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# **The Story of the Bible**

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# The Story of the Bible

## Schedule

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## **The Story of the Bible**

Summarizing the Story

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### **The Five Acts of the Story of the Bible**

- I. Created for Fellowship
- II. Sin and Separation
- III. The Covenant Community
- IV. Reconciliation in Christ
- V. The Consummation of the Ages

### **Periods of Bible History**

#### **The Old Testament**

The Period of Beginnings  
Hebrew Family of Promise  
Egyptian Bondage  
Wilderness Wandering  
Conquest and Settlement  
United Kingdom  
Divided Kingdom  
Captivity  
Return from Exile

### **Between the Testaments**

#### **The New Testament**

Life and Death of Christ  
Establishment and Spread of the Church  
The Age to Come

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 1: The Importance of Story

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### The Importance of Story

Stories are an important part of every culture. They can capture the mind and entertain. Parents tell their children fairy tales and myths. Nearly every child has lain down to sleep with a bedtime story in their ear. Stories are the basis of books, plays and movies, and people spend much money to be entertained by a good story.



Stories have many functions and many purposes. In addition to entertaining, stories may provide an explanation for the origin of something or how it started. Stories can instruct or provide a moral. They can provide an object lesson on proper behavior. They can inspire others to courageous acts of heroism. On the other hand, they may horrify or put people to shame for immoral acts. More times than not, stories elicit a response. They stir emotions in people and cause them to reflect on life.

Another important function of stories can be seen in their ability to shape and provide cohesion for a group of people. They can tie a group together by illustrating a common background or history. They can rally people around a common purpose or cause. People come to understand themselves based upon the stories of the past. Stories can provide distinctiveness and identity to a group. Their identity is defined by what has happened to them. Their individual story can help shape and direct them in their future actions as well.

- Does your family have stories that they tell often?
- Do your family stories provide closeness within a family?

### Unity and Diversity in the Bible

The Bible is a diverse collection of writings. It consists of 66 books, composed by 40 authors over a period of roughly 1600 years. The writings of the books span many cultures and a large geographical area. The Bible was composed in three different languages: Hebrew and some Aramaic in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament.

The Diversity of the Bible	The Unity of the Bible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 66 books</li><li>• 40 authors</li><li>• Composed in 3 languages</li><li>• Written over 1600 years</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inspired by God</li><li>• Presents a Unified Story</li></ul>

Despite all the differences in the individual books and their authors, the Bible actually presents a single, unified message. At its most basic level, the Bible is a story. Although it contains portions of law, poetry and other types of literature, it is the narrative of the Bible that ties it all together.

One of the reasons that the Bible presents a single, unified message is that it comes from a single source – God. The Bible is unique among all other literature because it represents God’s communication to man (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, the Bible is completely trustworthy.

## The Story of the Bible



Since the Bible tells a story, it shares common elements with any other story. All stories or narratives are composed of three main ingredients: characters, plot and plot resolution. The main characters in the Bible are God, humans and Satan. The basic plot of the Bible is that God created humanity in order to bear his image and share a relationship with him. As an enemy to God and his purposes, Satan promoted sin in order to destroy the fellowship between God and mankind.

The plot resolution consists of God's loving plan to redeem mankind and restore lost fellowship. The central event within God's plan for redemption is the cross, where Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was crucified for the sins of the world. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross paid the penalty for sin, allowing reconciliation to occur between God and mankind.

- Were you aware that the Bible told a story?
- How can knowing that the Bible is a story help in spreading the gospel?

### Literary Characters

- God is the *protagonist*, or main character.
- Satan is the *antagonist*, the one who brings about the conflict in the story.
- Humans are the *agonists*, or other major characters involved in the struggle.

### Lost Fellowship



### God's Plan to Restore Fellowship



## Answering Questions

The Bible answers some of the most fundamental questions of life. It is not a science book primarily intended to explain natural processes and observable facts. Instead it penetrates to the essence of humanity, and it answers questions of a spiritual nature. The Bible not only explains what happened at the beginning, but it also tells *why* it happened. Man was created in order to have fellowship with God. That is our ultimate purpose in life. The story of the Bible emphasizes God's desire for fellowship, and it shows the extent that God is willing to go in order to attain it.

Where did we come from?  
Why are we here?  
What is our purpose in life?

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 2: In the Beginning

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The stage for the “plot” of the Bible is established in the first few chapters of Genesis. The Bible not only depicts what took place in the beginning, it also provides significance for those events.

### The Creation

- Read Genesis 1-2

General	Particular
Day 1: Day & Night	Day 4: Sun, Moon & Stars
Day 2: Heaven & Sea	Day 5: Birds & Fish
Day 3: Earth & Vegetation	Day 6: Animals & Man
Day 7: God Rested	

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and all they contain. With his great power, he brought everything into being out of nothing. He created light, thus dividing the day from the night. The heavens and the sea were separated by his hand, and then he caused land and its vegetation to emerge from the sea. The sun, moon and stars would serve as lights for the day and the night. As the source of all life, God filled the sky, sea and land with living creatures.

- Read Psalm 104.
- How is the creation repeatedly described in Genesis 1? (see v. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). What does this tell us about God?
- What else can be learned about God from the creation?

Then God said, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish... the birds... the cattle and over all the earth,....” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:26-27

The crowning achievement of God’s creation was mankind. Man and woman were created in the image of God, bearing his likeness. Unlike any other creatures, man resembles God and he is provided the opportunity to relate to God. It is God’s desire that mankind have fellowship with him. This is the purpose for the creation of men and women.

- What does it mean for man to be made “in the image of God”? In other words, in what way is man like God and different than the animals (since they do not bear the image of God)?
- How does the creation account show God’s care for mankind?
- Read Ecclesiastes 12:14. Why were man and woman created?
- Is it important to live life with a purpose? How will that affect the way a person lives?

## The Devastation of Sin

- Read Genesis 3.

The creation account illustrates God's care and provision for mankind. He provided the first man and woman with everything that they needed to live a good life.

The serpent, or Satan, has the opposite intentions for mankind. Instead of seeking what is good for the man and woman, he seeks to do them harm. When he speaks to the woman in the garden, he portrays God in a negative way. He is trying to create suspicion and distrust toward God. Sin is the result of Satan's temptations.

- How do the following passages describe the consequences of sin...
  - Isaiah 59:1-2
  - Romans 6:23
  - Ephesians 2:1
- How does sin affect the relationship between God and mankind?

## Satan's Attack on God

In the Garden, Satan deceived the woman, introducing sin into the world. He employed lies and deception in the temptation. Notice how the words of Satan are a direct attack against God.

"Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" (Gen. 3:1)

- **Satan questioned God's character and commands.** He asked if God had prohibited them from *all* the trees of the Garden, even though only one tree had been withheld. Satan's exaggerates God's commands to make them appear burdensome and demanding. He further questions the goodness of God in giving such a command.

"You surely will not die!" (Gen. 3:4).

- **Satan questioned God's Promises.** He disputed that sin would bring death, which is contrary to what God said would happen.

"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).

