

To The Teacher

The information below is to help you in teaching the lesson. Do not read this page to the students. Instead, teach the information in your own words. Be sure to complete the student's lesson as well. Scripture references in parentheses are for further study, to round out the information given in the lesson. Be familiar with these passages as well, to provide additional Scriptures to your students.

Lesson 34 – Old Testament History (Teacher's Lesson)

Study Notes:

Place the following people, Biblical books, and events on the lines below in chronological order. The first one is given for you.

The Babylonian deportation	_____
Abraham	_____
Nehemiah	_____
The Assyrian deportation	_____
Jeroboam rebels against Rehoboam	_____
Moses	_____
Creation	_____
Jeremiah	_____
Destruction of Jericho	_____

**\*\*Special – Dates\*\***

Note: Certain dates of Old Testament events can be stated with a very high degree of certainty (such as the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and the Assyrian deportation in 722 B.C.). Others are a bit more uncertain. With this in mind, I have presented some probable dates for events and persons in this lesson with the understanding that they are to serve as a general guide for the flow of history, not as an exact reference.

Application: This information is intended as a basic help in the study of the Bible. For more in-depth treatment of the history of the Bible, consult a good Bible handbook or historical atlas.

## Lesson 34 – Old Testament History

Knowing the literary context of the passage being studied is important, but it is equally helpful to know the historical context. Below, Old Testament history is divided into 7 major periods with a brief explanation of the period.

### **Creation - Patriarchs**

Major events: Creation, Fall, Flood, Call of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

Book: Genesis

Time Period: ? – 1805 B.C. (Death of Joseph)

The events of the early history of creation through the time of Moses were not recorded in a systematic literary form until Moses himself wrote them down before his death around 1406 B.C. However, it is likely that Moses drew upon an oral (or possibly literary) tradition of history passed down from generation to generation. During this time, the laws of Moses had not yet been written down as a formal code. Although Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob worshiped the God of the Bible, they did not yet have the Bible in full. Their understanding was not yet complete. However, their relationship with Him was no less real. Each true follower of God from Adam to Joseph is depicted as having a real, personal encounter with the living God. This relationship was based in the concept of *covenant*.

### **Patriarchs - Exodus & Wilderness Wanderings**

Major events: Slavery in Egypt, Call of Moses, Exodus, Travel through Desert, arrival @ Canaan

Books: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Time Period: 1876 B.C. (Move to Egypt) – 1406 B.C. (Entry into Canaan)

A great deal of this period is simply not recorded in any detail in the Bible, however, it profoundly shaped the character of the Hebrew people. For 430 they were slaves in Egypt until God (through Moses) led them out and into the promised land of Canaan. During this time, a system of civil and religious law was written down, embodied in the 10 Commandments. Moses also wrote down the history of what had gone before him in the first five books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch.

### **Exodus & Wilderness Wanderings - Judges**

Major events: Conquest of Canaan, Ruling of Judges

Book: Joshua, Judges

Time Period: 1406 B.C. – 1020 B.C. (Saul becomes King)

The single most important event of this period is the conquest of the promised land of Canaan. There is a great deal of warfare in this time, especially in the book of Joshua.

It's important to realize that this warfare was not arbitrary, but was a tool of judgment from God (see Deuteronomy 18:9-13). Many things happened during the period of the Judges which seem strange to us as well. Remember that there was no central source of authority, "everyone did as he saw fit." (Judges 21:25). Also, the period of the judges ran from about 1380 to 1020 B.C. (about 360 years), but the years of service and oppression total about 410 years if taken consecutively. The best way to understand this is that the judges were local deliverers whose periods of service overlapped somewhat.

### **Judges - Kingdom (United & Divided)**

Major events: Call of Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Rebellion of Jeroboam

Book: 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 1 Chronicles

Time Period: 1020 B.C. – 922 B.C. (Death of Solomon)

This period actually begins before Saul is instituted, with the call of Samuel. He was both the last judge and the first prophet. Although the kingdom was not initially God's plan, David became a symbol of the perfect king. This is why Jesus is often called the "Son of David." The model kingdom does not last long, however, and the seeds of Jeroboam's rebellion were sown by Solomon himself when he drifted away from the Lord in his later years.

### **Kingdom (United & Divided) - Exile**

Major events: Apostasy of Israel & Judah, Deportation to Assyria, Deportation to Babylon, Destruction of Temple

Book: 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, Jonah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Nahum

Time Period: 922 B.C. – 586 B.C. (Fall of Jerusalem)

When studying this portion of history, it is helpful to note several things. First, the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles covers the same portion of history as 1 & 2 Kings, but only focuses on the southern kingdom of Judah. The prophets wrote during these times of God's impending judgment if Israel continued in disobedience. You can compare the kings listed in the prophets' books with the material in Kings or Chronicles to find out when that prophet was ministering. God's judgment did finally come for both kingdoms. The northern kingdom of Israel was deported to Assyria in 722 B.C., and the southern kingdom of Judah was deported to Babylon in 586 B.C. The Temple was destroyed at this time.

### **Exile & Return**

Major events: Babylonian Captivity, Return of Exiles, Rebuilding of the Temple

Book: Ezekiel, Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra, Esther, Malachi, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah

Time Period: 586 B.C. – 400 B.C. (Last OT book written)

The deportations to Assyria & Babylon changed the Hebrew people in many ways. The northern kingdom did not really retain its national identity – only the southern kingdom of Judah maintained this, but even she was changed by the captivity. Many Hebrews who returned from Babylon no longer spoke the Hebrew language, and needed an interpreter to understand the Scriptures. The religious life of the Jewish people, which at one time centered around worship at the temple, had been dramatically altered. Many of these developments continued through the inter-testamental times (the subject of the next lesson), and affected the culture of Jesus’ day.

**The Rest Is History**

Now let’s test your historical knowledge. Place the following people, Biblical books, and events on the lines below in chronological order. The first one is given for you.

- The Babylonian deportation \_\_\_\_\_ Creation \_\_\_\_\_
- Abraham \_\_\_\_\_
- Nehemiah \_\_\_\_\_
- The Assyrian deportation \_\_\_\_\_
- Jeroboam rebels against Rehoboam \_\_\_\_\_
- Moses \_\_\_\_\_
- Creation \_\_\_\_\_
- Jeremiah \_\_\_\_\_
- Destruction of Jericho \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Memory:

I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.

Psalm 77:11-12