

# The Chronological Reading of the Old Testament During 1933

(With Chronological Chart and Suggestive Reading Schedule)

**A**N EARNEST invitation is extended to all workers of the Advent Movement to join in the united, chronological reading of the Bible within the next two years, *the Old Testament in 1933*, and the New Testament in 1934. This recommendation, approved by action of the General Conference Committee, is here placed before our workers as one of the designated objectives of the Ministerial Reading Course.

In these remnant days of time, when apostasies from the faith and departures from the Word constitute an ever-increasing danger to the church, such a call to renewed study of the Scriptures is both timely and appropriate.—*for the Bible is the most loved, most feared, most hated, most strangely distorted, most widely circulated, and most shamefully neglected Book in the world.*

The advantage of acquaintance with the chronological order of the books of the Old Testament may be illustrated thus: The casual reader of the Bible will ordinarily think of Hosea as coming after the prophet Daniel, because so placed in our Bibles; instead, Hosea lived over two centuries before Daniel. This fact is recognized in Ussher's chronology, which dates appear in the margins of most Bibles.

Moreover, it is desirable to have an accurate understanding of the *time* or placement of each prophet's ministry in relation to paramount movements and crises in Israel, together with those in surrounding nations.

Still another helpful feature meriting attention in such reading, is a knowledge of the contemporary ministry of many of the prophets. It will be observed that a group of *writing* prophets is clustered in the period of the declension of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, terminating in the fall of Samaria. A second and larger group centers about the decline of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, with the siege of Jerusalem, and the beginning of the captivity. Previous to both of these crises, still another and remarkably large group of *oral* prophets appeared just after the division of the kingdom.

This relationship of the prophets to the obvious exigencies of the hour is deeply significant. The need of a contemporary group of prophets in both Israel and Judah was of course increased by the division of the nation after Solomon's death, and intensified by the periodic and persistent strife between the two nations. These points are easily grasped and retained by means of the chart which appears within, together with informative notations in parallel columns. Frequent reference to this chart should enhance the interest and value of chronological reading.

The majority of the Old Testament books can be placed in their historical and chronological order in the Canon on the basis of internal evidence, as well as upon the records of the Jews. A few, such as Obadiah and Jonah, are more difficult to locate, and their precise place cannot be determined with finality. In such instances, the conclusions of learned and conservative Christian scholars are recorded.

---

## FORMATION OF THE CANON

That it [the Canon] was fixed at that time [of Ezra] appears from the fact that all subsequent references to the sacred writings presuppose the existence of the complete Canon, as well as from the fact that of no one among the apocryphal books is it so much as hinted, either by the author or by any other Jewish writer, that it was worthy of a place among the sacred books, though of some of them the pretensions are in other respects sufficiently high (e.g. Ecclus. xxxiii, 16-18; 1, 28). Josephus, indeed distinctly affirms (cont. Ap. i. c.) that, during the long period that had elapsed between the time of the close of the Canon and his day, no one had dared either to add to, or to take from, or to alter any thing in the sacred books. This plainly shows that about the time of Artaxerxes, to which Josephus refers, and which was the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, the collection of the sacred books was completed by an authority which thenceforward ceased to exist.—McClintock and Strong, Vol. II, p. 76.

The O.-T. Canon, as established in the time of Ezra, has remained unaltered to the present day. Some indeed, have supposed that, because the Sept. version contains some books not in the Hebrew, there must have been a double Canon, a Palestinian and an Egyptian . . . but this notion has been completely disproved. . . All extant evidence is against it. The Son of Sirach, and Philo, both Alexandrian Jews, make no allusion to it; and Josephus, who evidently used the Greek version, expressly declares against it in the passage above referred to (Ap. i. 8). The earlier notices of the Canon simply designate it by the threefold division already considered.—*Id.*, p. 77.

## A SUGGESTIVE READING SCHEDULE

As there are 929 chapters in the Old Testament, and 365 days in the year 1933, if the worker will read approximately three chapters *daily*, the reading of all the sacred writings to which our Saviour had access, will be easily accomplished in 1933.

### THE CONTENTS AND ORDER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

**I**NFORMATION as to the whys and wherefores of the Protestant Old Testament canon, and how and when it came to differ from the Roman Catholic, will be useful to our workers. The Old Testament is, of course, utilized alike by Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. These different groups have a slightly varying order for the component books that have been accepted by all as canonical. This is quite apart from the apocryphal writings injected first into the Septuagint text, and later into the Roman Catholic canon. It is desirable to discern clearly that the Protestant Bible has eliminated the apocryphal books, and so is identical in content with the original list of the Palestinian Jews whose canon, as the illuminating footnotes indicate, remained virtually unchanged for centuries both before and after Christ. Data is here presented, showing at a glance the unwarranted enlargement approved by Roman Catholic authority, together with the Protestant repudiation of the apocrypha and a return to the original canon under Reformation influences. The occasional confusion, therefore, arising from continued publication by Protestants of the apocrypha along with the canon, as an appendix, was fully removed shortly before the rise of the Advent Movement. The four lists follow in parallel columns to facilitate comparative study, *with the apocryphal books (or parts thereof) as they occur set off in brackets*, and footnotes for reference conveniently appended. It should likewise be noted that, while the Septuagint lists more apocryphal books by name than the Roman Catholic, the latter has incorporated with other books most of those not separately named, so that in reality the two lists are virtually alike in relation to apocryphal writings.

