the liberation of besieged Samaria, which is very much in need (comp. 2 Kings 6:25-29). The Syrians flee during the night when they hear a sound; the unbelieving captain is trodden in the gate, 2 Kings 7.
- o) The Shunamite woman receives her goods back, which she had left behind before the famine, when Gehazi tells the king about all the miracles that Elisha had done to her, 2 Kings 8.
- p) Elisha appoints Hazael as Benhadad II's successor over Syria, 2 Kings 8. After this, Hazael kills Benhadad.
- q) Elisha commands Jehu, one of Jehoram's officers, to be anointed king, to carry out the Lord's punishment on Ahab's house, 2 Kings 9. For *Elisha's death*, see king Jehoash.

King Jehoram, who hoped to be healed from his injuries at Jizreel (he had been injured during the battle with the Syrians) is killed by Jehu on the land of Naboth, 2 Kings 9.

End of the house of Omri, 842 BC.

JEHU

2 Kings 9-10.

He reigns for 28 years, from 842-814 BC. Jehu's house reigns for a century. He carries out God's judgment in a cruel and selfish way (comp. Hos. 1:4).

According to his command the following people are killed: *Jehoram*, king of Israel – Ahaziah, king of Judah, who had come to Jezreel to visit the sick Jehoram – Jezebel, Ahab's wife – *seventy sons of Ahab* – *forty-two brothers of Ahaziah* – the entire remaining *house of Ahab* –

all *worshippers of Baal* in Israel. In Jehu's days, Hazael conquers the country east of the Jordan River from Syria. Jehu destroys Baal worship but continues the worship of calves.

JEHOAHAZ

2 Kings 13

Reigns for 17 years. Israel groans under Syria's yoke. See Jehoahaz' prayer in vs. 4. He is Jehu's son.

JEHOASH

2 Kings 13

Reigns for 16 years, son of Jehoahaz. He visits the dying Elisha, who predicts that he will defeat the Syrians three times (the bow with the arrows); see the *death of Elisha* and the ensuing miracle in 2 Kings 13:20-21. Jehoash fights against Amaziah from Judah, defeats him and robs the temple treasure, 2 Kings 14. Jehoash actually defeats Benhadad III, the son of Hazael, three times.

JEROBOAM II

2 Kings 14

Son of Jehoash, reigns for 41 years (783-742 BC). He reconquers the land east of the Jordan River, which had been lost under Jehu, to Damascus.

Consolidation of boundaries; a time of external flourishing for Israel. Religiously, there is a terrible apostasy.

Scripture prophets, who prophesied during Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom, are: *Amos* (comp. ch. 7), *Hosea* and *Jonah*.

NB: Scripture prophets are those prophets, whose writings have been preserved in the Holy Scriptures.

ZECHARIAH

2 Kings 15

Son of Jeroboam II, reigns for six months. Killed by his successor. *End of the house of Jehu*, 742 BC.

SHALLUM

2 Kings 15

Reigns for one month. Killed by his successor.

MENAHEM

2 Kings 15.

Reigns for 10 years. After paying a large tax he becomes a vassal of Pul (= Tiglath-Pileser III) of Assyria. NB: the great difficulties that occur, when we want to determine the *right years* of the reigns of these kings of Israel, cannot be discussed here.

PEKAHIAH

2 Kings 15.

Son of Menahem; loyal vassal of Assyria. Reigns for 2 years; killed by his successor.

PEKAH

2 Kings 15 and 16.

Reigns for 20 years. He wants to end their subjection to Assyria, and makes a covenant with Syria (Resin from Damascus). Pekah and Resin use violence in an attempt to involve Ahaz of Judah in this anti-Assyrian coalition (the so-called Syro-Ephraimite War, 735 BC), but he asks Tiglath-Pileser to help him. The consequences are devastating: Damascus is destroyed by the Assyrians; Pekah and Resin are killed; many Israelites, in particular from Naphtali and the area east of the Jordan River are deported.

HOSHEA

2 Kings 17.

Reigns for 9 years. Initially a faithful vassal of Assyria, this murderer of Pekah later seeks help from Egypt.

After a three-year siege by the Assyrian kings Shalmaneser V and Sargon, Samaria is taken. The people of the Northern Kingdom are carried away to Mesopotamia. They never returned. In 2 Kings 17 we read – besides the *cause* of the downfall of the northern kingdom – how the Samaritan nation came into existence: the Assyrians import foreign nations into the unpeopled area in Israel. A priest who has returned from Assyria teaches these people in Bethel how they should fear the LORD. Now a peculiar and mixed religion develops (vs. 33) and an intermarrying between the Israelites who had remained and the foreign colonists.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH

(1 Kings 12-2 Kings 25, 2 Chron. 10-36)

The great difference with the kingdom of the ten tribes is that, in Judah, only one house reigned, *the house of David*, to which the Lord had given His promises. The author of the book of *Chronicles* only describes the kings of Judah in 2 Chron. 1 Chron. Contains elaborate genealogies (in particular Judah, Levi and Benjamin) and details surrounding the temple worship.

REHOBOAM

1 Kings 12,14, 2 Chron. 10-12.

Reigns for 17 years in Jerusalem. When he follows the advice of his young counsellors to tax the people of Israel even more, the ten tribes separate themselves (the kingdom divided, 930 BC).

Then Rehoboam departs from the Lord more and more, until Pharaoh Sisak invades Judah and steals the temple treasures.

Then Rehoboam humbles himself temporarily, after being rebuked by the prophet *Shemaiah*. He was married to the idolatrous Maacah, a granddaughter of Absalom.

ABIJAH

1 Kings 15, 2 Chron. 13.

Reigns for 3 years. He wages war with Jeroboam I of Israel and God gives him victory; see his address to Israel's army in 2 Chron. 13:4-12. Abijah is called Abijam in 1 Kings.

ASA

1 Kings 15, 2 Chron. 14-16.

Reigns for 41 years. A God-fearing king, who wanders far from God at the end of his life. Maacah is dethroned. Zerah, the Cushite, is defeated with his great number of soldiers. Study the address of the prophet *Azariah*. When Baasha of Israel tries to prevent many people from moving from Israel to Judah, Asa asks Syria for help. Asa is rebuked for this by the prophet *Hanani*, 2 Chron. 16. The end of Asa's life is very dark: in his last illness, he does not seek the Lord, but physicians.

JEHOSHAPHAT

1 Kings 22, 2 Chron. 17-20.

Reigns for 25 years; a God-fearing king. The fear of the Lord, practised by Jehoshaphat, brings prosperity for the king and the people. Sadly, he becomes too close with the wicked Ahaz of Israel and with Ahaz' sons Ahaziah and Jehoram: for example, he organises a marriage between his son *Jehoram and Athaliah*, Ahabs daughter. He risks his life by waging war against the Syrians with Ahab (1 Kings 22); he encounters difficulties during his mutual campaign with Jehoram of Israel against Moab (2 Kings 3). He is rebuked by the prophet Jehu because of the friendship with Ahab's house, 2 Chron. 19:2. In 2 Chron. we read how Moab and Ammon invade Judah together, which God gives the victory in a miraculous way. Carefully read Jehoshaphat's prayer, vs. 6-12.

Concerning trade: together with Ahaziah of Israel, he sends ships to Ophir (gold), but they are broken at Ezion-Geber.

JEHORAM

2 Kings 8, 2 Chron. 21.

Reigns for 8 years. When he is in charge, he kills all his brothers. His wife is Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. He introduces the worship of Baal in Judah. He receives a rebuking *letter from Elijah* (2 Chron. 21:12-15). Read it carefully.

Then the Philistines and Arabs rob his possessions and his wives and children, except for Jehoahaz, the later king Ahaziah. Jehoram dies after a serious disease lasting two years. He is *not* buried in the graves of kings.

AHAZIAH

2 Kings 8, 2 Chron. 22.

Reigns for 1 year. He is killed by Jehu in 842 BC, together with Jehoram, his uncle.

ATHALIAH

2 Kings 11, 2 Chron. 22,23.

Jehoram's widow, Ahaziah's mother, reigns for 6 years and kills all the royal descendants. Jehosheba (daughter of Jehoram) saves her nephew Joash (Ahaziah's son), who is still a suckling, and raises him together with her husband Jehoiada, for 7 years. Then 7-year old Joash is crowned king in the temple and Athaliah is killed. Take note of the fact that Athaliah started her reign in the same year as Jehu in Israel.

JOASH

2 Kings 12, 2 Chron. 24.

Reigns for 40 years. Walks in God's ways as long as his uncle Jehoiada lives. The temple is restored (offering chests). After Jehoiada's death, Joash falls back into the worship of idols, on the request of the princes of Judah. The warning *Zechariah* (son of Jehoiada) is stoned in

the temple court, comp. Mat. 23:35. By means of a tax, Joash manages to keep Hazael of Syria at a distance. Sick Joash is killed by his servants in his bed. *Not* buried with the kings.

AMAZIAH

2 Kings 14, 2 Chron. 25.

Reigns for 29 years. He subjects Edom and controls the road to the port of Elath at the Red Sea. However, he loses the war against Joash of Israel, who plunders Jerusalem. He did “that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart”. Killed at Lachis. Carefully read Joash’s words about the thistle and the cedar.

UZZIAH

2 Kings 15, 2 Chron. 26.

He reigns for 52 years. He is also called *Azariah*; initially does that which is right in the eyes of God. He controls Edom, lives in peace with Israel (Jeroboam II), subjects the Philistines. In his own country, he stimulates agriculture, cattle breeding and trade. However, when he enters the temple to sacrifice in the holy place, he is rebuked by the high priest *Azariah* and eighty priests; God punishes him with leprosy.

For the rest of his life, he lives in an isolated house and his son Jothan is a regent. *Scripture prophets*: In the year of Uzziah’s death, *Isaiah* is called (comp. Is. 6).

