

How to do the Old Testament Overview Study

The goal of this study is to help you get an overview of the Old Testament. The three main goals you should pursue in this study are to learn about God and His character, to learn God's ways so you can be like Him, and to have your faith strengthened as you see God's mighty works throughout history. To do this study, you are going to read straight through the Old Testament. After each chapter, you are going to write a brief summary of what happened, normally just a sentence or two, unless there is a lot of important information. Below is a basic example for the first three chapters of Genesis:

Genesis Overview

Chapter 1

- It tells of the six days of creation and how God spoke the universe into existence.

Chapter 2

- God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden. God said that he could eat of any of the fruit of the Garden, but he was not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said that if he ate from this tree he would die. God then created Eve as a helper for Adam (v18).

Chapter 3

- Satan deceives Eve into eating the forbidden fruit by tempting her to doubt God's word and His character. He lied to her and said that she would not die, and he tried to make her believe that God was hiding something good from her (v1-5). Eve ate the forbidden fruit, and then gave it to Adam who was with her, and he ate it as well. This sin caused them to hide from God's presence because they realized that they were naked (v8). God curses them and the world because of their sin, sentences them to death and then removes them from the Garden of Eden.

When you come to a chapter that has a lot of important information, you can write more details, and even paste in important verses from that chapter. For example, Exodus 19 is where God enters into a covenant relationship with the nation of Israel. This is an important point in the history of God working with these people, so I wrote:

Chapter 19

The people come to Mount Sinai where God offers them a conditional covenant where He will allow them to be part of His Kingdom and become His people if they will follow Him and His ways:

- Exodus 19:4-6 (NASB95) ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. ⁵ 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

The people agree to this covenant and say, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (19:8)! God then descended upon Mount Sinai in fire and the mountain quaked violently (v18-25).

As you do this study, keep in mind that we are no longer under the Old Covenant of the Law (Rom. 7:1-6). So there will be things that God teaches the people of Israel that do not necessarily apply to you (such as the sacrificial, ceremonial, and civil laws). However, there are many moral principles that we can learn from these teachings, and we can also learn about the character of God. Also keep in mind that just because someone did something in these Old Testament stories does not mean that it was good. If you have any questions on how to do this study, talk to your discipler. When you finish Genesis, send your notes to your discipler so they can make sure you're doing they study properly.

Before you begin each book of the Old Testament, please read the overview of that book from "2a-Old Testament Outline and Timeline" which is in your "Studies Through the Bible" folder. This Outline will give you a timeline and background information for that book, and will help you understand the main events in that book. So for example, before you read Genesis, read pages 1-4 in this document. Then stop and study through Genesis. Then before you read Exodus, read pages 5-8.

In the Studies folder there is a folder called "Old Testament Overview Study Files." These are blank files for each book that you can use. These also have a brief background for each book that you should read before starting the book. These documents will be helpful in understanding each book of God's word in the Old Testament, so please make sure you read them for each book.