

Bi235 Old Testament 2

Lesson Bi235-1 Review of Old Testament 1

Do your people have stories about the earliest days of your tribe or region? Are they full of details or somewhat general? Your stories may be similar to the Old Testament stories of this course. They focus on great heroes and nation-builders. Perhaps they include famous women as well as men. You will remember the important women in Israel's story: Sarah and Hagar, Rebekah, Leah and Rachel, Pharaoh's daughter, and Miriam, Moses's sister.

Most if not all peoples have stories about their beginning days and early development. Israel was surrounded by nations more advanced than they in building, in laws, in armies, and in religions. However, in the early parts of the Bible, God did something amazing. He revealed the true story of creation to Moses, who was "trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). So he probably knew the various histories of his time.

In today's lesson you will review the first Old Testament course in the Oral Learners Bible Institute. In 30 lessons you studied stories from four of the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

In lessons one through five you heard stories from Creation to the Tower of Babel. These stories took place over thousands of years, so the biblical writer moved the story along quickly. The Book of Genesis focuses on the calling of Abraham and the beginning of God's chosen people, Israel. Most of Genesis, then, is focused on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their families. The time period of these stories is about 300 years.

The timespan of the rest of the stories in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy slows still more, to about 40 years. As you learned in the first course, this is the period of Israel's miraculous escape from Egypt and the years of wandering in the Sinai wilderness. This entire period of 40 years can be called the Exodus, which means "the way out." These books relate how God formed the descendants of Abraham into a nation, with customs, beliefs, and values. The stories are told in much greater detail, because God was forming a nation and was revealing himself more clearly.

While the Hebrew tribes were still in Egypt, before the Exodus, God revealed his plan. He gave his promise-name—his covenant-name—to Moses. His name is Yahweh, which means something like "he will do it," or "he will make it happen."

Here is the important passage: "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am Yahweh'" (Ex 6:6-8).

The placing of "I am Yahweh" at the beginning and end emphasizes the importance of the words between. You should try to memorize this passage, because the four elements it contains can be called "God's design for his people."

What are these four elements? (1) The first says, “I will redeem you,” and “I will bring you out.” Redemption and deliverance. These two words are similar and refer to two kinds of deliverance that Israel needed: deliverance from slavery in Egypt and deliverance from sin-guilt. We might call these two, external bondage and internal bondage.

(2) The second element is fellowship with God in a community of God-followers. “You will be my people and I will be your God.” God intended Israel to become a nation based on love of him and love of one another. Jesus later reminded his hearers of the two greatest Old Testament commands: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Deut 6:5), and “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18). (See Jesus’s words in Matt 22:37-40.)

(3) The third element is knowledge of God, “Then you will know that I am Yahweh your God.” We mentioned before that most peoples and tribes have had ideas about gods and goddesses. But here God promises Moses and the Israelites genuine knowledge of him. The word translated ‘knowledge’ means much more than ideas and guesses about God. It means experience with God that is life-changing and behavior-changing.

(4) The fourth element is land. God promises land, and not just any land, but the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This area is sometimes called “Canaan” or “Palestine.” It borders the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the Great Arabian Desert on the east.

When God gave these promises, the Israelites were still in Egypt, still in bondage. The fulfilling of these promises—deliverance, community, knowledge of God, and land—was still in the future. As you have studied in the first course, 40 years have gone by. Early stages of making good on God’s plan have already taken place. (1) They have escaped from Egypt. (2) They have achieved some unity during their year at Mount Sinai and the years of wandering. (3) They have had many experiences with God, such as miraculous supply of water in the desert, manna and quail for food, and protection from enemies. (4) Under Moses’s and Joshua’s leadership, they have conquered land east of the Jordan River and settled two tribes there.

On the other hand, there has been human failure and sin. They grumbled in the wilderness and wanted to go back to Egypt. They brought with them idols from Egypt, and worshipped a golden calf. Their devotion to God was half-hearted. Their knowledge of God was mixed with superstition and unbelief. Through unbelief they failed to go up into Canaan, when Moses, Joshua, and Caleb encouraged them to do so.

God chose one imperfect family and tribe, with the intention to bless all families and tribes. He chose them as they were, and taught them to be what he wanted them to be. In a similar way today, God chooses you and me with our imperfections. He promises deliverance from sin, fellowship with him, and increasing understanding of God and his ways. We too complain and fail God. But he continues to work in us to teach us to be what he wants us to be.

As you begin the next course of study, you will learn how God continues to work his plan for Israel. Israel, under Joshua’s leadership, begins the conquest of the land west of the Jordan River. And, unfortunately, Israel continues to struggle to live up to its role as “God’s people.”

This lesson is **important** because it reviews the first Old Testament course, reminding you that God brought all things into being. He then focused his love on one family—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The covenant-keeping God intended to bless all nations through them and their descendants.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that God is still choosing people today, like he chose Israel. He promises deliverance from sin, fellowship with him, and increasing understanding of God and his ways.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. Why did Moses spend so much more time with the stories about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob than the previous thousands of years? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, “Moses wanted to focus on the beginning of the chosen people and God’s plan for them,” you are correct.
2. What are the four elements of “God’s design” for Israel? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, “Deliverance, community, knowledge of God, and land,” you are right.
3. What are the two aspects of deliverance God had in mind? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, “Escape from Egypt and forgiveness of sins,” you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it at least three times. As you listen each time, try to remember the lessons in the first course. Then tell someone else this summary of the first course in your own words. Try to memorize the passage from Ex. 6, because in it God makes four important promises to Israel. Review these four promises until you can explain them in your own words. You should spend at least 45 minutes in learning this summary of the first course. Ask your friend the same review questions you answered when you first heard this summary.

The most important thing to tell someone else is that God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their lives, just as he loves Israel and has a wonderful plan for their nation.