- **Satan questioned God's motives.** Satan states that God selfishly wanted to keep the knowledge of good and evil to Himself. By painting a false picture of God, he insinuates that God's commands are not for their benefit but for their detriment.

## The Spread of Sin in Gen. 1-11

- Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit (3:1-7)
- Cain murders Abel (4:1-16)
- The polygamy of Lamech (4:19)
- Intermarriage with the daughters of men (6:1-3)
- Widespread wickedness before the Flood (6:5-6, 11-12)
- Noah's drunkenness and Ham's indiscretion (9:18-28)
- The Tower of Babel (11:1-9)

## The Spread of Sin

The first 11 chapters of Genesis highlight the far-reaching and devastating effects of sin, ultimately resulting in the destruction of the world by a Flood (Gen. 6-9). Sin continues to play a harmful role in society (Rom. 3:23). Despite the differences in culture and the amount of technological advances, we're still fighting the same battle with Satan.

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 3: A Promise of Blessing

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As sin intensified and spread among the early people, God provided an avenue for restoration by making a covenant with Abraham. The covenant consisted of promises that would ultimately provide for restoration that would be offered to all people.

### The Promises to Abraham

- Read Genesis 12:1-9; chapter 17
- Identify the three promises given to Abraham from Genesis 12:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 1, 7)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 2)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 3)

<b>The Patriarchs</b>
1. Abraham
2. Isaac
3. Jacob (Israel)
4. 12 sons of Jacob

These promises were repeated to Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5, 24) and Jacob (Gen. 28:14-15), and they were remembered during the days of the Exodus (Ex. 2:23-25; 6:2-9). The rest of the Pentateuch traces the story of the emergence of the Israelite nation and their journey to the Promised Land.



Sin had entered through the first man and woman and spread to all people, threatening man's close relationship with God. The flood represented God's attempt to eradicate sin, but it did not ultimately accomplish God's desire for fellowship with humankind. In response to sin, God introduced a path to blessing for man and woman, which would allow restored fellowship with God.

God would bring blessings through the descendants of one man, Abraham. Through Abraham, God would raise up a nation to be his special people. God's goal was not to isolate blessings for one group, but ultimately to bring restored fellowship with all humankind. God did not simply zap blessings on mankind, but he brought them about through interaction with mankind. In due course, God sent his son, Jesus Christ, who would fully experience humanity. His life would be sacrificed, bringing reconciliation between God and human.

- Why did God choose Abraham?

## The Child of Promise

Since the promises given to Abraham included his descendents, Abraham needed to father a son in order to start his ancestral line. The fulfillment of God's promise for a son would put Abraham's faith to the test over a long period of time.

Age	Event	Genesis Reference
75	Promises given to Abram	12:4
86	Abram fathers Ishmael by Sarai's handmaid, Hagar	ch. 16
99	Circumcision instituted as a sign of the covenant; a son was promised to Abraham by Sarah the following year	ch. 17
100	Sarah bears a son by Abraham	21:1-7

- How long did it take for Abraham to get a son from the time of the promises?
- What kind of faith did Abraham have?

	Esau	Jacob
Birth Order	First	Second
Father of Nation	Edom	Israel
Strength	Weaker	Stronger
Received Birthright	No	Yes

## Jacob's Blessing

When Isaac's wife, Rebekah, was pregnant with twin boys, she received a revelation from the Lord. God told her that two nations were in her womb, but one would be stronger than the other. The older would serve the younger (Gen. 25:19-26). Just as Esau and Jacob struggled in the womb, they

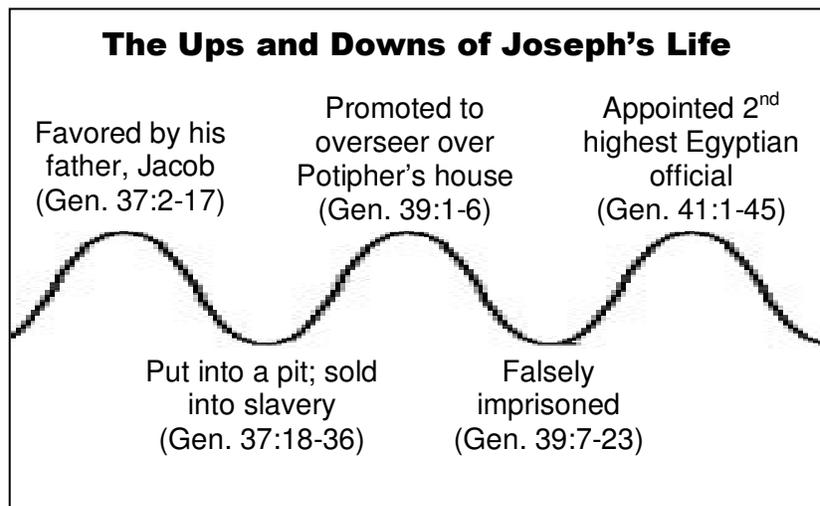
would find themselves in many conflicts together. Two other events played a role in the fulfillment of this prophecy.

- Esau, the older son, despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob for a bowl of soup (Gen. 25:27-34).
- Jacob, with the help of his mother, tricked Isaac into giving him the blessing instead of Esau (Gen. 27:1-29).

## Joseph's Life

Joseph's life was a roller coaster ride, mixed with extreme good and bad times. He experienced the struggles of slavery and the benefits of royalty. Despite his circumstances, he put his faith in God. In turn, the Lord was with him in all that he did (Gen. 39:2-3).

- When was the Lord with Joseph in his life?



- What can be learned from Joseph's life?

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 4: The Exodus

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Joseph is the last of the patriarchs discussed in the book of Genesis, and his journey takes him from the Promised Land of Canaan to Egypt, setting the stage for the book of Exodus.

### Oppression in Egypt

- Read Exodus 1.

God's promise to Abraham of a mighty nation began to be fulfilled while the Israelites were in Egypt. Over a period of 430 years, their population swelled from 72 people to around 2.5-3 million people (Ex. 12:37).

- What words does Exodus 1:7 use to describe their growth?

After Joseph died, a king came to power in Egypt that did not treat the Israelites favorably. In an attempt to control their population, the new king imposed harsh labor.

- What words does Exodus 1:13-14 use to describe the Egyptian oppression?

### Is God in the Picture?

The bulk of the first two chapters of Exodus contain no mention of God's activity. Pharaoh dominates the narrative with oppression of the Israelites and his order to murder all newborn Hebrew males. Some Hebrew nurses respond in faith to God, but there is no mention of what God is doing. One might conclude that God was absent during this difficult time of Israelite history. Exodus 2:23-25 indicates otherwise, and it serves as an important transition, signifying God's presence. His activity is demonstrated by four key phrases:

1. God heard their groaning.
2. God remembered His covenant.
3. God saw the sons of Israel.
4. God took notice of them.

### Prologue to the Plagues

Moses' first encounter with Pharaoh serves as an introduction to the plagues, providing many elements that will be repeated in the plagues (Ex. 7:8-13).

