

GOD'S UNFOLDING
Kingdom
A SURVEY OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT



HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE CURRICULUM

GOD'S UNFOLDING
Kingdom

A Survey of the Old Testament

Teacher Guide



Walking With God and His People: God's Unfolding Kingdom
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Christian Schools International
3350 East Paris Ave SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49512-3054

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Each generation stands on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Over the history of Christian Schools International, many people have been involved with creating sound Bible curricula to assist teachers in telling God's story. We are very grateful for their efforts and the sound foundation upon which we can build. This latest effort, *God's Unfolding Kingdom* (a second edition of *God's Unfolding Plan*), continues that building process.

Heidi Herberich Dean wrote the student text and teacher guide for *God's Unfolding Kingdom* with help from Claire Wait. Joseph Torres offered assistance with biblical content. The works of Richard Pratt (Third Millennium Ministries) and of Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew (Redeemer University College) were foundational in crafting the second edition.

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Introduction

Our Opportunity

Teachers—all teachers—have an important opportunity. We all have the privilege of equipping, training, and shaping the next generation. But teachers of God’s Word have a particularly weighty opportunity. Every day, we are asked to communicate to students the most important message of all: the truth of God, found in Scripture. We are asked to point students toward the One in whom all meaning and hope is found. And we are asked to help students orient their lives around this good news, this amazing offer of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our students need this truth. They need guidance in how to navigate life in a fallen world with all its disappointments, temptations, and pain. Our students hear an array of messages from the surrounding culture: many different “solutions” promise happiness and fulfillment. But only God’s Word contains the true solution to the brokenness inside us and around us. We have the opportunity to present and display this solution, and it is our sincere hope that students will see the message of Scripture outshining the messages of our culture. We are convinced that only this true story will allow students to properly understand who we are, what went wrong with the world, and what the remedy is.

Yet we often feel the need to be better equipped. We ourselves could use some guidance. We wonder how we can best present the Bible in a way that will draw our students toward Christ. How can we best nurture their faith? And how do we do this day after day? How do we turn the truth of a book as large and complex as the Bible into daily lessons that are both meaningful and age-appropriate? We want to move our students beyond mere knowledge of characters and events, but how do we connect all the pieces into a coherent whole? How can we tie all the daily lessons together into one compelling story that will become the true story guiding their entire lives?

Our Hope

Our hope with this curriculum is to provide teachers with just such a resource. We hope to help teachers connect the pieces of the Old Testament into one gripping story that tells the truth about ourselves, about this broken world, and about the redemption offered in Jesus. Many of us like this idea of connecting all the small stories of the Old Testament into one big story, but we are unsure how to implement it. How exactly would you summarize the story of the whole Old Testament? How would the stories of Noah, Ruth, and the Israelites in exile in Babylon all tie into one plot—with rising action, resolution, and all the other elements that make up a story? Better yet, how would one bring the ceremonial laws in Leviticus or the poetry of the Psalms into that story line?

This curriculum offers teachers a resource for bringing the many into one—the many events, many characters, many testimonies of God’s love into one plot that ties all the books of the Old Testament together. Having a structure on which to hang all the pieces of the Old Testament will help you turn “eighty different lessons about God’s love” into “one compelling story of God’s love.” It will help your students not miss the forest for the trees. And it will help you teach in a way that shapes hearts and minds.

Understanding the Bible as a Connected Whole

The second edition of this curriculum has been crafted around one unfolding plot, which you and your students can learn to narrate, illustrate, and retell to each other. We have told the Old Testament story as the best recent biblical scholarship has defined it: the story of a kingdom. We will see that throughout Scripture, God the King has desired to establish a kingdom of holy people making the Earth a holy place.

From the Book of Genesis to the Book of Malachi, your students will learn to tie the different themes and stories of the Old Testament back to this idea of holy people and holy place. They will learn to identify how the pieces play into the larger plot, and they will see this plot growing to a crescendo that culminates powerfully in the person of Jesus Christ.

As you begin your study of God's kingdom, you may feel like you are entering a different world: an ancient world of emperors and conquest, bloody rituals and treaties, pharaohs and slaves. And that is precisely what the Old Testament is: a different world. Students will see that it takes greater study to understand this world accurately than they previously anticipated. But if they take the time to delve into the ancient historic and literary background, the authors' original meaning will shine through more clearly, making our own application of these truths that much more powerful. The fact that the Old Testament is distant from our modern world and modern values means that it is able to give us an alternate vision of reality. We will come to see that our world is controlled not by the global economy, not by celebrities or politicians or the Internet, but by one supreme ruler: the royal son of David.

Encouraging Head, Heart, and Hands

This curriculum directs students to move beyond merely knowing about God's kingdom to participating in God's kingdom. Since true faith involves the whole person—the head, heart, and hands—we have designed each lesson to involve components of knowledge, conviction, and living. We believe that when students truly grasp the beauty of God's kingdom, their hearts will be stirred, and they will desire to use their lives in service to it.

The story of God's kingdom being established here on Earth stirs our hearts because it is an epic tale of good versus evil. It contains all the elements of suspense, heartbreak, violence, betrayal, and love that make for the best film or novel. Teens will be challenged and compelled by the radical nature of the kingdom. They will encounter a God who is not just a friend who helps us in our troubles, but a king who created us and makes demands of us. He is not content to let us lead comfortable lives, focused on fulfilling our dreams. Rather, he conscripts us into the service of his kingdom, fulfilling God's plan for the world. He will not settle for half our hearts. He is intent on turning our lives upside-down and reorienting them around his kingdom. The radical nature of what we will encounter disrupts our neat categories and compels a fresh hearing.

The story of God's kingdom not only stirs our hearts but also moves our hands to action. Students will see that God gave us an important mission to spread his kingdom here on Earth. We each have the high status of being commissioned by the King to carry out his purposes. How we use our time and our talents is of great importance because we can either have influence for eternity as we build up an everlasting kingdom—or we can live only for ourselves. Our actions are significant. The message of God's kingdom changes how we live.

We hope that the truth of Scripture will move from students' minds into their hearts, leading them to embrace Jesus Christ and producing lives of joyful service and obedience.

The Task of the Teacher

If we desire students to become excited about knowing and living out the Bible’s truths, it is important that teachers demonstrate and model this same passion themselves. When it comes to engaging students, your own enthusiasm does as much as, or more than, the written material. That is why it is important for us to attend to our own spiritual lives—our own walk with the Lord, our own study of the Word, our own participation in the church—because it is difficult to give to others what we ourselves are not experiencing.

How do we maintain the sort of spiritual vibrancy that will overflow into our teaching? Philippians 2:12–13 instructs us to “continue to work out” our salvation, for “it is God who works in you.” We must exercise ourselves in our faith, all the while asking and relying on the Holy Spirit to work in us. Prayer is vital to anyone teaching God’s Word; we need the Lord to help us understand, teach, and live out Scripture in a way that points students toward Christ. Yet even when we fail to be the teachers we desire to be, we should be reassured that God’s grace works in and through our weakness. He can use even our imperfect attempts to work in students’ lives.

The teacher also has the task of creating a classroom environment where learning can take place effectively. Classroom dynamics can either enhance or detract from the effectiveness of the material. We must direct students’ behavior toward reflecting the biblical truths we teach. The classroom should be a place where everyone is treated with respect and love, because the Bible tells us that all people are made in God’s image. It should be a place where humility and openness to correction are demonstrated because we know that all of us have been broken by the Fall. The classroom should be a place of grace and hope, because nothing is outside the reach of God’s redemption. Teachers play an important role in overseeing and directing these classroom dynamics.

Curriculum Implementation Suggestions

In this second edition of *God’s Unfolding Kingdom*, teachers will find that they are asked to serve less as lecturers and more as facilitators of learning as students engage the material in a variety of formats. Lessons have been updated to involve more student participation, making the classroom an environment of discussion, small group discovery, and personal reflection.

As you explore the Teacher Guide, you will find that lessons follow this format:

1. The *Bridge* builds anticipation for the lesson’s objective by introducing a question or idea, often tapping into students’ prior knowledge. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate additional review of material, linking the lesson’s objective to the larger framework.
2. The *Scripture Link* is a teacher-guided time of learning; teacher and students work through notes, activities, or discussion centered on the lesson objective.
3. The *Student Activities* are more student-oriented, asking the teacher to do more facilitating by circulating among students working independently or in small groups to extend the material.
4. The *Student Textbook* (or *Independent Practice*) portion can be done at the end of class or be assigned for homework. The reading will reinforce and extend the main ideas from the lesson as well as give an opportunity to think through questions that follow.
5. The *Looking Ahead* section presents the scriptural focus of the next lesson; teachers are encouraged to assign this as student reading outside of class.