While there are unquestioned allusions to historic events in some of the apocryphal books, yet the internal evidence of these writings—their strange phantasies, fables, and errors—automatically separates them from the inspired Scriptures. They were never quoted by Jesus, and it cannot be proven that the apostles ever directly alluded to them. Hence they stand unrecognized in the Protestant Church, and rejected as uncanonical.

---

Jewish \*  
(New 1917 Trans.)

Septuagint \*\*  
(After Swete, 3 Vols.)

Roman Catholic \*\*\*  
(Vulgate)

Protestant \*\*\*\*  
(A. V. and R. V.)

---

THE LAW	Genesis	Genesis	GENESIS
GENESIS	Exodus	Exodus	EXODUS
EXODUS	Leviticus	Leviticus	LEVITICUS
LEVITICUS	Numbers	Numbers	NUMBERS
NUMBERS	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	DEUTERONOMY
DEUTERONOMY			
THE PROPHETS	Joshua	Josue	JOSHUA
JOSHUA	Judges	Judges	JUDGES
JUDGES	Ruth	Ruth	RUTH
I SAMUEL	I Kings	I Kings (I Samuel)	I SAMUEL
II SAMUEL	II Kings	II Kings (II Samuel)	II SAMUEL
I KINGS	III Kings	III Kings (I Kings)	I KINGS
II KINGS	IV Kings	IV Kings (II Kings)	II KINGS
ISAIAH	I Chronicles	I Paralipomenon (I Chron- icles)	I CHRONICLES
JEREMIAH	II Chronicles	II Paralipomenon (II Chron- icles)	II CHRONICLES
EZEKIEL	[Esdras I]	I Esdras (Ezra)	EZRA
THE TWELVE	Esdras II (Ezra 1:1— 10:44; Nehemiah 11:1)	II Esdras, alias Nehemias	NEHEMIAH
(HOSEA	Psalms	[Tobias]	ESTHER
JOEL	Proverbs	[Judith]	JOB
AMOS	Ecclesiastes	Esther [10:4-16, 24 added]	PSALMS
OBADIAH	Song (of Songs)	Job	PROVERBS
JONAH	Job	Psalms	ECCLESIASTES
MICAH	[Wisdom of Solomon]	Proverbs	SONG OF SOLOMON
NAHUM	[Wisdom of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus]	Ecclesiastes	ISAIAH
HABAKKUK	Esther	Canticle of Canticles	JEREMIAH
ZEPHANIAH	[Judith]	[Wisdom]	LAMENTATIONS
HAGGAI	[Tobit]	[Ecclesiasticus]	EZEKIEL
ZECHARIAH	Hosea	Isaiah	
MALACHI)	Amos	Jeremias	DANIEL
THE WRITINGS	Micah	Lamentations	HOSEA
PSALMS	Joel	[Baruch, including Epistle of Jeremy]	JOEL
PROVERBS	Obadiah	Ezechiel	AMOS
JOB	Jonah	Daniel [3:24-90 (Song of Three Children), Ch. 13 (Susanna), and Ch. 14 (Bell and Dragon) added]	OBADIAH
SONG OF SONGS	Nahum	Osee (Hosea)	JONAH
RUTH	Habakkuk	Joel	MICAH
LAMENTATIONS	Zephaniah	Amos	NAHUM
ECCLESIASTES	Haggai	Abdias (Obadiah)	HABAKKUK
ESTHER	Zechariah	Jonas	ZEPHANIAH
DANIEL	Malachi	Micheas (Micah)	HAGGAI
EZRA	Isaiah	Nahum	ZECHARIAH
NEHEMIAH	Jeremiah	Habacuc	MALACHI
I CHRONICLES	[Baruch]	Sophonias (Zephaniah)	
II CHRONICLES	Lamentations	Aggeus (Haggai)	
	[Epistle of Jeremy]	Zacharias	
	Ezekiel	Malachias	
	Daniel [with Song of Three Children added]	[I Machabees]	
	[Susannah]	[II Machabees]	
	[Bel and the Dragon]		
	[Maccabees I]		
	[Maccabees II]		
	[Maccabees III]		
	[Maccabees IV]		
	[Psalms of Solomon]		
	[Enoch]		
	[Odes, including Manasses]		

