



Biblical Foundations

Course I - Bible Basics

From History to Daily Use

Week 7 – Reading Biblical Genres
Law, Prophecy, Gospel/Acts

Objective:

- To understand the various types of writing in the Bible (genres).
- To begin to understand the guidelines that inform how we read each of those genres.

Book(s) of the Law

- Torah
- Pentateuch
- The Book of Moses

Parts of the Law:

Moral

Ceremonial

Civil/Judicial

5 Old Testament Books

Genesis (Narrative, no law)

Exodus (From Chapter 20)

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy (Discourses of Law)

Behind the Law

Author

Covenant God of
Abraham, Isaac,
and Jacob

I AM

(Moses as scribe)

Audience

Slaves experiencing
freedom for the first
time

From a polytheistic
and superstitious
culture

Only know ruthless
and fruitless toil

Context

Sinai – first stop after
the Red Sea
crossing

Later desert waiting

Purposes of the Law

Relational

- Who is God?
- Who are they?

Covenantal

- Love God
- Love others

Establish Holiness

- Separate them from death, disease, and moral corruption (Idolatry)
- Define culture of justice and equality
- Create a dwelling place for God with His people

- **Holy**: *Set apart* from that which is common or profane
- Law exposes the inability of mankind to be faithful to God's Holy Covenant

Law establishes the ideals of:

- Holiness
- Justice
- Sacrifice
- Sacred Times

...and prescribes how those ideals should be applied in the culture of Ancient Israel

A photograph of two gold wedding rings resting on a dark, textured fabric surface. The rings are positioned in the center of the frame, with one slightly behind the other. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of dark purple and blue.

GOD:
I will!

ISRAEL:
We will too!

The Law

A covenant of reciprocal loving fidelity.

Covenant: A binding contract between **two parties** with obligations on both sides.
(God and the NATION OF ISRAEL... not the individual!)

Blessings

- The natural results of living a holy life in faithful fellowship with God
- AND
- The specific and particular responses from God toward His faithful people BEFORE MESSIAH

Cursings

- The natural consequences of living in opposition to God
- AND
- The specific and particular responses of God toward the rebellious which are **meant to bring them back into fellowship with Him BEFORE MESSIAH**

Prose/ Discourse



- **Mini speeches** arranged as an argument or presentation of facts to persuade the listener by reason and logic to act in a certain way.

First Rule to Reading Law:

It's not our
Covenant!



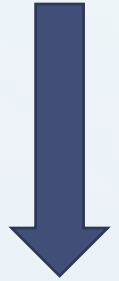
Read Law to Understand:

- God
- The kind of Holy relationship God wants to have with His people.
- The kind of Holy relationship God wants His people to have with each other.
- The kind of Holy relationship God wants His people to have with the world around them.
- Your inability to live in Holy relationship without a Savior.
- How God is providing that Savior and moving His plan forward.

Torah ‹‹‹ Prophecy ››› Jesus

Message from God to a **specific and limited audience**, at a **specific and limited time**,
to elicit a **specific response** (repent and prepare for **Messiah**)
and **to demonstrate that He alone is God.**

Nature of Prophecy:



- From God (not made up from the Prophet's own imagination)
- Often predictive (FORTHtelling more than FOREtelling)



- Always corrective (pointing back to the Law)



- Usually with an accompanying message of comfort and promise (pointing forward to Messiah)



Parts within Prophecy

Vision

- A supernatural revelation of God given to a person in the form of a dream or trance-like state
- Usually to reveal the glory of God or explain the meaning of past or future events.

Oracle

- A **prophetic** word from God ("The word of the Lord came to...") delivered by His chosen prophet.
- Often contain a "catalogue" (woes).

Discourse

- A sermon: self-contained unit of information with one coherent message.
- Often poetic.
- May present a "Lawsuit".

Chronology of the Writing Prophets

Pre-Exilic (Assyrian)

