

**CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF
THE ADVENT BIBLE
READING PLAN**

OLD TESTAMENT

***A READING PLAN TO BUILD
BIBLICAL LITERACY***

**CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF
THE ADVENT BIBLE READING PLAN**

978-0-578-63376-3

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The Story

In 2017, six members of the Cathedral Church of the Advent came together to create a project that would help our parishioners, families, and children develop deeper biblical literacy. Each of the six members—three men and three women with representatives in their 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and 80s—read the Old Testament over four months. Each person identified the stories, people, places, and things that they thought constituted essential biblical literacy. From these lists, the group analyzed the frequency of each item and established benchmarks for biblical literacy.

Then a team of interns and staff members defined all of the terms. Out of both of these teams comes this Bible reading plan.

The Purpose

The following reading plan was developed to help parishioners grow in biblical literacy. In particular, we want to enable parents to read the Bible to their children and to educate their kids on the basic components of biblical literacy. Nothing will help a person mature in their relationship with Christ like reading God's Word on a daily basis. However, it can be challenging to read the Bible if you do not have the basic foundations. We believe that when a person knows the basic foundations, the entire Bible opens up for their edification and enjoyment.

The Design

This Bible reading plan for the Old Testament includes 123 readings. In each reading are chapters and passages in the Bible to read. Each reading has three components: (1) *Book Overview* to remind you of the purpose of that book of the Bible, (2) *Summary of Bible Passage* to offer a synopsis of what you are about to read, and (3) *Key Items to Teach Your Child* with key Bible literacy components and a definition for each.

How To Use

For families, we recommend reading the Bible passage together. Before reading we recommend that the parent read the *Book Overview* and *Summary of Bible Passage* to establish a context for the passage. At the end, we recommend that the parent read the *Key Items* out loud to educate the kids on these people, places, and items.

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Genesis Bible Benchmark

Reading #1: Genesis 1 – *Creation of the World*

Reading #2: Genesis 2 – *The Creation of Man and Woman*

Reading #3: Genesis 3 – *The Fall*

Reading #4: Genesis 4 – *Cain and Abel*

Reading #5: Genesis 6-8 – *Noah and the Flood*

Reading #6: Genesis 11: 1-9 – *Tower of Babel*

Reading #7: Genesis 12: 1-9 – *Call of Abram*

Reading #8: Genesis 15 – *God's Covenant with Abraham*

Reading #9: Genesis 16 – *Sarai and Hagar*

Reading #10: Genesis 17: 1-14 – *Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision*

Reading #11: Genesis 21: 1-21 – *Birth of Isaac*

Reading #12: Genesis 22 – *The Sacrifice of Isaac*

Reading #13: Genesis 25: 19-28 – *Birth of Esau and Jacob*

Reading #14: Genesis 28: 10-22 – *Jacob's Dream*

Reading #15: Genesis 32: 22-32 – *Jacob Wrestles with God*

Reading #16: Genesis 37: 1-11 – *Joseph's Dream*

Reading #17: Genesis 37: 12-36 – *Joseph Sold by His Brothers*

Reading #1: *Creation of the World* (Genesis 1)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

God created the world in seven days. He creates the heavens and the earth, land and water, fish and animals. He creates man in His image and blesses them.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Adam - Adam is the first man that God creates; husband of Eve, father of Cain and Abel. Adam and Eve sin in the Garden of Eden and create the problem that the entire Bible is based on: the broken relationship between God, man, and the world.

Reading #2: *The Creation of Man and Woman (Genesis 2)*

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

God created Adam from dust and breathed life into him. God saw that man should not be alone so he created Eve as a helper for Adam. God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs. He called her woman because out of man He created her.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Adam - Adam is the first man that God creates; husband of Eve, father of Cain and Abel. Adam and Eve sin in the Garden of Eden and create the problem that the entire Bible is based on: the broken relationship between God, man, and the world.

Eve - Eve is the first woman that God creates; wife of Adam, mother of Cain and Abel. Eve has an encounter

with the serpent, believes his lies and falls into temptation. She then leads Adam to disobey.

Garden of Eden - This is the place where God placed Adam and Eve after He created them. God told Adam to work and tend to the garden. God tells Adam that he can eat of any tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Garden of Eden is where Satan tempts Adam and Eve, and later where God throws them out of the garden.

Reading #3: *The Fall* (Genesis 3)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

The Fall is when Adam and Eve first sinned against God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was the event that separated man and God. Pain and hardship would then enter into the world and Adam and Eve would be sent out from the Garden of Eden. This story designates the problem that drives the need for Christ and God's redemption for the rest of the Bible.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Adam - Adam is the first man that God creates; husband of Eve, father of Cain and Abel. Adam and Eve sin in the Garden of Eden and create the problem that the entire Bible is based on: the broken relationship between God, man, and the world.

Eve – Eve is the first woman that God creates; wife of Adam, mother of Cain and Abel. Eve has an encounter with the serpent, believes his lies and falls into temptation. She then leads Adam to disobey.

Serpent – The devil took form as the serpent to deceive Adam and Eve.

Garden of Eden – This is the place where God placed Adam and Eve after He created them. God told Adam to work and tend to the garden. God tells Adam that he can eat of any tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Garden of Eden is where Satan tempts Adam and Eve, and later where God throws them out of the garden.

Reading #4: *Cain and Abel* (Genesis 4)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

This is the story of Adam and Eve's two sons. Cain was the oldest and tended to the ground while Abel was the youngest and tended to the sheep. The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, however, He had no regard for Cain's offering. Cain grew angry and jealous and kills his brother Abel. God punishes Cain by cursing the grounds he works on so it will not bear the same strength it once did. Cain was also marked by God so nobody would kill him and Cain left the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Cain - This is the first-born son of Adam and Eve. Cain was a worker of the ground and later kills his brother Abel out of jealousy and anger. God punishes Cain by cursing the ground so it will no longer yield

to him its strength. God also puts a mark on Cain so that people would know not to kill him.

Abel - The second son of Adam and Eve. Abel was a keeper of sheep and later killed by his brother Cain.

Reading #5: Noah and the Flood (Genesis 6-8)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

The earth was corrupt and sinful and the wickedness of man was great, however, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. God told Noah to build an ark with specific instructions. Noah did all that God commanded of him. The flood came just like God promised and wiped out all of man, except Noah and his family and two of every animal. The waters prevailed on earth for 150 days. The flood then subsided and God sends a rainbow as a promise that He will never destroy the earth again by flood.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Noah's Ark – Noah's Ark was what God told Noah to construct. God gave Noah detailed instructions so that the ark would be large enough to house Noah's family and a wide variety of living creatures. The ark

would have been around 450 ft. long, 75 ft. wide, and 45. ft high, weighing about 43,000 tons.

Noachian Covenant - The Noachian Covenant is what theologians say when they refer to the covenant God made with Noah promising that He would never destroy the earth and all of mankind with flood again.

Reading # 6: *Tower of Babel* (Genesis 11: 1-9)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains the world around us and how it came to be along with story after story on God's faithfulness to those who obey and trust Him.

Summary of Bible Passage

God's will and intentions for the people was for them to disperse among the nations. However, they were clumping and began building a tower trying to create a name for themselves. They were all unified with the same language so this was an easy task. God came down to see the city and the tower in which was being created. He confused their language in order for them to not understand each other's speech. This was how the tower got its name, The Tower of Babel, because it was where the Lord confused the language of all the earth.

Reading #7: *Call of Abram* (Genesis 12: 1-9)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

God calls Abram to leave his country and to take his kindred and go to the land that God will show him. God promises to make a great nation out of Abram along with making his name great. Abram listened to what God told him to do, gathered all his family and possessions, and set out for the land of Canaan. This is God's invitation for Abram to become a source of blessing for the rest of humanity.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Abram/Abraham - An obedient follower of God and named the Father of Israel. Originally named Abram, but God changes his name to Abraham. Abraham and Sarah have Isaac. Through Abraham's faithfulness to the Lord, Abraham is promised that the Lord will

bless his offspring. Abraham is the ancestor of King David and Jesus.

Sarai - This is also Sarah, Abraham's wife. She was barren and did not originally trust God to provide, so she sent her husband to lay with their servant Hagar. Later, God blessed Sarah and Abraham with Isaac even in her old age.

Lot - Abraham and Lot originally traveled together then later there's a strife between Abraham and Lot. Lot is compared to Abraham as not being as faithful or obedient to God. Lot chooses the path he believes he should take instead of obeying God like Abraham. Later God does choose to rescue Lot by sending angels to him to urge him to wake up.

Canaan - Land that God promised to Abraham, which eventually becomes Israel.

Reading #8: God's Covenant with Abram (Genesis 15)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

God's promise to Abraham that his offspring will be as many as the stars in the sky. God also promised him and his offspring possession of land.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Abram/Abraham - An obedient follower of God and named the Father of Israel. Originally named Abram, but God changes his name to Abraham. Abraham and Sarah have Isaac. Through Abraham's faithfulness to the Lord, Abraham is promised that the Lord will bless his offspring. Abraham is the ancestor of King David and Jesus.

Reading #9: Sarai and Hagar (Genesis 16)

** this story may not be appropriate for young children*

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

Sarah (Sarai), Abraham's wife, had borne no children and was growing impatient. Sarah sent Abraham to go sleep with her servant Hagar. Abraham listened to Sarah and Hagar conceived a son, but Sarah became jealous of Hagar and dealt harshly towards her. Hagar fled. An angel of the Lord came to her and said that the Lord had listened and her son would be named Ishmael. Hagar returned to Abraham's house and gave birth to Ishmael.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Abram/Abraham – An obedient follower of God and named the Father of Israel. Originally named Abram, but God changes his name to Abraham. Abraham and Sarah (his first wife) have Isaac. Through Abraham's

faithfulness to the Lord, Abraham is promised that the Lord will bless his offspring. Abraham is the ancestor of King David and Jesus.

Sarai - This is also Sarah, Abraham's wife. She was barren and did not originally trust God to provide, so she sent her husband to lay with their servant Hagar. Later, God blessed Sarah and Abraham with Isaac, even in their old age.

Hagar - Hagar was the servant of Abraham and Sarah. She had sexual relations with Abraham and conceived a son, Ishmael.

Ishmael - The son of Hagar and Abraham. He is considered a prophet.

Reading #10: *The Covenant of Circumcision* (Genesis 17: 1-14)

** this story may not be appropriate for young children*

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

The Lord appeared to Abraham saying that He would multiply him greatly and make him the father of a multitude of nations if he kept the covenant between them and all his offspring throughout every generation. This was the moment that circumcision was established as the sign of the covenant with Abraham.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Abram/Abraham – An obedient follower of God and named the Father of Israel. Abraham and Sarah (his first wife) have Isaac. Through Abraham's faithfulness to the Lord, Abraham is promised that the Lord will bless his offspring. Abraham is the ancestor of King David and Jesus.

Circumcision - A procedure done to every male that is a sign of the covenant made between God and Abraham, that every male who is eight days old must be circumcised in the flesh, and it was to be carried out among every generation from then on. Circumcision was created in order for there to be an everlasting covenant in your flesh.

Reading #11: *Birth of Isaac* (Genesis 21: 1-21)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms his people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

Isaac was promised to Sarah and Abraham, despite their old age. Sarah miraculously conceived and bore a son, Isaac. Abraham circumcised Isaac, just as God commanded him. Isaac brought laughter and joy to both Abraham and Sarah.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Abram/Abraham – An obedient follower of God and named the Father of Israel. Abraham and Sarah (his first wife) have Isaac. Through Abraham's faithfulness to the Lord, Abraham is promised that the Lord will bless his offspring. Abraham is the ancestor of King David and Jesus.

Sarai – This is also Sarah, Abraham’s wife. She was barren and did not originally trust God to provide, so she sent her husband to lay with their servant Hagar. Later, God blessed Sarah and Abraham with Isaac, even in their old age.

Isaac – The son that God promised Abraham and Sarah.

Circumcision – A procedure done to every male that is a sign of the covenant made between God and Abraham, that every male who is eight days old must be circumcised in the flesh, and it was to be carried out among every generation from then on. Circumcision was created in order for there to be an everlasting covenant in your flesh.

Reading #12: *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (Genesis 22)

** this story may not be appropriate for young children*

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

God tested Abraham by calling him to take his son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering. Abraham obeyed God and took his son Isaac and they collected wood and went to the mountain which God told him to go to. He created an altar and laid his son on the altar. Right as Abraham lifted the knife, the Lord called out to him telling him to stop. God saw Abraham's obedience, and provided him a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Abram/Abraham – An obedient follower of God and named the Father of Israel. Abraham and Sarah (his first wife) have Isaac. Through Abraham's faithfulness to the Lord, Abraham is promised that the Lord will

bless his offspring. Abraham is the ancestor of King David and Jesus.

Isaac - The son that God promised Abraham and Sarah.

Reading #13: *The Birth of Esau and Jacob* (Genesis 25: 19-28)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

Isaac and Rebekah prayed to the Lord for children because Rebekah struggled to conceive. The Lord blessed them and she conceived twins. She could feel the twins struggle within her. The Lord told her that there were two nations in her womb and that one would be stronger than the other. The first came out red, and with hair all over his body. This was Esau. The next came out holding Esau's heel and they named him Jacob.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Isaac – The son that God promised Abraham and Sarah. He marries Rebekah and has two sons (Esau and Jacob).

Rebekah - Isaac's wife. Rebekah had to leave her family and country in an act of faith in order to journey to Canaan to marry Isaac, whom she didn't know.