- The Lord speaks to Moses and Aaron (7:8-9)
- Moses and Aaron approach Pharaoh (7:10a)
- A miracle is performed (7:10b)
- Pharaoh calls on the magicians to duplicate the sign of the serpent (7:11)
- Aaron's serpent swallows the serpents of the Egyptians, illustrating the primacy of God's power (7:12)
- Pharaoh hardens his heart and does not listen to Moses and Aaron (7:13)

### The Exodus from Egypt

God heard the cries of the oppressed Israelites and selected a leader to deliver the Israelite people out of Egyptian bondage (Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7-10). Reluctant at first, Moses accepted his role as a mouthpiece for the Lord and demanded the release of the people.

In order to convince Pharaoh to release the Israelites, God sent plagues against Pharaoh and the Egyptians. When Pharaoh hardened his heart, the plagues persisted and grew in intensity.

### **The Ten Plagues**

1. Water to Blood
2. Frogs
3. Gnats
4. Flies
5. Death of Livestock
6. Boils
7. Hail
8. Locusts
9. Darkness
10. Death of Firstborn

### **The Purpose of the Plagues**

The plagues were mighty demonstrations of God's character and power, fulfilling several different purposes.

- Deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (7:4-5).
- Proclaim a knowledge of the Lord (8:10, 22; 9:14-16, 29; 10:2)
- Display God's power over the false gods of Egypt (12:12).

- What can be learned about God from the plagues?

### **The Passover**

The feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread were instituted before Israel's departure from Egypt. There were reminders of Israel's protection from the tenth plague and their hasty departure. These feasts would be celebrated annually and they would serve as a permanent reminder of God's deliverance during this pivotal period of Israelite history (Ex. 12:14).

- What is the purpose of a memorial?
- How could the Passover help pass on Israel's faith to the next generation?

#### **Specifications for the Passover** **(Ex. 12:1-13)**

- Sacrifice an unblemished, year old male lamb.
- Put blood on doorposts.
- Eat the Passover meal.
- Let it be a reminder of deliverance from the 10<sup>th</sup> Plague.

#### **Specifications for the Feast of Unleavened Bread** **(Ex. 12:14-20)**

- Remove leaven from house and eat only unleavened bread.
- Gather for a holy assembly on the 14<sup>th</sup> day and the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month.
- Let it be a reminder of deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

### **The Nation of Israel**

The family of Israel had prospered in the land of Egypt and grown to an extremely large population. They had grown from the single family of Jacob, or Israel, into a mighty nation. In Egypt, the people were oppressed and forced to perform slave labor. God intended for the people to be more than slaves in Egypt. He chose them to be a holy nation and his special people. They would bear the name of God in a special way before all the other nations. The testing in the wilderness and the covenant at Mt. Sinai would help to grow into their identity as the people of God.

- How does the Exodus relate to the overall theme of the Bible?

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 5: The Wilderness

### God's Provision on the Journey

The journey from Egypt was a difficult one. The Israelites traveled in a barren wasteland with many pitfalls and dangers. During this time, there appeared to be two constant elements: Israel's complaints and God's provisions.

Israel's Complaints	God's Provisions
When the Egyptians pursued them at the Red Sea (14:10-12)	Safe passage through the Red Sea (14:13-31)
When they had no water at Marah (15:22-24)	Water at Marah and Elim (15:25-27)
When they had no food in the Wilderness of Sin (16:1-3)	Manna and Quail in Wilderness of Sin (16:4-36)
When they had no water at Rephidim (17:1-3)	Water at Rephidim (17:4-7)



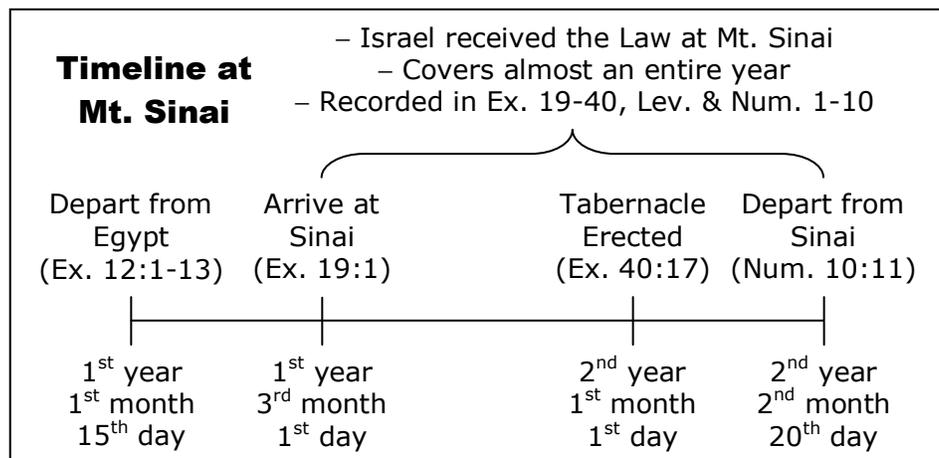
- How did the Israelites put God to the test (Ex. 17:2)?
- The stories of the Israelites were written for our instruction (1 Cor. 10:6-13). What lessons can be learned from the Israelites?

### Mt. Sinai

Mt. Sinai held the unique distinction of being called the "mountain of God" (Ex. 3:1; 4:27). Sinai was considered "holy ground" because it was God's dwelling and sanctuary (Ex. 3:5; 15:17).



This mountain was the site of Israel's first destination after leaving Egypt, the place where they would encounter God. They came to worship, receive the Law and build the tabernacle. Israel's time at Mt. Sinai covers a significant portion of the Pentateuch.



- How long did Israel camp at Mt. Sinai?

## The Covenant at Mt. Sinai

- Read Exodus 19-20

In Egypt, the family of Jacob had swelled in population, but they were oppressed by the Egyptian king. God intended for the Israelites to be more than slaves in Egypt. He wanted them to be his own special people. He chose them as descendants of Abraham to further his purpose of blessings for all people.

At Mt. Sinai, God made a covenant, or binding agreement, with the Israelites. Israel's part was to obey the voice of the Lord and keep his commandments. In return, Israel would be blessed by being the special people of God. They would be servants of God and a holy nation.

- How would Israel be a holy nation?
- How does covenant at Mt. Sinai relate to the overall theme of the Bible?

"Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the people, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex. 19:5-6a)

## The Report of the Twelve Spies

- Read Numbers 13-14.

After the Israelites left Mt. Sinai they headed north to Kadesh, where they sent spies into the land before progressing further. The account of the twelve spies represents a major turning point for the children of Israel. Everything up to this point focused on the Israelites being led by God into the Promised Land. However, the spies reported that they would be unable to take the land because the Canaanites were too big and strong (13:28, 31-32) and their cities were too large and fortified (Deut. 1:28).

- Did the people have reason to believe that they could take the land?
- What caused them to listen to the evil report of the spies? See 13:33; 14:11.

### Turning Point:

"a point at which a decisive change takes place; critical point; crisis."

## The Wilderness Wanderings

As punishment for listening to the evil report of the spies, God determined that the generation who had left Egypt would wander in the wilderness for forty years (Num. 14:28-35). Every Israelite who was 20 years and older would die in the wilderness and the next generation would inherit the land. The wilderness wanderings represented a low point in Israel's history. It was a period marked by rebellion, discouragement and hopelessness (Num. 16, especially v. 12-14).

