

Class Three Notes: Eschatology and Genres in the Old Testament

• What is Eschatology?

- God's purpose unfolding towards His end in Christ for His glory and the good of His people.
 - Narrow definition: "Study of Last Things". Broad, Biblical-Theological definition: "In the beginning implies a glorious ending". A study of God's purposes for history. There is a meaningful *telos* that has been ordained, designed, planned, and is sovereignly realized and fulfilled by God Himself.
 - William Dumbrell wrote "Eschatology is the key to understanding the entire bible." There is always a forward-looking ("prospectively") element from the opening of the pages of Genesis.
 - For instance, all Scripture is structured by the fact that there is something to which it is *pointing*. There is a *goal* to which Scripture is *moving*.
 - Richard Lints wrote helpfully:
 - "'In the beginning' marks inauguration, but it also anticipates the end. In this eschatological light, Scripture should be read as a text with a beginning, an end, and a developing story in between that moves toward a divine goal."
- o Read Hebrews 1:1-2: This is the "eschatological end-point" of Biblical revelation.

<u>Time-</u> Basic Timeline for OT Drama/Story:

2000 BC: Abraham-Jacob-in Egypt (Gen. 12-50)

1400 BC: Mount Sinai-Holy Nation (Exo. – Josh.)

1200 BC: Judges - Samuel

1000 BC: David/Israel

931 BC: Division of Kingdoms: North- Israel, capital Samaria/ South- Judah, capital Jerusalem

586/87 BC: Babylonian Captivity of Judah

538: Cyrus of Persia: Restoration from Exile

A Diversity of Genres in the OT:

- 1. **What is genre?** A genre is a group of texts that bear one or more traits in common with each other (Longman). This helps with a "Reading Strategy" or how to read this book, or think about this piece of literature, etc. For example, "Once upon a time," tells you to read the text as fairy tale; "In the year of King Uzziah's death…" tells you to read as historical narrative.
- 2. **Basically 2 Genres:** (1) **Prose: Stories** and (2) **Poems: Songs.** God is pleased to reveal Himself primarily through **story and song**, but more specifically through:
 - Law ("Instruction")- Stories
 - Prophecy/Oracles- Poetry
 - History (Historical Narrative)- Stories

Characteristics:

- * Plot
- * Character
- *Setting
- * Point of View
- Poetry- Songs

Characteristics:

- * Terseness
- * Parallelism
- * Imagery

Law: Genesis – Deuteronomy:

 Primary Storyline of Torah/Former Prophets: Creation to Exile (Story-Historical Narrative)

Prophecy: *Former Prophets*: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings / *Latter Prophets*: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Book of the Twelve

O Primary Storyline of Latter Prophets/Part 1 of Writings/Isaiah thru Ecclesiastes: Poetic Commentary on Genesis thru Kings (Songs-Poetry): A) What happened? B) How can we bring the past failures into our present as we understand more deeply the grace and faithfulness of God?

Writings: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Lamentations, Chronicles

o **Primary Storyline of Part 2 of Writings/Esther-Chronicles:** Historical narrative storyline continues and the future is opened (eschatology)

Three Categories:

- 1. Torah/Law = Covenant Law
- 2. Prophets = Covenant History
- 3. Writings = Covenant Life

Genesis and Revelation serve God's purposes as covenant prologue and covenant epilogue respectively ('A Biblical Theological Introduction to the Old Testament', Miles V. Van Pelt).

CRB/Oct. 9, 2018