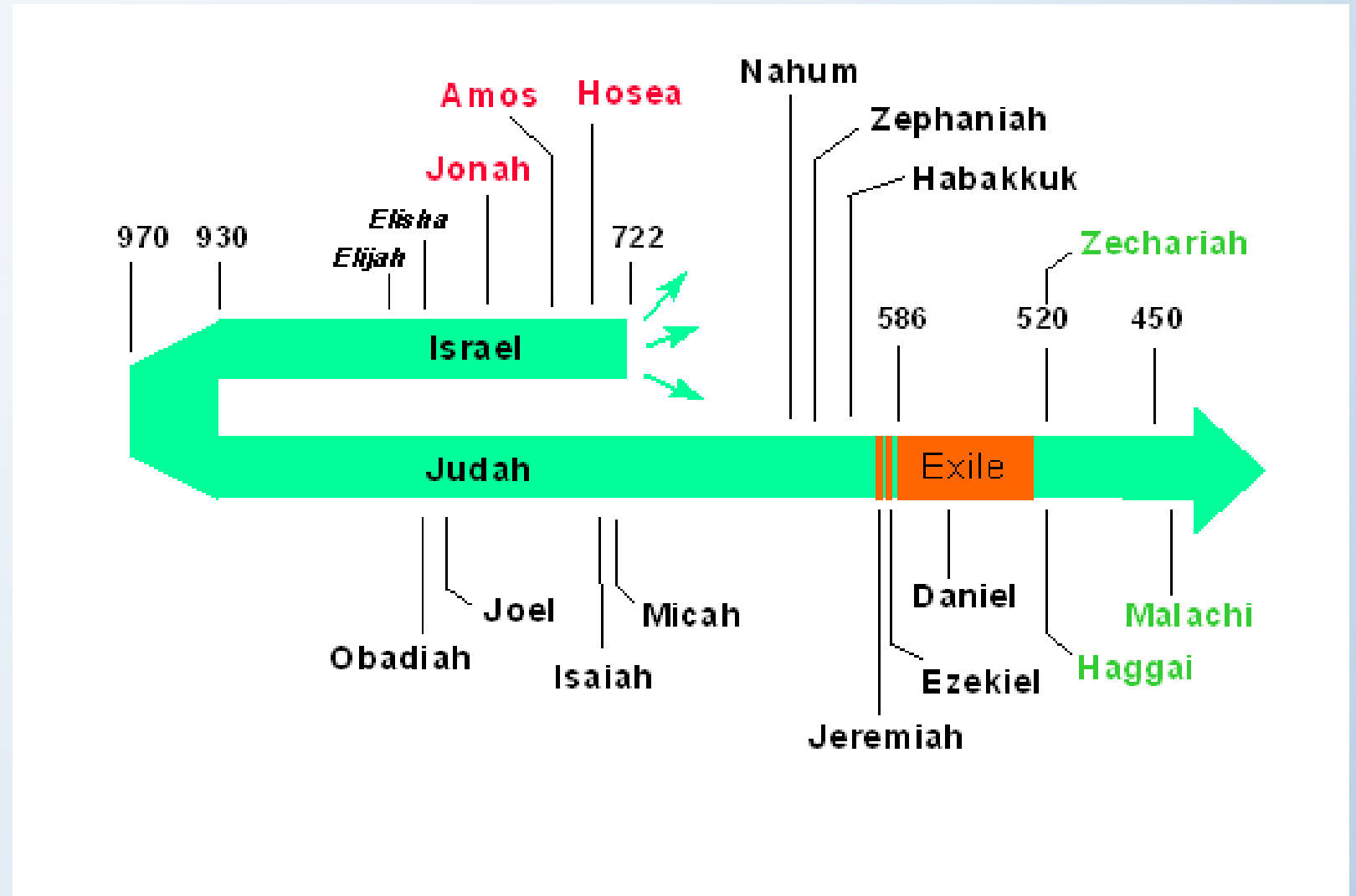
Prophets of Israel – Jonah, Amos, and Hosea

Pre-Exilic (Babylonian)

Prophets of Judah – Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk

Exilic Prophets – Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel

Post-exilic Prophets – Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi



Characteristics of Prophetic Writing

- Written in response to ***the Prophet's own cultural chaos and crises***
- Written about ***their own near future*** rather than our distant future
- Most events were ***fulfilled in their time*** and are not meant to be generally or interpretively applied
- Occasionally a short-term prediction was ***paired with a long-term prediction – usually Messianic***
 - Less than 2% Old Testament Prophecy is Messianic
 - Less than 5% describes the New Covenant age
 - Less than 1% eschatological (distant future, end-times related)

ASK:

- What IS happening?
- What WILL happen?
- What HAS happened?
- What HASN'T YET happened?





Gospel / Acts

The **Good News** about the arrival of the Christ long foretold.

