

# O.T. SUBJECT & STRUCTURE

THE END OPENED UP AND REVEALED FROM THE BEGINNING

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The Old Testament can be divided into three major sections — *Genesis through Esther (historic)*, *Job through the Song of Solomon (personal and experiential)*, and *Isaiah through Malachi (prophetic)*.

Insofar as the historical nature (and much of the typical nature) of that seen throughout the first part of these three major sections is concerned, Esther — having to do with *Israel* — outlines, in a typical fashion, that seen throughout the whole of this first section of Scripture (Gen. 11b ff).

Thus, in this respect, the Book of Esther simply presents a brief summary of all which has preceded surrounding Israel, with the emphasis placed in the same realm seen in the preceding Scriptures which the book outlines — on the latter days, leading into the Messianic Era. And the Book of Esther coming at the end of the first of these three major sections would be the proper place for this book in the Canon of Scripture.

This first major section of Scripture (Genesis through Esther) is often thought of only in the sense of providing *Biblical history, along with spiritual lessons drawn from Biblical history*. However, viewing this section of Scripture from this perspective alone only presents part of the picture. This section, through mainly its type-antitype structure, is *highly prophetic in nature*. In fact, from a typical perspective, this first section is *just as prophetic* in nature as the third section — from Isaiah through Malachi, containing the major and minor prophets (major and minor in the sense of *length*, not importance).

Also, though this first section centers around Israel and the nations from a historical perspective,

*typology* throughout this section is another matter. The typical structure and prophetic nature of this section of Scripture, a section covering about one-half of the entire Old Testament, is somewhat divided between *God and Israel* and *Christ and the Church*.

For example, viewing two parts of Genesis (chs. 2-4 and 23-25), chapters two and three have to do with Christ and the Church, and chapter four has to do with God and Israel; then chapter twenty-three has to do with God and Israel, chapter twenty-four has to do with Christ and the Church, and chapter twenty-five has to do with God and Israel once again.

Both aspects of these typical teachings can be seen in the lives of Joseph in the latter part of Genesis (chs. 37-45) and Moses in the first part of Exodus (chs. 2-4). Both Joseph and Moses *took Gentile brides during a time after they had been rejected by and separated from their brethren* (having to do with Christ and the Church, following Christ's rejection by and separation from Israel, His brethren according to the flesh); but the time came when both Joseph and Moses *dealt with their brethren again* (having to do with Christ and Israel, with that time when God resumes His national dealings with Israel).

Then, whole books deal with matters in this typical manner. Most of the Book of Exodus deals with God and Israel in this respect, and the Books of I, II Samuel deal with Christ and the Church in this same respect. Then, the same thing can be seen in the Books of Ruth and Esther. The Book of Ruth deals with Christ and the Church, while the Book of Esther deals with God and Israel.

And, viewing matters from a different perspective yet, note that the journey of the Israelites under Moses and Joshua typifies the journey of Christians under Christ today. *An earthly land* lay before one in the type, and *a heavenly land* lies before the other in the antitype.

This type-antitype structure is that which is referenced through the use of the word *typos* (type) in the Greek text of I Cor. 10:6, 11; this is the basis upon which particularly the second, third, fourth, and fifth of the five major warnings in Hebrews are to be

understood (Heb. 3-12); and this forms the basis for a proper understanding of the entire pilgrim walk of the Christian today (a journey *from Egypt* [a type of the world] *to Canaan* [a type of that heavenly land, connected with an inheritance and a rest, awaiting Christians]).

Or, going back to God and Israel, these same experiences of the Israelites under Moses foreshadow, as well, the future restoration of the Jewish people to the land under Christ.

Thus, saying that this first major section of Scripture is *historic* in nature, apart from being *prophetic*, would be far from correct. Within its typical structure, this section of Scripture is *highly prophetic* — *as prophetic as any section of subsequent Scripture*. And not only are numerous prophecies seen in the types extending from Genesis through Esther but also in places such as Balaam's prophecies (Num. 22-24), or that seen in God's promises and warnings to Israel in Leviticus chapter twenty-six and Deuteronomy chapter twenty-eight as well.

This section of Scripture provides *a detailed history* of Israel, relating the reason why the nation was called into existence, what was expected of this nation, and the reason why the Jewish people ultimately found themselves uprooted from their land and scattered among the Gentile nations.

Then, viewing *the typical aspect* of this section of Scripture, events move beyond history into prophecy, showing the end of the matter — the same thing seen in the Psalms and the Prophets.

This is the way in which God designed and structured this opening section of His Word. And if man would properly understand God's revealed Word, he must recognize this fact and study this Word after the same fashion in which it has been given.

This opening section of Scripture, from Genesis through Esther, forms *the backdrop* for not only the second major section (a section covering five books, from Job through the Song of Solomon) but the third major section as well (all of the prophetic books, extending from Isaiah through Malachi). That would be to say, Genesis through Esther forms *the backdrop*

for the remainder of the Old Testament. And if man does not understand (or if he ignores) that placed at the beginning, it will be impossible for him to ever come into a proper understanding of later revelation (including, of course, the New Testament as well), for the latter is inseparably tied to and built upon the former in this respect.