Esau - The son of Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob's twin. Esau was born with hair all over his body. He was a skillful hunter and man of the field. Isaac loved Esau. Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob in exchange for food when he was starving.

Jacob - The son of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau's twin. Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Rebekah loved Jacob. Jacob demanded Esau to sell him his birthright. Jacob also stole Esau's blessing from their father Isaac.

Reading #14: *Jacob's Dream* (Genesis 28: 1-22)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

When Jacob was traveling, he came upon a certain place and stayed there for the night. He took a stone and laid his head upon it and had a dream that there was a ladder set up on earth that reached heaven. On the ladder, angels were ascending and descending. God stood above the ladder and promised that the land Jacob was standing on would be given to him and his offspring. The ladder showed a bridge between heaven and earth. God promised to not abandon him and keep His promise to Jacob.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Jacob – The son of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau's twin. Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Rebekah loved Jacob. Jacob demanded Esau to sell him his

birthright. Jacob also stole Esau's blessing from their father Isaac.

Jacob's Ladder - A vision that Jacob had in a dream of angels ascending and descending from heaven to earth. God was above the ladder and He spoke to Jacob telling him that He was with him and would give him and his offspring the land he was standing on.

Reading #15: *Jacob Wrestles with God* (Genesis 32: 22-32)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

Jacob traveled with his family to Jabbok. He sent them across the stream along with all their belongings. Jacob was then alone. Then, a man approached and wrestled him until the morning. When the man realized he was not stronger than Jacob, he touched Jacob's hip socket and Jacob's hip was put out of joint. Jacob would not let the man go until he blessed him. The man turned out to be the Lord. He blessed Jacob and told him that his name would no longer be Jacob, but Israel.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Jacob – The son of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau's twin. Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Rebekah loved Jacob. Jacob demanded Esau to sell him his birthright. Jacob also stole Esau's blessing from their father Isaac.

Reading #16: *Joseph's Dream* **(Genesis 37: 1-11)**

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

Joseph had a dream that he shared with his brothers. This dream was that Jacob and his brothers were binding sheaves (bundle of grain stalks) in the field. Jacob's sheaf arose and stood upright and his brothers sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to his sheaf. Joseph then had a second dream that he shared with his brothers. This dream consisted of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down to Joseph. Joseph's brothers were filled with jealousy and hate towards him.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Joseph – Son of Jacob, and the son who Jacob loved the most. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, but God was with David even in his captivity. After trials,

Joseph rose to power. Pharaoh places him over his house. The Lord was with Joseph and blessed him.

Joseph's Coat of Many Colors - A coat given to Joseph that his father (Jacob) gave to him. The coat was a mark that represented leadership and his faithfulness to Jacob. The coat made the other brother envious because it was a special mark of Jacob's favor to Joseph.

Reading #17: *Joseph Sold by His Brothers* (Genesis 37: 12-36)

Overview of Genesis: Genesis explains God's creation of the world. It tells of the fall of man, which comprises the problem of sin and need for redemption that governs the storyline of the Bible. In Genesis, God forms His people Israel and makes covenants with them.

Summary of Bible Passage

After Joseph's brothers heard of his dreams and seen their father favor him, they planned to kill Joseph. Reuben, the oldest brother, argued against killing him. When Joseph approached his brothers in the field, they stripped him of his coat of many colors and threw him into a pit. Later, Ishmaelites drove by and Joseph's brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites and received twenty shekels of silver. Joseph was taken to Egypt, and his brothers told their father a fierce animal killed him.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Joseph – Son of Jacob, and the son who Jacob loved the most. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, but God was with David even in his captivity. After trials,

Joseph rose to power. Pharaoh places him over his house. The Lord was with Joseph and blessed him.

Joseph's Coat of Many Colors - A coat given to Joseph from his father (Jacob). The coat represented leadership and Joseph's faithfulness to Jacob. The coat made the other brothers envious because it marked Joseph as Jacob's favorite.

Exodus Bible Benchmark

Reading #18: Exodus 3 – *Moses and the Burning Bush*

Reading #19: Exodus 7-11 – *The Plagues*

Reading #20: Exodus 12: 1-32 – *The Passover*

Reading #21: Exodus 14 – *Crossing the Red Sea*

Reading #22: Exodus 16 – *Manna from Heaven*

Reading #23: Exodus 26-30 – *God's Commands*

Reading #24: Exodus 32 – *The Israelites and Worship of the Golden Calf*

Reading #18 *Moses and the Burning Bush* (Exodus 3)

Overview of Exodus: As the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus continues the story of God's people after Genesis and specifically focuses on God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Summary of Bible Passage

The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses one day in flames of fire from within a bush. Though the bush was on fire, it did not burn up, and God spoke to Moses from the bush and called him to lead Israel out of Egypt.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Moses – Adopted by an Egyptian princess as a baby, Moses was called by God out of Egypt, even though he was an imperfect and, at times, unwilling leader. Though Moses killed a man and was often afraid, God revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush and instructed Moses to challenge Pharaoh and eventually lead Israel out of Egypt and across the parted Red Sea. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible and continued to lead Israel for 40 years in the wilderness.

Burning Bush – At the burning bush, God called out to Moses and revealed Himself, His promises, and His purposes for Moses and Israel. In this supernatural scene, God demonstrated His power and control as the flaming bush did not burn up.

Egypt – Located along the Nile River in Northeast Africa, Egypt was one of the most powerful empires in the ancient world. Though Egypt had welcomed the Israelites within its borders (see Genesis 46-47), a new pharaoh turned against Israel and oppressed God’s people.

Reading #19 *The Plagues* (Exodus 7-11)

**If you'd like, you can read all of the plagues in Exodus 7-11. The most important to read would be the plague of the first-born son in Exodus 11.*

Overview of Exodus: As the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus continues the story of God's people after Genesis and specifically focuses on God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Summary of Bible Passage

God sent Moses and Aaron to confront Pharaoh and demand Israel's freedom. But God hardened Pharaoh's heart, so God sent ten plagues through Moses and Aaron to afflict Egypt. Despite the miraculous plagues, Pharaoh's heart remained hardened against Israel.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Moses - Adopted by an Egyptian princess as a baby, Moses was called by God out of Egypt, even though he was an imperfect and, at times, unwilling leader. Though Moses killed a man and was often afraid, God revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush and instructed Moses to challenge Pharaoh and eventually lead Israel out of Egypt and across the parted Red Sea. Moses wrote the first five books of the

Bible and continued to lead Israel for 40 years in the wilderness.

Pharaoh - The political leader (basically king) of Egypt who decided to oppress and enslave Israel. Previous pharaohs had been friendly to God's people (see the story of Joseph in Genesis 41-44), but this pharaoh did not know Joseph and feared the Israelites, so he oppressed them.

Aaron - Moses complained to God that he could not speak eloquently enough to save Israel, so God sent Aaron, Moses' brother, to speak for Moses. Aaron was also a priest and helped lead Israel alongside Moses.

Aaron's Staff - Both Moses and Aaron had wooden staffs that signified their authority over the people, and God worked miracles through these staffs. Through Aaron's staff, God worked many signs, including turning the staff into a snake that devoured other snakes. In this scene, God demonstrates His authority before Pharaoh and other gods.

Reading #20 *The Passover* (Exodus 12)

Overview of Exodus: As the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus continues the story of God's people after Genesis and specifically focuses on God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Summary of Bible Passage

God's final plague against Egypt was that every firstborn son would die. However, God told Moses to instruct the Israelites to brush the blood of a pure and sacrificed lamb on their door, so that when God passed through Egypt striking down firstborn sons, He would see the blood on the doors of His people and pass over them, sparing their sons. This miraculous event foreshadowed something even greater, because Jesus became our Passover lamb, bearing our sins with His blood so that we could be saved.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Moses – Adopted by an Egyptian princess as a baby, Moses was called by God out of Egypt, even though he was an imperfect and, at times, unwilling leader. Though Moses killed a man and was often afraid, God revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush

and instructed Moses to challenge Pharaoh and eventually lead Israel out of Egypt and across the parted Red Sea. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible and continued to lead Israel for 40 years in the wilderness.

Pharaoh - The political leader (basically king) of Egypt who decided to oppress and enslave Israel. Previous pharaohs had been friendly to God's people (see the story of Joseph in Genesis 41-44), but this pharaoh did not know Joseph and feared the Israelites, so he oppressed them.

Unleavened Bread - When the Israelites fled Egypt in the night, they did not have time to add yeast to the dough of the bread they were making. When they baked the bread, it lacked yeast and did not rise, and Moses instructed Israel to observe the tradition of eating this unleavened bread each year when they remembered the Passover.

Reading #21 *Crossing the Red Sea* (Exodus 14)

Overview of Exodus: As the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus continues the story of God's people after Genesis and specifically focuses on God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Summary of Bible Passage

After fleeing Egypt, Moses and the Israelites reached the shore of the Red Sea. With the Egyptian army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them, the Israelites appeared to be trapped, but God delivered them by parting the sea and permitting His people to walk across. After all of Israel was safely across, God closed the sea behind them and drowned the Egyptian army.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Moses – Adopted by an Egyptian princess as a baby, Moses was called by God out of Egypt, even though he was an imperfect and, at times, unwilling leader. Though Moses killed a man and was often afraid, God revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush and instructed Moses to challenge Pharaoh and eventually lead Israel out of Egypt and across the parted Red Sea. Moses wrote the first five books of the

Bible and continued to lead Israel for 40 years in the wilderness.

Red Sea - Located on the eastern shore of Egypt, the Red Sea is a large body of water that blocked the Israelites on their path to freedom. God miraculously parted the waters of the Red Sea in delivering the Israelites.

The Wilderness - After leaving Egypt, Moses and the Israelites walked across the wilderness (often a desert) in the Middle East for 40 years. Though the people grumbled, God provided for them each day with manna from heaven.

Reading #22 *Manna from Heaven* (Exodus 16)

Overview of Exodus: As the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus continues the story of God's people after Genesis and specifically focuses on God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Summary of Bible Passage

After the exodus from Egypt, Israel wandered in the wilderness. The people were worried about finding food, but God provided; each morning, manna (bread) rained down from heaven, and Israel could gather enough just for that day. This is an example of God providing exactly what we need each day – our daily bread – and that we must trust Him to do so.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Moses – Adopted by an Egyptian princess as a baby, Moses was called by God out of Egypt, even though he was an imperfect and, at times, unwilling leader. Though Moses killed a man and was often afraid, God revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush and instructed Moses to challenge Pharaoh and eventually lead Israel out of Egypt and across the parted Red Sea. Moses wrote the first five books of the

Bible and continued to lead Israel for 40 years in the wilderness.

The Wilderness - After leaving Egypt, Moses and the Israelites walked across the wilderness (often a desert) in the Middle East for 40 years. Though the people grumbled, God provided for them each day with manna from heaven.

Manna from Heaven - Each morning, God provided manna (bread) for the Israelites so they might have food. God quite literally gave His people their daily bread, and they were completely reliant upon Him for survival.

Reading #23 God's Commands (Exodus 20: 117)

Overview of Exodus: As the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus continues the story of God's people after Genesis and specifically focuses on God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Summary of Bible Passage

God gave Moses commands regarding the tabernacle, offerings/sacrifices, and priesthood.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:1-17

- 1 "And God spoke all these words, saying,
- 2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
- 3 "You shall have no other gods before^[a] me.
- 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
- 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who

- hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands^[b] of those who love me and keep my commandments.
- 7 “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
- 8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,
- 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.
- 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
- 12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.
- 13 “You shall not murder.^[c]
- 14 “You shall not commit adultery.
- 15 “You shall not steal.
- 16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- 17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Reading #24 *The Israelites Worship the Golden Calf* (Exodus 32)

Overview of Exodus: As the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus continues the story of God's people after Genesis and specifically focuses on God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Summary of Bible Passage

While Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments, the Israelites grew impatient and told Aaron to make gods for them. Aaron gave in and made a golden calf. Israel worshipped, sacrificed, and bowed to their new idol. Both God and Moses were angry at Israel, and Moses destroyed the calf as soon as he returned.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Aaron – Moses complained to God that he could not speak eloquently enough to save Israel, so God sent Aaron, Moses' brother, to speak for Moses. Aaron was also a priest and helped lead Israel alongside Moses during and after the Exodus from Egypt.

Mt. Sinai – Moses received the Ten Commandments and saw the Glory of God on Mount Sinai. As a result, it is a very significant place in the Bible.

The Tablets – God wrote the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. Moses broke the two tablets when he saw Israel worshipping the golden calf, but God rewrote His commands on two new tablets, which were housed in the Ark of the Covenant.

Leviticus Bible Benchmark

Reading #25: *Leviticus 1-7 – God’s Laws Regarding Offerings and Sacrifices*

Reading #26: *Leviticus 16 – Day of Atonement*

Reading #25: God's Laws Regarding Offerings and Sacrifices (Leviticus 1)

Overview of Leviticus: Written by Moses, God gives instructions and laws to the people of Israel about priesthood, offerings/sacrifices, and how the people should live.

Summary of Bible Passage

In the first few chapters of Leviticus, God is giving instruction on the rituals and laws of offerings and sacrifices. He is very specific because these offerings and sacrifices were part of how the people atoned for their sin. We no longer put into practice these laws because of Jesus; His death is the atonement for our sins. Leviticus 1 is a sample of these laws for sacrifices.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Burnt Offering – A food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. The offering is livestock from a herd or flock. The livestock must be male and perfect without blemish. The priests present it before the Lord following specific instructions for burnt offerings.

