

# The Biblical Story that is Our Story

Series: Getting to Know THE BOOK that Knows Me  
Brad Bailey – January 29, 2017

What story are you a part of?

The Larger Story: “The Goodness of God Redeeming all Creation by Grace through and in Christ.”

## Some Elements that Connect the Story

- **Covenant (Partnership)**

Jeremiah 31:31 (NLT)

*"The day will come," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.*

Luke 22:20 (NLT)

*After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This wine is the token of God's new covenant to save you—an agreement sealed with the blood I will pour out for you.*

Hebrews 9:15 (NLT)

*.... he (Christ) is the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, so that all who are invited can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.*

- **The Meeting of Heaven and Earth (Temple and Sacrifice)**
- **The Law (“Torah”)**

Colossians 2:17 (NIV)

*These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.*

Galatians 3:23-25 (NLT)

*Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed.<sup>24</sup> Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ*

*came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith.<sup>25</sup> And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.*

## Everything moves towards what fulfills the story...and that is Christ.

Luke 24:27, 32 (NLT)

*Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. .... They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"*

## The story that knows me...and makes sense of my own life.

---

Memory Verse for the week:

John 14:6

*"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"*

# **The Biblical Story that is Our Story**

Series: Getting to Know THE BOOK that Knows Me  
Brad Bailey – January 29, 2017

Intro: Let's begin by asking ourselves a question.

## **What story are you a part of?**

We may not think of our lives as part of a story. We may just think that every moment we are just randomly choosing who we are and what we do. But the truth is that...

## **We live life out of what we believe we are a part of.**

We live our lives in relationship to what we know about our beginnings (where we came from)...what we are then told about who we are...and what we believe we are to accomplish and fulfill.

**Jesus didn't live out of any human story. Jesus understood** that there is only one ultimate story ...it is the Divine Story... that which relates the eternal creator with creation.

What Jesus also makes clear...is that **many people had different versions...** that **would prove false.**

**He is calling us to return to the story.** He has made it possible to be reconciled to God...our Father...and **join in the family story** we were created for.

It is the unfolding story...revealed through the living testimony of the Scriptures. So as we continue our series on "Getting to know the Book that knows me"...

**One of the most valuable aspects of the Bible to grasp...is it's cohesive connected storyline.**

As we noted last week... it's **one of many reasons to trust** that it **transcends merely human ideas.**

It is telling a **cohesive story...** in which **what is raised at the start...** continues to be **carried through...**and is **ultimately fulfilled in the end...in a way that is profound and resolves the conflict in a way that is beyond what the human mind could have imagined.**

What's the big deal about that? I know a lot of books that carry the same theme from beginning to end. But this Book is made up of 66 books.... by forty different authors ...most of whom never met.... on three different continents, in three different languages.....written over sixteen hundred years of time..., and yet it carries this coherent story of God's relationship to creation forward.

Imagine what would happen if you asked everyone you know to write one chapter of a book...that you only give them the main topic? Now make them strangers living in different

times and cultures. It would be hard to keep the storyline coherent and the central figure consistent.

And that coherency is not only helpful in **testifying to it's uniqueness...** but it is **also helpful for understanding it.**

When we read a "book" of the Bible...we can find it hard to appreciate as a particular "book" or section of a book...because it **doesn't provide a very clear story in itself.**

- How are these genealogies significant?
- What am I supposed to understand in hearing about the exodus of this people from slavery to a promised land?
- Are these rules given to the priest or the people relevant to us in any way?
- Why is this Paul guy writing so much about how the relationship between Jews and Gentiles?

And it seems **hard to really know God....to understand Him...**just from one part of this book...sort of like trying to **appreciate who the main character** is in any story **just from one scene.**

**So this is what I want to help us grasp.**

**"The most valuable aspect of understanding the Bible comes with understanding how all the parts are part of larger storyline...and then discovering that it is our story."**

As Eugene Peterson describes rather profoundly,

**"The Bible is basically and overall a narrative, an immense, sprawling, capacious narrative. They show us a spacious world in which God creates and saves and blesses. First through our imaginations and then through our faith - imagination and faith are close kin here - they offer us a place in the story, invite us into this large story that takes place under the broad skies of God's purposes in contrast to the gossipy anecdotes that we cook up in the stuffy closets of the self. They invite us in as participants in something larger than our sin-defined needs, in something truer than our culture-stunted ambitions. We enter these stories and recognize ourselves as participants, whether willing or unwilling, in the life of God.**

**When we lose touch with our lives, our souls - our moral and spiritual, our God-personal lives - story is the best way of getting us back in touch again. The biblical way is to tell a story and invite us, "Live into this - this is what it looks like to be human in this God-made and God-ruled world; this is what is involved in becoming and maturing as a human being." We are taken seriously just as we are and given place in his story - for it is, after all, God's story. None of us is the leading character in the story of our lives. God is the larger context and plot in which all our stories find themselves." [1]**

**There's a plot in this story...and we are a part of it.**

There are several ways people might try to describe the whole plot in a single statement. [2]...

