

# Gift of a Promise: His Word and His Body

## Lesson 3

## Unit Two

### The Old Testament

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### Here I Am, Lord

*Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.  
Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long. Psalm 25: 4-5*

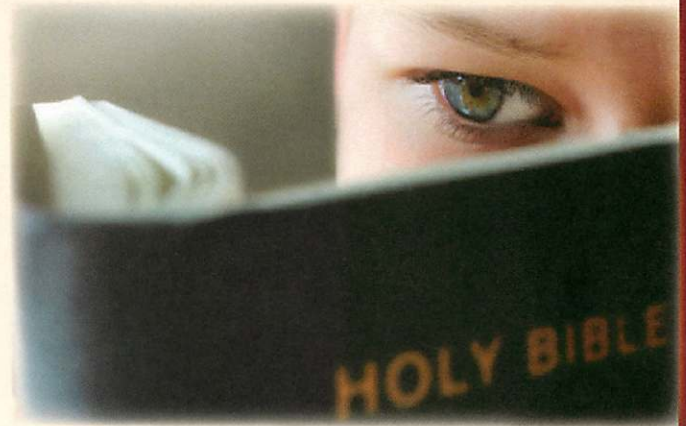
### A Sprint through Salvation History

The Bible is divided into two main sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament.



The Old Testament books are primarily about God's distinctive relationship with his Chosen People. At different times these people are called Hebrews, Israelites, Judeans, and Jews. Throughout their history, God breaks through and calls the Chosen People to recognize him as their one and only God. God promises to bless them in a special way, and in return he asks the Chosen People to be faithful in following his commands.

This holy promise between God and his people is called a Covenant (in legal terms we would call it a



contract). *Testament* is another word for *Covenant*, so the Old Testament is the story of the Covenant or contract between God and his special people—the Jews, so most of the books of the Old Testament are also the sacred Scripture of the Jewish people. Since the books were written in Hebrew, they are often referred to as the “*Hebrew Scriptures*.” The Old Testament is “old” not because it is out of date, but because it is the story of how God made his first Covenant with his Chosen People.

### Bringing the Past to Life

The Old Testament in our Christian Bibles is divided into four different sections.

**1. The Pentateuch or Torah.** These five books are the heart of the Old Testament. They contain the



stories of Creation and stories of how sin entered the world. They tell how God broke through to make his first covenant. In the Pentateuch we read how God led his people out of slavery and how God gave them the Ten Commandments to help them live the way he expected them to.

*Select the line that names the 5 books of the Pentateuch:*

- a. Genesis, Joshua, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers
- b. Deuteronomy, Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Genesis
- c. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

**2. The Historical Books.** These sixteen books contain religious history and accounts of inspiring people and events. They tell us how the Chosen People settled in the Promised Land, became a kingdom, appointed kings, how they often worshiped false gods and ignored the poor. So God sent special men and women to help the people come back to their senses and worship the only True God—the one with whom they made a covenant.

*Select the line that identifies some of the characters in the 16 Historical Books:*

- a. Joshua, Samson, Samuel, Solomon, Ruth
- b. Moses, Cain, Noah, Adam, Abraham
- c. Jacob, Abraham, Jeremiah, Judas Maccabees, Daniel

**3. The Wisdom Books.** These seven books contain the collected wisdom of the Chosen People. You will find songs and prayers that we use in Liturgy and special services. You will find advice on good and holy living. You will also find in the book of Job how the people questioned why bad things happen to good people...it's still a question we ask today!

*Name three of the seven Wisdom Books:*

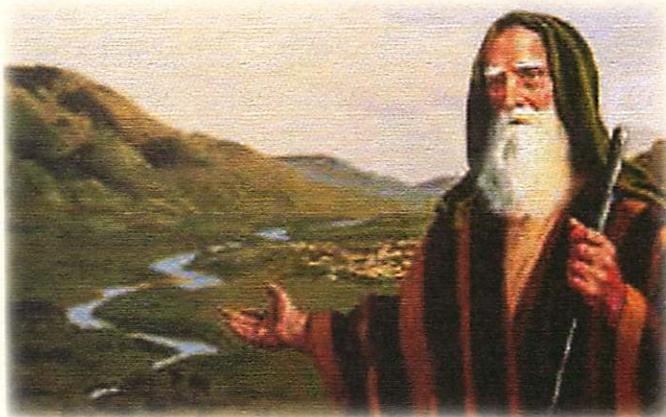
- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_



**4. The Books of the Prophets.** and make my dashes real dashes): These books contain the messages the prophets - those special people called by God - delivered to God's straying people. They warned the people, they challenged them, and when they stubbornly did not listen, they offered comfort and hope when the people felt that God had abandoned them. Some of the prophets promised a future savior, the Messiah, who would bring God's peace, love and justice to the world.

