# An Overview Of The Bible

## Index


**Getting To Know The Book**

1. Basic Layout
2. How Did We Get The Bible?
3. What Does The Bible Claim To Be?
4. The Final Question
5. Worldview

**Chapter 1 - Beginnings**

**Chapter 2 - Fall**

**Chapter 3 - Israel**

**Chapter 4 - Jesus**

**Chapter 5 - Church**

**Chapter 6 - Restoration**

# Getting To Know The Book

Objective 1: Set the relational "tone" for this overview. Make sure to invite your friend to share about his/her spiritual journey, spiritual questions, even also the struggles he/she might have with God and/or religion.

Objective 2: A basic layout of the Bible

Objective 3: A basic introduction to how we received the Bible and what it claims to be

Passages: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Peter 1:21

## Basic Layout

Most people who are interested in the Bible have little working knowledge of the Bible and its layout. It's often helpful to give them a basic layout of the Bible and some basic instructions on how to navigate the Bible.

If you are operating out of a paper Bible, you can have your friend navigate to the Table of Contents. From there, you can direct them to the two major sections of the Bible: The Old Testament and The New Testament. In a very basic sense, the Old Testament is mainly about the nation of Israel. The New Testament is mainly about Jesus and the Church. You can also communicate that the two major sections form one big story about God's loving pursuit of people in order to have a relationship with them.

Note: If they are looking at the Bible through a Bible App, you should be able to have them navigate to a screen listing all of the books of the Bible. You can explain that the Bible is divided into the two major sections between the books of Malachi and Matthew.

It's also helpful to explain that each book is laid out with chapter numbers separating major sections in each book and verse numbers representing various locations within each chapter. Bible scholars have done this to make it easy to find specific places within the Bible. You can actually navigate to a specific location, like 2 Timothy 3:16.

## How Did We Get The Bible?

The formalizing of what we call "the Bible" was a slow process (1,400 years, 40+ authors), but there are some important details about it that we know. He are some bullet points to consider:

- Written by 40 different men (Moses, various prophets, Paul, Luke, John, Peter, etc).
- Written in 3 different languages (manuscripts evidence of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic origins).
- Written over a 1,400 year span.
- Written in various literary genres (narrative, poetic, didactic, apocalyptic, prophetic, epistle,

etc)

- Written for many different reasons (to inform people about God; to inform people about life, meaning, purpose; to explain how to think and live; to combat false teaching, to foretell the future).

We can recognize a few key events in history that specifically led to the ultimate sealing of the Bible in its present state. Consider using the information in this chart as a basic timeline of when and how we formally received the "Bible", in terms of the completed canon.

| DATE | EVENT |
|---|---|
| AD 95-235 | Various early church leaders (Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, etc) mention and use the various books of the New Testament. |
| AD 363 | Council of Laodicea concludes that only the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament were to be read in the churches. |
| AD 397 | Council of Carthage officially prohibits the use of any other variation of the "Bible" to be read. |

## What Does The Bible Claim To Be?

From 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul gives us an understanding of how the Bible came to us. Although there were various writers over a span of 1400 years, there is actually only one author, God Himself. These verses provide for us a clear perspective on, not only the importance of the Bible, but also the motivation behind it. We understand that all of the Bible is given by God and it has a number of foci: to teach, reprove, correct, and train in righteousness. The key phrase in this passage, related to the concept of revelation, is the phrase "God-breathed." This unique phrase in the Greek New Testament is quite vivid as it portrays God revealing Himself to us through His own Word that literally comes up from within His very being - "God-breathed."

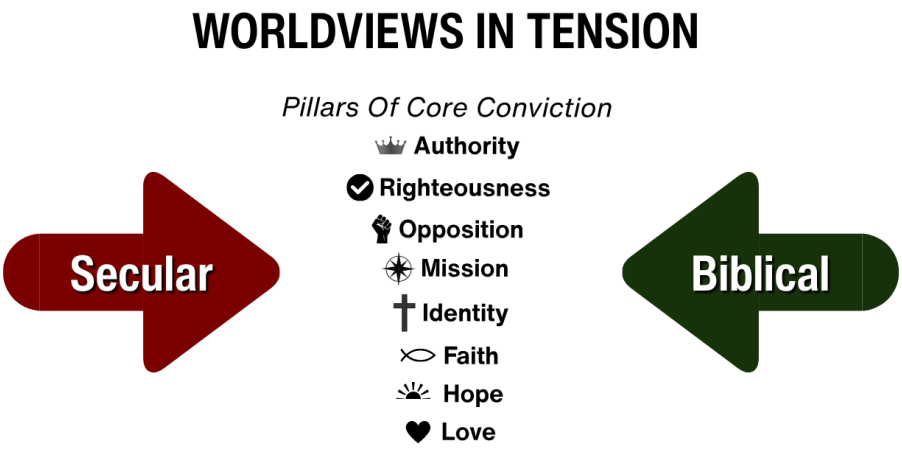
2 Peter 1:21 also gives us a simple description of the process of specific revelation through human beings. This process is extremely important because it explains the key components of the doctrine of revelation:

