

**STUDIES IN OLD  
TESTAMENT  
CHARACTERS**

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Studies in Old Testament characters by Wilbert Webster White

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WILBERT WEBSTER WHITE, PH. D.

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SECOND REVISION.

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## PREFACE

### THE AIM AND THE SCOPE OF STUDIES IN OLD TESTAMENT CHARACTERS

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While the purpose in "Studies in Old Testament Characters" has been to present for the student a course primarily devotional and practical, it may be that the scope of the Studies, which is larger than anything merely biographical, is not sufficiently indicated by the title.

Not only is the attempt made to interpret each character studied in the light of the immediate historic situation, and to derive valuable personal instruction from utterances, acts and manifest motives, but the relation of each character to a greater national and world movement is to some extent considered. This requires a study of the movement itself. It is sought to know how each age, with its accumulation from the past, grew out of the past and beyond itself and moulded its characters, and how in turn each character moulded his own age and influenced the future.

Characters are personifications of times, and they are products and potentialities. Into the proper study of Old Testament Characters, Old Testament History, Psalm and Prophecy must enter.

Moreover, it should be noted that this course is restricted in its reach by its avowed aim. It must not do critical or much exhaustive work. It takes for granted that there is in the curriculum a certain amount of literary and critical Bible Study. This course is the third of a cycle which is designed to supplement rather than to supersede college class-room work.

The authors of "Studies in the Life of Christ" and "Studies in the Acts and Epistles" (the two preceding courses of the series) had bases for their work already at hand in "A Harmony of the Gospels" by Stevens and Burton, and "Records and Letters of the Apostolic Age" by Burton. The advantages of such re-arrangement of the Bible text as is found in these books have been clearly shown by the use of these courses by students. The value of similar analysis and re-arrangement of the material in the Old Testament is equally great

in providing a basis for the study of Old Testament characters. The amount of material in a volume containing a reprint of the entire Old Testament text would be too large, however, to meet the purposes for which this book has been prepared.

The accompanying Analytical Outline it is believed will meet all the needs of the student pursuing this course. This outline has a chronological arrangement, and it puts in parallel columns references to duplicate material.

The Diagrams of Books of the Bible, and of periods of time will explain themselves. It is hoped that they may help to a clearer grasp of many historical situations, and a more comprehensive knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The words of Professor Burton in his preface to "Records and Letters of the Apostolic Age" in reference to critical questions as related to his work, are so suitable to the problems met in the Old Testament field, that I take the liberty to quote them here, changing only such words as are necessary to adapt the passage to the Old Testament; "For the purpose of this work it is assumed that the claims of authorship made in the books themselves are true. This course is indeed the one which is most congenial to my own opinions. While the evidence, or lack of evidence, in a few cases certainly justifies the treatment of the question of genuineness as an open one, such examination and estimation of it as I have been able to make has not led me to a positive conclusion against the genuineness of any of the books with which we here have to do. Yet I have constructed the work on this basis not so much for the purpose of expressing an opinion on each of the points at issue, as because, in my judgment, it best adapts the book to the uses for which it is intended. The ordinary student of the Bible, not specially trained in biblical science, may well make the genuineness of the Old Testament books his working hypothesis at least. The mature scholar, if he has reached the conclusion that all the Old Testament books here under consideration are genuine, will of course desire them assigned to a place consistent with this conclusion. If he has reached a different conclusion in any case, the plan here adopted will at least furnish him a basis of criticism in an arrangement whose faultiness he will be able to point out."

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## Titles of the Studies

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STUDY 30.	Leaders of the Reconstruction Period	§ 161 to § 169	"

# Studies in Old Testament Characters

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## GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

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Read over these suggestions *at the beginning of each week*.

Scripture supplies no shortcuts for the intellect. Expect to apply the mind with even more vigor in this study than in any other. God's Word surely has messages to you. Be very simple and sincere in giving heed.

Follow the order of the day's work. Read *and follow* each direction as you come to it. Do not read even the second part of the first direction before doing the first part.

Do exactly as directed. If the direction is: *Glance* over the section, do not *read* it.

Work with regularity. Do the work of each day in its day.

Employ a portion of the best of the day. Let it be if possible the first part of the day.

Study the material itself. Do not let the mind wander.

Hurry never, but do not waste time. Be expeditious.

Be always thoughtful.

Be always applying to your life when there is material applicable. Do not force applications.

Do not strain the material for thought. Let it yield what is there and be content.

Do not be sidetracked. Keep to the work in hand. Note additional lines of thought and investigation which suggest themselves, but work them out at another time.

Develop the historical imagination, but be careful that it be true to history.

Be on your guard against estimating the characters of ancient times by present day standards. Take sufficiently into account the political, religious and social conditions of the times.

Record thoughts, impressions, questions and difficulties. Do not insist that all questions be answered and all difficulties be removed at once. Study and wait.

Use the maps and diagrams freely.

Do not pass by marginal references and footnotes.

Be on special guard not to derive answers to questions propounded in the Studies from some other source than the text. As a rule answers will be found in the text.

Be patient and persistent. Results will come if you work and wait.

Emphasize prayer. Howsoever brief the time of study may be, at the beginning of it, definitely lift the heart to God for help and direction.

Make rigid application of the personal thought to the life. Form the habit of recalling often during the day points from the lesson of the morning.