JOTHAM

2 Kings 15, 2 Chron. 27.

He reigns for 16 years. A good and powerful king, who makes the Ammonites subjects. The 16 years of his reign are including the years of his regency.

AHAZ

2 Kings 16, 2 Chron. 28.

Reigns for 16 years. A very wicked king, who sends his sons through the fire, sacrifices children to Moloch, introduces worship of calves and Baal. The war of Syria and Ephraim against Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus takes place during Ahaz’ reign (735 BC; see king Pekah). To read more about this war, also carefully read *Isaiah 7*. Take note of the rebuke of the prophet *Oded* for the northern kingdom, 2 Chron. 28:9-11. Judah now becomes dependent of Assyria, which, for example, is clear from the introduction of various foreign religious customs. Ahaz even commands the temple doors to be closed.

HEZEKIAH

2 Kings 18-20, 2 Chron. 29-32.

Reigns for 29 years and “cleaves to the LORD”. He opens and cleanses the temple, and makes sure the Passover is celebrated again. Look at what happens to the serpent of brass in 2 Kings 18:4 (Nehushtan). Hezekiah thoroughly ends the worship of idols. He reinforces Jerusalem against the enemies and leads the water of Gihon Well through the tunnel of Siloah into the city, ca. 700 BC.

Because of a campaign of the Assyrian king *Sennacherib*, Hezekiah meets with great trouble, comp. 2 Kings 19 (read thoroughly), from which God delivers him in a miraculous way. He is healed of a serious disease during the fourteenth year of his reign. Carefully read his prayer of gratitude in *Isaiah 38:9-20*. When Hezekiah shows all his treasures to ambassadors of the Babylonian king *Merodach-Baladan*, God shows His displeasure about it. N.B.: during

Hezekiah's reign, the ten tribes from the northern kingdom are carried away to Assyria (722 BC). *Scripture prophets: Isaiah, Micah.*

MANASSEH

2 Kings 21, 2 Chron. 33.

Reigns for 55 years. He is born three years after Hezekiah's healing, and accepts the throne as a twelve-year-old boy. Loyal vassal of Assyria.

During Manasseh's reign, there is a terrible syncretism (mixing of different religions) in Judah. For example, he erects altars for the celestial bodies in the temple courts and commands his sons to pass through fire unto Moloch. Only 2 Kings describes his sins. In 2 Chron. 33, however, we also read how God converted him after the king of Assyria had locked him in prison in Babylon. When he had returned to Jerusalem, he tries to reintroduce the service of the Lord. Take special note of 2 Chron. 33:10-13. *Scripture prophet: Nahum.*

AMON

2 Kings 21; 2 Chron. 33.

He reigns only 2 years, very wickedly. He is killed by his servants. The people kill the conspirators and make Amon's eight-year-old boy king.

JOSIAH

2 Kings 22, 23; 2 Chron. 34, 35.

The last God-fearing king of Judah. Reigns for 31 years (639-608 v. Chr.). During Josiah's reign, there are important changes in the foreign political relationships: Assyria weakens and Babylon's power (the Chaldeans) increases, under their king Nabopolassar. In 612 BC, Assyria's capital city Nineveh is destroyed by Babylon's armies. When Pharaoh-nechoh II of Egypt wants to interfere in the war, Josiah tries to stop him, but he loses his life in the battle of Megiddo (608 BC).

Josiah's piety is clear from the following things:

- a) During the twelfth year of his reign, he commands the high priest Hilkiah to cleanse the temple from the worship of idols (also Jerusalem, Judah and even Samaria are cleansed; the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:2 is fulfilled); the conversion of Josiah himself took place in the eighth year;
- b) He has the temple renovated in the eighteenth year;
- c) During this renovation in 621 BC, the "Book of the Law" is found in the temple. Shaphan, the scribe, reads it to Josiah; study the message of the prophetess Huldah in 2 Chron. 34:23-28.
- d) After he has made a covenant before the LORD, the people celebrate the Passover.

Scripture prophets: Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah. See the favourable witness concerning Josiah's reign in Jer. 22:15 and 16.

JEHOAHAZ

2 Kings 23; 2 Chron. 36.

Reigns for 3 months (608 BC); is captured by Pharaoh-nechoh and replaced by his brother *Eliakim* (= Jehoiakim).

JEHOIAKIM

2 Kings 23-24; 2 Chron. 36. Reigns for 11 years (608-597 BC). In Jehoiakim's days, the new-Babylonian empire of Nabopolassar receives the hegemony in the Near East, because Babylon crown prince Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh-necho at Karkemish in 605 BC. Babylon's armies go to Jerusalem, under Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim now becomes Babylon's vassal state. The first deportation takes place (including Daniel). After three years of obedience, Jehoiakim rebels against Babylon again. He was a wicked king, who undoes his father's reformation. He dies before the siege of Jerusalem (burial of a donkey, Jer. 22:19).

JEHOIACHIN

2 Kings 24; 2 Chron. 36.

Reigns for 3 months; son of Jehoiakim (597 BC).

Jerusalem is besieged by Babylonians and taken. Jehoiachin is carried to Babylon with ten thousand of his most prominent subjects (including Ezekiel): the second deportation.

He is released after 37 years of captivity, 2 Kings 25:27-30. Nebuchadnezzar makes Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah (Mattaniah, son of Josiah) king in his place.

ZEDEKIAH

2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chron. 36.

Reigns for 11 years (597-586 BC). He is loyal to Nebuchadnezzar for nine years. In those days, many try to tempt him to rebel against Babylon. *Jeremiah* solemnly warns against it; many people accuse Jeremiah of treason, but he only urges people to bow under God's punishment. In 588 BC, Zedekiah becomes disloyal to Babylon. Jerusalem is besieged once again; after 18 months, *city and temple* are destroyed and a large part of the people are deported to Babylon, including Zedekiah. *Gedaliah* is made governor of the largely depopulated area. Later he is killed (comp. also Jer. 39-44, which describes how the remaining people, afraid of the Babylonian's revenge, flee to Egypt and force Jeremiah to go along). Also carefully study 2 Kings 25.

EZRA

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the events after the captivity and are very closely connected to the books of Chronicles (comp. for example the last verses of 2 Chron. to the first verses of Ezra). The book of Ezra was partly written in Hebrew, and partly in Aramaic.

A general outline:

A) – Return from Babylon to the dedication of the second temple (ch. 1 to 6).

This is the time from 538 - 516 BC.

1. King Cyrus of Persia gives the Jews permission to return;
2. A list of those who return under the supervision of Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the son of Sealthiel, the son of king Jehoiachin. Also comp. Neh. 7;
3. The worship service is restored and the foundations of the temple are laid (also comp. for this time the *Scripture prophets Haggai and Zechariah*). A shouting of joy and a shouting of weeping...;
4. The building of the temple is impeded by Samaritans, until the second year of Darius;

5. The building of the temple is resumed upon the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah;
6. King Darius finds the scroll in the treasury in Babylon, in which Cyrus gives the Jews permission to rebuild the temple; he maintains this permission and commands the governor Thathnai to assist the Jews.
The temple is dedicated in 516 BC and the Passover is celebrated.

B) Ezra's labour (ch. 7 to 10).

First Ezra's labour is discussed now. Ezra is a 'sopher' (= secretary, 'Scribe'). He goes to Jerusalem in the seventh year of king Arthaxerxes Artaxerxes I Longimanus, in 458 BC.

7. Ezra travels to Jerusalem with part of the remaining Jews, without escort from the king;
8. A list of Ezra's travel companions and a report of the journey;
9. Ezra's mourning and prayer in response to the apostasy in Jerusalem, in particular because of the mixed marriages;
10. The foreign wives are sent away.

Also see, concerning Ezra's labour: *Neh. 8 and 9*.

NEHEMIAH

General outline:

A) The history of Nehemiah, the cupbearer of Arthaxerxes (ch. 1-7).

1. Nehemiah's prayer after he hears about the sad condition in Jerusalem;
2. He goes to Jerusalem, with permission from Arthaxerxes (with an escort from the king) in 445 BC. Notice v. 20;
3. A list of the builders of Jerusalem's walls;
4. Sanballat and Tobiah try to prevent the building; Nehemiah arms the people;
5. Nehemiah relieves the poor from their debts;
6. Several complots from Sanballat and Tobiah against Nehemiah;
7. Nehemiah finds the list of the people who have returned under the guidance of Zerubbabel and Joshua (also comp. Ezra 2).

B) Several particulars (ch. 8-13).

8. Ezra reads the law to the people and organises the Feast of Tabernacles;
9. The people have a day of repentance; carefully read the solemn prayer;
10. A renewal of the covenant with God: confirmed in writing;
11. Division of the people in their towns;
12. Record of the priests and Levites. Also a description of the Feast at the dedication of the city wall in Jerusalem;
13. Nehemiah returns to Persia after a time of twelve years in Jerusalem. During a second time of leave in Jerusalem, he puts an end to several abuses, comp. 4-9.
This second time of leave must be dated ca. 430 BC.

ESTHER

In the Hebrew canon, this book belongs to the five "Megillot" (refer to Ruth; again study the information about the Megillot that you find there). The history of Esther takes place during

the Persian king Ahasuerus (= Xerxes), who reigned from 486-465 BC. The book describes how God's care – even though God's Name is not mentioned – also extends to the part of His people that initially did not return to Canaan. The book, after all, takes place after Zerubbabel's return, but before Ezra's return. The events take place in the ancient Persian residence of Shushan.