\* **Jewish.**—In making the transition from the Jewish to the Christian church, we find the same canon cherished by all. Christians of all sects have always been disposed to accept without question the canon of the Jews. For centuries all branches of the Christian church were practically agreed on the limits set by the Jews, but eventually the western church became divided, some alleging that Christ sanctioned the "larger" canon of Alexandria, including the Apocrypha, while others adhered, as the Jews have always done, to the canon of the Jews in Pal.—*International Standard Bible Ency., Vol. I, p. 561.*

During the first four centuries this Hebrew Canon is the only one which is distinctly recognized, and it is supported by the combined authority of those fathers whose critical judgment is entitled to the greatest weight. The real divergence as to the contents of the Old-Testament Canon is to be traced to Augustine, who enumerates the books contained in "the whole Canon of Scripture," including the Apocrypha, without any special mark of distinction, although it may be reasonably doubted whether he differed intentionally from Jerome except in language.—*McClintock and Strong, Ency. of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Lit., Vol. II, p. 78.*

\*\* **Septuagint**—The order of the books in our English OT is of course derived from LXX [Septuagint] through the Vulg of St. Jerome. The books in the LXX are arranged as follows: . . . On the basis of the LXX, Catholics advocate what is known as the "larger" canon of the Jews in Alexandria; Protestants, on the other hand, deny the existence of an independent canon in Alexandria in view of the "smaller" canon of the Jews in Pal. The actual difference between the Catholic and Protestant OTs is a matter of 7 complete books and portions of two others; viz, Tob, Jth, Wisd, Ecclus, Bar, 1 and 2 Macc, together with certain additions to Est (10 4—16 24) and to Dnl (3 24-90); Three; Sus ver [chapter] 13 and Bel ver [chapter] 14.) These Protestants reject as apocryphal because there is no sufficient evidence that they were ever reckoned as canonical by the Jews anywhere.—*International Standard Bible Ency., Vol. I, p. 556.*

The general use of the Septuagint (enlarged by apocryphal additions) produced effects which are plainly visible in the history of the O-T. Canon among the early Christian writers. In proportion as the fathers were more or less absolutely dependent on that version for their knowledge of the Old-Testament Scriptures, they gradually lost in common practice the sense of the difference between the books of the Hebrew Canon and the Apocrypha. The custom of individuals grew into the custom of the Church; and the public use of the apocryphal books obliterated in popular regard the characteristic marks of their origin and value, which could only be discovered by the scholar. But the custom of the Church was not fixed in an absolute judgment.—*McClintock and Strong, Ency. of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Lit., Vol. II, p. 78.*

\*\*\* **Roman Catholic**—Up to the date of the Council of Trent (q. v.), the Romanists allow that the question of the Canon was open, but one of the first labors of that assembly was to circumscribe a freedom which the growth of literature seemed to render perilous. The decree of the Council "on the Canonical Scriptures," which was made at the 4th session (April 8th, 1546), at which about 53 representatives were present, pronounced the enlarged Canon, including the apocryphal books, to be deserving in all its parts of "equal veneration" (*pari pietatis affectu*), and added a list of books "to prevent the possibility of doubt" (*ne cui dubitatio suboriri possit*).—*McClintock and Strong, Ency. of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Lit., Vol. II, p. 79.*

The Council of the Trent (1546) accepted as canonical all the books contained in the Latin version known as Vulgate, that is, in addition to the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Scriptures also Tobit and Judith (between Nehemiah and Esther), the additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira; after the Song of Songs), Baruch including the Epistle of Jeremiah (after Lamentations appended to Jeremiah), Susanna and Bel and the Dragon (as an appendix to Daniel; in chapter 2 the Song of the Three Holy Children—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—is inserted), I and II Maccabees (at the close of the Prophets).—*The Hebrew Scriptures in the Making, Margolis, p. 92. (See also Note a.)*

\*\*\*\* **Protestant**—The reformed churches unanimously agreed in confirming the Hebrew Canon of Jews allow any dogmatic authority to the apocryphal books, but the form in which this judgment was expressed by the different confessions. The Lutheran formularies contain no definite article on the subject, but the note with the front of his German translation of the Apocrypha (ed. 1534) is an adequate declaration of the later judgment: "Apocrypha, that is, books which are not placed on an equal footing (*nicht gleich gehalten*) with Holy Scripture, profitable and good for reading."—*McClintock and Strong, Ency. of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*

