

History for the thoughtful child... ...from Greenleaf Press

Real History! The stories of real people for students in the elementary grades.

In the Bible God uses the stories of the Patriarchs, Judges, Prophets, and Kings to teach us a number of important truths. For this reason, above all others, we believe that the history of Israel ought to be the first history taught to every child. The Old Testament history of Israel is the model of how history ought to be done.

The 180 readings in this study are designed to be done orally. They can be used with students as young as first grade (though you may have to break the Scripture reading into smaller segments). They can also be used as a daily family devotional with students through grade twelve. And some innovative teachers have used them in Sunday school classrooms and/or with new Christians to give them an introduction to the history of God's people.

Cyndy Shearer has a BA degree in English (summa cum laude) from Queens College (Charlotte, NC) and an MA in English from the University of Virginia. She has taught elementary, high school, and college students and has been a home-schooling mom since 1985.

Rob Shearer has an AB in History (cum laude) from Davidson College and a MA in History and Humanities from Stanford University. He taught at Stanford from 1977-1979 and at Virginia Wesleyan College from 1981-1984. In 1979-1980 he was a Fulbright Research Fellow in Marburg, Germany. He is the Director of the Francis Schaeffer Study Center in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee - a tutorial program for homeschooled high school students - which he and Cyndy founded in 2004.

Rob and Cyndy live near the town of Lebanon in middle Tennessee along with their eleven children. The Shearer home school and petting zoo currently boasts four dogs, five cats, two horses, one pony and whatever else the children may have dragged home this month.

Internet: www.greenleafpress.com
3761 Highway 109N, Unit D
Lebanon, Tennessee 37087
615-449-1617



The Greenleaf Press field testing department.

GREENLEAF GUIDE TO OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

SHEARER



The Greenleaf Guide to OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

History for the thoughtful child

Rob & Cyndy Shearer

© copyright, 1994 by Greenleaf Books, LLC
Twelfth Printing, 2008

Revised

The 1st thru 11th editions had 196 lessons. This edition has been edited and some lessons have been combined in order to fit the standard 180 day school year.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or used in any form by any means — graphic, electronic, or mechanical including photocopying, recording, taping or information storage and retrieval systems without written permission from the publisher

NOTE: Parents and teachers are expressly given permission by the publisher to copy any pages of this book they wish, so long as the copies are for the use of their own students and not for resale.

You may make copies for yourself and your students. You may NOT make copies for friends or other teachers' students.



3761 Highway 109N, Unit D • Lebanon, TN 37087

www.greenleafpress.com

History for the thoughtful child

Table of Contents

Introduction.....x
How to use this book xii
Dates xiv

Lessons: Each lesson is intended to be read and discussed at one sitting. The questions are intended to be a guide for recall and discussion. They test comprehension and attempt to point out significant facts, events, people, and places.

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. God creates	Genesis 1		1
2. Adam & Eve	Genesis 2 & 3.....	4100 B.C.....	2
3. Cain & Abel	Genesis 4	4000 B.C.....	3
4. Enoch & Methuselah	Genesis 5	3300-2350 B.C.	4
(see also Jude 14&15)			
5. The earth had become wicked.....	Genesis 6	2950-2000 B.C.	5
6. The Flood.....	Genesis 7 & 8.....	2350 B.C.....	6
7. The Rainbow & God's Covenant	Genesis 9		7
(Genesis 10 is the genealogy of Noah's sons)			
8. The Tower of Babel	Genesis 11	2300 B.C.....	8
9. Abram called to leave his home,	Genesis 12 & 13.....	2170 B.C.....	10
winds up in Egypt			
10. Civil War in the Jordan Valley,	Genesis 14 & 15.....		11
Lot taken Prisoner			
11. Sarai gives Hagar to Abram.....	Genesis 16 & 17.....	2080 B.C.....	13
12. God visits Abram.....	Genesis 18		14
13. Lot in Sodom	Genesis 19	2080 B.C.....	15
14. Abraham, Sarah, Abimelech, and Isaac	Genesis 20 & 21	2066 B.C.....	16
15. The Sacrifice of Isaac.....	Genesis 22 & 23.....		17
16. Abraham sends for a wife for Isaac	Genesis 24	2026 B.C.....	18
17. The death of Abraham	Genesis 25	2000 B.C.....	19
18. Like father, like son.....	Genesis 26		20
19. Jacob and Esau	Genesis 27		21
20. Jacob's ladder	Genesis 28		22
21. Jacob, Laban, Leah, and Rachel	Genesis 29 - 31.....	1920 B.C.....	22
22. Jacob returns to Esau	Genesis 32 - 33.....		23
23. Dinah and her brothers' Revenge	Genesis 34		23
24. Jacob's New Name	Genesis 35		24
(Genesis 36 is the genealogy of Esau)			
25. Joseph Betrayed by his Brothers	Genesis 37	1900 B.C.....	25