- Does God's punishment mean that he did not love Israel? Explain.

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 6: A Home of Their Own

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Israel's disobedience brought a delay in taking possession of the Land of Promise. After the disobedient generation fell in the wilderness, the next generation would be able to take the land.

### Preparations to Enter the Land

Before the second generation could enter the land, they prepared for the great task. They camped on the plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan River, and heard the Law read. The book of Deuteronomy contains this telling of the Law. The conquest of Canaan would not be accomplished through superior military might. Instead, God was giving them the land. Their covenant relationship with God and obedience to the law were more important than strong military power.

### The Conquest

- Read Joshua 6

The nature of the conquest was illustrated in Israel's first victory in Canaan over Jericho. Israel defeated the city of Jericho by marching around the city according to the instruction of the Lord. Angels of the Lord caused the city walls to fall, and Israel entered the land and routed the city.

- What kind of faith did the Israelites need to have in the conquest?

Israel would undergo two more sweeping military campaigns, one in the south and one in the north. When God was with Israel, they could not be defeated. They defeated the people and took over their land. After the Northern Campaign, the text states that Israel had taken the whole land.

- What does the conquest say about the Promises of God?

### **Military Campaign**

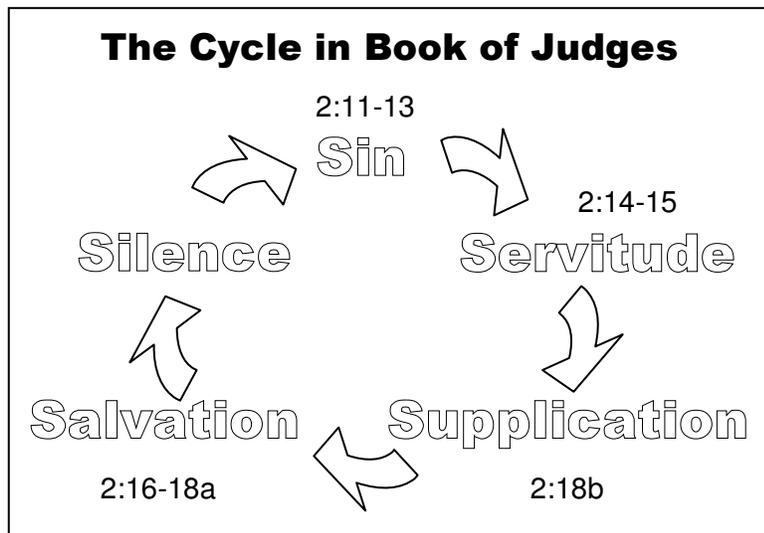
With God's help, the Israelites were able to conquer the inhabitants of Canaan. The conquest can be divided into three separate campaigns.

- Initial Entry into the Land (Josh. 6)
  - Jericho
  - Initial defeat at Ai
  - Victory over Ai
- The Southern Campaign (Josh. 9-10)
  - Gibeonite Towns (9:17)
  - Amorite Alliance (10:5)
  - Libnah (10:29)
  - Gezer (10:33)
  - Hebron (10:36)
  - Debir (10:38)
- The Northern Campaign (Josh. 11)
  - The Armies of the Northern Alliance (11:1-9)
  - The Cities of the Northern Alliance (11:12)
  - Anakim (11:21-22)

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses..." (11:23)

## The Division of the Land

Once the land was conquered, the land was divided up among the various tribes of the Israelites. Joseph received a double portion and the descendents of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh each claimed tribal property. The Levites did not assume a territory since they were dedicated to the service of God. They dwelled in cities and served the spiritual needs of the Israelites in all of the tribes.



## The Period of the Judges

- Read Judges 2.

After the death of Joshua the history of the Israelites depict a continual cycle of sin and suffering. They forsook the Lord and did evil in his sight. Their sin angered the Lord and he gave them over into the hands of their enemies. After a time of suffering, the Israelites would cry out to the Lord for help, and God would send a deliverer or judge to save the

people from subjugation. Salvation from enemy oppression would result in rest and peace in the land. After experiencing the comforts of peace, the Israelites would gradually fall back into a sinful lifestyle, and the cycle would start all over.

- Identify each element of the cycle of sin and servitude in the reign of Othniel (Judg. 3:7-11).
  - Sin
  - Suffering
  - Supplication
  - Salvation
  - Silence
- What can be learned from Israel's historical cycle?
- How's is God's relationship with the Israelites emphasized in the book of Judges?

Judge	Scripture
Othniel	Judg. 3:7-11
Ehud	Judg. 3:12-30
Shamgar	Judg. 3:31
Deborah	Judg. 4-5
Gideon	Judg. 6-8
Abimelech	Judg. 9
Tola	Judg. 10:1-5
Jair	Judg. 10:1-5
Jepthah	Judg. 10:17-12:7
Ibzan	Judg. 12:8-15
Elon	Judg. 12:8-15
Abdon	Judg. 12:8-15
Samson	Judg. 13-16
Eli	1 Sam. 1:9
Samuel	1 Sam. 7:15-17

- Relate this lesson to the overall story of the Bible.

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 7: A Divided Kingdom

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### The Monarchy

- Read 1 Samuel 8.

The book of Judges ends by stating that there was no king in the land and that every man did what was right in his own eyes (Jdgs. 21:25). It would not be long before the people of Israel rejected the system of the judges and asked for a king so that they can be like the other nations. The people's request for a king was a rejection of God. In the Exodus, the Israelites went from subservience to the ruthless king of Egypt to serving a benevolent and loving God. Now, the people wanted to return to having a human king over them. Their reasoning was also dangerous. Instead of being satisfied as a holy and distinct people, they wanted to be like the other nations.

#### Kings of the United Kingdom

1. Saul
2. David
3. Solomon

- What reason did Israel give for wanting a king over them (v 19-20)?
- Did they lack any of these things with God?

#### God's Promises to David

2 Samuel 7

Promises fulfilled in David's lifetime:

1. Name (v. 9)
2. A place for Israel (v. 10)
3. Rest from enemies (v. 11)

Promises fulfilled after David's lifetime:

4. A house for David (v. 11)
5. To raise up his descendent (vv. 12-15)
6. An everlasting kingdom (v. 16)

#### The Davidic Covenant

- Read 2 Samuel 7.

Saul was selected as the first king of Israel, but he turned against God and did not lead Israel in his ways. His successor, David, was called a man after God's own heart and he sought

"... I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom."

(2 Sam. 7:12b)

the Lord as he ruled over Israel. During his reign, David offered to build a temple for the Lord, but the Lord rejected the offer because David was a man of war. God still loved David, though, and made a covenant with him. God's covenant with David would be far-reaching and would serve God's purposes of bringing restored fellowship with humanity.

- What had God already done for David?
- Note that God's makes a covenant with David that looks to the future and will come through his descendents. Has God made any other covenants like that?