I think as cohesive as any is that of:

**The Larger Story: "The Goodness of God Redeeming all Creation by Grace through and in Christ."**

It begins with God's beautiful purpose in creation. It gives a poetic description of man being drawn into independence... and the fundamental shame and separation that followed... and then God beginning to reveal himself...calling one man through whom he would set apart a people to make a covenant with...and bless the whole world. And in that relationship... God sows the nature of separation...sacrifice...that leads to revealing the nature of his love and faithfulness...and the one thing that we need most... grace.

And this comes through...

**Some Elements that Connect the Story**

**They are elements or themes that emerge and are developed and fulfilled.**

Today... just touch upon some examples.

The first is...

**Covenant (partnership)**

Everything begin with the creation of a partnership... to cultivate the earth...bring forth it's potential. We decide to go rogue. So God calls a people and what he forms is a partnership... called a covenant. They can't live up to it.

But God had a new covenant in mind all along. As hear God Speak through the prophet Jeremiah...

**Jeremiah 31:31 (NLT)**

"The day will come," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.

And Jesus is the very means to that new covenant. On the night he would be taken... and then crucified...he shares the Passover meal... which represented God's providing for his people when enslaved...to protect them from his judgment upon Egypt. And here is what he says...

**Luke 22:20 (NLT)**

After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This wine is the token of God's new covenant to save you—an agreement sealed with the blood I will pour out for you.

As the writer of the book of Hebrews would later explain...

**Hebrews 9:15 (NLT)**

... he (Christ) is the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, so that all who are invited can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

**But amidst this process of partnership... how does the realm of God and earth relate? That is another element to consider.**

### **The Meeting of Heaven and Earth (Temple and Sacrifice)**

**For this I want to draw upon some really great work done by a young team called The Bible Project. [3] I hope you'll enjoy how well they have engaged some themes as well as I do.**

**Video: Heaven & Earth** – <https://thebibleproject.com/product/heaven-earth-video/>  
(6 min; explains two realms that intersect... includes sacrifice and temple)

This helps explain the significance of how all that God had set as **central into the life of the Jewish people... was a signpost for what was to come.**

**Sacrifices...**reminded them that sin must be absorbed by a life.

**And the Temple...** set into the hearts of the people...that those unclean cannot come close to God. The temple is at the center of all their life... to know that the living God would dwell with them...even if one could not safely come close to such goodness.

What becomes very clear...is that Jesus was declaring that he was the now the true temple. He was the embodiment of that space by which men and women could meet with God.

And as a people called out...they are given laws... that which tells them how to live as free people. SO lets consider that element that connects the storyline.

### **The Law (“Torah”)**

**The Torah is the Hebrew word normally translated “law” which eventually became a title for the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. The Torah was understood as a redeeming order for life ...to restore humanity.**

**VIDEO - The Law** – <https://thebibleproject.com/product/the-law-video/> (5:30; explains Law as it grows through OT through story...of failure ...then concludes with prophets telling of needing new heart...then Jesus bringing new heart ; shows names and linear movement of all OT books)

As N.T. Wright explains [4],

“Torah... was not only the word from God but the living presence of God’s word with and for the people of Israel. For someone to announce and embody a new Torah, in continuity with the old to be sure but going strikingly beyond it in various respects (Mt. 5:17-20), was to make the implicit claim that in his teaching and in his presence as teacher, the living God was somehow present.” (cf. Mt. 18:20)

**There are more elements we could trace...but I want to conclude with what matters most...which is how it is all fulfilled in Christ. In every theme...we discover that what everything is fulfilled in Jesus.**

**The Bible is always clear it is heading towards something God would do ....** Into the theme of covenant ...God speaks of a **new covenant** he will make (Jeremiah 31:31; Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:15; into the spiritual war at hand God declares that one will rise who will **strike down the spiritual enemy (Genesis 3:16)**; into the role of spiritual shepherds, God says I will personally come be the shepherd (Ezekiel 34:11-16.)

**Everything was like a shadow to which we now discover the real fulfilment. [5] As Paul explains...**

**Colossians 2:17 (NIV)**

**These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.**

**So we don't want to miss the fulfillment...**because without it...we won't understand anything else clearly.

The Bible is **an unfolding story...**but it is **more than simply linear**. There is the element in which **only at the end to you understand all that came before.**

My wife and I were watching a movie last week...that had one of those endings...that you never expected...and it left us talking about...and as we did...we realized that the end gave everything before it a whole new understanding. That is what the Biblical story does...the end clarifies everything that comes before it...it resolves the dilemma in ways beyond what anyone expected.