Lesson	Scripture	Date	Page
26. Judah and Tamar.....	Genesis 38		26
27. Joseph in Potiphar's house.....	Genesis 39		27
28. The Baker, the Cupbearer, & Joseph	Genesis 40		27
29. Pharaoh's Bad Dream.....	Genesis 41	1885 B.C.	28
30. Joseph and His Brothers come to Egypt	Genesis 42		29
31. Joseph's brothers come back to Egypt.....	Genesis 43-44.....		30
32. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers	Genesis 45		31
33. Jacob/Israel settle in Egypt.....	Genesis 46 & 47.....	1875 B.C.	32
34. Jacob's Blessing.....	Genesis 48 & 49.....		32
35. The death of Jacob/Israel and of Joseph	Genesis 50	1860 B.C.	33
36. Egypt forgets Joseph.....	Exodus 1		33
37. The Birth of Moses.....	Exodus 2.....	1525 B.C.	34
38. Moses & the Burning Bush	Exodus 3.....	1465 B.C.	35
39. Moses returns to Egypt.....	Exodus 4 & 5.....	1446 B.C.	36
40. God's Promise to Moses	Exodus 6 & 7.....	1446 B.C.	37
41. Frogs, Gnats, & Flies.....	Exodus 8.....		39
42. Cattle died, Boils, & Hail	Exodus 9.....		40
43. Locusts & Darkness	Exodus 10 & 11.....		41
44. Passover.....	Exodus 12.....	1445 B.C.	42
45. The Parting of the Red Sea	Exodus 14 & 15.....	1445 B.C.	43
46. Quail, manna, water, & victory.....	Exodus 16 & 17.....	1445 B.C.	44
47. Moses and Jethro	Exodus 18.....	1445 B.C.	45
48. God's Covenant with Israel	Exodus 19 - 20.....	1445 B.C.	45
(Exodus 21-24 are detailed laws)			
(Exodus 25-28 are descriptions of the tabernacle)			
(Exodus 29-31 are descriptions of the sacrificial system)			
49. Aaron & the Golden Calf.....	Exodus 32.....	1444 B.C.	46
50. Moses gets new Tablets	Exodus 33 - 34.....	1444 B.C.	47
(Exodus 35-40 are descriptions of the construction of the tabernacle)			
(Leviticus contains the detailed laws)			
(Numbers 1-4 is the census of Israel)			
(Numbers 5-10 are laws and lists)			
51. Grumbling, Complaining, and Rebellion.....	Numbers 11 & 12.....	1435 B.C.	48
52. Spies into Canaan	Numbers 13 - 14	1430 B.C.	49
(Numbers 15 are instructions for the promised land)			
53. The Rebellion of Korah	Numbers 16.....	1430 B.C.	50
(Numbers 17-20 are instructions for the Levites)			
54. Serpents among the People	Numbers 21.....	1405 B.C.	50
55. Balaam and Balak	Numbers 22-24.....	1405 B.C.	51

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
56. Israel plays the harlot (Numbers 26 is another census) (Numbers 27-30 are ceremonial instructions) (Numbers 31 is the judgment on Midian) (Numbers 32-36 concerns the division of the land)	Numbers 25.....		51
57. Israel defeats two kings.....	Deuteronomy 1-3		52
58. Moses teaches Israel the law.....	Deuteronomy 4-5		53
59. Moses commands Israel.....	Deuteronomy 6-7		53
60. Why God will give Israel victory.....	Deuteronomy 8-9		54
61. Moses commands Israel.....	Deuteronomy 10-11		54
62. Moses commands Israel.....	Deuteronomy 12-13		55
63. Moses commands Israel.....	Deuteronomy 14-16		55
64. King, Priests, Prophets,& Detestable Practices.... Deuteronomy, chapters 19-25 are more detailed laws given by Moses to govern Israel after settlement in the promised land. You may decide (especially with older children) that it is worthwhile to read through these. God's principles of justice are eternal and there is much for us to learn from these practical principles. Chapter 26 is a benediction on the law. Chapter 27-30 is a recitation of the blessings and curses which God sets before Israel in conjunction with keeping or disobeying the law. Again, you may choose to read these chapters in their entirety. We include a reading of chapters 29-30 as a lesson to summarize the blessings and curses associated with the law.	Deuteronomy 17-18		56
65. Blessings and Curses.....	Deuteronomy 29-30		57
66. Moses' last Message.....	Deuteronomy 31-33		57
67. Moses & Joshua	Deuteronomy 34 & Joshua 11.....	1405 B.C.	58
68. Spies sent to Jericho	Joshua 2 & 3		58
69. Crossing the Jordan.....	Joshua 4 & 5		59
70. Jericho and Ai	Joshua 6 & 7		60
71. Joshua conquers Ai.....	Joshua 8		61
72. Tricked by the Gibeonites.....	Joshua 9 & 10		62
73. Joshua's final battles	Joshua 11	1390 B.C.	63
(Joshua 12-23 describes the division of Canaan) Joshua's charge to Israel	Joshua 23-24		
74. Unfinished Business	Judges 1-2		64
75. The First Judges: Othniel and Ehud.....	Judges 3.....		65
76. Deborah & Barak.....	Judges 4-5		65
77. Gideon called to deliver Israel	Judges 6.....		66
78. Gideon and his band of 300 Warriors.....	Judges 7-8		67
79. Abimelech	Judges 9.....		67
80. Israel's pattern of Forgetfulness — Jephthah	Judges 10 & 11		68
81. Jephthah and Manoah.....	Judges 12 & 13		69

