

I recall the joy of visiting my Grandma and Grandpa. Every visit was joyful to my memory – a home built on the foundation of Jesus, the love of which was expressed in laughter and adventure, in problem solving and testing. The tests that impressed me were the ones given to me by my grandfather, a six foot three inch graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, class of '25. That was an intimidating size to an eight year old. But even more intimidating were the tests he would give to me. My grandpa always asked me questions about the Old Testament. “How old was the oldest living man and what was his name?” “How many sons did Abraham have?” “Where was Moses born?” With my answer came the Bible stories. Finally the test was done. Following the test we would go and shoot an air pistol in the basement of the parsonage and laugh until grandma called us up for dinner. Before eating we would pray, “Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever. Amen.”

I will never forget those days; the comfortable mixture of unconditional love, the challenge to think, and, always, the application of the cross– all of which was founded on Bible history.

But the principle of my grandpa, telling stories and asking questions, has been repeated countless times from the beginning of time itself in Christian homes.

So my goal in the area of Christian Education for young disciples is first the teaching of Bible history. Of course, teaching doctrine and the application of the same, namely, maturing in the knowledge of Jesus, are no less my goals. But early in a person’s development, comprehending and applying Biblical truths are difficult, if not impossible, without a good strong model. (This is true in a mature development as well.) I believe that model is contained in the Word. In fact, without the history contained in the Bible, Biblical truths and principles contained therein are very close to lifeless. It is when characters such as Noah, at God’s command, spend 120 years building a boat large enough to hold a pair of every kind of animal that we see the blessing of trust in God’s Word. Responding to his only son’s question, “Where is the sacrifice?” Abraham, fearing it will be his son Isaac, says, “The Lord will provide.” And there is the ram in the thicket. That is faith in action. In Abraham there is no better example of the doctrine of faith, with perhaps the exception of David fighting Goliath or Elijah at Mt. Carmel or Daniel in the lions’ den or Stephen being stoned or Paul and Silas singing praises in jail or Peter being released from prison. Each of these stories, and the many more not mentioned, contain the doctrines and the principles that God intended for us to know. Most importantly, each of these stories point to the central figure in all of history, recognized in the central event in all history, namely Jesus’ death and His resurrection. This Christian life is exciting, and we can learn that first from history.

This course, written to provide Bible history for Junior Confirmation, brings these stories to life. It was written by my wife, Lynn, and myself. Lynn brings the wealth of experience into the classroom along with the gift of teaching. We believe that this material is teacher friendly and student engaging. It is possible for students to complete these lessons satisfactorily on their own with the help of their parents at home or simply with the aid of a Bible.

The maps and many illustrations in this edition are hand drawn by Lynn. The pictures depicting many of the Biblical events were first used by my grandfather in his ministry of teaching Scripture. The italicized text is a comprehensive and loose translation, meaning it is a short summary from no specific English translation reflecting a specific event.

God bless your class and your studies. And may the stories take root into eternity.

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Contents

1. Introduction to Bible History.....	1
2. The Beginning of History.....	9
3. Our Spiritual Patriarchs.....	19
4. Israel and His Sons.....	29
5. Character Through Suffering.....	39
6. Leaving Egypt.....	49
7. Heading Home.....	59
8. On the Road and Back Again.....	71
9. Judges, Juries, and Justice.....	81
10. Fortune and Failure.....	91
11. Sins of the Father.....	101
12. A Nation Divided.....	109
13. The Word of the Lord.....	119
14. Picking Up the Pieces.....	131
15. The Old Becomes New.....	139
16. The Word Announced.....	147
17. The Word Unfolds.....	155
18. The Miracle Worker.....	163
19. The Kingdom at Hand.....	173
20. The Greatest Story Teller.....	183
21. The End of the Beginning.....	191
22. Last Will and Testament.....	201
23. The Trial.....	209
24. The Sentence.....	217
25. Alive Now and Forever.....	227
26. The Bride of Christ.....	237
27. The First Persecution.....	245
28. The Church Scattered.....	255