

# The Old Testament as a Novel

Or

Where the Victorian novelists got  
their ideas from

# Taken at the end of the novel, looking forward

- Mal 3:1
- "Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.
  
- Mal 4:1-3
- "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.
- 2 But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.
- 3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.
- ESV

# How big a novel?

<b>BIBLE</b>	<b>CHAPTERS</b>	<b>VERSES</b>	<b>WORDS</b>
OLD TESTAMENT	929	23,214	622,771
NEW TESTAMENT	260	7,959	184,590
ENTIRE BIBLE	1,189	31,173	807,361
War and Peace	Tolstoy		587,287
Les Miserable	Victor Hugo		530,000
Anna Karenina	Tolstoy		340,000
Middlemarch	George Eliot		316,059
Jane Eyre	Charlotte Bronte		184,875
Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen		122,189
<b>Average word count of the Great Novels is:</b>			<b>136,604</b>
The entire Lord of the Rings series (including The Hobbit)			576,459

# If in English it would look like this?

thlwfthlrdsprfctrvngthslthtstmnfthlrdsarmkn  
gwsthsmpthprcptsfthlrdrghtrjcngthhrthcm  
mndmntfthlrdsprnlghtnngthsthfrfthlrdsclnndr  
ngfrvrthrlsthlrdrtrndrghstlgthrmrtbdsrdrthyt  
hngldvnmchfngldswtrlsthnhnnynddrppngsfthh  
nycmbmrvrbbthmsyrsrvntwrndnkpngthmthrsgr  
trwrd

# With capitals

ThlwftHrdsprfctrvngthsIthstmnfthHrdssrmk  
ngwsThsmpIthprcptsfthHrdrrghtrjcngthhrtThc  
mmndmntfthHrdsprnlgthngthsThfrfthHrdscInn  
drngfrvrThrlsthHrdtrndrghtsltgthrMrtbdsrdrth  
ythngldvnmchfngldswtrlsthnhnnynddrppngsfth  
hncmbMrvrbthmsyrsrvntwrndnkpngthmthrs  
grtrwrdr

# Sentences

Thlwfthlrdsprfctrvngthsl

Thtstmnfthlrdssrmkngwsthsmpl

Thprcptsfthlrdrrghtrjcngthhrt

Thcmmndmntfthlrdsprnlghtnngths

Thfrfthlrdsclnndrngfrvr

Thrlsfthlrdtrndrghtsltgthr

Mrtbdsrdrthythngldvnmchfngldswtrlsthnhnyn

ddrppngsfthhnycmb

Mrvrbthmsyrsrvntwrndnkpngthmthrsgrtrwr

# Spaces

Th lw f th lrd s prfct rvvng th sl  
Th tstmn f th lrd s sr mkng ws th smpl  
Th prcpt f th lrd r rght rjcnng th hrt  
Th cmmndmnt f th lrd s pr nlightnng th s  
Th fr f th lrd s cln ndrng frvr  
Th rls f th lrd r tr nd rghts ltgthr  
Mr t b dsrd r thy thn gld vn mch fn gld swtr ls  
    thn hny nd drppngs f th hnycmb  
Mr vr b thm s yr srvnt wrnd n kpng thm thr s  
    grt rwrđ

# Vowels

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;

The rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

# And just for fun

- Dear Nik
- 1 It was a pleasure to meet you with Chris, Olivia, Bill and Theo at the Kitsch Inn. Sorry for the delay in responding to your text but I have been doing a trial, which when they happen tend to take over life, and have only just resurfaced to respond to messages on other matters.
- 2 I bought my apartment, A6 in Residence Kandahar building 1, as a new build in July 2006 with a view to persuading as many as possible of my 5 siblings and 14 nephews and nieces to fall in love with the mountains as much as I have.

# What does a Panda do?



# Who is for supper?



And one of my favourites..(we sang  
this last week)

- Don't quit like men be strong
- Don't quit like men, be strong  
(the feminist version)
- Don't! Quit: like men -be strong  
(pragmatist version)

# If in English it would look like this?

thlwfthlrdsprfctrvngthslthtstmnfthlrdssrmkn  
gwsthsmplthprcptsfthlrdrrghtrjcngthhrtthcm  
mndmntfthlrdsprnlgthnngthsthfrfthlrdsclnndr  
ngfrvrthrlsthldrtrndrghtsltgthrmrtbdsrdrthyt  
hngldvnmchfngldswtrlsthnhnnynddrppngsfthh  
nycmbmrvrbbthmsyrsrvntwrndnkpngthmthrsg  
trwrd