Sacrifice – An offering to God with the main purpose of worshiping and pleasing Him or atoning for sins. Sacrifices include burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings.

Clean vs. Unclean – The clean are living creatures that can be eaten. The unclean are living creatures that cannot be eaten.

Reading #26: *Day of Atonement* (Leviticus 16)

Overview of Leviticus: Written by Moses, God gives instructions and laws to the people of Israel about priesthood, offerings/sacrifices, and how the people should live.

Summary of Bible Passage

God tells Aaron (the high priest of Israel) to enter the Holy Place in the Tabernacle where the Lord will appear like a cloud over the mercy seat. Aaron offers a sin offering and a burnt offering to atone for the sins of himself, his house, and the sins of Israel. The high priest will do this once a year.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Burnt Offering - A food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. The offering is livestock from a herd or flock. The livestock must be male and perfect without blemish. The priests present it before the Lord following specific instructions for burnt offerings.

Sacrifice - An offering to God with the main purpose of worshiping and pleasing Him. Sacrifices include burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings.

Aaron - Moses complained to God that he could not speak eloquently enough to save Israel, so God sent Aaron, Moses' brother, to speak for Moses. Aaron was also a priest and helped lead Israel alongside Moses during and after the Exodus from Egypt.

Numbers Bible Benchmark

Reading #27: Numbers 13 – *Spies Sent into Canaan*

Reading #28: Numbers 14: 1-38 – *The People Rebel, but God Remains*

Reading #29: Numbers 21: 4-9 – *The Bronze Serpent*

Reading #27: *Spies Sent into Canaan* (Numbers 13)

Overview of Numbers: The book of Numbers describes Israel's time in the wilderness over 40 years. Despite repeated disobedience, God continued to sustain His people.

Summary of Bible Passage

When Israel reached the Promised Land, each tribe sent out a spy to scout out the territory. While ten of the spies were terrified when they saw enemy nations, Caleb and Joshua trusted in God. However, the Israelites were afraid and ignored Caleb and Joshua's call to trust the Lord. God prohibited that generation from entering the Promised Land.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Caleb – Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, was one of the twelve spies sent to explore the Promised Land. While the other spies were afraid when they saw enemy nations and convinced Israel not to enter the Promised Land, was one of two spies who trusted in God and encouraged Israel to enter. Along with Joshua, another spy, Caleb was dismayed at this blatant rebellion against God, and God rewarded their faith by promising them entry into the Promised Land.

Reading #28 *The People Rebel, but God Remains* (Numbers 14: 1-38)

Overview of Numbers: The book of Numbers describes Israel's time in the wilderness over 40 years. Despite repeated disobedience, God continued to sustain His people.

Summary of Bible Passage

The people of Israel doubted God and His power to deliver them into the Promised Land. Even though they were doubting, God remained with them in the form of a pillar of clouds by day and fire by night. Due to their lack of faith, God declared that their generation would never see the land they were promised. For 40 more years, they wandered the wilderness. Only Caleb and Joshua saw the land God had promised.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Pillar of Clouds by Day / Fire by Night - God's presence guided Moses and the Israelites as they left Egypt; by day the Lord appeared in a pillar of cloud, and by night He guided them by a pillar of light. These pillars did not leave the people and continued to guide Israel for decades as they wandered in the

wilderness (see Exodus 13). Even though Israel was rebellious, God did not leave them.

Caleb - Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, was one of the twelve spies sent to explore the Promised Land. While the other spies were afraid when they saw enemy nations and convinced Israel not to enter the Promised Land, was one of two spies who trusted in God and encouraged Israel to enter. Along with Joshua, another spy, Caleb was dismayed at this blatant rebellion against God, and God rewarded their faith by promising them entry into the Promised Land.

Reading #29 *The Bronze Serpent* (Numbers 21: 4-9)

Overview of Numbers: The book of Numbers describes Israel's time in the wilderness over 40 years. Despite repeated disobedience, God continued to sustain His people.

Summary of Bible Passage

Israel continued to grumble against Moses and the Lord, so God sent fiery serpents to punish Israel. When the people repented, God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent so that anyone who had been bitten could see the bronze snake and be healed. Jesus later compared His own death on the cross to the bronze serpent, for He too was lifted up (on the cross), and He brought healing for all sinners (see John 3:14-15).

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Bronze Serpent – After repeated disobedience, God sent serpents to bite many Israelites. When they repented of their sins, God instructed Moses to raise a bronze serpent. This bronze serpent was lifted on a poll. When someone, who had been bitten by a snake, looked at the bronze serpent, he or she was healed. Jesus later compared Himself to the bronze serpent, lifted up to heal the sins of Israel once and for all.

Deuteronomy Benchmark

Reading #30: Deuteronomy 1: 19-46 - *Israel
Sentenced to Wilderness*

Reading #30 *Israel Sentenced to Wilderness* (Deuteronomy 1: 19-46)

Overview of Deuteronomy: Deuteronomy is the final chapter before the Israelites enter the Promised Land. God expounds upon the Law. There is particular focus on the Israelites passing on their faith to the next generation and to preparing them to enter the Promised Land.

Summary of Bible Passage

Israel did not trust God's promise for protection and prosperity, so they disobey God's command to go into the Promised Land. He sentenced them to 40 years of exile in the desert, meaning only the next generation would enter the Promised Land.

Joshua Benchmark

Reading #31: Joshua 1 – *Joshua Assigned as New Leader*

Reading #32: Joshua 2 – *Rahab Hides the Spies*

Reading #33: Joshua 3: 4-10 – *The Israelites Pass into the Promised Land*

Reading #34: Joshua 5-6 – *The Fall of Jericho*

**Reading #31: *The Lord Passes
Leadership from Moses to Joshua*
(Joshua 1)**

Overview of Joshua: God called on Joshua to lead the Israelites after the death of Moses. He promised Joshua He would never leave him. He ordered Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan River and take over the Promised Land.

Summary of Bible Passage

Joshua has been prepared for this task. Joshua's job is to lead the people to see their inheritance in the Land of Promise. However, this is a difficult task, but the Lord says, "I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:5-6). This is God promising to be with Joshua every step of the way and calling him to be brave.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Joshua – God declared that Joshua, instead of Moses, would lead the Israelites into the Promised Land due to Moses' and the Israelites' rebellion. God promised Joshua His presence, protection, and victory over all his enemies.

Reading #32: *Rahab Hides the Spies* (Joshua 2)

Overview of Joshua: God called on Joshua to lead the Israelites after the death of Moses. He promised Joshua He would never leave him. He ordered Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan River and take over the Promised Land.

Summary of Bible Passage

Joshua sent spies to go view the land of Jericho. They went and stayed at the house of a prostitute, Rahab. The king of Jericho heard that Rehab was hiding spies, and the king demanded her to bring him the men. However, Rahab hid the spies and told the king that the men stayed, but she did not know where they were from or where they were going. Rahab told the spies that she had heard the Lord and found favor in His sight. The spies agreed to save her family if she would not speak of them. Rahab sent them on their way and helped them escape without being captured. Rahab exemplified bravery, kindness, and trust in the Lord.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Rahab - Rahab was a prostitute in Jericho who hid Israelite spies. She was saved by the mercy of God and is remembered for her faith and good works.

Reading #33: *The Israelites Pass Into the Promised Land (Joshua 3: 4-10)*

Overview of Joshua: God called on Joshua to lead the Israelites after the death of Moses. He promised Joshua He would never leave him. He ordered Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan River and take over the Promised Land.

Summary of Bible Passage

God parts the waters of the Jordan River to enable the Israelites to pass into Canaan, fulfilling the longtime covenant that He made with Abraham. When the nation arrives in the Promised Land, God has them take 12 stones to establish a memorial of His faithfulness.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

12 Memorial Stones – God told Joshua to take twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe, and have them take twelve stones from the Jordan River and put them where they stay that night. The stones represent a memorial for the people of Israel of the faithfulness of God to His covenant.

Jordan River - The Jordan River flows through the Sea of Galilee and on to the Dead Sea. Joshua leads Israel across the Jordan River.

Canaan - Canaan is the geographic name for the Promised Land that God reserved for the Israelites.

Reading #34: *The Fall of Jericho* (Joshua 5-6)

**If you'd like, you can read all of Joshua 5-6. The most important portion to read would be in Joshua 6.*

Overview of Joshua: God called on Joshua to lead the Israelites after the death of Moses. He promised Joshua He would never leave him. He ordered Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan River and take over the Promised Land.

Summary of Bible Passage

Jericho was a city that God gave to Joshua. He told Joshua to march around the city for six days and on the seventh day to march around the city seven times. God says that the trumpets will sound and people will shout to the Lord and the priests will blow their horns and the wall will come down. They destroyed the city and the people within it except for the two spies, Rahab, and Rahab's family. The Lord was with Joshua through it all and His fame was in all the land.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Jericho - Jericho was a city where nobody went out and noone came in. It is now one of the oldest-known fortified cities in the Ancient Near East. It was wellsupplied with spring water and was often called

the “city of palms.” Jericho was the first city to be taken in Canaan. The city of Jericho was supposed to be wholly dedicated to the Lord.

Ruth Benchmarks

Reading #35: Ruth 1-4 - *The Story of Ruth and Naomi*

Reading #35: *The Story of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1-4)*

Overview of Ruth: The story of Ruth's dedication to Naomi, her mother-in-law. She accepts the God of Israel as her own and later marries Boaz. She is an ancestor of King David and Jesus.

Summary of Bible Passage:

A famine hits the land of Moab and both Ruth and Naomi's husbands die. Naomi plans to return to Bethlehem and tells Ruth to return home to her family and remarry. Ruth refuses and promises to remain with Naomi and worship her God, the God of Israel. Naomi and Ruth go to Bethlehem where Ruth collects leftover barley in Boaz's fields. Boaz is kind towards Ruth and protects her. Boaz and Ruth marry and have a son. Ruth is an ancestor to both King David and Jesus.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Ruth - A widowed Moabite (from Moab) who was faithful to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and followed Naomi to Bethlehem. To provide for herself and Naomi, Ruth gathered grain in Boaz's field where he took notice of her and was kind to her. Ruth goes on to marry Boaz and was an ancestor of Jesus.

Naomi - Ruth's mother-in-law who returned to Bethlehem after her husband (Elimelech's) death.

Boaz - A resident of Bethlehem and kinsman of Elimelech, Naomi's husband. He was a man of position and wealth who was kind and protected Ruth. Boaz marries Ruth, and they have a son named Obed.

Moab - The place Ruth was originally from.

Kinsman Redeemer - A male who acted as redeemer for a relative who was in trouble, danger, or need of vindication. He would redeem the estate of his kinsman and marry the widow of his relative to produce an heir to the estate.

Genealogy of Ruth - The line of Abraham is saved and preserved, which is connected to David and Jesus. Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, who fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David, who eventually became king (Ruth 4).

Judges - Judges were the political and military leaders of Israel during the period after Joshua and before King Saul (see 1 Samuel 8). When Israel disobeyed God, God would raise up a judge to lead them, often in military battle, and judges would often bring periods of peace to Israel. However, just as they disobeyed God, Israel repeatedly disobeyed the judges He raised up to rule.

1 Samuel Benchmarks

Reading #36: 1 Samuel 3 – *God Calls Samuel*

Reading #37: 1 Samuel 4-6 – *Ark of the Covenant Captured and Returned*

Reading #38: 1 Samuel 8 – *Israel Demands a King*

Reading #39: 1 Samuel 9-10 – *Saul Chosen King*

Reading #40: 1 Samuel 16 – *David Anointed King*

Reading #41: 1 Samuel 17 – *David and Goliath*

Reading #36: *God Calls Samuel* (1 Samuel 3)

Overview of 1 Samuel: The first book of Samuel tells the origins of Israel's monarchy, as well as the story of Saul and David. Key themes include the sovereignty of God and His eternal kingship.

Summary of Bible Passage

In the middle of the night, God called out to Samuel, but Samuel thought that the voice was from Eli and not God. God called him a second and a third time, and Eli finally told Samuel that it was God calling out to him. When God spoke to Samuel a fourth time, Samuel listened, and God revealed the judgment and fate of the house of Eli. This was the beginning of Samuel's status as a prophet.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Samuel - After his mother (Hannah) prayed for his birth, Samuel was dedicated to God as a baby to serve as a priest. As a child, God called Samuel to lead Israel, and Samuel became a wise and respected judge and prophet. However, Israel eventually demanded a king, and God sent him to anoint Saul as Israel's first king, and Samuel advised him at times. When Saul

turned away from God, the Lord sent Samuel to anoint David as king.

Eli - Eli was a judge and high priest in Israel, and he raised Samuel to be a priest from a young age. While Eli was a good priest and judge over Israel, his sons were evil, and God rejected the house of Eli. Eventually, Israel would fall into the hands of the Philistines because of the wickedness of Eli's sons, and Samuel would replace Eli as priest and judge over Israel.

Reading #37: Ark of the Covenant Captured and Returned (1 Samuel 4-6)

Overview of 1 Samuel: The first book of Samuel tells the origins of Israel's monarchy, as well as the story of Saul and David. Key themes include the sovereignty of God and His eternal kingship.

