

# Cover to Cover Bible Course

## OLD TESTAMENT



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TEACHING GOD'S WORD AND TRANSFORMING LIVES



## Cover to Cover Old Testament

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## Uniqueness of Cover to Cover Bible Course

Welcome to Cover to Cover Bible Course—Biblical learning that can change your life!

The cover of your student textbook depicts the intentional focus of this course. God’s Word points to Jesus and His death on the cross for our salvation. We have evidence from Jesus Himself that everything written in the Old Testament pointed to Him.

In Luke 24 on the road to Emmaus, Jesus explained how all the Scriptures, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, pointed to Him. Throughout His ministry, Jesus appealed to the Old Testament as a source of authority, including stating that He was the fulfillment of it. The 300 prophecies Jesus fulfilled in His coming and throughout His life serve as a solid reminder that nothing thwarts God’s plan.

### Benefits of Cover to Cover Bible Course

Complete this course and you will:

- Join the minority of people in the US who have read the whole Bible.
- Encounter God through His Word.
- Understand the centrality of the Gospel.
- See Jesus at the center of God’s plan of redemption.
- Trace the “Scarlet Thread of Redemption” (symbols, types, names, and covenants that point to God the Son as the coming Messiah).

Since 1982, God has used our approach of teaching the Bible from Genesis to Revelation to ignite faith and action. Graduates relate that taking the class prepared them to lead a small group, emboldened them to tell their “God story,” and equipped them to disciple others.

It is essential to remember that God uses His Word personally as well. Our prayer is that God would use this course to nurture in you the characteristics of a disciple. A disciple is someone who:

1. **Yields to the Spirit:** Is born (regenerated) by the Spirit, is filled with the Spirit, walks in the Spirit, and manifests the fruit of the Spirit (John 3:3; Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16-23).
2. **Is sanctified:** Becomes more and more like Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29) by being sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3) and holy (1 Peter 1:15-16) through the Word (John 17:17) and the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 5:16-26).
3. **Develops a biblical worldview:** Develops a comprehensive, Gospel-centered Biblical worldview, applying the Word of God to every facet of life because all things hold together in Christ (Colossians 1:17).



## Cover to Cover Old Testament

4. **Lives godly priorities:** Understands the Gospel, the Great Commandment, and the Great Commission as the foremost priorities of the church (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Matthew 22:36-40; Matthew 28:18-20).
5. **Multiplies:** Disciples make other disciples by sharing the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20; John 14:6; Ephesians 4:11-13).

Since 1982, God has used our approach of teaching the Bible from Genesis to Revelation to ignite faith and action. We hear from many of our graduates that taking the course prepared them to lead a small group, emboldened them to tell their “God story,” and equipped them to disciple others.

**At Village Schools of the Bible, we imagine a day when our Cover to Cover students become fluent in the Gospel and mobilize to reproduce their faith in others’ lives.**

Then hundreds of graduates filled with the Holy Spirit and grounded in the Word will take the Gospel both next door and to the ends of the earth.

Village Schools of the Bible intends to fuel a significant movement that is propelled throughout the world to exalt Jesus and see His Kingdom come!

We are praying for you. *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” (Romans 15:13)*

In Christ,

*Laurie Besonen*

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## Dedication

We lovingly dedicate this Old Testament Cover to Cover Student textbook to you, the student. We wrote it with your transformation in mind. Jesus promised that all the Scriptures pointed to Him (Luke 24:44). We have evidence that when you see Jesus more clearly, it changes you!

We teach Cover to Cover with the expectation that the Spirit of God will use the Word of God in conforming you into the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29). As you change, Jesus will entrust you with a new or renewed calling of your ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).

*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)*

The writing of this student textbook was a labor of love and collaboration from the teachers and staff of Village Schools of the Bible.



## How to Use the Student Textbook

This student textbook was written with you, the student as the “end–user,” in mind. We have organized it to provide the background for each book of the Old Testament that we deem essential to grasp the purpose of each book and understand the “Scarlet Thread of Redemption.”

