

Road Trip Through The Bible ... Part 2

2 Timothy 3:16-17

I. WHY THE BIBLE IS THE GREATEST BOOK EVER WRITTEN

- It tells us about the greatest PERSON.
- It shares the solution to the greatest PROBLEM.
- It is filled with the greatest PROMISES.
- It tells us about the greatest PLACE.

II. Bible Could Be Compared to (The Bible is like...)

- An ENCYCLOPEDIA the Bible covers kinds of important subjects and teaches what God says about each.
- The Bible is the greatest HISTORY book in the world. It tells of the many things that God has done, from Creation right up to the days when the church began.
- A FLASHLIGHT - just as a light in the dark can point the way, the Bible shows us things about our lives and our world and points us to the right way to go.
- The Bible is like a MAP that will show you what way to go, what things to avoid, and how to get to heaven.

III. The Overarching Storyline of the Bible

- **The Bible is about God.**

It is God's revelation of Himself to humankind.

The human characters in the biblical story change frequently, but God is constantly involved, constantly in the spot light, in the entire story.

- **There are four main “scenes” in this storyline:**
 - Creation – God creates everything that exists (Genesis 1-2)
 - Fall – Mankind disobeys God and sin enters the world (Genesis 3)
 - Redemption – God graciously works on behalf of His creation to undo the deadly effects of sin (Genesis 3:15-Revelation 20)
 - Glorification – God restores all of creation to its perfect state, and our relationship with God is perfectly restored (Revelation 21-22).
- **More specifically, the Bible is about God revealing Himself to us through Jesus.**

Jesus is the centerpiece that connects all parts of the biblical story together.

The Old Testament promises that God will send His Messiah to save the world, and the promises of the Old Testament point forward to Jesus (Luke 24:27).

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus coming as God’s Messiah in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (the four gospels – semi-biographies about Jesus).

Next, the New Testament tells how the church grew and spread after Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection (Acts).

The New Testament contains letters written by Jesus’ apostles (people chosen by Jesus to lead the church) to churches and individuals to help them follow Jesus (Romans- Jude).

Finally, the New Testament tells about Jesus’ future return when He will complete God’s work of glorification (Revelation).

Hebrews 1:1-3 teaches us that God has spoken to us and revealed Himself to us by His Son, Jesus, who “is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.”

IV. THE BIG STORY OF THE BIBLE BEGINS WITH GENESIS

The key passages:

- **Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning, God...”**

The Bible begins with God, because God is the beginning of everything.

God is the only eternally existent, uncreated, self-sustaining, independent being who exists. Everything else exists because God speaks it into being.

In the very first chapter, the Bible we learn that God is a creative being with phenomenal power.

There are differing views on how we were formed – creation or evolution.

If God is not the creator then how does everything come from nothing?

(It makes sense that a Creator God could be the source of everything. It doesn't make sense that nothing could be the source of everything.)

How does order come out of chaos?

In our universe, order never “accidentally” arises out of chaos. Order is always the work of a rational mind.

- **Genesis 1:26 – “Let us make man”**

Interesting that God refers to Himself in the plural (us).

A hint toward God's three-fold nature (the Trinity).

God exists as three persons within Himself. Don't get hung up on this. It makes sense that God would be more complex in His existence than we are... He's God!

Three persons within one being suggests that God is relational by nature. He has always been in relationship within His own persons.

All three persons are fully God, but they are distinct in the way they relate to one another within the Godhead.

- **Genesis 1:26-27 – God makes man and woman “in His image.”**

God created humans to reflect His nature. We are personal creatures. We are created to be in relationship with God and with one another. We are created to rule over creation as God’s personal representatives.

- **Genesis 3 – The Fall**

God places the first man and woman in a garden. Two trees in the garden are mentioned by name (The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and The Tree of Life). God forbids them to eat from The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He is giving them a choice. It seems that God desires for His relationship with us to be one in which we have a choice. He wants us to choose Him, to choose to love Him, to choose to obey Him.

Adam and Eve disobey. They eat from the tree, hide from God, and refuse to take responsibility for their actions.

God responds in two ways: with judgment and grace.