Outline:

1. Queen Vashti refuses to go to the feast of the drunk Ahasuerus, and she is cast out by the king.
2. The king selects and marries the Jewess Hadassah (Esther), an orphan, who is raised by her cousin Mordecai. She conceals her Jewish background. Mordecai discovers a plot against Ahasuerus; this is written in the chronicles.
3. Mordecai refuses to worship Haman; Haman wants to exterminate the people of Mordecai, and determines a day for this. He casts the Pur=lots: he has to wait for a year. The king gives him permission to massacre the Jews.
4. Mordecai organises a time of fasting among the Jews and commands Esther to go to the king.
5. Esther goes to the king: make sure you are able to recall this chapter in detail.
6. Sleepless Ahasuerus has someone read the chronicles to him, and he hears that Mordecai saved him but never received an award for it. Mordecai is guided through the city – with Haman in front of him.
7. During a second meal with the king and with Haman, Esther makes her request for her people. Haman is hanged.
8. Mordecai receives the ring of Ahasuerus. The Jews are allowed to defend themselves on 13 Adar and kill their enemies.
9. The Jews gain the upper hand. The Feast of Purim is established: 14 and 15 Adar.
10. Mordecai seeks that which is best for his people.

Finally, to conclude the books of Samuel to Esther, here is a brief outline of the names and years of *several foreign kings* who influenced the history of Israel:

ASSYRIA

(Nineveh)

- Tiglath-Pileser III (=Pul) 745-727 BC
Plays a role in the Syro-Ephraimite War, 735 BC.
- Shalmaneser V 726-722 BC
Besieges Samaria
- Sargon II 722-705
Conquers Samaria, 722 BC
- Sennacherib 704-681 BC
When he begins to reign, the Assyrian Empire is at the zenith of its power; he besieges Jerusalem at the time of Hezekiah, 701 BC.

BABYLON

(Babel)

Nabopolassar

626-605

	He establishes the Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean Empire and gives the great rival Assyria the final blow: Nineveh destroyed, 612 BC.	
Nebuchadnezzar	As crown prince, he defeats Pharaoh Necho decisively at Karkemish near the Euphrates, 605 BC. Destroys Jerusalem, 586 BC.	604-562
Evil-Merodach	Liberates Jehoiachin.	561-559
Nabonidus	During the last years, he sometimes reigns together with his son Belshazzar.	556-539
Belshazzar	Dies during the conquest of Babylon by the Persians, comp. Dan. 5.	539

PERSIA

(Shushan)

Cyrus	In 550 BC, he puts an end to the Empire of the Medes, and in 539 to the Neo-Babylonian Empire. During his reign, 'Darius the Mede' briefly reigns over Babylon – little is known about his character and relationship with Cyrus. This Darius is spoken of in the book of Daniel.	559-529
Darius I Hystaspes	This king is referred to as 'Darius, the king of Persia'. He should be clearly distinguished from Darius the Mede. Ezra 4, for example speaks of Darius the Persian.	521-486
Xerxes I (= Ahasuerus)	He is the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther.	486-465
Artaxerxes I Longimanus	He is the Artaxerxes from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.	465-425

JOB

The time in which Job lived may have been the time of the patriarchs. This can be concluded from the social conditions, Job's great age, and the fact that Mosaic ordinances are not mentioned. In any case, he was known to the prophet Ezekiel, comp. Ez. 14:14. There is no uniform view with respect to the location of the land of Uz. Many think it was in Syria. The main question of the entire book is the question of 1:9 ("Doth Job fear God for nought?") Before you study the book of Job, read the "contents of this book" written by the annotators of the Dutch Authorized Version.

General outline:

A) **Prologue** (1,2).

Written in prose. Job's piety is tested by being deprived of all his goods and of his ten children. He praises the Name of the LORD. When he is arraigned by Satan before God for the second time, he becomes seriously ill. His wife is full of enmity. His three friends come and sit with him for seven days and nights without speaking. Carefully study both chapters. *Memorize 1:21.*

B) Conversations (3-42:6).

Written in poetry. We can distinguish several elements in these conversations:

- Job curses the day of his birth (3).
- Three rounds of conversation between Job and his three friends (4-26), Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, who accuse him of a *certain* sin, which they say is the reason he is punished by God (comp. John 9:2). Job (sometimes overly) defends himself against this accusation. *Memorize 19:25-27.*
- A speech by Job, in which he defends his innocence, he praises wisdom, describes his former happiness and present misery, and in which his innocence is powerfully proved (27-31).
- The speech of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, in which he rebukes both the three friends and Job because of what they have said. His speech is a powerful defence of the righteousness of God (32-37). Take note of 33:23-24.
- The LORD reproves Job (38-42) in a first speech, in which He points out the greatness of Creation (Job's answer in 39:36-38) and in a second speech, in which He describes the power of the Behemoth and Leviathan which were created by Him (Job's answer in 42:1-6; now he bows before God unconditionally).

C) Epilogue (42:7-17).

Written in prose. We read of Job's intercession for his friends, his renewed happiness and the names of his daughters: Jemima, Kezia and Keren-happuch.

PSALMS

A) Structure

It is clear that the book of Psalms consists of five parts, in which many people see a parallel with the Pentateuch. These five 'Psalm books' are:

- a) Psalm 1-41, concluded with praise in Psalm 41:13
- b) Psalm 42-72, concluded with praise in Psalm 72:18-19
- c) Psalm 73-89, concluded with praise in Psalm 89:53
- d) Psalm 90-106, concluded with praise in Psalm 106:48
- e) Psalm 107-150, concluded with praise in Psalm 150 (completely).

It is striking that each book is concluded with a doxology (= praise).

B) Poets

- Moses: 90
- David: a great number of Psalms (74 in total; including Psalm 72)
- Asaph: 50; 73-83
- Heman: 88
- Ethan: 89
- The sons of Korah: 42-49; 84, 85, 87, 88

We speak of *anonymous* Psalms when the poet is not mentioned; we speak of *orphan psalms* when any heading (also the author) is missing. An anonymous psalm is not necessarily an orphan psalm. For example, Psalm 100 is an anonymous Psalm, but not an orphan Psalm. There are 34 orphan Psalms.

C) **Headings**

It was very difficult for the translators of the Bible to explain the headings of the Psalms. This is clear from the fact that they have left many of them untranslated. Headings which were actually translated are: "To the chief musician" (55 times); "For the Sabbath day" (Ps. 92); "A song of degrees" (Ps. 120-134) etc.

Concerning the headings which were not translated we would like to point out:

- a) "On Neginoth" (e.g. 4, 5, 54) This probably means: "Sing accompanied by stringed instruments";
- b) "Upon Sheminith" (6, 12), i.e. "on the eighth, octave";
- c) "Upon Gittith" (8, 81, 84), probable meaning: to sing accompanied by a musical instrument from the city of Gath;
- d) "Shela" occurs 71 times, the meaning of which is still unknown. It is probably an instruction for the director of the choir.

Also striking are the so-called alphabetic Psalms (e.g. 25, 111, 119). Each verse or group of verses is preceded by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. If a verse (or group of verses) is preceded by an Aleph or a Beth, this means that the Hebrew verse begins with a word the first letter of which is an Aleph or a Beth.

D) **Types**

Considering the *contents* of the book of Psalms, we can distinguish the following types (not complete):

- The *seven penitential psalms* (probably given this name since Augustine): 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143
- The *historical* Psalms, praising God's deeds in Israel's history: 78, 105, 106, 114.
- Specific "*Messianic*" Psalms, speaking of the coming Christ: 2, 16, 22, 45, 72, 110, and other Psalms.
- The so-called "*psalms of curse*", in which the poet curses God's and his own enemies in the Name of the Lord: 137.
- *Psalms of nature*, which praise God's deeds in creation: 8, 19, 29, 104, 147.
- The "Great Hallel", sung at the Passover meal: 113-118.

Texts from the Book of Psalms, which you should memorize, are: *Psalm 2:6-7*; *Psalm 16:10-11*; *Psalm 40:7-9*; *Psalm 110:1*. Carefully read as many Psalm as possible – in particular the ones mentioned in this outline.

PROVERBS

The book owes its name to ch. 1:1. The word "proverbs" is a plural form of the Hebrew word *mashal*, which means an allusion, similitude, parable with a deep intention and meaning. The book of Proverbs is part of the Old Testament *Wisdom Literature* (chokma writings, from the Hebrew word chokma=wisdom), together with Job and Ecclesiastes. Even though the book, in line with the introduction, is ascribed to Solomon, it should be noted that the book includes several other proverbs. Solomon was famous because of the gift of wisdom that he had received: he spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were thousand and five (1 Kings 4:32).

General outline:

- A) **Exhortations from a father to his son (1-9)**
Solomon addresses his audiences as a wise man addressing his pupil. These chapters can be considered an introduction to the book. Wisdom is greatly recommended, *together* with the fear of the LORD (inseparably connected, comp. 1:7); this distinguishes the book of Proverbs from all Gentile wisdom literature, despite external similarities.
Serious warnings against the “strange woman” and adultery (5-7). Carefully study chapter 8, where eternal Wisdom is impersonated. Also take note of the often occurring “paralellismus membrorum”: the parallelism of members, which often occurs in poetic books, that a verse consists of two parts which run parallel and correspond.
- B) **The proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16).**
Numerous subjects concerning practical wisdom, given in proverbs, which in Hebrew consists of two parts of three or four words each.
- C) **The words of the wise (22:17-24:34).**
Outwardly, there is a striking similarity between this part and the Egyptian book of wisdom of Amenemope. This similarity, however, does not mean that they are mutually dependent.
- D) **Proverbs of Solomon (25-29).**
Written by the servants of king Hezekiah.
- E) **The words of Agur, the son of Jake (30).**
Take note of the so-called “number proverbs” for example in vs. 15, 16.
We also find this remarkable figure of speech in 6:16-19 and in Amos 1:3.
- F) **The words of the king Lemuel (31:1-9).**
Exhortations against lust and against wine abuse.
- G) **The wife of noble character (31:10-31).**
An acrostic, an alphabetical poem (comp. that which has been written above about alphabetical Psalms).

Texts that you should memorize: 8:23-25; 9:3-6; 14:34; 25:11; 30:7-9.

ECCLESIASTES

One of the five Megillot (see information about Ruth).

