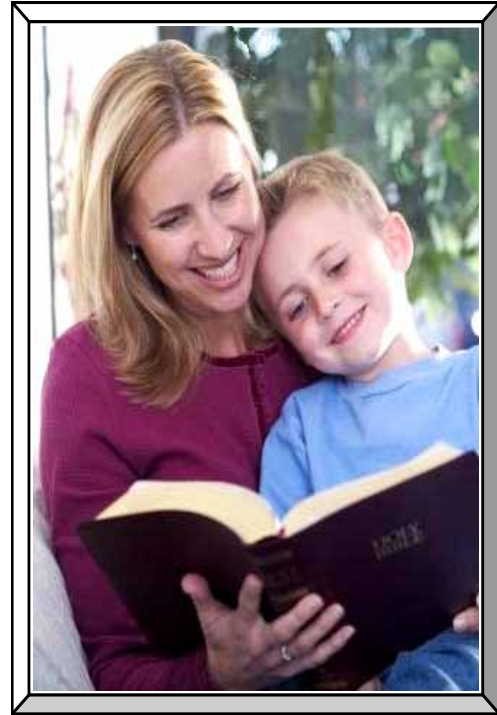


Cherished Bible Stories



*“...and that from childhood you
have known the Holy Scriptures...”*

- 2 Tim. 2:15

Beloved Stories From
The Old Testament
That Build Faith & Devotion

Prepared By Jeff Smith

Cherished Bible Stories

Stories From The O.T. That Build Faith & Devotion

Lesson 1 – General Introduction

Overview

There may not be anything sweeter to a parent or grandparent than reading to a child. Sooner than we want them to, children outgrow their desire to have a book read to them. But while they're young, it does warm the heart to have a precious young child run up to you with his/her "favorite book" and ask you to read it to them...even if you've read it dozens of times before. Such a pleasure is hard, if not impossible, to resist.

Many books intended for the young have become "generational favorites." Present-day adults look back with fondness on memories of their parents or grandparents reading to them these same stories they now read to their children or grandchildren. These "literary classics" teach important things like...

- ...politeness, sharing, some good behavior, etc.
- ...numbers, the alphabet, basic colors, etc.
- ...other moral virtues children need to develop

Other familiar stories offer thrilling tales of a favorite superhero, explorer, or some adventurer. Children often identify with characters from their favorite stories, even pretending to be them in innocent play. Whatever the story, adults have become "expert readers." By this we mean the child doesn't just want to hear the words on the page. Dads & Moms, Grandpas & Grandmas read with such enthusiasm that the story comes "alive." It has even been observed that the eyes of children being read to in such a manner "get as big as saucers" as they intently look at the pictures accompanying the story while hearing it.

We want to spend some time studying some "cherished stories" that differ from the examples cited above. These will be favorites from the Old Testament. In doing so, we do not intend to "cheapen" the Bible by classifying it along side of Big Bird's exploits from *Sesame Street*, nursery rhymes from *Mother Goose*, or some of *Aesop's Fables*. We firmly believe the Scripture to be words of Divine truth inspired of God, able to save man's soul, and complete him for every good work in Christ (**Jas. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**).

We're not interested in examining these sacred classics just for the sake of "pleasure reading." We need to read these stories "...written aforetime" so that we might

- ♦ learn lessons God would have us know
- ♦ be "admonished" through the examples of O.T. people
- ♦ have "hope" through the "patience & comfort of the Scriptures" (**Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11**).

These stories are not "fables" or "make believe." They are real events that happened among real people who lived centuries ago. Our Father wants us to read them to either create or strengthen our faith.

Cherished Bible Stories

Lesson 1

The O.T. is "...able to make one wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:14-15). When reading the stories found in the first covenant, we are reminded they occurred in the days that "pointed to the Christ" (Gal. 3:19, 22-25). However, obedience and disobedience are the same in any age. We see how God was pleased with His people when they submitted to His will. We also learn not only the consequences of disobedience, but also the mercy & forgiveness of a patient God.

Even though we live today under N.T. precepts, these O.T. treasures are "profitable."

- ◆ They contain timeless principles from a God who does not change (Jas. 1:17-18).
- ◆ They give assurance in an ever-changing world growing more godless by the day.
- ◆ Most importantly, they provide the beginnings of the overall Bible story laid out for man. Failing to understand these stories actually hampers the student when he/she comes to the covenant under Jesus Christ.

God wants all of us to develop a "love for truth"...it is necessary if one wants to be saved and not perish (2 Thess. 2:10). That certainly includes what is found in the O.T.

- ◆ Peter wrote that Christians have the "...prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place..." (2 Pet. 1:19). This reference to the O.T. goes on further to emphasize its origin was not from the "will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- ◆ The writer of Hebrews tells us to "...give the more earnest heed (pay much closer attention) to the things we have heard, lest we drift away" (Heb. 2:1). The stories we'll study in these lessons will once again sound the warning: "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if neglect so great a salvation,..." (Heb. 2:2-3a).

Plan

Obviously, we can't cover every one of these "cherished stories" in the O.T. It may even be that we by-pass one of your favorites. We'll simply go through the O.T., starting at **Genesis** and pick some of the more familiar ones. Throughout the class, we'll proceed in somewhat of a chronological order. The narratives will be some of the easiest stories to study. However, we'll try to select some from among the *Wisdom Literature* and the *Prophets*.

Please consider the following suggestions as you prepare for each lesson:

- ◆ Read the text straight through a couple of times without stopping to make notes, etc.
- ◆ Then look for principles that can be applied your own daily living
- ◆ Also try to find corresponding N.T. passages that harmonize with the story

Our Father has a Book full of stories for us to read...stories we've heard since our childhood. As we refresh our memories with these timeless classics, may our love for God be renewed, and may our respect for teaching found in the Scripture be deepened.