

Story of the Old Testament

Appendix Review

What I'd like to do for you is review the materials that you have in the appendix of your document for the story of the Old Testament. There are a number of tools that are helpful for understanding the story and then communicating it. So let's start by turning to page 47 in your handout. We will just talk through some of these tools and explain how they can be used.

The first is on page 47. This is what I refer to as "the OT roadmap". It's a simple one-page document that can help you tell the story using pictures. And as you look at this, this takes us through all nine lessons of the story of the Old Testament from creation to Eden, the fall and the flood, and then the Tower of Babel. The first 11 chapters of Genesis, when God was working in a very general way to establish his kingdom.

Because of the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man in Genesis 11 and the Tower of Babel, God says, I'm going to now work in a very specific way. And this begins part two of the story of the Old Testament with God's desire to work through Abraham and call out a special people of his own through the nation of Israel. He will bring about the continuing development of his kingdom that will ultimately be fulfilled through Jesus as Messiah in the New Testament.

In picture #5, we highlight the period of the patriarchs with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the 12 tribes, and then Joseph. You would discuss how God worked through Joseph in Egypt to save his people and prepare for the formation of the nation.

God raised Joseph up for the saving of many people, he became second in command under Pharaoh, and Jacob's family moves to Egypt. Jacob's family of 70 grows to be many millions of people over 300-years.

We then move into the time of Moses. God raises up Moses as the deliverer, and we begin to see the birth of the nation in Exodus. We tell the story of the wandering of the people in the book of Numbers, the time of Joshua, leading the people after the death of Moses into the promised land. What follows is the conquest of the land.

After the time of Joshua, two generations later, the people don't know the Lord, and we enter into the period of the Judges. There are seven cycles of spiritual decline, where people begin to do what's right only in their own eyes.

In 1 Samuel, Samuel is the last of the judges, the first prophet. He is leading, he is getting old, he loves the Lord, his sons are not walking with the Lord. The people say, there is no one to come after you, Samuel, so we want a king. The people reject God as their king under the Theocracy, when God was intended to be their king.

Samuel anoints Saul as the first king, Saul disobeys God, Saul was a king with no heart for God, while Saul is still king, Samuel anoints David as a future king to replace Saul. When Saul is finally killed in battle, David becomes king of the united kingdom of Israel. He has a whole heart for God. He is a man after God's own heart. God makes a promise with David that

someone from his line will reign on his throne, the throne of David, from the tribe of Judah, forever. This looks forward to the promise of Jesus as the king of kings and the Lord of lords.

King Solomon follows after David. He is king with a half a heart for God, He started well, but sin and idolatry turned his heart away from God, and that led to the divided kingdom.

The divided kingdom has two parts, the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. There were ten tribes in the north, two tribes in the south, no good kings in the north, they go into exile in Assyria in 722 BC.

Eight of the twenty kings of the southern kingdom are good. They did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Yet because of sin and idolatry, they went into exile in Babylon for 70 years between 605-586 BC.

God's people are in Babylon during the time when Daniel and Ezekiel are prophesying. They are providing hope of a future return. Jeremiah prophesied that God's people would be in captivity for 70 years and at the end of those 70 years, at the command of the decree of King Cyrus of Persia, the people of God are allowed to leave Persia and return to the promised land.

They begin to rebuild the temple and the city and the land. During that restoration period, there are three waves of returnees, under Zerubbabel and Ezra and Nehemiah. The prophets at that time were Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

At the end of the Old Testament, there's a period of 400 silent years. The story ends with God's people in God's land, living for God, but waiting for their promised king. There would be 400 years of no prophets writing, until John the Baptist comes to break the silence, prophesied by the prophet Malachi. He said that God would send a messenger ahead to prepare the way for the Lord.

At just the right time, in Galatians 4, we see that God sent his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law.

This tool is a very helpful way to summarize the story of the Old Testament.

Turning on page 49, you can see the chart that is at the beginning of every lesson in your handout. Remember it gives you at the very top of the chart, what was going on in world history, the middle of the chart summarizes the different sections of the story of the Old Testament. You can see some of the key characters, and also where each of the prophets were speaking and prophesying at a given time. The bottom of the chart shows you where the books of the Old Testament support the story.

Page 50, is a blank chart to test yourself to fill in the blanks, fill in the missing pieces to complete the chart. This might be a good tool to reinforce your learning.

