

Old Testament Overview (OT240)

Australian College of Theology name: *Old Testament Overview*

Unit Description

Gain an overall historical and theological framework within which to interpret the text, highlighting the significance of biblical theology. Develop an appreciation of the dynamic of biblical theology, focusing on the progressive unfolding of the divine plan of covenant redemption for the people of God. Acquire an overall appreciation of the text and structure of the Old Testament as one of the two primary documents of biblical studies and Christian ministry. Develop an appreciation of the order of books in the Hebrew canon, and why it differs from the order of the English Bibles.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, you will

A. Know and understand:

1. The English text and structure of the Old Testament
2. The leading theological themes of the Old Testament
3. The implications of the Old Testament for the New Testament

B. Be able to:

1. Use sources such as biblical and theological dictionaries, commentaries and online resources
2. Describe the historical, religious and socio-cultural background
3. Outline the contents and distinctive features of selected books
4. Trace the leading theological themes

C. Be in a position to:

1. Apply the leading themes of the Old Testament in personal life and in formal ministry contexts

Content

Introduction

1. Historical development of the canon (brief timeline).
2. Brief history of the ordering of the books – English vs Hebrew canon.
3. Divisions of the Old Testament: Law; History - Prophets; Writings
4. Biblical-theological themes: e.g. Kingdom of God; covenant; promise; land; Temple (and city); “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule” (Goldsworthy).

5. The Old Testament as the foundational preparation for the ensuing New Testament.

The following sections will all contain thematic summaries of the books of the Old Testament, and a brief description of key biblical-theological motifs:

Section A: Law (*Pentateuch*)

The key themes of each major section or books of the Pentateuch are noted below:

1. Genesis 1-11
2. Genesis 12 -50
3. Exodus
4. Leviticus/Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

Section B: Prophets – History

Former Prophets (c.1400 -587 BC):

1. Joshua – Judges
2. 1 and 2 Samuel
3. 1 and 2 Kings

Latter Prophets (i.e. Prophetic books):

1. The Book of Isaiah
2. The Book of Jeremiah
3. The Book of Ezekiel
4. The Twelve (“Minor Prophets”)

Section C: Writings

1. Poetic (or Wisdom) books: Job; Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Songs; Lamentations
2. Narrative: Ruth; Esther
3. Prophetic-Apocalyptic: Daniel
4. Redemptive History: Ezra-Nehemiah; 1 & 2 Chronicles