6. The *Enrichment* section provides cross-curricular ideas for additional activities based on similar themes and concepts taught in the lesson.

Assessment is provided at the end of each unit in the form of a unit review and unit exam. Teachers are encouraged to find ways to include daily review of key ideas and add informal or formal assessment to daily lessons according to the needs of students. The Enrichment section often gives ideas for projects, quizzes, or essay assignments.

Teacher Preparation is given at the beginning of each lesson through an opening note, lesson highlights, and background information. Teachers are also encouraged to read the student text during their preparation, as the text reinforces the classroom objective, offering some extended content. Feel free to incorporate additional content from the text during class time.

Student Textbook. An important change in this second edition is that the student textbook is used to reinforce ideas rather than to introduce them. The textbook is intended to be utilized after the classroom lesson, either as an extension activity during class or as homework.

Kingdom Video and Chart (page 19) are intended to help teachers review the major themes of this curriculum throughout the year, whenever opportunity arises. These tools will help you connect any given lesson or unit into the larger structure of God's kingdom.

Pacing. This second edition intentionally has fewer lessons to allow the teacher more flexibility in how to implement them. Teachers can stretch lessons over two classroom periods when necessary.

Scope and Sequence Overview

Unit	Lesson	Reference
Unit 1 The Pentateuch: God Chooses Israel to Be His Redeemed People	1. Approaching the Old Testament	Introduction
	2. The One Big Story	Introduction
	3. Preparing to Read God's Word	Introduction
	4. God Creates the World	Genesis 1
	5. A Mission for Humanity	Genesis 1–2
	6. The Fall into Sin	Genesis 3
	7. Sin Grows Worse: The Flood	Genesis 4–11
	8. God Begins Redemption through Israel	Genesis 11–12
	9. God Covenants with Abram	Genesis 15
	10. Abraham's Faith Is Tested	Genesis 22:1–19
	11. Jacob Inherits the Promise	Genesis 27–28
	12. Jacob Wrestles with God	Genesis 32–33
	13. Joseph: God Meant It for Good	Genesis 37; 39–41
	14. Joseph's Brothers Are Reconciled	Genesis 42–45
Unit 2 The Pentateuch: God Redeems Israel and Expects Covenant Loyalty	1. Israel Enslaved in Egypt	Exodus 1:1–2:10
	2. God Calls Moses	Exodus 2:11–4:31
	3. God Redeems Israel in the Exodus	Exodus 11:1–12:39, 13–14
	4. Passover: A Redemption Meal	Exodus 12; 14:1–15:21
	5. Israel in the Wilderness	Exodus 15:22–17:16
	6. Sinai: God Gives His Law	Exodus 19–20
	7. God Dwells with His People	Exodus 25–40
	8. Leviticus: Rules for Holy Living	Leviticus 1; 16; 23:9–14
	9. Numbers: Judgment and Mercy	Numbers 13:17–14:45; 20:1–13; 21:4–8
	10. Deuteronomy: Love the Lord!	Deuteronomy 28–34
Unit 3 The Histories: Israel Is Established as a Kingdom	1. Conquering the Promised Land	Joshua 1–12
	2. Dividing and Settling the Land	Joshua 13–24
	3. Judges: A Cycle of Sin	Judges 2:6–3:31
	4. Samson: Portrait of a Judge	Judges 13–16
	5. Ruth: God's Plan for His Kingdom	The Book of Ruth
	6. Samuel: Chosen to Anoint the King	1 Samuel 1–7
	7. Saul: A Failed Start to Kingship	1 Samuel 8–13
	8. David: A New King for Israel	1 Samuel 15–30
	9. David: The Golden Years	1 Samuel 31; 2 Samuel 5–7
	10. The Consequences of Sin	2 Samuel 11–13, 15:18–19:8; 1 Kings 1
	11. Solomon: The Glory Years	1 Kings 2–11; 2 Chronicles 3–9

<p>Unit 4 The Writings: Poetry and Wisdom of Ancient Israel</p>	1. Psalms: An Introduction	Selections from the Book of Psalms
	2. Psalms of Praise	Psalms 19, 33, 138
	3. Psalms of Lament	Psalms 38, 51, 74
	4. Psalms of Thanksgiving	Psalms 30, 107, 118
	5. Proverbs: An Introduction	Proverbs 1–3
	6. Proverbs: Guard Your Tongue	Proverbs 10, 15, 18
	7. Song of Songs: A Love Story	Song of Songs 1–3; 8:6–7
	8. Ecclesiastes: Life Is Meaningless	Ecclesiastes 1, 2, 4
	9. Ecclesiastes: Life with Meaning	Ecclesiastes 5, 11, 12
	10. Job: The Friends Speak	Job 1–3
	11. Job: God's Response	Job 38–42
<p>Unit 5 The Histories: The Fall of Israel</p>	1. Dividing the Kingdom	1 Kings 12–14
	2. Early Kings of the Northern Kingdom	1 Kings 15:25–16:28
	3. Israel's Baal Worship	1 Kings 16:29–19:21
	4. Israel Sent into Exile	2 Kings 15, 17
	5. Judah: The First 150 Years	2 Chronicles 10:1–11:17; 12:1–14:2; 17:1–12; 20:31–21:7
	6. A Case Study of a Godly King: Hezekiah	2 Kings 18–20; 2 Chronicles 29–32
	7. Judah's Decline	2 Chronicles 33:1–36:9
	8. The Fall of Judah	2 Kings 24:18–25:30; 2 Chronicles 36:11–23
<p>Unit 6 The Histories: Israel in Exile</p>	1. Daniel: Life in Exile	Daniel 1
	2. A Babylonian Repents	Daniel 4
	3. The Fall of Babylonia	Daniel 5
	4. Esther: An Introduction	Esther 1–4
	5. Esther: A Dramatic Conclusion	Esther 5–10
	6. The Exiles Return	Ezra 1; 3–6
	7. Relearning God's Law	Ezra 7; 8:15–10:17
	8. Rebuilding the Walls	Nehemiah 1–2; 4:1–7:3
	9. Nehemiah's Reforms	Nehemiah 8–9; 10:28–39; 12:27–13:31
<p>Unit 7 The Prophets: Israel's Failure Yet Future Hope</p>	1. An Introduction to the Prophets	Jeremiah 2:1–19
	2. The Lives of the Prophets	Ezekiel 2–4
	3. Reasons for Exile: Injustice	Jeremiah 22; Isaiah 3:13–15; Isaiah 59; Amos 5–6
	4. Reasons for Exile: Israel's Leaders	Amos 7:10–17; Hosea 4:1–9; Jeremiah 23:13–32
	5. The Hope of Israel: End to Exile	Jeremiah 30–32
	6. The Hope of Israel: Jesus	Isaiah 11