The word Ecclesiastes is a Latin transliteration of the Hebrew word Kohelet, a feminine present participle. It means: someone who speaks in the qahal, i.e. the congregation or gathering of people; someone who gathers an audience around him. Even though Kohelet is a feminine word, we may translate it as a masculine word, because in Hebrew the feminine form often refers to an office or someone who bears an office. So it may be translated as “Preacher”. Hardly any of the recent commentators still defends the view that the Kohelet is Solomon. The following argument are brought in against it:

- a) Solomon’s name is not mentioned in the entire book;
- b) 1:16 speaks of more than one people who were (king?) in Jerusalem before him;
- c) Words like those of 3:16 and 4:1 are believed not to fit in with the time of peace and quiet under Solomon;

- d) The language in which the book was written shows little similarity with ancient Hebrew, and much with the language of e.g. the Mishna (the oldest part of the Talmud, third century BC).

Based on these arguments, the book is believed to have arisen in Palestinian Judaism in the time of Persian domination (fourth century BC).

Even though we do not want to simply ignore the above-mentioned arguments, we believe that we still should hold to the old Jewish and Christian tradition, which considers Solomon the author of the book. However, we cannot discuss the matter here in detail, because it would lead us to the area of canonicity.

It is hard to give a *general outline*. The book has always confronted commentators with questions because of the *seeming contradictions* that can be found in it, e.g. between 2:2 and 8:15. Some church fathers consider the book to be a “dispute” between a foolish, wandering soul and the author, who refutes the sayings of the former. However, we should not follow this assumption. There is a certain line to be distinguished:

Theme:

1:2 and 12:8 “Vanity of vanities saith the preacher; all is vanity.” This theme runs through the entire book like a thread. However, this should *absolutely not* be understood as an expression of ungodly indifference, but it should be considered in connection with all the toil and labour of man under the sun; *that* is vanity, has no lasting value.

Explanation of the theme:

The theme is considered from different perspectives.

We may here point at the passages about the Preacher’s study of the lasting value of the labour of man (1:12-18); about the fact that everything that was gained, must be left to others (2:12-23); about the fact that man has no profit of that wherein he labours (2:24-3:15); about the injustice that happens on earth (3:16-4:6); about the needs of a person who is alone (4:7-12); about the vanity of wealth (5:7-6:12); about death, that takes away lasting value from one’s labour (9). Still man is called to labour faithfully and persevering (11), to consider the transience of life and to prepare for eternity (study the very beautiful allegory in which an old person is described, 12:2-6).

Conclusion:

12:8-14, with a repetition of the theme and an exhortation to fear God.

Memorize the following texts: 3:21; 7:1-2; 12:1,11.

SONG OF SOLOMON

One of the five Megillot (see the information about Ruth).

The Hebrew name of the book means ‘song of songs’.

This word construction refers to a superlative for, like in the holy of holies = most holy.

Even though ch. 1:1 may also be translated as “which deals with Solomon”, we believe the Dutch and English authorized versions are right and we consider Solomon to be the author. With respect to the question what the book’s aim is, we have to point out that mainly three interpretations have been given of the Song of Solomon:

a. The allegorical interpretation:

The Song of Solomon is a conversation between Christ as Bridegroom and His Church (or the soul of His child) as bride.

By far most church fathers followed this interpretation (influenced by the Jewish Targum, which spoke of the love between the Lord and Israel), in particular Bernard of Clairvaux and also the annotators of the Dutch Authorized Version. In this view, the Song of Solomon is considered to refer primarily to Christ and His Church,

b. The dramatic interpretation:

In this belief, the Song of Solomon does not have two main characters (Bridegroom and bride), but three; the Shulamite woman is believed to be engaged to a simple shepherd, who is unwillingly taken to Solomon's palace, where she refuses Solomon's advances; eventually she is set free and reunited with her fiancé in her parents' house. This is also called the 'shepherd's hypothesis'. Advocates of this view emphasize that the bridegroom is often presented as a shepherd (comp. 1:7-8), which they think is hardly compatible with Solomon's character (comp. 1:7-8). Yet we reject the dramatic approach, because the very loving way in which the bride addresses the *King* excludes any exegesis in which another lover is assumed.

c. The typological interpretation:

The Song of Solomon is believed to praise the pure, natural marriage love between king Solomon and the young Shulamite (6:13 i.e. from the town Shulam = Sunem?). This marriage of Solomon is at the same time believed to be a metaphor of the deep loving relationship between the heavenly Bridegroom Christ and the Church, His bride.

Considering these views, the old, allegorical interpretation seems to be the one which is most in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, even though we do not ignore the difficulties that we are confronted with when interpreting the text in detail.

A general outline:

The three times recurring verse (2:7; 3:5; 8:5) divides the Song of Solomon into three parts.

- A) 1:2-2:7:
 - The bride tells about her longing for the Bridegroom, 1:2-7
 - dialogue, 1:9-17
 - the love of the bride, 2:1-6
- B) 2:8-3:5:
 - The Bridegroom comes, 2:8-17
 - Looking for the bride, 3:1-4
- C) 3:6-8:4:
 - The wedding procession, 3:6-11
 - The charms of the bride praised by the Bridegroom, 4
 - Indifference and repentance of the bride, 5:1-7
 - The beauty of the Bridegroom praised by the bride, 5:8-16
 - Mutual expressions of love, culminating in the embrace, 6:1-8:3

The end of the Song of Solomon (8:5-14) shows us, among other things, the great power of love.

Memorize: 5:6-7.

ISAIAH

Isaiah means: “the LORD is salvation” or “the LORD has given salvation”.

Both his name, as well as in the names of his sons, contain a message. Isaiah was a son of the unknown Arnoz, and married to a prophetess. He lived in Jerusalem. It cannot be proved that he was of royal origin. It is clear from his prophecies that he was well-educated. The time when he prophesied: during Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (so from ca. 740-690 BC). He was called to be a prophet in the year when Uzziah died (chapter 6). Precisely in those days the international political relationships changed thoroughly: after a time of relative rest under Jeroboam II (Israel) and Uzziah (Judah), the power of Assyria began to rise again and became more influential. When reading the first part of Isaiah’s prophecies (1-39) you should always consider this Assyrian threat.

General outline:

The book can be divided into two main parts: 1-39 and 40-66.

The first part is written from Isaiah’s own time, the second part assumes the Babylonian captivity.

A) **Isaiah 1-39**

1-12: Chapter 1 is related to the Syro- Ephraimite War (735 BC. See the information above about the kings Pekah and Ahaz). Memorize vs. 3, 8, 18.

Chapters 2-5 contain prophecies about Isaiah’s early days (Uzziah, Jotham).

Compare 2:1-5 to Micah (contemporary) 4:1-5.

Also take note of the song of the vineyard in 5:1-7.

In the sixth chapter the calling vision with the “trisagion” = thrice holy in vs. 3.

He is so much impressed by this vision, that “The Holy One of Israel” is the typical name that he uses to refer to God in his prophecies.

In ch. 7-12 we find prophecies from the time of the Syro-Ephraimite War. Study the names of Isaiah’s sons in 7 and 8: Shear-jashub = a remainder returns, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz = hurrying to the spoil.

Memorize 7:14; 9:1-5; 11:1.

13-23: **Prophecies against the Gentile nations.**

Comp. Jeremiah 46-51. We find prophecies against Babylon (13, 14), against Ashur, the Philistines (take note of 14:32), Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Arabia, Tyrus and Sidon.

Carefully read 22:15-25 (the replacement of Sebna, the scribe, by Eliakim).

24-27: The “*apocalypsis*” (= revelation concerning the world judgment) of Isaiah. Take note of 26:19, about the resurrection from the dead.

28-35: Sharp warnings against expecting help from the Egyptians, against the Assyrian expansion (30, 31). In 35 another prophecy concerning the end times.

36-39: Chapters with strong similarities with 2 Kings 18-20. Hezekiah’s thanksgiving after his healing is new here, 38:9-20.

B) **Isaiah 40-66**

We can only briefly discuss the questions concerning the author of these chapters; otherwise we would too much enter the area of canonics. The broadly

accepted hypothesis is that Isaiah 40-66 were written by another prophet than Isaiah, the son of Amoz. The unknown author is called "Deutero-Isaiah" (second Isaiah) and his writings are dated back to the latter days of Babylonian captivity. Some even go as far as to assume that there was a third prophet ("Trito-Isaiah" (third Isaiah), who they date after the exile. The grounds for these hypotheses are, among other reasons:

1. 40-66 continually speaks about individuals and events which can be dated long after Isaiah's days, for example the Persian king Cyrus, God's "anointed", 45; the liberation of the Jews (538 BC); the rebuilding of Jerusalem, etc.
2. The Babylonian captivity and Cyrus' actions are not *predicted* as future events, but *assumed* as events that have taken place;
3. The so-called "Trito-Isaiah" is even written as if it were the time after the captivity.

However, all of these arguments can be refuted, because one decisive argument to consider the entire book to be written by Isaiah, the son of Amos, is the fact that the *New Testament*, when citing from chapters 40-66, repeatedly mentions Isaiah as the author (e.g. in Luke 4:17; Acts 8:28; Rom. 10:16,20). We believe that the Spirit of God has enabled the prophet to see through the centuries, and has given him to experience the miserable situation of captivity as being present, to enable him to write down his "book of comfort" with even more clarity.

It is difficult to give a *general outline* of the second main part. It is clear, however, that Isaiah owes the name "Evangelist of the Old Covenant" to these chapters.

Carefully read the following chapters:

- 40: "Comfort, ye comfort ye My people..."
- 44: The prophet mocks the worship of idols
- 45: Cyrus, God's anointed one
- 46: The powerlessness of Babylon's idols
- 54, 55: Zion's glorious future
- 56,58: Fasting and the sabbath
- 60, 62: Jerusalem's new glory
- 61: The LORD's Anointed One speaks

The four songs about the Ebed-Jahweh, the Servant of the LORD, are also well-known. These songs have no respect to Israel or to an unknown prophet (as newer exegesis says), but to the coming Christ; we find them in:

- 42:1-7
- 49:1-9
- 50:4-11
- 52:13-53:12

JEREMIAH

His name probably means: "The LORD lifts up". Son of Hilkah, lived Anathoth. Was born there in ca. 650 BC, during the reign of Manasseh. It is recommended, when studying the

major and minor prophets, to study again the information about the kings during whose lives they prophesied.