Lesson	Scripture	Date	Page
82. Samson.....	Judges 14-15		70
83. Samson and Delilah	Judges 16.....		71
	The last five chapters of the book of Judges tell the story of Micah, his household idols, and a live-in Levite priest; then the story of a Levite, his unfaithful concubine, the lawless men of Gibeah in Benjamin's land, and the resulting civil war among the 12 tribes. The stories and lessons are obscure and we have made the decision to omit them from this study. They do not seem to follow chronologically in the story of the Judges, but rather seem to be told to illustrate the principle "There was no king in Israel and each man did what was right in his own eyes. (17:6; 21:25). While all scripture is inspired and profitable, we think these sections are best left for another time, perhaps when your children are older and want to do a more detailed study of Israel's history between Egypt and King Saul - the period of the Judges.		
84. Naomi loses Husband and Sons	Ruth 1 & 2.....		72
85. Boaz Redeems Ruth	Ruth 3 & 4.....		72
	<i>Now we come to the books of 1 & 2 Samuel which tell the stories of the last two Judges, Eli & Samuel and the first two kings, Saul and David.</i>		
86. Hannah & Eli	1 Samuel 1-2		73
87. Samuel's First Vision.....	1 Samuel 3-4		74
88. The Philistines & the Ark	1 Samuel 5-6		74
89. Samuel judges Israel.....	1 Samuel 7-8		75
90. Samuel anoints Saul.....	1 Samuel 9-10		75
91. Saul leads Israel to deliver Jabesh-gilead.....	1 Samuel 11-12	1051 B.C.	76
92. Saul's Disobedience.....	1 Samuel 13-14		77
93. Saul sins, Samuel confronts, David annointed	1 Samuel 15-16		78
94. David and Goliath.....	1 Samuel 17		79
95. David and Jonathan, Part 1.....	1 Samuel 18-19		80
96. David and Jonathan, Part 2.....	1 Samuel 20		80
97. David flees into Exile.....	1 Samuel 21 & 22		81
98. Saul hunts David in the Wilderness.....	1 Samuel 23-24		82
99. David and Abigail	1 Samuel 25		83
100. David spares Saul again.....	1 Samuel 26		83
101. David flees to the Philistines	1 Samuel 27-28		84
	Saul consults the witch		
102. David turned back, defeats the Amalekites	1 Samuel 29-30		85
103. Death of Saul and Jonathan	1 Samuel 31	1011 B.C.	86
 1 Chronicles 10		
104. David hears of the death of Saul and Jonathan ...	2 Samuel 1		86
105. David faces Civil War	2 Samuel 2 & 3		87
106. Death of Ish-bosheth, Saul's Son	2 Samuel 4, 5, & 6		88
107. David wishes to build the Temple.....	2 Samuel 7 & 8		89
108. David and Mephibosheth.....	2 Samuel 9-10		90

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
109. David and Bathsheba	2 Samuel 11-12		91
110. Amnon and Tamar and Absalom	2 Samuel 13		92
111. Absalom's Rebellion	2 Samuel 14 & 15		93
112. David on the road away from Jerusalem	2 Samuel 16		94
113. David and Absalom	2 Samuel 17 & 18		95
114. Sheba's Rebellion	2 Samuel 19 & 20		96
<p>Kings and Chronicles tell overlapping stories in the Bible. 1 Chronicles begins with 10 chapters of genealogies going back to Abraham and then picks up with the death of Saul and the reign of David. 2 Chronicles recounts the reigns of Solomon and the succeeding Kings of Judah. The author of Chronicles does not deal with the Kings of Israel directly. Kings opens with the accession of Solomon (the stories of Samuel, Saul, and David are told in 1 & 2 Samuel) and then traces the stories of the Kings of Judah as well as the Kings of Israel. In selecting readings for this guide, I have relied primarily on Chronicles for stories about the kings of Judah and Kings for the kings of Israel. Almost all of the passages about the Kings of Judah in the books of 1 & 2 Kings have parallels in Chronicles, but very little of what Kings has to say about the Kings of Israel is included. I have followed the sequence of kings as they are mentioned in the book of Kings.</p>			
115. David, Solomon, and the Temple	1 Chronicles 22 and 28-29.....		97
116. Adonijah the rebel, Solomon the heir	1 Kings 1 & 2	971 B.C.	98
117. Solomon asks for wisdom.....	1 Kings 3, 5-7		99
118. The dedication of the Temple.....	1 Kings 8-9:9		100
119. Solomon's Kingdom.....	1 Kings 10 & 11	931 B.C.	101
120. Rehoboam and Jeroboam.....	1 Kings 12		102
121. Jeroboam's Idolatry.....	1 Kings 13 & 14		103
122. Abijam, King of Judah.....	1 Kings 15:1-7	913 B.C.	104
	2 Chronicles 13		
123. Asa, King of Judah.....	2 Chronicles 14,15,16	908 B.C.	106
124. Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab	1 Kings 15:25-16:34	886 B.C.	107
	— Kings of Israel		
125. Elijah of Israel, Famine and the Widow's Child ...	1 Kings 17	876 B.C.	108
126. Elijah and the prophets of Baal	1 Kings 18 & 19		109
127. Ahab and Ben-Hadad.....	1 Kings 20	874 B.C.	110
128. Jezebel murders Naboth, Ahab Repents	1 Kings 21		110
129. False prophets and the death of Ahab.....	1 Kings 22:1-41		111
	God's view of Jehosaphat & Ahaziah.....	1 Kings 22:42-53	
130. Jehosaphat of Judah	2 Chronicles 17-19	873 B.C.	111
131. Jehosaphat at war with Moab.....	2 Chronicles 20		112
132. Ahaziah inquires of Baal-zebub, Elijah answers ..	2 Kings 1	853 B.C.	112
133. Elisha receives the mantle of Elijah.....	2 Kings 2	852 B.C.	113
134. Jehoram & Jehosaphat defeat Moab	2 Kings 3		113

