

A Summary of the Old Testament

Type (Genre) of Writing

The Old Testament is arranged in four types of writing.

Law	History	Poetry	Prophecy
<p>Creedal in nature. Describes guidelines for godly living among cultures that do not honor God.</p>	<p>Narrative in nature. Describes the early existence of the Hebrew people.</p>	<p>Emotional in nature. Describes man's relationship with God and others.</p>	<p>Judicial in nature. Declares God's just and gracious character by proclaiming truth. Prophecy announces coming events with tones of judgment and mercy.</p>
<p>Genesis. The account of creation, the fall of man, the promise of a Savior for all humanity, and the preservation of the Savior through the Hebrews.</p> <p>Exodus. The deliverance of the Hebrew people from enslavement in Egypt.</p> <p>Leviticus. The establishment of a sacrificial system as a means of fellowship with a holy, righteous God.</p> <p>Numbers. The account of the Hebrews wandering for forty years owing to sin.</p> <p>Deuteronomy. The second giving of the Law to prepare the Hebrews to enter their Promised Land.</p>	<p>Joshua. The entering and conquering the promised land.</p> <p>Judges. Sin in the promised land.</p> <p>Ruth. A story of human faithfulness and divine providence.</p> <p>1, 2 Samuel, 1, 2 Chronicles, and 1, 2 Kings. Historical narratives of Israel under different leaders.</p> <p>Ezra and Nehemiah. The restoration of Israel after exile.</p> <p>Esther. A story of personal courage and divine providence.</p>	<p>Job. The story of human suffering and God's sovereignty.</p> <p>Psalms. Stories of God's unchanging character (immutability) against man's ever-changing emotions and circumstances.</p> <p>Proverbs. Wise sayings about man's relationship to man.</p> <p>Ecclesiastes. Teachings about what is most important in life.</p> <p>Song of Songs. Passionate words about love.</p> <p><i>"Job teaches you how to suffer, Psalms teaches you how to pray, Proverbs teaches you how to live, Ecclesiastes teaches you how to enjoy, Song of Songs teaches you how to love."</i> —J. Oswald Sanders</p>	<p>Prophecy can have both near and far application. Some were historically fulfilled; some are still future in fulfillment.</p> <p>Prophecy often speaks about God's punishment (and eventual restoration) of Israel. It also predicts much about the Messiah. Read Isaiah 53:1-12.</p> <p>There are two types of prophecy books: the longer books, called Major Prophets, and the shorter books, called Minor Prophets. Both types are monumental in significance.</p> <p>Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel</p> <p>Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi</p>