CSI Bible Student Outcomes

Grades K–8	Grades 9–12
<p>1. Students know key Bible characters, events, and themes and are able to connect them.</p>	
Retell Bible stories and organize stories, characters, events, and eras in sequential order.	Retell Bible stories and organize stories, characters, events, and eras in sequential order.
Explain relationships between closely related characters and/or events.	Explain relationships between closely and distantly related characters and/or events.
Know that broader themes such as salvation, covenant, and God's kingdom connect the stories of the Bible.	Know that broader themes such as salvation, covenant, and God's kingdom connect the stories of the Bible. Arrange these broader themes themselves into an organized, branching structure, with God's kingdom as the broadest category and the other themes as subcategories.
Know that the biblical story unfolded through the stages of Creation, Fall, and redemption.	Explain how God's kingdom unfolded through the stages of Creation, Fall, and redemption. Describe how redemption itself unfolded in stages. Tie specific characters and events to the appropriate stage of Creation, Fall, or redemption.
Understand that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament and give examples of distinct prophecies or distinct roles he fulfills.	Understand that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament and give examples of distinct prophecies or distinct roles he fulfills. Explain that Jesus fulfills not only distinct pieces of the Old Testament but also the overarching plot itself, centering on the history of humanity and of Israel.
Know that the Old Testament focuses on the nation of Israel and identify the stages in Israel's history.	Identify how God's kingdom plan advanced as Israel grew from being a wandering people group, to a settled nation, to finally a unified kingdom under David. Explain why Israel's decline into a divided kingdom and then a conquered and scattered people group represented a devastating failure in the mission of God's kingdom.
Tell the story of the whole Bible at a basic level.	Tell the story of the whole Bible at a more complex level.
<p>2. Students read the Bible in its historical and cultural context.</p>	
Understand that Scripture is fully divine. Explain and defend the Bible as the infallible Word of God, for all times and places.	Understand that Scripture is fully divine. Explain and defend the Bible as the infallible Word of God, for all times and places.
Know that the Holy Spirit inspired human authors.	Understand that Scripture is also fully human. Explain and defend the importance of the original human author and audience.
Identify key authors of Scripture (Moses, David, Jeremiah, Daniel, etc.).	Identify key authors of Scripture (Moses, David, Jeremiah, Daniel, etc.).
Know key facts about the lives and historical contexts of these authors.	Know extended facts about the lives and historical contexts of these authors as well as the audiences to whom they wrote. Practice finding the original meaning of a passage by asking what the original author was trying to teach his original audience.
Explain the basic chronology of the history of God's people.	Explain a more detailed chronology of the history of God's people.
Know how historical empires, events, and figures affected the story of God's people.	Know how historical empires, events, and figures affected the story of God's people.
Describe ancient Near Eastern religious practices.	Describe ancient Near Eastern culture with greater depth, including religious, social, political, and economic dimensions.
Use various reference materials appropriately for the sake of historical research (maps, study Bibles, concordances, online tools, etc.).	Use various reference materials appropriately for the sake of historical research (maps, study Bibles, concordances, online tools, etc.).

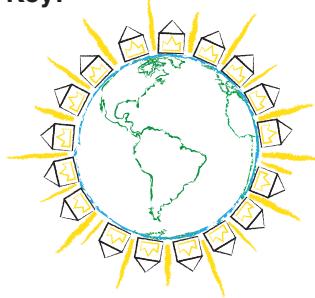
3. Students read the Bible in its literary context.	
Identify the divisions of Scripture into Pentateuch, history, writings, prophets, etc.	Identify the divisions of Scripture into Pentateuch, history, writings, prophets, etc. Link key events in Israel's history to the book or section where they are described.
Recite the books of the Old and New Testaments in order.	Recite the books of the Old and New Testaments in order.
Know the basic genres of literature included in Scripture.	Identify extended types of literature in the Bible, including narrative, proverb, poetic dialogue, psalms, prophecy, etc.
Know the characteristics of various genres.	Know the characteristics of various genres.
Begin using knowledge of genre characteristics to identify and analyze a passage.	Apply principles of interpretation for various genres at an extended level. Identify changes of genre within a passage. Analyze the use of imagery and parallelism in Hebrew poetry. Identify idioms used in Hebrew narrative. Explain the complex ways in which prophetic literature can speak of future events.
4. Students understand the importance of geography to the biblical story.	
Identify key geographic features of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world.	Identify key geographic features of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world.
Describe the impact of geography on Bible stories.	Describe the importance of land and place in the ancient world and in the Bible's kingdom theology. Tie the concept of "holy place" to Creation, Fall, and redemption. Explain the connections Scripture draws between various holy places (Eden, Canaan, temple, heaven). Understand and defend that God's plan of redemption involves physical, not just spiritual, realities.
5. Students understand what the Bible teaches about God.	
Explain the work of God as both Creator and Redeemer.	Explain the work of God as both Creator and Redeemer.
Identify the attributes of God revealed in a particular story, whether holiness, love, justice, etc.	Identify the attributes of God revealed in a particular story, whether holiness, love, justice, etc. Explain the primary images the Bible uses for God and their significance in the ancient world.
Know that God's character is unchanging throughout the pages of Scripture.	Explain and defend that God's character is unchanging throughout Scripture, whether Old or New Testament.
Explain that God is gracious and loving but that he is also holy and requires our obedience.	Explain that God is gracious and loving but that he is also holy and requires our obedience. Explain that God's covenants with humanity involve elements of both blessing and responsibility. Identify components of grace as well as requirements of loyalty in each of his covenants.
6. Students understand what the Bible teaches about humanity.	
Describe that God created humanity to be his image-bearers.	Describe that God created humanity to be his image-bearers. Explain the ancient and royal connotations behind God's creation of humanity in his image, and explain the role God envisioned for them.
Explain how sin has alienated people from God, creation, others, and themselves.	Explain how sin has alienated people from God, creation, others, and themselves.
Explain how God has worked to restore humanity to a right relationship with him, with creation, with others, and with themselves.	Explain how God has worked to restore humanity to a right relationship with him, with creation, with others, and with themselves.
Identify the offices of prophets, priests, and kings throughout Scripture, as well as examples of individuals called to those offices.	Identify the offices of prophets, priests, and kings throughout Scripture, as well as examples of individuals called to those offices. Connect the general calling of all humans as prophets, priests, and kings to the particularized, heightened offices of prophet, priest, and king.

7. Students understand what the Bible teaches about creation.	
Identify that God created all things good, including this physical world.	Identify that God created all things good, including this physical world.
Explain humanity's responsibility to care for God's creation as stewards.	Explain humanity's responsibility to care for God's creation as stewards. Explain humanity's responsibility to enhance creation by making culture.
Identify how creation was distorted because of the Fall.	Identify how both creation and culture have been distorted because of the Fall.
Explain that God's redemption extends to creation as well as to humanity.	Explain that God's redemption extends to creation as well as to humanity. Contrast Scripture's promise of humanity dwelling on a renewed Earth with the idea of dwelling forever in a heavenly spirit-world. Narrate the story of Scripture, ending with God's dwelling coming down to a new creation.
8. Students draw from Scripture an entire framework or Christian worldview for approaching every issue.	
Explain how Scripture answers the basic human questions: Where did we come from? What went wrong? What is the remedy?	Explain how Scripture answers the basic human questions: Where did we come from? What went wrong? What is the remedy? Narrate and illustrate the Bible's overarching story for others.
Be familiar with the framework of Creation, Fall, and redemption.	Apply the framework of Creation, Fall, and redemption to questions raised by culture.
Use biblical teaching to examine cultural values and practices.	Use biblical teaching to examine cultural values and practices. Discern the principles that biblical authors taught their ancient audience and apply them appropriately to our modern world.
9. Students apply biblical teaching to their hearts and lives.	
Understand that salvation is a free gift, something we can never merit.	Understand that salvation is a free gift, something we can never merit.
Understand that sanctification is the ongoing process of becoming more like our Savior.	Understand that sanctification is the ongoing process of becoming more like our Savior.
Identify personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus.	Identify, discuss, and apply personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus.
Understand what God values and what he desires for humanity.	Understand that what God values and what he desires for humanity are expressed in his law. Explain how God's law can be summarized in ten, and ultimately in two, commandments. Explain how these serve as the basis for ethical living.
Respect and love themselves and others as being created in God's image and thus having great significance.	Respect and love themselves and others as being created in God's image and thus having great significance.
Apply biblical learning to both our actions and the attitudes of our hearts.	Apply biblical learning to both our actions and the attitudes of our hearts.
Consider ways we might serve others better.	Consider ways we might serve others better.

God's Unfolding Kingdom Overview

A video presentation of this information can be found at <http://youtu.be/jYd4pLwEIYM> or on the high school Bible resource page, www.csionline.org/high_school_bible_resources.

Key:



= God's holy kingdom



= Sin



EXILE



= Holy place

= Exile

Unit:	Lesson:	Kingdom Theme of Each Lesson:
Unit 1 The Pentateuch: God Chooses Israel to Be His Redeemed People	4. God Creates the World	God the King creates the Earth to be his beautiful kingdom.
	5. A Mission for Humanity	God commissions humans with spreading his kingdom around the globe.
	6. The Fall into Sin	Humans rebel against their King and bring destruction into the Earth.
	7. Sin Grows Worse: The Flood	God is grieved by the spread of sin and wipes it out, but only temporarily.
	8. God Begins Redemption through Israel	God chooses Abram's family to be a "redeemed humanity"—a rescue group for the rest.
	9. God Covenants with Abram	God establishes his promise of holy descendants and holy land through a covenant.
	10. Abraham's Faith Is Tested	God tests Abraham's faith in his covenant promises through the sacrifice of Isaac.
	11. Jacob Inherits the Promise	God passed the promises of holy land and holy descendants to Jacob, an unlikely candidate.
	12. Jacob Wrestles with God	God blesses Jacob and changes his name to Israel.
	13. Joseph: God Meant It for Good	God is at work even in bad circumstances to accomplish his purposes among Jacob's 12 sons.
	14. Joseph's Brothers Are Reconciled	God orchestrated to save the 12 sons of Jacob through Joseph, whom they mistreated.

