

## Historical Backbone of the Bible

The first words of the New Testament (Matthew 1:1-17) trace the biblical history from Abraham (Genesis 12) to David (1 Samuel) to the Exile (end of 2 Kings) and on to the birth of Jesus the Christ. A basic knowledge of this history is presumed and necessary for a comprehension of what God is doing in the New Testament.

Below I have suggested portions of the Old Testament which follow the historical framework in Matthew 1. You will note that much of the history between the Exile and the birth of Jesus (approximately 400 B.C. to 4 B.C.) is not related in the Old Testament record. Nevertheless, this history was well-known to the readers of the Matthew's gospel, and is well attested in other historical records. This period is often called the 'Inter-Testamental' period because it is between the Old and New Testaments. During this time there was the conquest of Palestine by the Greeks (initially under Alexander the Great) followed by the Romans who were politically and militarily dominant during the history of the New Testament.

The suggested passages of the Bible total 367 chapters. If you read 6 chapters a day this would take you two months; if 12 chapters a day then one month. Choose a reasonable period to read these chapters, and then determine how many pages or chapters need to be read each day. Be intentional about reading a certain number of chapters or pages per day, or for a certain length of time each day. You may choose to read six days a week – but choose a reading schedule that fits your schedule and circumstances. It will be helpful to read a translation of the Bible that is in the 'language of your heart' meaning either a modern English version or perhaps in your own 'native' language, if that is not English. You may also find it useful to have a partner so that you can encourage each other.

I suggest that if you are reading this for the first time, your primary goal would be to get a sense of the historical backbone of the Bible, the relationship of major biblical characters with significant historical events, and the sense that this is God's 'story' as he continues to act throughout for the recovery of the earth and its inhabitants. Don't get bogged down or side-tracked. If you have difficulties or questions, write them down for later. Read to grasp the larger 'story'.

Here are the suggested chapters to read. The numbers in parenthesis are the number of chapters in each of the books of the Bible set out.

Genesis	(50)	1 Kings	(22)
Exodus 1-24, 40	(25)	2 Kings	(25)
Numbers	(36)	Ezra	(10)
Deuteronomy 1-6, 29-34	(12)	Nehemiah	(13)
Joshua	(24)	Luke	(24)
Judges	(21)	Acts	(28)
1 Samuel*	(31)	Revelation	(22)
2 Samuel	(24)		

\* Think of 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 2 Kings as a sequential history of what could be referred to as '1, 2, 3 and 4 Kings'.