

What Is the Bible About?

(by Bob Pulliam)

Many people do not understand the Bible because they do not realize the message behind it. Some read it thinking that each individual book within it is foreign to all other books within it. But this is not true. Every book of the Bible actually serves a purpose toward the overall message of the Bible. This message begins in Genesis and works its way through to Revelation. It has been called "the golden thread" of the Bible, because you can see it woven through its entire fabric.

The Bible begins by relating the events of creation. It does not try to prove such. It simply states it as fact. On the sixth day of creation, God created the first man and woman (Adam and Eve). We are told that God's creation of them involved making them in His image and likeness. God gave humans something that He did not give anything else in creation: a soul. This soul will exist eternally, no matter what may come up in its future.

The reason for the Bible can be clearly seen in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve sin against God by disobedience to His command. This sin results in death, as God decreed when He gave the command (Gen 2:16f). The word death means separation, and we find them expelled from the garden, away from the presence of God (Gen 3:22ff). The consequence of sin is always death (Rom 6:23). Once one has sinned, he stands condemned by God, with no hope of eternal peace (remember the soul exists eternally). The Bible is all about what God has done to remedy that problem. God could have immediately destroyed His creation; or He could have provided a remedy for mankind's plight. He chose the later, and the Bible is what He did.

The first promise of a Savior comes in the curses that resulted from the first sin. As God cursed Satan, He said:

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." (Gen 3:15)

Satan had subdued mankind with sin; but a descendant of the woman (seed) would come to give mankind victory over Satan's oppression. Jesus is seen in this promise as He is crucified on the cross. The cross was only a temporary wound for Jesus, but in His resurrection He dealt a crushing blow to Satan's power. In Jesus' death and resurrection, mankind has received the ability to remove the curse of sin.

The book of Genesis relates the beginning of all things. Chapters 1-11 covers the beginnings of mankind. Chapters 12-50 relates the beginnings of the chosen nation, through whom the Savior would come. The remainder of the Old Testament (Genesis - Malachi) tells about God's chosen people, the law He gave them, and the wait for the time when the Savior (Messiah) would come. The New Testament calls that time "the fulness of the times" (Eph 1:10). It was the perfect moment in human history for God to establish the Messiah's kingdom, and accomplish His eternal purpose by the sacrifice of Jesus (Eph 3:11). After the close of the Old Testament, there is a period of about four hundred years when no inspired writings (Bible books) were produced.

The New Testament begins with the coming of the Messiah. Many of the Old Testament prophecies are pointed out as His birth, life, death, resurrection, and kingdom fulfill them. His apostles go forth with the message of salvation through a risen Christ. The book of Acts

relates the early history of the first century church. The epistles which follow Acts were written to churches and individuals regarding problems and important issues of the day, as well as for encouragement to righteous living.

The Bible ends with the book of Revelation. It is a highly symbolic book regarding the imminent persecution that would befall the early church, and ends with two and a half chapters regarding the final judgment.

Here is a brief outline of Bible history:

- I) The beginnings (Genesis)
 - A) The beginnings of mankind (sin enters the world)
 - B) The beginnings of a nation
 - 1) Abraham chosen (**given 3 promises**):
 - a) Become a great nation.
 - b) Given the land of Canaan.
 - c) All families of earth blessed in him.
 - 2) Isaac
 - 3) Jacob chosen (name changed to Israel)
 - a) 12 sons who represent 12 tribes.
 - b) Move to Egypt during famine.
 - 4) Israel in Egypt for 400 years (**1st promise fulfilled**).
- II) Israel leaves Egypt (Exodus)
 - A) Receives law at Sinai.
 - B) Wanders 40 years for rebellion.
- III) Israel conquers the promised land (Joshua - **2nd promise fulfilled**)
- IV) Israel ruled by judges (Judges)
- V) Israel ruled by kings (I Sam - II Chron)
 - A) People rebuked by prophets when they sinned.
 - B) Kingdom divided into Judah and Israel.
 - C) Prophets speak of a future Savior.
 - D) Northern kingdom taken into captivity 1st.
 - E) Southern kingdom taken into captivity later.
 - 1) Prophets prophesy a return.
 - 2) Daniel foretells Messiah's kingdom (Dan 2).
- VI) Israel returns from captivity (Ezra & Nehemiah)
- VII) Silence for 400 years.
- VIII) The Messiah comes (Matthew - John).
 - A) Way prepared by John as prophesied.
 - B) Jesus born, lives, dies, and is raised as prophesied.
 - C) Ascends to heaven, reigning there now.
- IX) Message of salvation in Jesus goes forth (Acts - **3rd promise fulfilled**).
 - A) Start of the church.
 - B) Great persecution.
 - C) Conversion of Paul.
 - D) Most epistles written during the time covered in the book of Acts.
 - E) Prophecies of coming apostasy.
- X) The Revelation to John (Revelation).
 - A) Great persecution imminent.
 - B) Many killed, times difficult.
 - C) God's cause will prevail.
 - D) Final judgment scenes (Rev 20:7 - 22:21).