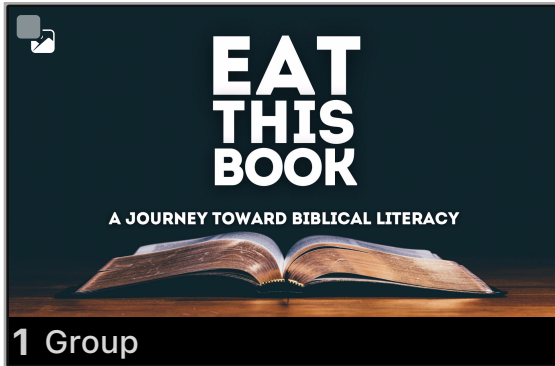


# 2024.01.28 - Meta-Story of the Bible

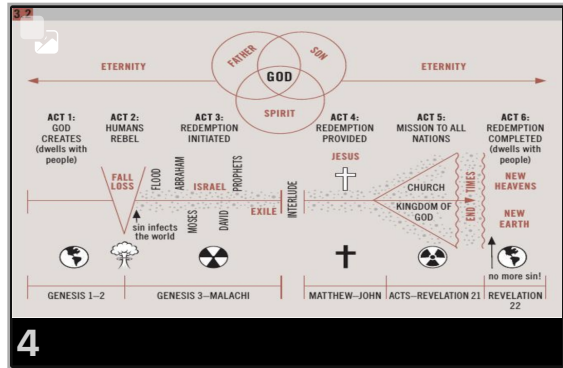


Understanding the meta-story of the Bible helps us to interpret the Bible wisely.

2

"Knowing the Bible storyline is so important to understanding the Bible. This storyline tells of God's creating the universe and human beings so he can dwell among us and be in relationship with us. The Bible begins and ends with the beautiful fact that God loves us as his children and wants us to be in his presence. The majority of Bible verses that are pointed out today as disturbing or crazy are ones that are taken out of context and have reasonable explanations for them."  
-Dan Kimball

3



These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground. But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground. Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

5

The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed. The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

6

The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

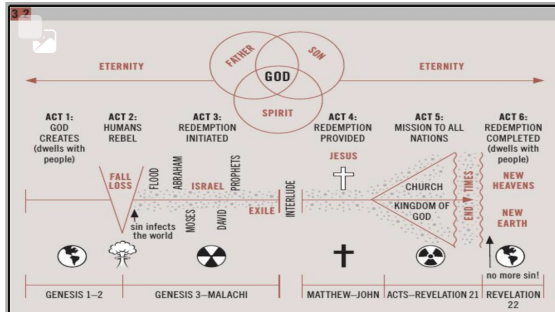
7

The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.

8

And the man said:  
This one, at last, is bone of my bone  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one will be called "woman,"  
for she was taken from man.  
This is why a man leaves his father and mother  
and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. Both  
the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.  
-Genesis 2:4-9, 15-25

9



10

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden?'"  
The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.'"

11

"No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

12

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"  
And he said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."  
Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

13

The man replied, "The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate."  
So the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"  
And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."  
So the LORD God said to the serpent:  
Because you have done this, you are cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild animal. You will move on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life.

14

I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.  
He said to the woman:  
I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children with painful effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you.  
And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it':

15

The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust."

16

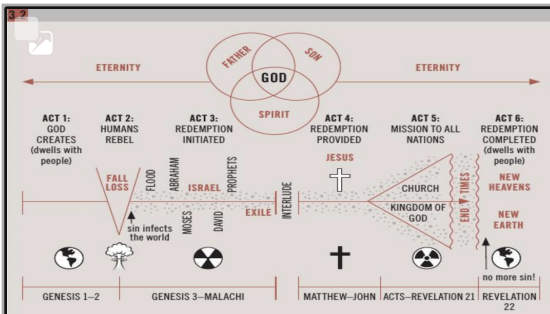
The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living. The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.  
The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever."

17

So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

-Genesis 3

18



19

The LORD said to Abram:  
Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.  
I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.  
So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

20

After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:  
Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great.  
But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Abram continued, "Look, you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house will be my heir."

21

Now the word of the LORD came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous."  
Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

22

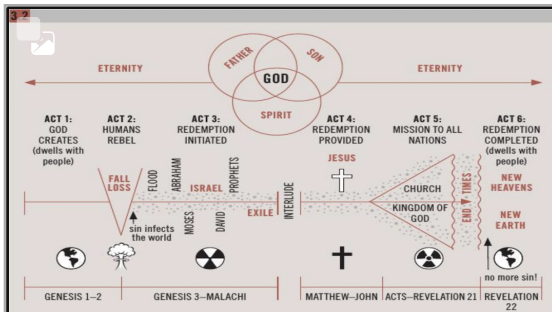
When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in my presence and be blameless. I will set up my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell facedown and God spoke with him: "As for me, here is my covenant with you: You will become the father of many nations. Your name will no longer be Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I will make you the father of many nations. I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you.