Summary of Bible Passage

After the Philistines defeated Israel in battle, Israelite leaders decided to bring the ark – a visible sign of the presence and power of God – into the next battle. Rather than trusting in God, they wanted to use the ark as a gimmick or charm, but the Philistines again defeated Israel as part of God's judgment against Eli and all of Israel. The loss of the ark devastated Israel, but God afflicted the Philistines with disease and suffering wherever they took the ark to demonstrate that He was superior to their god, and the Philistines returned the ark to Israel because they were afraid.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Eli – Eli was a judge and high priest in Israel, and he raised Samuel to be a priest from a young age. While Eli was a good priest and judge over Israel, his sons were evil, and God rejected the house of Eli. Eventually, Israel would fall into the hands of the

Philistines because of the wickedness of Eli's sons, and Samuel would replace Eli as priest and judge over Israel.

Philistia / The Philistines - Philistia was a collection of city states located between the kingdom of Israel and the Mediterranean Sea. The Philistines (the people who lived in Philistia) were a constant enemy of God's people and repeatedly attacked Israel.

Ark of the Covenant - The ark was a gold-covered chest specifically designed by God to hold the Ten Commandments. The ark was the only item in the most holy place of the tabernacle, and God would speak to Moses from the top of the ark.

Reading #38: *Israel Demands a King* (1 Samuel 8)

Overview of 1 Samuel: The first book of Samuel tells the origins of Israel's monarchy, as well as the story of Saul and David. Key themes include the sovereignty of God and His eternal kingship.

Summary of Bible Passage

Though Samuel was a good judge, his sons were corrupt, and the people of Israel demanded a king because they wanted to be like other nations. This desire was indicative of their repeated disobedience of God; rather than trusting God to raise up judges to lead them, they wanted to follow the ways of the world around them. Samuel recognized that this was a rejection of God's kingship over Israel, and he warned Israel about the problems a king would bring. Still, the people insisted, and God granted their request by anointing Saul.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Saul – Anointed by Samuel, Saul became the first king of Israel. Initially, Saul was a good king and conquered many of Israel's enemies. However, he stopped obeying God's commands and became jealous and paranoid. He felt threatened by David, tried to kill

him, and chased him across the country. Eventually, Saul committed suicide to avoid being captured by the Philistines in battle.

Reading #39: *Saul Chosen King* (1 Samuel 9-10)

Overview of 1 Samuel: The first book of Samuel tells the origins of Israel's monarchy, as well as the story of Saul and David. Key themes include the sovereignty of God and His eternal kingship.

Summary of Bible Passage

Saul was young, tall, and handsome—he fit the worldly definition of what a king should look like. Even though Israel's desire for a human king was a rejection of God, God instructed Samuel to privately anoint Saul and then publicly proclaim him king in front of all the people. Even though he knew he was anointed, Saul was afraid and initially hid from everyone before accepting the throne.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Saul – Anointed by Samuel, Saul became the first king of Israel. Initially, Saul was a good king and conquered many of Israel's enemies. However, he stopped obeying God's commands and became jealous and paranoid. He felt threatened by David, tried to kill him, and chased him across the country. Eventually, Saul committed suicide to avoid being captured by the Philistines in battle.

Reading #40: *David Anointed King* (1 Samuel 16)

Overview of 1 Samuel: The first book of Samuel tells the origins of Israel's monarchy, as well as the story of Saul and David. Key themes include the sovereignty of God and His eternal kingship.

Summary of Bible Passage

After Saul had turned from God, God turned from Saul and desired to set a new king over Israel. God instructed Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint one of Jesse's sons. Samuel wanted to anoint one of Jesse's older sons who was tall and strong, but God "looks on the heart" of a man and chose David (the youngest) to be the new king.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Samuel - After his mother (Hannah) prayed for his birth, Samuel was dedicated to God as a baby to serve as a priest. As a child, God called Samuel to lead Israel, and Samuel became a wise and respected judge and prophet. However, Israel eventually demanded a king, and God sent him to anoint Saul as Israel's first king, and Samuel advised him at times. When Saul turned away from God, the Lord sent Samuel to anoint David as king.

David - As a young shepherd, Samuel anointed David to become the next king of Israel. David was described as a “man after God’s heart,” and he became a renowned warrior, poet, musician, and king. With God’s help, David slew Goliath, united Israel, and established the Davidic line (and God promised that Jesus would be descended from David). At the same time, his life was not always easy; he had to run for his life from Saul, his son Absalom tried to usurp him, and he committed adultery and lost a baby. Though imperfect, David is an example of a man who lived for God and how God turns weakness into strength.

Jesse - Jesse was Ruth’s grandson and the father of David. Jesse and his seven sons lived in Bethlehem, and even though David was the smallest and youngest, God chose him to become king of Israel.

Reading #41: *David and Goliath* (1 Samuel 17)

Overview of 1 Samuel: The first book of Samuel tells the origins of Israel's monarchy, as well as the story of Saul and David. Key themes include the sovereignty of God and His eternal kingship.

Summary of Bible Passage

As champion of the Philistine army, Goliath challenged any Israelite to one-on-one combat, but they were all too afraid. David, still a young shepherd, dared to face Goliath. He didn't carry a sword or armor, but faced Goliath with just a sling and stones. Goliath mocked David and all of Israel, but David struck him in the forehead with a stone and killed the Philistine, leading to a massive victory for Israel.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Goliath – Standing over nine feet tall, Goliath was the greatest warrior in the Philistine army, and he challenged anyone in the Israelite army to face him in battle. Saul and the Israelites were terrified of him, and Goliath mocked Israel and God. David, though just a boy, was the only one brave enough to face Goliath, and he slayed the giant with just a slingshot.

Philistia / The Philistines - Philistia was a collection of city states located between the kingdom of Israel and the Mediterranean Sea. The Philistines (the people who lived in Philistia) were a constant enemy of God's people and repeatedly attacked Israel (1 Samuel 4-6; 17).

David - As a young shepherd, Samuel anointed David to become the next king of Israel. David was described as a "man after God's heart," and he became a renowned warrior, poet, musician, and king. With God's help, David slew Goliath, united Israel, and established the Davidic line (and God promised that Jesus would be descended from David). At the same time, his life was not always easy; he had to run for his life from Saul, his son Absalom tried to usurp him, and he committed adultery and lost a baby. Though imperfect, David is an example of a man who lived for God and how God turns weakness into strength.

2 Samuel Benchmarks

Reading #42: 2 Samuel 7 – *David's Covenant*

Reading #43: 2 Samuel 11 – *David and Bathsheba*

Reading #44: 2 Samuel 12 – *Nathan Rebukes David*

Reading #45: 2 Samuel 15 – *Absalom's Conspiracy and David's Flight*

Reading #46: 2 Samuel 18 – *Absalom Killed*

Reading #42: *David's Covenant* **(2 Samuel 7)**

Overview of 2 Samuel: This book focuses on the kingship of David. In particular, we see David's success, downfall, and restoration. Central to this book is David's covenant where God promises His presence, discipline, and protection forever.

Summary of Bible Passage

God promised David that his descendants will rule on his throne forever. God promised David and the Israelites His presence, discipline, and protection. This covenant points to Jesus, a descendant of David, ascending to a heavenly and eternal throne through His life, death, and resurrection.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Davidic Covenant – The covenant God made with David that his line would rule forever over Israel; promises them His presence, discipline, and protection; also promises that one of his descendants will be the eternal king over the eternal kingdom. This is Jesus.

David - As a young shepherd, Samuel anointed David to become the next king of Israel. David was described as a “man after God’s heart,” and he became a renowned warrior, poet, musician, and king. With God’s help, David slew Goliath, united Israel, and established the Davidic line (and God promised that Jesus would be descended from David). At the same time, his life was not always easy; he had to run for his life from Saul, his son Absalom tried to usurp him, and he committed adultery and lost a baby. Though imperfect, David is an example of a man who lived for God and how God turns weakness into strength.

Reading #43: *David and Bathsheba* (2 Samuel 11)

** this story may not be appropriate for young children*

Overview of 2 Samuel: This book focuses on the kingship of David. In particular, we see David's success, downfall, and restoration. Central to this book is David's covenant where God promises His presence, discipline, and protection forever.

Summary of Bible Passage

After seeing her bathing, David summoned Bathsheba, a married woman, and slept with her. After learning that she has come pregnant, David tries to cover up his transgression by calling Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, back from war. Ultimately, David has Uriah killed, and he marries Bathsheba.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Bathsheba – A married woman who lived in Jerusalem whom David saw bathing and then slept with. Bathsheba becomes pregnant with David's baby and, ultimately, marries David, after the king has her husband, Uriah, killed.

Uriah – A soldier in David's army and husband of Bathsheba. David carried out a successful plot to kill him in order that he may have Bathsheba for his own wife and conceal her conceiving a son by him.

Reading #44: *Nathan Rebukes David* (2 Samuel 12)

Overview of 2 Samuel: This book focuses on the kingship of David. In particular, we see David's success, downfall, and restoration. Central to this book is David's covenant where God promises His presence, discipline, and protection forever.

Summary of the Passage

The prophet, Nathan, told David the parable of a rich man stealing a poor man's one possession, a lamb, and slaughtering and cooking it for his guest. David declares that this man should die and pay back his debt fourfold. Nathan revealed to David he was the rich man and Uriah the poor man. As punishment, God allowed David and Bathsheba's first child to die and curses David's house, declaring that there will be violence in it. God's wording to David (through Nathan) illustrates that we sin against and hate God when we sin against and hate man.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Nathan – A prophet whom God sent to convict David of his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah and to inform him of the consequences on him and his house as a result.

Reading #45: Absalom's Conspiracy and David's Flight (2 Samuel 15)

Overview of 2 Samuel: This book focuses on the kingship of David. In particular, we see David's success, downfall, and restoration. Central to this book is David's covenant where God promises His presence, discipline, and protection forever.

Summary of Bible Passage

In 2 Samuel 11, Nathan prophesied that, due to David's sin involving Bathsheba and Uriah, violence would rise up from within David's own home. Absalom fulfilled this prophesy and, after killing his brother Amnon, fled from Jerusalem, gathered support from the Israelite people, and returned to Jerusalem to overthrow David and make himself king.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Absalom – One of David and Bathsheba's sons; he killed his brother Amnon and conspired to overthrow David from the throne. He was killed in battle.

Reading #46: Absalom Killed (2 Samuel 18)

Overview of 2 Samuel: This book focuses on the kingship of David. In particular, we see David's success, downfall, and restoration. Central to this book is David's covenant where God promises His presence, discipline, and protection forever.

Summary of Bible Passage

Before the final battle of David's army versus Absalom's, David requested that his men spare Absalom, but they ultimately killed Absalom. In spite of Absalom's betrayal, David laments the death of his son.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Absalom - One of David and Bathsheba's sons; he killed his brother Amnon and conspired to overthrow David from the throne. He was killed in battle.

1 Kings Benchmarks

Reading #47: 1 Kings 3 – *Solomon's Wisdom / Divide the Child*

Reading #48: 1 Kings 6 – *Solomon Builds the Temple*

Reading #49: 1 Kings 12 – *Rehoboam's Foolish Decision and the Division of the Kingdom*

Reading #50: 1 Kings 18 – *Elijah Defeats the Prophets of Baal and Calls for Rain to End the Drought*

Reading #51: 1 Kings 19 – *Elijah Flees Jezebel*

Reading #47: Solomon's Wisdom / *Divide the Child* (1 Kings 3)

Overview of 1 Kings: A core theme in this book is that Yahweh is the only true God and that He commands that He alone should be worshipped. The main figures in this book are King Solomon, son of David, and the prophet Elijah. In general, this book describes Israel's kings' and peoples' sinful worship of other gods, and Israel's choice to ignore God's Word spoken through prophets.

Summary of Bible Passage

Solomon sacrificed numerous burnt offerings to God on Mount Gibeon, where afterwards the Lord appeared to Him and offered him whatever he wanted. God gave Solomon, as he requests, wisdom beyond that of any other previous or future man and, as a result of Solomon's humble request, also gave him incomparable riches and honor.

Two prostitutes gave birth within a few days of one another in one tent with no other witnesses. One of the babies died, and each woman claimed the live child as her own. The women came to Solomon to resolve the conflict and he announced to the women that he would divide the baby with a sword and give each woman one half. The first woman cried out for

the other woman to take the baby, as long as it should live, and the second woman assented willingly to its death. Solomon discerned that the first woman was the baby's true mother, an exhibit of the wisdom God had given him to carry out justice.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Solomon – Israelite king, son of David and Bathsheba; renowned for his wisdom and wealth and for building the first temple in Jerusalem. His idolatry with money, women, and power lead to his downfall.

Reading #48: Solomon Builds the Temple (1 Kings 6)

Overview of 1 Kings: A core theme in this book is that Yahweh is the only true God and that He commands that He alone should be worshipped. The main figures in this book are King Solomon, son of David, and the prophet Elijah. In general, this book describes Israel's kings' and peoples' sinful worship of other gods, and Israel's choice to ignore God's Word spoken through prophets.

Summary of Bible Passage

God gave Solomon the task of building the first-ever permanent dwelling for Him. This building in Jerusalem contained the Ark of the Covenant, the throne of God; meaning wherever it was, His presence also was. The command to build the temple was therefore also God's promise to Israel: "Concerning this house that you are building, if you [obey My Law and Word]... I will dwell among...and not forsake my people Israel."

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Solomon – Israelite king, son of David and Bathsheba; renowned for his wisdom and wealth and for building

the first temple in Jerusalem. His idolatry with money, women, and power lead to his downfall.

The Temple – The place in Jerusalem where Israelites went to worship God and offer sacrifices, which contained the very presence of God.