# Why?

- God could have given us totally clear, very difficult to misinterpret commands
  - but he did not
- Two dangers
  - Implying a certainty (sometimes) that does not belong
  - Trying to make it say what we want it to say

# How?

We must understand scripture in the light of these two guides

- The guidance of the Holy Spirit
- The rest of scripture
  - Context is everything

# Back to the Novel

- The Victorian era novel (in just about any European language) contained three parts
  - Character development
  - A story centred, around those developing relationships
  - Moral, philosophical and ethical points being made by the author

# The Old Testament Novel

- There are three characters
  - God
  - His inner circle (the Hebrews)
  - Human kind, of every tribe, nation and culture.
- The story develops through historical development
  - the Hebrews move from individuals, to family, to tribes, to nation, to empire, to lost empire, to the finale of dependency on God: both as a nation and as individuals
  - All human kind, all nations and individuals, being offered the same relationship but continually rejecting it.
- The novel has distinct types of writing styles to allow this story development: history, laws, advice, and poetry and meditations

# How big a novel?

<b>BIBLE</b>	<b>CHAPTERS</b>	<b>VERSES</b>	<b>WORDS</b>
OLD TESTAMENT	929	23,214	622,771
NEW TESTAMENT	260	7,959	184,590
ENTIRE BIBLE	1,189	31,173	807,361
War and Peace	Tolstoy		587,287
Les Miserable	Victor Hugo		530,000
Anna Karenina	Tolstoy		340,000
Middlemarch	George Eliot		316,059
Jane Eyre	Charlotte Bronte		184,875
Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen		122,189
<b>Average word count of the Great Novels is:</b>			<b>136,604</b>
The entire Lord of the Rings series (including The Hobbit)			576,459

# Types of writing style in the Old Testament

- Jewish scriptures
  - Torah (first five books, Pentateuch)
  - Prophets
  - Writings

# Genres of Old Testament

- Historical narrative:
  - Genesis and the first half of Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah,
- The Law:
  - the last half of Exodus; also Leviticus, Deuteronomy
- Wisdom:
  - Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, Song of Solomon, Lamentations
- Prophecy:
  - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi : Daniel,

# The Old Testament Novel

- There are three characters
  - God
  - His inner circle (the Hebrews)
  - Human kind, of every tribe, nation and culture.
- The story develops through historical development
- The novel has distinct types of writing styles
  - History
  - The Law
  - The Prophets
  - Wisdom Literature
    - Which is the comments section

# How do we understand scripture?

## We must understand scripture in the light of these two guides

- **The guidance of the Holy Spirit**
- **The rest of scripture**
  - Context is everything
- The Wisdom literature gives us context and comment
  - It is not to be read historically or literally, but as poetic comment
  - It is the “aside” stories and diversions from the main theme in Victorian Novels
  - It is where the writer is making a point

# Advice of a very very rich and powerful king, given at the height of his wealth and knowledge

(taken half way through the novel and foreshadowing the ending).

- 12.1 So remember your Creator in the days of your youth before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”;

2 before the sun and the light of the moon and  
the stars grow dark,

and the clouds disappear after the rain;

3 when those who keep watch over the house  
begin to tremble,

and the virile men begin to stoop over,

and the grinders begin to cease because they grow few,  
and those who look through the windows grow dim,  
4 and the doors along the street are shut;  
when the sound of the grinding mill grows low,  
and one is awakened by the sound of a bird,  
and all their songs grow faint,

5 and they are afraid of heights and the dangers in the street;

the almond blossoms grow white,

and the grasshopper drags itself along,

and the caper berry shrivels up –

because man goes to his eternal home,

and the mourners go about in the streets –

6 before the silver cord is removed,  
or the golden bowl is broken,  
or the pitcher is shattered at the well,  
or the water wheel is broken at the cistern –  
7 and the dust returns to the earth as it was,  
and the life's breath returns to God who gave it.

8 “Absolutely futile!” laments the Teacher,

“All of these things are futile!”

9 Not only was the Teacher wise,  
but he also taught knowledge to the people;  
he carefully evaluated and arranged many proverbs.

10 The Teacher sought to find delightful words,  
and to write accurately truthful sayings.

11 The words of the sages are like prods,  
and the collected sayings are like firmly fixed nails;  
they are given by one shepherd.

12 Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them.

There is no end to the making of many books,

and much study is exhausting to the body.

13 Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion:

Fear God and keep his commandments,

because this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God will evaluate every deed,

including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Taken three quarters of the way through the novel, at the darkest hour

- Lam 3:21-23
- But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

# Taken at the end of the novel, looking forward

- Mal 3:1
- "Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, **behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.**
  
- Mal 4:1-3
- "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.
- 2 But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. **You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.**
- 3 **And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.**