

And so the Old Testament ends: the mystery of the seed promise, the promised king, and the new temple still unresolved for the Jews. This mystery is not revealed until four hundred years later...

The New Testament

Matthew 1:1-17

Matthew opens with a list of ancestors of Jesus. The purpose of this list is also the purpose of the book of Matthew. Showing that **Jesus is descendant of Abraham and David** implies Jesus is the promised king and fulfillment of the promise to Abraham (1:1).

Luke 3:23-38

Another gospel, Luke, also has a list of genealogy. This list does not only trace Jesus' lineage back to David or Abraham, but returns to the very beginning, reminding us of the promise first given to Adam and Eve; the promise of *Genesis 3:15* has been fulfilled. The message of Luke is that Jesus has come as Savior of all mankind, all nations.

Galatians 3:16-17, 26-29

The apostle Paul tells the Galatians that salvation is not just for Jews only; it is also available to the Gentiles (everybody else). Christ brings about the fulfillment of the promise the Abraham in *Genesis 22:19*: "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." Because of our faith in Jesus, we are be heirs of the blessings that God promises to all the families and nations of the earth (*Genesis 12:3*). "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (*Galatians 3:29*). See also *Romans 4:16-18*.

Ephesians 3:3-6

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul speaks again about the opportunity for Gentiles to be citizens of the kingdom of God without being physical Jews. This fulfills the promises of the Old Testament, a message that was a mystery to the Jews. Now, with new revelation through the apostles, we can understand this mystery.

Hebrews 2:14-16

The writer of Hebrews says that through the death of Jesus Christ, God cancels out the power of the devil, the power of death. In the cross, the seed of woman is wounded, but the serpent receives his fatal wound (*Genesis 3:15*), and all men have opportunity to freedom from the power of sin and death.

The Message of the Bible

- The Old Testament
 - Christ is coming.
- The Gospels
 - Christ is here.
- The Epistles
 - Christ is coming again.

The Story of the Bible

The Seed Promise

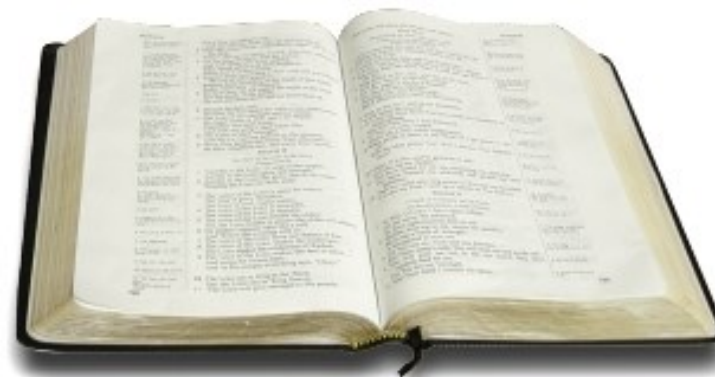
The Bible is one of the most well-known books. Even without a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, most everyone can recall bits and pieces of the Bible story - perhaps the story of Adam and Eve, of Noah and the flood, of Moses and the 10 commandments, or of Jesus and the cross. This book has made an unforgettable impact on our culture and our world.

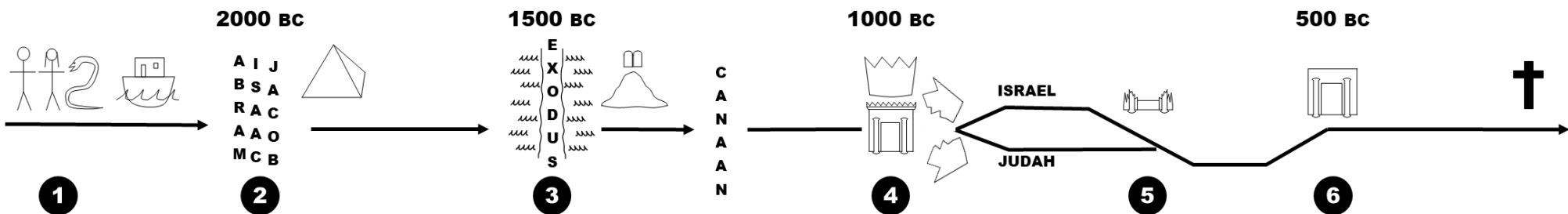
However, this well-known book is not known *well* by many. Relatively few know the purpose of the Bible. Even many Christians struggle to put the

major events of the Biblical story in order or to understand its overall message.