**Reading #49: Rehoboam's Foolish
Decision and the Division of the
Kingdom (1 Kings 12)**

Overview of 1 Kings: A core theme in this book is that Yahweh is the only true God and that He commands that He alone should be worshipped. The main figures in this book are King Solomon, son of David, and the prophet Elijah. In general, this book describes Israel's kings' and peoples' sinful worship of other gods, and Israel's choice to ignore God's Word spoken through prophets.

Summary of Bible Passage

Right after Rehoboam is crowned king of Israel, the Israelites pleaded with him not to treat them as harshly as his father did. Old men counseled the king to treat his people well and serve him, but Rehoboam instead followed the advice of some young men: he promised Israel he would add to their burden. Consequently, the northern Israelites rebelled, which forced Rehoboam to flee to Jerusalem (in the Southern Kingdom) and caused Israel to divide. Israel divided into two kingdoms: the Southern Kingdom (Judah) and the Northern Kingdom (Israel). Rehoboam fled to rule only the Southern Kingdom, while Jeroboam stepped up to be king of the North.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Rehoboam - A son of Solomon; chose to listen to foolish counsel, which caused Israel to turn against him and produced a divided kingdom.

Jeroboam - Became king of the Northern Kingdom after Rehoboam was forced to flee, and turned the Northern Kingdom of Israel's hearts to worshipping idols.

**Reading #50: *Elijah Defeats the
Prophets of Baal and Calls for Rain to
End the Drought (1 Kings 18)***

Overview of 1 Kings: A core theme in this book is that Yahweh is the only true God and that He commands that He alone should be worshipped. The main figures in this book are King Solomon, son of David, and the prophet Elijah. In general, this book describes Israel's kings' and peoples' sinful worship of other gods, and Israel's choice to ignore God's Word spoken through prophets.

Summary of Bible Passage

Baal was the foreign (Canaanite) God of fertility, weather, and war. Many Israelites turned from Yahweh and worshipped Baal, which caused God to curse Israel with a drought. To prove Yahweh was the only true God and to end these horrible circumstances, Elijah told Israel's King Ahab to summon all of Baal's prophets and the Israelite people to a mountain. Elijah commanded Baal's prophets to kill a bull, set it on wood, and pray that Baal would send fire to consume the sacrifice. Elijah said he would do the same, except that he would pray to Yahweh. With all of the Israelites as witness, the prophets unsuccessfully called on Baal for hours. Finally, Elijah called on God and asked

Him to turn the peoples' hearts back to Him. Immediately, God sent fire from heaven that consumed the entire sacrifice. The Israelites proclaimed Yahweh as the only true God and slaughtered all of Baal's prophets. Meanwhile, as a result of King Ahab and Israel's worship of Baal, God caused there to be a drought for years in Israel (Samaria at that time). After God spoke through the prophet Elijah to inform King Ahab of this, the drought begins, and great famine ensues throughout the land. After Yahweh defeated the prophets of Baal and turned Israel's hearts back to Himself, God sends rain to restore the people and the land.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Elijah - One of the greatest prophets of Israel. He led the defeat of the prophets of Baal and performed many miraculous works through the power of God.

Reading #51: *Elijah Flees Jezebel* (1 Kings 19)

Overview of 1 Kings: A core theme in this book is that Yahweh is the only true God and that He commands that He alone should be worshipped. The main figures in this book are King Solomon, son of David, and the prophet Elijah. In general, this book describes Israel's kings' and peoples' sinful worship of other gods, and Israel's choice to ignore God's Word spoken through prophets.

Summary of Bible Passage

Jezebel, King Ahab's wife and avid worshipper of Baal, hears the news of Elijah's slaughter of Baal's prophets. She sent word to Elijah that she would also slaughter him, and he fled into the wilderness. Elijah, in extreme fear and despair, asked God to kill him. Elijah fell asleep, and God provided an angel that woke him twice, both times to give him food and water. These two meals sustained him for 40 days and 40 nights. (This number recalls both Israel's 40-year exile and the future of Jesus' 40-day fast in the wilderness). Once Elijah arrived at Mount Horeb, the Lord asked Elijah twice why he was there, and both times Elijah replied that he fervently tried to turn Israel's hearts back to Yahweh and that they threatened

him. The Lord responded that Elijah should go and anoint Aram, Israel's new king, and Elisha as His successor to Elijah, as Israel's next prophet. God's new political order would finally end the worship of Baal entirely.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Elijah - One of the greatest prophets of Israel. He led the defeat of the prophets of Baal and performed many miraculous works through the power of God.

Ahab - A king of Israel who was eviler in God's eyes than any Israelite king before him, primarily in his worship of Baal, which caused the nation to also turn from God and worship Baal.

Jezebel - The wicked foreign (Sidonian) wife Ahab married, who caused him to turn to her god Baal. She attempted to have Elijah killed.

2 Kings Benchmarks

Reading #52: 2 Kings 2 – *Elijah Taken to Heaven*

Reading #53: 2 Kings 6 – *Horses and Chariots of Fire*

Reading #54: 2 Kings 17 – *Israel (Northern Kingdom) Falls to Assyria*

Reading #55: 2 Kings 20 – *Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery*

Reading #56: 2 Kings 22-23 – *Josiah's Reform*

Reading #57: 2 Kings 25 – *Fall of Judah*

Reading #52: *Elijah Taken to Heaven* (2 Kings 2)

Overview of 2 Kings: The continuation of 1 Kings and Elijah's life, 2 Kings is another catalogue and history of the kings of Israel. In this book of prophecy and miracles in two divided kingdoms (Israel and Judah), the people are sinning and disobeying the Lord. Both Israel and Judah fall to their enemies as a consequence of their disobedience.

Summary of Bible Passage

Elisha asked to be given a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elijah says it will happen if Elisha sees him being taken to Heaven. As Elisha and Elijah are walking, a whirlwind and chariot of fire descends and takes Elijah into Heaven.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Elisha – A prophet and successor to the prophet Elijah.

Elijah – One of the greatest prophets of Israel. He led the defeat of the prophets of Baal and performed many miraculous works through the power of God.

Reading #53: *Horses and Chariots of Fire* (2 Kings 6)

Overview of 2 Kings: The continuation of 1 Kings and Elijah's life, 2 Kings is another catalogue and history of the kings of Israel. In this book of prophecy and miracles in two divided kingdoms (Israel and Judah), the people are sinning and disobeying the Lord. Both Israel and Judah fall to their enemies as a consequence of their disobedience.

Summary of Bible Passage

The Syrians had surrounded Israel and the prophet Elisha was warned by his servant about the Syrians. Elisha prays that the servant's eyes would be opened. He sees the mountain covered with horses and chariots of fire sent by the Lord to protect Israel. The Syrians are struck with blindness and led into Samaria.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Elisha - A prophet and successor to the prophet Elijah.

Reading #54: *Israel (Northern Kingdom) Falls to Assyria (2 Kings 17)*

Overview of 2 Kings: The continuation of 1 Kings and Elijah's life, 2 Kings is another catalogue and history of the kings of Israel. In this book of prophecy and miracles in two divided kingdoms (Israel and Judah), the people are sinning and disobeying the Lord. Both Israel and Judah fall to their enemies as a consequence of their disobedience.

Summary of Bible Passage

Israel fell to Assyria because of their disobedience to God and their sin. They had worshiped other gods and didn't listen to prophets or the voice of the Lord.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Israel / Ephraim (Northern Kingdom) - Israel was divided into two kingdoms after Rehoboam (Solomon's son) became king. The Northern Kingdom consisted of ten tribes of Israel and ultimately fell to the kingdom of Assyria. They were historically very rebellious against God and worshiped pagan idols.

Reading #55: Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery (2 Kings 20)

Overview of 2 Kings: The continuation of 1 Kings and Elijah's life, 2 Kings is another catalogue and history of the kings of Israel. In this book of prophecy and miracles in two divided kingdoms (Israel and Judah), the people are sinning and disobeying the Lord. Both Israel and Judah fall to their enemies as a consequence of their disobedience.

Summary of Bible Passage

Hezekiah gets sick almost to the point of death, and he is told to prepare to die. Hezekiah weeps and calls out the Lord for healing. He is healed and promised 15 more years of life and that the Lord will deliver him from the king of Assyria.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Hezekiah – Hezekiah became the king of Judah at age 25 and reigned for 29 years. He followed the instruction of the Lord and purified/repared the temple. Hezekiah was faithful and very productive for much of his life. However, pride overtook him. God spared his life from illness and Hezekiah was healed. However, he later fell back into pride and self-

centeredness and was responsible for the ultimate fall of Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

Assyria – An aggressive and violent enemy of Israel and Judah. Assyria conquered Israel (Northern Kingdom) and threatened Judah (Southern Kingdom).

Judah (Southern Kingdom) – Split with Israel after Rehoboam (Solomon's son) became king, and consisted of two tribes, Benjamin and Judah. Judah was threatened by the Assyrians and eventually was captured by Babylon. Judah was far more faithful to God than the Northern Kingdom.

Reading #56: Josiah's Reform (2 Kings 22-23)

**If you'd like, you can read all of 2 Kings 22-23.
The most important to read would be 2 Kings 22 and
23:1-27.*

Overview of 2 Kings: The continuation of 1 Kings and Elijah's life, 2 Kings is another catalogue and history of the kings of Israel. In this book of prophecy and miracles in two divided kingdoms (Israel and Judah), the people are sinning and disobeying the Lord. Both Israel and Judah fall to their enemies as a consequence of their disobedience.

Summary of Bible Passage

The Josiah was king of Judah at age eight after his father Manasseh died. Manasseh had led the nation into sin and disobedience. However, Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and kept His commandments. He repaired the temple, got rid of idols and false teachings, made sacrifices, and restored the Passover.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Manasseh – The king of Judah at age 12 after his father Hezekiah died. He did not follow the Lord and built idols and altars for other gods. He led the people into more sin and evil than any past king (2 Kings 21).

Josiah – The king of Judah at age eight after his father Manasseh, a wicked king, died. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and enacted massive reforms. He repaired the temple, made sacrifices, and restored the Passover. Josiah is seen as one of the greatest kings of Judah.

Judah (Southern Kingdom) – Split with Israel after Rehoboam (Solomon's son) became king, and consisted of two tribes, Benjamin and Judah. Judah was threatened by the Assyrians and eventually was captured by Babylon. Judah was far more faithful to God than the Northern Kingdom.

Reading #57: *Fall of Judah* (2 Kings 25)

Overview of 2 Kings: The continuation of 1 Kings and Elijah's life, 2 Kings is another catalogue and history of the kings of Israel. In this book of prophecy and miracles in two divided kingdoms (Israel and Judah), the people are sinning and disobeying the Lord. Both Israel and Judah fall to their enemies as a consequence of their disobedience.

Summary of Bible Passage

Judah (Southern Kingdom) fell to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. The Babylonians sieged Judah and broke into the city during a time of famine. They burned the city, stole from the temple, and enslaved the people.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Nebuchadnezzar - As king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Israel and took many Israelites captive. He was a proud man who forced everyone to worship a golden idol of himself, and he suffered many confusing dreams, which Daniel interpreted. He eventually came to recognize the sovereignty of God.

Babylon - The Babylonian empire was one of the most powerful empires in the ancient world. With a capital city of Babylon, the empire conquered Israel and took thousands of Israelites captive, including Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

1 and 2 Chronicles Benchmarks

Reading #58: 2 Chronicles 7 – *Dedication of Temple and Prayer*

Reading #59: 2 Chronicles 20 – *Jehoshaphat's Prayer*

Reading #60: 2 Chronicles 32 – *Hezekiah's Pride and Achievements*

Reading #58: *Dedication of Temple and Prayer* (2 Chronicles 7)

Overview of 1 and 2 Chronicles: These two books contain narratives and genealogical lists recounting nearly all of Judah's (Southern Kingdom) history through the Babylonian exile. 1 Chronicles focuses on the life of David. 2 Chronicles looks at the lives of other kings of Judah. They repeatedly remind Israel to hope in God's covenant promises.

Summary of Bible Passage

Once construction of the temple was completed, Solomon held a massive ceremony dedicating it to God. For over a week, all of Israel gathered to make sacrifices and sing God's praises; and God promised Solomon that He would hear any prayers made in the temple, forgive His people, and heal the land—so long as Israel humbly sought God and turned from idols and wickedness. This promise is part of the reason why the temple was so important to Israel.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Solomon – Israelite king, son of David and Bathsheba; renowned for his wisdom and wealth and for building the first temple in Jerusalem. His idolatry with money, women, and power lead to his downfall.

Reading #59: Jehoshaphat's Prayer (2 Chronicles 20)

Overview of 1 and 2 Chronicles: These two books contain narratives and genealogical lists recounting nearly all of Judah's (Southern Kingdom) history through the Babylonian exile. 1 Chronicles focuses on the life of David. 2 Chronicles looks at the lives of other kings of Judah. They repeatedly remind Israel to hope in God's covenant promises.

Summary of Bible Passage

Facing invasion from Moab and Ammon, Jehoshaphat and all of Judah were afraid. Instead of relying on himself, Jehoshaphat called on God to remember His promises and deliver Judah. God heard Jehoshaphat's prayer and fought the battle for Judah, completely destroying Ammon and Moab.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Jehoshaphat – As king of Judah, Jehoshaphat was generally a good leader who strengthened his country militarily, politically, and spiritually. At times, he stumbled into bad alliances and strayed from God, but he ultimately repented and trusted in God to fight for him.

Judah (Southern Kingdom) – Split with Israel after Rehoboam (Solomon's son) became king, and consisted of two tribes, Benjamin and Judah. Judah was threatened by the Assyrians and eventually was captured by Babylon. Judah was far more faithful to God than the Northern Kingdom.