The lessons in the student textbook were written by a variety of authors. We have chosen, within the framework of each lesson, to showcase our community of writers rather than edit out individual voices. One place this might be evident is in the outlines provided for each book. Some of the outlines are more detailed than others. Some include questions that we hope will engage the reader. **NOTE: Questions within the outlines are not required to be answered.**

Similarly, we have included a section for every book entitled: *Personal application: What applications flow from the book?* We consider this section of vital importance. Unfortunately, people can know God’s Word and not be changed by it because of their hard hearts. Think of the religious leaders in Jesus’ day—the Pharisees. They were zealous for the Law of Moses and guardians of the traditions that interpreted this Law. Jesus had strong words of warning for them (“blind guides”) as they lacked godliness (Matthew 23:1-36) and had grossly distorted God’s way of salvation.

God’s Word is different from any other book.

*“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)*

The personal application questions are an invitation for the Holy Spirit to transform you!

### Suggested for Each Week

1. **Pray.** Ask the Lord to help you understand and apply the truths taught in the section of God’s Word that you intend to read.
2. Read the Scripture.
3. **Reflect** on the Personal Application questions. Do any of the questions “hit home”? Do you sense an invitation to spend time reflecting on any of them?
4. **Required for All Students:** Answer the “*Do a brief lesson summary and Scarlet Thread tracking*” for the lesson. Write a paragraph to answer each of these questions.
5. **For Diploma Students Only:** Complete the book summary and Scarlet Thread tracking **AND** write a short essay (two to three pages) on **ONE** of the topics



## How to Use the Student Textbook

provided at the end of each lesson, going deeper in your study and writing. There is no paper due for Lesson 1. In total, 14 papers are required for all diploma students.

Send your assignment to your teacher via email or hand it in at the beginning of the next class.

### Benefits of Writing Assignments

- Encourage careful and thoughtful reading.
- Encourage research that involves investigating and assessing the information gathered.
- Help you develop your theological thinking. Research not only teaches you how to reproduce material analytically, but it also teaches you the skill of pondering and evaluating evidence so you can draw conclusions.
- Help you distill information so you can communicate what you are learning to others whom God invites you to influence for His name.

### Additional Information for Diploma Students

- Anyone can take Cover to Cover at the Diploma level if they desire to do so. Students seeking college credit must take the course at the Diploma level.
- The average time for Bible reading and writing assignments is 6–8 hours per week.
- To earn a diploma that leads to college credit, you will complete 14 writing assignments per semester. There is no paper due for Lesson 1; students can choose to skip one of the 15 remaining papers.
- We expect the writing to be at “grade level” with an emphasis not only on content but on proper writing techniques (see below for instructions).
- Each assignment will be graded and commented on by your teacher.
- Attendance during class is expected to fulfill overall credit requirements.

### Essay Question Instructions

Work with an outline: An introduction, the main section, and a conclusion.

- An introduction states your topic as clearly as possible. List the 2-3 points that you intend to make in the body of the paper. State these clearly.
- The main section is where the topic is investigated as systematically and convincingly as possible. Feel free to research using cross-references, commentaries, etc. Organize your paper with the 2-3 points mentioned in the introduction.
- The conclusion is where you give a final comment concerning what you have learned in your study of the topic and how this can be practically applied.



## Introduction to the Bible

The Bible is the revelation from God about God. It is the most important book ever written.

The Bible explains how a relationship with God is possible and necessary through Christ Jesus. The Bible is different from all other books because it is a spiritual book written by God Himself (Hebrews 4:12) to accomplish His purposes.

*"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth: It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)*

God is the central character of every chapter of the Bible. He is present as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Satan, the angels (the spiritual realm), and mankind are the other key characters.

Even though the Bible was written for a certain cultural context, it remains authoritative in all cultures, even today.

*"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

The Bible was written for not just the initial recipients in the first century, but all people in every century and part of the world.

### Authenticity and Inerrancy

The Bible was written over 1500 years by 40 different individuals, all inspired by the Holy Spirit. Originally written in Hebrew (Old Testament), Aramaic, and Koine Greek (New Testament), the Bible we use today has come down to us through numerous meticulous, hand-copied translations. It became more widely available to individuals after the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in 1450. Today, there are many different translations and types of Bibles available, and it is important to understand the difference between word-for-word, thought-for-thought, and paraphrases (retelling). See Figure 1 shown next.