- “not produced by the will of man” Of first importance in this verse is the notion that the Bible did not originate with people. Although people assisted God in the physical task of writing the Bible, the content (even the words themselves) came from God’s supernatural work in them.
- “men spoke from God” In this next clause, we read that the physical process was through the avenue of people who God selected and supernaturally empowered to communicate His very words and truths to all people.
- “carried along by the Holy Spirit” Lastly, this verse explicitly states that the Bible came through the empowering of the Holy Spirit, both in the sense that He gave content and also that He empowered the process.

## Worldview Tension

God's story exists to inform us of both the true history of all things, but even more deeply, it seeks to inform us of God's fundamental *perspective* on all of life so that we can believe with Him and walk with Him in this world according to His perspective - His worldview.

One of the objectives of our consideration of the Larger Story is to know and understand God's worldview. Each discussion of each chapter, should be motivated by asking questions, considering, and understanding each chapter through the lens of how God wants to reshape our worldview. Each chapter will have a short review and a "Worldview" section to lay out the core worldview perspectives that are addressed in that chapter.




## The Final Question

If the Bible claims to exclusively be the revealed Word of the living God to us, and He revealed it so we might have a relationship with Him, don’t we owe it to ourselves to consider these claims?

# Chapter 1 - Beginnings And Design

## Review

Before you prepare new content to share with your friend, make sure to remind yourself of the Larger Story of God and the "point in time" that you will be talking about. Referring to the timeline can help you remember the place in time, from God's perspective, that you are discussing, and it also can help you stay on point without speaking to issues that will be covered in future chapters.




## Worldview

| | |
|---|---|
| Authority: | God predates all things, creates out of nothing, holds all things by the power of his own nature. He is *over* all things. |
| Righteousness: | God created all things right. |
| Mission: | Multiply a God-dependent humanity |
| Identity: | Individual humans find security in relationship to and with God, not from other people. |
| Faith: | Human flourishing is available only by faith - believing in God and all embracing His perspective on all things. |
| Love: | God created people and established them in prominence over the earth for their own good and flourishing. He fully accepted and embraced them. |

## 1 | 1

Passage: Genesis 1:1-25

Topic: Creation of the heavens and the earth

Summary: God preexisted before all things. He is perfect and nothing He does is bad. God created all things by His power alone. His power is demonstrated in creation as He spoke all things into existence out of nothing and with nothing - He is the only true creator, which is much different than a builder. He created people to be like Him (not the same as Him, but like Him) so that we could relate to Him and other people in a personal way. He also wanted us to rule over the earth that He created. In other words, God wanted us to serve Him while we were in close friendship with Him.

Themes:

1. God is existed before all things; therefore, He needing nothing to survive.
2. God created everything out of nothing but His Word.
3. God has authority over all things because He created everything.

## 1 | 2

Passage: Genesis 1:26-2:25

Topic: Creation of mankind

Summary: When we look at the creation account of humanity, we find that a new focus is highlighted. First, the phrase "Let us make man in our image" indicates that God does not exist as a single being, but as a group of relational beings who are in perfect unity. This perfect relational union between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit was in existence before anything else. Therefore, all of God's creative acts came out of this dynamic intimate relationship.

Second, the pattern of God's creative acts shifts when He comes to humanity, and this shift is significant for us to recognize and understand. God demonstrated something unique about humanity in the way He created them and in the role that He gave them to rule over everything else. This uniqueness stems from the fact that we are like God or, in other words, image bearers of God. It is important that we investigate and consider what it means to be image bearers of God and how that plays into the rest of the Biblical narrative.

Themes:

1. God exists as a group of relational beings where there is perfect unity between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit.

2. God loves people and He wants them to be in deep relationship with Him.
3. God wants to fill the whole earth with His love through people.