Lesson	Scripture	Date	Page
135. Elisha and the Shunamite's son	2 Kings 4		114
136. Naaman's Leprosy Healed, Gehazi Cursed	2 Kings 5		115
137. Famine & War in Samaria	2 Kings 6-7		116
138. Elisha's prophecy to Hazael	2 Kings 8		117
Jehoram king of Judah			
139. Elisha Anoints Jehu	2 Kings 9	841 B.C.	118
death of Jehoram and Jezebel			
140. Jehu Executes Judgement.....	2 Kings 10		119
141. Athaliah and Joash	2 Kings 11	841 B.C.	119
142. Joash Repairs the Temple	2 Kings 12		
.....	2 Chronicles 24:15-27	835 B.C.	120
143. Jehoahaz & Jehoash of Israel, death of Elisha.....	2 Kings 13	814 B.C.	121
144. Amaziah, Jehoash, Azariah (Uzziah), & Jotham..	2 Chronicles 25 & 26	796 B.C.	122
145. Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum,	2 Kings 14 & 15	793 B.C.	123
Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea		752 B.C.	
146. Jotham & Ahaz, Kings of Judah	2 Chronicles 27-28	750 B.C.	124
147. The Destruction of Israel by Assyria	2 Kings 17	722 B.C.	125
148. Hezekiah Orders the Temple Cleansed	2 Chronicles 29	715 B.C.	125
149. Hezekiah Celebrates Passover	2 Chronicles 30 - 31		126
150. Hezekiah & the Siege of Jerusalem.....	2 Kings 18 & 19		127
151. Hezekiah's Reprieve and Isaiah's Prophecy.....	2 Kings 20		128
152. Manasseh & Amon, Wicked Kings.....	2 Chronicles 33		
.....	2 Kings 21	695 B.C.	129
153. Josiah, Hilkiah, Repair the Temple.....	2 Chronicles 34	640 B.C.	130
154. Josiah Cleanses the Temple, Celebrates Passover ..	2 Kings 23		131
155. Pharaoh & Nebuchadnezzar.....	2 Kings 24	609 B.C.	132
156. Zedekiah rebels against Babylon	2 Kings 25	597 B.C.	132
157. Daniel in captivity.....	Daniel 1	605 B.C.	133
158. Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams.....	Daniel 2		133
159. Daniel's Companions and the Fiery Furnace.....	Daniel 3		134
160. Daniel and another Dream of the King.....	Daniel 4		135
161. Belshazzar and the Handwriting on the Wall	Daniel 5	539 B.C.	135
162. Darius, Daniel, & the Lion's Den.....	Daniel 6	539 B.C.	136
chapters 7-12 of Daniel are the account of his prophetic dream			
163. Cyrus' Decree to Rebuild the Temple	Ezra 1, 2, & 3	536 B.C.	137
164. Rebuilding the temple.....	Ezra 4, 5 & 6	520 B.C.	138
165. Ahasuerus puts away his Queen.....	Esther 1	483 B.C.	139
166. Esther and Mordecai please the King	Esther 2	478 B.C.	140

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
167. Mordecai angers Haman- Haman plots Revenge....	Esther 3 & 4.....		140
168. Esther appeals to the King.....	Esther 5.....		141
169. The king honors Mordecai- Haman Outraged	Esther 6.....		141
170. Haman's Plot Revealed, Haman Executed.....	Esther 7 & 8.....	473 B.C.....	142
171. The Jews Destroy their Enemies	Esther 9 & 10.....		142
172. Ezra appointed Governor by Artaxerxes	Ezra 7 & 8	458 B.C.....	143
173. The Problem of Foreign Wives	Ezra 9 & 10		143
174. Nehemiah hears of Jerusalem's Distress	Nehemiah 1 & 2.....	445 B.C.....	144
175. The Jews build with one hand on their Weapons ...	Nehemiah 3 & 4.....		145
176. The rich repent of Oppressing the Poor	Nehemiah 5.....		145
177. Nehemiah Threatened, but the Wall Completed	Nehemiah 6.....		146
chapter seven is an accounting of those who returned from exile			
178. The reading of the Law.....	Nehemiah 8.....		146
179. Israel Repents	Nehemiah 9 & 10.....		147
chapters eleven and twelve are lists of who lived in Judah and the surrounding cities			
180. Purifying Israel (again!)	Nehemiah 13.....		148

For more information about:

Alexander the Great
 Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Maccabees
 Herod the Great

I refer readers to ***Josephus, The Essential Writings***, by Paul L. Maier. Josephus is a skilled writer and his work provides fascinating coverage of the history of Israel during the time between Old & New Testaments.

Introduction

This book was written to guide parents in introducing the history of Israel to their children. It is our conviction that children should be acquainted with the Bible as early as is practical. We are convinced that the stories from the Old Testament are given to us to teach us and our children important lessons about godliness and wisdom.