God's revelation to man is *progressive* in the sense that it has been designed so that a proper understanding of later revelation rests on a proper understanding of earlier revelation. One part progresses into the other, and *Scripture must be compared with Scripture* — later revelation with earlier revelation, and earlier revelation with later revelation (I Cor. 2:9-13; cf. Isa. 28:10).

For example, in the second section, there are numerous Psalms covering not only Israel's present condition (scattered among the Gentile nations) but also that which lies in the future for Israel (the end of Gentile world power, with Israel restored to her land and elevated to her proper place among the nations [e.g., chs. 2, 8, 22-24, 37, 45-47, 76, 83, 89, 97, 102, 110, 121, 126, 137, 145]). And these Psalms cannot be properly understood apart from the backdrop provided by the first section of Scripture.

The fact that numerous Psalms cannot be properly understood apart from this first section should be easy enough to understand, for this first section of Scripture reveals the history of Israel, *all the way from the reason for the nation's calling as God's firstborn son to the reason why God allowed the Gentile nations to come into the land and uproot His people.*

Then, beyond that, the typical aspect of the first section enters into the matter, *projecting events out into the future, as seen in the Psalms.*

And all of the prophets present *exactly the same central theme.* It is that seen throughout the preceding Psalms, or the preceding historical books, viewing the latter from both historical and typical vantage points.

Each of the prophetic books (seventeen in all, as there are seventeen historic books) deals with different facets of *the whole of Israel's history, current condition, and future destiny, with a particular emphasis placed upon God's punishment befalling His people because of*

*disobedience, followed by the Jewish people's repentance, followed by the destruction of Gentile world power, followed by God restoring Israel.* These things comprise the overriding theme of *all Old Testament prophecy as it pertains to Israel*, whether in the historic books, the Psalms, or the Prophets.

Each of the prophetic books, beginning with Isaiah, covers, after some fashion, this panorama of Israeli history — events extending *from the time of the nation's inception* almost three and one-half millennia ago *to the Messianic Kingdom* yet future. But no two of these seventeen books cover exactly the same thing, after exactly the same fashion. Each book centers around a particular and peculiar facet of study within this panorama of events.

In this respect, studying these prophetic books is much like studying types. As no one type provides the complete picture in and of itself, no one Old Testament prophetic book provides the complete picture in and of itself as well.

Note, for example, how Gentile world power is dealt with in the Old Testament. Such power exists *because of Israeli disobedience;* and such power also exists *to bring Israel, through persecution at the hands of the Gentiles, to the place of repentance.*

Then, since *the emphasis* concerning Israel in this realm, in any part of the Old Testament, is upon Israel's repentance and restoration, *the emphasis* concerning Gentile world power should, as well, be upon the end and destruction of Gentile world power, which it is. *One parallels the other in Biblical prophecy, whether in Moses, the Psalms, or the Prophets.*

Over and over in the Old Testament — beginning in Genesis — *the end of Gentile world power* comes into view. There is an emphasis placed in this realm, for *Gentile world power must be brought to an end* before Israel can occupy the nation's proper place within a restored theocracy. This is why one finds the power of Egypt destroyed in the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus under Moses (Ex. 14:27-31); this is why one finds Haman slain in Esther prior to the Jewish people receiving their proper and due recognition (7:9, 10; 8:15-17; 10:1-3); and this is why numerous Psalms and

Prophets deal with this subject prior to Israel being restored (e.g., Ps. 2:1-5; Isa. 24:21; Jer. 4:26-28; Ezek. 39:21, 22; Dan. 11:36-45; Joel 3:12-16).

*Gentile world power is going to come to an end.* And its end will be as depicted in Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45, among numerous other places in the Old Testament. Christ will return and personally destroy Gentile world power in its final form, headed up under Antichrist in that coming day. And once Gentile world power has been destroyed in this manner, Scripture pictures this destruction as "chaff" thrown into the wind from a threshing floor, being carried away by that wind, with Israel then elevated to the nation's proper place among the Gentile nations of the earth, realizing the position occupied by firstborn sons (cf. Ex. 4:22, 23).

"A threshing floor" is used in Scripture to depict *judgment.* This is true of *God's judgment upon Christians at the end of this dispensation* (cf. Ruth 3:2ff; Matt. 3:11, 12), and it is equally true of *God's judgment upon the Gentile nations at the end of the Tribulation* (Dan. 2:35).

And to deny that these sequences of events will occur at the end of Man's Day is to deny central themes of all Old Testament Scripture, as it pertains to the Church, Israel, and the nations. Much of that seen in Old Testament Scripture surrounding the Church, Israel, and the nations awaits fulfillment. And, in this respect, when God steps in and begins to fulfill these Scriptures, multiplied thousands upon thousands of prophecies seen throughout the pages of the Old Testament, beginning with the opening chapters of Genesis, will be fulfilled in a very short period of time.

God, through the writers of the Old Testament, has provided *a voluminous amount of information on this overall subject;* and there is no reason for anyone today to be uninformed or ignorant concerning that which God is about to do.

*It has all been laid out in the Old Testament Scriptures, beginning with Moses and ending with the Prophets.*

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