

SELF-EVALUATION: HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLICAL STORYLINE?

BEGINNER

**BEYOND
BEGINNER**

INTERMEDIATE

ADVANCED

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION IN THE FIRST PLACE.	I UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION, BUT I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO FIND AN ANSWER.	I KNOW OF AT LEAST ONE RESOURCE OR PERSON THAT MIGHT HELP ME ANSWER THIS.	I HAVE A GENERAL IDEA, AND I THINK I KNOW WHERE TO START LOOKING IN THE BIBLE TO BEGIN TO ANSWER THIS.	I MAY ALREADY KNOW A FEW BIBLICAL TEXTS THAT ADDRESS THIS.	GIVE ME "X" AMOUNT OF STUDY TIME, & I'LL COME UP WITH A DECENT ANSWER.	I'M PREPARED AT THIS MINUTE TO WRITE OR SPEAK ABOUT THIS.
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Directions: Each of the questions below requires knowledge of one or more of the “high points” on the biblical storyline. Find your “reaction level” to each question on the continuum above, then follow the suggestions on the attached page to improve your familiarity with these elements of the story of redemption and your ability to explain them to others. (You may wish to consult the storyline page to find out which books of the Bible correspond to the historical area(s) in which you need improvement.) I’d suggest working through this list slowly, or else at first only zeroing in on those questions that seem most intriguing to you, so you don’t get overwhelmed! (Unless you happen to like quizzes. ☺)



1. What is the relationship between Abraham, Judah, David, and Jesus? What specific connections are made between David and Jesus in the NT? [**Abraham & Family; Monarchy; Gospels**]



2. How is the vision of the New Creation similar to the original creative acts of God? How is it different? [**Creation; All Things Made New**]



3. How does the book of Hebrews explain Genesis 3:15, Melchizedek, the Aaronic priesthood, and the wilderness wanderings in terms of Jesus? [**The Fall; Abraham & Family; the Law; Wilderness Wanderings; Telling the Story**]





4. How does the apostles' preaching to Gentiles in the Roman Empire differ from their preaching in synagogues to the Jews of the Diaspora? How is it similar? Are there any differences in their approaches to the various Gentile audiences? [**Pax Romana; Telling the Story**; much OT history figures in the sermons]



5. How are the songs of Miriam, Hannah, and Mary alike? What was the role and era of each in redemptive history? [**Exodus; Time of the Judges; Son of God**]



6. Is the Sermon on the Mount law or gospel? Is it stricter or more lenient than the law of Moses? In what way(s) do the Cross and Resurrection add a new dimension to our understanding of Jesus' moral teachings? [**The Law; the Son of God; Telling the Story**]



7. In what ways does Abraham figure in Paul's and James' theological arguments? [**Abraham & Family; Telling the Story**]



8. How does Jesus' life reflect the teaching found in the book of Proverbs? [**Gospels, Wisdom Literature**]



9. In what ways are the lives of Job and Joseph similar? In what ways do they prefigure Christ? [**Abraham & Family; Job; Gospels**]



10. Does the Bible assume Adam to have been a historical figure? How can you tell? [**The Fall; Gospels; Telling the Story**]



Self-Teaching Suggestions

Note: To conserve space, I did not repeat beginner-level suggestions for the later levels, but of course any of these suggestions would be appropriate for more experienced students of the Word as well. There is likely to be considerable overlap between levels; these are arbitrary divisions meant to give you a sense of the possibilities without overwhelming.

Beginner Level

- Habitual Bible reading is a must! Read through whole books, not just random passages.
- Use a concordance to locate names in the biblical stories; read all the stories you can find about each biblical figure mentioned in your question.
- Get overviews of the different eras from the notes in a study Bible or Bible dictionary.
- Begin to keep a notebook of questions you want to answer, leaving a blank page for each to fill in when you encounter new information.
- Create a “Who’s Who” notebook or electronic file to help you keep track of all the players.
- Reference books such as the *Holman Book of Biblical Charts, Maps, & Reconstructions* provide visual aids & organizers.
- Take advantage of online and church learning experiences to increase your knowledge.

Beyond Beginner

- Develop a system of symbols (pictures, letters, etc.) to write in the margins as you read through whole books, to help you later when you want to locate passages quickly by sight. (E.g., I draw a ✨ for any mention of David; ☺ for blessings; X for sin; M for references to the books of Moses or the Law.)
- Take notes whenever you read a passage. What is the main idea? How does it connect with what went before? (This will slow you down in your Bible-reading plan, but the long-term benefits are incredible.)
- Play “I Spy”: In narrative passages or poetry, be alert for references to the Mosaic Law (sacrifices, priests, right and wrong, etc.). Add what you notice to your notes. Note also any references to people and events from earlier in the storyline.
- Read a book about redemptive history to get a big-picture view. Christopher Wright’s *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* is a favorite, as is Ed Clowney’s *Unfolding Mystery*.
- Test yourself whenever you hear pastors or other speakers refer to biblical figures: can you name the book of the Bible where each person is first mentioned?

Intermediate

- When reading in the NT, take time to read the larger contexts of OT verses quoted by the authors or OT figures mentioned as illustrations in a theological argument. (That is, for ex., read the whole Psalm if part is quoted by a NT writer or speaker, and look up the stories of the people he mentions.)
- Keep track in writing of the various ways in which NT authors use OT passages. What is the purpose each time?
- As you study, repeat the note-taking pattern found on the *Reading Redemptive History* worksheet. How do the biblical authors make sense of their own times by referring to earlier events on the timeline?
- Continue reading books and articles on redemptive history (or biblical theology). Two great online resources include www.beginningwithmoses.org and the website of the World Reformed Fellowship (www.wrfnet.org). Look for articles by Graeme Goldsworthy (at the first) and Paige Britton (at both).
- When you become curious about something as you read a passage, don't let it go till you track down an answer. (At least write the question down and research it later!) Develop a habit of researching whatever presents itself to you.

Advanced

- Read a book that treats the theology of the whole Bible, such as John Frame's *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, William Dyrness' *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, or John Sailhamer's *Introduction to OT Theology: A Canonical Approach*. These overviews will rehearse the different people, events, and eras for you while presenting a coherent view of the whole. (Views will differ according to the person viewing! But sometimes the variety helps us see how multi-faceted the Scriptures are.)
- Discipline yourself to summarize in a paragraph or two something you have learned. If you really like to write, try composing a short paper to answer one of your questions. (If you want an audience and feedback, send your writing to me at the email address below.)
- Enroll in an online or live class at a seminary to further your knowledge. Covenant Seminary, among others, offers free class lectures online for anyone to listen to (www.worldwide-classroom.com/). (These will lack teacher feedback, but you can't beat the price! If you would like interaction about your thinking and learning, you are welcome to contact me at the address below.)
- Teaching a thing always forces us to be organized in our thinking about it. If you have opportunities to teach children or youth, consider going beyond the typical Bible story lesson and offering thinking challenges that help them connect the parts of the Bible together. If you teach adults or lead Bible study discussions, consider composing some higher-order questions of your own to challenge your learners. (Make sure you do your homework before you ask these, though!)

