

# Bible Overview



## What the Bible Is

What are the divine aspects of the Bible?

The Bible is an experiential book that conveys the concrete reality of human life.

--Leland Ryken

What are the human aspects of the Bible?

Where do we stand in relation to the Scriptures?

Historically the church has understood the nature of Scripture much the same as it has understood the person of Christ—the Bible is at the same time both human and divine. “The Bible,” it has been correctly said, “is the Word of God given in human words in history.” It is this dual nature of the Bible that demands of us the task of interpretation.

--Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart

## Finding Yourself in the Story

What is the text doing to us?

What happens when we don't see the Bible as a unified whole?

What are some of the ways in which we engage the text?

A fragmented understanding of the Bible may well produce theologically orthodox, morally upright, warmly pious idol worshippers.  
--Craig Bartholomew

Why are stories so important?

## **The Meta-Narrative**

If the Bible were a five act play, how would that play be put on?

What happens in Act 1?

What happens in Act 2?

What happens in Act 3?

What happens in Act 4?

What happens in Act 5?

## **Obedience**

What is the real trouble most of us have with the Bible?

What does loving Jesus require?

How is the Bible not an end in and of itself?

## Discussion Questions

How do you see your story fitting into the larger story that God is telling through the Bible?

Where is your life consistent or inconsistent with the story of Scripture?

With what Bible character do you most identify? Why?

## Suggested Resources

**J. Scott Duvall & J. Daniel Hays** | Grasping God's Word

**Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart** | How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth

**Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart** | How to Read the Bible Book by Book

**Leland Ryken** | How to Read the Bible as Literature

**Eugene Peterson** | The Invitation

**Kevin Vanhoozer** | Is There Meaning in this Text?

**Equipping Ministry Journal** | [www.heritagecc.org/equipping-weblog/](http://www.heritagecc.org/equipping-weblog/)

The Story We Find Ourselves In... (modified synthesis of NT Wright + John Goldingay)

Five Act Play (Model 1)	God's Engagement With Us (Model 2)	Associated Books / Passages	
Creation	God began <i>Creation</i>	Genesis 1-2	
Fall	God started over <i>from Eden to Babel</i>	Genesis 3-11	
Israel	God promised <i>Israel's Ancestors</i>	Genesis 12-50	
	God delivered <i>the Exodus</i>	Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	
	God covenanted <i>Sinai</i>		
	God gave <i>the Land</i>		
	God accommodated <i>from Joshua to Solomon</i>	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 & 2 Samuel	1 & 2 Kings 1 & 2 Chronicles Psalms Proverbs
	God wrestled <i>from Solomon to the Exile</i>	Job Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Hosea	Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah
God preserved <i>Exile &amp; Return</i>	Ezra Nehemiah Daniel	Haggai Zechariah Malachi	
Jesus	God sent <i>the coming of Jesus</i>	Matthew Mark Luke John	
The Church	God began again <i>new Creation</i>	Acts Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy	Titus Philemon Hebrews James 1 & 2 Peter 1, 2 & 3 John Jude Revelation
		God is redeeming...	
	God will complete it		

## Further Reading | Metanarrative • Andy Holt

Maybe you've heard the word "metanarrative" before. It's a five dollar word that educated types like to throw around to make other people regret they didn't spend tens of thousands of dollars on a post-graduate degree. (And yes, I'm one of those guys. Sorry.) Metanarrative just means Big Story. It's the Story behind and above the story. You might say the metanarrative of the Lord of the Rings is the triumph of Good over Evil in spite of human frailty and temptation to power. It's not just about hobbits and elves and rings—it's about you and me and the struggle between Good and Evil we find ourselves in every day.

The Bible has a metanarrative. There is a Story behind all the stories of the Bible—behind all the books and poems and laws and prophecies there lies a Big Story that holds them all together. The Big Story of the Bible is just like any other story. It has plot, characters, settings, moods—even occasional pyrotechnics! In order to see the metanarrative of the Bible you have to pull back so that you can see, as it were, the whole Scripture lying open in a scroll before you. When you see the whole Bible you find that the plot is this: Creation; Rebellion; Redemption Pursued; Redemption Accomplished; ReCreation.

### Creation

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"In the beginning, God." That's how the story starts. The first actor on the stage and the first one to speak is God. It all starts with him. He creates everything and calls it good. And then he creates humans and calls them very good. In the beginning, it's all good.

### Rebellion

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Well, that didn't last long. By the time you get to the third chapter of the Bible humans are screwing things up by rebelling against God. It's not all good anymore. In fact, it's very, very bad. Now that humans have sinned (which is basically rebelling against God), they have invited death into creation as a consequence. And it's not long before brothers start killing each other. Things spiral quickly into chaos until God regrets creating humans in the first place, so he sends a catastrophic flood to start over with the only good family left on earth. But, of course, that doesn't really solve anything, and it isn't long before humanity is back on the same path it was pursuing before the flood.

### Redemption Pursued

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Then along comes this old fella named Abraham, and God decides that he's going to undo everything that humanity has done through this guy and his descendants. Long story short, Abraham's descendants become the nation of Israel, whom God establishes through their great, triumphant exodus from slavery in Egypt. (By the way, the Exodus is the most important event in the Old Testament, so you would do well to study up on it.) God's intention is to redeem the whole world from sin and death and evil through Israel. But you probably already know how this story ends—not good! Israel winds up becoming just as sinful as everyone else, so there's no way that they can fulfill their role as the hope of the world. God's going to have to do something else—something drastic.

### Redemption Accomplished

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Jesus. Because the people God chose to be the vehicle of redemption for mankind failed to live up to their end of the bargain, he decided to do it himself. So God sent his son Jesus to become a human. (I know you've heard that a million times, but think about it. Think about it again. God. Became. Human.) Jesus came and did what Israel had failed to do—keep their agreement with God. And the thing is, when God became human, we killed him. Jesus was crucified like a brigand or criminal. But then he rose again! He came back from death, and his resurrection is the victory over sin and death that we had been waiting for all this time! The redemption that God had promised would come way back when we first rebelled finally happened in Jesus' death and resurrection.

### ReCreation

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But that's not the end of the story, because now Jesus is busy making all things new—that means me and you. God is at work ReCreating the cosmos, and he's starting with us humans, the people who sent everything into this downward spiral in the first place. Someday, when he decides the time is right, Jesus is going to come back and judge everyone, and that judgment will be the

ultimate act of ReCreation, because when he has judged he will ReCreate everything—not just you and me but the heavens and the earth as well. (If you think our world is beautiful now, just wait until Jesus gets to work and Yosemite Valley is the least beautiful place on earth.) Then he will come down here and live with us for all eternity.

That's the metanarrative of the Bible. The Big Story. All the little stories are just retellings of the Big Story (Scot McKnight calls them wiki-stories), and the Big Story is what holds them all together. And now it's our turn. It's our turn to find ourselves in the story (hint: we're in the ReCreation part) and tell wiki-stories of the Big Story, and to live out the implications of the Big Story so that the world can know that there really is a Storyteller behind and above it all.

