

The Bible's Big Story (Cyprus Training: week 1, session 4)

Overview in 7 Parts

1. **God Creates a Perfect World** (Gen.1f)
2. **The Great Rebellion: Sin Spoils Everything** (Gen.3-11)
3. **The Story of Israel** (Gen.12ff)
4. **Jesus Christ** (The Gospels)
5. **The Story of the Church** (Acts ff; church history)
6. **Day of Reckoning: Sin Judged & Banished** (Rev.20)
7. **The Age to Come: A Perfect World** (Rev.21f)

Some Observations

- A. The world can only be understood in the light of #1+2.
(State of the world intimately related to that of humans)
- B. God's plan is to restore all things (#1→#7), not merely to rescue people from the mess ('die & go to heaven' etc.)
- C. There is a very strong 'corporate' element in God's plan (#3+5). ⇒ No room for Western individualism
- D. If we are to understand the Bible, we need to understand the role played by Israel.
- E. The Return of Christ (#6) is a vital part of the Bible's story
- F. Jesus is at the centre of the Bible's story & world history
(Note B.C./A.D.!)

⇒ One of *the* most important skills in understanding & teaching the Bible is to see how a given part relates to Jesus.

We'll be looking at that in a later session...

[H/o A3 versions of 'Bible's Big Story Completed Wall Chart'](#)

The Bible & History

A v rough timeline of #3:

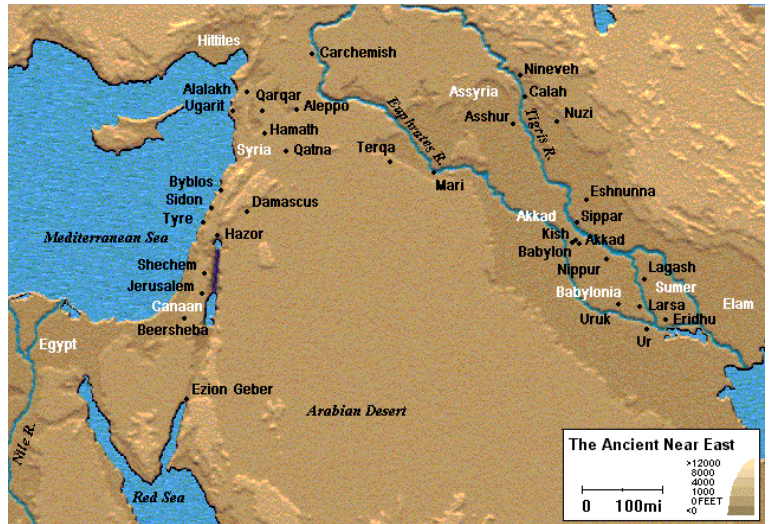
~2000BC ?? Abr

~1500BC ? Moses

~1000BC David

~500BC Exile (586-538BC)

~BC/AD Jesus (4BC–30AD?)



Use the map ([h/o – NB Cyprus!](#)) & describe the mvmts:

Abr: **Ur** to **Haran** (on map, under the 'c' in Carchemish – just inside S border of Turkey; then 'Aramean kgdm'); then down to **Canaan**; **Joseph** et al to **Egypt** (another key ANE centre); **Moses/Joshua:** Egypt back to Canaan; **David** at **Jerusalem** Kingdom splits after Solomon (~930BC); 2Cs later (~722BC), N.Kgdm defeated by **Assyrians** & exiled; 150yrs later south defeated by **Babylonians** & **Exiled** (come full circle, cf. Ur!) Return (Persian Emp), but as a 'vassal state' not indep Nn. By **NT**, Persia→Greece→Roman Empire (ANE map & West). **Gospels** set in Israel (+Matt.2, Egypt!); **Acts** ult W→Rome.

Thing to underline = Bible story set v firmly in the world of the ANE as known from other historical sources, & archaeology. NB: Secular Acct: rise of civilisn = ~3,200BC onwards in the Fertile Crescent: the Levant (Egypt et al.) & Mesopotamia.

⇒ Learning more about the history & culture of these areas will help with our Bible understanding (& the first & most important way to do that is by an increasing Scr knowledge)

Understanding the Bible

Some things are universal, throughout the whole Bible:

- God: infinite/personal, creator/judge, righteous/merciful
- Human beings: responsible (& #2-6, sinful!)
- The way to be right with God: resting solely upon his mercy
- God's requirement of worship & uprightness; knowing him

As the Bible unfolds God reveals more and more...

- *About his nature*: OT: unique; NT: tri-personal (exalt'n of X't, Pentecost => expand understanding of God to incl J & HS)
- *About his plan*: Gen.3v15 (a human being will strike the decisive blow in the battle against evil); Gen.12 (Abr's family); Ex. (see later session!) etc. (by end of OT, lots of jigsaw pieces re God's interventn, but not yet a picture...).
- Almost all OT = re *Israel*, but in NT we discover that the Nn is 'scaffolding', & God's intent is an Internnl people (Jew+G)

Some things are v diff, depending where in the story...

- A. Gen.12ff. Importance of ethnic alignmt (& cf circumcision); but not in NT (Gal.3v28)
 - B. Joshua's generation: Holy War! Not now.
 - C. Seeking atonemt. OT: animal offering; NT: look to Calvary
 - D. Purity. OT incl ceremonial (clean/unclean; ritual); NT moral
 - E. God's rule: OT: theocracy. NT JX't over his Ch. (cf. State)
 - F. God's relnshp w Nn: Prosperity as promised elt; Not NT!
- Also... God's method of comms (cf Abr w post NT: Bible!), mission of God's people (NT: proactive disciple-making)...

⇒ It is v important to take into acct 'where we are in the story' when we seek to explain & apply the Bible.