

Tutorial Guide: *The History Books and the Prophets – Learning to Live as God's People*

Goal:

To help participants explore how the historical books and the prophets in the Old Testament tell the story of God's people, their struggles, and the call to live faithfully.

1. Living in the Land: What Happens After the Exodus?

Summary:

The Exodus was about being freed from slavery — but what happens after freedom? The next books tell how the people entered the land, struggled to build a society, and wrestled with what it meant to follow God.

They include:

- *Joshua*: Taking the land
- *Judges*: Cycles of failure and rescue
- *Samuel & Kings*: The rise (and fall) of kings
- *Ezra & Nehemiah*: Returning after exile

Discussion Prompts:

- When people gain freedom, what new challenges do they face?
 - What do you think makes a good society?
 - Why do you think the Bible tells stories where things go badly?
 - Can we learn from stories of failure as much as from success?
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2. Kings, Power, and the Danger of Forgetting

Summary:

The people asked for kings “like other nations,” but it came with problems. Saul and David are complex figures. Solomon builds a temple, but his choices lead to division. Eventually, the nation falls apart.

Key idea:

The Bible often shows that power, when misused, leads to trouble — even among God’s people.

Discussion Prompts:

- Have you ever seen power used in a harmful way?
- Why do you think people are drawn to strong leaders?

- David is called “a man after God’s heart” — even though he made big mistakes. What does that say to you?
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3. Exile and Rebuilding: Starting Over Again

Summary:

Because the people turned away from God, they lost their land and were taken into exile. Later, some returned and tried to rebuild. But it wasn’t easy — the past had left wounds, and the future was uncertain.

Key idea:

The Bible shows that even when things fall apart, God still invites people to return and rebuild.

Discussion Prompts:

- Have you ever had to start over after something broke down?
 - What makes returning or rebuilding difficult?
 - What might faithfulness look like in times of disappointment?
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4. The Prophets: Calling People Back to What Matters

Summary:

Prophets were people called by God to speak hard truths. They reminded the people of their covenant with God — especially when they had forgotten justice, mercy, and truth. They often spoke in poetry, pictures, or symbolic actions.

Key Themes:

- Justice and mercy
- Faithfulness to God
- Hope for restoration

Discussion Prompts:

- What do you think a “prophet” is?
 - Why do you think God sent prophets when people were turning away?
 - Do you think churches today need prophetic voices? What would they say?
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5. Judgement and Hope – Held Together

Summary:

The prophets warned of judgment — not to shame people, but to wake them up. Yet they always pointed toward hope: that God would restore, forgive, and bring peace. Some prophets even spoke of a future person (the Messiah) who would lead God’s people.

Key Examples:

- Isaiah: speaks of a coming servant (Isaiah 53)
- Jeremiah: promises a new covenant (Jeremiah 31)
- Ezekiel: sees dry bones brought back to life (Ezekiel 37)

Discussion Prompts:

- Why do you think judgment and hope are both part of the prophetic message?
 - Do you see places in the world today where people need to be “woken up”?
 - What does hope mean in hard times?
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6. What About Us?

Summary:

The stories of kings, exile, and prophets aren’t just about the past — they raise big questions for us today. What does it mean to be faithful? What does justice look like? How do we respond when things are broken?

The prophets give us a “prophetic imagination” — a way of seeing the world not just as it is, but as it could be.

Discussion Prompts:

- What stood out to you in today’s discussion?
- If someone were a prophet in our world today, what might they say?
- Where do you see signs of hope or signs of change?