This becomes a very important theme throughout the rest of the biblical story. God responds to human sin with judgment and grace.

Judgment: God kicks them out of the garden, man’s work will now be hard and , childbirth will be painful for women, etc.

Grace: God promises that a descendant of the woman will eventually triumph over the serpent who tempted them (Satan) (3:15).

- **Genesis 4** – Adam and Eve’s sons, Cain and Abel, offer sacrifices to God.

We later learn that this is part of God’s gracious way to forgive sin and restore our relationship with Him. The punishment for sin is death, but that punishment can be covered by a substitutionary sacrifice. Abel offers an animal sacrifice, which God accepts favorably. Cain brings a fruit sacrifice, which God does not accept. Hebrews 9:22 tells us, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Abel brought God what God required. Cain chose to do it his own way, and God would not accept it. People still try to do this today. We try to come to God on our terms. You can’t come to God on your terms. You can only come to God on God’s terms. God’s terms are that the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the only way you can be forgiven and in right relationship with God. You can only come to God through faith in Jesus. God warns Cain that “sin is crouching at his door.” The word for sin literally means “missing the mark.” Based on the attitude of Cain’s heart, he was missing the mark of God’s standard. Cain is jealous that God approved of Abel’s sacrifice and not his, so he kills Abel. Adam and Eve have another son, Seth.

- **Genesis 6 – The Flood**

Several generations later, Noah is one of Seth’s descendants. Many humans now on earth. God sees the wickedness of their hearts (this is an important concept – God always looks at the heart!).

Judgment: God decides to destroy the earth by flood.

Grace: God turns His favor on Noah and spares him. Noah and his family survive in the ark. God

makes a covenant with Noah that He will never again destroy the world by flood.

Note: The ark was 450 feet long (that’s one and a half football fields), 75 feet wide, and 45 feet

high. It would have held 522 railroad cars of volume. One railroad car can hold 200 sheep, so the

ark was more than big enough to hold the 3500 species that would have been present on earth at that time.

- **Genesis 11 – The Tower of Babel**

Humans begin to build a gigantic tower “to make a name for themselves.” They are seeking to glorify themselves instead of glorifying God.

Judgment: God confuses their language and scatters them all over the earth. In other words, God

makes them into many nations that can’t communicate with one another.

Grace: God calls one man, Abraham, and promises to make him into a great nation. The purpose of

this nation will be to bless all other nations through him. God intends to use Abraham and his descendants to help all the nations in the world know Him.

- **Genesis 12-17 – God makes a covenant with Abraham.**

He promises to give Abraham a son, to give

his descendants the land of Canaan, and to make them into a great nation.

In Abraham’s day, people made a covenant with one another by cutting an animal in half and walking

between the pieces. You were symbolically saying, “May this happen to me if I break the covenant.”

In other words, “If I break the covenant, I’m dead meat!”

In this instance, only God passes through the animal halves. The covenant is not based on Abraham

at all. It is based completely on God. Genesis 15:6 is a huge verse in the Bible, “Abraham believed

God and it was credited to Him as righteousness.” Abraham just trusts God, and God does all the work.

- **Genesis 16 – Ishmael is born.**

Abraham is 85 and Sarah is 75, and they still don’t have a son. Sarah convinces Abraham to sleep with her maidservant Hagar to try to have a son. He does, and Ishmael is born.

- **Genesis 17** – Issac is born.

God appears to Abraham again when Abraham is 99. He basically tells Abraham, “I didn’t need you to give me a son. I’m going to give you a son.” Abraham and Sarah laugh at God, because Sarah has never been able to have children, and they think they’re too old to have children now. But a year later, when Abraham is 100 and Sarah is 90, Sarah gives birth to a son. They name him Isaac, which means “he laughs.” Isaac eventually has twins, and God chooses to keep His promise to Abraham through the younger twin, Jacob. God changes Jacob’s name to Israel, and Israel has 12 sons. The descendants of these 12 sons eventually become the 12 tribes of Israel. God’s promise to give Abraham many descendants is coming true.

This reminds us that the whole story of the Bible is about God. It’s about what God has done in history to fulfill His promises.