Whenever we have talked about teaching history to children, we have encouraged families to make the history of Israel, the Old Testament, their children's first history. It has not mattered where we are — we can always count on seeing one of three reactions from our listeners. Some look at us as if we are crazy: "What else **would** you start with, we've been doing that all along." Some look at us as if we are crazy: "Sure, we'd like to teach the Bible to our children, but surely you don't mean **young** children. It's too hard!" And the rest look at us as if we are crazy. In fact, this group often tells us we are crazy. They say "You don't expect me to teach the Old Testament to **children** — I can't even understand the Old Testament."

As a people, we do not really know the Scriptures very well. And we have forgotten that God has commanded, not merely suggested, that we pass on these things (these Old Testament stories) to our children. Sometimes we are overwhelmed, paralyzed by a realization of our own shortcomings. So very often, we honestly do not know where to start. And sadly, with few exceptions, our churches are not helping us very much.

As we have read through the story of Israel again this time, we have been most struck by something we already knew — but have seen again. We have been painfully reminded of the fact that we truly are always only one generation away from a return to paganism. This is true and demonstrated all the way through the history of Israel, the history of the Church, and is in evidence in our own churches (and I mean the good, solid, doctrinally-correct churches that most of us seek out). We are not immune.

The pattern runs something like this: Parents are blessed by God and set about to enjoy the blessings. Children remember that their parents were blessed by God and continue to enjoy the blessings. Grandchildren enjoy the blessings and forget their source. And all of a sudden we have a generation who know neither Joseph or his God. God becomes for them some small part of their cultural identity — something like the state bird or flower. They know there is one, but its existence really doesn't trouble them very much.

This pattern is played out over and over again throughout the history of Israel. A history of a people who, for the most part, keep forgetting who their God is and what He has done for them. Our deepest fear and sadness is that the same pattern is being played out again within the believing Church today. If we do not pass on to our children our own love for and delight in the Word of God; if we allow the Sunday School or youth group to become the primary source of Biblical instruction; if in our home instruction, we make the Word of God a slave to workbook pages and fill in the blank lessons, we will lose our children. Our believing churches (for all their doctrinal soundness) are producing a generation of children who, for all their head knowledge, have no heart for God.

However, we do not believe that such an outcome is inevitable. The good news is that we can as adults, fall in love with the Word of God. We can infect our children with a love for

the Word if we will just let the Bible speak for itself. Tell its stories as if they are real, living stories. Read them with the same loving expression that we use when we read our favorite family read-alouds. We should be able to laugh just a little as the angel announces to a cowering Gideon, “Hail, mighty man of valor!” We should cheer David on as he confronts Goliath in the name of the Living God. We should feel the sadness that David feels as he realizes that his best friend, Jonathan, is dead. And we should rejoice with God’s people in Susa as God delivers them from the hand of wicked Haman.

If we find delight in the Word, for the most part, our children will follow. If we approach it with fear and uncertainty, we can be sure our children will follow our lead here, too. With the psalmist we need to call our children to join us, to “Taste and see that the Lord is Good!”

And that’s the basic purpose behind this book. It is intended to be a guide to help you, as parents, to organize your study of the Old Testament with your children.

This book is not a commentary. It will not answer all your questions about the Old Testament. We have concentrated on the historical narratives, telling where the laws and the prophets fit into the history, but we concentrate on the historical books themselves. This is a source book for a basic historical overview. Once you have given your children the big picture, you will want to continue through the Gospels and Acts. And then, once they grasp the stories and the major themes, you will want to show them how to camp out in the Scriptures — learn how to inductively study the Word for themselves. We strongly recommend that your Bible instruction go far beyond the scope of this guide. We hope that the study you begin with your children here will only be the beginning of a lifelong passion for the Word of God that will produce a generation of believers like those described by Daniel 11.32 — a people who know their God, are strong and do great things.

How to Use this Book

The readings from the Bible outlined here are selected for the purpose of studying the history of Israel. The focus is on history — not theology. The audience intended are children — not adults. The focus is always on one or two central characters. Repeatedly, we will ask, “What actions are worthy of imitation?” “What actions should we avoid?” “What is God’s judgment on this life?”

The focus is on understanding God’s providential action and intervention through history, guiding the destiny of the children of Israel. Like the Famous Men series (with titles on Egypt, Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, Renaissance & Reformation) which follows it, this history unit is built around a series of biographies. We have not attempted to write a Famous Men of the Old Testament book, since one already exists, and we don’t presume to suppose that we could improve upon it (the Bible!).

The 196 readings are intended to be used, one each day throughout the school year. Yes, we know that’s a few more readings than most people have school days. Be creative. You could do more than one reading on some days, or you could continue the study into the summer or the next school year. We really tried to fit Old Testament History into 180 readings, but we just couldn’t do it and we couldn’t bear to leave anything out.

The readings are designed to give the student (and parent/teacher) an overview of the history of Israel and an introduction to the key figures whose lives God uses to teach us about Himself and His character. These stories are intended for children in the elementary grades, and should be accessible, even to children in kindergarten or first grade. (Actually, anyone of any age wanting to get an overview of Old Testament history might find this book to be helpful.) If this seems surprising, the reader is reminded that God’s plan for families is for fathers to teach these stories to their children. When God decrees in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 that “you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up,” he is not referring to math facts and grammar rules. God’s textbook for children are the stories from the Old Testament. He is specifically referring here to the story of the Exodus from Egypt, but by implication he means the entire Old Testament. The Old Testament is God’s textbook for children. It is the only textbook, quite probably, which Jesus used during his education in the house of his parents (and perhaps with a rabbi in Nazareth).

