The purpose of this document is to explain how to read history using a database. A relational database is a bunch of interconnected lists and the lists are connected by relationships (associations, parent and child relationships).

Context

If we have all the stories of history associated with the locations mentioned in the stories and the authority over those locations at that time, then we can prepare to read a story by first looking at the context of the story or what was going on in the whole world during that period.

Here is an example of context for a story from the fifth century. Sometimes a story starts in one century and ends in the next. Here is an example of that kind of context for between the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Stories themselves are time periods and they are associated with folders of history that roll up into folders of time periods for those authorities. So, what you see in "context" are all the history folders around the world associated with that time period.

Geography and History

Using a database, before we read the story, we open the Geography and History folder. For an example, I randomly selected this folder. Here we see the geography and history directly related to the story we are about to read (to be opened later if you want, the transfiguration story). Here we are not only looking at folders, but at places and stories directly related to the story.

Repeating groups

The places mentioned in the story are the names that do not repeat. Because they do not repeat, they are easy to pick out of a big list. History folders have dates right after the folder name, and using those dates you can see how they roll up into important time periods for that location. Geography folders do not have dates. Geography folder names show you how they roll up into the way the many stories of that location define the geography. For example: a story mentions a city. That city is at the intersection of two rivers. Where those rivers start defines a continental divide. And, protecting their water defines the natural boundaries for the nations. The forts and springs or lakes are on the high points. To avoid needing bridges, the major highways follow the high line of the continental divides. The water thoroughfares go up and down the rivers.

Read History first, then Geography

Start with history. To read the history associated with a story, just hover your cursor over each of the history folders, look to the right of the folder name, at the end of the long name to see where in history the story takes place. Here you will see other (sibling) stories during that period. Of course, you can also click on the history to drill down for more detail.

Then Geography

I like to click on all the non-repeating story locations to get an idea of how far the story takes us and how many nations. When you click on non-repeating you will also click on the Continental Divides. Sometimes two locations are right across the divide from each other and that is important to know in understanding the story. So, it is important to click on the non-repeating first.

Then I look at those non-repeating names for clues for their parent Geography folders. Then from the clues, find the folders and drill down from the top for each national folder group. Before you drill down to the more detailed folders, after you open a folder, avoid clutter by clicking on the check mark (on the left, that makes the folder visible). Also, in Google Earth Tools, Options, select small for the size of your labels and icons.

Summary: How to read the story

All history is His (the Lord's) Story. Reading history with a database helps us realize how much He controls history through His authority. Before you read a story you know where it occurs, in His creation, in His authority, and in His story. Then, as you read a story you can click on locations and history as they are mentioned in the story, which you have already opened in Google Earth.

Understanding comes from relationships. Seeing the big picture provided by a relational database will quickly give you understanding with very little text, available I believe in no other way. Dictionaries provide relationships for understanding. Like dictionary definitions, understanding comes from seeing relationships (associations, parent, child, sibling relationships). A strategy is 80% definitions. A database gives you definitions for a strategic view of the story. People, Places, Things and Events or Who, What, When, Where, and Why, but not How. This "Big Picture" view will bring the story to life.

P.S. Here is a link to my Geography and History Blog which includes a PowerPoint and Introduction.