# Chapter 2 - Fall

## Review

Before you prepare new content to share with your friend, make sure to remind yourself of where you are at in the Larger Story of God. Take time to refer to the timeline so that you can provide a clear reference point for your friend, in order that they may better understand what you will be talking about.




## Worldview

| | |
|---|---|
| Authority: | God determines what is right. He is always righteous and must judge sin. |
| Righteousness: | God is righteous. People need to righteous to be in right relationship *to* and *with* God |
| Opposition: | Satan is introduced as the one who is opposed to God, seeking to destroy all that God designs. Humans have a natural (attached to the physical body) inclination of independence from God. |
| Mission: | Align with God's plan for redeeming and restoring humanity from sin. |
| Identity: | Due to sin, human identity is naturally separate from God. |
| Faith: | Adam and Eve were given the relational opportunity to trust/depend on God for the knowledge of good and evil. People must believe in the promised Redeemer to be restored to right standing to God. Their lack of faith is the foundation of sin. |
| Hope: | God promises to provide a Redeemer, someone who will restore human's relationship *to* God and their ability to live and walk *with* God. |
| Love: | God sacrificially provides the means for salvation to people. Any human relationship *to* and *with* God is based on His loving acts of sacrifice for them. |

## 2 | 1

Passage: Genesis 3, Ezekiel 28:11-19

Topic: People chose independence from God

Summary: Satan comes onto the scene as angel who had rejected the authority of God and the relationship with God for a life of independence. This put him in a position as God's enemy. In the prophet Ezekiel's prophecy found in Ezekiel 28:11, he is referred to as the King of Tyre, which is a reference to false deity (Baal) of the people of Tyre, Malquart, which means "King of the City". Ezekiel was referring to this false King - who is Satan, the fallen angel. It is he who approached Adam and Eve and tempted them to follow him in his path of independence from God.

Adam and Eve chose to disregard God's authority and walk independently of Him. They listened to Satan's lies and followed their own thinking. Because God is perfect, He does not allow sin in His presence, and He had to judge Adam and Eve for their independence. The result was a separation ("death") from God and a loss of their close relationship with Him, which included their position with Him and their friendship with him. They were now destined for physical death that would also leave them eternally separated from God and His love. This choice not only affected them, but all of their offspring as well. We are all born in sin, receiving this from Adam and Eve.

Themes:

1. Independence from God brings relational separation from Him.
2. Satan chose independence from God and, as God's enemy, seeks to bring that same death into our lives.
3. The choice of Adam and Eve affected the entire human race.

## 2 | 2

Passage: Genesis 3:15

Topic: God promised to restore all things

Summary: In the midst of failure, sin, fear, shame, blaming, and separation from God, God gave the first humans a promise. Because of their choice, it has placed all people to this day in a terrible predicament of being separated from God. Yet, God alone can offer a solution to their problem. We must remember, all people are all separated from God and can do nothing to fix their problem! For Adam and Eve, it was right at this point that God offered to send someone who would deal with

Satan and provide a way for people to be restored to a relationship with God. This is a theme that begins in Genesis 3:15, but will be further explained throughout the Bible.

Themes:

1. God promised to provide a way to restore people back to Himself.
2. God's promise was not one of many options to consider to be restored; it was the only option to be restored.

# Chapter 3 - Israel

## Review

Before you prepare new content to share with your friend, make sure to remind yourself of where you are at in the Larger Story of God. Take time to refer to the timeline so that you can provide a clear reference point for your friend, in order that they may better understand what you will be talking about.




## Worldview

| | |
|---|---|
| Authority: | God determines His plans for redeeming and restoring humanity. |
| Righteousness: | God's plan for Israel was one of national righteousness. It was built upon the nation being committed to upholding a national identity and function that demonstrated God's righteousness to the world. |
| Opposition: | Satan attacked Israel through the temptation to marry and embrace the nations around them who worshipped false gods. Israel struggled in their own flesh and natural inclination to live apart from dependency on God. |
| Mission: | God desires to use people to restore humanity to Himself. His desire was to use Israel as a nation to be a light and avenue wby which all nations could be restored to Him. |
| Identity: | Israel was God's chosen people; unique and separate from all other nations. |
| Faith: | Israel could be a blessed nation if they would believe in God's promises and in His way of living for them. |
| Hope: | God promised Israel both an eternal Redeemer to save them spiritually, and an eternal King to save them nationally. |
| Love: | God sacrificially provides everything that was necessary for Israel's thriving. They merely needed to respond in faith to Him. |