Jeremiah was called to be a prophet in 626 BC, the thirteenth year of Josiah. Several of Jeremiah's prophecies date back to that time, but the main part of his labours were under Jehoiaqim, Jehoichachin and Zedekiah (608-586 BC). His ministry mainly consisted of penitential preaching.

He was not deported after the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC), but was permitted to stay in Judaea. After the murder of the governor Gedaliah, who had been appointed by the Babylonians, Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch are taken to Egypt by the fleeing Jews. According to the tradition, Jeremiah was stoned by his fellow-countrymen; this may have happened during the controversy with his people, described in chapter 44.

General outline:

A) 1-10: A unified part with prophecies from the early days of Jeremiah's ministry. This part may have been the scroll which was once burned by king Jehoiaqim (36:1-2).

In chapter 1 we read that Jeremiah was called when he was 25 years old (see vs. 6), and the visions of the rod of an almond tree and the seething pot.

In 2-10 we find prophecies dating back to the time of Josiah and the early years of Jehoiaqim.

Important themes:

- the *unfaithfulness* of the people (disobedient Israel and faithless Judah, 2 and 3);
- approaching *doom from the north* (Babylon's armies, 4-6);
- false trust in the temple (7; comp for Jeremiah's temple preaching also chapter 26; take note of 7:4,5).

B) 11-45: Chapters in which prophecies against the people and royal house and false prophets are alternated with historical accounts concerning Jeremiah's ministry. 14-17 belong to the *first category* (prophecies), (announcement of a great drought and condemning idolatry); 22-24 (take note of the sharp words against king Shallum = Jehoahaz and against Jehoiaqim; in 24 the vision of the two baskets of figs; take note of the Messianic passage in 23, which also deals with the false prophets); 25 (the main vision of the cup of the Lord's wrath, that Jeremiah has to use for all nations); 30 and 31 (very beautiful prophecies of salvation about the return of the captives – Israel and Judah – and predictions of the "new covenant", comp. in particular 31:31-34). The *second category* of these chapters (the historical accounts) of these chapters include: 11 (a plot of the men of Anathoth against Jeremiah); 13 (the history of the linen belt, which rotted); 18 (the visit to the potter); 19 (in the valley of the son of Hinnom, Jeremiah breaks a jar from a potter which he has bought, to portray Judah's ruin); 20 (Pashur, a priest, arrests, beats and imprisons Jeremiah; after his liberation, the prophet experience a terrible struggle in his soul and even curses the day of his birth); 26 (Jeremiah's temple preaching, also compare ch. 7, is the reason why he is seized and threatened with death; Ahikam protects him against the fury of the people, but the pious

prophet Uriah is killed by Jehoiakim at the same time); 27-29 (Jeremiah calls the people to submit to Babylon's power, in sharp contrast to the advice of the false prophets; he has to carry a wooden yoke; has a conflict with the false prophet Hananiah, who breaks the yoke, then he carries an iron yoke; Hananiah dies; in 29 a letter from Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon: after seventy years, the captivity will be ended); 32 (Jeremiah has to buy a field in Anathoth, which was already occupied by the Caldeans, as a sign of guarantee for the future restoration of his people); 35 (encounter with the Rehabites, who obey the rule of their father; a humiliating example for Judah).

Note that the historical accounts were not written in chronological order; e.g. 34 took place in the time of Zedekiah and 35 in the time of Jehoiakim. Moreover, concerning the historical accounts, we can mention 36 (in 605 BC, Jehoiakim burns the scroll with Jeremiah's prophecies); 37 (Jeremiah accused of treason and imprisoned under king Zedekiah); 38 (murder attack on the prophet: thrown into a pit with mud; taken out of it by the Ethiopian Ebed-Melech); 39 (Jerusalem taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and Jeremiah set free); 40, 41 (Gedaliah, the governor who had been appointed by Babylon, killed at Mizpah by a certain Ishmael); 42, 43 (against his will, Jeremiah has to go to Egypt, along with the fleeing people); 44 (serious reproof from the prophet to the people because they have resumed the worship of the "queen of heaven"; was the prophet stoned at the end of this conversation?); 45 (prophecy to Baruch, Jeremiah's faithful secretary, who had already sided with him in 605; also take note of vs. 5).

- C) **46-51: Prophecies against several nations**
Comp. Isaiah 13-23. Prophecies against Egypt, the Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Arabia, Elam and Babylon. In particular take note of the well-known words about Moab in 48:11.
- D) **52:** The final chapter is very much like 2 Kings 25 and describes the last time of king Zedekiah and the destruction of Jerusalem, 586 BC.

Memorize the following texts:

1:10; 3:14; 9:1; 31:31-33.

These are only a few of the texts which are typical of Jeremiah's prophecies.

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

One of the five Megillot (see information about Ruth).

The Israelites were accustomed to sing a lamentation about a dead person.

For example, consider Gen. 50:10, 2 Sam. 1:17-27 (David's well-known lamentation about Saul and Jonathan), Jer. 9:17-21; for the New Testament, Matt. 9:23 and 11:17.

Some people made lamenting their profession – sometimes men, usually women.

The lamentations had a unified form: verses, divided into two halves, the first one longer than the second one; this causes a cadence that makes one sad.

We see the same in the book of Lamentations.

It contains *five* lamentations, written on the occasion of the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

In Hebrew the title of the book is “Ekha” (i.e. Ah, how”), the first word of the first, second and fourth songs.

The “dead person” who is lamented is the city of Jerusalem.

According to the tradition, Jeremiah is the author of Lamentations; in the original heading of the Hebrew manuscripts, Jeremiah is not mentioned (it only says “ekha”), but it is mentioned in the Septuagint.

The first four songs are so-called acrostics, alphabetic songs.

Memorize: 3:21-23.

EZEKIEL

This prophet laboured among the captives in Babylon, in Tel-abib, near the River Chebar (3:15).

Meaning of his name: “God is (or makes) strong”.

Son of Buzi, a priest. Taken captive in 597 BC with Jehoiachin (see information about the kings of Judah). His ministry can be dated from 592-570 BC. So Ezekiel was a later contemporary of Jeremiah. His calling is, in particular, to convince the captives in Babylon that the Lord will restore His people out of them, and also to warn against the ungrounded confidence that Jerusalem will be spared.

A very important moment is described 33:21, where an escaped Jew brings the tidings of Jerusalem’s destruction to Ezekiel.

After this, the tenor of the book radically changes from announcements of judgment to prophecies of salvation.

We sharply reject the opinion of many modern exegetes, who explain texts like 2:2, 3:15, 4:4-8, etc. by stating that the prophet suffered from epilepsy. This exegesis changes the prophet into a patient, and his prophecies into hallucinations, and denies the overwhelming impression that a revelation of the LORD makes upon a “son of man”, an impression that we find with many other men of God.

General outline:

A) 1-24: Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry before the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC).

The impressive calling vision in ch. 1; animals, wheels, the glory of the LORD.

Take note of the faces of the animals: human being, lion, ox and eagle.

The actual calling in 2, 3: (read carefully): the prophet has to eat a scroll with lamentations etc. Take note of vs. 2:6 and 3:9.

Very typical is the expression “son of man”, which shows the great distance between God and man.

In 4 and 5 we read about four symbolic actions which represent the destruction of Jerusalem (in particular note the prolonged lying on the left side and the right side).

In chapters 8-11, we find the so-called “temple vision”.

The Spirit of the Lord takes the prophet, in a visionary condition, to the temple of Jerusalem, and he sees the abominations that take place there.

He sees the seventy elders of Israel worshipping images of animals in the temple, and women who mourn the Tammuz, the heathen deity of corn, who would always become alive in spring and die in summer.

In 9, future judgment is described (the Man clothed in linen; read it carefully).

Moreover, in chapters 12-24 we mainly find continual announcements of judgment against Jerusalem and Judah. Take special note of 14 (Noah, Daniel and Job would not be able to save); 16 (unfaithful Jerusalem portrayed like an adulterous woman, more sinful than her “sisters” Samaria and Sodom); 18 (the sinner is personally responsible for his deeds, comp. vs. 2 to Jer. 31:29, 30); 23 (the two adulterous sisters, Ohola= Samaria and Oholiba= Jerusalem). These chapters contain beautiful parables. For example, look at 17, where Babylon and Egypt are described as two large eagles, soaring above a cedar of Lebanon (David’s royal house). 24:15-27 is very moving, where Ezekiel, after the sudden death of his wife, is forbidden to mourn “the desire of his eyes”, to instruct his people. The prophet’s unconditional submission to the service of the Lord is obvious here.

B) 25-32: Ezekiel’s prophecies against the nations.

Comp. Isaiah 13-23 and Jer. 46-51.

There are prophecies about Ammon, Moab, Edom, the Philistines, Tyrus (take note of the lamentation in 27), the king of Tyrus, Sidon and Egypt. In 32 we read a lamentation about Pharaoh. The following chapters also belong to this part: 35 (prophecy against Edom) and 38 and 39 (prophecy against Gog in the land of Magog, the prince of Meshech and Tubal. Here the last attack of the nations against Israel is described, and their final destruction by the Lord).

C) 33-48: Ezekiel’s prophecies after the destruction of Jerusalem.

In these chapters, we mainly find a message of salvation. The restoration of the people of the LORD is promised. Take note of 33:21, where the change begins.

In 34, the LORD, as the faithful Shepherd, promises to for His scattered sheep, and to seek them out, in contrast to the “shepherds” of Israel, who feed themselves; take note of the Messianic prophecy in 34:23-31. In 36 Israel’s return to the destroyed land is promised; take note of the words which are so typical for this book: “I do it not for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake.”

