

THE BIBLE STORY

Select Passages • February 28, 2010 • Mike Newman, Senior Pastor

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A Summary of the Bible Story

The Old Testament begins when God created Adam and Eve in a perfect paradise. They later sinned and were driven out of the Garden of Eden, forced to live “by the sweat of their brow” in an imperfect world. As their offspring multiplied, sin also multiplied. Eventually, humanity became so sinful that, as judgment, God destroyed the earth with a universal flood, preserving only Noah and his immediate family on the ark to repopulate the earth.

Sin kept its hold over humanity, however, and once again people forgot God. As the years passed, God revealed Himself to Abraham (two thousand years before Christ), promising him a nation, many descendants, and a blessing that would ultimately extend to everyone on the earth. Abraham believed God and became the father of the Hebrew people. Abraham had a son, Isaac, and Isaac had a son, Jacob. The promises God made to Abraham were passed down through Isaac and Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons, and the promises were passed to all twelve sons, who became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jacob and his family of about seventy people were living in the land of Canaan when a famine hit. They were forced to migrate to Egypt to get food. In time, they became so numerous that they were perceived as a threat by the Egyptian people, and the Egyptians enslaved the Hebrew people for nearly four hundred years. Finally (approximately fifteen hundred years before Christ), God raised up Moses to lead them out of Egypt. With many astounding miracles, including the crossing of the Red Sea, they escaped Egypt and went to Mt. Sinai, where they received the Ten Commandments. Then they rebelled against God again and, as a judgment, wandered in the wilderness for forty years. When their time of judgment was up, they were allowed to enter the promised land. Moses died, and Joshua led the Israelites in the conquest of the land God had promised to give them.

Israel lived in the promised land in a loose governmental system, ruled by judges, for the next four hundred years. Samson and Samuel were the most famous judges. Then Israel insisted on establishing a monarchy (approximately one thousand years before Christ), and the Hebrews were ruled by kings for the next four hundred years. Saul, David, and Solomon were the first three kings, who ruled over a united monarchy for 120 years (forty years each). When Solomon died, the nation divided over the issue of taxation. There was now a northern kingdom, which kept the name Israel, because a majority (ten) of the tribes were loyal to the north, and a southern kingdom, which was called Judah, because Judah was by far the larger of the two southern tribes.

Because of the accumulating sin of Israel, Assyria, a nation to the northeast, came and conquered Israel and scattered many of the people throughout that part of the world. About one hundred fifty years later, because of the accumulating sin of Judah, Babylonia came and conquered Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and took many of the people into captivity in Babylonia.

About seventy years later, Persia defeated Babylonia, who had previously defeated Assyria. Thus Persia now ruled the entire part of the world from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea to the borders of India. The king of Persia allowed the Israelites living in captivity in Babylonia to return to Jerusalem to rebuild it. Fifty thousand people returned (approximately five hundred years before Christ), rebuilt the city, rebuilt the temple, and restored ceremonial worship of God. They continued to live that way for the next four hundred years. During that time, Persia fell to Greece, and Greece in turn fell to Rome. Rome was ruling that part of the world when Jesus was born.

The ministry of Jesus was preceded by the ministry of His cousin, John the Baptist, who warned the Jews to get ready for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, near Jerusalem, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Then Jesus and His parents, Mary and Joseph, moved back to their hometown in Nazareth, in the northern part of the country, just west of the sea of Galilee. There Jesus lived an apparently normal childhood until the age of thirty, when all teachers, by Jewish custom, began their ministry. Jesus began His ministry in Jerusalem and in the surrounding area of Judea. His ministry was highlighted by authoritative teaching and remarkable miracles.

Because of mounting opposition to His ministry on the part of the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus went north to the area around the Sea of Galilee, making Capernaum on the north shore His home base. Much of His three-year ministry was conducted in the area around Capernaum, though many events did not actually take place in Capernaum. Eventually, He returned to Jerusalem and, because of the jealousy of the religious leaders, was soon crucified. Three days later He rose from the dead, and He showed Himself to His disciples several times during the next forty days. Then, with His disciples gathered around Him on the Mount of Olives, just outside Jerusalem, He visibly ascended into heaven.