23

I will confirm my covenant that is between me and you and your future offspring throughout their generations. It is a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. And to you and your future offspring I will give the land where you are residing—all the land of Canaan—as a permanent possession, and I will be their God."

-Genesis 12:1-4; 15:1-6; 17:1-8

24



25

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

26

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

27

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Indeed, we have all received grace upon grace from his fullness, for the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side—he has revealed him.

28

This was John's testimony when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" He didn't deny it but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." "What then?" they asked him. "Are you Elijah?" "I am not," he said. "Are you the Prophet?" "No," he answered. "Who are you, then?" they asked. "We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What can you tell us about yourself?"

29

He said, "I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord—just as Isaiah the prophet said." Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. So they asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you aren't the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?" "I baptize with water," John answered them. "Someone stands among you, but you don't know him. He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to untie."

30

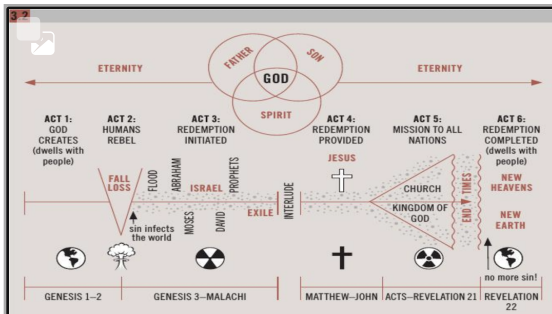
All this happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.  
 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I told you about: 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.' I didn't know him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him.

31

I didn't know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on—he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

-John 1:1-14, 16-34

32



33

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men.

34

The angel told the women, "Don't be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.' Listen, I have told you."

35

So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his disciples the news. Just then Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They came up, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."

36

The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

37

While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "Which," he said, "you have heard me speak about; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?"

38

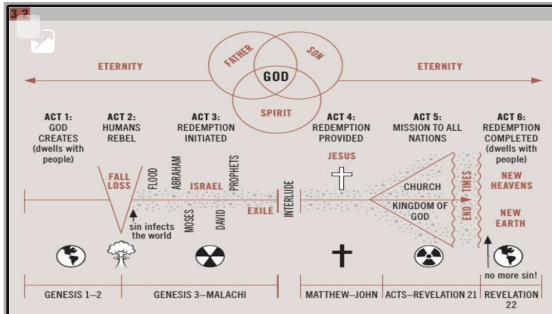
He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

39

While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven."

-Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20  
-Acts 1:4-11

40



41

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.

42

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life.

43

Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

44

Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever. Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

45

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" Then he said to me, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. Let the unrighteous go on in unrighteousness; let the filthy still be filthy; let the righteous go on in righteousness; let the holy still be holy."

46

"Look, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to repay each person according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

47

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the Root and descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let anyone who hears, say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely. I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.

48

And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.

He who testifies about these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen.

-Revelation 21:1-6; 22:1-21

49

50

Understanding the meta-story of the Bible helps us to interpret the Bible wisely.

51

52

"Many reading errors can be avoided if we simply remember that the Bible comes to us packaged in a kind of literary 'wrapping'.... For example, some of the narratives of the Hebrew Bible describe polygamy (marriage to two or more wives). But it doesn't teach or endorse polygamy. It describes the way things were, not what should have been.

53

In fact, I would point out that every single time that polygamy does occur in narratives, it turns out disastrously for the characters involved. Narratives do teach truths, but they do so differently than poetry or discourse - by 'showing' rather than 'telling.'"

-Ray Lubeck

54

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56

The purpose of the Bible is not simply informational, but rather formational.

57

“Christian reading is participatory reading, receiving the words in such a way that they become interior to our lives, the rhythms and images becoming practices of prayer, acts of obedience, ways of love.”

-Eugene Peterson

58

Reading Large Portions of Scripture Aloud:

1. Get Comfortable
2. Pick A Passage

Ideas: Ruth, Psalm 119, Matthew 5-7, John 18-21, Galatians, Philippians, James, 1 John - 2 John - & 3 John

3. Establish The Reader(s)
4. Invite The Holy Spirit
5. Read
6. Silence & Prayer