For each reading, we recommend the following outline:

Pray

Review

Read-aloud

Narrate

Discuss

Pray

As a teaching technique, we heartily commend to you a practice described as narration by Charlotte Mason (for more about her educational philosophies, see **For the Children's Sake** by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay and **The Original Home Education Series** by Charlotte Mason). Narration is a simple technique in which the child reads or listens to a story and then is asked to tell the story back in his own words. This exercise is difficult at first, but over time (actually a short time) the child will learn to focus his attention and remember significant details so that he can retell what he has learned. It is important not to do too much prompting or correcting and not to offer the child a second reading too readily. Begin with short passages (a paragraph or two) and before long, your child will be able to recount passages of 3-4 pages (about 5-10 minutes worth of out-loud reading).

After giving his own narration back to you (this is your check to make sure he has comprehended the passage), use the discussion questions as a guide to help focus on significant events, ideas, and lessons in each passage.

After you have read the passage out loud, have your students tell the story back to you. If you have more than one student, then have them alternate telling the story as you call on them. This will keep the attention of those who are NOT at the moment narrating from wandering.

From the start, train your students to listen for answers to the basic questions that begin with the words who, what, when, where, why, and how. This simple habit is a foundational study skill (for any study) and is especially important for inductive Bible study.

Teaching Aids

Maps, coloring books, flannel graphs, puzzles, story tapes, animated video versions all have their place (though with regard to audios and videos - be scrupulously fanatical about accuracy). Any or all of these may prove helpful with your child. None of these will catch their interest and work ALL of the time. If you notice their eyes glazing over, stop. Don't push them too hard. This is supposed to be fun.

Dates

The dates we have used are those generally agreed upon by conservative scholars. If you have a King James Bible with Bishop Ussher's dates (an Irish Bishop who worked out a system of dates for the Old Testament in the 19th century), then you will find substantial agreement. Other conservative scholars may vary somewhat. For the later time periods of the Old Testament, there is little controversy. The regnal dates of Saul, David, and Solomon are confirmed by records from other contemporary cultures that mention them. The further back in time you go from Saul however, the greater the divergence of opinion. The largest area of controversy concerns the dating of the Exodus.

In the 19th century, critical (read that skeptical and quite often heretical) scholars began to express doubts about the traditional dating of the Exodus. They argued, for example, that Moses could not have developed the law and his monotheistic emphasis as early as had been supposed. He must, they argued, have picked these ideas up from later developments in Egyptian history. In particular, the critics argued that Moses drew heavily on Ahkmaton, the monotheistic pharaoh whose reign was from 1361 B.C. to 1344 B.C.

But the skeptics' arguments beg the question. They assume Moses' ideas were derived from Egyptian culture, therefore they move his dates to a much later period, then they point to the earlier Egyptian ideas as their "proof" that Moses "borrowed" his best ideas. It is all a fairly transparent and calculated attempt to cast doubt on the authority of the Bible.

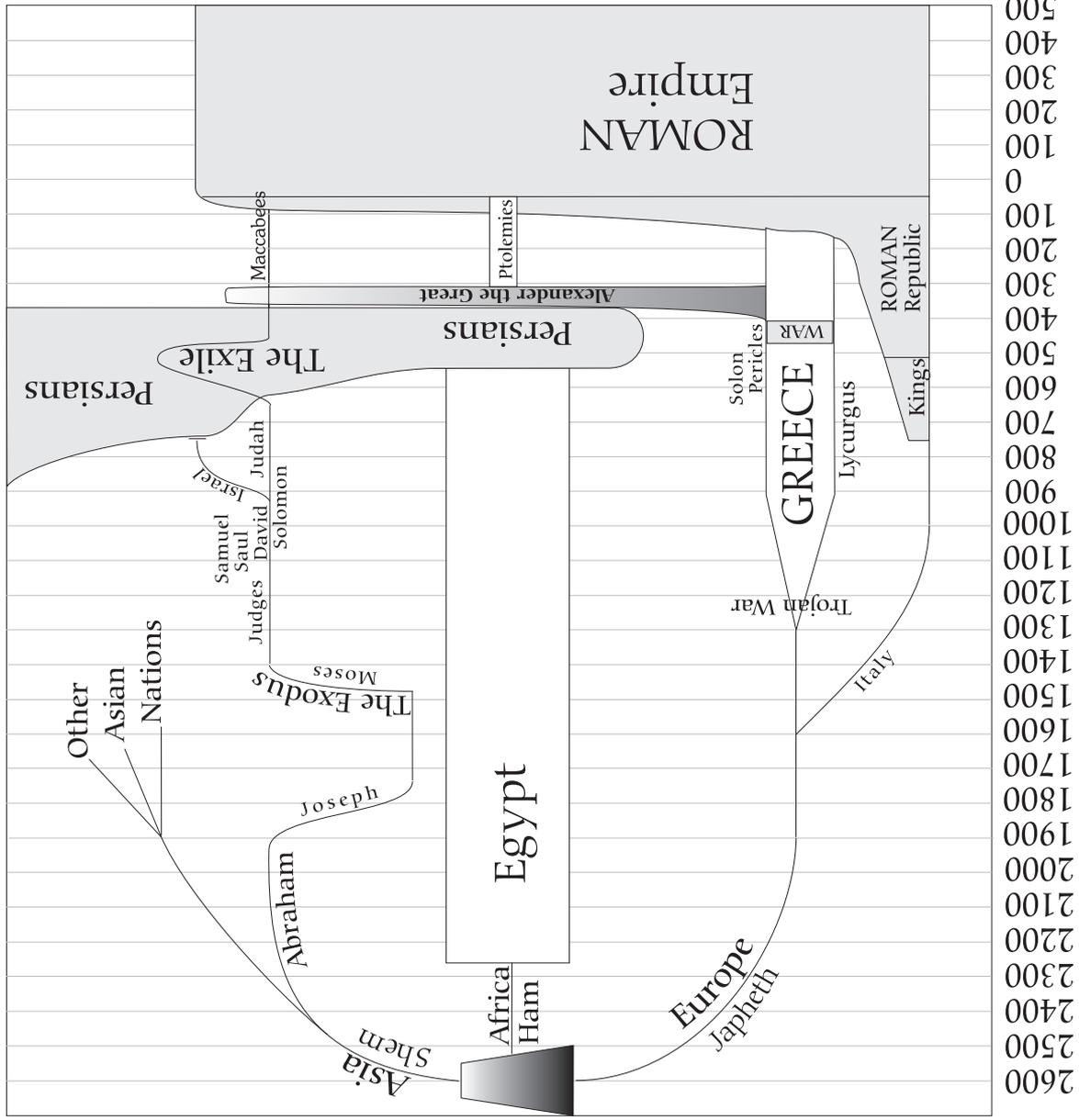
But if God is who He claims He is, does it not make sense that His giving of the law would be a unique event, without immediate antecedents? And if Egypt was rocked by plagues and a military disaster during the Exodus, would it be unusual if that brought about a turning away from the traditional Egyptian gods and the rise of a group seeking the truth about one true God. Seen in this light, the reforms of Pharaoh Ahkmaton are a sign that the Exodus had a spiritual impact on Egypt.

