

The Bible Summarized in Three Pages

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Introduction

Maybe you are new to reading the Bible and are not sure what it is all about. The Bible is a library of 66 smaller books, written over a span of 1,500 years by about 40 authors, and collected into a single volume. It describes important events in world history. In it, God also tells us what he wants us to know about ourselves, Himself, and everything that has to do with life and death. This document summarizes in 11 parts what God has said.

Creation

Genesis 1-2 God created everything out of nothing in six days, and ceased from creation on the seventh day. That is why our week is seven days long. The very pinnacle of creation was man and woman, Adam and Eve. God made Adam out of the dust of the ground and made Eve out of Adam. They were real people whom God directed to keep the Garden of Eden, manage the entire world, and fill it with people. He gave them one prohibition, namely to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Fall

Genesis 3-5 Whether the fruit eaten by Adam and Eve was really an apple or not we do not know. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. Their disobedience caused a major disturbance in the world. First, Adam and Eve started down the path of physical death: dust began to go back to dust. Second, they were separated from God because they had rebelled against Him. Third, they had to leave the utopian Garden of Eden and fight the elements to win an existence from the ground by farming and tending animals. Fourth, it changed their nature so that they were now 'sinners' and their offspring were also sinners. That's us! We are feeling the effects of that disaster down to the present.

Flood

Genesis 6-10 As the population of the world grew, people put their heads together to do evil things on a huge scale. This was distressing to God, so much so that he decided to destroy the world with a flood. Only the man Noah and his family survived by taking refuge in a large boat called the Ark. This flood was a catastrophe that changed the earth's geography forever. We can see the effects of it today all around us. God promised that he would not judge the world again in this way, and signified that promise with the rainbow.

Languages

Genesis 11 After the flood, Noah's sons and their wives had families and began to multiply the earth's population. Once again, the people turned their attention to their own pursuits instead of re-filling the earth as God had commanded. So, when they took on a huge building project at a place called Babel, God stirred things up by changing their single language into multiple languages. This divided the people into language groups and they began to move apart and settle into different regions of the world. As they became geographically isolated, they gradually developed identifiable physical and cultural characteristics, such as variations of skin color, shape of eyes, and various religions.

Covenant Promise

Genesis 12-50 Out of these many people groups, God chose a man named Abraham from a place in the Fertile Crescent called Ur. He began to believe in the true God. God promised Abraham a nation and personal blessing. His descendants are the Jews/Hebrews as well as the Ishmaelites. God's promise to Abraham extended through his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons who became the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel. Why did God choose Abraham? Simply because he wanted to do so. There was nothing special or worthy in Abraham or his future descendants that warranted God's choice. God set his love on them as an illustration of how he chooses the things of the world that are despised, and the things that don't amount to much, in order to bring honor to God.

Law

Exodus to Malachi In the next four books of the Bible (Exodus through Deuteronomy), the Bible tells us about Jacob's family that went down to Egypt to avoid starvation in a famine. God turned that family into a nation of hundreds of thousands of people over a period of 400-odd years. The Hebrews left Egypt and God gave them a constitution that we call the Law of Moses. They were to follow this constitution, with God as their king and Moses as their prince. They immediately had trouble with this assignment, showing that man's sinful nature, inherited from Adam and Eve, continued to be very troublesome. About 1000 years of their history is covered in the remainder of the books of the Old Testament. They often failed and God sent them prophets and priests and some good kings to exhort them to live under the Law of Moses. The story is a sad tale of repeated failure. The Law, including the 10 commandments, could not rescue the people from their sinful condition caused by the corruption of Genesis 3-5.

Christ

Matthew to John God then sent his Son to take a human body and nature in order to reveal God to humanity and to stand in our place as a substitute, taking the penalty for our sin. That happened on the cross (next section), but before that occurred, His Son Jesus spent several years doing public teaching and private training of his followers to prepare them

to start a new phase in God’s program for the world: the church (see below). Jesus is God-in-the-flesh, truly God and truly man in one human being. Christians acknowledge him as Lord and Messiah.

Cross

Matthew to John Remember that Adam and Eve began immediately to suffer separation from God and physical degradation that led to death. Apart from God rescuing them out of this terrible predicament, they and we would remain forever separated from him. God’s appointed rescuer is Jesus, who died for our sins to provide forgiveness and life. He asks that we truly turn from our affinity to sin and trust in Him. By so doing, one “believes” in Jesus and is thus *saved* and *born again* to a new life, enabled to live in a new way apart from sin. After Jesus died on the cross, he rose again from the dead. This demonstrates that Jesus’s sacrifice for sin was completed and acceptable before God the Father, and guarantees that all humans will rise from the dead as well: some to everlasting life, and some to eternal condemnation.

Church

Acts to Jude The church was planned to be a distributed, decentralized body that would proclaim the same truths that Jesus did, and encourage people to believe in him and live life with godly character. We can see what this life should look like by reading the teachings of Jesus. These teachings were carried forward by his followers, called apostles, and they wrote the teachings down in the books of the New Testament. Many of their teachings they conveyed in the written form of letters to churches like those of the Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, Romans, and the others. Christians follow these instructions.

Second Coming

Revelation Jesus Christ is coming back a second time. Just before that happens, God will take all Christians, dead and alive, to heaven. Then, there will be a time of difficult tribulation that will consume the entire earth, after which Jesus will return and inaugurate a time of world peace. This age—Messiah’s Kingdom—is the answer to humanity’s hope for a peace-filled world ruled in justice. But even this will be sullied by sin. At the end of this future era, God will judge the unsaved dead and consign them to a place called the lake of fire. Sinners and sin will be confined to that place forever, unable to damage the rest of God’s creation.

Completion

Revelation Finally, God will do a total cleanup of the universe by burning it all up and creating a new heaven and new earth. In this new earth he will take up residence and his people will live there with him in perfect harmony. This is what Christians call “heaven.” It will be a never-ending perfect society with no sickness, pain, or death.