There is a telling point at which right after Jesus is raised from the dead... he engages two guys who were headed home from that crazy events that had taken place in Jerusalem... and what did Jesus do in this conversation?

**Luke 24:27 (NLT)**

Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

And their response is equally telling...

**Luke 24:32 (NLT)**

They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"

**There hearts were lit up. It made sense beyond what they could have grasped. And when we grasp the story...our hearts can sense how much it makes sense...and makes sense of our own lives.**

Ultimately he is the one who can make sense of all of life. For so many of us who struggle to put the map of life together...let his life form your map.

## Conclusion:

### What story will you choose?

I have found this question so vital.

What I have found is that it **speaks to me in profound ways**. It speaks to my heart. **It speaks to me as one who is part of the story it is telling.**

And it speaks to me **as telling me the story that makes sense of my own life.**

It tells me that my life is **rooted in relationship** ...that I am not merely material that became a living organism... that is deceived by some form of self-consciousness that thinks it is **more than mere random change trying to survive as the fittest...** but that which is **more ultimately rooted in relationship and responsibility.**

So if I see an infant left on the side of the road... I don't see that which is weak not surviving...I see that which was **meant to belong being abandoned...** that which I have a **moral right to engage**. I am a part of something that **bears meaningful than transcends my material nature.**

That is an example of what I mean when I say that this Book reveals and reflects who I am in a way that makes more sense of what I sense within me...than any other story.

And this Book explains why I long to belong. It tells me that it not merely a means of material survival...to keep my species winning...but that there is a deeper desire to be united... to others on a personal level... and **ultimately personally united with the personal source of life**. So when my body faces it's end... one naturally is faced not with a loss of survival but with separation....a desire not to depart from relationship.

And through all this... I am told that my **inner compass is not merely some form of survival instinct...** that **moral responsibility is not merely an evolving deduction in reasoning for the sake of survival**. It tells me that human life apart from relationship with God will rise up like Cain and kill it's brother in rivalry. It tells me that **something is wrong in my heart....an inner posture that defies reason**. It explains why **the very things I might deduce as being good....I don't simply or easily do**. It explains why **reasoning alone has never created men who can live what they reason or know to be right.**

It tells me that I need to be restored to life with God...and be blessed with belonging and purpose....and be given a new heart.

So think deeply about what story you will choose.

PRAYER....

## Memory Verse for the week:

## **John 14:6**

*“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

**Resources:** This message is part of a series focusing on the Bible itself. Some aspects of this series have drawn from both James Emery White’s message from “How to: Bible” series and Rick Warren’s 40 Days in the Word Campaign. This particular message did not draw from them, but I am indebted to both for the foundational messages for such a series...and the heart of the campaigns which they developed.

## **Notes:**

1. LIVING INTO GOD'S STORY by Eugene Peterson

([http://www.biblicaltheology.ca/blue\\_files/Living%20into%20God's%20Story.pdf](http://www.biblicaltheology.ca/blue_files/Living%20into%20God's%20Story.pdf))

2. There have been an increasing amount of lives who have helped recapture the larger storyline of the Bible. Among my favorites are Bill Jackson’s [The Eden Project: A Short Story](#) and [The Biblical Metanarrative: One God - One Plan - One Story](#). (His longer 7 hour seminar material is also available, entitled: “Nothin’s Gonna Stop It” which he developed for over 15 years.) Another well reviewed on [is The True Story of the Whole World: Finding Your Place in the Biblical](#), by Michael W. Goheen and Craig Bartholomew. In this work , the authors relate all acts to the role of King and Kingdom:

Act 1: God Establishes the Kingdom—Creation

Act 2: Rebellion in the Kingdom—Fall

Act 3: The King Chooses Israel—Redemption Initiated

Scene 1: A People for the King

Scene 2: A Land and a King for God’s People

Interlude: A Kingdom Story Waiting for an Ending—

The Intertestamental Period

Act 4: The Coming of the King—Redemption Accomplished

Act 5: Spreading the News of the King—The Mission of the Church

Scene 1: From Jerusalem to Rome

Scene 2: And into All the World

Act 6: The Return of the King—Redemption Completed



There has also been developed the beautiful ideas of the “Scarlet Thread” through the Bible. {Note: The “Scarlet Thread” was developed as a sermon in 1961 by W.A. Criswell and also a book by book Richard Booker }

