

The historical books

Deltacourse

A discipleship training to equip Christians for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:11-16)

10

QUIET TIME

Theme: God's work through Joshua and the judges

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understood.

- Day 1 Joshua 3:1-17
Crossing the Jordan
- Day 2 Joshua 5:13 – 6:27
The destruction of Jericho
- Day 3 Joshua 23:1-16
Joshua's farewell to the leaders
- Day 4^{BS} Judges 2:1-16
Why God gave judges to Israel
- Day 5 Judges 7:1-25
The judge Gideon defeats the Midianites
- Day 6 Judges 16:1–31
God attains his goal by Samson's death
- Day 7 Ruth 1:14-18 and 2:5-23
Ruth's commitment to God and acquaintance with Boaz
- Day 8^{BS} Ruth 3:1-18 and 4:1-22
Ruth's marriage proposal and marriage to Boaz
- Day 9 1 Samuel 2:12-36
The misbehaviour of the judge Eli's sons
- Day 10 1 Samuel 3:1-21
The calling of Samuel
- Think about Marc 11:22-25.
God always hears the prayers of believers!
It is not God's purpose that we literally move mountains, but that we dare to ask for things that are great within God's perspective cf. 1 John 5:14).
 - Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: The historical books

Read study 10 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: God's people in the world

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Judges 2:1 - 3:4**.

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

1 Corinthians 10:6

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did

1 Corinthians 10:6 (NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

4. Memorisation of the Bible books

The 12 minor prophetic books:

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

10. The historical books

The historical books in the Old Testament are: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. How should you read and understand a historical book in the Old Testament? What is the lasting significance of a historical event in the Bible? What is God's message for us in this?

A. The historical books in the Old Testament

1. The Old and New Testaments form a unity!

One could compare the Bible to a body. Each book in the Bible is like a member of the body and must be regarded as a part of the whole.

The Bible also explains itself: the New Testament is the continuation of the revelation of the Old Testament as well as the fulfilment and explanation of the Old Testament! That is why the Old Testament must always be explained in the light of the New Testament! Thus in order to explain and understand each book of the Bible you need to look, not only at the contents of the book, but also at the contents of the Bible as a whole!

2. History in the Bible has a 'holy' character

'History' in the Bible is 'holy' (Leviticus 10:10), that is, it is history that has been 'set apart' from ordinary history in the world, because God himself and not man is the Maker of this history in the Bible.

The history in the Bible has really happened, but it points to a much higher reality. The history in the Bible is not an ordinary history about the nation of Israel, but the history of God's people amidst the other nations in the world. God speaks and acts within the history of the world in order to save his people and to judge his enemies. The history in the Bible is thus 'salvation history' in which God makes his plan of salvation known and executes it.

3. History in the Bible has a 'prophetical' nature

History in the Bible is 'prophecy' (a proclamation or announcement) of God's words and deeds with respect to the salvation of his people and the judgement of his enemies. Not only the books of the law and the prophetical books, but also the historical books in the Bible reveal and proclaim who the One and Only Living God is and what he does. That is why the Hebrew Canon (the list of inspired books) calls the books from Joshua to 2 Kings 'the early prophets' and the books from Isaiah to Malachi 'the latter prophets'. The prophetical writers of the historical books in the Bible describe the history of God's people and evaluate the words and deeds of people in the light of the God of the Bible: "They did what was good in the eyes of God" (1 Kings 15:11) or "They did what was evil in the eyes of God" (1 Kings 15:26).

B. Typology: the use of symbolic events in the Bible

1. What are 'types' (foundational forms) in the Bible?

The Old Testament contains 'types': events, persons or matters that have specific characteristics in former history and which appear again later in history in a different form. Types are illustrating models or images for later events in God's history of salvation. These later events are then called 'antitypes' or 'the fulfilments' of the 'types'.

The Old Testament contains a repetitive pattern of God's *re-creative, restorative and saving acts* with respect to his Old Testament people, Israel. And the New Testament contains God's final re-creative, restorative and saving acts in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Certain matters in the ceremonial law of the Old Testament are types or shadows of the realities in the New Testament. For example: the animal sacrifices are types or shadows of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross to make atonement for sins ((Hebrews 10:1).

Although the Bible makes use of types, Christians may not ascribe typological significance to any random historical event, person or matter in the Bible. We may only do this when the writer of a book in the Bible regards an event, person or matter as a type.