Reading #60: Hezekiah's Pride and Achievements (2 Chronicles 32)

Overview of 1 and 2 Chronicles: These two books contain narratives and genealogical lists recounting nearly all of Judah's (Southern Kingdom) history through the Babylonian exile. 1 Chronicles focuses on the life of David. 2 Chronicles looks at the lives of other kings of Judah. They repeatedly remind Israel to hope in God's covenant promises.

Summary of Bible Passage

Hezekiah was a faithful and righteous king who enacted many religious reforms, and Judah prospered under his reign. Personally, he gained riches, honor, and prosperity, but he became proud late in his life. Because of his pride, God's wrath descended upon Judah, but Hezekiah repented and humbled himself before his death.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Hezekiah – Hezekiah became the king of Judah at age 25 and reigned for 29 years. He followed the instruction of the Lord and purified/repared the temple. Hezekiah was faithful and very productive for much of his life. However, pride overtook him. God spared his life from illness and Hezekiah was healed.

However, he later fell back into pride and self-centeredness and was responsible for the ultimate fall of Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

Ezra and Nehemiah Bible Benchmark

Reading #61: *Ezra 1 – Cyrus Releases the Jews*

Reading #62: *Ezra 3 – Temple Restoration Begins*

Reading #63: *Nehemiah 3 – The Rebuilding of the Wall*

Reading #61: *Cyrus Releases the Jews* (Ezra 1)

Overview of Ezra: Ezra recounts the return to Judah to begin rebuilding the temple after the Babylonian captivity. It's significant because God fulfilled His promise of returning His people to their Israel after their exile.

Summary of Bible Passage

The Lord stirred the heart of Cyrus to make a declaration that the Jews would be released and return to their homeland. Cyrus also call for the temple be rebuilt and offers aid in rebuilding.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Cyrus of Persia - Cyrus was the king of Persia and freed God's people to return to Judah. He also decreed the rebuilding of the temple in Judah and returned temple artifacts that were taken when the Babylonians invaded under King Nebuchadnezzar.

Reading #62: *Temple Restoration Begins (Ezra 3)*

Overview of Ezra: Ezra recounts the return to Judah to begin rebuilding the temple after the Babylonian captivity. It's significant because God fulfilled His promise of returning His people to their Israel after their exile.

Summary of Bible Passage

After Cyrus of Persia released the Jews, they returned to Israel and began the rebuilding of the temple. When the foundation was laid and people began to worship, many of the priests and elders wept with joy because God had fulfilled His promise to bring His people home.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Ezra – Ezra was a scribe who knew the Law of Moses. He was sent by the king to study the Law of the Lord and teach the people of Israel.

Reading #63: *The Rebuilding of the Wall* (Nehemiah 3)

Overview of Nehemiah: Nehemiah's leadership in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, and the people of Israel finding and re-establishing themselves as a nation.

Summary of Bible Passage

The wall of Jerusalem had been destroyed in the Babylonian invasion. The Israelites united to repair and rebuild the wall. The rebuilding of the wall signified God's blessing and gave the city protection against their enemies.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Nehemiah - He was cup-bearer to the king of Persia. He was granted permission from the king to go to Judah to help rebuild Jerusalem and its walls. Nehemiah also established policies and addressed the issue of marriage between Jews and Non-Jews.

Jerusalem's Wall - The walls were in a state of disrepair and were rebuilt to fortify the city and show that the Lord was with them. The rebuilding of the wall was led by Nehemiah.

Esther Bible Benchmark

Reading #64: Esther 1-10

Note: Esther is a book we recommend reading the whole way through as one unit. Below are key items and moments in this short book.

Reading #64: Esther 1-10

Overview of Esther: Esther is a book about a beautiful woman who bravely saved the Israelites from certain death and was honored and adored by King Ahasuerus.

Summary of Bible Passage

Despite the hardship of Esther's life with losing both of her parents, God created her to be the queen and save the Jews. Despite the struggles, God had planned for her to be exactly where she was at the exact time she was there. It was all part of His perfect plan (Esther 1-10). When Esther learns that Haman is going to destroy the Jews, she realizes that she must go to the king and tell him the truth about who she is and plead for them. This was a very dangerous thing to do because you are only to go to the king when you've been called. Esther fell at the king's feet and wept telling him the evil plan of Haman. The king tells Esther to rise and he calls his scribes in and an edict was written to all the Jews declaring that they may gather together and defend themselves (Esther 8).

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Esther – Esther was a beautiful woman who lived with Mordecai, her cousin, because both her mother

and father had died. Esther is a beautiful (secretly Jewish) woman who the king finds favor in. She becomes queen and saves the Jews.

Mordecai – Mordecai made Esther his own daughter because her father and mother both died. He sent Esther to the king's palace to win favor of the king. Later, Mordecai was in second rank to King Ahasuerus and spoke peace to all his people. He was a well-respected Jewish man.

Vashti – Vashti was queen before Esther. She did not obey the king and so King Ahasuerus did not find favor in her.

Haman – Haman is an Agagite who King Ahasuerus promoted and set him above all the officials. All of the king's servants bowed down and paid homage to him, except for Mordecai. Haman has a wicked plot to kill of the Jewish people. Later, Esther tells the king Haman's plot and he is hanged.

Sackcloth and Ashes – Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and then sprinkled his head with ashes. This was a traditional way of expressing grief. However, this was a big deal to do publicly and Esther worried for his safety.

Psalms Bible Benchmark

Overview of Psalms: King David authored most, if not all, of the psalms. His authorship is important to note because Israel's king was supposed to embody the ideal Israelite, the ideal worshiper of God. Psalms are

intended to be sung by people who genuinely believe them and take the psalms to heart. The whole kingdom of Israel may have known and sung these particular psalms, as the king crafted them. Some common themes include supplication for God to provide justice and salvation from enemies, God's beauty in creation, and, above all, praise of God as the one true God, good and trustworthy in character. While the context of many of the psalms remains a mystery, a number of psalms are clearly David's response to specific events that we can pinpoint today.

In this section, we recommend reading these full psalms. We have left out any key items and only include summaries of the individual psalms.

Reading #65: Psalm 1

Summary of Bible Passage

Introduction to the whole book in that it talks about how those who follow God must take His law (the Torah) seriously and uphold it. The Law blesses and provides continual nourishment to those who follow it and observe it. Those who do not honor God by upholding the Law will all eventually die.

Reading #66: Psalm 19

Summary of Bible Passage

All of creation glorifies God, and so does His law. This psalm is all about celebrating God's law: its goodness, sweetness, infallibility, and imperishability. It is God's priceless gift to man; for humankind, the law is a source of joy, restoration, and enlightenment.

Reading #67: Psalm 22

Summary of Bible Passage

David laments that he, an innocent man, suffers at the hand of wicked men. Four times the book of Matthew directly quotes this psalm in reference to Jesus' own suffering and crucifixion. Despite his affliction, David worships the Lord and trusts He will save him, and he joyfully anticipates the future when the whole earth will worship God.

Reading #68: Psalm 23

Summary of Bible Passage

Here, David compares God to both a shepherd and to a generous host. As the shepherd, God cares for all of Israel and also each individual Israelite. He gives them what they need: safety, restoration, comfort, guidance, etc. He has the best interest of His people in mind. Even in the worst of circumstances, God (as host) is faithful to provide for and cherish His guest. David rejoices that, no matter where he is, he can always be in God's presence. David does not view evil circumstances as a reflection of God's disposition towards him, but believes that, in every situation, God still loves him fervently and sovereignly plans good for his life.

Reading #69: Psalm 40

Summary of Bible Passage

In a time of suffering, David recalls all of the previous times God rescued and provided for him and praises God. Recalling His faithfulness in the past gives David comfort and hope that God will again provide for him in this new instance, and declares the truth over himself: that it is God and His love and mercy alone that sustains David. He asks God to shame his enemies and cause those who seek God to praise Him.

Reading #70: Psalm 51

Summary of Bible Passage

This psalm is David's response to God speaking through the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan told David that God is going to punish him for committing adultery with a married woman named Bathsheba and for killing Bathsheba's husband Uriah. David acknowledges his sin, asks God for mercy on him and Jerusalem, and promises to genuinely worship God.

Reading #71: Psalm 103

Summary of Bible Passage

David stirs up his soul and all of heaven to praise God. He describes all the ways God is a good and faithful Father to His people, Israel. He knows their limitations and sinful nature and has patience with and compassion on them. David praises God that, in contrast to humans, God has perfect, unchanging character and love.

Reading #72: Psalm 119

Summary of Bible Passage

This psalm is a celebration of one of God's greatest gifts to His people: the Torah, God's promised words of guidance to His covenant people. (For Christians, this includes the whole Bible.) The psalmist(s)

celebrate(s) God's Word for many reasons: it expresses God's faithful character, provides God's perfect instruction and commandments to His people, and provides a sure source of truth in an unsure world. Furthermore, God is able to use His Word to supernaturally mold those who trust in Him to become more like Him.

Reading #73: Psalm 137

Summary of Bible Passage

Here the psalmist laments all of Israel's suffering during the Babylonian exile. God used the Babylonians to punish his sinful people Israel, but this does not justify the wrong the Babylonians did. The psalmist prays for their destruction and also prays that he would never forget "Jerusalem," which implies not only the Holy City, but also God's covenant and goodness to His people.

Reading #74: Psalm 150

Summary of Bible Passage

David calls all of creation to worship God. David mentions many instruments which implies that this psalm is probably intended to be sung with loud music and for the worshiper to worship and dance with his or her entire body; a song of jubilation and that encapsulates the heart and character of the whole book of Psalms.

Proverbs Benchmark

Overview of Proverbs: A book meant for fathers to walk through with their sons to teach them the temptations a man will face, and the reward for not giving in and waiting patiently for a woman who fears the Lord.

Since Proverbs is a collection wise principles and sayings, we have listed a few that are particularly notable from the book.

Key Verses from Proverbs

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”
(Proverbs 1:7)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” **(Proverbs 3:5)**

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” **(Proverbs 9:10)**

“The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.” **(Proverbs 16:9)**

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” **(Proverbs 16:18)**

Ecclesiastes Benchmark

Overview of Ecclesiastes: A speaker's lament of trying earthly pleasures. The book is a compilation of his studies, hypotheses, and proverbs regarding wisdom, and the mystery of life through the eyes of man. He concludes that everything in the world is vanity apart from God. Knowing, worshiping, and obeying God are the only things of value.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

The Teacher – The narrator of Ecclesiastes who identifies himself as the current king of Israel and son of King David. He shares his wisdom and details the vanities of man and the dissatisfaction they bring.

Key Verses from Ecclesiastes

“Vanity, vanity, everything under the sun is vanity.”
(Ecclesiastes 1:2)

“What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.” **(Ecclesiastes 1:9)**

“In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.” **(Ecclesiastes 7:14)**

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.” **(Ecclesiastes 3:11)**

“The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” **(Ecclesiastes 12:13)**

Song of Solomon Benchmark

Overview of Song of Solomon – It is not clear who this book's author is: the author may be Solomon or someone else may have written these songs in Solomon's honor. Regardless, the main speakers are a young man and a young woman, and may very well reflect God's love for His people, Israel, and Christ's love for the church.

Isaiah Benchmarks

Reading #75: Isaiah 6 – *Isaiah's Vision of God*

Reading #76: Isaiah 9 – *Prophecy of the Christ Child*

Reading #77: Isaiah 40 – *The Goodness of God*

Reading #78: Isaiah 43 – *When You Pass Through the Waters*

Reading #79: Isaiah 53 – *The Suffering Servant is Wounded for our Sins*

Reading #80: Isaiah 61 – *The Year of God's Favor*

Reading #75: *Isaiah's Vision of God* (Isaiah 6)

Overview of Isaiah: Written by Isaiah, the book of Isaiah contains a series of prophecies with strong themes of God's judgment and grace in the restoration of Israel. Additionally, Isaiah provides some of the clearest prophecies regarding the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would save sinners by His blood and the grace of God. Isaiah 40-66 contains much content about the Suffering Servant who will redeem God's people, a prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah.

Summary of Bible Passage

In this scene we see a beautiful picture of God in all His holiness. As part of his call to become a prophet, Isaiah saw God sitting on His throne in heaven, surrounded by seraphim (angels) singing His praises. Isaiah's initial reaction was one of woe, for he was unclean and sinful, but, through God's grace, he was able to accept God's call to go out and minister.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Isaiah - Isaiah, whose name means "the Lord saves," was the one of the major prophets in the Bible. In addition to being a prolific prophet, his ministry stretched over decades.

Reading #76: *Prophecy of the Christ Child (Isaiah 9)*

Overview of Isaiah: Written by Isaiah, the book of Isaiah contains a series of prophecies with strong themes of God's judgment and grace in the restoration of Israel. Additionally, Isaiah provides some of the clearest prophecies regarding the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would save sinners by His blood and the grace of God. Isaiah 40-66 contains much content about the Suffering Servant who will redeem God's people, a prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah.

Summary of Bible Passage

Through Isaiah, God revealed His divine plan to bless and save humanity—through a child. In this short prophecy, Isaiah provided several key details about the child, including that He would be divine, rule over an eternal kingdom, and be descended from David.

Reading #77: *Invasion and Fall of the Sennacherib* (Isaiah 36-37)

Overview of Isaiah: Written by Isaiah, the book of Isaiah contains a series of prophecies with strong themes of God's judgment and grace in the restoration of Israel. Additionally, Isaiah provides some of the clearest prophecies regarding the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would save sinners by His blood and the grace of God. Isaiah 40-66 contains much content about the Suffering Servant who will redeem God's people, a prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah.