In 37 we find the well-known vision concerning the revival of the dead people. Chapter 40-48 form the vision of the new temple, the new life in the Promised Land and the restoration of the theocracy.

Take special note of the return of the kabod JAHWEH, the glory of the LORD, which Ezekiel had seen leave the old temple in 9 and 10 (43:4); the honour given to the sons of Zadok and the rebuke, given to the Levites (44), and finally the life-giving brook, which flows from the new temple (47). The new name that the new city will have is very meaningful: “The LORD is there” (48:35).

Memorize several texts which are typical of the book: 3:17; 33:11; 34:31; 36:26, 27.

DANIEL

The name of this prophet means: “God is my Judge”.

He was among those who were taken captive in the third year of Jehoiakim, so he was taken to Babylon before Ezekiel. His prophetic ministry took place during the Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar (we do not read about the kings who reigned between these two kings), during the Mede Darius and during the reign of Cyrus, the Persian. For dating the reigns of these kings, see the summary of the kings of Ashur, Babylonia and Persia after the information about the book of Esther.

This book occupies a remarkable place in the Hebrew canon: between the Ketuvim, the Writings; see the comments after the information about Malachi.

Modern exegetes strongly doubt the historical credibility of the book. It is dated in 164 BC, in the time of the Maccabees. The arguments that are used to defend this can only be thoroughly discussed with special canonicity, not in this booklet with Scripture facts.

Yet we would point out here that these arguments are not valid at all, and would mention the following:

- a) It is said that the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar (4) is not mentioned in the Babylonian sources which are known to us. However, this argument has very little value, because, both psychologically and politically, this silence can much better be explained than no silence about it.
- b) They often point at the person of Darius the Mede. No other information is known about him from sources outside the Bible. Something is known, however, about Darius Hystaspes, a Persian (see the summary of the kings of Persia above, after Esther). He cannot possibly be the same as the Mede. The Persian reigned from 511-485 BC, the Mede was active around 538 BC. When finding a solution we follow the exegetes who consider Darius the Mede to be the same person as Gobryas, the general of king Cyrus, who led the Persian army when Babylon was conquered. We believe that king Cyrus, after the death of Belshazzar, appointed this Gobryas as supervisor or governor of Babylon, to avoid violating the national pride of Babylon too much (take note of the fact that it says that Darius the Mede *received* the kingdom, 5:31). We would sharply reject the opinion of newer exegetes that they author in the Maccabean time called Darius a Mede out of historical inaccuracy, and dated him incorrectly.
- c) Most predictions, concerning the prophetic part of the book, are explained as so-called *vaticinia ex eventu*. A vaticinium ex eventu (literally prophecy from the event), in Scripture interpretation, refers to a description of events which have already taken place, written in the form of a prediction. It is believed that in particular chapters 10-12 with their detailed predictions concerning the time of Antiochus Epiphanes were written after those days, which is why they could be so detailed. It is not necessary to say that this reasoning makes the whole book a falsification, and this seriously undermines the authority of divine inspiration and the nature of prophecy.

Concerning the language in which the book was written, we should mention the remarkable fact that the text from 2:4-7:28 was written in Aramaic.

General outline:

A) 1-6: Historical part

1. Daniel and his friends at Nebuchadnezzar's court. Daniel:
Daniel: Belteshazzar; Hananiah: Shadrach; Mishael: Meshach; Aariah:
Abednego.

2. Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the statue with the golden head. The four kingdom mean here are almost certainly (just like in ch. 7) the Babylonian Empire, the Median-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire. The stone refers to the Kingdom of God.
3. The three young men in the fiery furnace.
4. The dream and insanity of Nebuchadnezzar.
5. The writing on the wall; the death of Belshazzar. In these days, Daniel apparently no longer has his prominent position at the court.
6. Daniel in the lion's den.

Make sure you are able to relate the content of the first six chapters.

B) 7-12: Prophetic part

7. The dream vision of the four animals in the first year of Belshazzar (ca. 550 BC; this year must be explained in such a way, that the actual power during the reign of Nabonedus was in the hand of his son Belshazzar).
The prophet subsequently sees a lion, a bear, a leopard and a hard-to-describe monster with ten horns, arising from the sea of the nations. One little horn arises amidst the others.
After the divine judgment (take note of vs. 9, 10, "the Ancient of Days"), the Kingdom is given to one, like the Son of man, and to the saints of the Most high. For the meaning of the animals, see at ch. 2.
8. The vision of the ram and the goat, in the third year of Belshazzar. The ram with the two horns: the Medes and the Persians. The goat with one large horn: Alexander the Great. The ram is trodden underfoot by the goat. (From the four horns of the goat (= the division of Alexander's empire into four parts), another horn arises: Antiochus Epiphanus, who shows signs of the antichrist and oppresses Israel. The angel Gabriel explains this vision.
9. Daniel's prayer for his people. The Messianic prophecy of the seventy weeks, vs. 24-27. Dating of this prayer: the first year of Darius.
- 10-12. In the third year of Cyrus, the prophet sees a vision at the Hiddekel (Tigris). The Man, clothed in linen. We also read about the angel Michael. In these chapters, we also find a prediction of the war between the king of the south (the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt) and the king of the North (the Seleucids of Syria). In 12, Daniels approaching death and rest are announced.

Memorize 12:2,3.

HOSEA

With this prophet, we have come to discuss the so-called "*Dodekapropheton*", the books of the twelve Minor Prophets, which the Jews usually wrote together on one scroll.

Of course the name minor in "minor prophets" does not refer to their meaning but to the length of their book.

They do not appear in a chronological *order*: e.g. Amos prophesied before Hosea. The oldest of the Minor Prophets are Hosea, Amos and Micah; Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi prophesied after the captivity. Some are from Israel (Hosea, Jonah), but most are from Judea.

The prophet Hosea laboured amongst the kingdom of the ten tribes. The son of Nun and the last king of Israel were also called Hosea (deliverance?). See in ch. 1:1 the time when he prophesied; it is remarkable that only one king of the northern kingdom is mentioned, whereas several kings from Judah are mentioned.

His ministry began in the last days of Jeroboam II, ca. 750 BC. It is not certain, but probable, that he lived to see the fall of Samaria (722 BC). Other contemporary: Amos. Younger contemporaries: Isaiah and Micah.

The predominating notion in Hosea's preaching is the LORD's love for an unfaithful and infidel people. Again and again the approaching judgment of God is preached, in particular because of the worship of Baal and the calves, and because of the religious degeneration of the priests. Yet we also repeatedly hear of God's one-sided compassion.

General outline:

- A) 1-3: The marriage between the LORD and Israel, symbolised by the marriage between Hosea and Gomer.
It is doubtful whether chapter 3 also speaks of Gomer. Gomer's unfaithfulness symbolises Israel's unfaithfulness. Three children: Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah (the unpitied) and Lo-ammi ("not My people"). In chapter 2 the alternation between the preaching of judgment and promise is very clear.
- B) 4-14: Prophetic addresses. It is difficult to divide these chapters into smaller parts. They are probably chronologically ordered. We have to date chapters 4 and 5 shortly after the death of king Zecariah, 6-11, during the time of Pekah and Hoshea, 12-14 during the time of Hoshea. Locations that you should take note of: 4:6; 6:1-3; 12:4-6 (about Jacob, the patriarch).

Although we do not wish to enter the area of detailed exegesis too much, we will briefly discuss the questions around *Hosea's marriage to Gomer*. The question is how the accounts of chapter 1 (and 3) should be interpreted. There are three different explanations:

a) the realistic interpretation

In this view, the marriage between Hosea belonged to the area of sensory perceptible reality.

The *strongly*-realistic interpretation states that Hosea, on God's command, married an adulterous woman (or with a different exegesis) a woman about whom the Lord foretold that she would be unfaithful to him.

The *free*-realistic or *biographic* interpretation assumes that it started with a normal marriage, but that the prophet discovered Gomer's unfaithfulness during his marriage, and then saw his marriage in a broader picture, and later interpreted his marriage as concluded on God's command. It needs no explanation that, from a Scripture-faithful perspective, the biographic interpretation must be rejected, considering ch. 1:2. The strongly-realistic interpretation seems to have a strong case. It reminds us of other prophets, who also had to

perform symbolic actions on God's command, which were hard to perform; e.g. Jer. 16:2 and Ez. 24:15.

Yet one may wonder whether it is really in accordance with the mind of the Holy Spirit, to explain chapter 1 in such a way the Hosea had to marry a harlot. Doesn't such a marriage violate the holiness of God's law? Besides this ethical objection, there are several exegetical objections, which we will not discuss here.

Calvin and the annotators to the Dutch Authorized Version rejected the realistic interpretation.

b) The figurative or allegorical interpretation

In this view, 1 and 3 are symbolic stories, parables or allegories. True, such stories with symbolical meaning are often found in God's Word (e.g.) the parables, spoken by the Lord Jesus, and Scriptures like 2 Sam. 12:1-4, Is. 5:1-7, etc.. Important questions, however, are whether this does not lead to a distorted exegesis and whether this really does justice to the veracity of ch. 1:2.

c) The visionary interpretation

In this view (in contrast to b), Hosea did actually experience the things described in chapters 1 and 3, but not in a sensory perceptible reality, but in an idealistic reality. These are believed to be visions, which are not announced as such; for a parallel, see for example Jer. 25: 15-17. Indeed, the ethical objection of a) loses much of its power in this view; also, there are a little less exegetical difficulties than in b). However, the last word has not been spoken about it; of there is any place in exegesis where our knowledge turns out to be in part, it is here.

Memorize: 2:13, 14; 6:1-3; 14:6.