*Unscramble the letters to identify each of the prophets*

- rahecaihz \_\_\_\_\_ hmeareij \_\_\_\_\_  
 shaiai \_\_\_\_\_ ekzeile \_\_\_\_\_  
 smao \_\_\_\_\_ caimh \_\_\_\_\_



To fully understand the plan God has for the human race, we need both the Old and the New Testaments. In the Old Testament, God reveals the love he has for us. The stories teach us how sin keeps us from being in a completely loving relationship with God. You will see as you explore the Old Testament that God used faithful people to bring his people back on the right path. All the stories of the Old Testament prepare us to understand the New Testament and how Jesus Christ fulfills God's promise to save us from sin and death.

## Our Armenian Way

### *A Picture Paints a Thousand Words*



In Jesus' time the world was very different from ours. Biblical scholars offer a great deal of background information that helps us to better understand what the people of that time were experiencing. This intense investigation by scholars helps us understand Scripture at a much deeper level.

Most people then were illiterate, meaning they did not have the ability to read or write. That's really why, for the early Church, oral tradition was so important. The Hebrew people, for example, would pass down stories by word of mouth (imagine how we share camp-fire stories). This is how later generations understood what God expected from them. The epic cycle of David of Sassoun is a great example of oral tradition in Armenian culture.

The Hebrew people recorded Scripture on scrolls and those that had the ability would read it to the congregation.

Art was yet another way of communicating God's word. Armenian artists (most of them monks)



produced magnificent illustrations to depict biblical events. Toros Roslin was one of the best known Armenian manuscript illustrators (or illuminators, called so because of the use of gold leaf in their paintings). He lived in the 13th century (c. 1210-1270). He worked at the scriptorium of Hromkla in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, the seat of the patriarchal see at that time. His patrons included the Catholicos Constantine I, King Hetum I, Queen Isabella, and Prince Levon, in particular. Interestingly, Roslin wrote notes in the margins (called colophons) which have given a rich picture of the world in which he lived. The earliest surviving manuscript he illustrated is the *Zeytun Gospel* (1256).

The miniature below represents a New Testament story. Can you guess what biblical story it portrays?



## Creative Expression-Gifts from God

How do you like to tell stories or express yourself? Some people act, some write, some paint or draw, some sing, create pottery, metal works... the list is endless. The arts are a wonderful gift from God to his creation and they communicate the infinite glory and endless creativity we humans have, because we are made in the image and likeness of God. What do you say we try our hand at some different forms of a creative expression?

1. Read Exodus 20:1-17



*(Draw a picture or create your own symbolic language to represent the word that fits in each space)*

The \_\_\_\_\_ are one of the most famous parts of the \_\_\_\_\_. They are a summary of the entire \_\_\_\_\_ God gave to Moses on \_\_\_\_\_. For Christians and Jews they play a \_\_\_\_\_ role in how we make \_\_\_\_\_, how we treat each other, and how we go about being in good standing with \_\_\_\_\_.

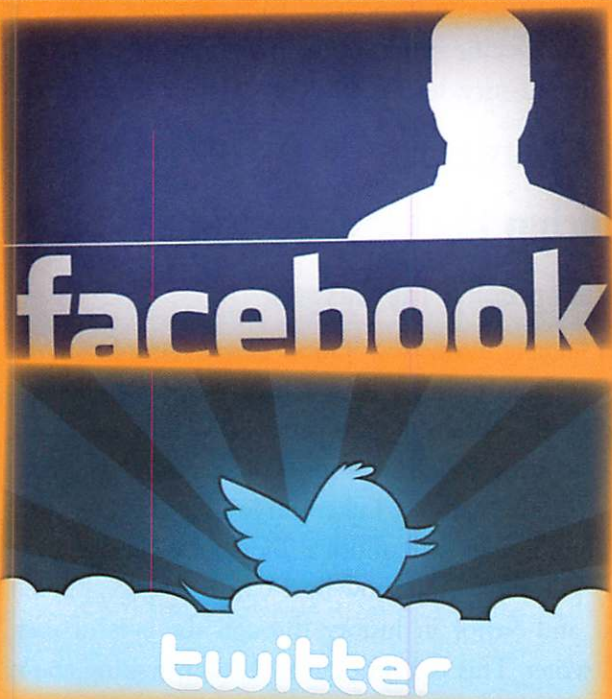
### Answers:

Bible God Mount Sinai key  
Ten Commandments Law decisions

2. Read Psalms 137: Wisdom-compose a prayer.

3. Read Isaiah 53: Draw your own miniature.

4. Read I Kings 19:8-13: (hearing God's voice) Act it out.



## What Rules *Your* Life?

Technology can be a wonderful thing. We know the social networking vocabulary: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Blog... True, they all keep us updated with the lives and activities of our family and friends. That is what they are designed to do—to expand our horizontal network. We can keep adding “friends” until they number in the tens of thousands, most of whom we will know only superficially. However, there is one relationship that social networking sites omit. This is the vertical relationship with our Creator, our Father, and our Friend. To build an authentic, real relationship with God, we have to seek him. God is always there for us, even when the internet connection is down. Think about letting *him* be a big part of what rules *your* life!