Summary of Bible Passage

Sennacherib was an Assyrian king who attacked Judah and surrounded Jerusalem. He mocked King Hezekiah, the Israelites and God Himself. Though afraid, Hezekiah was faithful, and prayed to God for deliverance. God heard Hezekiah's prayer and wiped out the Assyrian army without any battle or violence. Sennacherib fell because of his resistance of God and his scorn for Israel.

Reading #78: *The Goodness of God* (Isaiah 40)

Overview of Isaiah: Written by Isaiah, the book of Isaiah contains a series of prophecies with strong themes of God's judgment and grace in the restoration of Israel. Additionally, Isaiah provides some of the clearest prophecies regarding the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would save sinners by His blood and the grace of God. Isaiah 40-66 contains much content about the Suffering Servant who will redeem God's people, a prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah.

Summary of Bible Passage

In this beautiful poetry, Isaiah writes to future Israelites living under Babylonian captivity, but the message rang true for everyone then and today: God is good. None can compare. This picture of God's unrivaled and eternal glory would one day offer comfort and hope to Israelites in exile, and still offers us hope today.

Reading #79: *When You Pass Through the Waters (Isaiah 43)*

Overview of Isaiah: Written by Isaiah, the book of Isaiah contains a series of prophecies with strong themes of God's judgment and grace in the restoration of Israel. Additionally, Isaiah provides some of the clearest prophecies regarding the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would save sinners by His blood and the grace of God. Isaiah 40-66 contains much content about the Suffering Servant who will redeem God's people, a prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah.

Summary of Bible Passage

Even though Israel did not deserve it, God promised to redeem His people. Even through trial and tribulation— which God promised Israel will soon face—God will deliver His people. This message of hope rings true today; no trial or tribulation is too great for God, and He will never leave or forsake His people.

Reading #80: *The Suffering Servant is Wounded for our Sins (Isaiah 53)*

Overview of Isaiah: Written by Isaiah, the book of Isaiah contains a series of prophecies with strong themes of God's judgment and grace in the restoration of Israel. Additionally, Isaiah provides some of the clearest prophecies regarding the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would save sinners by His blood and the grace of God. Isaiah 40-66 contains much content about the Suffering Servant who will redeem God's people, a prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah.

Summary of Bible Passage

God promised to send His servant, Jesus, to save Israel from her sins. The servant must suffer, carrying the weight of every sin on His shoulders, and He must die like a sacrificial lamb for the sins of the entire world. This prophecy hits the heart of the Gospel, that God sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins, so that we could be saved and live in relationship with God.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Servant - Isaiah uses the term "servant" in a number of different ways, at times indicating a specific person or even Israel as a whole. Most importantly, the term often refers to the Messiah, the chosen one whom God

would send to save and redeem His people. Today, we know that Jesus was the servant who lived, died, and rose for us.

Reading #81: *The Year of God's Favor* (Isaiah 61)

Overview of Isaiah: Written by Isaiah, the book of Isaiah contains a series of prophecies with strong themes of God's judgment and grace in the restoration of Israel. Additionally, Isaiah provides some of the clearest prophecies regarding the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would save sinners by His blood and the grace of God. Isaiah 40-66 contains much content about the Suffering Servant who will redeem God's people, a prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah.

Summary of Bible Passage

Jesus quotes this text as he opens his ministry in Luke 4. Contrasted with a single "day of vengeance," this Messianic prophecy harkens to the Year of Jubilee (when all debts were forgiven and liberty was proclaimed). This passage captures the heart of Jesus' mission. Because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, our sins were forgiven and our debts were paid; and we currently live in the year of God's favor until Christ returns.

Jeremiah and Lamentations Benchmarks

Reading #82: Jeremiah 1 – *Jeremiah’s Call*

Reading #83: Jeremiah 23 – *Righteous Branch*

Reading #84: Jeremiah 31 – *The New Covenant*

Reading #85: Lamentations 3 – *Great is Thy Faithfulness*

Reading #82: *Jeremiah's Call* (Jeremiah 1)

Overview of Jeremiah: The book of Jeremiah occurs as God is about to make good on His warning to Judah (the Southern kingdom of Israel) that He will withhold His judgment no longer. The Babylonians will invade them because of their unfaithfulness to God. Jeremiah emphasizes God's judgment over unfaithful sinners, but at the same time, he stresses God's desire to restore all people to Himself through a new covenant.

Summary of Bible Passage

Like other prophets, God specifically called Jeremiah to service. While still a youth, God called Jeremiah to be His fearless messenger to Israel, and God literally put His divine words into Jeremiah's mouth.

Reading #83: *Righteous Branch* (Jeremiah 23)

Overview of Jeremiah: The book of Jeremiah occurs as God is about to make good on His warning to Judah (the Southern kingdom of Israel) that He will withhold His judgment no longer. The Babylonians will invade them because of their unfaithfulness to God. Jeremiah emphasizes God's judgment over unfaithful sinners, but at the same time, he stresses God's desire to restore all people to Himself through a new covenant.

Summary of Bible Passage

In this prophecy, the "righteous branch," descended from the line of David, will one day rule with righteousness and justice over an eternal kingdom. This prophecy points to Jesus, who is the "righteous branch," that has reunited and ruled over God's people.

Reading #84: *The New Covenant* (Jeremiah 31)

Overview of Jeremiah: The book of Jeremiah occurs as God is about to make good on His warning to Judah (the Southern kingdom of Israel) that He will withhold His judgment no longer. The Babylonians will invade them because of their unfaithfulness to God. Jeremiah emphasizes God's judgment over unfaithful sinners, but at the same time, he stresses God's desire to restore all people to Himself through a new covenant.

Summary of Bible Passage

God had previously made a covenant with Moses and Israel, but Israel had repeatedly disobeyed and turned from God. Here, Jeremiah prophesied of a new covenant, where God offered a fresh start for His people and promised that His Word would be written on their hearts and that He would remember their sins no more. In the old covenant, Israel repeatedly had to perform animal sacrifices to atone for sins; Jesus, however, was the sacrificial lamb of the new covenant, and His blood has washed us clean of our sins forever.

**Reading #85: *Great is Thy Faithfulness*
(Lamentations 3)**

Overview of Lamentations: Written by Jeremiah, this book is a sorrowful lament over the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. He pours out his sorrows to the Lord, but he also realizes the faithfulness of the Lord even in times of despair.

Summary of Bible Passage

This passage is a beautiful description of the steadfast love of God, His never-ending mercies, and His faithfulness in the midst of dire suffering and pain.

Ezekiel Benchmarks

Reading #86: Ezekiel 1 – *Glory of God Seen by Ezekiel*

Reading #87: Ezekiel 2: 3-15 – *Ezekiel's Call / Eats the Scroll*

Reading #88: Ezekiel 36 – *New Heart / Spirit of God in You*

Reading #89: Ezekiel 37: 1-14 – *The Valley of Dry Bones*

Reading #86: *Glory of God Seen by Ezekiel* (Ezekiel 1)

Overview of Ezekiel: Initially a priest, God later called Ezekiel to become a prophet to minister to Jewish exiles in Babylon. God gave him a vision of Jerusalem in ruins as a starting point to call the Jews in exile to repentance. Ezekiel lived a difficult life, suffering through exile and the loss of his wife, and he delivered hard truths to God's people as one of the major prophets. His lived during the same time as Daniel and overlapped with the end of Jeremiah's life.

Summary of Bible Passage

In this detailed account, the glory of God approached Ezekiel before calling him to ministry. Ezekiel only saw a "likeness" of God's glory, which was preceded by a storm and cherubim (angels), but seeing the likeness of God on His throne and hearing His voice was awesome enough for Ezekiel to fall on his face in reverence.

Reading #87: *Ezekiel's Call/Eats the Scroll* (Ezekiel 2: 3-15)

Overview of Ezekiel: Initially a priest, God later called Ezekiel to become a prophet to minister to Jewish exiles in Babylon. God gave him a vision of Jerusalem in ruins as a starting point to call the Jews in exile to repentance. Ezekiel lived a difficult life, suffering through exile and the loss of his wife, and he delivered hard truths to God's people as one of the major prophets. His lived during the same time as Daniel and overlapped with the end of Jeremiah's life.

Summary of Bible Passage

God presented a tough task for Ezekiel, sending the prophet out to a rebellious and hard-hearted people. However, Ezekiel accepted God's call. God then presented him with a scroll written with lamentation and woe and instructed Ezekiel to eat it and go speak to Israel. Ezekiel obeyed the strange task to eat the scroll, proving that he was not rebellious like the rest of Israel, and he was literally filled with the words of God, which tasted sweet as honey.

Reading #88: *New Heart / Spirit of God in You (Ezekiel 36)*

Overview of Ezekiel: Initially a priest, God later called Ezekiel to become a prophet to minister to Jewish exiles in Babylon. God gave him a vision of Jerusalem in ruins as a starting point to call the Jews in exile to repentance. Ezekiel lived a difficult life, suffering through exile and the loss of his wife, and he delivered hard truths to God's people as one of the major prophets. He lived during the same time as Daniel and overlapped with the end of Jeremiah's life.

Summary of Bible Passage

God had previously made a covenant with Moses and Israel, but Israel had repeatedly disobeyed and turned from God. Here, Jeremiah prophesied of a New Covenant, where God offered a fresh start for His people and promised that His Word would be written on their hearts and that He would remember their sins no more. In the Old Covenant, Israel repeatedly had to perform animal sacrifices to atone for sins; Jesus, however, was the sacrificial Lamb of the New Covenant, and His blood has washed us clean of our sins forever.

Reading #89: *The Valley of Dry Bones*
(Ezekiel 37: 1-14)

Overview of Ezekiel: Initially a priest, God later called Ezekiel to become a prophet to minister to Jewish exiles in Babylon. God gave him a vision of Jerusalem in ruins as a starting point to call the Jews in exile to repentance. Ezekiel lived a difficult life, suffering through exile and the loss of his wife, and he delivered hard truths to God's people as one of the major prophets. His lived during the same time as Daniel and overlapped with the end of Jeremiah's life.

Summary of Bible Passage

In this scene, God called Ezekiel to prophesy to a valley of bones, and his prophecy—that God would give the bones new flesh and life—came true. God used this powerful image to demonstrate the restoration that He would do to Israel, a broken and hopeless nation.

Daniel Benchmarks

Reading #90: Daniel 2 – *Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*

Reading #91: Daniel 3 – *Fiery Furnace*

Reading #92: Daniel 5 -- *The Handwriting on the Wall*

Reading #93: Daniel 6 – *Daniel and the Lion's Den*

Reading #94: Daniel 7 – *Vision of Reign of Son of Man*

Reading #90: *Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Daniel 2)*

Overview of Daniel: Written by Daniel, this book recalls stories of Israelites during their time as exiles in Babylon. Themes of the book include the sovereignty of God over earthly kingdoms, the power of bold faith, and prophecy. The first half involves stories of the provision of God and the faithfulness of several of His people. The second half involves prophecy, particularly prophecies about the end times.

Summary of Bible Passage

King Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream that none of his wise men could interpret. God revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel, and Daniel interpreted the dream for the king. Daniel explained that there would be a succession of empires after Babylon, and that God would eventually establish His kingdom that would never fall.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Daniel – Taken into exile as a kid, Daniel was educated in Babylonian schools, but remained faithful to God despite pressures to conform. Daniel's faithfulness helped him interpret dreams for the king, survive a

den of hungry lions, and even prophecy about the future.

Babylon - The Babylonian empire was one of the most powerful empires in the ancient world. With a capital city of Babylon, the empire conquered Israel and took thousands of Israelites captive, including Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Nebuchadnezzar - As king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Israel and took many Israelites captive. He was a proud man who forced everyone to worship a golden idol of himself, and he suffered many confusing dreams, which Daniel interpreted. He eventually came to recognize the sovereignty of God.

Reading #91: *Fiery Furnace* (Daniel 3)

Overview of Daniel: Written by Daniel, this book recalls stories of Israelites during their time as exiles in Babylon. Themes of the book include the sovereignty of God over earthly kingdoms, the power of bold faith, and prophecy. The first half involves stories of the provision of God and the faithfulness of several of His people. The second half involves prophecy, particularly prophecies about the end times.

Summary of Bible Passage

King Nebuchadnezzar built a giant golden image of himself and ordered that everyone bow down and worship the idol. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the idol because they worshiped, believed, and trusted God alone. Enraged, Nebuchadnezzar threw the three young boys into a fiery furnace, but instead of dying, God protected them and sent Jesus to join them in the fire.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Nebuchadnezzar - As king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Israel and took many Israelites captive. He was a proud man who forced

everyone to worship a golden idol of himself, and he suffered many confusing dreams, which Daniel interpreted. He eventually came to recognize the sovereignty of God.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – These three friends refused to bow to the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar because of their faith and obedience to God. As a result, Nebuchadnezzar threw them into a fiery furnace, but God protected them, and Jesus Himself appeared in the furnace with them.

Reading #92: *The Handwriting on the Wall* (Daniel 5)

Overview of Daniel: Written by Daniel, this book recalls stories of Israelites during their time as exiles in Babylon. Themes of the book include the sovereignty of God over earthly kingdoms, the power of bold faith, and prophecy. The first half involves stories of the provision of God and the faithfulness of several of His people. The second half involves prophecy, particularly prophecies about the end times.

