

## **Entering the World of the Old Testament: Reading Scripture with Ancient Eyes**

Reflection Worksheet for Continued Study: A guide for personal reflection on timeline, genre, ancient context, and your own place in the story.

### ***1. Where Am I in the Story?***

- a. Which part of Israel's story (Patriarchs, Exodus, Wilderness, Conquest, Monarchy, Exile, Return) resonates most with your life right now? Why?
- b. What emotions or themes from that period connect with your current faith journey?
- c. How does seeing the Old Testament as a lived story change the way you read it?

### ***2. Connecting Genre to the Ancient World***

- a. Law: How might the covenant laws have helped shape Israel's identity after coming out of Egypt? What kind of identity-shaping guidance do you rely on today?
- b. History: How can the themes of reconciliation, personal encounter, and transformation help you read historical books differently?
- c. Poetry & Wisdom: What human experiences (joy, grief, fear, hope) do you see reflected in Psalms, Job, or Proverbs? How do these writings give voice to your own life?
- d. Prophets: What challenges was Israel facing when prophets like Isaiah or Jeremiah spoke? How do prophetic themes of justice, faithfulness, and hope speak to our world today?

### ***3. How the Book Categories Reflect Israel's Lived Experience***

- a. Which category (Law, History, Poetry/Wisdom, Prophets) feels most relatable to you as a modern reader? Why?
- b. How does knowing the struggle or situation Israel faced help you understand a book's message more clearly?
- c. What does it mean to you that Scripture arose from real moments of human messiness, crisis, celebration, doubt, and hope?

### ***4. Examples of Each Genre and Their Function***

Reflect on one of the following (or another passage of your choice):

- Law: Deuteronomy 6 or Exodus 19
- History: 2 Samuel 12
- Poetry: Psalm 113 or Psalm 139
- Wisdom: Job 28 or Proverbs 3
- Prophets: Amos 5

What new insight emerges when you consider the passage with ancient eyes?

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**5. In what ways does Scripture shape your own identity, imagination, or spiritual life?**

**6. Why These Books? What Needs Were They Addressing?**

- a. What human question or need do you think each category or book addresses?
- b. Which of those needs do you personally identify with most today?
- c. How does this understanding help you approach the Old Testament with fresh perspective?

**7. Geography as Theology: Place in the Story**

- a. Which biblical places (wilderness, mountains, rivers, Jerusalem, exile lands) stand out most to you?
- b. What spiritual themes are connected to those places?
- c. How does thinking about physical settings enrich your reading of Scripture?

**8. A Three-World Reading Approach**

Choose any Old Testament passage and reflect:

- World Behind the Text: What historical, cultural, or geographical background might matter here?
- World Of the Text: What features of genre, structure, or imagery stand out?
- World In Front of the Text: How does this text speak into your life and community today?

- a. What did you discover about the ancient world?
- b. What features helped shape the meaning?
- c. What personal or communal insight emerges as you bring the text into the present?

**9. Bringing It All Together**

- a. How has learning about context—timeline, themes, categories—changed your understanding of the Old Testament?
- b. What question or theme do you want to continue exploring?
- c. How might you approach reading Scripture differently going forward?