THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

We have concluded the study of the Pentateuch, the book of Laws, covering the creation story in Genesis up to the death of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy. The Historical Books include the biblical books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther (Roman Catholic canon’s also include Tobit, Judith and 1 and 2 Maccabees but for this series we will not include them)

Many people get to the historical books in the bible and find them too dull or uninteresting. But to approach the rich content can bring fulfillment if you view it from a storytelling perspective. These stories paint a vivid picture of the times, landscape and people, how they lived and worshipped God. Understanding Israel’s past sets the stage for all the following books of the bible as many books closely mirror or compliment one another at later stages.

For example, Joshua Judges, Samuel and Kings are a continuous narrative of Israel’s history from the time of Moses death until the end of the monarchy and Exile to Babylon. Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah narrate a separate history of Israel that concludes with the reconstruction of Jerusalem after the return from Babylonian Exile. Ruth and Esther both stand independent of each other and the other historical books are promote women as the ones who saves Israel from threats of destruction at the hand of the enemy. Ruth, ultimately becomes the ancestress of King David and therefore of Jesus.

The first four books from Joshua to Kings constitute the bulk of the historical material and are considered by theologians to be apart of the Deuteronomistic historical account, sharing the viewpoint that worship should be centralized in Jerusalem (Deut 12:4-14, 1 Kings 11:13, 32, 36, 2 Kings 21:4, 7, 23:27). The book of Joshua narrates the conquest of the Promised Land under his leadership leading up to Joshua’s death, which begins the book of Judges. Judges ends before the birth of Samuel and follows through to the anointing of Samuel as the first king of Israel.

The books outlining the work of the chronicler’s history includes 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah with the beginning of Ezra being identical to the ending of 2 Chronicles. Chronicles draws on earlier sources narrating the history of Israel until the decree of Cyrus permitted the Jews to return from Exile. Ezra and Nehemiah tell the history of Israel after this decree.

The purpose of the summaries of the historical accounts of the bible is to shed light on the primary themes of each book, discuss the importance of several notable stories and the supporting scriptures and to show how the history behind who and what we believe is important to understanding how we arrive at this present time in our walk with Christ.