<p>Unit 2 The Pentateuch: God Redemeems Israel and Expects Covenant Loyalty</p>	1. Israel Enslaved in Egypt	The 12 tribes of Israel have multiplied in fulfillment of God's promise, and are now seen as a threat.	
	2. God Calls Moses	God raises up a prophet, Moses, to redeem his people, Israel, from slavery.	
	3. God Redemeems Israel in the Exodus	God shows Pharoah that he (God) is the rightful king of Israel, and he redeems his people.	
	4. Passover: A Redemption Meal	Passover is established as a yearly reminder of God's redemption of Israel.	
	5. Israel in the Wilderness	The Israelites had no sooner been freed than they began complaining against God, just like the first humans.	
	6. Sinai: God Gives His Law	God requires Israel's covenant loyalty through obedience. He provides a path for holiness.	
	7. God Dwells with His People	God establishes the tabernacle as his special holy dwelling place among the Israelites.	
	8. Leviticus: Rules for Holy Living	God gives Israel ceremonial laws as pictures of what holiness is like.	
	9. Numbers: Judgment and Mercy	Israel's persistent complaining and rebellion lead God to withhold the promised holy land longer.	
	10. Deuteronomy: Love the Lord!	Before entering Canaan, God re-establishes his covenant, outlining his plan for holy people and holy place.	

<p>Unit 3</p> <p>The Histories: Israel Is Established as a Kingdom</p>	1. Conquering the Promised Land	Through holy war, God fulfills his promise to Abraham to give Israel the land of Canaan.	
	2. Dividing and Settling the Land	The Israelites would experience rest in the land only if they obeyed God's covenant.	
	3. Judges: A Cycle of Sin	By not fully driving out the Canaanites, Israel fell into a pattern of sin and idolatry.	
	4. Samson: Portrait of a Judge	Samson, like Israel, proves to be weak and easily tempted. Israel needs stronger leadership: a king.	
	5. Ruth: God's Plan for His Kingdom	By faith, Ruth was grafted into Israel and became the ancestor of King David.	
	6. Samuel: Chosen to Anoint the King	Samuel served Israel during an important transition from the rule of judges to the rule of a king.	
	7. Saul: A Failed Start to Kingship	The line of Saul was not God's intended kingly line of Israel.	
	8. David: A New King for Israel	David was God's chosen royal line. His family was to lead Israel in advancing God's kingdom.	
	9. David: The Golden Years	As Israel's greatest king, David holds great hope for leading Israel in covenant loyalty to God.	
	10. The Consequences of Sin	Even David, Israel's greatest king, proves to be weak through his sin against God.	
	11. Solomon: The Glory Years	David's son Solomon leads Israel to its greatest height, but his sin leaves it on the brink.	
<p>Unit 4</p> <p>The Writings: The Poetry and Wisdom of Ancient Israel</p>	1. Psalms: An Introduction	The Psalms serve as Israel's book of songs for worshiping their Lord and King.	
	2. Psalms of Praise	Praises are given to God for his kingly majesty, power, love, and faithfulness.	
	3. Psalms of Lament	The psalms lament the consequences of evil in the world.	
	4. Psalms of Thanksgiving	The psalms thank God for his special care for his people Israel, collectively and individually.	
	5. Proverbs: An Introduction	Wisdom literature served to teach holiness and wisdom to the people of Israel.	
	6. Proverbs: Guard Your Tongue		
	7. Song of Songs: A Love Story		
	8. Ecclesiastes: Life Is Meaningless		
	9. Ecclesiastes: Life with Meaning		
	10. Job: The Friends Speak		
	11. Job: God's Response	Only a relationship with God can make sense of good and evil in the world.	

Unit 5 The Histories: The Fall of Israel	1. Dividing the Kingdom	Instead of advancing God's kingdom, the Davidic kings broke covenant and began Israel's downfall.	
	2. Early Kings of the Northern Kingdom	The king and people of Israel quickly turned to the worship of idols, breaking covenant with God.	
	3. Israel's Baal Worship		
	4. Israel Sent into Exile	Due to their covenant breaking, God used the Assyrians to punish Israel, leading them into exile.	
	5. Judah: The First 150 Years	Judah prospered when godly kings ruled it but declined under the rule of evil kings.	
	6. A Case Study of a Godly King: Hezekiah	God relented from judgment when his people and their kings repented.	
	7. Judah's Decline	Judah also slid into covenant breaking, and God used the Babylonians to lead them into exile.	
	8. The Fall of Judah	God's plan was not over. He promised a future return from exile and a greater king like David.	
Unit 6 The Histories: Israel in Exile	1. Daniel: Life in Exile		
	2. A Babylonian Repents	God remained with his people even in exile. He still desired their repentance and obedience.	
	3. The Fall of Babylonia	God used the rise of Persia to bring about the exiles' return to Jerusalem.	
	4. Esther: An Introduction		
	5. Esther: A Dramatic Conclusion	Through Esther, God preserved his people from destruction while in exile.	
	6. The Exiles Return	God began to fulfill his promise by allowing a remnant of his people to return to the land.	
	7. Relearning God's Law	Ezra worked to reestablish God's law and covenant with the Jews who had returned.	
	8. Rebuilding the Walls	Nehemiah led the remnant community in rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem, despite opposition.	
	9. Nehemiah's Reforms	The returned remnant was still sinful and straying; how would God's kingdom ever be established?	

<p>Unit 7 The Prophets: Israel's Failure Yet Future Hope</p>	1. An Introduction to the Prophets	God's prophets offered hope to those in exile: God still intended to redeem Israel and, through them, the world.	
	2. The Lives of the Prophets	The prophets had tried to warn Israel of God's coming judgment and were persecuted as a result.	
	3. Reasons for Exile: Injustice	Israel was being judged because the people had failed to be God's kingdom. They had acted unjustly.	 EXILE
	4. Reasons for Exile: Israel's Leaders	Israel's kings had failed to lead God's people into keeping his covenant and expanding his kingdom.	
	5. The Hope of Israel: End to Exile	One day the exile would end, when David's royal son would rescue the Israelites from their conquerors.	
	6. The Hope of Israel: Jesus	Jesus came to end Israel's exile and establish God's kingdom. Yet many rejected him because he did not reestablish Israel the way they expected.	

Creation

of God's Kingdom

Fall

of God's Kingdom

4

God Creates the World

5

A Mission for Humanity

6

The Fall into Sin

7

Sin Grows Worse: The Flood

8

God Begins Redemption through Israel

9

God Covenants with Abram

10

Abraham's Faith Is Tested

11

Jacob Inherits the Promise

12

Jacob Wrestles with God

13

Joseph: God Meant It for Good

14

Joseph's Brothers Are Reconciled

1

Israel Enslaved in Egypt

2

God Calls Moses

3

God Redemeems Israel in the Exodus

4

Passover: A Redemption Meal

5

Israel in the Wilderness

6

Sinai: God Gives His Law

7

God Dwells with His People

8

Leviticus: Rules for Holy Living

9

Numbers: Judgment and Mercy

10

Deuteronomy: Love the Lord!