## 3 | 1

Passage: Genesis 6:9-7:5, 8:13-22

Topic: Noah and the Ark

Summary: This is a famous story because of its familiarity, but there is a clear principle demonstrated in the story that will assist in preparing people to learn of and understand Jesus and His work for them. There are two key principles in the story of Noah. First, the payment for sin against God is death. The story of Noah is a very graphic depiction of this. Second, God's provides a way of escape from His judgment to those who trust in Him. Because of the sinfulness of mankind, God was forced to punish people and destroy them. Not because he wanted to, but because He is holy and righteousness and cannot overlook their sin. In the midst of that judgment, God offers a way of escape to Noah because of his faith in God.

Themes:

1. The consequence of sinning against God is death.
2. God provides a way of escape from His judgment to those who believe in Him.

## 3 | 2

Passage: Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6

Topic: Abraham

Summary: God's desire is to restore all people to Himself. During this phase of God's Larger Story, He chose to raise up the nation of Israel through Abraham and his descendants to show and tell the world who He is. He also promised that through Abraham's descendant He would save the world. This directly connects to that first promise that God gave to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. This affirms God's character as a promise keeper and it gives hope to what is to come.

As we study Abraham, we are also instructed in one of the main issues that God is looking for in us - the issue of faith. Abraham demonstrated faith in God and His promise to bring the Redeemer through his offspring. This is displayed when Abraham believed God's promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. One of those descendants would be the Redeemer. The result of his faith in God was that God gave Abraham a right-standing before Himself, total acceptance based on Abraham's belief in God's Word. Abraham didn't have all the answers and did not know how everything would work out, but he believed in the promise of God and that saved him. He understood that he could not work to attain what God promised, he had to simply believe in God's ability to provide.

Themes:

1. The promised Redeemer that God would send to save mankind would come through the family of Abraham.
2. Whoever would believe in this promised Redeemer would be saved.
3. God desires to have an intimate relationship with all people (this comes from the promise to Abraham that in him all families of the earth would be blessed).

## 3 | 3

Passage: Genesis 22:1-14

Topic: Abraham and Isaac

Summary: This is a key biblical story for a number of reasons. The most significant principle in this story is the principle of substitutionary death. Abraham demonstrated faith in God and His promise when he was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, through whom the Redeemer was promised to come. The key component of this story is how God responds to Abraham's faith by providing a ram to die in the place of Isaac. This story will be an example that you will remind them of when you teach them about Jesus.

Themes:

1. Belief in what God says about the Redeemer results in being restored to a relationship with God.
2. God provides a substitute to pay for the sins of people (Isaac deserved to die for his sin, yet God provided a ram as a replacement for Isaac).
3. People can respond to this substitute by believing it.

## 3 | 4

Passage: Exodus 19-20

Topic: The establishment of the Law

Summary: Through a series of events over 400 years, Abraham's descendants grew to millions of people (the nation of Israel) and were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up a deliverer for His people (Moses) to lead Israel out of Egypt. As the Israelites moved toward the land that God promised to Abraham (The Promise Land), they began to act out against God, choosing a life of independence from Him. They desired the old land of Egypt over trusting God into the promised land. They failed to rest in

God and His holiness for their lives. God instituted the Law for Israel to make a distinction between His people and the surrounding nations. The heart of this Law was love for both God and others. Consequently, over time, it showed the Israelites' lack of ability to love God and others according to God's design. It exposed their sin and their constant need to be pursuing Him.

Themes:

1. God provides pictures of the promised Redeemer throughout the Old Testament in the lives of people like Abraham and Moses.
2. All people fall short of God's standard of love because of the Fall and therefore, sin against God and others.
3. People are imperfect because of their sin and unacceptable to a perfect God.

# Chapter 4 - Jesus

## Review

Before you prepare new content to share with your friend, make sure to remind yourself of where you are at in the Larger Story of God. Take time to refer to the timeline so that you can provide a clear reference point for your friend, in order that they may better understand what you will be talking about.