Purpose of the Gospel:



- To **proclaim** the good news that Jesus is bringing the whole Biblical story to its fulfillment, and to **persuade** the reader to **believe, repent, trust, and follow** the King of the new Kingdom being proclaimed.
- The books of the Gospel provide then and **only then, illustrations for how to live** in His Kingdom empowered by His life and Spirit within. (1 Peter 4)



There is only ONE Gospel

It is told by FOUR authors:

Four eyewitnesses

Four experiences

Four purposes

Four audiences

Synoptic: to see the same

Matthew, Mark, Luke



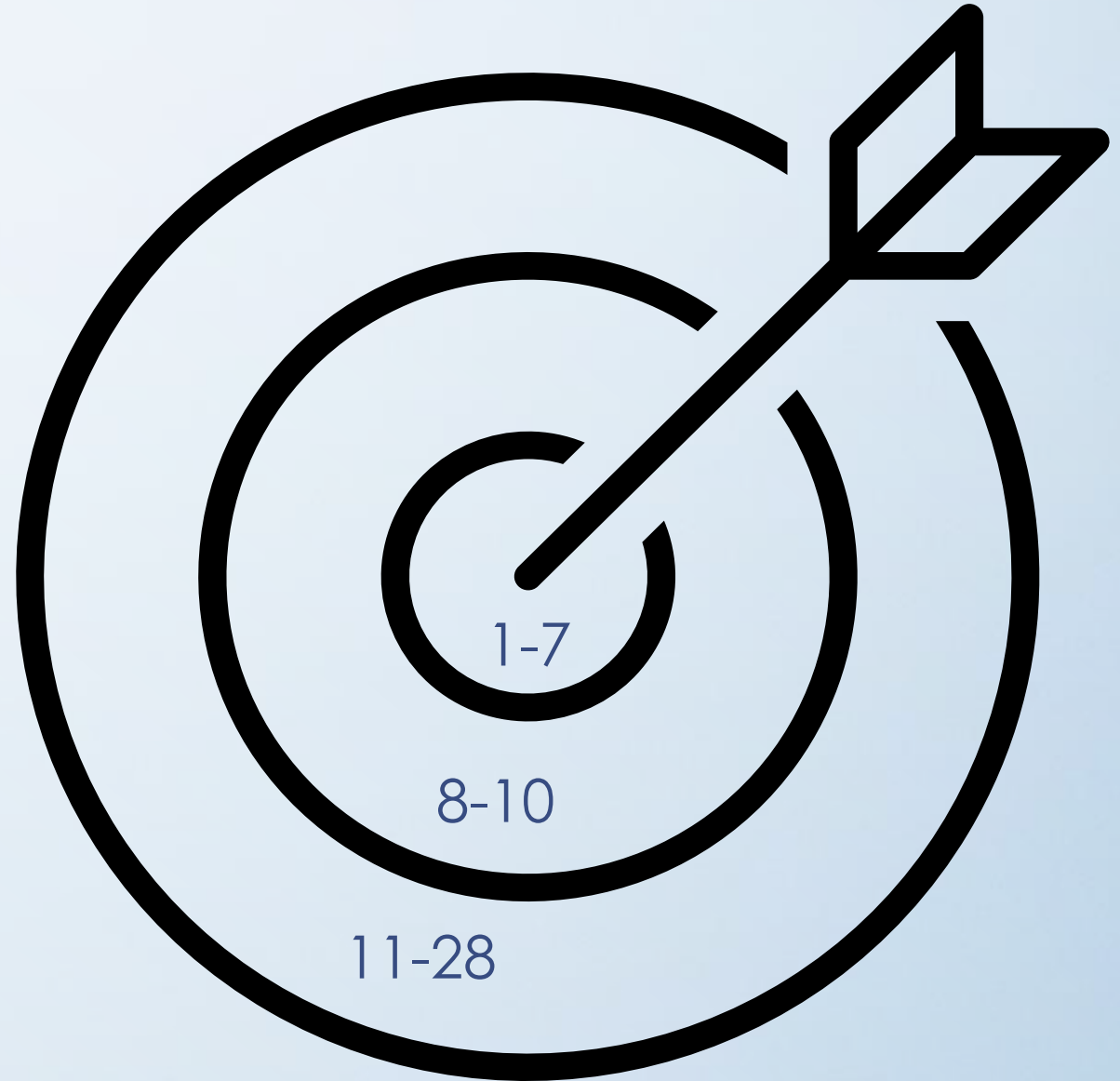
Acts:

- Illustrates the **OUTWORKING** of faith in community revealing Jesus as Lord of the Church that He is building by His Spirit at work in believers.



Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**, and to the **ends of the earth.**”



Assignment:

Behind the Gospel Accounts