2. The historical events contain types

The historical events of God's people in the Old Testament have specific characteristics that also occur in the historical events of God's people in the New Testament. The Bible depicts them as 'types' for the new life in Jesus Christ. The events in the Old Testament point forward to the work of salvation of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. They point forward to the new life with Jesus Christ; to the establishment of the kingdom of God; to the pilgrim's journey of Christians throughout life; and to the perfect life on the new earth. That is why, when you read the history of God's people in the Old Testament, you have to keep in mind that these events describe the first phase of God's salvation history.

3. The people 'Israel' is a type of God's people

You can only understand the historical books in the Old Testament when you view God's people in the Old Testament (Israel) as a 'type' or a foundational form of God's people in the New Testament (the Church).

God's covenant people in the Bible

(1) 'God's covenant people' in the Bible *begin* with Abraham, the Hebrew or Aramean who came from Ur in Chaldea (Genesis 11:31; 14:13; Deuteronomy 26:5), including all the foreigners that belonged to his household (Genesis 17:7,26-27). To some extent they begin with the first believers: Adam, Eve, Abel and Seth (Luke 3:37; Hebrews 11:4).

(2) After that God's people were *extended (enlarged)* to include all believers in the nation of Israel (Exodus 6:7; 19:3-6; Leviticus 26:12), including all the believing foreigners that joined Israel (Isaiah 56:3-8).

(3) In the final phase God's people were *extended (enlarged)* to include all the people from all the different nations in the world who believe in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:2-6; 1 Peter 2:4-5,9-10; Revelation 5:9-10; 7:9).

The two phases of the history of salvation of God's people
The Old Testament describes *the first phase* of the history of salvation of God's people and the New Testament describes *the final phase* of the history of salvation of God's people. In the Bible both God's Old Testament people and God's New Testament people are called: 'God's people' (Deuteronomy 7:6; 1 Peter 2:9), 'Israel' (1 Samuel 7:23; Galatians 6:16), 'Church' (Greek: *ekklesia*) (Psalm 107:32; Matthew 16:18).

C. Three types in the Old Testament: the creation, the exodus and the exile

The three most important types or foundational illustrations of God's history of salvation are: the creation of the world, the exodus from the land of slavery and the return from exile from another land of slavery.

1. The creation

The creation is described in the Bible in terms of the conquering of the chaos (e.g. the emptiness, the formlessness and the darkness) that covered the earth after its creation (Genesis 1:2). In a sovereign way God puts a limit around the unruly mass of water of the ocean flood that covered the earth (Genesis 1:9-10; Job 38:8-15). He symbolically conquered 'Rahab' and 'Leviathan' (two mythical sea monsters that symbolised the power of chaos and enmity (Job 26:12; Psalm 89:10-11; Psalm 104:25-26. *Read* also Job 40:15 – 41:26).

2. The exodus: a symbol for a new 'creation'

The exodus (departure) out of the land of slavery (Egypt) is described in terms of 'a new creation'. God re-creates his people. God conquered the chaos: the waters of the Red Sea and dried it up (Exodus 14:21-22) so that his people could escape their persecutors. And this event is depicted symbolically as a victory over Rahab (Isaiah 51:9-10) and Leviathan (Psalm 74:13-15). Even the land of Egypt is symbolically called Rahab (Psalm 87:4; Isaiah 30:7) and the mighty Pharaoh is depicted as the monster Leviathan who is drawn out of the Nile with hooks (Ezekiel 29:3-5).

3. The return from exile: a symbol of 'a new creation' and a symbol of 'a new exodus'

The return from exile out of the land of slavery (Assyria and Babylon) is described in terms of 'a new creation'. God re-creates his people (Isaiah 43:5-7). It is also described in terms of 'a new exodus'. God again saves his people from the slavery in Assyria and Babylon by bringing them through the rivers (Tigris and Euphrates) and the desert. Also this event is depicted in terms of known images. Assyria and Babylon, the countries to which Israel and Judah had been exiled, are symbolically called the sea monster: 'Leviathan, the gliding (fleeing) serpent' and 'Leviathan, the coiling (twisting) serpent' (Isaiah 27:1).

When we look at the line of historical events that follow one another in God's history of salvation, we see that there is a pattern in which God repeats certain acts:

God creates,
God saves,
God restores.