Types of Translations		
Word for Word	Thought for Thought	Paraphrase
King James Version	New Life Bible	The Living Bible
American Standard Version	New International Version	The Message
New King James Version	Amplified Bible	New Living Translation
Young’s Literal Translation	American Translation	Clear Word Bible
English Standard Version	God’s Word	The Gospel Message

Figure 1: Types of Translations

In its original autographs, we believe it is the inerrant Word of God as 2 Peter 1:21 says:

*“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

**Archeological Evidence**

Several archeological discoveries have been made that enhance and reinforce the authenticity of the text of the Bible. One such discovery was the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1946–47. These were found in the Qumran Caves on the northern shore of the Dead Sea by Bedouin shepherds. Some 981 manuscripts and over 15,000 fragments were found in the various caves. Scholarly consensus dates these scrolls from the last three centuries BC and the first century AD. They include a complete copy of Isaiah which was dated before the time of Christ. This find allowed the comparison of this text with the previously oldest existing text from about 1000 AD and provides significant evidence of the accuracy of the Isaiah text.

Biblical history goes back in time more than 4000 years. While the events of the first eleven chapters of Genesis (creation, fall, flood, Babel) cannot be accurately dated, scholars date the Patriarchal period (Abraham onward) to around 2100 BC.

It is important to know how to properly interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who . . . correctly handles the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)*

This is called hermeneutics. The Bible should be understood literally, historically, grammatically, and contextually, and Scripture should interpret Scripture. There are many different genres (categories of literary composition) represented in the Bible including law, history, poetry, prophecy, letters, apocalyptic writings, prose, and wisdom literature. These require different methods of interpretation; e.g., poetry will not be interpreted in the same way as prose nor prophecy the same way as history. The following charts (Figures 2 and 3) provide an outline of the major categories found in the Old and New Testaments.



### Charts of the Order and Categories of the Bible

<b>The Bible: Old Testament—39 Books</b>				
Law	History	Wisdom	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
<b>5 Books</b>	<b>12 Books</b>	<b>5 Books</b>	<b>5 Books</b>	<b>12 Books</b>
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

Figure 2: The Bible: Old Testament

<b>The Bible: New Testament—27 Books</b>				
Gospels	Acts of the Apostles	Paul’s Letters	General Letters	Revelation
<b>4 Books</b>	<b>1 Book</b>	<b>13 Books</b>	<b>8 Books</b>	<b>1 Book</b>
Matthew	Acts	Romans	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark		1 Corinthians	James	
Luke		2 Corinthians	1 Peter	
John		Galatians	2 Peter	
		Ephesians	1 John	
		Philippians	2 John	
		Colossians	3 John	
		1 Thessalonians	Jude	
		2 Thessalonians		
		1 Timothy		
		2 Timothy		
		Titus		
		Philemon		

Figure 3: The Bible: New Testament



## Introduction to the Bible

### Fun Facts

- Sixty-six books.
- Written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Ancient Greek.
- The full Bible has been translated into more than 704 modern languages.
- Written over 1,500 years.
- More than 40 human authors were instructed by God to write down His Word.
- The best-selling book of all time.
- It reflects life: including murder, drama, love stories, victories, and defeats. It was not originally written in chapters and numbered as it is today; each book was a scroll or a part of a scroll.



### What is the Canon of Scripture?

The word “Canon” comes from the rule of law that was used to determine whether a book measured up to a standard. It is important to note that the writings of Scripture were canonical at the moment they were written; Scripture was Scripture when the pen touched the parchment. This is very important because Christianity does not start by defining God, Jesus Christ, or salvation. The basis of Christianity is found in the authority of Scripture. If we cannot identify what Scripture is, then we cannot properly distinguish any theological truth from error.

What measure or standard was used to determine which books should be classified as Scripture? A verse key to understanding the process and purpose, and perhaps the timing of the giving of Scripture, is Jude 3 which states that a Christian’s faith “*was once for all delivered to the saints.*” Since our faith is defined by Scripture, Jude is essentially saying that Scripture was given once for the benefit of all Christians. Isn’t it wonderful to know that there are no hidden or lost manuscripts yet to be found, there are no secret books only familiar to a select few, and there are no people alive who have special revelation requiring us to trek up a Himalayan Mountain to be enlightened? We can be confident that God has not left us without a witness. The same supernatural power God used to produce His Word has also been used to preserve it.

Psalm 119:160 states that the entirety of God’s Word is truth. Starting with that premise, we can compare writings outside the accepted Canon of Scripture to see if they meet the test. As an example, the Bible claims that Jesus Christ is God (Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1-2, 14; 20:28; Acts 16:31, 34; Philippians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1). Yet many extra-biblical texts claiming to be Scripture argue that Jesus is not God. When clear contradictions exist, the established Bible is to be trusted, leaving the others outside the sphere of Scripture.