1

Conquering the Promised Land

2

Joshua: Dividing and Settling the Land

3

Judges: A Cycle of Sin

4

Samson: Portrait of a Judge

Genesis

Exodus

Isra

a

Kingdom

Redemption

of God's Kingdom

el is Established		Israel Falls,		Israel Is in Exile			
as a Kingdom (Unit 3)		Breaking Covenant with God (Unit 5)		(Units 6–7)			
Ruth	1 and 2 Samuel	1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles	Daniel	Esther	Ezra— Nehemiah	Major and Minor Prophets	
Ruth: God's Plan for His Kingdom	5	Samuel: Chosen to Anoint the King	6	Saul: A Failed Start to Kingship	7	David: A New King for Israel	8
Dividing the Kingdom	1	Early Kings of the Northern Kingdom	2	Israel's Baal Worship	3	Israel Sent into Exile	4
Solomon: The Glory Years	11	Judah: The First 150 Years	5	A Case Study of a Godly King: Hezekiah	6	Judah's Decline	7
The Consequences of Sin	10	Judah's Decline	7	The Fall of Judah	8	Daniel: Life in Exile	1
Dividing the Kingdom	1	The Fall of Judah	8	A Babylonian Repents	2	The Fall of Babylonia	3
Solomon: The Glory Years	11	Daniel	1	Esther: An Introduction	4	Esther: A Dramatic Conclusion	5
The Consequences of Sin	10	Esther	2	The Exiles Return	6	Relearning God's Law	7
Dividing the Kingdom	1	Ezra— Nehemiah	3	Rebuilding the Walls	8	Nehemiah's Reforms	9
Solomon: The Glory Years	11	Major and Minor Prophets		An Introduction to the Prophets	1	The Lives of the Prophets	2
The Consequences of Sin	10	Major and Minor Prophets		Reasons for Exile: Injustice	3	Reasons for Exile: Israel's Leaders	4
Dividing the Kingdom	1	Major and Minor Prophets		The Hope of Israel: End to Exile	5	The Hope of Israel: Jesus	6

Unit 1

The Pentateuch: God Chooses Israel to Be His Redeemed People

Unit Outline

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Unit 1

The Pentateuch: God Chooses Israel to Be His Redeemed People

Unit Summary

1. Approaching the Old Testament	Introduction
2. The One Big Story	Introduction
3. Preparing to Read God’s Word	Introduction
4. God Creates the World	Genesis 1
5. A Mission for Humanity	Genesis 1–2
6. The Fall into Sin	Genesis 3
7. Sin Grows Worse: The Flood	Genesis 4–11
8. God Begins Redemption through Israel	Genesis 11–12
9. God Covenants with Abram	Genesis 15
10. Abraham’s Faith Is Tested	Genesis 22:1–19
11. Jacob Inherits the Promise	Genesis 27–28
12. Jacob Wrestles with God	Genesis 32–33
13. Joseph: God Meant It for Good	Genesis 37; 39–41
14. Joseph’s Brothers Are Reconciled	Genesis 42–45

Unit Highlights

- ▶ The Old Testament lays out the plot of the story that Jesus came to resolve. We cannot gain a proper understanding of Jesus apart from the Old Testament.
- ▶ Our goal in reading Scripture is to find the authors’ original meaning and to apply it to our lives.
- ▶ To find the original meaning, we must read Scripture in context, asking who the author and audience were, what the historical context was, and what type of literature it is.
- ▶ The theme of the Old Testament is God’s plan of redemption through the nation of Israel.
- ▶ Genesis 1–11 sets up the need for the nation Israel, while Genesis 12 through the Book of Malachi present the story of the nation Israel.
- ▶ In telling the story of Creation, Moses emphasized the sovereign kingship of the universe’s Creator and contrasted this with the weak pagan gods of surrounding cultures.
- ▶ God created humans in his image to spread his kingdom around the world by multiplying (creating holy people) and ruling over the Earth (creating holy place).
- ▶ The themes of holy people and holy place will resound throughout the Old Testament.
- ▶ Adam and Eve had the choice of remaining under God’s kingship or becoming their own lords. Their sin brought devastating consequences on all creation.
- ▶ Sin worsened after the Fall, as seen in the line of Cain, the flood, and the tower of Babel (Genesis 4–11).
- ▶ God began his plan of redemption in Genesis 12 by calling Abram, promising to make him a great nation—Israel—that would bless all the nations of the Earth.

- ▶ God's promise of multiplying Abram's descendants (holy people) and giving them Canaan (holy place) shows that God had not abandoned his original purpose for humanity. Israel was now to fulfill it.
- ▶ Israel was to be God's redeemed people, once again spreading God's kingdom and spreading the news of redemption to other nations.
- ▶ The lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's sons show examples of both faith and sin. But God remained faithful to his covenant, even when his people were disobedient.

Background

We will read the Book of Genesis looking for the author's original message to his ancient audience. This entails looking frequently at the ancient context: an age of empires, of conquering kings, of godlike pharaohs, and of kingdoms administered through covenants. It was in this context that God revealed himself to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

As the opening book of Scripture, the Book of Genesis answers the basic human questions: Where did we come from? What went wrong with the world? What is the remedy? We can summarize the answer of Scripture in three words: Creation, Fall, redemption.

1. Where we came from: The world was *created* by God to be his kingdom.
2. What went wrong: Evil entered the world through the *Fall*, when humans sinned against God.
3. What the remedy is: God set out on a long path to *redeem* humanity and the world.

Creation. Genesis opens by revealing God as a great and loving King who created the world to be his beautiful kingdom. He created humans as the highest and most valuable creatures in his creation. He wanted them to be images of God, acting as loving rulers over the world. God gave humans a glorious mission to fulfill: to spread his kingdom all around the world. And at first, humans had a wonderful relationship with God, with each other, and with creation (Genesis 1–2).

Fall. God allowed humans to be tempted by evil to see if they would freely choose to continue loving him. Humans began to think that life would be better if they could be their own kings and not have to obey God. Satan tempted them to become their own masters, and they turned against God. This brought evil into the world so that it was no longer a beautiful kingdom. Jealousy, hatred, and violence polluted God's good creation (Genesis 3).

Redemption. God had created humans to be in a loving relationship with him and to join him in turning this world into a beautiful kingdom. But because humans aligned themselves with evil, they were now fighting against God and ruining his kingdom (Genesis 4). Even after God judged humanity through the flood and started the world afresh (Genesis 6–9), humans turned right back to evil (Genesis 11). So how could God redeem them and turn them back toward himself? God chose to start the process by working with just one people group—Israel, the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 12–50).

Israel would be a representation of all humanity. Knowing the depth of human sin, God would pour his efforts into teaching this small group, helping them see the wickedness of their rebellion, offering them sacrifices of atonement, and patiently loving them back into relationship with him. Then, Israel would serve as God's ambassadors to bring the news of redemption to the rest of the world. The Book of Genesis gives us just the beginning of the story of Israel in the lives of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Book of Exodus tells how Israel was redeemed and formed as a nation.

Lesson 1

Approaching the Old Testament

To the Teacher

This lesson examines why we should study the Old Testament even though Christians often focus primarily on the New Testament. We cannot gain a proper understanding of Jesus and of our faith apart from the Old Testament; Jesus himself was in complete agreement with the Old Testament as the completion to all that it stood for. Jesus' followers must have the same respect for the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus had.

Lesson Highlights

- * God does not change, and neither does the truth of the Bible. Therefore, the Old Testament is still relevant for us.
- * The Old Testament, which accounts for 75 percent of Scripture, lays out the plot of the story that Jesus came to resolve. We cannot gain a proper understanding of what Jesus came to fulfill apart from this plot.
- * Jesus never disagreed with the Old Testament; instead, he fulfilled it. It all points to him.
- * The entire Bible, Old and New Testament, is one story. It never contradicts itself.
- * The story of the Bible grows over time. The stages look different only because the story is growing and maturing.

Preparation/Materials

- ✓ **Jesus and the Old Testament** handout, one per student
- ✓ Teacher resource sheet, see page 93. (electronic copy available at www.csionline.org/high_school_bible_resources)

Background

The goal of this lesson is to establish the importance and relevance of the Old Testament to us today. The Old Testament has the power to energize and strengthen students' faith. While the Old Testament is certainly

ancient, it is not outdated. It is the story of an eternal God's plan of redemption for humanity, so it is eternally relevant!

This lesson will cover several mistaken notions that many people have of the Old Testament—e.g., that it is legalistic, harsh, and at odds with the New Testament. The Scriptures show that Jesus was in harmony with the Old Testament. He honored it as God's perfect Word and wanted to restore its true and proper meaning, which some teachers had distorted. Jesus showed that the Old Testament was not about legalism and harshness; it is about a holy God who demands obedience and who promises his love to all who will trust and obey. Both the Old and New Testaments reveal a gracious God who offers forgiveness and redemption. The Old Testament, just as much as the New Testament, required inward, heartfelt obedience from God's people, not mere externals.

Keep an eye out this year for simplistic contrasts between the Old and New Testaments that would undermine the unity of God's plan of redemption. Sinners have never been able to earn God's forgiveness by obeying his laws; neither have we ever been able to obey God without the help of the Holy Spirit. Repentance and faith in God's promised sacrifice has always been the path of redemption.