3. These great videos are being created by The Bible Project. They are creating videos on every aspect of the Bible – themes, books, and more...that are truly remarkable in their combination of theological sophistication, relaxed and relatable conversational explanation, and brevity. Seems like a great group to support. <https://thebibleproject.com/>

4. Regarding Jesus and the Temple, N.T. Wright writes in “The Challenge of Jesus” (pp. 111-112)

“Jesus, at the very center of his vocation, believed himself called to do and be in relation to Israel what, in Scripture and Jewish belief, the Temple was and did. If Judaism did indeed have a great incarnational symbol at its very heart, namely the Temple, then for Jesus to upstage the Temple, to take on its role and function and to legitimate this with Davidic claims, meant that Jesus was claiming that he rather than the Temple was the place where and the means by which the living God was present with Israel.

He offered people “forgiveness of sins,” not only by saying so but also in some of his most characteristic actions, namely, his welcome to and his feasting with “sinners” of all sorts. He offered, in other words, the blessing that was normally obtained by going to, or at least (in the Dispersion) praying toward, the Temple. The immensity of this should not be missed. ....it was the offer of the new-covenant reality to which the Temple was the old-covenant signpost. That which you might obtain at the Temple – and would then need to obtain again after another round of sinning and impurity – you could have now and forever by accepting Jesus’ welcome, by trusting him, by following him. He was the personal embodiment of what the Temple stood for.”

5. Speaking of the ritual and ceremonial forms which helped the people identify as set apart... Paul would explain:

Hebrews 10:1 (NIV)

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves.

Galatians 3:23-25 (NLT)

Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed. <sup>24</sup> Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. <sup>25</sup> And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.

The word translated “guardian” refers to the trusted family servant who took the child to school. It was the school that fulfilled the potential of the child to be all he could possibly be, as a fully equipped adult, which is what the believer becomes, in Christ.



## Home Church Study: The Biblical Story that is Our Story

Series: Getting to Know THE BOOK that Knows Me / January 31-February 4, 2017

This week we are continuing our new series entitled: “*Getting to Know The Book that Knows Me.*” The Bible is a remarkable book. If you open a Bible at random you could come across poetry, proverbs, history, love-songs, architectural details or a national legal code. This amazing collection of literature was drawn together by numerous authors over a period of hundreds of years, yet amazingly – miraculously, even – it still tells one consistent story.

**Connecting Question: What is one of your favorite stories? Why?  
Or What is one of your favorite movies about the Bible?**

**Group Discussion:**

- 1. Can someone tell the story of the Bible in 3 minutes?**
- 2. Can someone tell the story of the Bible in 60 seconds?**

*Read the following passages*

Hebrews 9:15 (NLT)

*.... he (Christ) is the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, so that all who are invited can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.*

Galatians 3:23-25 (NLT)

*Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed.<sup>24</sup> Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith.<sup>25</sup> And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.*

Luke 24:27, 32 (NLT)

*Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. .... They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?”*

- 3. What are some of the major themes in the Scriptures?**

**4. Why is it important that we read and study the Old Testament and not just focus on New Testament?**

**5. Spend some time exploring the differences between the old and new covenants.**

The old required complete obedience to laws/rules God provided after the flood. Israel's continuing shortcomings defined the poster children for human inability to win favor by that covenant.

Jeremiah prophesies a new and better covenant for Israel

*"The day will come," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. Jeremiah 31:31 (NLT)*

The old covenant embraced the temple with its rituals and rigidity, but the new covenant establishes a different priesthood consisting of Jesus. This covenant redefines grace; the scapegoat is fulfilled by the new Lamb.

The temple is redefined as well. God does not reside in buildings, but we can invite Him in instead of the other way around as with the old. There is an incredible transition from stone to human hearts that God chooses to dwell in.

*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. 1 Cor 3:16-17*

*I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. Ezekiel 11:19-20*

**6. Read: "This story of the Bible is not like any other story you are likely to come across. The Bible claims to be the ultimate story which explains why the universe exists, why the world is the way it is and where the whole of creation is heading. It is a story that makes a claim on your life: which says that you were created for a purpose and which tells you what that purpose is."**

**How does the Bible help you make sense of your life?**

**7. The Story of the Bible could be divided in 5 acts**

- Act 1: Creation - Genesis 1-3
- Act 2: Israel - Genesis 12-Malachi 4

- Act 3: Incarnation and Redemption - The Gospels
- Act 4: The Church - Acts and 2000 years of history
- Act 5: The Future - Revelation

**8. How does the fact that there is still a future story to be told make you feel?  
What part do we have to play in that?**

**Allow anyone to recite the Memory Verse for the week:**

John 14:6

*“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

**Ministry: Close in a time of sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.**