

The Storyline of the Bible

Genesis - Deuteronomy: Known as the “Books of the Law”

God creates the world, calls a people group, the Israelites, to follow and worship Him and be His representatives in the earth. He gives them commands and instructions

- **God created the world and mankind and said it was good**
- **God created man to enjoy relationship with Himself and placed man in a wonderful paradise**
- **God gave Adam and Eve instructions to live by, so that they could forever enjoy this paradise and relationship with Himself**
- **They were curious and chose to disobey God and suffered terrible consequences. Their actions brought sin into the earth and every man born after Adam and Eve was born with this sinful nature.**
- **The first inhabitants of the earth became very corrupt, and God chose to wipe them out with a flood. But he saved one family, the family of Noah, by instructing them to build an ark to survive the flood.**
- **Several generations later, as the earth was repopulating, God chose a man named Abraham and made a covenant with him and said he would make his family of descendents very large and that He would teach them of Himself and they would be His representatives in the earth. They are later named the “Israelites” and these are the Jewish people of the earth today.**
 - **Abraham has two sons -- Ishmael, the son of self-effort born according to Abraham’s disobedience in failing to believe God to keep His promise--and Isaac, the son of faith and promise born according to God’s promise**
 - **Jacob, a son of Issac has 12 sons**
 - **11 of Jacob’s sons sell their brother Joseph into slavery**
 - **God raises Joseph up to be an agent of the king in the land of Egypt where he is carried off to slavery. God uses Joseph to save his whole family in a time of famine, but the family suffers consequences of 400 years of slavery**
 - **God chooses a man named Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery**
 - **After a very great deliverance in which the Lord God does many miracles of power to free the Israelites from bondage, they live in the desert 40 years. Here God is present with the people and provides food for them each day. He teaches them about Himself and gives them commands to live by and guides them through the desert.**
 - **God promises to take them into a land of great plenty that will be all their own. They will establish themselves there and be God’s light and examples to all nations of the earth to show who God is and how to live.**

Joshua - Job: Known as the “History Books”

These recount the history of God’s people as they conquer, enter and occupy the Promised Land. The history reveals God’s great heart to bless the people and His demonstration of power on their behalf. Then it reveals the people’s attempts and failure to fully follow God’s instructions after they occupy the land.

- **God calls an Israelite man Joshua--who is a descendent of Abraham, Issac and Jacob--to lead the Israelites to conquer and enter the Promised Land**

- God establishes Judges to rule the people in the land, but they insist on having a king
- God gives the Israelites kings to lead them. Some obey God and some do not.
- Despite all of God's power shown to His people and all of God's goodness given to them, the Israelites fail miserably and most do not obey God in the promised land and they become a corrupt and oppressive people.

Psalms, Song of Solomon: Known as the "Poetry Books"

- Psalms: Songs, Prayers and Poetry, mostly by King David, that praise God's character and appeal for help in times of challenge and trouble
- Song of Songs - an allegory of God's love for us

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes: Known as the "Wisdom Books"

- Proverbs: Words of Wisdom from King Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived
- Ecclesiastes: A search for the meaning of life, and conclusion, by King Solomon, a very rich and very wise man

Isaiah - Malachi: Known as the "Books of the Prophets"

God's cry of love to His people to turn back from their sinful destructive ways; and a foretelling of the severe and loving discipline God will bring upon His people to deliver them from their stubbornness. God promises a Messiah who will come to deliver the people forever.

- God sends prophet after prophet to warn the Israelites to turn back from their sin, but still they do not obey
- God disciplines His people by allowing 2 great political enemies to capture them and carry them away from their beloved Promised Land to a distant land
- God promises to send a deliver, a Messiah. This Messiah will die for their sins so that they can be restored to relationship with God and escape judgement.
- God's people later resettle in Israel, but they are under the rule of the Greeks and Romans
- Still they await their Messiah

Matthew - John: Known as the "Gospels"

God sends the Messiah, who was foretold by the prophets. The gospels are four accounts of the birth, life, death and resurrection of the promised Messiah, Jesus the Christ

- The amazing events of Christ's birth, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies
- Christ heals, delivers people from demons, teaches how to live
- Christ trains 12 Disciples, while he is living on the earth, to spread His truth and continue His work
- Christ confounds many of the people awaiting a Messiah because His deliverance is not what they expected. What unfolds in the gospels is that Christ came to deliver men not first from their external outside enemies, but first to deliver them from their own hearts - to change the hearts of all men and give us a new heart and to give us His power to obey God's instructions. He demonstrates great care for the poor and oppressed and opposes the proud and greedy and religious hypocrites.

- Christ dies for the sins of man. All who repent of their sins and believe in Christ as Lord and Savior are forgiven, restored to relationship with God and have our names written in the book of life to receive eternal life at the final judgement. The believer in Christ receives a new spirit within so that we can obey God and continue in relationship with Him and receive all His promises. Believers in Christ become part of God's eternal family. We become part of a new kingdom called "The Kingdom of God" whose power and authority supersedes all powers of this earth and will never end. We are still to obey the powers of this earth (as long as they do not contradict God's commands), but we also have a greater power in the living Christ providing for us and fighting for us in every situation we face in this life.

Book of Acts: Known as the "Acts of the Apostles"

The events that followed Christ's resurrection. The first church of Christ followers.

- The 12 Disciples begin to establish the first church and go into all the world, according to Christ's command, to tell others about Him and call all men to repent and believe in Christ and follow His teachings
- God also converts an enemy of Christ named Saul; changes his name to Paul, and calls him to be a leader in spreading the gospel.
- God instructs to take the good news of the gospel not only to the Israelites (Jews) but also to pagan cultures. Only small numbers of Jews believe while much greater numbers of pagans (Gentiles) believe. The scriptures say though that eventually, by the end of time, all Jews will be saved.

Romans- Jude: Known as the "Epistles"

Letters of instruction to the churches

- Letters of instruction by Paul and the disciples to the first churches concerning how to live according to the new life Christ gives us as we rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in us to enable us to obey

Book of Revelation

God concludes His instructions to us by revealing how the world will end and the fate of all men

- God reveals to the disciple John how Christ will return and the world as we know it will end
- God reveals terrible things that will happen in the last days of the earth and the judgement to come.
- Those who have their names written in the Book of Life will be with the Lord forever, while those who have not believed and persisted in their sins, despite all of God's grace and kindness made available to them, will suffer eternal punishment.

The stories of God's chosen people, the Israelites, serves as a model for all men to learn from. Their true tales and struggles are common to all humanity. As we find ourselves in their story and observe how God dealt with them, we learn to trust, follow and obey Christ to receive the precious relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit that is offered to us, and the great eternal promises and blessings our Lord has for us.