

The Bible is Story

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We say the Bible is Story because if we read it from beginning to end, we discover that it has **three features**: it has a **plot** (creation to consummation), it has **characters** (God-Father, Son, and Spirit-and God's people and the world and creation around them), and it also has **many authors** who together tell the story. Imagine The Father or Jesus or The Spirit reclining at the head of a table at a writer's banquet. The forty authors each asking for permission to tell their story, in their way.

Where to Begin Is A Big Challenge?

2 Approaches: 1. A General Plot & 2. Redemptive Benefits

The King and His Kingdom -- New Heaven – Revelation 2:1

God's plan is not just salvation but all creation benefits.

Three Chapters (Movements) in this Story:

1. Theocracy: The Creator God who makes a covenant with Abraham rules, no humans are to rule, and all humans are to trust and obey this one true God. This story is that humans constantly resist the will of God, God makes a covenant to redeem them, gives the law to guide them, and provides a sacrificial system to reconcile them to himself. But most importantly, God turns his gracious and guiding attention especially to one family, Abraham's, and to one nation, Israel.

2. Monarchy: God permits, but only permits, his people Israel to have a king, a monarch. Why? Because as Samuel says to God, Israel wants a king so that they can be like the other nations. Yet again, the kings act like the humans under Theocracy: they resist the will of God; God's covenant provides a way of reconciliation and restoration; the sages of Israel develop wisdom for the people of God so they will learn how to live well and flourish; the prophets become more central to announce God's will, to predict the future, and to declare that someday God will bring Israel back into a theocracy again.

3. Christocracy: God calls a halt to the human rule of a monarchy, sends his royal Son- Jesus the King, the Messiah, the Son of God and Son of Man, and Wisdom incarnate. He lives with us, shows us how to live, teaches us the way of God, and then he dies for us, he is buried, he is raised for us, and he ascends to the right hand of the Father to rule. Now the people of God expand from Israel to include gentiles in the one people of God, the church. This people too are not perfect. The church age, will be completed when Christ returns, all evil is defeated, and the ways of God are established forever, back into **theocracy**. It is then profoundly Christian Bible reading to read the whole Bible as fulfilled in King Jesus and His Kingdom. Each wiki-story in the Bible has its place in its time, but it also has its place in the King and His Kingdom Story.

The Gospel - Mistake to Reduce Gospel to its Benefits.

When we keep focused on the King and His Kingdom Story, Jesus remains central. But when we make the redemption central, it becomes about us, and Jesus becomes not the subject of the Story but the means of redemption.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 & Acts 10:34-43

Do we make Jesus central or is our salvation steps central?

1. What three features of a story does the Bible have? Discuss.

"But there are two non-negotiables in the Bible's Story. First, there is a **general plot** from the creation of the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1-2 to the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth in Revelation 20-22. Second, there are **redemptive benefits** for those who participate in that "general plot" by declaring allegiance to the God of that plot. ...I want to sketch briefly the General Plot, which I will call the King and His Kingdom Story."

2. Any insights on the three movements?

3. Why is it vital to keep our focus on the King and His Kingdom? Is this easy to do?

1 Corinthians 15:1-5

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

Acts 10:34-43

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

³⁹ "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.

Plot	Theme
Creating Eikons (Genesis 1-2)	Oneness
Cracked Eikons (Genesis 3-11)	Otherness
Covenant Community (Genesis 12 – Malachi)	Otherness Expands
Christ, the Perfect Eikon, Redeems (Matt – Revelation)	One in Christ
Consummation (Revelation 21-22)	Perfectly One

Each author must write their story within this redemption plot, but they are given considerable freedom to tell the Story in their own way. The most important thing I have to say here is this: The unity of the Bible is the King and His Kingdom Story that brings redemption. It is this Story that puts the Bible together.

Our grand systems of theology, however helpful they are, do not form the unity of the Bible; the Story that God tells forms and frames that unity. (See Irenaeus – “On the Apostolic Preaching”)

Creating Eikons: Designed for Oneness

The choice to make The Adam as an Eikon and to split The Adam into two, male and female, is profoundly important for understanding the story of the Bible. God wanted The Adam to enjoy what the Trinity had eternally enjoyed and what the Trinity continues to enjoy: perfect communion and mutuality with an equal. Garden = Life of Oneness.

Cracked Eikons: Distorting Oneness, Creating Otherness

The first impact of rebelling against God was that they were ashamed of themselves because of their nakedness. (..felt no shame Gen 2:25) Then they hid from God (3:8-9), blame each other and are sent east of Eden. At odds with God, self, one another & the world. Oneness has become otherness. Instead of dwelling in Eden, the dwell in Exile.

Instead of experiencing one another in oneness, they begin to experience one another as "others." In fact, Genesis 3 predicts something that tells the story of human relationships: "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (3:16). This is not a curse as if this *must happen forever and always*. Instead, the desire to rule rises in the human heart because oneness is cracked. Instead of loving one another as they love themselves, they will now desire to climb over the other and on top of the other in order to control and dominate. This fallen story of otherness leads to death. But the good story of oneness leads to life. The entire rest of the Bible, *aiming as it will toward Jesus Christ, is about turning Eikons bent on otherness to Eikons basking in oneness with God, with self, with others, and with the world*

Covenant Community: The Struggle for Oneness

This covenanted community, which focuses on oneness with others, will shape the rest of the Bible. God's idea of redemption is community-shaped. The way God works redemption in this world is through his covenanted community – first Israel, then the church. The redemptive benefit of the King & His Kingdom finds concrete embodiment in the covenant community, the people of the kingdom.

Otherness Gets the Last Word – Failure: Job not done.

Christ, The Perfect Eikon: Oneness Restored

Incarnation | Death | Resurrection & Ascension | Pentecost – Spirit

Consummation: Oneness Forever

When God opens the gates to Eden Mr. & Mrs. Eikon will bask in the glory of union with God, where they will themselves be so radiant as to draw attention to God's ONENESS as the origin of it all.

4. What is the basic redemptive plot of the Bible?-- basic themes of the Bible story?

5. What gives the Bible its unity?

6. What does Scot say is the important thing for us to understand about the story of creation in Genesis 1 and 2?

7. What four relationships were “cracked” when Adam and Eve disobeyed in Gen 3?

8. What is the giant blue parakeet in the plot of the Bible?

Covenant Community: The Struggle for Oneness p-80
 “I like this, but creation-fall-redemption plot, but there’s something missing. (Like 1033 pages!) It is right to see the plot move from creation & fall to redemption, **but how God chooses to redeem** is a giant blue parakeet in the Bible for many readers. The story of the Bible is creation, fall, and then covenant community – page after page of community – as the context in which our wonderful redemption takes place.”

9. What happened to the covenant community?

10. Where is the plot headed?

11. If Fallen humanity become this central focus of how we read the Bible, what do we miss out on?

12. A strategic plan of broken Eikon’s is to develop an approach to life that reduce the mystery of God and His plan for redeeming mankind. Why is that?

13. Does routine religious system keep broken humanity from developing a deep personal relationship with God?

14. What could you do as a next step to draw deeper in your relationship with God, the God image within you, others and the world?

**If the Bible is Story, how do we read it?
 The Answer: We listen to God.**

Thus the question might better be stated:

**What is our relationship
 to the Bible?**