### Wisdom Literature

Book	Emphasis
Job	Suffering
Psalms	Worship
Proverbs	Daily Living
Ecclesiastes	Purpose of Life
Song of Solomon	Love in Marriage

### Wisdom Literature

When God offered to grant David's son Solomon anything he wanted, he chose wisdom to rule the people (1 Kgs. 3:3-15). Solomon was granted an extraordinary amount of wisdom by God, and his fame spread across the known world. He ruled his

people with great insight, and he composed many proverbs and songs (1 Kgs. 4:32). Wisdom literature provided insights for pursuing a godly life, and it would become an important part of the Hebrew Scriptures.

### Rehoboam's Folly

- Read 1 Kings 12.

Rehoboam succeeded his father Solomon as king over a united Israel, but his judgments would lead to the division of the nation. Instead of ruling with leniency, Rehoboam implemented a harsh policy of forced labor. When Rehoboam announced his intentions, Jeroboam led the ten northern tribes in secession from Rehoboam and Judah.

- Why did Rehoboam choose to deal harshly with the Israelites?

### The Divided Kingdom

Beginning around 930 B.C., the kingdoms of Judah and Israel would exist as separate nations. Both nations would face problems, but Israel displayed a greater degree of political instability. They were ruled by 9 separate dynasties, with 7 of their kings being assassinated by a usurper to the throne. Israel's political instability was undermined by their spiritual bankruptcy. Not a single king was declared to be a good king. Judah, on the other hand, would only have one dynasty and maintain the ancestral line of David. While they crowned many wicked kings, 8 kings were declared to be good kings who walked after the ways of their father David.

### The Golden Calves

The worship of golden calves was an idolatrous practice that plagued Israel all throughout its history. Reminiscent of the golden calf fashioned by Aaron at Mt. Sinai, Jeroboam later instituted the idolatrous practice in the land of Canaan (1 Kgs. 12:25-33). Originally, he placed one golden calf in Dan and one in Bethel (1 Kgs. 12:29). Although according to Amos, idols may have later been placed at Gilgal, Gilead, Samaria, and Beersheba (Amos 4:4; 5:5; 8:6, 14; 10:5; 13:2, 16). The Israelite kings persisted in the sinful ways of Jeroboam. Not a single one was considered a good king who sought after the Lord.

Kingdom	Dates	Number of Kings	Number of Dynasties	Average Reign	Num. of Good Kings	Num. of Bad Kings
United Kingdom	1050-930	3	1	40 yrs	--	--
Israel	930-722	20	9	10.4 yrs	0	20
Judah	930-586	20	1	17.2 yrs	8	12

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 8: Hope Lost and Regained

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The people of God were afforded security from foreign powers because of the One they served. However, the Israelites were not invincible when they turned their backs on the Lord who had protected them. When the nations of Israel and Judah rejected God, He allowed them to be taken in captivity.

### Assyrian Captivity

- Read 2 Kings 17:1-23.

Stage	Date (BC)	Area Targeted	Scripture
First	740	Reuben, Gad and Manasseh	1 Chron. 5:26; 2 Kgs. 15:29
Second	722	Samaria	2 Kgs. 24:14-15

The Assyrian Empire rose to power in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and they conquered other nations with great ruthlessness. Their attacks on Israel occurred over many different years. In 740 BC, the king of Assyria carried the eastern tribes of Israel into captivity (1 Chron. 5:26; 2 Kgs. 15:29). Nearly twenty years later, Assyria completed their overthrow of Israel by capturing its capital city of Samaria (2 Kgs. 17:3-6). In order to demoralize the people, Assyria forced the Israelites from their home and transplanted them to Assyria. The ten northern tribes of Israel would never return from captivity in any organized way.

- What was the real reason for Israel's captivity?
- Does the captivity mean that God turned his back on his covenants with Abraham and David?

### Babylonian Captivity

- Read 2 Kings 25:1-21.

Deportation	Date (BC)	Scripture
First	605	Dan. 1:1
Second	597	2 Kgs. 24:14-15
Third	586	2 Kgs. 25:11

The Babylonian Empire rose to power in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century by defeating the Assyrians. They continued to practice many of the ruthless tactics of the Assyrians, including the conquest and deportation of foreign nations. The remaining tribes of Israel were carried away into captivity by the king of Babylon in three distinct stages (Jer. 52:28-30), culminating in the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.

"Surely these things happened to Judah according to the Lord's command, in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done."

(2 Kings 24:3)

- Why did God want Israel removed from his presence? See 2 Kgs. 24:3, 20
- What can be learned about God's character from the captivities of Israel and Judah?

## The Prophets

The prophets played a vital role in the history of the Israelites nation. They served as mouthpieces for God, speaking forth his word and reminding the people of their covenant with God. Their message primarily consisted of the following themes:

Prophet	Date	Audience
<b>The Assyrian Period</b>		
Obadiah	845	Edom
Joel	830	Judah
Jonah	790-750	Nineveh
Amos	755	Israel
Hosea	750-725	Israel
Isaiah	740-700	Judah
Micah	735-700	Judah
<b>The Chaldean Period</b>		
Zephaniah	630-625	Judah
Jeremiah	626-586	Judah
Nahum	625-612	Nineveh
Habakkuk	625-605	Judah
<b>The Period of the Exile</b>		
Daniel	603-536	Judah
Ezekiel	593-570	Judah
<b>Post Exilic Period</b>		
Haggai	520	Judah
Zechariah	520-518	Judah
Malachi	440	Judah

- *The Covenant.* The people were reminded of God's past faithfulness to them and their covenant obligation to him.
- *Sin.* The sins of the people were identified and enumerated, including heartless worship and social injustice.
- *Repentance.* The prophets called upon the people to repent of their sins. Their transgression demanded a response from a contrite heart.
- *Judgment.* If the people refused to repent, they would be judged for their iniquity. Judgment would include the loss of their beloved land
- *Redemption.* After the judgment of captivity, a remnant of God's people would return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and its temple.

### Return from Exile

- Read Ezra 1.

In the early sixth century B.C., the Medes and Persians were growing in power, and in 539 B.C., Cyrus, the ruler of the Persians, defeated the Babylonians to become the dominant world power. A change in leadership brought a new attitude toward the conquered people. In 538 B.C., Cyrus issued a decree that allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the temple. Over the next one hundred years, three different groups of Jews would return to Jerusalem in an effort to rebuild. The first group, led by Zerubbabel, would return to rebuild the temple. Ezra and Nehemiah would lead the next two groups to teach the law and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Return	Date (BC)	Those Returning	Purpose for Return	Scripture
First	538	Zerubbabel	Rebuild the Temple	Ezra 1:1
Second	458	Ezra	Teach the Law	Ezra 7:1
Third	445	Nehemiah	Rebuild the City Walls	Neh. 2:1

- Did God intend for a remnant to return to Jerusalem? See Isa. 10:20-23 and Jer. 24:3-8.
- Had God ever given up on his plan for man's restoration?

