

Old Testament Introduction: Reading Guide

The best plan by which to gain an understanding of Scripture, of course, would be to systematically read the entire Bible. For those seeking to get an overview understanding of the entire ‘storyline’ of Scripture, however, this task would certainly prove intimidating, daunting, or just plain overwhelming. Unfortunately, what should be an exciting journey through God’s word would most likely lead to discouragement and abandonment of the whole endeavor—how often have we resolved to read through the Bible only to get bogged down in Leviticus or Numbers!

To help achieve our goal of gaining a high-level understanding of God’s redemptive plan, the following books, chapters, and passages are suggested with our overall purpose in mind and should help us gain an overall view of God’s work, God’s character, and God’s grace as revealed in the Old Testament and consummating in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

May the Spirit lead, guide, and illuminate our hearts and minds as we read his word together!

Passages Arranged by Their Order in the Bible

Genesis: 1-3; 12-24; 37-50	Ecclesiastes: 1-3; 5.1-7; 8-9; 12
Exodus: 1-15; 19-20; 32-34; 40	Song of Songs
Leviticus: 1; 4; 5; 10; 16; 19.9-18; 20.22-26; 26	Isaiah: 6-12; 24-27; 30-35; 40-45; 49-56; 60-66
Numbers: 10.11-14.45; 16; 17; 20-25; 33.50-56	Jeremiah: 1-9; 11; 15; 18-19; 23-25; 30-33; 38-39; 42-44; 51-52
Deuteronomy: 1-11; 21.22-23; 27-34	Lamentations
Joshua: 1-10.15; 21.43-45; 23-24	Ezekiel: 1-11; 15-16; 18; 20-21; 24; 33-43
Judges: 1.1-3.6; 6-8; 13-16	Daniel: 1-6 (7-12 if desired)
Ruth	Hosea: 1-4; 11-14
1 Samuel: 1-10; 15.1-18.16; 20	Joel
2 Samuel: 1-7; 11-12; 22-24	Amos: 1-5; 8-9
1 Kings: 1-3; 8-11; 17-19	Obadiah
2 Kings: 2; 4-6; 16-25	Jonah
1 Chronicles: 13-17; 21-22	Micah
2 Chronicles: 1; 5-8; 20; 26; 28-30	Nahum
Ezra: 1; 3-7	Habakkuk
Nehemiah: 1-4; 8-9	Zephaniah
Esther	Haggai
Job: 1-14; 19; 32-33; 39-42	Zechariah: 1-2; 8-14
Psalms: 1-19; 31-33; 38-42; 51; 68; 90-104	Malachi
Proverbs: 1-9; 15; 30-31	

Passages Arranged by Chronological Order

Genesis: 1-3	Jonah
Job: 1-14; 19; 32-33; 39-42	2 Kings: 16
Genesis 12-24; 37-50	Isaiah: 6-12; 24-27; 30-35; 40-45; 49-56; 60-66
Exodus: 1-15; 19-20; 32-34; 40	Micah
Leviticus: 1; 4; 5; 10; 16; 19.9-18; 20.22-26; 26	Hosea: 1-4; 11-14
Numbers: 10.11-14.45; 16; 17; 20-25; 33.50-56	Amos: 1-5; 8-9
Deuteronomy: 1-11; 21.22-23; 27-34	Zephaniah
Joshua: 1-10.15; 21.43-45; 23-24	Jeremiah: 1-9; 11; 15; 18-19; 23-25; 30-33; 38-39; 42-44; 51-52
Judges: 1.1-3.6; 6-8; 13-16	Lamentations
Ruth	Obadiah
1 Samuel: 1-10; 15.1-18.16; 20	Nahum
2 Samuel: 1-7; 11-12; 22-24	2 Kings: 17-25
Psalms: 1-19; 31-33; 38-42; 51; 68; 90-104	Habakkuk
1 Chronicles: 13-17; 21-22	2 Chronicles: 28-30
1 Kings: 1-3	Ezekiel: 1-11; 15-16; 18; 20-21; 24; 33-43
2 Chronicles: 1	Daniel: 1-6 (7-12 if desired)
1 Kings: 8-11	Ezra: 1; 3-7
2 Chronicles: 5-8	Nehemiah: 1-4; 8-9
Proverbs: 1-9; 15; 30-31	Esther
Ecclesiastes: 1-3; 5.1-7; 8-9; 12	Joel
Song of Songs	Haggai
1 Kings: 17-19	Zechariah: 1-2; 8-14
2 Kings: 2; 4-6	Malachi
2 Chronicles: 26	

In addition to focusing on these passages, three additional suggestions are offered:

1. Read from a dynamic translation! While literal translations (NASB, ESV, KJV, etc.) are great for in-depth study, dynamic translations (NIV, NLT) present Scripture in smooth-flowing English and are suitable for reading large sections of Scripture.
2. Read aloud! The contents of Scripture were almost exclusively delivered orally to the original audience and are well suited, by God's design, to be heard.
3. Read chronologically! Our English Bibles are *not* arranged according to chronology by according to tradition and genre. Therefore, our chosen passages are presented in two arrangements—first, by the order in which they appear in our Bibles, and second, by chronological order.