

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
WEEK 2 – WHAT IS THE BIBLE ABOUT?

Session plan

- Week 1 – What is the Bible?
- Week 2 – What is it about?
- Week 3 – Can we trust it? (etc.)
- Week 4 – How to read it?

1. a book about SALVATION and SERVICE

2 Timothy 3:15-17 ...from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for SALVATION through faith in CHRIST JESUS. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly EQUIPPED for every good work. *(emphasis mine)*

- Note the **sufficiency** of scripture
- Note the usefulness of **all** scripture
- Note the **CHRIST-centred** perspective of scripture

2. a book about God's ONE plan to save us through CHRIST (KING) JESUS

John 5:39-40 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

- two testaments, ONE BOOK



The Old Testament is not...

3. a book about God's SALVATION purposes worked out in HISTORY and human EXPERIENCE

- events, events, events
- history, history, history

Genesis 1-11	Genesis 12-50	Exodus - end of OT	New Testament	End of NT (Rev 21-22)
Prologue The pre-history of the world	Story of Abraham's family	History of Israel	History of Jesus and his followers (the early church)	The end of history The beginning of the world to come
CREATION and FALL	HISTORY OF REDEMPTION/SALVATION		NEW CREATION	
<i>FLOOD</i> <i>Noah (humanity) gets saved</i>	<i>FAMINE</i> <i>The family gets saved</i>	<i>EXODUS</i> <i>Israel gets saved</i>	<i>THE CROSS</i> <i>All can be saved</i>	THE CONSUMMATION Salvation experienced

- salvation, salvation, salvation
- people, people, people
- God, God, God

The salvation-history that leads to, prepares for and points to the coming of Jesus

Creation – people (image-bearers to rule, fill and subdue), place, blessing of life, under God’s rule

Fall – God’s rule rejected: rebellion, exile and death

Promise: the serpent-crusher

Gen 3:15

Flood – Human wickedness, judgement, salvation

Call of Abram (‘Exalted Father’) [childless] → **Abraham** (‘Father of Many’)

Covenant Promise: people, place, blessing (personal, global)

Gen 12:1-3

Slavery in Egypt

Exodus (Moses)

Sinai – Law, Tabernacle, Sacrifices

Land (Joshua)

Judges

Kingship – Saul and David

Covenant Promise: David’s kingdom will endure forever

2 Sam 7:12-16

Solomon – a great king (wisdom, wealth, Temple), but...

1 Kings 10-11

Division (two kingdoms) and decline

1 Kings 12

Northern Kingdom (Israel) rejects the Davidic King

Persistent sin, idolatry and refusing God’s word → scattering (Assyrians) – 722BC

2 Kings 17

Southern Kingdom (Judah) – always a David King

until sin, idolatry and refusing God’s word → exile (Babylon) – 587BC

2 Kings 25

Restoration – through Cyrus the Great (Persia) – 539BC

Waiting...

4. a book about God's SALVATION promised and fulfilled in CHRIST

- the promise in the garden – the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent's head
- the covenant promise to Abraham – through your seed/offspring (singular) the world will be blessed
- the covenant promise to David – your seed/offspring will reign for ever

- super-charged through the prophets – exile is coming, but God will not abandon in his people

there will be...

- a New Exodus/Gathering
- a New King from David's line (*The Messiah/Christ*)
- a New Jerusalem
- a New Temple
- a New Sacrifice to take away sins (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)
- a New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34/Ezekiel 36:25-27)
 - not like the old (Sinai) law-covenant (which led to condemnation)
 - sins forgiven
 - personal relationship with God
 - hearts changed
- a New Blessing – the pouring out of the Spirit
- a New inclusion of the gentiles
- a New Creation

The original promises become a 'super-promise'

- a prophetic hope which is increasingly in tension with the historical experience of the people of Israel

All God's promises are fulfilled in and by King Jesus, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the serpent crusher

- through his life, death (for our sins) and resurrection
- by his pouring out of the Spirit (first at the festival of Pentecost in Jerusalem – Acts 2)
- under his present reign
- at his future return in glory
- in the New Creation to come

2 Corinthians 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Both now...

Ephesians 1... ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.... ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit...

And in the not yet...

... ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory.

Titus 2:13 ...we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,

So, we too live with the tension between prophetic hope and present experience

Romans 8:23-25 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Meanwhile...

Luke 24:45-47 he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, 'This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts ends with Paul in Rome...

Acts 28:31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ – with all boldness and without hindrance!

5. a book about the KINGDOM of God which comes through JESUS THE KING (THE CHRIST)

Mark 1:14-15 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'

The kingdom is the saving rule of God (as we have seen, the theme of the whole Bible)

'God's people in God's place under God's rule enjoying God's blessing'

The climax of the OT story is a kingdom that foreshadows the coming kingdom

In the OT, the kingdom was at its heart...

- *God's people in God's place under God's rule enjoying God's blessing*

But in outward form, it was also...

- restricted primarily to one nation
- socially and politically defined
- geographically based

But Jesus said, *'my kingdom is not of this world'* (John 18:36)

In the New Testament, the kingdom is still...

- *God's people in God's place under God's rule enjoying God's blessing*

But it is...

- for all peoples
- spiritually defined
- throughout the world

It is now...

GOD'S PEOPLE	IN GOD'S PLACE	UNDER GOD'S RULE	ENJOYING GOD'S BLESSING
Those who have faith in Christ	In Christ (the sphere of blessing)	Under the rule of Christ	Forgiveness of sins Gift of the Holy Spirit

It will be...

GOD'S PEOPLE	IN GOD'S PLACE	UNDER GOD'S RULE	ENJOYING GOD'S BLESSING
Those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life	In the New Jerusalem/ the New Creation	Before the throne of God and of the Lamb	Raised to everlasting and ultimately satisfying life reigning over the new creation

An Overview of Salvation-History leading up to the coming of Christ



life, death & resurrection of Jesus