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 9: The Coming of the Savior

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The Old Testament has been telling the story of God's involvement with his people, particularly Abraham and the Israelites. God never intended to isolate his relationship to one nation of people, though. He used certain people and worked through them to bring blessings for all humanity (see Gen. 12:2-3). The story of redemption for all people was anticipated in the Old Testament, but it had not been completed. The New Testament finishes the story of God's desire for restored fellowship with humanity by speaking of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is not just a simple continuation of the story. It is the goal of what has occurred before.

...the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified in faith.

(Gal. 3:24)

### Prophecy

Throughout the Old Testament, there has been a thrust to look to the future. It has been pointing toward something yet to come. Gal. 3:24 refers to the Law as a "tutor" leading us to Christ. The coming of the Savior was not a surprise. It was announced beforehand. Jesus would be the Savior of prophecy. He would fulfill the Old Testament statements about who the Savior would be.

#### Prophecies of the Coming Savior

- ❖ *The Son of Abraham and David* (Matt. 1:1). Jesus would ultimately fulfill the covenants with Abraham (Gen. 12, 15) and David (2 Sam. 7).
- ❖ *A Prophet* (Deut. 18:15). Jesus would speak forth the message of God, revealing the Father in his life and his teachings.
- ❖ *A Priest and King* (Psa. 110:1-4). Jesus was a priest and king like the Old Testament figure, Melchizedek (Heb. 7:15-17).
- ❖ *The Suffering Servant* (Isa. 49:1-13; 53:4-6). Jesus would not save the people through military might but through self-sacrifice.

- What is the benefit of prophecy? What can we learn from it?

### Birth

- Read Matthew 1:18-25.

The Birth of Jesus represented the completing work of God's plan for renewed fellowship with humanity. At his birth, it was announced what kind of person he would be. Consider the following statements from Matthew's account:

- He is the Messiah or Christ (Mt. 1:16).
- He was conceived in Mary from the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:20).
- He will save his people (Mt. 1:21).
- His name will be Immanuel, meaning 'God with us' (Mt. 1:23).



## Life

- Read Matt. 4:23-25; 9:35-38.

Jesus' time on earth was a relatively short 33 years, and his ministry consisted of only 3 years. However, he would accomplish much during this period. His primary objectives consisted of healing the sick, casting out demons and proclaiming the message of the coming Kingdom of God. In his life He provided a clear revelation of the Father (Jn. 14:6-7), and in his death He provided reconciliation between God and man (2 Cor. 5:16-21).

The Life and Ministry of Jesus

Period	Status	Time	Time Reference	Scripture	Primary Location
Birth and Childhood	Announcement	About 30 years	--	Lk. 3:23	Nazareth
Ministry	Obscurity	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	1 <sup>st</sup> Passover	Jn. 2:13	Judea
	Popularity	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Passover	Jn. 5:1; Lk. 6:1	Galilee
	Opposition	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Passover	Jn. 6:4	Perea
Final	Last Week	Last Week	4 <sup>th</sup> Passover	Jn. 11:55	Jerusalem

- What encouragement can we gain from the fact that Christ took on human flesh and lived as a man?

## Teaching

Jesus Christ was the Master Teacher, proclaiming a message of hope and salvation to those in desperate need. Jesus used several techniques to convey his message.

- *Miracles.* Jesus performed miracles to alleviate suffering among the people, but many of the miracles also provided object lessons for a deeper spiritual truth.
- *Parables.* A parable is a short story that illustrates a spiritual message. Jesus used simple stories to convey a profound truth. Those who were spiritually discerning could understand his message and respond.
- *Sermons.* The sermons of Jesus were filled with powerful teaching about those who would become kingdom citizens. Those desiring the kingdom must place it as their top priority with a singular devotion. To express this truth, Jesus often used hyperbole and exaggeration to get across his point.

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 10: The Sacrifice

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The death of Jesus Christ is the defining event in the Bible. Man's sinfulness had destroyed fellowship with God, and God responded in order to bring reconciliation. The Father sent his Son to die on the cross for the sins of the people. In the process, Jesus took on flesh and fully experienced humanity. The death of Jesus illustrates the extent that God was willing to go to restore his relationship with humanity.

### Trial

- Read Luke 22:63-23:25.

Because Jesus challenged the Jewish religious establishment, the chief priests and elders conspired against him to put him to death. The Jewish authorities arrested Jesus and brought him before their own court. False witnesses were produced to condemn him, but their testimony was inconsistent. Jesus would finally be charged with blasphemy.

Only the Roman government had authority to execute criminals, so the Jewish leaders delivered Jesus to Pilate, accusing him of treason and sedition. After much debate with the crowds, Pilate reluctantly delivered Jesus to be crucified in order to please the crowds.

- What was Jesus declared to be before he was sentenced to death? See Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22.

### The Trials of Jesus

Trial	Scripture
Before Annas	Jn. 18:12-14, 19-23
Before Caiaphas	Mt. 26:57-68; Mk. 14:53-65; Lk. 22:54, 63-65; Jn. 18:24
Before the Sanhedrin	Mt. 27:1; Mk. 15:1; Lk. 22:66-71
Before Pilate (First Time)	Mt. 27:2, 11-14; Mk. 15:1-5; Lk. 23:1-5; Jn. 18:28-38
Before Herod	Lk. 23:6-12
Before Pilate (Second Time)	Mt. 27:15-31; Mk. 15:6-20; Lk. 23:13-25; Jn. 18:39-19:16

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ **died** *for our sins* according to the Scriptures, and that He was **buried**, and that He was **raised** on the third day according to Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

### Death

- Read Mark 15:15-41.

After the mock trial, Jesus was beaten by scourging, mocked and ridiculed by the Roman soldiers. He was then led away to be crucified along with two other common criminals. As Jesus hung on the cross, he was reviled by the scribes, elders and even the criminals beside him.

Jesus felt the pains of the cross. In an allusion to Psalm 22, he expressed a sense of being forsaken by the Father. After taking a drink of sour wine, Jesus committed his spirit to the God and breathed his last breath. Onlookers were moved to mourning and expressions of praise after witnessing his death.

## Burial

- Read Matthew 27:57-66.

After Jesus had died, Joseph requested the body and prepared it for burial. He wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and placed it inside a new tomb, which had been cut inside a rock. A large stone was rolled in front of the tomb. To prevent anyone from tampering with the body, the stone was sealed and guards were placed in front of the tomb. The Gospel accounts establish the fact that Jesus truly died, and his Everything in the Gospel accounts establish the fact that Jesus had truly died and that his body was buried.

## Resurrection

- Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, the third day after his death and burial. The first to discover the empty tomb was not the apostles, but a group of women who had been close to the Lord during his life. When the angels who were beside the tomb announced that Jesus had risen, they went out and reported the good news to the other disciples. For a period of forty days, the resurrected Jesus would make several appearances, mostly to the apostles. At one point, Jesus appeared to over 500 brethren.