The differences between the Old and New Testaments in terms of growth will be explained. The Bible is one unified story that never contradicts itself, but it is also a story that matures as it unfolds. Some people have misunderstood the Sermon on the Mount to think that Jesus disagreed with the Old Testament. (See Matthew 5:38–39.) Notice, however, that Jesus never disagreed with what was "written" but only with what was "said" about it—i.e., the misinterpretations.

God's plan of redemption looked different in different stages, as does a child growing into an adult. It may seem that the people of the Old Testament had more laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices than we have today, but that is because they were in an earlier stage of God's plan of redemption. Just as children have more rules and boundaries that fall away as the children grow

Lesson 1

Approaching the Old Testament



David Slaying Goliath by Peter Paul Rubens.

You may be familiar with the stories of the Old Testament. Perhaps you heard about David and Goliath at church or learned about Abraham and Sarah in school. But did you ever wonder how those stories apply to you today? Some Christians wonder why they should study the Old Testament, given that Jesus and his disciples do not appear until the New Testament. Isn't the New Testament sufficient for our growth as Christians? So much of the Old Testament seems outdated.

We can't gain a proper understanding of who Jesus was and what he did unless we understand the Old Testament. Not only does the Old Testament compose roughly 75 percent of Scripture, but it lays out the plot of the story that Jesus came to resolve. Would you understand or appreciate the last 20 minutes of a movie had you not seen the first hour and a half? Similarly, it is difficult to appreciate fully why Jesus came into the world unless we see how he fulfilled the story begun in the Old Testament.

Although the Old Testament was written thousands of years ago, it remains relevant for us in the 21st century. Just as God does not change, neither does the truth of the Bible. The Old Testament was written with future generations in mind, in order to teach us (1 Corinthians 10:11). In fact, the New Testament says that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

No other ancient writings have this quality, because they were not inspired by God. To

Total Number of Chapters	1,189	
Old Testament	929	78%
New Testament	260	22%
Total Number of Verses		31,103
Old Testament	23,145	approx 75%
New Testament	7,958	25%

say that the Bible was inspired means that God "breathed out" the words of Scripture through the human authors. The books of the Old Testament were written by many different authors—from Moses to Malachi—yet there is also one author: the Holy Spirit. This mystery of God working through the human authors to compile and write the great story of redemption is what gives the Bible its unique character. It is an eternally relevant book.

Some people have mistakenly thought that the New Testament and Old Testament are at odds with each other. They perceive the Old Testament as legalistic—all about pleasing God by obeying laws and sacrifices. They see the Old Testament as harsh and demanding and the New Testament as gracious and forgiving. They may even think that Jesus disagreed with the strict laws of the Old Testament and shifted the focus from outward obedience to an inward focus on the heart.

Instead, Jesus claimed that he was in harmony with the Old Testament and came to fulfill it, not to do away with it (Matthew 5:17–20). Jesus never disagreed with what was written in the Old Testament; he disagreed only with how some people had interpreted it. He wanted to restore its true meaning. He said the Old Testament was not about striving to please a strict God; it is about a holy God who demands obedience and promises his love to those who will trust and obey. Both the Old and New Testaments reveal a gracious God, but both also require inward, heartfelt obedience from God's people.

It is true that Old Testament believers followed certain laws and ceremonies that Christians no longer follow, but this is only because we have experienced the fulfillment of these symbols. Instead of interpreting the differences between the Old and New Testaments as conflicts, we will view the differences in terms of growth. We will see that

the whole Bible is one unified story, but it is also a story that matures as it unfolds.

As we embark on this Old Testament study, we look forward to seeing how this epic tale of adventure, love, and betrayal will energize and strengthen your faith.

Reflection Questions

1. Think of a story from the Old Testament and a lesson you learned from that story. How might you miss out on God's truth if you did not have that story?
2. If someone said that he or she was inspired by the beauty in nature and just had to compose a song or drawing about it, is that the same thing as the authors of Scripture being inspired? Why or why not?
3. What would you say if you wanted to encourage yourself or someone else to read the Bible more regularly? What reasons could you give?

and mature, so the people of the Old Testament needed more pictures and symbols of redemption because they did not yet have the fulfillment: Jesus.

Lesson Steps



1. Give students five minutes or so to journal responses to the prompts below:
 - What portion of the Bible is your favorite? Why?
 - When you hear the term *Old Testament*, what are the first things that come to your mind?
 - What things about the world of the Old Testament make it seem the most foreign, or even offensive, to people?
2. Lead a discussion about students' answers:
 - What are your favorite portions of the Bible? How many of you said that your favorite portion was something in the Old Testament?
 - What are your current perceptions of the Old Testament?
 - Outside this classroom, what do you think are other people's perceptions of the Old Testament? Why do you think that is? (Many non-Christians and even Christians have a rather negative view of the Old Testament; they see the Old Testament God as more wrathful, whereas Jesus is more peaceful and loving.)
 - What things about the world of the Old Testament make it seem the most foreign, or even offensive, to people? (Answers may include animal sacrifices, slavery, polygamy, treatment of women, warfare and destruction, strange religious practices.)

Name: _____ Unit 1 Lesson 1

Jesus and the Old Testament

In Jesus' day, the term *law* or *Law and Prophets* was a way of referring to the Old Testament. Similarly, *Scripture* also referred to the Old Testament, since it was the only part of the Bible that existed at that time. To make Jesus' message about the Old Testament clearer, cross out these terms and substitute the term *Old Testament* every time it is referenced as you read.

1. Matthew 5:17–19: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the *Law or the Prophets*; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the *Law* until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

2. Luke 24:44–45: He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the *Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms*." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the *Scriptures*.

3. John 5:39–40: "You study the *Scriptures* diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very *Scriptures* that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life."

4. Matthew 22:37–40: Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the *Law and the Prophets* hang on these two commandments."

5. 2 Timothy 3:15–17 (from Paul to Timothy): "From infancy you have known the *Holy Scriptures*, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All *Scripture* is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

True or False: List which verse from above supports your answer.

1. The Old Testament points people toward eternal life and salvation. **TRUE, 2 Timothy 3, John 5**

2. The New Testament is sufficient for equipping us in our faith. **FALSE, 2 Timothy 3**

3. The Old Testament is all about a loving and holy God who calls his people to love him by living holy lives. **TRUE, Matthew 22**

4. Everything the Old Testament taught was good. **TRUE, 2 Timothy 3; it was all God-breathed.**

5. Only the New Testament is about Jesus. **FALSE; notice Luke 24, John 5—the Old Testament is also about Jesus.**

6. We can break the Old Testament's commandments, since we're in the New Testament now. **FALSE, Matthew 5. The Old Testament commands still apply to us today, unless the New Testament says Jesus completed a command and we no longer need to.**

Orange = Old Testament

3. Ask students to respond to the following: "I'm not that interested in studying the Old Testament. There were so many different laws back then. The Old Testament doesn't seem to apply to me today, since I live in the New Testament era." (Allow a variety of responses.)



Scripture Link

1. Explain that these are important questions. If we're going to study the Old Testament, we need to decide whether it is relevant to us. Let's begin by looking at what Jesus thought about the Old Testament.
2. Distribute the handout **Jesus and the Old Testament**, and read the instructions aloud.
3. Have students read the verses aloud, substituting the words *Old Testament* as they read.
4. Read aloud the True/False summary questions, discussing as you go.
5. Point out the great harmony between the Old and New Testaments; they both reveal the same God and the same plan of salvation. God did not change who he is or what he values and requires.
6. Explain that sometimes the Old Testament does seem very far removed from today. That society had laws and ceremonies that we no longer practice. How can we understand this?
7. Use the teacher resource sheet to demonstrate the growth in the plan of redemption between the Old Testament and today.
8. Point out that the stages of life can look very different (seed versus oak tree, baby versus adult). But it's still the same tree, the same person, and the same DNA. That's true of the Bible, too. God is the same, people are the same, and God's plan of redemption is the same. But the Old Testament was an earlier stage, so it looks different.
9. Ask students for examples of rules they had to follow when they were young that they don't have to follow any more. (Examples might include holding their parents' hands when they cross the

street, asking permission to have a snack, etc.) Were those rules good? (Yes.) Were they based on a good principle? (Yes.) Should you totally ignore those rules today? (No, we should remember and follow the principle we learned—such as being careful crossing the street—even if we don't apply it the same way.)



Student Activities

1. Give students 10 minutes to work in groups of four to answer the following questions:
 - If you didn't have the Old Testament, what important truths would you be lacking?
 - What questions have you had related to the Old Testament?
 - What issues do you hope we'll address in this course?
2. Discuss answers as a class, as time allows.