In the early centuries of the church, Christians were sometimes put to death for possessing copies of Scripture. Because of this persecution, the question soon came up, “What books are worth dying for?” Some books may have contained sayings of Jesus, but were they inspired as stated in 2 Timothy 3:16? Church councils played a role in publicly recognizing the Canon of Scripture, but often an individual church or groups of churches recognized a book as inspired from its writing (e.g., Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27). Throughout the early centuries of the church, few books were ever disputed, and the list was basically settled by AD 303.

When it came to the Old Testament, three important facts were considered.

1. The New Testament quotes from or alludes to every Old Testament book but two.



## The Canon of Scripture

2. Jesus effectively endorsed the Hebrew Canon in Matthew 23:35 when He cited one of the first narratives and one of the last in the Scriptures of His day.
3. The Jews were meticulous in preserving the Old Testament Scriptures, and they had few controversies over what parts belonged or do not belong. The Roman Catholic Apocrypha did not measure up; it fell outside the definition of Scripture and has never been accepted by the Jews.

Most questions about which books belong in the Bible dealt with writings from the time of Christ and forward. The early church had some very specific criteria for books to be considered as part of the New Testament. These included:

- Was the book written by someone who was an eyewitness of Jesus Christ?
- Did the book pass the “truth test” (i.e., did it concur with other, already agreed-upon Scripture)?

The New Testament books they accepted back then have endured the test of time, and Christian orthodoxy has embraced these with little challenge for centuries.

Confidence in the acceptance of specific books dates to the first century recipients who offered firsthand testimony as to their authenticity. Furthermore, the end-time subject matter of the Book of Revelation and the prohibition of adding to the words of the book in Revelation 22:18 argue strongly that the Canon was closed at the time of its writing (c. AD 95).

There is an important theological point that should not be missed. God has used His word for millennia for one primary purpose—to reveal Himself and communicate to mankind. Ultimately, the church councils did not decide whether a book was Scripture; that was decided when the human author was chosen by God. To accomplish the end result, including the preservation of His Word through the centuries, God guided the early church councils in their recognition of the Canon.

The acquisition of knowledge regarding such things as the true nature of God, the origin of the universe and life, the purpose and meaning of life, the wonders of salvation, and future events (including the destiny of mankind) are beyond the natural observational and scientific capacity of mankind. The already-delivered Word of God, valued and personally applied by Christians for centuries, is sufficient to explain to us everything we need to know of Christ (John 5:18; Acts 18:28; Galatians 3:22; 2 Timothy 3:15) and to teach us, correct us, and instruct us into all righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

*Quoted from "What IS the Canon of Scripture?"*

GotQuestions.org. <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-happens-after-death.html>



### Setting the Stage

At some point before the creation of mankind, the angelic world rebelled against God. God's enemy is Satan, and the rebellious angels are called demons. We are introduced to the rebellious Satan in Genesis 3, where the rebellion occurred, and three relationships were broken for humanity:

1. With God.
2. With each other.
3. With themselves (rebellious nature).

This sets up the reality that humanity now has three enemies:

1. Satan and his angels, who are out to destroy God's pinnacle of creation—mankind (Revelation 12:7).
2. A world system that is set up by rebellious humanity in opposition to God.
3. A self-centered nature, true of everyone born after Adam and Eve.

However, the promised Christ will restore everything:

1. He will restore creation to a perfect state (Revelation 21:1).
2. Satan will be defeated (Revelation 20:7-10).
3. Our fallen nature will be redeemed through Christ's death on the cross (Revelation 21:5-8; 27).



## The Scarlet Thread of Redemption

Tucked inside every book of the Bible is the promise of God Himself (God the Son) coming to bring salvation through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Along with promises in the Old Testament, there are covenants, symbols, and types that all point to our Messiah, Jesus Christ. At Village Schools of the Bible, we call these revelations the **“Scarlet Thread of Redemption.”** Dr. Walter Kaiser, former President of Gordon–Conwell Seminary calls it the “Promise Theology.” He sees the promise of “the seed” (Galatians 3:16) as the central and unifying truth of Scripture.