What is the story of the Bible? Does it have any value for me? If God speaks through the Bible, what is he trying to say to me?

Consider the following scriptures and overview of the Bible message and appreciate the love God has communicated through its pages.





1 In the beginning, Jehovah God created the heavens and the earth and placed man in his creation (*Genesis 1:1, 27*). The earth was “very good” (*1:31*).

But everything changed with the sin of man (*3:6*). Man was thrown out of the Garden of Eden, far from the tree of life. **Adam** and **Eve** began to die physically and spiritually and they were separated from God. With Adam and Eve began the problem of sin.

However, God had a plan. In *Genesis 3:15*, while cursing the serpent for his part in the rebellion, God predicted a war between the serpent (Satan) and the seed (descendants) of woman: “He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” While the seed of woman would be wounded, but Satan would receive the fatal blow.

Essentially, in the first three chapters, we have the entire Bible story: man and his problem with sin, and God and his salvation brought about by the seed. But who was this seed? How would God fulfill his promise of hope? This is the rest of the story...

After the first sin, the problem only got worse. Each man chose to sin – even to the point that “every intent of the thoughts [of man]...was only evil continually” (*6:5*). Only the family of Noah found favor in the eyes of God (*6:8*). God saved Noah from the wickedness of men by a world-wide flood (*6:7*).

2 Through Noah and his sons the earth was repopulated, and through the coming descendants arrived a man of faith, **Abraham**. He was given three promises (*12:1-3*):

<i>The Promise</i>	<i>The Fulfillment</i>
1. A nation	Israel
2. A land	Canaan
3. A blessing	The seed

These promises were not just given to Abraham (*22:17-18*), but also to his sons, Isaac (*26:4*) and Jacob (*28:3-4, 13-14*).

In the course of events, Jacob (Israel) had twelve sons. To each, Jacob gave promises. The promise of **Judah** is especially interesting (*Gen. 49:10*). Using the language of the seed promise, Jacob said, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh comes.” The kings of the nation of Israel were to come from children of Judah.

3 The children of Jacob were taken to Egypt and made slaves by Pharaoh. But God blessed them. Four hundred years later, at the beginning of the book of *Exodus*, the children of Israel had grown to be a great nation. God raised up a man, **Moses**, to save the people through 10 plagues. Israel crossed the Red Sea, and God guided them to Mount Sinai to receive the law and covenant with God.

Even during this time, God was thinking about his promise to man. Still at the foot of Sinai, in *Leviticus 26:40-42*, God affirmed he would remember the promise he made with Abraham, conditioned on the obedience of the people.

After Sinai, the Israelites passed forty years through the desert and arrived at the Promised Land, Canaan (cf. *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*). Under the direction of *Joshua*, they conquered the peoples in the land. The Israelites lived many years in Canaan, governed by God and his *judges*.

4 However, the people were not content with the judges. Wanting to be like the other nations, they asked for a king. Saul was the first king, but he was not obedient to God, and so Jehovah replaced him with **David**, a king after God’s own heart.

During the reign of David, more or less five hundred years after the exit of Egypt, God gave David the seed promise (*2 Samuel 7:12-13*). He promised a son who would build a temple and would have power forever. David’s son **Solomon** did build a physical temple in Jerusalem during his reign. But this prophecy had a broader view than just the life of Solomon.

The story of God’s people after Solomon is tumultuous. During the reign of his son Rehoboam, a division occurred between the twelve tribes: ten tribes to

the north (Israel) and two tribes to the south (Judah). All of the kings of the northern kingdom were evil, not giving attention to the laws of God and serving the idols of the nations. So, God punished Israel, sending them to captivity in Assyria. The kings of the south were little better. They continued to have a relationship with Jehovah and worshiped him in his temple in Jerusalem, but in the end, they sought after other gods, and Judah was carried away into Babylonian captivity.

5 Even in this dark time for Israel, with the physical temple destroyed and God’s nation carried to a foreign land, Jehovah remembered his promise to Abraham. Through the prophet *Jeremiah*, God predicts the “**Branch of David**” would reign justly and save his people (*23:5-6*).

6 After many years of captivity, God permitted a portion of the Jews to return to their land. They rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple, but never attained the former glory of Israel. During this time God gave hope to Israel through the prophet *Zechariah*. Again, a “**Branch**” would govern as king and priest and rebuild the temple (*6:12-13*), this while the Israelites were currently rebuilding the physical temple.