Page 51 is a chronological timeline of the books of the Old Testament. There is a song that summarizes the structure of the Old Testament, 5, 12, 5, 5, 12. The first five are the books of the law (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

Let me also state that the 11 books in the middle of the chart are the books that advance the story of the Old Testament. The books above and the books below reinforce the story at a given point in time. For example, Genesis begins the story. Job is linked to Genesis. Job was written during the time of the patriarch, so it reinforces Genesis.

Exodus and Leviticus are tied together. Exodus advances the OT story. Leviticus provides more detail regarding what was happening at Mount Sinai with the giving of the law.

Numbers continues to advance the story while Deuteronomy is a summary of 40 years of wandering as Israel is camped on the plains of Moab. Moses is reinforcing, renewing the covenant with the people before they enter the promised land.

The story follows with the books of history, from Joshua all the way through to Nehemiah. There are 12 books of history. These include Judges and Ruth was written during the time of the Judges, when there was such a darkness and despair. Ruth was a book of hope. This gives us an OT peek toward the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Through Abraham and those with the faith of Abraham, all the nations of the earth would be blessed, not just the Jew, but also the Gentile. Ruth was a Moabite, a Gentile, and Ruth became the great-great-grandmother of King David.

The history books continue with 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings. 1st and 2nd Chronicles is primarily a summary of the spiritual work of God through the southern kingdom. This was also the time of Saul, David, and Solomon, as the kings of the United Kingdom, Thus these all support the main story line of the OT.

After Solomon, the kingdom is divided with Israel, made up of 10 tribes, and Judah with the two tribes. David wrote many of the Psalms. Solomon was the author of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Above the story line, you see the different prophets. The prophets that prophesied to the north, to the south, to foreign nations.

The story continues into the seventy years of exile of the southern kingdom. During the time of captivity, Daniel and Ezekiel were the two prophets. At the end of the 70th year, King Cyrus issues the decree for the return of the people to the promised land.

The story continues with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were the prophets during that time. The book of Esther took place between Ezra chapter 6 and 7

Similar to the picture the OT roadmap, you can tell the OT story, using a chart like this with the 39 books of the Old Testament. Focus on the five books of law, 12 books of history, 5 books of poetry, 5 major prophets, and 12 minor prophets. 5-12-5-5-12.

Turning to page 52, here's your opportunity to quiz yourself. Based on what you know, complete the list of all the books of the Old Testament.

On page 53, we already referenced this when we were talking about the divided kingdom. This is the list of all the kings and prophets. So it starts with the kings of the United Kingdom. There were 19 kings of the northern kingdom of Israel and 20 kings of the southern kingdom of Judah. The chart details how many years each king reigned and whether they were good or evil. There were no good kings of the northern kingdom, and only eight of the 20 kings of the southern kingdom were good. On the far left and the far right of the chart you see the prophets that were speaking.

On page 54, there is a reading plan to read through the story of the Old Testament in one year.

On Page 55 begins a series of seven pages with a summary of each book of the Old Testament. This is divided into sections. The Pentateuch or the Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets and Minor Prophets. For each book you have the author, a short summary of the book, some red threads of Jesus in each book.

So if you just turn the pages, it takes you first from the five books of Moses, then the 12 books of history with Joshua, Judges, Ruth, first and second Samuel, first and second Kings, first and second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, okay, and even into Esther. On page 58, you can see the five books of poetry, same format, the author, summary, and where you may see some of the red threads of Jesus in those books, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

Page 59 starts with the five major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentation, which was written by Jeremiah as well, Ezekiel, and Daniel. And you can see the same format on pages 60-62, with the 12 minor prophets. There are 17 books of prophecy, 5 major prophets, 12 minor prophets. They were not called minor because they were less important. They were minor because they just wrote less. These include Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The final tool is on page 63, this is the diagram of the Kingdom of God that we introduced to start this course and added to it as the OT story unfolded.

This picture helps me. If it is not helpful for you, then I would encourage you to come up with your own picture to tell the story of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament. Remember there's a reference here to Luke 24:44 – 47. Jesus said, “these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. And he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem.”

Remember we said that there is a red thread of Jesus through every book of the Old Testament. The main character of the Old Testament is Jesus, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

The theme of the whole Bible is the story of the kingdom of God. We used this picture to show that a kingdom requires at least four things. It requires a king, it requires a land where the kingdom will reside, it requires people who will live in that land to serve the king, and it requires a purpose, a rule of law.