JOEL

Joel ("The LORD is God"), the son of Pethuel, probably prophesied in Judah and Jerusalem (the temple occupies an important place in his book). It is very difficult to determine the *time* of his ministry. The estimates of theologians vary between the ninth and the fourth centuries before Christ. Modern exegetes often think the time of his ministry is after the captivity, based on texts like ch. 3:2, 17; in the past, it was often believed to be in the years when the high priest Jehoiada governed the land on behalf of young Joash, partly based on the fact that the book does not mention a king. We are happy to join the latter opinion. I will list several arguments for dating it *after* the captivity, which are not decisive, but that you should know:

- a) The texts ch. 3:2 and 17 which have already been mentioned, which are interpreted as having reference to the events of the year 586 BC;
- b) The fact that the book does not mention a king, but that it does mention "elders" (1:14).
- c) The fact that Judah is called Israel, which may mean that the ten tribes no longer existed;
- d) 3:6 speaks of children of Judah, which were sold to the Grecians, which is hard to imagine before the captivity.

An important argument for the dating that we follow – in the days of Joash – is the early position in the Dodekapropheton, although the order of the Minor Prophets is not *strictly* chronological.

General outline:

A) 1:1-2:17:

A terrible *plague of locusts*, as an omen of the “Day of the LORD”. The main question that exegesis is here confronted with, is: is this a description of a real plague of locusts, or does the prophet mean to announce the invasion of the land by hostile armies, and is this thus a metaphor?

We tend to follow the view that Joel means to describe a real plague of locusts, while the description begins to show apocalyptic aspects, with respect to the end times, and eventually leads to the preaching of the approaching day of the LORD, ch. 2:1-2.

The people are powerfully called to wholehearted *humiliation*, ch. 2:12-13.

B) 2:18-3:21:

Promises of salvation. In ch. 2:18, the book suddenly changes from judgment to the preaching of grace. A very important part is the prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as one of the signs that will precede the coming of the day of the LORD, ch. 2:28-32. In chapter 3 the “Day of the LORD” is announced again, this time as a day of judgement of the nations and of the exaltation of Israel, comp. ch. 3:1-2.

Memorize: 2:13.

AMOS

The prophet Amos the only person with this name in the Holy Scriptures (the name of Isaiah’s father is spelled very differently in Hebrew). He was a shepherd, see ch. 1:1 and 7:14. He came from the Judean place of Tekoah, but prophesied in the northern kingdom. The fact that he was familiar with living outdoors is clear from texts such as ch. 2:13; 3:4; 9:9 and others. Read these verses and find other examples yourself. It is surprising how much knowledge Amos appears to have of sacred and general history.

For example, take note of ch. 3:1, 5:26, 9:7. His language is very visual and it reveals his stylistic gifts; read the number proverbs from ch. 1:3-2:6.

The *time* of his ministry is the time of Jeroboam II. So he is a contemporary of Hosea, but, since the latter also prophesied under successors of Jeroboam II, he is an older contemporary. Amos prophesied two years before the earthquake, ch. 1:1, comp. Zech. 14:5. Concerning the *time circumstances*: the reign of Jeroboam II was characterized by great wealth (see e.g. 3:15; 5:11; in particular 6:4-6).

Sad additional phenomenon: the painful contrast between rich and poor (see 4:1; 8:4-6). It is remarkable that the great wealth in Jeroboam’s days was accompanied by extensive religiosity; however, it was a religiosity that took place in Dan, Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba: so self-willed religion, a degenerate, adulterous worship of nature; see ch. 5:5; 5:22, 23; 8:5. Amos had to preach in this sensual, degenerate and idolatrous atmosphere.

General outline:

A) 1-2: **Preaching of judgment to the nations**

Comp. Is. 13-23; Jer. 46-51; Ez. 25-32.

The following nations are addressed: the Syrians, the Philistines, Tyrus, Edom, Ammon, Moab; finally (very remarkably) Judah and Israel. The prophecy against the northern kingdom is the most extensive one.

B) 3-6: Announcement of judgment to Israel

Three complaints about the religious, social and moral degeneration of the northern kingdom. Each of the three speeches begins with the words: "Hear this word" (3:1; 4:1; 5:1).

C) 7-9: Five visions

These chapters give us an insight into the prophet's closet. He sees consecutively:

- an invasion of locusts;
- fire;
- a plumb line in the hand of the Lord;
- a basket of summer fruit;
- the Lord, standing upon the altar.

After the first two visions, we read about the prophet's intercession, which is accepted by the Lord; we do not read this anymore after the last three visions. At the end of chapter 9, the preaching of judgment changes into announcement of salvation, only for the house of David, not for the house of Jeroboam.

We should also take note of Amos' conflict, after his third vision, with Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, 7:10-17. Take special note of vs. 14-15.

OBADIAH

The name of the shortest of these Scripture prophets means: "servant of the LORD". It contains a prophecy of the coming punishment against Edom. This people, had seriously misbehaved during a capture of the city of Jerusalem.

In order to determine the right *dating* of the book, the following question is very important: which capture of Jerusalem is meant here? There are two realistic possibilities: either the capture by the Philistines and Arabs in the time of king Jehoram of Judah (comp. 2 Chron. 21:16-17), or the well-known capture by Nebuchadnezzar in 586. So here we have a similar problem as with the prophet Joel. Also here we think an early dating (thus during the reign of Jehoram) is very much defensible, among other reasons because Jeremiah seems to quote from Obadiah in chapter 49, the first verses.

Concerning the *content* of the book, the first part describes Edom in his pride, his approaching downfall and his great sin, that he has committed against Judah, comp. also Psalm 137:7, Lamentations 4:21-22 and Ezekiel 35:5; in the second part (vs. 16-21) Edom's downfall is seen in the light of the great world judgment, the "day of the LORD".

JONAH

This prophet is also known to us from 2 Kings 14:25, where he is called the son of Amittai from Gathhepher.

He predicted the restoration of Israel's boundaries, a restoration that would take place during the reign of Jeroboam II. So it is clear that Jonah did not prophesy later than, and probably during the reign of this king. So probably he was a contemporary of Amos and

Hosea. The book has a very different character from the other Minor Prophets. Here there are no records of Jonah's prophecies, but a number of accounts surrounding his person; it may be compared to the historical accounts from 1 and 2 Kings around Elijah and Elisha. We reject the allegorical interpretation of the book (in this view, Jonah symbolises the people of Israel in his disloyalty to the calling with respect to the Gentile, in his captivity – the fish – and in his return from it), and consider the book a description of historical events surrounding the character of Jonah – however miraculous they were. The main content and meaning of the book is, in my opinion, the preaching of the unfathomable *long-suffering of God*, in sharp contrast to the behaviour of His prophet, a long-suffering which also extends to the *Gentiles*.

You should know the historical accounts of the book in detail; read the prayer (2) carefully. One of the core words in the book is the word "prepare": God prepares (ordains) a fish, a gourd, a worm and an east wind. The word also points to the sovereign dealings of God with respect to His servant. Also take note of the question that the book closes with, a question which shows that God is even concerned about little children and about cattle, and which is not answered by Jonah. Considering the political background, you should bear in mind that Assyria (capital city: Nineveh) had already destroyed Samaria in 722.

MICAH

We should not confuse this prophet with Micaiah the son of Imlah (1 Kings 22:8); the Scripture prophet did not live in the time of Ahab, but much later, in the time of *Jotham*, *Ahaz* and *Hezekiah*. His prophesying during this last kingdom is confirmed by Jer. 26:18. We can conclude from ch. 1:1 that Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah (Judah) and of Hosea (Israel). Once again refer to the information about these prophets, as well as what is written about the kings concerned.

Micah lived in a time of crumbling wealth, in which the shadows of Tiglath-Pileser still fall upon Israel and Judah. He is called "Micah the Morastite"; this means that he came from Moreshethgath, a little village near Gath, comp. ch. 1:14.

Just like Amos, and in contrast to Isaiah, he came from the countryside. In contrast to Amos, he laboured in Judah. Concerning the character of the book, we can say that it is a continual alternation of confession, prayer, sin, rebuke for sins and faithful expectation. Darkness and continually light alternate – sometimes in the same chapter. It is very hard to determine in which time each chapter was written because (different from e.g. Jeremiah) there are no time references.

General outline:

- A) **1-2:** **Call to all nations**, to witness the judgment that will be carried out on Samaria and Jerusalem. This first part ends with the promise of salvation in ch. 2:12, 13.
- B) **3-5:** **Serious complaints against princes, prophets and priests.**
Take special note of ch. 3:12; comp. Jer. 26:18. In 4 we read of Zion's rich future (comp. vs. 1-5 to Isaiah – contemporary ch. 2:2-4). The prophecy of ch. 4:9-10 (Babylon) is followed by the prediction concerning the delivering Ruler from Bethlehem in chapter 5.
- C) **6-7:** In 6 we read about "the LORD's controversy with His people" (comp. vs. 3-5; see the people's question in vs. 6, 7 and the LORD's answer in vs. 8. After renewed complaints about sin, also this part ends with a promise of salvation, 7:8-20.

Take special note of 7:18, where we find an allusion to the name of the prophet (Micah, in its full form Micaiah, means: who is like unto the LORD?) It should also be mentioned that each of the three parts starts with the word "Hear".

Memorize: 5:1; 6:8.

NAHUM

Nahum's name ("Comfort") has the same Hebrew root as e.g. the names of Menahem and Nehemiah. The addition "Elkoshite" indicates that he came from Elkosh, a town the location of which is unknown to us. There are three hypotheses: either it was close to Nineveh (very improbable) or it was in Galilee (was it perhaps the village which was later called Kfar Nahum = Nahum's village = Capernaum?), or it was in the vicinity of Maresha (then Nahum is a Judean and came from the same area as Micah).

The book was written between 663 BC (when No Amon = Thebe was destroyed, the old residence of the Pharaohs; this fact is mentioned in 3:8; the destroyer was the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal) and 612 BC (the year of the destruction of Nineveh which was predicted by Nahum). It seems best to date Nahum's book closer to the first year than to the last, so rather during the reign of Manasseh (when Nineveh was still an important power), than during the reign of Josiah. Concerning the *content* of the book: in chapter 1 we read an (alphabetic) hymn about the avenging righteousness of the LORD with respect to His enemies, and about His goodness towards those who trust in Him. In chapter 2 we find a vivid picture of Nineveh's approaching downfall. In chapter 3 Nineveh's sins are criticized and its fall is prophesied once again.