Post-Resurrection Appearances of Jesus

Person	Place	Scripture
Mary Magdalene	Jerusalem	Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:16-18
The Women	Jerusalem	Matt. 28:5-10
Peter	Jerusalem	Lk. 24:23; 1 Cor. 15:5
Cleopas and Companion	On Road to Emmaus	Lk. 24:13-15
The Ten	Jerusalem	Lk. 24:33-43; Jn. 20:19-23
The Eleven	Unknown	Jn. 20:24-29
The Seven	By Sea of Galilee	Jn. 21:1-14
500 Brethren	Unknown	1 Cor. 15:6
James	Unknown	1 Cor. 15:7
The Eleven	Galilee	Matt. 28:16-20
The Eleven	Jerusalem	Lk. 24:44-53; Acts 1:4-11

- What evidence does the text provide that Jesus really rose from the dead?
- How important is the resurrection of Jesus? What would it mean if Jesus did not rise from the dead? See 1 Corinthians 15:12-17.

## Significance

The significance of the cross is monumental. It is the most important event in the Bible and world history. Consider what Jesus accomplished in the cross. He brought reconciliation between God and man (2 Cor. 5:18-21). He gave himself as a ransom and died in our stead (Mk. 10:45; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). He provided forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:28). Because of his sacrifice, we have been justified, sanctified, redeemed and declared righteous (Rom. 5:8-9; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 11: The Early Church

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The early church consisted of those disciples who followed Jesus after his resurrection and determined to work together in community. The church gathered for worship and encouragement, and they proclaimed the gospel message to others.

### The Foundation of the Church

- Read Matthew 16:13-19.

When Jesus was walking with his disciples, he asked them about what people were saying about him. Peter stated that many people called him a prophet. Jesus then asked his disciples about his identity. Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus stated that he would build his church, and Peter's statement would be the foundation of the church. Christ would build the church and be its foundation. Furthermore, the church would not be destroyed or overcome, even by the power of Satan.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this **rock** I will build my **church**, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

- Whose church was Jesus going to build?
- How was the church purchased? See Acts 20:28.

### Establishment of the Church

- Read Acts 2.

In the resurrection, Jesus was fully shown to be the Son of God. With the risen Christ as its cornerstone, the church was established on the Day of Pentecost following the death and resurrection of Jesus. The apostles gathered in Jerusalem and proclaimed Christ crucified to the Jews who had come for the feast. They were told about Jesus and his identity. Then they were instructed to repent of their sins and be baptized into Christ, committing their lives to him.

Those who were baptized were added to the church and continued the work of God together. They devoted themselves to the teaching of the disciples, to fellowship, breaking bread and prayer (Acts 2:42). By continuing to spread the message of Jesus, the church grew and was strengthened.

- Of what sin in particular did the Jews at Pentecost need to repent?
- Summarize Peter's sermon in a few words.

## **Spread of the Church**

- Read Acts 8:1-17.

As the church in Jerusalem grew after the Day of Pentecost, it was met with opposition from the Jewish leaders. The preacher Stephen was even put to death, and there were threats of violence and imprisonment for other Christians. The Jews desired to squelch the new Christian religion, but their efforts had the opposite effect. The Jerusalem church was scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. As they went they proclaimed the gospel in the new region, and many were converted to Christ.

Now those who were scattered went about **preaching the word** (Acts 8:4).

- How did God bring something good out of the difficulties of persecution?

## **Upholding the Truth**

As believers came together to work and worship in the church, part of their mission was to proclaim forth the gospel message. Similar to the sermon found in Acts 2, the early church proclaimed the saving message of the cross to the world.

According to 1 Timothy 3:15, the church is described as “a pillar and support of the truth.” They uphold the truth of God’s word. Upholding the truth is more than a doctrinal stand. The truth serves the purpose of sanctifying and setting people apart (Jn. 17:17). They no longer live sinful lives, serving Satan. They are to pursue the holiness that is found in God.

- How can holiness help people draw closer to God?

## **The Organization of the Church**

- Read Acts 14:21-23.

The church is organized in a manner that will best help it fulfill its work. On Paul’s first missionary journey, he traveled to different cities in Asia Minor establishing congregations of the Lord’s people. He went back to the churches a second time in order to strengthen them. Part of the strengthening process involved appointing elders in every church. Elsewhere, Deacons or servants were also appointed to fulfill the needs of service in the congregation (qualifications for elders and deacons can be found in 1 Tim. 3:1-13). Paul’s letter to the Philippians illustrates that a local church consists of elders, deacons and saints (Phil. 1:1).

- What work are elders to perform?
- What work are deacons to perform?

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 12: You Are Part of the Story

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The Bible has told the story of creation and God's desire for intimate fellowship with humankind. Shortly after creation, the first man and woman sinned and separated themselves from God's fellowship. As the population grew, sin intensified, and man fell further away from God. Then God chose Abraham and the Israelites to ultimately restore fellowship between a holy God and sinful man. The final act of God's plan for salvation would be accomplished through one of Abraham's descendents, Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the penalty of sin for humanity by being sacrificed on the cross.



### You are Part of the Story

The story of the Bible did not end in the first century. It is not a history lesson without any connection to the reader. Even today, you are part of the story of the Bible. As a member of the human race, you join in this struggle between accepting God's fellowship and rejecting it.

- Have humans really changed since they were created? What are the similarities and differences between now and then?

### You Were Created for Fellowship

Just like Adam and Eve, your origin can be attributed to God. In the beginning, He physically formed Adam and Eve as adults. Ever since then, he has formed every human as babies within the belly of their mother. The Psalmist states about God, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:13-14a). God has the same desire for you as he had with Adam and Eve. He desires to have fellowship with you.

I will **praise** you for  
I am *fearfully* and  
*wonderfully* made  
(Ps. 139:14a).

### You Have Sinned

Sadly, every person who has lived (except Jesus Christ) has sinned against God. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Every person has imitated Adam's example of unfaithfulness to God. You are no exception to the rule. You have committed sin, which is rebellion against God. Instead of serving God, you have served your own will. Your sins have separated you from God's fellowship.

- Why has everyone sinned? What makes people sin?

## Jesus Died for You

Jesus sacrifice was not isolated to one geographical region, one nation or one time period. The death of Jesus on the cross was a universal offering for sin for all people at all times (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:1-2). It only needed to occur once. His blood was powerful enough to provide forgiveness for all people. That means that Jesus did not just die for other people. He died for you, too. You are the recipient of his loving sacrifice.



- What is the difference between the sacrifice of Jesus and the sacrifices of the Old Testament? See Heb. 10:1-4.

## You Must Respond to the Gospel

So, you were created for fellowship, you have sinned and Jesus died for you, but there is more to the story. You must make a decision about the gospel. The gospel message demands a response. When the gospel is proclaimed, individuals have two options: acceptance or rejection. Acceptance means believing that Jesus is the Savior who died for your sins and confessing that before men. It involves a commitment to change your life from sin to godliness, and it involves baptism into the blood of Christ. One who rejects the gospel fails to do these things. Rejection can be outright refusal or simply a failure to make a decision. Either way, the blessings of the gospel are not accepted.

- What kind of commitment is involved in obeying the gospel?

## The Gospel Is Passed On (And You Can Play a Part)

And what you have **heard** from me in the presence of many witnesses **entrust** to faithful men who will be able to **teach others** also (2 Tim. 2:2).

The gospel is a message of good news and glad tidings. It is the message that the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ is available for all who will accept it. Jesus' death can bring reconciliation between God and the estranged sinner.

