



THE STORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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THE STORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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Acknowledgments begin on page 304.

Photograph credits appear on page 307.

Based in part on original materials from *Bible Truths: Level B The Story of the Old Testament*, Fourth Edition, by Mark L. Ward Jr., PhD.

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Greenville, South Carolina 29609

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ISBN 978-1-62856-241-5

15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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FOREWORD

Middle school is a crucial time in a person's life. I know this by experience. When I was in elementary school, I was aware that God loved me, that evil was in the world, and that I needed to live for God. But in my seventh-grade year, this awareness became an awakening. I didn't just know that evil existed, I felt it—even in my own heart. I wasn't just aware that I needed to live for God, I was overwhelmed with conviction that I ought to surrender my life to Him. At the end of that school year, God brought me to a breaking point. It was then that I gave my life to Him. It was then that I began to grow spiritually.

One of the first things that changed was my relationship to the Bible. It was no longer a book that sat on the shelf except for Sundays and Wednesdays. It was a book I read every day. As I read the Bible and prayed, my desires began to change. I wanted to please my parents, to get involved in ministry, and to be a good influence in my Christian school. I learned over the next couple of years that the Bible is a powerful book. If you let it loose in your life, it will change everything. It certainly changed me.

Things were very different for most of my friends. That year was for them the beginning of a downward spiral. Their relationship with their parents began to fall apart, and their behavior on the weekends was becoming shameful and dangerous. In time, some even got in trouble with the law. I learned that middle school isn't just the next step in life. It's the place where life forms a fork in the road. What you do at that fork determines the path you will travel. And in the end, Proverbs 13:15 will prove true: "The way of transgressors is hard."

I've often thought it was strange that many of my friends got on the wrong path while attending a Christian school. A Christian school is a place where everyone is a Christian, and everyone acts like a Christian, right? We all know better than that. In this fallen world, evil is found in every heart. And where it manages to take control, it turns everything to its will. My friends had many advantages in that Christian school, but they chose not to use them.

But there was one advantage they should have had but didn't. A challenging, engaging Bible class. Our teacher was a godly man, from what I could tell. But we didn't learn much about the Bible, and we didn't feel like we needed to either. The teacher basically read from a script, and we filled in blanks on worksheets. That Bible class was a missed opportunity.

What my friends needed was something like this course. *THE STORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT* is designed to help young people study the Bible for themselves, and it does so by focusing on a biblical worldview. It doesn't just cover the details of the Old Testament. It relates those details to one another, showing how the Bible fits together to tell one grand story. This course then demonstrates, lesson by lesson, how that story should shape a person's beliefs and values, and how those should lead to a changed life. That was what my friends needed many years ago.

It was what I needed too. God did change my life through His Word. But the change was for me a difficult struggle. I didn't know how to study the Bible, and I was confused about how the Bible was supposed to help me grow spiritually. I figured these things out slowly over time. Looking back, I wish I'd had some help.

That's the reason we put this course together. We want to help.

Of course, you'll need to do something too. Read the textbook, do your homework, be real when you complete a journal assignment. If you work hard, you'll find that this course does an excellent job leading you step by step through the Old Testament. It will show you how to read and understand God's Word. It will even confront you with God—His holiness, His power, and His grace. But you will have to be willing to take the next step. You will have to choose the right path at this fork in the road. If you do, you won't be disappointed. That's another promise from Proverbs: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

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BJU Press