The Scarlet Thread begins with God’s response to redeem humanity after the fall in Genesis 3:15 and continues throughout biblical history. In the Old Testament, this theme is seen in God’s call to Abraham and God’s promise to make him a nation that will bless all the nations. It continues with God choosing Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt and their conquest to inhabit the Promised Land. The Davidic covenant is also a part of God’s promise of redemption as well as all the messianic predictions in the Old Testament. Each of these examples reveals a part of the bigger story that God is writing. It is the story preparing us for one who was to come as the seed (Son) who would shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins, grant eternal life in His name, and break down the barriers between Jew and Gentile. All these promises fulfilled what is meant by the “Scarlet Thread of Redemption” or “Seed Promise.”

Salvation history is commonly divided into four parts: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation with Jesus Christ as the central unifying theme. The chart in Figure 4 lays out this unfolding plan of redemption as it is revealed in the Bible.

What do we mean by “redemption”?

Redemption, “*apolytrōsis*” in Greek, means “releasing effected by payment of ransom, deliverance” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary, 1992). It is an essential element of salvation and has significant spiritual meaning in both testaments.

**In the Old Testament**, redemption is illustrated in three scenarios linking it to the responsibility of the patriarch, who was ultimately tasked with providing for the safety and welfare of their tribe. In Genesis 14, Abraham goes to Lot’s rescue when he and his household is taken captive by a coalition of kings. In the story of Ruth, honorable Boaz steps up to fulfill the role of Kinsman Redeemer by marrying the widow Ruth to bear an heir for Elimelech’s family inheritance (this included the land law set up in Leviticus 25). The third example is in Hosea, he buys back (redeems) his wife from prostitution for a second time.

“In Israel’s tribal society redemption was the act of a patriarch who put his own resources on the line to ransom a family member who had been driven to the margins of society by poverty, who had been seized by an enemy against whom he had no defense, who found themselves enslaved by the consequences of a faithless life.



## The Scarlet Thread of Redemption

Redemption was the means by which a lost family member was restored to a place of security within the kinship circle” (The Epic of Eden, 45). The New Testament implications are rich with meaning as Jesus describes His own purpose as that of “giving His life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

God rescuing Israel from bondage in Egypt is another significant event that shaped their faith and ours. In Exodus 6, God promises Israel “*I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment*” (6:6b). This promise is referred to a dozen times in the Psalms and Isaiah. It was a pinnacle act of God that demonstrated His covenant love and almighty power.

**In the New Testament**, redemption is directly attributed to Jesus’ atoning death on the cross. As the apostle, Paul writes, “In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight” (Eph. 1:7–8). “The NT language of redemption . . . refers to the salvific work of Christ and to its effect for humanity. The word of Our Lord places beyond question three facts: (1) the work He came to accomplish was one of ransom, (2) the giving of His life was the ransom price, and (3) the ransom was substitutionary in character” (Murray, *Redemption, the Gospel Coalition*).

Just as God redeemed Israel from the bondage of Egypt, we are freed from the bondage of our sin, a debt we would otherwise have not been able to pay! And due to Cover to Cover’s unique emphasis on this Scarlet Thread of Redemption, your amazement at the cost of our salvation is sure to grow; as will your gratitude.