These three types: creation, salvation (exodus) and restoration (return from exile) are repeated in the Old Testament. However, the writers of the New Testament believed that these repeated events find their real and final significance and fulfilment (antitype) in and through the salvation work of Jesus Christ!

D. The antitype in the New Testament of the types in the Old Testament

The relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament is as follows: 'In the Old Testament the New Testament lies hidden; and in the New Testament the Old Testament is revealed' (Augustine). In the New Testament the work of salvation of Jesus Christ is the antitype or real fulfilment of God's mighty acts in the historical events of the Old Testament. The work of salvation of Jesus Christ in the New Testament is the culmination of God's mighty acts. Thus, the three historical events in the Old Testament: the creation, the exodus and the return from exile receive symbolical meaning in the New Testament. They are pictures of the real work of salvation of Jesus Christ!

1. The creation becomes a symbol for the work of salvation of Jesus Christ

At the creation God made light shine in the darkness (this is the type) (Genesis 1:3). And at salvation 'God made his light shine in our darkened hearts, so that we became enlightened with the true knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ' (this is the antitype) (2 Corinthians 4:6).

All people who are in Christ are ‘a new creation’ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15).

And at the end of the New Testament period at the second coming of Christ, also ‘this present creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay and will share in the glorious freedom of the children of God’. It will be renewed into a new universe and a new earth (Romans 8:19-21; Revelation 21:5; 22:1-5; 2 Peter 3:13).

2. The exodus becomes a symbol for the work of salvation of Jesus Christ

The exodus of Israel from Egypt (the type) (Hosea 11:1) becomes the symbol of the exodus of Jesus from Egypt (the antitype) (Matthew 2:15). Matthew regards the childhood of Jesus as a repetition of the earlier experience of Israel, when they went to Egypt and then left Egypt again.

The exodus from slavery in Egypt (the type) becomes the symbol of the salvation of Christians from their slavery to sin in the New Testament (cf. examples below).

The Passover lamb

At the exodus the Passover lamb (the type) (Exodus 12:5) becomes the symbol of Jesus Christ as the real Passover Lamb (the antitype) (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19; 1 Corinthians 5:7). The prophets in the Old Testament tried to figure out the time and circumstances of Christ’s death and resurrection which would bring this future salvation (1 Peter 1:9-12).

The Passover festival

The Passover festival, which was celebrated with bread without yeast (the type), becomes the symbol of the life-long Christian festival of consecration to God by living without insincerity and lies (the antitype) (1 Corinthians 5:8).

The passing through the Red Sea

The passing through the Red Sea (the type) becomes the symbol of the Christian dying with Christ in the baptism with the Spirit, which is expressed in the New Testament by the baptism with water (the antitype) (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).

The journey through the desert to the Promised Land

The journey through the desert to the Promised Land (the type) becomes the symbol of the journey of Christians to the new heaven and the new earth (the antitype) (1 Corinthians 10:3-12; cf. Revelation 12:13-17).

Nevertheless, because Israel persisted in unbelief and disobedience during this journey, they could not enter the Promised Land (the type). This becomes a symbol for Christians that they should take God very serious and not fall away from God by unbelief and disobedience (*Read Hebrews 3:7 – 4:3*).

3. The return from exile becomes a symbol for the work of salvation of Jesus Christ

The gospel

The word ‘gospel’ (the good news) in the Old Testament about the return of Israel from the exile to Babylon (the type) (Isaiah 40:9, 52:7; 61:1-2a) becomes ‘the gospel’ (the good news) about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the New Testament (the antitype) (Romans 10:15; Luke:4:18-19; Acts 13:32-33; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

A voice of one calling

The voice calling in the desert: ‘Prepare the way for the LORD’ to bring his people out of exile through the desert to the land of Israel (the type) (Isaiah 40:3) became the symbol of John the Baptist in the New Testament calling people to prepare themselves for the first coming of Jesus Christ as Saviour (the antitype) (Mark 1:1-5).

The servant of the LORD

The Servant of the LORD who gathers the remnant of Israel out of exile to be God’s Old Testament people (the type) (Isaiah 49:5-6) becomes the symbol of Jesus Christ who gathers the believers of all the nations on earth into God’s New Testament people (the antitype) (Acts 13:46-48; 26:22b-23).

