

THE L.I.F.E. PLAN

# STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLE

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BLOCK 3

THEME 1 - THE LAW  
LESSON 1 (73 of 216)

## **BLOCK 3**

### **THEME 1: THE LAW**

#### **LESSON 1 (73 OF 216): STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLE**

**LESSON AIM:** Overview the structure of the Bible.

Before we take a look at some of the individual books of the Bible, it would be beneficial to us to note the Bible's structure. That is, the place where we find the books within the canon of Scripture and what we can learn from this. There are many recognizable divisions in the Bible but the most obvious ones are the Old Testament and the New Testament. We will base our observations around these two obvious divisions. The work of J. Sidlow Baxter in his monumental book called *Explore the Book* is highly recommended. The following analysis follows his suggestions.

To begin with, it might be helpful that we remember a number sequence. This number sequence represents the other divisions within the Bible and the number of books within each division. This number is: 593 5 593 5949. Let's break it down.

#### **I. The Old Testament - 593 5 593**

In the Old Testament, there are 17 historical books in the beginning. There are five experiential books in the middle. And there are 17 prophetic books at the end. The two groups of 17 books each divide into the same pattern as well: 593. Here's what we find.

##### **A. 17 Historical Books (divided into three groups)**

1. The Law (5) - Theme is Preparation
  - a. Genesis - Destitution in himself
  - b. Exodus - Deliverance in God alone
  - c. Leviticus - Dedication to God's way
  - d. Numbers - Direction by God's will
  - e. Deuteronomy - Discipline by God's Word
  
2. Pre-exilic Records (9) - Theme is Occupation
  - a. Joshua - Possession
  - b. Judges - Declension
  - c. Ruth - Declension
  - d. 1 Samuel - Transition - From Theocracy to Monarchy
  - e. 2 Samuel - Confirmation - Davidic Covenant
  - f. 1 Kings - Disruption - The kingdom was divided after Solomon's death
  - g. 2 Kings - Dispersion - Assyrian and Babylonian captivities
  - h. 1 Chronicles - Retrospection
  - i. 2 Chronicles - Retrospection

Note: 1 and 2 Kings gives the perspective from the throne (political).

1 and 2 Chronicles give the perspective from the temple (religious).

3. Post-exilic records (3) - Theme is Dispossession

- a. Ezra - Restoration
- b. Nehemiah - Reconstruction
- c. Esther - Preservation

B. 5 Experiential Books

The experiential books give us the pattern of our spiritual journeys on the earth.

1. Job - Death to the self-life. [Personal]
2. Psalms - New life in God. [Spiritual]
3. Proverbs - Wisdom for living. [Practical]
4. Ecclesiastes - Don't be distracted. [Philosophical]
5. Song of Solomon - Intimacy with God. [Relational]

C. 17 Prophetical Books (divided into three groups)

1. Major Prophets (5)

- a. Isaiah - The God who governs all. (Pre-exilic).
- b. Jeremiah - The God who avenges sin. (Pre-exilic).
- c. Lamentations - Jerusalem falls into Babylonian captivity.
- d. Ezekiel - The God who overrules. (Post-exilic).
- e. Daniel - The God who fore-plans. (Post-exilic).

2. Minor Prophets (12)

a. Pre-exilic prophets (9)

- 1) Hosea - The God who loves to the uttermost.
- 2) Joel - The God who appeals before smiting.
- 3) Amos - The God who requites the oft-warned.
- 4) Obadiah - The God who judges with poetic irony.
- 5) Jonah - The God who spares repentant sinners.
- 6) Micah - The God who smites in order to bless.
- 7) Nahum - The God who is never mocked or eluded.
- 8) Habakkuk - The God who vindicates the righteous.
- 9) Zephaniah - The God who avenges abused privilege.

b. Post-exilic Prophets (3)

- 1) Haggai - The God who restores lost blessing.
- 2) Zechariah - The God who returns new mercies.
- 3) Malachi - The God who still says, "Prove me now."

Note: Among the minor prophets, there are four trios:

To Israel: Hosea, Amos, Joel

To Judah: Joel, Micah, Zephaniah

To Gentiles: Obadiah (Edom), Nahum (Nineveh; Assyria) Habakkuk  
(Babylon)

To Remnant: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Note: There are three outstanding enemies to God's people in the Old Testament: Edom, Assyria, and Babylon.

## **II. The New Testament - 5949**

In the New Testament, there are four major divisions.

### A. Historical Foundation (5)

1. Matthew - Jesus as King.
2. Mark - Jesus as Servant.
3. Luke - Jesus as man.
4. John - Jesus as God.
5. Acts - The re-offering of the kingdom to Israel and the birth of the church.

### B. The Gentile-Christian Letters (9)

1. Evangelical Letters (4)
  - a. Romans - The Gospel and its message.
  - b. 1 Corinthians - The Gospel and its ministry.
  - c. 2 Corinthians - The Gospel and its ministers.
  - d. Galatians - The Gospel and its mutilators.
2. Mystical Letters - (3)
  - a. Ephesians - The Gospel and the heavenlies.
  - b. Philippians - The Gospel and the earthlies.
  - c. Colossians - The Gospel and the philosophies.
3. Eschatological Letters - (2)
  - a. 1 Thessalonians - The Gospel and the church's hope.
  - b. 2 Thessalonians - The Gospel and the antichrist.

### C. The Pastoral Letters (4)

1. 1 Timothy - A charge to guard the post.
2. 2 Timothy - A challenge to fortitude and faithfulness.
3. Titus - An urge to put things in order.
4. Philemon - An appeal and model to ourselves.

#### D. The Hebrew-Christian Letters - (9)

1. Hebrews - Faith.
2. James - Works.
3. 1 Peter - Hope.
4. 2 Peter - Growth.
5. 1 John - Love.
6. 2 John - Continuing.
7. 3 John - Conserving.
8. Jude - Contending.
9. Revelation - Co-reigning.

The Bible is the most unique book in the history of the world. It came to us from God as a part of his plan to reveal himself to us and to guide us through life in the way that pleases him.

You should make the study of the Bible a life-long practice. Learning the structure of the Bible will help you to better understand the content of the Bible. It will also help you remember and recall the story the Bible is telling in a greater way.

Invest in a good library of tools that will help you study the Bible. Your basic library should include the following books.

1. Old Testament Survey.
2. New Testament Survey
3. Basic Theology Book
4. Bible Dictionary
5. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
6. Bible Encyclopedia
7. A good study Bible
8. Explore the Book by J. Sidlow Baxter, Zondervan (This is a must-have)

The more you study, the more you will get to know God. The more you get to know God, the more like him you will become. Let your Bible study become as important to you as breathing. Through your Bible study, God will reveal to you his purpose for your life and he will equip you for the work he has planned for you to do.

Keep this lesson handy. Let it be a guide for you as you study through the Bible. God wants to speak to you from his Word. Take time every day to give him this opportunity.

Happy Studying.

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**LESSON 1 (73 OF 216): STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLE**

**QUESTIONS TO INSPIRE THOUGHT**

1. Memorize the books of the Bible.
2. What is the structural analysis of the Bible?
3. Based on the number sequence above, write the basic structural outline of the Bible.