**Old Testament 101**

**Opening Prayer:** *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.* **Psalm 19:14.**

**Sources:**

* The Old Testament – A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures by *Michael D. Coogan.* Oxford University Press 2011
* Introduction to the Old Testament – DVD lectures by *Ralph Klein & Katheryn Schifferdecker.*
* Enter the Bible on the Luther Seminary Web Site
* Moody Handbook of Theology by *Paul Enns.* [On line]
* Lutheran Study Bible – New Revised Standard Version.

**My Goal:**

O.T. 101 is designed as an overview of the Old Testament [O.T.] primarily concentrating on the **‘historical aspects’** of O.T. literature. I hope to give you a basic and beginning framework, a ‘***skeleton’*** if you will of O.T. history, on which you may build your own personal Bible study. A ***‘skeleton’*** of the O.T. to which you add the *muscles, ligaments, tendons, and organs* to make YOUR personal Bible study come to LIFE for you.

Note that I have spent no time on early Genesis, the prophets, the Writings of the Bible like the Psalms, Proverbs, and books like Job. As you study the O.T.; for example as you study the prophets, add their ‘story’ to the **‘skeleton’** of O.T. history that I began for you.

**Disclaimer:** I am not a Bible expert.I am no Biblical scholar. I am not a trained Theologian. I have been studying the O.T. off and on for about 6 months as part of my first foundation course training as a Lay Pastoral Associate {L.P.A.] in the ELCA. My O.T. knowledge is in a very early stage. Please know that I have no motivation or intention to mislead you. I am trying my best to be true to my sources. I suspect there are errors and or discrepancies in my work. I know there are other interpretations out there. Look at my words as one person’s interpretation of how I see the O.T. story. If you find a discrepancy or you find a different or better interpretation, please let me know. johnvhanson@bresnan.net Questions are also welcome.

**Bias:** Everyone who reads the Bible brings **Bias.**

 For example, a white slave owner reads the O.T. with a different perspective than a black slave. A rich person reads the Bible with a different perspective than a poor person.

 For example, the prophets attack ‘rituals of worship’ in 9 places in the Bible. Protestants interpret these as an attack on the rituals themselves. Catholics, Jews, and Episcopalians say these passages do not reject their elaborate forms of worship but reject worship that is not accompanied by an inner disposition of full obedience.

 When we read the Bible, we must be careful not to interject our own **Bias**/perspective; although, on some level that is impossible. I use this example; in the Cain and Abel story Genesis 4 why did God choose Abel’s offering and reject Cain’s? Classic interpretation is that Cain did not bring his best offerings. Abel brought ‘firstlings’ of his flock. Cain brought ‘an offering’. The Bible really does not say why Cain’s offering was less acceptable than Abel’s. It is very easy to inject our **Bias** into this story and perhaps over interpret the story.

Also and most importantly, we Christians read the O.T. knowing the Cross and the Life of Jesus and what they mean for us. That is still a kind of **Bias.**