

OLD TESTAMENT SUMMARY:

God created the universe: the earth, the people, the animals . . . everything. People got along with God, and everything in **creation** was running smoothly, just as he intended.

But people wrecked God’s ideal plan by deciding to take matters into their own hands instead of trusting him. When people rebelled against God, they damaged all of humanity’s relationships with him and with one another. They threw a wrench into a perfectly working system. The consequences of their **sin** impacted all generations after them—similar to how our actions affect future generations.

People have since suffered the consequences of their actions, but God mentioned in the early part of the book of Genesis that he will one day destroy evil and make things right again. In the meantime, evil will be a strong force.

Evil became so prevalent that God sent a **flood** to wipe out the planet and start the process over with one family—**Noah**’s family. But as the population grew again, people continued to sin against God. People’s relationships with one another and God continued to be broken.

Still in Genesis, God began to reveal his agenda to restore his relationship with humanity. He chose a man, **Abraham**, to be the starting point for this plan. He said Abraham would be the beginning of a great nation—a nation that would play a huge part in making things right in the world and would bless all other nations. Abraham passed that promise down to his son **Isaac**, and Isaac passed it to his son Jacob. **Jacob** would have 12 sons, and his name was changed to Israel. The rest of the Old Testament is the early history of the nation of Israel.

In one of the early stories, we are introduced to Jacob’s youngest son, **Joseph**. His older brothers sold him into slavery, and he was shipped to Egypt. Through a series of unlikely events, Joseph was promoted to second in command of Egypt and was in charge of the nation’s food supply. One day, his brothers—yes, those brothers—traveled to Egypt to buy food without knowing Joseph was in charge of the food! Their relationship was restored. That was the beginning of the nation of Israel living in Egypt for centuries.

After 400 years in Egypt, the Israelites became so numerous that the Egyptian leader (Pharaoh) felt threatened. He enslaved them before they got any ideas about taking over.

Then **Moses** entered the picture. God used Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (that’s the book of **Exodus**) and back to the land God had promised them long ago, when he first spoke to Abraham. You might have heard of the 10 plagues or the parting of the Red Sea. These were some of the miraculous events God used to get his people out of Egypt.

When the Israelites were finally out of Egypt, God gave specific **commandments** to Israel to set them apart from other nations. In particular, and perhaps most importantly, he didn’t want them to worship any other gods. But time and again—often because of the influence of other cultures—Israel would lose sight of the one and only God. They would begin to drift.

Various judges and kings would lead the nation, with different degrees of emphasis on following God. Even though people were not always loyal to God, he repeated his promise to Israel that he would restore humanity. And he would do so through someone from the lineage of King **David**.

Prophets warned Israel that turning from God would lead to temporary disaster. Indeed, the people’s choices repeatedly left the nation in shambles. They would get overtaken by foreigners, be run out of their land, and lose hope in promises God made centuries earlier. New prophets appeared from time to time in order to revive hope. But at the end of the Old Testament, God had yet to send a leader to restore the nation of Israel. There was no clear resolution or conclusion.

The New Testament explains how God jumped back into the picture 400 years later by sending a man named Jesus, who claimed to pick up where the hopeless story of Israel left off.



SESSION 2: OLD TESTAMENT

I. A REPEATED CYCLE:

- A. God initiates a relationship with people.
- B. God makes promises (covenants) to show how his plan of redemption will unfold.
- C. People sin against God and face consequences.
- D. People ask God for forgiveness.
- E. God restores the relationship.

II. KEY PEOPLE AND EVENTS:

- A. Genesis 1–11 lays the foundation for the rest of the Bible by demonstrating people’s natural tendency to resist God. Examples include:
 - 1. Adam and Eve
 - Though Adam and Eve began in a perfect relationship with God and each other, they damaged all of humanity’s relationships with God and one another.
 - God introduces the idea that he will one day restore order by crushing evil.

2. The Flood

- The story of Noah describes God’s plan to give humanity a fresh start.
- Even with new beginnings, people turn away from God.

3. Tower of Babel

- People’s inclination is to try to replace God’s name with their own.
- In his mercy, God sometimes thwarts the plans of people.

B. Genesis 12–50 describes how God works through one family to begin to reconcile himself with people.

1. God promised to use Abraham to bless the rest of the world. This is known as the **Abrahamic Covenant**.
2. Isaac, Abraham’s son, became the keeper of God’s covenant with his father.
3. God renamed Isaac’s son Jacob “Israel,” and Israel became the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

4. Joseph, one of Jacob’s sons, helped rescue the nation of Israel from famine by bringing them to Egypt.

5. After about 400 years of living in Egypt, the Israelites were forced into slavery.

C. Exodus through Song of Solomon include:

1. Israel’s journey from slavery to freedom

- Key characters: Moses, Joshua
- Key events: the ten plagues, parting of the Red Sea, **Mosaic Covenant**

2. Stories of Israel’s judges and kings

- Key characters: judges, Saul, David, Solomon
- Key events: **Davidic Covenant**, Solomon’s temple built

3. Israel’s demise

- Key characters: Jeroboam, Rehoboam
- Key events: Israel splits and is conquered and exiled; temple destroyed

Jacob’s Sons (Birth Order):	12 Tribes of Israel
Reuben	Reuben
Simeon	Simeon
Levi	-
Judah	Judah*
Isaachar	Isaachar
Zebulun	Zebulun
Dan	Dan
Naphtali	Naphtali
Gad	Gad
Asher	Asher
Joseph	Ephraim, Manasseh (sons of Joseph)
Benjamin	Benjamin*

	Northern Kingdom	Southern Kingdom
Name:	Israel (or Ephraim)	Judah
Capital:	Schechem then Samaria	Jerusalem
First King:	Jeroboam	Rehoboam
# of Tribes:	10	2*
Conquered by:	Assyria (722 BC)	Babylon (586 BC)

D. Isaiah through Malachi highlight prophecies:

1. Prophecies warning Israel of God’s impending judgment
2. Prophecies of hope, promising restoration