Graphical Timeline of Ancient History

by Robert G. Shearer
© 1996 Greenleaf Press

Key Dates

- Israel**
- c.1900 B.C. – Joseph sold into slavery
 - c.1445 B.C. – The Exodus
 - c.1000 B.C. – Death of Saul, David becomes King
 - 605–1344 B.C. – The Exile
- Egypt**
- 2500 B.C. – Khufu (Cheops) The Great Pyramid
 - 1505–1484 B.C. – Queen Hatshepsut
 - 1361–1344 B.C. – Amenhotep IV also known as Akhenaton
 - 51–31 B.C. – Cleopatra
- Greece**
- c.1200 B.C. – Siege of Troy
 - 478–404 B.C. – Civil War between Athens & Sparta
 - 356–323 B.C. – Alexander
- Rome**
- 753 B.C. – Founding of Rome
 - 509 B.C. – Founding of the Roman Republic
 - 100–44 B.C. – Julius Caesar
 - 312–327 A.D. – Constantine
 - 410 A.D. – Sack of Rome by the Visigoths
 - 476 A.D. – Death of the last Roman Emperor



An Outline of the History of Israel

Most of us know instinctively the major periods of American history:

Explorers-----	1400-1600
Pilgrims and Colonists -----	1604-1750
The American Revolution-----	1750-1787
The War of 1812-----	1812-1815
Sectionalism and Westward Expansion-----	1815-1860
The War Between the States -----	1861-1865
Reconstruction -----	1865-1900
World War 1 -----	1914-1921
The Great Depression-----	1929-1940
World War 2 -----	1941-1945

We should spend at least as much time learning the outline of **Israel's history**.

The Patriarchs-----	2200-1700 B.C.
Slavery in Egypt-----	1700-1450 B.C.
The Exodus-----	-1453 B.C.
Judges -----	1413-1020 B.C.
The United Kingdom -----	1051-931 B.C.
The Divided Kingdom (Israel & Judah) -----	931-586 B.C.
The Babylonian Exile -----	605-535 B.C.
The Return & Rebuilding -----	536-415 B.C.

On the preceding page is a graphical overview of the history of Israel from the tower of Babel through the exile and return. The history of Israel is shown along the top line (the descendants of Shem). The development of other, neighboring civilizations are shown in the lines of Ham, and Japheth

Lesson 1

God Creates

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Background: *The first three chapters of scripture contain rich lessons for all of us. For children, it is important to establish for them that God is the creator of the entire universe, and of everything, and everyone in it.*

1. When do the events of the passage happen?
2. Who acts in the passage? Note any pronouns. Are they singular or plural? What significance might this have?
3. You might want to make a chart with the words “Light, waters, earth, and dry land” and note what you learn about each.

Notice how the 6 days divides into two groups of threes. In the first 3 days, God creates three realms, the heavens, the expanse between the waters, and the dry land. In the second 3 days God populates each of the realms: stars in the heavens, fish and birds in the skies and the waters, and finally animals and man on the dry land.

Day 1: light and darkness

Day 2: division of the waters

Day 3: dry land, seas, vegetation

Day 4: stars, sun, & moon (for the heavens)

Day 5: fish and birds (for the seas and the skies)

Day 6: land animals, man (for the dry land)

4. What is God’s opinion of His creation? How often is this judgement repeated?
5. What is different about the creation of man from the creation of the animals?