Independent Practice

1. Have students read **Approaching the Old Testament** (page 10) in the student text and answer the reflection questions.
 1. *Think of a story from the Old Testament and a lesson you learned from that story. How might you miss out on God's truth if you did not have that story?*
 2. *If someone said that he or she was inspired by the beauty in nature and just had to compose a song or drawing about it, is that the same thing as the authors of Scripture being inspired? Why or why not?*
 3. *What would you say if you wanted to encourage yourself or someone else to read the Bible more regularly? What reasons could you give?*



Looking Ahead

There is no Scripture reading in preparation for Lesson 2.



Enrichment

- ▶ Have students write a short journal about their current experience with God and the Bible. Choose among prompts such as the following entry: What does your relationship with Jesus look like right now? How would you summarize your faith journey right now? What role do these things play in your life: church, Bible, prayer, other believers? How often do you read the Bible on your own?
- ▶ Have students write down some expectations or goals they have of this class academically, spiritually, or personally.

Lesson 2

The One Big Story

To the Teacher

This lesson sets the stage for the rest of the curriculum by explaining the goal of putting together the big picture of the Bible. Students already know many of the pieces of the Bible from their prior studies, but the goal this year is to see the central story undergirding all the individual stories. This lesson introduces “the kingdom of God” as that central, underlying big story.

Lesson Highlights

- * The entire Bible, Old and New Testament, is one unfolding story with a unified plot. It is not a mere list of teachings about God.
- * Stories engage both our minds and our emotions; they appeal to more than just head knowledge.
- * While there are many ways to summarize the Bible, the best and most complete summary is God’s kingdom. This incorporates all portions of the Bible: Creation, Fall, and redemption.

Preparation/Materials

- ✓ Blank puzzle pieces from teacher resource sheet, see page 95 (electronic copy available at www.csionline.org/high_school_bible_resources)
- ✓ **Who Is God?** handout, one per student
- ✓ **Thinking Kingdom** handout, one per student

Background

This lesson centers on finding the one meta-narrative that ties together all the narratives of Scripture—the one big story tying together the small stories. Various words could describe the Bible’s major themes: *redemption, God’s love, covenant, God and his people*. You may wonder, then: Why the theme of God’s kingdom? Wouldn’t the best theme simply be Jesus?

First, the choice of God’s kingdom is not arbitrary; it is the theme settled on by biblical scholars who make it their specific study to tie the parts of the Bible to the

whole. (For more information on this branch of study, visit www.beginningwithmoses.org or see the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, IVP, 2000.)

Second, the theme of God’s kingdom is all about Jesus. In Luke 4:43 Jesus said, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.” God sent Jesus to proclaim this kingdom and enlist his followers into it. Or as Mark’s Gospel describes it, “Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near’” (Mark 1:15). The gospel message we believe is good news about God’s kingdom, brought in Jesus.

Jesus could proclaim that the kingdom was now at hand—and make this kingdom the central point of his preaching—because he knew that his audience understood about this kingdom. They were a biblically literate group who knew the Old Testament. So Jesus could now proclaim his connection to and fulfillment of the Old Testament concept of God’s kingdom.

Scholar Stephen Wellum says, “Even though the term ‘kingdom of God’ is not found in the OT, the idea is everywhere.” An idea that is so central to Jesus and the entire NT must be and is “firmly rooted in OT teaching and expectation.”¹ Graeme Goldsworthy agrees that the theme of Jesus’ preaching was also the theme of the Old Testament—“I cannot agree with those scholars who are nervous about proposing the kingdom as central to the biblical message on the grounds that the term ‘kingdom of God’ does not occur until the New Testament. The particular phrase might not be a feature of the Old Testament but the concept is central to it.”²

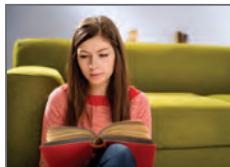
Yes, Jesus is the focal point of all Scripture. But who Jesus was and what he came to do demand explanation—explanation that is provided through the Bible’s big story of the kingdom. For this reason, this edition has been rewritten so that individual Old Testament lessons are tied first to a kingdom theme and then to Jesus. This will explain with much greater depth who Jesus is and what he came to do, making Jesus the true culmination of a grand story stretching from creation.

¹ Stephen Wellum. “Reflecting on the Kingdom of God,” p. 2.

² Ibid

Lesson 2

The One Big Story



Which would you rather read: an adventure novel or a theological treatise? The Lord of the Rings trilogy, or a doctrine textbook? Most of us would choose to read the story; stories excite our imaginations and emotions much more than a list of doctrines could. We should not be surprised, then, that God chose to reveal the Bible as a story, not as a mere list of facts about himself.

We have all heard many stories from the Old Testament—Daniel in the lions’ den, Noah and the flood. But if you were asked to tell the Old Testament as one story, could you do it? We might begin with key terms such as *redemption*, *God*, *God’s people*, or *God’s love*. But do these summarize the whole Old Testament? And how does such a theme become a story, complete with characters, conflict, setting, and plot?

The terms suggested above are all important biblical themes, but none of them explain the story of the whole Old Testament. For instance, the Bible is certainly about God, but it features other characters as well—and not just God’s people, but God’s enemies, too. God’s love for humanity is another major theme of the Bible, but his holiness and justice are equally important. And even the theme of redemption leaves out two important pieces: the Creation of the world and the Fall into sin.

For an even more complete story, we will use what biblical scholars use as the best summary of the Old Testament: God’s kingdom. This theme includes all the stages of Scripture from Creation, to Fall, to redemption. It also incorporates all the characters mentioned in Scripture: God, God’s people, evil people—even animals and the Earth. The word *kingdom* demonstrates that God rules as a king over both people (his sub-

God’s Kingdom

God’s kingdom is his rule over all creation. When Jesus taught us to pray “Your kingdom come,” he meant that we should pray for God’s rule to govern our own lives more and more, to pray that the church will be strong and bring the message of God’s rule into the world, to pray that God’s enemies will be defeated, and to pray for the day when Jesus comes again to bring God’s rule to its perfect end in the new creation.

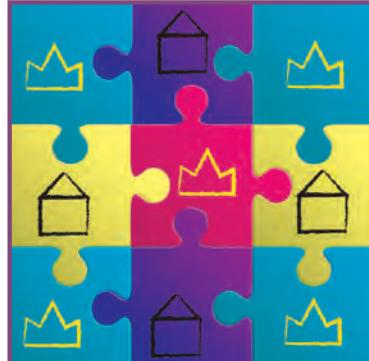
See Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 48.



Lesson Steps

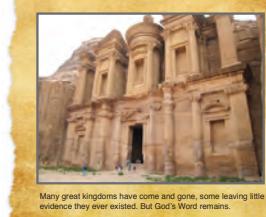


1. Using the blank puzzle, discuss students’ knowledge of the “pieces” of the Old Testament:
 - “When you think of the Old Testament, what stories come to mind?” (Allow examples. With each one, write the story title on a puzzle piece and tape it to the board.)
 - “You’ve obviously learned many of the pieces of the Old Testament. But if you were asked how the pieces fit together, what would you say? For example, how does the story of David and Goliath fit with the story of Ruth and Boaz?” (Allow ideas. Students may respond with “redemption,” “God and his people,” etc.)
 - Acknowledge that it can be hard to connect all the small stories into one big story, but that is our goal this year: to see the big picture of the Old Testament.
2. Explain that two big themes we will see when we put the pieces together are an emphasis on holy people and holy place. God has always wanted people to belong to him and he’s always wanted this world to belong to him. A video presentation of this information can be found at www.csionline.org/HS-BibleKingdomVid.mp4.



Holy people + Holy land = God’s kingdom

jects) and place (his domain). That is why, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Malachi, you will learn to tie the stories of the Old Testament back to the idea of God’s desire for a kingdom made of holy people and holy place.



Many great kingdoms have come and gone, some leaving little evidence they ever existed. But God’s Word remains.

presidents, prime ministers, celebrities, or other powerful forces, but by one supreme ruler: the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who sits enthroned over the universe.

