**A Personal Introduction to the Bible – Joe Moffatt**

2nd Talk – Understanding the Old Testament 1st Talk – October 8th 2019

**Making friends with the OT**

*Of all our friends in faith, the Old Testament is easily the quirkiest. This friend is from another culture and speaks with a thick Hebrew accent. There’s also quite a generation gap – one that spans over two thousand years. As soon as the Old Testament begins to speak, our minds fill with questions. Yet we need this oddball of a companion precisely because the Old Testament shatters our expectations and forces us to think about things in new and creative ways.*

Matthew Schlimm, This Strange and Sacred Scripture

**Learning where to place the pieces of the jigsaw**

* 39 books: History-Wisdom-Prophets (17-5-17)
* Key themes: Creation-Covenant-Exodus-Kingdom- Exile-Return
* Timeline (see chart for approx. dates and periods)
* Styles of writing (genres): Historical Narrative-Law-Prophecy-Poetry/Song-Wisdom

**Progressive revelation**

* Many phases of composition, editing and weaving together
* Describes a relationship between God, humankind and the wider world that develops over time, changes in different circumstances and manifests in different genres.
* Unfolding picture of God as seen by humans – from local/tribal deity to universal/’one alone’/ethical GOD.
* Helps us to reflect on our own developing understanding of God.

**Precursor to the New Testament**

* Can’t really understand the NT without the OT, nor the God of the New, and the fresh revelation in Christ, without reference to the Old.

**Further reading**

* The Lion Handbook to the Bible (5th edition 2017 - brilliant for background)
* The Bible: The Biography – Karen Armstrong (2015)
* A History of the Bible: The Book and Its Faiths – John Barton (2019)
* Who needs the Old Testament? Its enduring appeal and why the New Atheists don’t get it – Katharine Dell (2017)