



# THE HISTORIES

*Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings,  
1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*



*Following Jesus through the Histories*

## HOW DOES THIS TYPE OF LITERATURE FIT INTO THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE?

After the Exodus and Moses' leadership, God used Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land, a place of victorious rest. However, the people rebelled by turning away from God by following false religions and practicing oppression in a depressing cycle of disobedience and the tragic consequences that stem from sin. Through different judges (like Samson), prophets (like Samuel) and kings (like Saul & David), God sought to lead His people toward Himself through righteous leadership. However, when the kings and people turned away from the Law, God expelled Israel and Judah from the Promised Land into Babylonian exile. After the Persians defeated Babylon, God brought the exiles back to Jerusalem and rebuilt His temple.

## HOW DO WE READ THE HISTORIES NORMALLY?

The books of Old Testament history present the stories contained within them as just that, history. When reading these scriptures, it is important keep in mind that God was working out His redemptive plans through real human events primarily in the people of Israel, observed and recorded (mostly) by eyewitnesses who experienced them. The books of history show us God faithfully working despite the individuals and nations, who often give us negative examples, yet nonetheless provide evidence for God's graciousness and unthwarted plans.

## HOW DOES THIS PART OF THE BIBLE POINT TO JESUS?

Interestingly, the name "Jesus" is a Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua" (roughly meaning 'the Lord saves'). As a better Joshua, Jesus fought with His people as God and demonstrated that victory over sin and death comes from God alone. Thankfully, Jesus took our sin and the consequences of our rebellion (1 Corinthians 15:56-57). God therefore exalted Jesus (Philippians 2:9) -as a better David- to a position of eternal kingship righteously presiding over all past, present, and future rulers. Jesus dealt graciously with exiles of sin, and through His physical resurrection rebuilt His own destroyed temple (John 2:19).

# HOW DO THE HISTORIES FIT INTO OUR LIVES TODAY?

When we open the Bible we are not only opening up a religious text, we are opening up a living history. Consider Esther: nowhere in her story is God mentioned, rather the author invites us to look for God's activity as one ironic reversal after another comes to pass in favor of the Israelites. This account, and many more like in the Bible, invite us to see God's faithfulness as God works out His purposes in and through people. The historical books remind us that the end goal of God blessing Israel was never to elevate them over the nations; it was always for Israel to be a conduit of God's grace and blessing to all the nations. This narrative's unique and definitive trajectory is resolved ultimately in the person and work of Jesus Christ. As His followers, we can look to Him as our present day proof of God's historical faithfulness.