The new heavens and the new earth

The words in the Old Testament: ‘I will create new heavens and a new earth’ (Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:22) are descriptions of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and God’s people after the return from exile (the type). Later these words became the symbol of the restoration of everything into the new universe and new earth at the end of history (the antitype) (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1).

Thus only in the light of the antitype or reality in the New Testament can one understand the symbolical meaning of the type or shadow in the Old Testament (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1)! The types: creation, exodus and return from exile in the Old Testament finally find their complete fulfilment in the work of salvation of Jesus Christ in the New Testament!

E. The historical book Joshua

The historical book Joshua contains a continuous report of historical events from God’s people Israel entering the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua until his death. The most important message of this book is that the historical events in the book are part of God’s history of salvation. God was fulfilling his promise to his people (Joshua 23:14), but also threatening to bring evil if they would violate the covenant (Joshua 23:15-16). You can only understand these messages when you read the book Joshua in the light of the New Testament revelation.

1. Jesus Christ is the Saviour who ultimately fulfilled what was prophesied in the book Joshua

The name Joshua and the name Jesus

The name 'Joshua' means 'the LORD is salvation' and means that the salvation and the well-being of God's Old Testament people was completely dependent on God. 'Joshua' in the Hebrew Old Testament means exactly the same as 'Jesus' in the Greek New Testament. Not Joshua (the type), but Jesus (the antitype) would be the Saviour of God's people (Matthew 1:21)!

Bring into the land and bring into the final rest

In the light of the New Testament, Joshua brought God's people into the Promised Land, but that was only a type or shadow of the antitype or the reality which Jesus brought. Joshua did not bring God's people into the final 'rest of God'! The crossing of the River Jordan in the Old Testament (the type) became a symbol of the crossing of God's New Testament people (Christians) from their death on earth to their life with God in heaven and later on with God on the new earth (the final 'rest of God') (Hebrews 4:8-11).

Jesus taught: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me (now on earth) will live (i.e. will be translated into heaven), even though he dies (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:1; Philippians 1:23; Revelation 20:4); and whoever lives and believes in me (here on earth) will never die (the eternal death in hell) (John 11:25-26).

Ultimately Jesus brings God's people (both the believers in Israel in the Old Testament and the believers in the Church in the New Testament) into 'the rest of God' (1 Peter 1:9-12). People can only enter this rest of God by faith in the gospel and obedience to God during their lives on earth (Hebrews 4:1-7). Not Joshua, but Jesus is 'the Author of their salvation' (Hebrews 2:10). When we Christians have finished our work on earth, we will enter the rest of God in heaven and rest from all our labour on earth (Revelation 14:13).

2. The New Testament book of Acts resembles the Old Testament book of Joshua

The book Joshua forms the bridge between the five books of the Law and the rest of the Old Testament, just as the book of Acts forms the bridge between the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament.

There are several resemblances:

Take possession of the land and witness to the ends of the earth

The people of God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament were as it were at the top of their spiritual life and were therefore able to do great things in God's power: Joshua is commanded to take possession of the whole land, but the apostles were commanded to be Christ's witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Be strong and receive power

Joshua is encouraged to be strong and courageous, but the apostles received power from the Holy Spirit to be Christ's witnesses.

Great acts and great miracles

In the book Joshua God performs great acts: he leads his people across the Jordan and causes the fall of Jericho. In the book of Acts God performs even greater miracles: he heals the sick, raises the dead and turns the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

Extended over whole land and whole Roman Empire

In the book Joshua God's people are extended over the whole land, but in the book of Acts God's people are extended over the whole Roman Empire.

God leads to the Promised Land and Jesus leads to the ends of the earth

The message of the book Joshua is that God Himself fights for his people and leads them in triumph to take possession of the Promised Land. The message of the book of Acts is that Jesus continues the work which he began in the world before his ascension into heaven through his Holy Spirit, his Word and his Church (Acts 1:1; Hebrews 1:1-2). He leads his people to their destination: first to the ends of the earth (Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:31) and finally to the new earth (2 Peter 3:13).

God fulfils his promise to Israel and extends salvation to the Gentiles

Joshua said: "Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed: every one was fulfilled" (Joshua 21:45; 23:14)! And the apostle Paul said: "What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus" (Acts 13:32). And this would continue until all the Jews and all the Gentiles that were appointed for eternal life have come to faith (Acts 13:32-33,48; cf. Romans 11:11-12,25-27).