Summary of Bible Passage

King Belshazzar held a massive feast where they drank out of cups stolen from the temple in Jerusalem. A hand appeared on the wall and began to write, but the king and his wise men did not know what it meant. With God's help, Daniel interpreted the strange sign and told Belshazzar that his kingdom was about to end.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Belshazzar – Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon. During a party, a hand appeared and began writing on the wall. Daniel interpreted this mysterious sign to mean that Belshazzar's reign—and Babylon's empire—would soon be over.

Daniel – Taken into exile as a kid, Daniel was educated in Babylonian schools, but remained faithful to God despite pressures to conform. Daniel’s faithfulness helped him interpret dreams for the king, survive a den of hungry lions, and even prophecy about the future.

Reading #93: Daniel and the Lion's Den (Daniel 6)

Overview of Daniel: Written by Daniel, this book recalls stories of Israelites during their time as exiles in Babylon. Themes of the book include the sovereignty of God over earthly kingdoms, the power of bold faith, and prophecy. The first half involves stories of the provision of God and the faithfulness of several of His people. The second half involves prophecy, particularly prophecies about the end times.

Summary of Bible Passage

The story of Daniel in the lions' den tells how Daniel rises to a powerful position in Darius' court. Daniel's rivals trick Darius into issuing a decree, which condemns Daniel to death. Hoping for Daniel's deliverance, but unable to reverse his decree, the king has him cast into the pit of lions. At daybreak Darius discovers that God has saved his friend. Daniel replies that God had sent an angel to close the jaws of the lions, "because I was found blameless before him." The king has those who had conspired against Daniel, and their wives and children, thrown to the lions in his place, and commands to all the people of the whole world to "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel."

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Daniel – Taken into exile as a kid, Daniel was educated in Babylonian schools, but remained faithful to God despite pressures to conform. Daniel’s faithfulness helped him interpret dreams for the king, survive a den of hungry lions, and even prophecy about the future.

Darius – King of Persia, which replaced the Babylonian empire. He signed a petition forbidding the worship of any man or god other than himself, and when Daniel refused to worship anyone other than God, Darius threw Daniel into a den of lions.

Reading #94: *Vision of Reign of Son of Man* (Daniel 7)

Overview of Daniel: Written by Daniel, this book recalls stories of Israelites during their time as exiles in Babylon. Themes of the book include the sovereignty of God over earthly kingdoms, the power of bold faith, and prophecy. The first half involves stories of the provision of God and the faithfulness of several of His people. The second half involves prophecy, particularly prophecies about the end times.

Summary of Bible Passage

Daniel had a series of prophetic visions predicting the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms. The visions reminded Israel that God is always in control, and, one day, the Son of Man will rule over everyone for all eternity. As we learn in the Gospels, Jesus is the Son of Man, and He will return one day to rule over everything.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

The Son of Man - This term, appearing in one of Daniel's visions, combines the divine and human attributes of Jesus. Daniel's prophecy predicts that the Son of Man will one day have an eternal kingdom over all creation. Jesus repeatedly confirms that He is

the Son of Man, and the term is found over 80 times in the Gospels (see Mark 14:61-62 and Matthew 8:20 for examples).

Ancient of Days - In Daniel's vision, the phrase "Ancient of Days" refers to God Himself, seated on His throne in Heaven. God is described as the eternal, wise, pure, and just judge of all creation.

Minor Prophets Benchmarks

This section features selective readings from the Minor Prophets. Some books (such as Obadiah) do not have a selected reading. Instead we have included a summary of that book and some key terms.

Reading #95: Hosea 1 – *God Commands Hosea to Take Gomer as His Wife*

Reading #96: Joel 2 – *God Pours Out His Holy Spirit*

Reading #97: Jonah 1-4 – *The Life of Jonah*

Reading #98: Micah 5 – *Future Messianic Ruler from Bethlehem*

Reading #99: Nahum 1-2 – *The Prophecy of Nahum*

Reading #100: Habakkuk 3 – *Habakkuk Rejoices in God Amidst Affliction*

Reading #101: Zephaniah 3 – *God Takes Great Delight in Israel*

Reading #102: Haggai 1-2 – *God Commands Israel to Rebuild the Temple*

Reading #103: Zechariah 12 – *The Pierced One*

Reading #104: Malachi 3: 1-5 and 6:15 – *God's Messenger Preceding the Great Day of the Lord, and Robbing God / Bring Whole Tithe into Storehouse*

Reading #95: God Commands Hosea to Take Gomer as His Wife (Hosea 1)

Overview of Hosea: The story of Hosea who is called to marry Gomer, a prostitute, and love her. Hosea's story illustrated Israel's spiritual adultery and God's boundless love for His sinful people.

Summary of Bible Passage

God tells Hosea to marry Gomer who is a prostitute. Hosea obeys and has children with Gomer. This command reflects God's relationship with rebellious Israel.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Hosea - Hosea was a minor prophet who was instructed to marry a prostitute (Gomer) and love her unconditionally. His love for Gomer was a picture of God's love for Israel despite their sin.

Gomer - A prostitute who marries Hosea and runs away from him even after they are married. Hosea buys her back and shows her unconditional love despite her sin. Gomer illustrates the sinful nature of Israel and their continual rebellion against the Lord.

Reading #96: *God Pours Out His Holy Spirit (Joel 2)*

Overview of Joel: Joel is a book of the bible that is somewhat intense because it is Joel calling the people of Judah to repentance and preparing them for the coming judgment.

Summary of Bible Passage

The Lord says that He will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. He goes through and lists sons, daughters, old men, young men, male and female servants as people to whom He will pour out His Spirit. This prophetic promise is fulfilled on Pentecost in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit comes down on believers in Christ.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Joel - Joel is a prophet and the son of Pethuel. The Word of the Lord came to Joel and he preached to the people of Judah. Little is known of Joel except what we learn throughout the book of Joel.

Summary of Amos

During this period of time, many Israelites celebrated their wealth and prosperity and believed that this was a premonition that 'the day of the Lord' was coming soon. However, the prophet Amos warned them that God knew their accumulation of wealth resulted from their exploitation of the poor. Amos explained God also knew their worship of Him was actually manipulative and self-serving and that they practiced idolatry. As a result, Amos warned that the day of the Lord is indeed coming, but that it will be a day of destruction. God would destroy much of Israel's power, leaving a remnant to continue the lineage of God's people. God would carry out this destruction through the brutal Assyrians, and Israel would cease to exist as an independent, unified nation. The book ends on a note of hope: God promised He would eventually restore King David's line to the throne and restore Israel's people and their land.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Plumb Line - A string with a weight on the end of it. This tool provided an accurate measurement of the angle of a wall. If a wall is not perfectly vertical and continues in disrepair, it will eventually collapse. God revealed to Amos in a vision that Israel is like a wall to which He holds up a plumb line. He revealed that that wall had been leaning so much and for so long that it must be destroyed.

Summary of Obadiah

In this short book, the prophet Obadiah condemns Edom for its sins and reminds Israel of God's redemptive promises. Edom was a nation that betrayed Israel. God's promises of judgment for Edom reminded the Israelites of His favor for the Israelites.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Edom - Edom was a neighboring kingdom to Israel, and the Edomites were descended from Jacob's brother Esau. Instead of helping Israel when the Babylonian empire invaded, Edom sided with Babylon; and Obadiah prophesied of God's impending judgement on Edom for its wicked decisions.

Day of the Lord - God promises that one day – the Day of the Lord – there will be a great reversal, where Israel (Mount Zion) will be united and holy, and all enemy nations, including Edom, will be judged and destroyed by God. Then, God's kingdom will be established forever.

Reading #97: *The Life of Jonah* (Jonah 1-4)

Overview of Jonah: A prophet who tried to run away from God's instruction to go to Nineveh. He is swallowed by a whale and then obeys God's instruction. He tells Nineveh to repent and turn away from their sin. God teaches Jonah about His love and mercy for those who repent.

Summary of Bible Passage

God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell them to repent. Jonah tried to hide by taking a boat to Tarshish, but God sent a storm that forces Jonah to jump from the boat. A whale swallowed him for three days and three nights and threw him up on the shore. Jonah finally obeyed and Nineveh repented. Jonah was angry at God for not punishing Nineveh, but God revealed that He is a God of compassion and mercy.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Nineveh – The city where God tells Jonah to go and tell them to repent. Nineveh was a sinful city, but repents of their sin after Jonah warns them of God's power to destroy them.

Tarshish - The place Jonah tried to go to so that he could run away from God and hide from Him. On his journey to Tarshish, God created a storm and Jonah jumped into the water and was swallowed by the whale.

Jonah - A prophet who tried to run away from God's instruction to go to Nineveh. He is swallowed by a whale and then obeys God's instruction. He tells Nineveh to repent and turn away from their sin. God teaches Jonah about His love and mercy for those who repent.

**Reading #98: *Future Messianic Ruler
from Bethlehem (Micah 5)***

Overview of Micah: The book of Micah shows that a real relationship with God is connected to how we treat one another. Micah contrasts Judah's sinful kingdom with God's righteous kingdom. Micah gives a future picture of a messianic leader who will rise in the future for God's people.

Summary of Bible Passage

Micah 5:2 is one of the most significant prophecies of Jesus' birth. Seven hundred years before Jesus is born, Micah tells us that Bethlehem would be the long-awaited Messiah's birthplace.

Reading #99: *The Prophecy of Nahum* (Nahum 1-2)

Overview of Nahum: Nahum is given a message from God that the city of Nineveh would be destroyed. The purpose is to pronounce the final warning and judgment upon Nineveh.

Summary of Bible Passage

The prophet, Nahum, was called to preach God's judgment to Nineveh. Nahum predicted the fall of Nineveh and warns the people. The reason why Nineveh was destroyed was because it was a city filled with idols, violence, lust, and greed. Nahum's book is a sequel to the book of Jonah.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Nineveh - Capital of the Assyrian empire that is destroyed later in the book of Nahum.

Assyria - The empire on which God brought well-deserved judgment. It fell because of its idols and wealth.

Reading #100: *Habakkuk Rejoices in God Amidst Affliction* (Habakkuk 3)

Overview of Habakkuk: Habakkuk's cry to God in the midst of iniquity. He heard the answer of the Lord and rejoiced knowing that God was his refuge and defense even in hard times.

Summary of Bible Passage

Despite the difficulty around him, Habakkuk praises God. He knew that the Lord was his strength and salvation even in times of trouble.

Key Items to Teach Your Child

Habakkuk - A prophet who questioned why God wasn't acting when there was injustice. He prays to the Lord and rejoices in Him amidst affliction.

Chaldeans - Babylonian peoples who were aggressive and warlike.

Reading #101: *God Takes Great Delight in Israel (Zephaniah 3)*

Overview of Zephaniah: Zephaniah, like many of the prophets, focused on judgment on all people for their sin and restoration of God's chosen people.

Summary of Bible Passage:

Israel deserves judgement and doom, but God is a God of mercy and restores and delights in His own. This passage's language of God's deep, personal affection for Israel captures the Gospel in beautiful terms.

Reading #102: *God Commands Israel to Rebuild the Temple* (Haggai 1-2)

Overview of Haggai: Written by Haggai, one of the minor prophets, this book encouraged Israelites who had returned from exile to rebuild the temple. Haggai reminded the people of what they are missing since the temple had been destroyed (namely, they were missing God's presence).

Summary of Bible Passage:

Though many Jews had finally returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, they were struggling to survive because they did not rebuild God's temple immediately. Through Haggai, God commanded Zerubbabel and Joshua (the priest) to rebuild His temple, restoring God's house on earth and bringing prosperity to Judah. This story demonstrates our need to put our relationship and worship of God first.

Reading #103: *The Pierced One* (Zechariah 12)

Overview of Zechariah: A book of visions and prophecies, specifically about the coming of the Messiah. The first half recounts Zechariah's visions from the Lord, and Israel's future peace and prosperity. It tells of the future salvation brought by Jesus, and that He will return a second time. The prophet's intent was to encourage the people to rebuild the temple as God had commanded.

Summary of Bible Passage:

This passage talks about the future glory that will come to Israel through a legacy of the house of David. It describes one whom Israel would pierce. Jesus (God's son) was the one who was pierced and crucified. One day, the Jewish people will realize they bear responsibility in Jesus' death and will repent and mourn.

Reading #104: God's Messenger
Preceding the Great Day of the Lord
(Malachi 3: 1-5)

Overview of Malachi: Nearly 100 years after the Babylonian exile, God used Malachi to speak to Israel. God had promised post-exile Israel prosperity, expansion, and His presence. However, the Israelites struggled to see this in the midst of their suffering: a long-lasting drought, economic issues, and crop failure. Furthermore, they did not witness many miracles during this time, and it almost seemed to them that God had abandoned them. Meanwhile, Israel was living in disobedience and false worship; they had not repented after the exile in the way that God called them. God taught them through these events that this was a time to live by faith, not sight. Malachi ends the Old Testament looking toward a coming messenger and a Messiah.

Summary of Bible Passage: 3:1-5

Malachi foretells that a messenger will go before him, before God Himself visits his temple for the sake of purifying it. This passage is a prophecy predicting the coming of John the Baptist and of Jesus.

Summary of Bible Passage: 6:15

God rebuked Israel for not tithing and giving Him the sacrifices He commanded. He also chastises them for accusing Him of allowing the wicked to prosper and for not being a god worth serving. He promised that, were they to resume the rightful tithing, He would bless them. Their destitution, He explains, has been a punishment for their disobedience in not tithing.