
Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp 2026

Class Curriculum - Back to the Bible

Age - Senior Campers

Wednesday - The Old Testament

Summary

1. Subject: A brief overview (otherwise known as a “survey”) of the Old Testament
2. Scripture: Acts 13:16-23, Jeremiah 25:8-11. Jeremiah 29:10-14
3. Grade/Level: Senior Campers
4. Objective: Learn about the chronological timeline of the events of the Old Testament, as well as the genre of each section of its writings. See the through-line of Jesus Christ.
5. Time Allotment: 1 Hour

Prayer: Don't forget to begin and end your class with a prayer! If possible, have a camper lead one or both of these prayers.

Lesson

Overview: This week's classes will focus on “Back to the Bible”. This entails an overview of the Old and New Testaments, as well as the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture. By the end of the week, all campers should be confident that the Bible is the complete and perfect word of God: sufficient for everyone to have an everlasting relationship with God.

Today's lesson will focus on a survey of the Old Testament. This is important in understanding Jesus Christ and the New Covenant that He has established. Today's class will not be able to cover all aspects in detail, but will focus on the chronology of the Old Testament events, as well as the genre of each section of its writings, so that any camper will be able to pick out a book, at will, and be able to gather God's intended information.



Chronology of the Old Testament

The Old Testament takes place over roughly 4,000 years. Using the genealogies in Genesis, the time from Adam to Noah and the flood is about 2,000 years. God made His covenant with Abraham about ~450 years later, and the last book of the Old Testament was written around 430 BC. This means the vast majority of the events of the Old Testament take place over the course of 1,000 years. This is a long time, but it is not unimaginable, and the general sequence of history can be understood by anyone.

Acts 13:16-23

These verses come from a time when the apostle Paul was preaching to Jews, and he offers a summary of the Old Testament events. He skips the very beginning, when God created the world and when Adam and Eve sinned, and begins with Abraham (one of the “fathers” that God chose for Israel). He mentions the time of slavery in Egypt—recorded by Moses in Exodus—the wandering afterwards, and the conquest during the time of Joshua that establishes the nation of Israel. After their nation is established, they are ruled by Judges. After the time of the Judges, they went on to be led by kings, beginning with King Saul, and then King David (recorded by the last judge of Israel, Samuel, and by the books about the kings, 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles).

This is the sequence of the Old Testament history: God’s creation, the sin of Adam and Eve, the worldwide flood, the beginning of God’s covenant people through Abraham, the time of patriarchs (Isaac, Jacob/Israel, and the 12 sons) when God’s people multiplied and became a race, the Egyptian slavery and exodus, forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the conquest of the “Promised Land” under Joshua when the nation of Israel was established, the reign of Judges, and the reign of Kings.

Jeremiah 25:8-11, Jeremiah 29:10-14

These two passages highlight the last significant part of the Old Testament timeline: the Babylonian captivity. During the time of the kings, Israel struggled to stay faithful to God. After Solomon, the kingdom broke into two pieces: the northern kingdom (often called Ephraim) and the southern kingdom (often called Judah). Both kingdoms turned away from God, and in response, God empowered the nation of Assyria to destroy the Northern Kingdom and later the nation of Babylon to destroy the Southern Kingdom, taking the peoples into captivity. During the captivity of the Southern Kingdom, we find the events of Daniel and Esther. After 70 years of captivity for the Southern Kingdom, God restores the nation as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Genre of Old Testament Books

Once the timeline of the Old Testament is understood, it is much easier to read the books. The first five books of the Old Testament are called “The Law” when they are referenced in the New Testament. They contain all of the commandments for God’s people at the time, as well as many historical accounts. The following books (Joshua through Esther) are History; they record events as they happened.

After the histories are the books called “The Writings” when they are referenced in the New Testament. They are also known as “Wisdom Literature”. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes are all in this category (some people place Psalms and Song of Solomon in a separate category, since they are books of expression rather than teaching), and they seek to convey God’s Wisdom in different ways.

Finally, there are the books of the prophets. The major and minor prophets have no meaningful distinction other than length, and they range from before the Babylonian captivity to afterwards. They contain prophecies, largely about the destruction of Israel and subsequent rebuilding. Many of these prophecies have dual meanings: for example, when God promises that He will establish His kingdom, he refers to both the events of Ezra/Nehemiah and the future establishment of the Church.

In truth, many books contain multiple genres. There are parts of Exodus that are history, parts that are law, parts that are poetry, and parts that are prophetic. A comprehensive understanding of genre takes a great deal of study, but this overview of Old Testament genres should be enough for young students to become familiar with each book and know how to read it.

Comprehension Questions:

- Is there any part of the timeline of the Old Testament that surprised you?
- What part of the Old Testament do you spend the most time reading? Which parts do you typically skip through? Why?
- Are any events in the Old Testament “more significant” than others? Why or why not? (yes, and no. The early events before the Tower of Babel are noteworthy because they are a shared history of all people. The prophecies around Jesus and the history of the formation of God’s people are especially relevant to Christians today, whereas the smaller accounts of battles and politics are less necessary to the New Covenant. But all scripture teaches us about God and comes from Him, so it is all incredibly valuable)
- Which genre do you enjoy reading most? Are any difficult to read and understand?

DISCUSSION

Read **Jeremiah 31:31-32** together. This passage, along with many others in the New Testament, explains how Christians today are not bound to the laws of the Old Testament, but instead are part of a better/perfect covenant. Ask, “**Why is the Old Testament still important to us today, if we are no longer under its command?**”

- The best answer comes from Jesus in **Matthew 5:17-18**, where He advocates for the Old Testament. He says He did not come to destroy it, but to fulfill it. Jesus studied the Old Testament, quoted it extensively, and knew it as God’s word: we should do the same.
- The Old Testament reveals the nature of God. From descriptive prophecies to the accounts of His handiwork among His people, we learn a great deal about the loving, righteous, gracious, and personal nature of God.
- The New Covenant is modeled after the Old. Studying this gives us a greater appreciation for what we read in the New Testament. The Old Covenant required sacrifices to atone for sin; in the New Covenant, Jesus is the permanent sacrifice for all sins. In the Old Covenant, God dwelt in the temple, and His people worshipped there; in the New Covenant, the temple is our body where the Holy Spirit dwells, and our worship is continual (1 Cor 6:19-20). In the Old Covenant, God gave His people the Sabbath for rest; in the New Covenant, the fulfillment of Sabbath rest is twofold: the covenant itself is not burdensome (Matthew 11:30), and the promise of Heaven, which is eternal rest (Heb 4:9).

Ask, “**How does the Old Testament help us better understand Jesus Christ?**” In John 1, the Bible tells us that Jesus was active during the creation of the world, and it is safe to assume that He was present throughout the events of the Old Testament. In addition to His involvement, the Old Testament gives us the model for the New, to better understand the work of Christ and His covenant.

A common question that is asked about the Old Testament is, “**Why did God make an imperfect covenant? Why not just send Jesus after Adam and Eve sinned?**” This is answered in Galatians 3:19-25. Paul asks the question, “Why, then, the Law?” referring to the Old Testament. He answers his question by saying it was necessary until it was appropriate for Christ to come. He calls the Old Covenant a “guardian” or “tutor” for us. You can compare God’s people to a child: while humanity was young, we needed to be taught the fundamentals. God used the time of the Old Testament to teach His people, firsthand, about the consequences of sin and the importance of faith. It was necessary to experience imperfect kingdoms, practice imperfect sacrifices, undergo physical slavery, be physically delivered from evil, etc., so that Christians today can fully realize the amazing gift of Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers all.