The story of God’s kingdom being established here on Earth is an epic tale of good versus evil. It contains all the elements of suspense, heartbreak, violence, betrayal, and love that make for the best film or novel. Yet this is not just a compelling story; it is a true story. And it has the power to stir our hearts and propel us into action. It is a more radical message than we often hear. We will encounter a God who is not only a loving friend to help us in our troubles, but a king who created us and makes demands of us. This story of God’s kingdom will give us not only a bigger vision of God but also of our own lives. We will see that we were commissioned with spreading God’s kingdom here on Earth. We influence how history unfolds. We can have influence for eternity.

May learning the biblical story of God’s redemption lead you to embrace Jesus Christ even more energetically and to come to participate in his mission of transforming this world.

Reflection Questions

1. Many Christians have found fictional stories of kingdoms—such as *Lord of the Rings* or the *Chronicles of Narnia*—to convey the truths of Christianity very powerfully. Non-Christians and Christians alike are also moved by fairy tales of kings and kingdoms. Identify at least three stories in this category.
2. If we viewed our sins as actual rebellion against the King of the universe, how would that change our perspective?
3. What are some ways that your behavior and thoughts should change in light of seeing God as the great and loving King of the universe?

Lesson 2 | The One Big Story

Name: _____ Unit 1 Lesson 2

Who Is God?

Who is God, and why should we praise him? Read these psalms to see how God is primarily characterized in Scripture. Is he most often called our friend, our parent, or our king? Underline the evidence as you go.

Psalm 47

¹ Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.
² For the Lord Most High is awesome, **the great King over all the earth.**
³ He **subdued nations** under us, peoples under our feet.
⁴ He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.
⁵ God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of **trumpets.**
⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to **our King**, sing praises.
⁷ **For God is the King of all the earth;** sing to him a psalm of praise.
⁸ **God reigns** over the nations; God is seated on his **holy throne.**
⁹ The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for **the kings of the earth belong to God.** he is greatly exalted.

Psalm 9 (selections)

¹ I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
⁴ For you have upheld my right and my cause, **sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.**
⁵ You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.
⁷ **The Lord reigns forever;** he has established his **throne for judgment.**
⁸ He **rules** the world in righteousness and **judges** the peoples with equity.
⁹ The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.
¹¹ Sing the praises of the Lord, **enthroned** in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.
¹² For he who avenges blood remembers;
¹³ The Lord is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.
¹⁵ Arise, Lord, do not let mortals triumph; let the nations be judged in your presence.
²⁰ Strike them with terror, Lord; let the nations know they are only mortal.

Psalm 93:1-2

¹ The Lord **reigns**, he is **robed in majesty;** the Lord is **robed** in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure.
² Your **throne** was established long ago; you are from all eternity.

Psalm 103:19-22

¹⁹ The Lord has established his **throne** in heaven, and his **kingdom rules over all.**
²⁰ Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who **do his bidding,** **who obey his word.**
²¹ Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.
²² Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in **his dominion.** Praise the Lord, my soul.

Psalm 99:1-5

¹ **The Lord reigns,** let the nations tremble; he sits **enthroned between the cherubim,** let the earth shake.
² Great is the Lord in Zion; he is exalted over all the nations.
³ Let them praise your great and awesome name – he is holy.
⁴ **The King is mighty, he loves justice** – you have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is just and right.
⁵ Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.

Psalm 22:27-28

²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will **bow down before him.**
²⁸ **for dominion belongs to the Lord,** and he **rules over the nations.**



Scripture Link

1. Tell students that you don't want them to simply take your word for it that "God's kingdom" is the big picture of Scripture. We should see if this is what the Bible really teaches.
2. Distribute the handout **Who Is God?** Explain that the Bible uses many different images for God (shepherd, helper, friend, father). But let's look at the main way that the Psalms describe God.
3. Read aloud the instructions, pointing out that students should underline any key words that point to God being a friend, father, or king.
4. Have a different student read each psalm aloud. Afterward, ask students what they underlined. Bring out key themes mentioned in the key, pointing out that the number-one way God is described in all of these psalms is as a king. Calling him "Lord" means "Master." References to his power, majesty, control, rule, reign, throne, etc., all point toward kingship.
5. Explain that this is not to belittle the softer images of God, such as a friend or helper. But it is important to remember that he is a kingly friend and a kingly helper, worthy of adoration.
6. Allow students a few moments to work with a partner or small group to answer these questions: "What about in the New Testament? The Bible never uses the term King Jesus. Is it appropriate to call Jesus a king? Defend your answer, using Scripture." (Possible scriptural defense for Jesus' kingship: Since Jesus is God, whatever is true of God is also true of him. Jesus is often called "Lord," which means "master" and "king." In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." In John 18:36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Revelation 11:15 says, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.")
7. Explain that when early Christians said "Jesus is Lord," this really was a claim to kingship. At the time of the Roman Empire, citizens were supposed to say that "Caesar is Lord." But Christians believed that Jesus was a higher king than Caesar.

Name: _____

Unit 1 Lesson 2

Thinking Kingdom

Part 1:

1. Use your best thesaurus skills to brainstorm alternate ways of describing kings and kingdoms.
Alternate words for king include **royalty, the crown head, monarch, emperor**.
Kings rule over a land, called **their realm or domain**.
Kings rule over people, called **their subjects**.
Kings have unique privileges, such as **power, control, and authority**.
Kings make demands of their people, such as **loyalty, obedience, money, service, and fighting for him**.
A king is addressed as **"Your Majesty," "Your Highness," "My Lord," "My Liege."**
2. Why is a king addressed this way? What do these words convey? They convey that the king is **high and exalted, not common or lowly, and that we owe him our loyalty and obedience**.

Part 2: Biblical Applications

1. If God is a king, who are his subjects? What is his domain? **All living creatures, especially humans, are his subjects, and the whole universe is the realm over which he rules.**
2. What unique privileges and prerogatives belong only to God? **Answers may include that he controls the entire universe; by his power he can simply speak and creation does his bidding. He has the authority to set boundaries and declare what is what in a way that no one else can.**
3. As a king, what sorts of demands does God make of people? **Answers may include that he requires our loyalty, obedience, honor, worship, etc. He will one day have every knee bow to him.**
4. How do you think people generally respond to the idea that God is king over all? **Answers may include that many find it offensive to think that God makes demands of us or believes that he deserves all our worship and praise. That is not very democratic!**
5. How do we often try to make God more democratic—more of a president than a king? **Answers may include that we water down his claims and his demands to make them more negotiable. We make it sound as though he really exists for just us: to help us fulfill our dreams and desires.**
6. Even though God is an absolute ruler—an emperor, really—in what ways is he different from other emperors? **Answers may include that he is far more loving and gracious; he did not create the universe only for his own pleasure but also for our enjoyment. He ordered the universe in such a way that we would find great joy when we live to his glory.**
7. How should we respond as a result? **Answers may include that we should have great joy and gratitude that someone so powerful, who controls the destiny of the universe, would nevertheless bestow so much love and honor on us.**

Part 3: Journaling

1. In what ways do you personally try to take on prerogatives that only God has? How do you try to be "king" of your own life? **If students need prompting, point to how we often try to be in control—of our destinies, of other people, of circumstances. We think we have the authority to determine right and wrong. We may shake our fist at God when his ways are not our ways. Consider sharing personal examples.**
2. In what ways has your attempt to be ruler of your own life failed you? Why does it not ultimately bring happiness? **Answers will vary.**



Student Activities

1. Distribute the handout **Thinking Kingdom**. Allow students to continue working in small groups to answer parts 1 and 2.
2. Ask students to work individually in journaling their responses to part 3.
3. Choose a few questions for discussion, allowing students to share their responses (either from group or individual work).



Independent Practice

1. Have students read **The One Big Story** (page 12) in the student text and answer the reflection questions.
 1. *Many Christians have found fictional stories of kingdoms—such as Lord of the Rings or the Chronicles of Narnia—to convey the truths of Christianity very powerfully. Non-Christians are also moved by fairy tales of kings and kingdoms. Identify at least three stories in this category. (Answers may include Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Aladdin, The Princess Bride, King Arthur and Camelot, etc.)*
 2. *If we viewed our sins as actual rebellion against the King of the universe, how would that change our perspective? (Answers will vary.)*
 3. *What are some ways that your behavior and thoughts should change in light of seeing God as the great and loving King of the universe? (Answers will vary.)*



Looking Ahead

There is no Scripture reading in preparation for Lesson 3.



Enrichment

- ▶ Have students translate the hymn “Jesus Shall Reign” by Isaac Watts into modern language. What truths does this hymn express that relate to our lesson? “Rejoice, the Lord Is King” is another option.

Unit 1