Memorize: 1:3.

HABAKKUK

His name probably means "embraced". Just like Nahum and Zephaniah, Habakkuk is a contemporary of Jeremiah. A characteristic aspect of the book is the announcement of the "Chaldees" in their advance as conquerors of Judea. This people refers to the army of the Neo-Babylonian empire of Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar and their successors.

The Chaldees were the ones who destroyed the city and temple of Jerusalem. Habakkuk's prophecy dates from this time, which immediately precedes the first coming of the Chaldeans in the land of Judah. Therefore it seems most suitable to think of the time of *Jehoiakim*, who reigned from 608-597 BC. The contents of the book: chapter 1 describes to us the amazing (v. 5) advance of the Chaldees, who will perform the punishment. However, in chapter 2 it becomes clear that there will be a time when the Chaldeans will be punished by God because of their terrible actions; we hear a five-fold "woe". In chapter 3 we read Habakkuk's prayer, which speaks of trust in God, Who delivers His own people in the way of His judgments.

Memorize: 2:4b; 3:17,18.

ZEPHANIAH

The quite elaborate genealogy is remarkable (1:1); it is quite controversial whether the forefather Hezekiah is the same as the well-known king; if he is, the prophet is of royal blood. The prophet's ministry began in ca. 630 BC, in the days of Josiah, and most probably during the first years of his reign. So he is a (somewhat older) contemporary of Jeremiah. Zephaniah's preaching is dominated by the coming of the "day of the LORD", the coming day of world judgment.

Without any introduction, chapter 1 starts with the threat of judgement against Judah and Jerusalem. They day of the LORD will be a day of wrath.

In chapter 2 the day of the LORD is in particular described as coming against several nations: Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, etc. In chapter 3, after a short summary of the first two chapters, we read a promise of salvation for the nations and for the remnant of Judah.

Memorize: 3:9, 12.

HAGGAI

In the prophecies of Jeremiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah we have been able to read about the conditions during the last kings of Judah before the captivity; the situation *during* the captivity was described to us in the books of Ezekiel and Daniel; the last three prophets from the Dodekapropheton give us some insight into the life of those who returned *after* 539 BC.

In order to understand Haggai and Zechariah, we should remember that the people who had returned under the direction of Zerubbabel, the prince (descendant of Jehoiachin) and *Joshua*, the high priest, had started to rebuild the temple, which had been halted after the burnt offering altar had been built and the cornerstone had been laid, because of the intrigues of the Samaritans (Ezra 3 and 4).

This work was not resumed for years, until the Lord, in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, in 520 BC (see the summary of kings after the information of the book of Esther) raised up two prophets in order to urge the people to resume the rebuilding of the temple. These two are Haggai and Zechariah.

We know very little about Haggai's person: even his father and place of birth are not mentioned.

Concerning the *contents* of his book: it consists of *four* prophetic messages, that Haggai preached within a time frame of four months (note their careful dating) by the Lord's inspiration.

They have one purpose: rebuilding the temple. In the first prophecy, the people are rebuked because they build their own houses, but leave the temple in ruins, and because of this sin the Lord has withheld His blessing in many things. In the second prophecy, the dispirited people are assured that the glory of the last house will be greater than the glory of the first one. In the third prophecy, the people learn by two priestly decisions that the unclean makes more unclean than that which is holy sanctifies (2:11-20) (read carefully). The fourth prophecy contains a promise for Zerubbabel, the prince.

Memorize: 2:10.

ZECHARIAH

Among the eighteen bearers of this name (“the LORD has remembered”) that we know from the Holy Scriptures, this prophet was a contemporary of Haggai. He descended from a family of priests (comp. Jeremiah and Ezekiel). Name of his father: Berechiah (comp. Isaiah 8:2, where of course a different person is meant). Zechariah begins his ministry in 520 BC, just like Haggai in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, but two months later than Haggai’s first prophecy. It is assumed that he was still a young man when he was called in 520 BC. In Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 it is confirmed that he laboured for the building of the temple, together with Haggai.

General outline:

A) 1-6: The eight night visions.

Carefully dated, 1:7. After a warning not to be like their fathers who were punished by God, Zechariah sees during the night:

- a man riding on a red horse among the myrtle trees, 1:7-17;
- four horns and four carpenters, 1:18-21;
- the man with the measuring line, 2;
- the high priest Joshua with filthy garments, 3;
- the golden candlestick and the two olive trees, 4;
- the flying roll, 5:1-4;
- the woman in the ephaph, 5:5-11;
- the four chariots, 6:1-8.

The last verses of chapter 6 contain the history of the crowns which were made for the high priest Joshua and later kept in the temple.

Read these night visions carefully; take special note of the prophecies concerning the “Branch”, 3:8 and 6:12.

B) 7-8: The question concerning fasting.

Dated in the fourth year of Darius’ reign. Sarezar and Regem-melech ask the following question to the priests and prophets of Jerusalem: now that the city and temple are rebuilt, is it still necessary to observe the days of fasting in the fifth month – that are a reminder of the destruction of the city and temple in 586 BC? Zechariah’s answer: not the Lord, but they themselves had committed themselves to that fasting; practising righteousness is better than fasting; the time of chastising is over; rich blessings of the LORD will come upon Jerusalem; the days of fasting will be changed into festivals.

C) 9-14: Prophecies about the Messianic times.

These six chapters are sometimes referred to as the “*Deutero-Zechariah*” by the majority of modern exegetes, as a way to suggest that the author was *not* Zechariah, but a later writer, or an earlier writer – an hypothesis which was defended in the past.

The main argument against Zechariah’s authorship: the completely different political and historical background than in chapters 1-8.

For example, Zerubbabel and Joshua are not mentioned anymore, it speaks about the Greek, etc. Based on these considerations, guesses were made about its authorship, which vary from the time of Jeremiah (comp. Matth. 27:9) or even earlier, to the days of the Maccabees. Just like the hypothesis of Deutero-Isaiah, this question belongs to the area of special canonicity, and cannot be discussed here in detail; let it only be said that the arguments in favour of

“Deutero-Zechariah” are absolutely unconvincing and that these chapters can be well-explained if we assume that they were indeed written by Zechariah, but during a much later stage of his life than chapters 1-8, e.g. around 480 BC. Remember that he was called as a young man. Concerning the contents of these chapters, they speak of God’s judgment upon several nations (9), of Israel’s rich future (10), of a symbolic action of the prophet, in which he has to feed the flock of slaughter with the staves Beauty and Bands (11), of the attack of the nations on Jerusalem and the deliverance of the LORD (12), of putting away sin, idols and false prophets in the time of salvation (13), of the coming of the “day of the LORD” and Jerusalem’s deliverance (14). These chapters contain many difficulties for exegesis.

Memorize: 3:2; 4:6b; 12:10; 13:1,7.

MALACHI

The name of this prophet means “My angel (or messenger)”; people have also thought of the meaning “Angel (messenger) of the LORD”. In ch. 3:1 we find a clear allusion to his name.

He is a penitential preacher, who points out in particular *two* sins to his people:

- a) The unworthy way in which the worship – in particular by the priests – is carried out;
- b) The easy divorcing from their own, Jewish wives, who are replaced by Gentile women.

Read this book carefully and study the preaching against the above-mentioned sins.

The first two chapters are characterized by this penitential preaching; the prophet sharply contrasts the seriousness of Israel’s sins to the background of the Lord’s electing love, 1:2-5. The last two chapters announce the coming “day of the LORD”. A remarkable prophecy is the prophecy of the coming of “Elijah”, which will precede the day of the LORD, ch. 4:5,6; also the so-called “dialectic speech”, the stylistic form of the dialogue, comp. ch. 1:2, 6 and 7. Concerning the *time* of prophesying, it seems best, considering the contents of the book, to date Malachi in the time of Nehemiah, whose labour show much similarity with the prophet’s message; see e.g. Neh. 13.

Memorize: 3:1; 4:2.

SEVERAL NOTES ABOUT THE HEBREW CANON

At the end of these Scripture facts concerning the Old Testament, we have to point out that the *order* in which the books of the Bible are placed in the Dutch and English authorized versions does not represent the original order which the Hebrew canon presents us.

The Jews, after all, refer to the Old Testament canon by the names of the three parts in which the Holy Scriptures can be divided: the *Law*, the *Prophets* and the *Writings*.

They call the Old Testament the Tanakh, according to the Hebrew names of the three parts Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets) and Ketuvim (Writings). Indications that also the Lord Jesus used this division into three parts during His ministry, are found in e.g. Luke 24:44 (here the third group is referred to as the Psalms, derived from one of the books that belong to the Ketuvim).

Described in more detail, the Hebrew canon looks as follows:

I TORAH

These are the five books of Moses, in Hebrew called by their initial words, in our Bible by names derived from Greek or Latin, from the Septuagint and the Vulgate. A well-known Greek name for these books is the "pentateuchos biblos" = five-volume book; the well-known term *Pentateuch* was derived from this.

II NEVI'IM

The "Prophets", a collection of different books, which consists of two parts:

- a) the "early prophets": Joshua, Judges, Samuel (2 books in our Bible) and Kings (two books in our Bible);
- b) the "later prophets";
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Dodekapropheton.

III KETUVIM

The "Writings" which can be divided into three groups:

- a) The books of Psalms, Job and Proverbs;
- b) The five Megillot or Festive Scrolls (see the information about the books of Ruth);
- c) The books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles (two books in our Bible; in the Septuagint, the latter book is called the Paralipomenon, i.e. omitted).

In the Dutch and English authorized versions, the books have been ordered according to a different principle, namely in the order of the Septuagint, on the basis of their historical, poetic or prophetic character.