The various continental and Eng. versions of the Bible then being made likewise placed them [the Apocryphals] apart from the acknowledged books, as a kind of appendix. For example, the Zurich Bible of 1529, 1535, Coverdale's English tr of 1536, Matthew's of 1537, the second ed of the Great Bible, 1540, the Bishop AV of 1611. The first Eng. version to omit them altogether was an ed of King James's Version published in 1611 of printing them by themselves between the OT and the NT, continued until 1825, when the Edinburgh Committee and Foreign Bible Society protested that the Society should no longer translate these Apocryphal writings among heathen. The Society finally yielded and decided to exclude them (May 3, 1827). Since then, Protestants in America have given up the practice of publishing the Apoc as a part of sacred Scripture.—*International Standard Bible Ency., I, p. 562.*

(a) The grounds upon which the Reformed Churches differed from the Roman Catholic Church in the Apocrypha, were partly historical and literary and partly doctrinal. It seemed right to limit the books of the Apocrypha, which had been accepted by the Jews and formed part of the Hebrew Bible, and had also been accepted by some of the Fathers, notably Origen, Athanasius, and Jerome; whereas the Apocrypha had been clearly distinguished by them and placed upon a lower level. The Reformers were also influenced undoubtedly by the fact that quotations from the Apocrypha were frequently used by Roman Catholic writers in support of the peculiar doctrines of their Church, such as the merit of good works (To 4<sup>10</sup> 12<sup>9</sup>, Sir 38<sup>0</sup> 29<sup>11-12</sup>).

We have, then, to take account of what may be called a larger and a smaller Canon. The larger included the books which were comprised in the Greek LXX and afterwards the Latin Vulgate, and became the Bible of the Mediaeval Church, which was confined to the Books of the Hebrew Bible, and was equivalent to our Old Testament.—*Dictionary of the Bible, Hastings, Vol. III, p. 605.*

## THE THREE MAJOR DIVISIONS

The Jews early divided the OT writings into three classes: (1) the **Torah**, or Law; (2) the **Nebhiim**, or Prophets; and (3) the **Kethubhim**, or Writings called in Gr. the Hagiographa. The **Torah** included the five books of the Pentateuch (Dt, which were called "the Five-fifths of the Law." The **Nebhiim** embraced (a) the four so-called Former Prophets (1 and 2 S, counted as one book, 1 and 2 K, also counted as one book; and (b) the four so-called Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel) counted as one book; and the Twelve Minor Prophets counted as one book; a total of 8 books. The **Kethubhim**, or Writings, were Ps, Prov, and Job, the five Meghilloth or Rolls (Cant, Ruth, Lam, Eccl, Est), Dnl, Ezr-Neh, counted as one book; in all 24 books, exactly the same as those of the Protestant canon. This was the canon of the Jews as far as we can trace it back.—*International Standard Bible Ency., Vol. I, p. 555.*

It is an altogether erroneous supposition that all of the writings comprised within the third division must have been written after the second or prophetic collection had been closed. The books of the third division rather form a group of matter from the two which precede it in the editions.—*"The Hebrew Scriptures in the Making," Margolis, p. 117.*

**MAJOR PROPHETS.**—The study of the Major Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel—carried us through the history of Judah, and through the entire period of the Babylonian Exile. That is, from the time when Isaiah began his prophetic labors to the end of the reign of Hezekiah, and from the thirteenth year of the Exile until the fall of Judah in 586 B. C. Ezekiel was carried to Babylon in 597 B. C., and in 592 was called back to Jerusalem. His prophetic labors extended over a period of twenty-two years, or until 570 B. C., about sixteen years after the fall of Judah. He was carried to Babylon in the reign of Jehoiakim and passed through the entire period of the Captivity and returned to Jerusalem by the edict of Cyrus.—*Holy Bible, New Analytical Ed., Dickson, p. 1011.*

It is proper to add that while the contents of the several divisions of the canon were fixed, the order of the divisions varied from time to time; and even in the second division the Talmud knew Isaiah as standing between the Major and Minor Prophets. This order of the four prophetic books (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Minor Prophets), was followed by the Jews, the largest being placed first.—*A Dictionary of the Bible, John D. Davis, p. 117.*

**MINOR PROPHETS.**—At an early time these twelve prophets must have been brought together in one collection. In the Septuagint there is a slight difference in the order. The word "Minor" does not imply less importance than the others, but are smaller in bulk than Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.—*Holy Bible, New Analytical Ed., Dickson, p. 1011.*

The Minor Prophets take us back to a time earlier than that of Isaiah, since at least two of them preceded Isaiah was prophesying when Jeremiah received his call, and between the time of Zephaniah and the fall of Judah. Obadiah utters his messages. Following the Exile, the three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi came to be included in the Old Testament Canon. It was in Israel that the first of the sixteen prophets appeared, Jonah, doubtless, the prophet of Nineveh. He was followed by Joel in Judah and Amos in Israel, while the labors of Hosea extended from the time of the fall of Israel in 722 B. C. Thus we see how the minor prophets range over the whole of the long period of the Exile.—*Ibid.*