## Worldview

| | |
|---|---|
| Authority: | God alone can redeem and restore humanity. His plan of doing so through Jesus is the only way that humanity is to be saved. |
| Righteousness: | God's plan for saving and restoring humanity is and can only be fully accomplished through the standard of His righteousness alone. He accomplishes this by providing His very own righteousness *freely* through Jesus by faith. |
| Opposition: | Satan attacks and fights against the arrival of and work of Jesus for the sake of humanity. |
| Mission: | God desires to use people to restore humanity to Himself by working humans as ambassadors of Him and His message. |
| Identity: | By faith in Jesus' substitutionary death and resurrection, humans can finally attain full and eternal right standing within the God family. |
| Faith: | Israel could be a blessed nation if they would believe in God's promises and in His way of living for them. |
| Hope: | God promises eternal and complete restoration of all things in creation through the impending return and righteous reign on King Jesus over all the earth. |
| Love: | God models the highest example of sacrificial love in His sending of Jesus to humanity. By faith and salvation in Him, people can also live and demonstrate this love to others. |

## 4 | 1

Passage: Matthew 1:17, 18-25

Topic: Jesus is born

Summary: In Chapter 3 of this study, we learned that Abraham was the one that God chose in order to make a nation from his offspring. Recall one of the promises to Abraham: "In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Beginning with Genesis 3:15, and throughout Israel's history, God continued to reveal more information about the promised Redeemer. For example, roughly 1000 years after Abraham, David was born as a descendant of Abraham and became the second king of Israel. God promised David that one of his descendants would sit on the throne of Israel forever. Roughly 1000 years after David, Jesus was born as that promised descendant of David and Abraham and as the fulfillment of the promise made to Adam and Eve to deal with sins of people.

Themes:

1. God fulfilled all of his promises about the Redeemer in the person of Jesus who was the descendant of Abraham and David.
2. Jesus is God who came to live with people and fulfill the Genesis 3:15 promise to deal with the sins of all people.

## 4 | 2

Passage: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22

Topic: Jesus' disciples

Summary: Before going too much in depth into the life and ministry of Jesus, we are initially introduced to a group of men called the Disciples. They are a very key group of people in the biblical story of God restoring mankind to their original purpose of having relational with Him and with other people. The disciples collectively chose to leave everything and follow Jesus, and Jesus chose to teach and train them about living in God's Mission. Jesus modeled, through his time and interaction with his disciples, that pursuing God and what He's about is done best in a humble community of people that is pursuing Jesus together.

Themes:

1. Jesus modeled that pursuing God and what He's about is done best in a humble community that is pursuing Jesus together.

2. God wants to restore people to their original intended purpose of having relationally intimacy with Him and people; that is only accomplished when we sacrifice our desires for what He has for us.

## 4 | 3

Passage: Luke 7:1-7, 11:37-44; John 3:16-17

Topic: Jesus' ministry

Summary: These couple of accounts about Jesus give a picture of what Jesus was primarily doing in His earthly ministry. He demonstrated his power and authority over all things in order to validate Himself as the Son of God and so that people would believe in Him. Jesus also wanted to make clear that God's salvation (how to be included in and live in God's Larger Story) had always been linked to the promise of the Redeemer that God instituted in the Garden of Eden.

Most of the religious leaders of Jesus' day had grown to trust in their own righteous acts as the way to be restored to God. Jesus strongly contradicted and opposed their thinking. Jesus made it clear that restoration was and will always be by faith alone in what God provided in the promised Redeemer; it can never be gained by our own righteous acts.

Themes:

1. Jesus showed by his great power that He is the promised Redeemer and Son of God.
2. Jesus taught clearly that salvation has always been and always will be by faith in what God provided in the promised Redeemer.

## 4 | 4

Passage: John 14:1-6; Mark 15:1-16:8

Topic: Jesus' death and resurrection

Summary: Jesus promised to come back for all those who believed in Him and take them to be with Him and His Father. Jesus makes an exclusive statement that He is the only way to the Father. Throughout the world, Satan has established various systems of thinking that promote different ways to be "saved." They are all counterfeit ways meant to steer people away from the Truth of how to have an intimate relationship with the one true God of all things. The death and resurrection of Jesus are the key works of Jesus that open up the way to having this intimate

relationship with the Father.

For this reason, it is important to work through the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus and clearly connect it to the Old Testament stories that prepare the way for Jesus. Take the necessary time to remind your friend of the promise in the Garden of Eden, the ram that took the place of Isaac, and God's promise to Abraham to send one of his descendants to save mankind. Jesus is the culmination of all those promises and we need to believe in Jesus' sacrifice for us in order to be saved.

Themes:

1. Jesus is the only way to enter a relationship with God. This happens through belief in Him.
2. Jesus fulfills all the OT prophecies about the promised Redeemer and is the final sacrifice for all those who believe in Him. His death was the substitute in place of our own death for our sins against God.