*Some families have found it profitable to organize the study of science around the days of creation. One resource for this is the book, **Science in the Creation Week** by Unfred.*

Lesson 2.

Adam and Eve

Genesis 2:4-3:24

Remember the outline: Pray, Review, Read, Narrate, Discuss, and Pray again.

1. Name those who are involved in the story told in 2:4-3:24
2. What do you learn about each one?
3. Where does this story take place?
4. What responsibility does God give to man? (2:15)
5. Who named the animals? (2:19)
6. Why was Eve created? How does her creation differ from the animals?
7. Look in more detail at the conversations between God and Adam in 2:15-17. Compare this with Satan's report in 3:1-6.
8. Where was Eve when God said these things? How would she have found out what God has said? Does she know what God said accurately?
9. Does the serpent repeat what God said accurately? (Try reading the two passages one after the other to your younger children and have them listen for the differences.)
10. What happened because Adam and Eve disobeyed?
11. Why is it silly to hide from God? Why is it "natural?"
12. Whom does God curse because of Adam and Eve's disobedience? How is the curse different for each of them?
Don't overlook Genesis 3:15, generally understood to be the first prophecy of the messiah.
13. Why do you think Adam calls Eve the "mother of all the living?" Why wouldn't he name her "cursed woman God saddled me with?"
14. What does God do for Adam and Eve AFTER the fall? How are the clothes God makes for Adam and Eve different from the clothes they made for themselves? How is this a picture of our own redemption?

Lesson 3.

Cain and Abel

Genesis 4

1. Who was the older of the two brothers?
2. **Something to think about:** Is it possible that Eve thought Cain was the Messiah who would bruise the serpent's heel?
3. What was Cain's occupation?
4. What was Abel's occupation?
5. How would you describe Cain's relationship with Abel?
6. Is Cain able to hide his sin? What implications does this have for us?
"The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground..."
7. What happens to Cain because of Abel's murder? Why does God place a special mark on Cain?

The rest of this chapter provides us with a history of Cain and his offspring. Our middle elementary children on up enjoyed making a genealogical chart of the people listed here. In addition to recording the names of the individuals, we also made note of any special accomplishments attributed to an individual. Our younger children (Kindergarten and first grade) bailed out before we got very deeply into this — so watch closely for the signals that say, "You may be enjoying this, but we're sure not!" In such cases it would probably be better for you to make the chart and share highlights with the kids briefly. Suggested highlights follow.

8. Notice when the men described in Genesis 4 do things like build cities, work with metals, play instruments, live in tents and raise cattle. Compare the sequence described in Genesis with the typical evolutionary scenario: "primitive man moves from caves to tents and follows animals to seasonal pastures for years and years and years, until he figures out how to build fences and houses and EUREKA! — cities!"
9. Be sure and ask your students to identify the specific offspring and the occupations they are noted for.
10. What is the name of Adam and Eve's third son?

Lesson 4.

Enoch and Methuselah

Genesis 5

Though at first, this chapter may appear to be one of those insufferable lists of who begat whom, don't be quick to skip it. Although your younger children may not be quite ready to walk through it in much detail, we would recommend that the parent or teacher at least do it themselves.

With our older children (3rd grade and up) we made a chart of Seth's descendants, noting names, ages of each father when his son was born, age of each man at his death. Out to the side of the chart, I kept a running tally of Adam's age — which will also give you, obviously, the amount of time MAN has been around.

*As I record Adam's age beside each name in the genealogy, I ask "Is Adam still alive?" And then I point out that Adam was indeed able to pass on a first hand account of life before and after The Fall to a long line of people. This activity seemed to help all of us see the early history of man in a new, very real light. It is possible to get the same information from the charts in ***The International Inductive Study Bible*** or ***The Wallchart of World History***. However, there is something about doing the numbers yourself that will really make the information "yours". Thus, we recommend it, at least to you, if not to your children.*

For Discussion:

1. The phrase "These are the generations of..." is repeated throughout Genesis. Watch for it. (This is, in fact, its second appearance).
2. How many sons and daughters did Adam and Eve have? Which ones are specifically named? (see v. 4: "He had other sons and daughters ..." This is the answer to the proverbial question of skeptics, "where did Cain's wife come from?")
3. How is Enoch different from the other descendants of Adam? When does the text say Enoch died? (WARNING! WARNING! TRICK QUESTION!) What does it say about how Enoch ended his time among men? What does Enoch name his son?

Background: *Enoch was apparently one of the first prophets/preachers in the Word. A look at Jude, verses 14 & 15 will give you a description of what he preached. Read this to your children. Enoch not only preached against the wickedness of the world, but provided a prophetic word about coming judgement through the name of his son, Methuselah. Methuselah's name means, "after me, it comes." God confirms this prophetic word by withholding judgement until after Methuselah's death.*

It is possible to calculate the flood year as you keep a tally of the years which have passed since Adam's creation. When you run the numbers, you find that Methuselah died the year the flood began. Our kids were greatly impressed by this.

4. What did Enoch preach?
5. When does Adam die? How long after his death was Noah born? How could Noah's father have found out the details of life before and after The Fall?
6. What does Lamech prophesy about Noah? (verse 29)