

### Studying the Books of History

- *In many ways, the books of history are the easiest place to begin your study of Scripture.*
  - *You are not drawing immediate points of application for Christian living.*
  - *Word studies are rarely needed, thus language expertise is lessened.*
  - *New believers and children should be immersed in the books of history.*
  - *The challenge: We all want to get to the “good stuff” (i.e. doctrine and prophecy).*
- *The books of history are the most important place to begin your study of Scripture.*
  - *Doctrine and prophecy are apt to grave error without the foundation of history.*
  - *The books of history contain the story of God’s activity through time. These accounts are foundational to God’s directives for today.*

### Finding the books of history

- *In the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), use the arrangement of the TaNaKh, not the arrangement of the Christian Old Testament.*
  - *In the Christian Bible, Joshua to Esther are the books of history.*
  - *In the Jewish TaNaKh, the books of Ruth, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Esther and Nehemiah are removed from Historical books and put into the “Writings.”*
- *Old Testament books of History:*
  - *From the Torah (with exceptions)*
    - *Genesis – history*
    - *Exodus – history*
    - *Leviticus – Doctrine under the Law*
    - *Numbers – history*
    - *Deuteronomy – Mostly doctrine under the Law, some history*
  - *From the books of History: Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings*
  - *Books that have history but should NOT be included in a study of history:*
    - *Leviticus & Deuteronomy*
    - *Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*
    - *The prophets, which require a knowledge of the books of history.*
- *New Testament books of History:*
  - *The Gospels –*
    - *Matthew – a history with a focus on the Kingdom*
    - *Mark – a “play by play” history*
    - *Luke – a history written to an individual*
    - *John – a history of key events and teachings*
  - *The book of Acts – A history of the setting aside of Israel and the subsequent birth of the church.*

### An important truth reiterated

- *Specific Christian-living doctrine can be seen and illustrated in books of History, but should never be grounded in books of history.*
  - *General theology is often grounded in books of history.*
    - *The doctrine of “atonement”*
    - *The doctrine of Trinity*
  - *If a Christian living doctrine is based solely on historical books, then it is a made-up doctrine and can be abandoned as a requirement.*
    - *Fasting (mentioned three times in the Epistles, but not as a requirement and no instruction given).*
    - *Certain prayer practices*
    - *Call to ministry*
    - *Tithing*

### Should the Gospels be viewed as History?

- The Gospels themselves claim to be historical books.
  - Matthew 1 begins with history.
  - Mark 1:1 says the book is the **beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ**.
  - Luke 1:1-4 is specific that it is history.
  - John 20:31-31 says the book is an account of the **signs** of Jesus that are foundational to belief.
- Do the Gospels contain doctrine for Christian living?
  - They contain the explanation of Mosaic law for Jewish living.
  - They contain the historical basis upon which the Christian life is made possible.
  - If you draw your Christian living doctrine, you will end up with confusion and “Lordship Salvation.”

### Steps to Studying Historical Passages

- Learn some basics about the background of the book.
  - Author
  - Time frame covered in the book
  - Time when the book was written
  - Audience (if known).
  - **Caution:** Bible background book often lead to doubt. Be careful where you get your information.
    - **Recommended sources:**
      - Scofield Bible introductory notes
      - From Moses to Malachi by Kenneth G. Hanna – available at Dispensational Publishing
      - From Gospels to Glory by Kenneth G. Hanna - available at Dispensational Publishing
- It is helpful, though not essential, to have an outline of the book before you begin.
  - **Caution:** Every outline is man’s work. Question the assumptions.

### Digging in to historical books

- If you use the KJV and a Young’s Literal Translation, the knowledge of Hebrew and Greek is helpful when something doesn’t make sense, but otherwise less essential than in doctrinal and prophetic books.
- Word studies are almost completely unnecessary for understanding historical books.
- Make a commitment to avoid drawing direct application, especially for Christian living.
- Start by finding a passage of scripture that can stand alone (i.e.: a pericope).
- DO NOT outline the pericope before you study. Outlines are a teaching and memory tool, not a study tool.
- Make notes on each particular phrase, person, place, or event.
- Use a reverse Strong’s Concordance to find cross references that give insight.
- Use the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge to find illustrations and insights from other passages.
- Ask questions of the passage.
- Who, What, When, Where, Why, How...and whatever else you can think of!
- After the entire passage is studied, look to see if there is a discernible outline that can be used for teaching and as a memory tool.

### Recommended Passages

- Genesis 1:1-31
- Exodus 1:1-21
  - Learn the need to do the background work before moving on.
- Joshua 1:1-9
  - Learn the discipline of avoiding personal application
- Matthew 4:1-11
  - Learn to study the Gospels for historical application.
  - Learn to compare other Gospels.