## 4 | 5

Passage: Matthew 28:18-20

Topic: The Great Commission

Summary: The commission paints a very clear picture of what our mission is as believers in Jesus: to make disciples of all people by following Jesus ourselves through reprioritizing our lives so we can have a deeper relationship with Him and so we can love others with the same love He has for us. This involves immersing ourselves and others into a deeper relationship with the Trinity, and teaching ourselves and others all that He has told us. Jesus now reiterates the same mission He gave to Adam and Eve, yet He gives it now to us through making disciples who love Jesus and others the way Jesus loves. God has always been about this relational priority for people.

Themes:

1. Jesus invites us to participate with Him in His mission to restore all people to their original intended design of deep relational intimacy with God and other people. This puts the nature and character of God on display for others to experience.

# Chapter 5 - Church

## Review

Before you prepare new content to share with your friend, make sure to remind yourself of where you are at in the Larger Story of God. Take time to refer to the timeline so that you can provide a clear reference point for your friend, in order that they may better understand what you will be talking about.




## Worldview

| | |
|---|---|
| Authority: | God sovereignly decided to shift His human strategy from Israel to the Church. Through His wisdom and foreknowledge, His strategy for humanity's salvation has changed. |
| Righteousness: | Righteousness for humanity is the non-negotiable condition for human restoration. This righteousness is stewarded by the Church. It is also right for God's people to live within God's family - the Church. |
| Opposition: | Satan attacks and fights against the Church; seeking to upend the growth and flourishing of God's people who seek His mission of redemption/ restoration. |
| Mission: | God desires to use people to restore humanity to Himself by working humans as ambassadors of Him and His message. |
| Identity: | The Church is compromised of those who are individually identified as God's children, and corporately identified in God's family through the Church. |
| Faith: | Israel could be a blessed nation if they would believe in God's promises and in His way of living for them. |
| Hope: | God promises eternal and complete restoration of the Church into God's forthcoming Kingdom. |
| Love: | God's family - expressed through the Church - is to be transformed internally by, and externally demonstrate the love of God through Jesus. Sacrifice for the gain of others is to be the highest value of the Church. |

## 5 | 1

Passage: Acts 1:6-11, 2:1-13

Topic: The Holy Spirit comes and the Church is born

Summary: There is much confusion in our world today over the Church. Many have had some kind of experience with the Church (weddings, funerals, VBS, attendance as a kid with a family member, media, etc.) and have formed skewed understandings that are contrary to the Bible's definition and function of the Church. In a very basic sense, the Church exists to help believers in Jesus learn how to think and live in their new status as children of God, which includes deepening our relationship with Jesus by pursuing him together in a humble community.

The mission that Jesus gave to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 is reiterated in Acts 1. We now see how Jesus plans to work through the Church to accomplish His mission of restoring people into an intimate relationship with God and each other. With this in mind, the story of the birth of the Church is very important for the children of God to understand. The Spirit of God taking up residence in believers in Jesus is the key to living as children of God. As your friend begins to wrestle with what it means to be part of a humble community on mission for Jesus, they may realize that Jesus does not ask them to go it alone. Jesus sent His Spirit to indwell all believers to empower them to pursue Him and His mission together.

Themes:

1. Though many misunderstandings exist today, the Bible gives a clear picture of the beginning and purpose of the Church.
2. By the indwelling Spirit, Jesus empowers all believers with the capacity to pursue deep relational intimacy with God and with each other resulting in a radical different kind of life.

## 5 | 2

Passage: Romans 6:5-14; Ephesians 2:17-22

Topic: Living together as God's ambassadors

Summary: Not only has God accepted believers in Jesus into His family, but He has also freed them from their slavery to sin. Your friend must understand that sin always provokes a person through temptation to rebel against God, but for the believer, he is not bound to obey the temptation that sin is offering. They can offer themselves to God as a new creation and ask Him to help them live like the new creation that they are. This conversational approach to God is a huge quality that all new believers can begin to develop. Not only is this a truth that applies to the individual,

but it must be understood as a truth that applies to all believers collectively. This should change how we view other people. Not only am I changed, but all my friends who believe in Jesus have been changed too. We are all in this together.

Themes:

1. Because of our faith in Christ, although we didn't physically die, we were spiritually severed from our old slavemaster - sin (natural desire for independence from God) and now have a new master, Jesus.
2. Spiritual growth involves continual belief that God fully accepts us forever as His Children and that sin is no longer our master, and then continually offering ourselves to God as He sees and defines us.