What we saw is that God is the king.

In Genesis 3 to 11, there was a conflict between the kingdom of God and kingdom of man, and a barrier was set up. In Genesis chapter 12, God makes a covenant promise with Abraham. He says, I'm going to make you a great name, I'm going to give you a great land, and all the nations of the world will be blessed through you.

And you can see the beginnings of God as a king. He's going to give them a land, they'll be God's people, and the purpose that God gives to them is to love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love their neighbor as themselves. As they live in this way, they will be a light to the world, drawing people from the nations who are separated from God, those who have rebelled against God, to enter into God's kingdom. You can see that to the right of the picture are the nations, that's the kingdom of man.

Their/our hearts are darkened. Sin has infected every aspect of their/our lives. They/we are prisoners to sin. There is a chasm that separates them/us from God. On the left, the people of God are in relationship with God.

God has given the Ten Commandments, not as laws that they/we have to follow to get into relationship with God. It was God who said, I am your God, and you're my people. Here's how you live in relationship with the Holy God. God plan was that through the promised king to come, a new covenant would be put into place. God's law would not be on tablets of stone but written on hearts.

Ezekiel spoke about how God's going to take away their/our heart of stone and give them/us a soft heart. He's going to put his spirit within them/us. There was going to be a new way to be made right with God. The Old Testament was looking forward to Jesus consummating the new covenant through his crucifixion and resurrection and his ascension, which brings the spirit of God to indwell every believer.

The focus of the story of the Old Testament is about the kingdom of God. Daniel speaks about this everlasting kingdom that will come, that we'll see the fulfillment of it all the way through the New Testament, even into the Revelation, where Jesus comes a second time as the conquering king to set up his kingdom to rule and reign for a thousand years. This leads to the new heaven and new earth.

Here is the gospel! There is no way that they/we can cross this chasm. There is no way they/we can enter into the kingdom by their/our own strength. This picture is true in the Old Testament and it is fully consummated in New Testament. Romans 6:23, says “the wages of sin is death.”

Because of sin, we are on the right side of this picture. We are separated from a holy God and this calls for eternal death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus, our Lord. The cross at the bottom of chart is the only way we can truly cross over from spiritual death, separation of God, to enter into the kingdom, to be a true citizen, a family member of God, to be his children.

You could use a picture like this to tell the story of the Old Testament. You may develop a picture that is more appropriate for you. Pictures help to tell a story, and pictures are easy for people then to put themselves into the story.

It's easy to remember the story. So whether it is the OT roadmap, whether it is the chronological books of the Bible, whether it is a picture like this of the story of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament, whether it is something that you'll come up with on your own, I encourage you to, at this point, go back through this entire handout, review the lessons, look up the scriptures.

Do not get lost in the details of the story, but stay focused on what's the big picture story, the big picture of the story of God, the kingdom of God, from creation all the way through to Malachi. God promises that he is going to send a messenger who's going to prepare the way for the Lord. That will be the transition to the story of the New Testament. At that point, you'll be able to tell the big picture story of the entire Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, not as two different stories, but all just one story, one theme.

Remember at the beginning of this course, we said there are a few different numbers that helped us to summarize the story of the Bible.

There are 40 authors.

The Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years.

There are 3 languages that it was written in, Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

It was written over 3 continents, Africa, Asia, and Europe.

There are 66 different books, yet there's 1 theme, 1 message across all these different books.

There was also the number 0, meaning there was no human editor.

The Holy Spirit guided the authors of the Bible. The Holy Spirit was the editor who guided the authors of the Bible to write down everything that God intended to have written.

So all Scripture is breathed out by God. Men wrote as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. When we think of the Old Testament and the New Testament, it is one story of the Kingdom of God.

It's the message of the kingdom of God. We can be brought back into relationship with God through the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus and live with him and serve him as our king forever and ever in perfect peace and joy in relationship with God. He is our God, and we are his people.

I hope you find these tools helpful in your learning and teaching.

There's one final recording that I'd like you to listen to. This is a 15-minute summary of the story of the Old Testament.

And that will be your challenge: to develop your own story, to be able to tell the story of the Old Testament in your words in 15 minutes or less.

You have all the tools to be able to do this. Listen to my story in the final recording.