He had commissioned His disciples to take the new message of salvation through Christ to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria (the surrounding regions), and to the uttermost parts of the earth. The church was established in Jerusalem, and the first Christians were Jews. The church there was overseen by Jesus’ apostles. The spread of the gospel to the surrounding area and uttermost parts of the earth focused primarily on the apostle Paul, who conducted missionary journeys into areas of Asia Minor and Greece. Many non-Jews became followers of Jesus as a result of those missionary journeys. Finally, Paul was arrested and taken to Rome, where he was eventually executed for his faith. There were enough disciples, however, not only in Jerusalem, but also in Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, that the message not only lived on, but it grew until it became the dominant world religion.

- The above was taken from “**30 Days to Understanding the Bible**” by Max Anders. Nelson Publishing. ©1998

ERA	MAIN FIGURE(S)	STORY SUMMARY
Creation	Adam	Adam and Eve are created by God, but they sin and destroy God's original plan for mankind.
Patriarch	Abraham	Abraham is chosen by God to "father" a people to represent God to the World.
Exodus	Moses	God uses Moses to deliver the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt and then gives them the Law.
Conquest	Joshua	God uses Joshua to lead the Israelites into the "promised land."
Judges	Samson	Samson and others were chosen as judges to govern over the people for four hundred rebellious years.
Kingdom	David	David, the greatest king in the new monarchy, is followed by a succession of mostly unrighteous kings, and God eventually judges Israel for her sin, sending her into exile.
Exile	Daniel	Daniel gives leadership and encourages faithfulness among the exiles for the next seventy years.
Return	Ezra	Ezra leads the people back from exile to rebuild Jerusalem.
Silence	Pharisees	Pharisees and others lead the Israelites into legalism for the next four hundred years.
Gospels	Jesus	Jesus comes in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of a savior and offers salvation and the true kingdom of God. While some accept Him, most reject Him, and He is crucified, buried, and resurrected.
Church	Peter	Peter, shortly after the ascension of Jesus, is used by God to establish the Church, God's next major plan for man.
Missions	Paul	Paul expands the Church into the Roman Empire during the next two decades.

Information in this chart was taken from "**30 Days to Understanding The Bible**" by Max Anders. Nelson Publishing. © 1998.

Exodus 20:1-7 (NLT) ¹Then God gave the people all these instructions: ²"I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. ³You must not have any other god but me. ⁴You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. ⁵You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. ⁶But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands. ⁷You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

Matthew 22:34-40 (NLT) ³⁴But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again. ³⁵One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: ³⁶"Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" ³⁷Jesus replied, "**You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.**" ³⁸**This is the first and greatest commandment.** ³⁹A second is equally important: **'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** ⁴⁰The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Acts 1:6-8 (NLT) ⁶So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" ⁷He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And **you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**"

Five Major Teachings of the Bible:

- 1) God _____ and desires a relationship with them. (See Genesis 1:26-28 and Luke 15:11-32)
- 2) God wants us to love Him and give Him our _____. (See Exodus 20:1-7 and Matthew 22:34-40)
- 3) God wants us to _____. (See Matthew 22:37-40)
- 4) God wants the Church to _____ to the world and do what it can to get the word out about Him. (See Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:6-8)
- 5) Jesus will _____ and those who are followers of Jesus will reign on the earth with Him forever. (See Revelation 21:1-8)

There is no other book like the Bible!

For more information about what it means to become a follower of Christ or what to do after you make a decision to follow Jesus, speak to one of the pastors or elders following the service today (they can be found by the prayer room in the church lobby) or contact the church office at 717-762-7147 to set up an appointment. You may also request materials and find additional information to help you on your spiritual journey on our website: www.otterbeinchurch.org