## 5 | 3

Passage: Colossians 1:15-18a; Ephesians 1: 13-14

Topic: The definition of and entrance into the Church

Summary: The Church is defined by God as the Body of Christ where Jesus is the head or supreme leader of the Church. The Body metaphor is intentionally used by God to describe the aliveness quality of the Church and the multimember aspect of the Church with each member having a different function for the benefit of the whole Body. Similar to the human body, it also depicts that everyone is under one Head or Spiritual Director - Jesus.
Entrance into the Body of Christ, the Church, occurs when the Spirit takes up residence in the new believer at the point of belief. At that moment, the Holy Spirit fully places the new believer into the spiritual Body of Christ. Or in other words, the new believer is placed into the same position as Jesus in relationship to the Trinity. This is what has happened from the birth of the Church forward. There are three descriptors used to help understand the Church. There is the Universal Church: This refers to all believers who have believed, are believing, and will believe in Jesus. There is the Global Church: This refers to all believers who are currently alive on the Earth right now. There is the Local Church: This refers to a collection of believers who choose to place themselves under a common leadership team. The local Church is to be the expression of Jesus.

Themes:

1. The Church is the spiritual Body of Christ with Jesus as the Head.
2. Entrance in the spiritual Body of Christ occurs as belief through the work of the Holy Spirit.

## 5 | 4

Passage: Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-13

Topic: The leadership of the Church

Summary: God has given spiritual gifts to each local leadership team to be used to help the believers of that Church grow into loving one another in various ways that more and more reflect the sacrificial love that God has for people. There are two basic leadership positions defined by the Bible: Elder and Deacon. Elders have the responsibilities of feeding the Church the Truth from God's Word, protecting the Church from perversions of God's grace, and leading the Church into the sacrificial love life of Jesus. Deacons assist the elders in whatever ways necessary for the Elders to accomplish their responsibilities. Scripture teaches that Pastor is a gift given to the Church rather than a leadership position in the Church.

Themes:

1. God gives gifts to each local leadership team to be used to help believers grow into deeper relational intimacy with God and sacrificial love for each other.

## 5 | 5

Passage: Acts 2:42-47

Topic: The culture of the local Church

Summary: The end of Acts 2 displays a picture of the local Church in action. We see the function of the leaders in overseeing the Church. We see the members committing to participation in the local Church through learning and applying God's Word and spending quality and quantity time with each other. There is sacrificial giving to those in need and enjoying each other's company in their homes. As they were putting God's love on display in their families and neighborhoods, God worked through that to draw more people to Himself.

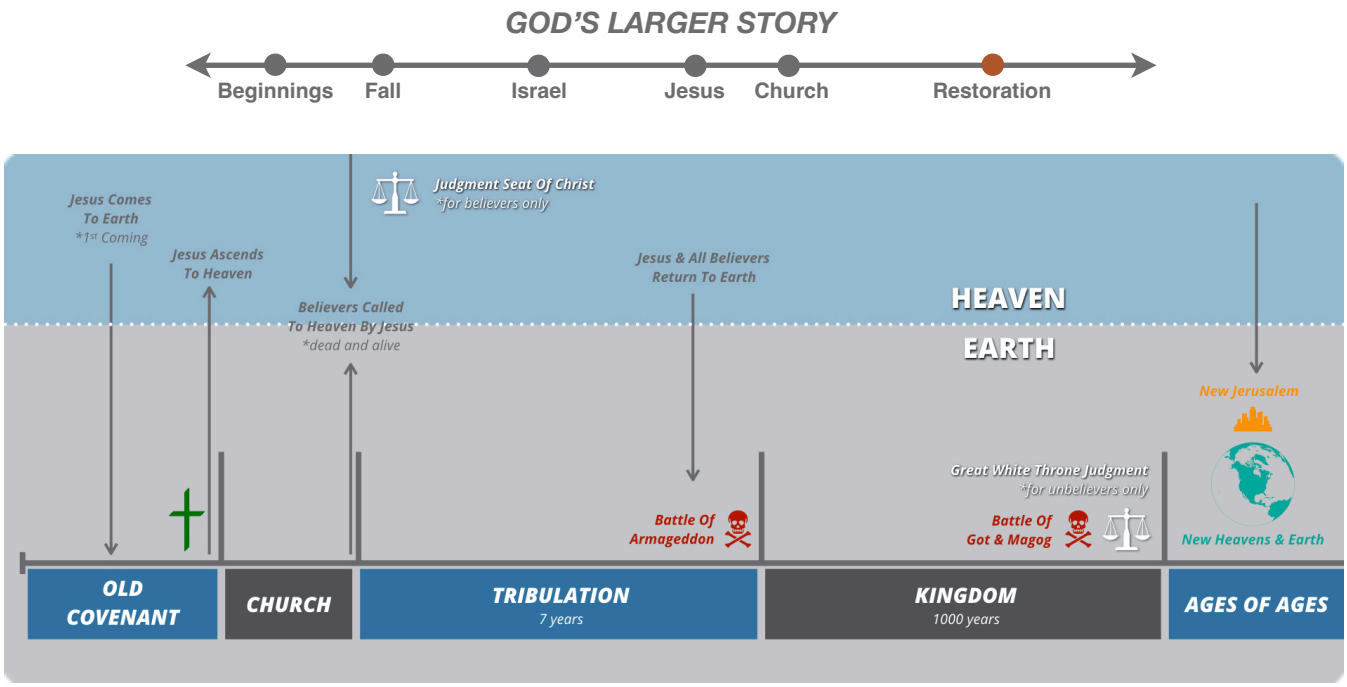
Themes:

1. When the Church is functioning according to God's design, God's love is put on display and He draws more people to Himself.

# Chapter 6 - Restoration

### Review

Before you prepare new content to share with your friend, make sure to remind yourself of where you are at in the Larger Story of God. Take time to refer to the timeline so that you can provide a clear reference point for your friend, in order that they may better understand what you will be talking about.




## Worldview

| | |
|---|---|
| Authority: | God sovereignly works within the timeline of human history to bring all things to final state of redemption and restoration. |
| Righteousness: | God will righteously judge sin in finality. God's standard of righteousness will be fully restored; a new re-creation of image bearers fully embracing a fruitful life on earth within a deepening relationship with the God Family. |
| Opposition: | Satan, sin, and the flesh will be defeated once-for-all and they will no longer oppose God's people. |
| Mission: | God will use people to offer salvation one last time to all humanity. All of redeemed people belonging to God for all the ages past will fruitfully expand and multiply the earth as originally intended. |
| Identity: | All of the collective people of God for all time, will be finally and wholly identified together with their God forever. |
| Faith: | As judgment comes, people will be extended one last opportunity for faith in God and His promises. In eternity, people will continue to relate to God in faith - ever growing in dependence on the God Family for life and flourishing. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Hope: | No longer will hope for restoration be offered, but God's people live in the reality of that previous hope. |
| Love: | God's people for all the ages will live together within the God Family for eternity to come; endlessly multiplying the God nature of love throughout His recreated order on earth. |

## 6 | 1

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10

Topic: The Rapture and Judgment Seat of Jesus

Summary: The verses in 1 Thessalonians give a clear picture of the time period directly before God judges the people of earth for their sin and rebellion against Him. The good news is that prior to any judgment, God promises to send Jesus to call the Church out (Rapture) from the earth. The bodies of all believers who have died and all those who are alive at that time will be called up into heaven with Jesus before the God's judgment begins. The bodiless souls of all believers who died prior to this point were with Jesus in heaven. At the Rapture, the souls of all believers will be reunited with their newly resurrected bodies. For those believers physically alive at that time, their bodies will be instantaneously transformed into their eternal resurrected bodies.

The passages in Corinthians give us an explanation of the events in Heaven during the Tribulation period, where Jesus judges/rewards the faithful works of believers.

Themes:

1. Because of His justice, God is faithful to punish sin, and He is equally faithful to keep His promise of saving those who have believed in Him from that judgment.
2. God will judge the works of every believer, rewarding them by giving them eternal work and responsibility commensurate to our faithfulness on earth.

## 6 | 2

Passage: Revelation 20-22

Topic: The Kingdom and Eternal State

Summary: Revelation 6-18 depict God's judgment on earth. The last three chapters of the Bible describe a culmination to God's great plan to restore all things. He brings a new heaven and earth and a new city of Jerusalem for us to live in. As was the plan from the very beginning of Creation, at this point, God Himself returns to the earth to live among people for all eternity. Everything and everyone will be the way that God intended them to be in perfect intimate relational dependence on Him and a deep commitment of relational love towards each other.

Themes:

1. God fulfills His promise to restore all things to intended purpose. He will once and for all fill the entire new earth with His image through all of us restored image bearers. He will be with us and we will be with Him forever.