

Adam to Abraham Overview

Except for a few familiar passages—Genesis 1, Psalm 23, Isaiah 53—The Old Testament remains a closed book to most Christians. Yet it was the only form of Scripture which was used by Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and the first Christian community. Jesus referred to the OT consistently. When the words were written, “*All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*” (1 Timothy 3:16), the statement was talking about what we call the Old Testament and what was then known as “Scripture.”

The Old Testament stories and prophecies lay the foundation for understanding the life of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. We cannot fully know about Christ and His purpose for coming into our world without studying the Old Testament. It gives us a picture of Christ’s sacrifice for sin. The Christian faith is built on the Old Testament; Erich Sauer, in his book *The Dawn of World Redemption*, said this:

The Old Testament is promise and expectation; the New is fulfillment and completion. The Old is the marshaling of the hosts to the battle of God; the New is the triumph of the crucified One. The Old is the dawn of morning; the New is the rising sun and the light of eternal day. If Christianity, the “religion of Christ,” may be likened to a magnificent cathedral, the Old Testament is its unshakable foundation.

David Egner, describes the riches of the Old Testament in the book *Knowing God through the Old Testament*:

The Old Testament story emerges like a tiny shaft of light way off in the distance, races toward us through the darkness, and bursts over us in a crescendo of light, color, and sound. It fills our minds, our emotions and our spirits with the majesty and presence of Almighty God Himself.

It's a marvelous story as it unfolds. It's Adam's story. It's Noah's story. It's Israel's story. It's our story. But most of all, it's God's story. It's the opening of His book, the explanation of His character, and the record of His mighty deeds among men from the beginning of time.

The Old Testament is a book of great spiritual and personal value. This is because: it tells us about God.

- it answers questions about how life began.
- it tells how evil came into our world.
- it prophesies of the Messiah-Redeemer.
- it inspires us to holy living.
- it fills our hearts with gratitude and praise.

The Book of Genesis is the book of origins. The word *genesis* (Hebrew *b'reshet*) comes from a Greek word that means “origin,” “source,” or “beginning.” The first eleven chapters of Genesis begin with Creation and the first man and woman and move to the seventy nations of the world considered “The Table of Nations” in Genesis chapter 10. Genesis chapters 12–50 comprise the ancestral story. The focus of this unit study is on Genesis 1–12, with a brief introduction to the call of Abram (God later changed Abram's name to Abraham) and the promised Land. (The culture of the Mesopotamian world of Abraham is covered in the *Mesopotamia* Unit Study, and the Hebrews' ancestral story is told in detail in the *Ancient Israel* Unit Study.)

Genesis 1–12 stories include the divine act that brings humanity and history into existence and enables humanity to exist, multiply, diversify, and disperse upon the earth. It is the story of how God creates a world that is good but becomes corrupted by sin, which enters the world through human disobedience. Adam and Eve ate fruit which was forbidden to them, and Cain murdered his brother Abel. God later commanded Noah to build an ark in which pairs of all living things were preserved from the great Flood which God sent to purge the earth. God set the rainbow as a remembrance of His covenant with Noah. Afterward, people began building a tower that would reach to heaven in order to make a name for themselves, but God confused their speech and scattered them. Then God again appointed a man—Abraham—with whom to establish His covenant.

The messages taught in Genesis is taught through the rest of the Bible:

1. God is sovereign. (above or superior to all, greatest, supreme)
2. God has a plan which He is carrying out.
3. God is able to take the bad and the evil and cause it to serve His eternal purposes, thus bringing great good out of it all.

The entire Bible finds its meaning and explanation in the redemption provided by Jesus Christ. Each lesson in this book reveals shadows and types of the great doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. As you teach your children about the Creator of universe—the story of the Fall, of corruption, the Flood, the call of Abram—remind them that God takes control of every situation in our lives. He is the One who commands the wind and the waves, and He is the One who knows us by name. He is the One we can call on at any time.

Footnotes

1. Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption: A Survey of the History of Salvation in the Old Testament*. Paternoster; 2nd edition (1985) ISBN: 085364411X. <<http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/sauer/dawnredm/dwrtable.htm>>
2. Sper, David. *Knowing God Through The Old Testament*. RBC Ministries (1990) Grand Rapids, MI <<http://www.gospel-com.net/rbc/ds/sb101/>>

Recommended in: ♦ several lessons in a unit; ★ several units in a volume; ♥ several volumes. 🔑 Key Resource for this unit.