This message is intended to be passed on from person to person, from generation to generation. What began in Jerusalem in the first century spread to the rest of the world, and it has been passed down throughout time.

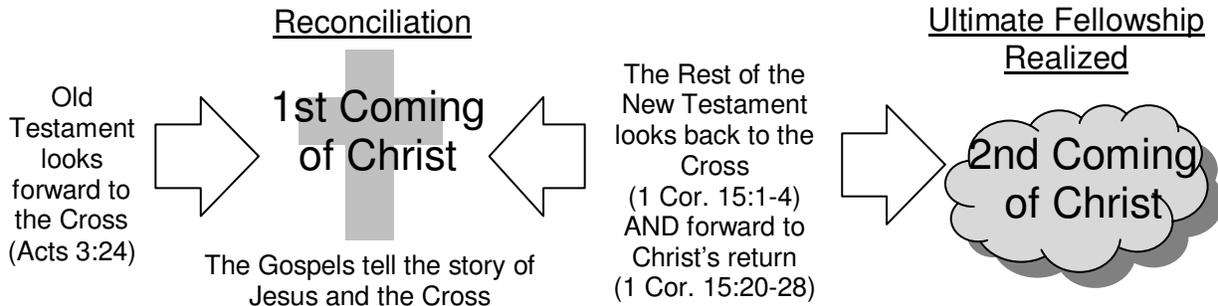
The gospel is a message that is passed on, and you can play a part. Once you have heard the good news and accepted it, you should pass it on, too. Go and tell others about the good things you have encountered. Not everyone will listen, but if they do they will become your brother or sister in Christ. Then they can continue to tell the message to others as well.

# The Story of the Bible

## Lesson 13: The End

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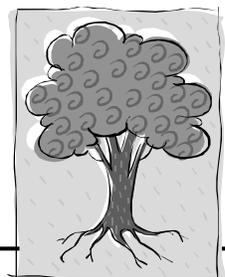
### Achieving Fellowship with God



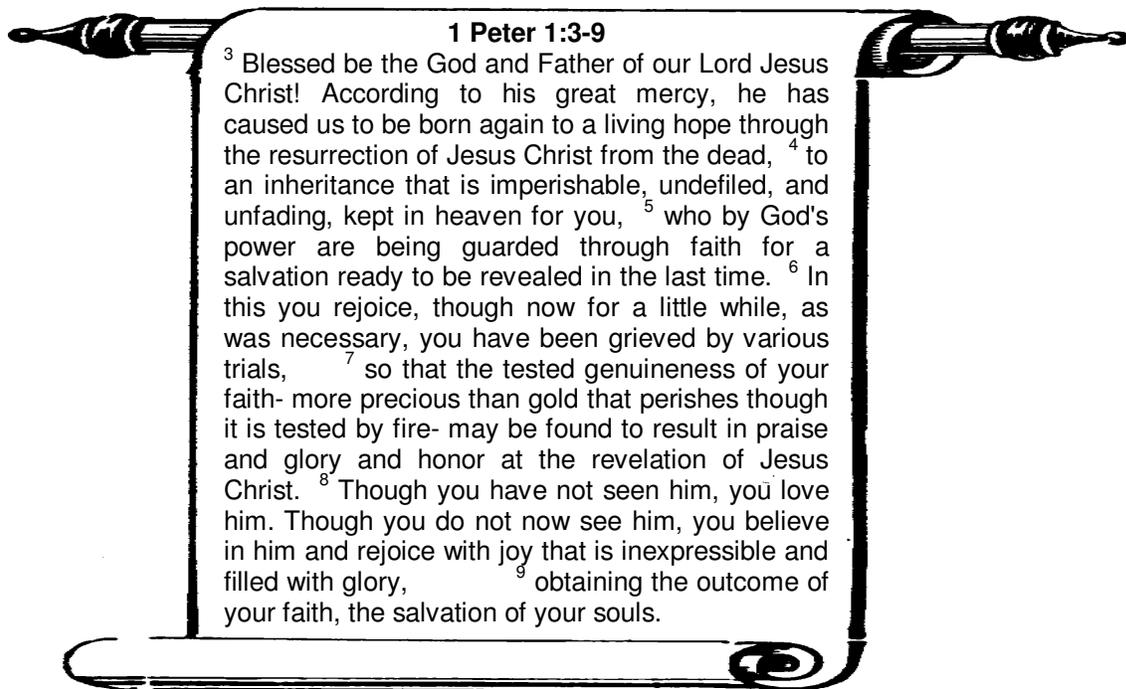
### The End of the Story

One of the great things about the Christian story is the ending. The ending makes the decision to follow Christ worth it. The Christian commits to follow God despite persecution and harsh treatment from others. Currently, Satan is fighting hard, and he may be winning many battles, but in the end Satan does not win the war. God reigns victorious. The kingdom of God will be fully realized and God's reign will be recognized universally.

- Revelation uses highly symbolic language to give a picture of the spiritual battle taking place between God and Satan. According to Revelation 20:7-10, what will ultimately happen to Satan?
- What will happen in the end for all the faithful Christians of all time? See 1 Cor. 15:20-23 and Phil. 3:20-21.



**The Tree of Life** provides bookends for the bible, appearing in the first few chapters of Genesis and the closing chapters of the book of Revelation (Gen. 2:9; 3:22, 24; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19). In the beginning, the Tree of Life was placed in the midst of the Garden of Eden, representing eternal life and divine fellowship. The sin of man resulted in death and broken communion with God. Therefore, God banished man and woman from the Garden so that they would not eat from the fruit of the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:22-24). The theme of the Bible presents God's plan for restored fellowship, ultimately enjoyed for eternity in heaven. Salvation pictured in the Tree of Life is found through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and awarded to those overcome with a life of faith and devotion.



## **A Life of Hope**

Knowing how the story ends changes everything for the Christian. The Christian not only believes that God has acted in human history, but that he will continue to do so. God will fulfill his promise in the future to care for his people. This confident expectation is what characterizes hope. Hope pushes the Christian forward through the difficulties of life. It is the goal or aim for all of God's people, providing motivation to continue working for God.

- How is hope described in 1 Pet. 1:3-9?
- How is hope compared to suffering in Rom. 8:18?
- How does hope affect the way Christians live today?

## **Perfect Reconciliation**

Jesus' death on the cross provided reconciliation between sinful humanity and a holy God. His sacrifice paid the debt for the penalty of sin, and allowed humans to have a relationship with God again. However, in this life, perfect reconciliation cannot be achieved. When Christ comes again, ultimate fellowship will be realized.

- What will be lacking when ultimate fellowship is realized?

# The Story of the Bible

## Review

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### Questions



- What are the five main “acts” of the story of the Bible?
- What can the story of the Bible teach us about God’s character?
- What is man’s purpose in life? What does God expect of people?
- In what ways did God work his plan through humanity?
- What are some of the major covenants in the Old Testament and how do they relate to the New Testament?
- What role does Christ play in the story of Scripture?
- How can you be a part of the story?
- How does the story end?
- What have you learned in this class that will be most beneficial to you?