# The Plan of Redemption and Covenants

## How the Bible Lays Out God’s Unfolding Plan of Redemption

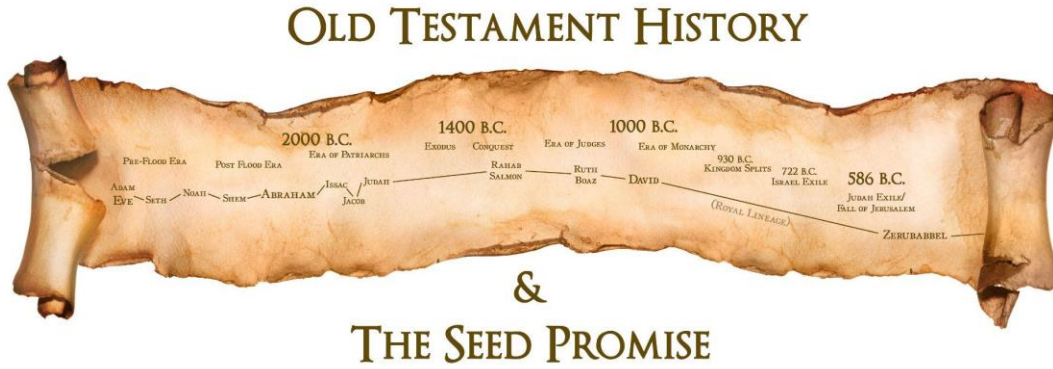
God’s Redeeming Plan				
Beginning	Unfolding			Consummation
<b>Beginning:</b> Genesis 1-11:9	<b>Act 1:</b> Genesis 11:10- Malachi 4:6	<b>Interlude:</b> Intertestamental Period	<b>Act 2:</b> Matthew-Jude	<b>Finale:</b> The Book of Revelation
<b>Creation of the world; who created the world and humanity:</b> Genesis 1-3	<b>God’s redemption through Shem, Abraham, and his family:</b> Genesis 11:10-50:26	<b>God’s redemptive work between Malachi and Matthew</b>	<b>Birth, death, and resurrection of the Messiah:</b> Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John	<b>Christ’s message to His church:</b> Revelation 1-3
<b>The fall of humanity. How sin came into the world:</b> Genesis 3-6:7	<b>God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt and the establishment of His law:</b> Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy	<b>God preparing the world for the coming of Christ</b>	<b>The birth of the church of Jesus Christ and worldwide evangelization:</b> Acts	<b>Christ’s rule and work in human history as it pertains to the end times:</b> Revelation 4-19:10
<b>The flood and the beginning of the nations of the world:</b> Genesis 6:8-8:14	<b>The history of Israel and God’s redemptive plan unfolding:</b> Joshua-2 Chronicles	<b>God’s redemptive work in the life of the Jewish nation leading up to the birth of Jesus Christ</b>	<b>The teaching of God’s truth to His church and help against false teachers:</b> Romans-Jude	<b>The universal reign of Christ, His kingdom in the new heavens and earth:</b> Revelation 19:11-22
<b>Tower of Babel and the origin of the different languages:</b> Genesis 8:15-11:9	<b>God’s redemptive plan through the Jewish exiles:</b> Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, the wisdom books, major and minor prophets			

Figure 4: God’s Redeeming Plan

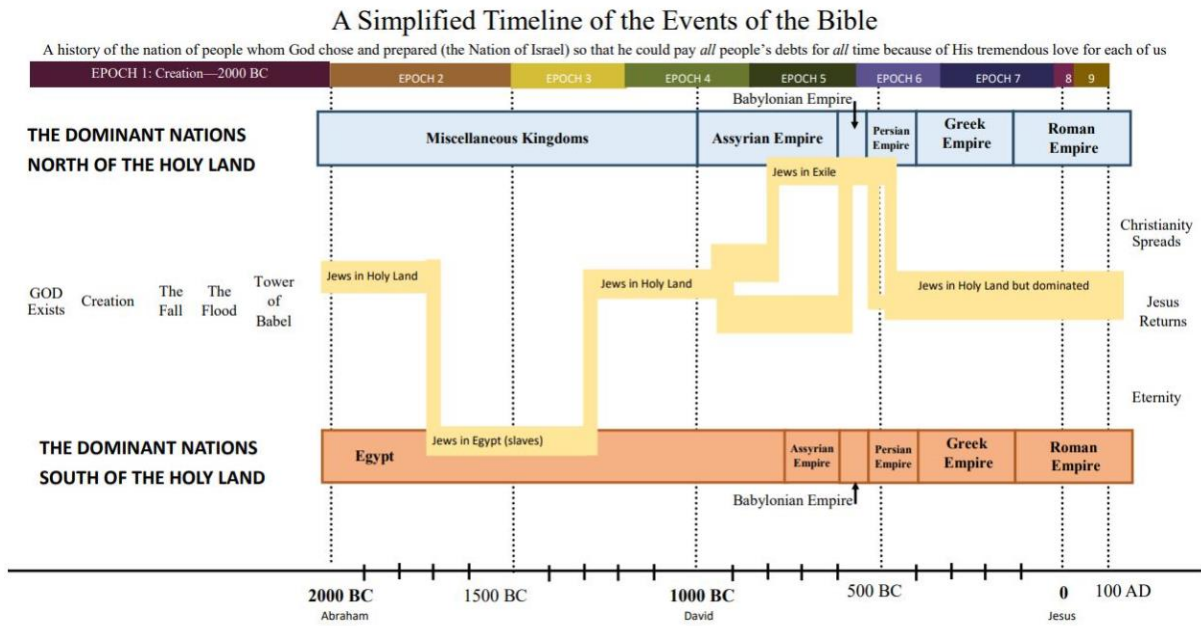


# The Plan of Redemption and Covenants

## Timeline of the Old Testament



Created by Ryan Habbena



Lieber, D. (1994). *Bible 101 getting the big picture*. From a class presented at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church in 1994.

Figure 5: A Simplified Timeline of the Events of the Bible



### What is Meant by the Term “Covenant”?

“Covenant” is an English translation of the Hebrew (*berit*) and Greek (*diatheke*). A covenant formally binds two parties together in a relationship based on mutual personal commitment with consequences for keeping or breaking the commitment. God makes this kind of covenant with a group of people by covenanting with one who represents them; everyone else then experiences the covenant by being included ‘in’ the representation.” (ESV Study Bible, page 65.)

Covenants made by God can be either conditional or unconditional. An unconditional covenant is fulfilled by God as a divine promise. A conditional covenant is two-way and requires mankind to obediently fulfill their part.

Types of Covenants				
Covenant	Summary	References	Type	Sign/Symbol
Abrahamic	Land, Seed, Blessing	Genesis 12:1-3	Unilateral, Unconditional	Circumcision (Genesis 17:11)
Mosaic	Law	Exodus 19:1-25; 24:3-8	Bilateral, Conditional	The Sabbath (Exodus 31:13)
Davidic	Eternal Throne	2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89:3; Luke 1:32-33 (of Jesus)	Unilateral, Unconditional	Christ’s resurrection and exaltation (Acts 2: 30-33)
Messianic	New Covenant	Isaiah 42:1-7; 59:20-21; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32	Unilateral, Unconditional	Bread and cup Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:25

Figure 6: Types of Covenants



## Introduction to the Pentateuch

The Pentateuch comprises the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. This title is taken from a Greek word that means “five-volume work.” The Pentateuch is sometimes referred to as “Torah” by the Jews, or the “Book of the Law” (2 Kings 22:8), or the “Book of the Law of Moses” (Joshua 8:31). While the authorship of these books is not specifically stated within the books, both Jews and Christians generally view Moses as the principal author. Likewise, both the rest of the Old Testament and Jesus Himself affirmed Mosaic authorship.

The Old Testament writers, including the prophets, provide ample evidence of Moses’ authorship in their writings, e.g., Joshua 1:7-8; 8:30-31; 22:5; Judges 3:4; 1 Kings 2:3; Nehemiah 10:29; Daniel 9:11-13; Malachi 4:4.

In the Gospels, Jesus confirmed that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible (Matthew 8:4; Matthew 19:1-6; Luke 24:27) including what Moses wrote about Him (John 5:46-47).

The genre or type of literature into which the Pentateuch fits is called “historical narrative.” A historical narrative is “the practice of writing history in a story-based form.” It is a style of writing history that would be preferable in an oral culture where written material was in scarce supply.

**Genesis** is the book of origins. It speaks of the creation of everything by the triune God and the origin of sin and its remedy (Genesis 3:15). Genesis chronicles the creation of the Jewish nation beginning with a covenant made with Abram and continuing through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

**Exodus** describes the rescue of God’s people from slavery in Egypt in 1445 BC. Moses was the principal character, and the book’s highlights are the ten plagues of Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and nation-building at Sinai where the law was given (including the Ten Commandments) along with instructions for building the tabernacle. God made a conditional covenant with His people regarding consequences for keeping or breaking His laws.

**Leviticus** is a priestly manual also given at Sinai, providing instructions for worship and sacrifice. This book foreshadows Jesus Christ who is explicitly identified as our High Priest in the Book of Hebrews.

**Numbers** describes leaving Sinai and the wilderness wanderings as a result of Israel's unbelief. It also shows God’s faithfulness and visible presence through a cloud over the tabernacle.

**Deuteronomy** is a series of three addresses by Moses as he prepared a new generation for life in the Promised Land. The setting was Israel at the border of



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Canaan (the Promised Land). Moses exhorted this new generation to live differently from their parents' generation by keeping God's commands. If they failed to keep the law or worship idols, they would be exiled from the land. In this book, God made His expectations of their worship clear.

*"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Deuteronomy 6:4-5*