

God's Story B.C. – Part 1

If I asked you to trace history of God's work as recorded in the Bible – could you do it?
Could you give me an overview of the Bible with key dates, events, people, places?
Could you tell me how they all fit together and relate to one another, and describe
God's purposes through it all?

If you're answer is no, or not completely, don't feel bad
I grew up in the church, and I couldn't do that until about 6-7 years ago
I had all the pieces, but they were like the pieces of a massive jigsaw puzzle scattered
all over the floor
Couldn't put it all together because I didn't have the box top – the big picture
When I finally did, the Scriptures came alive – people became real, places 3-D, and
connections between events and recurring themes began to leap off the page

If that's you, I don't want you to wait as long as I did – if you do, you're missing out
If we're going to grow in our love for God, our awe of God, our knowledge of God –
we must increase in our knowledge of his story; God's Story; the big picture
My hope is that by seeing the big picture box top, you'll better understand and
appreciate the pieces, and grow in your love and allegiance to God as a result

- With that in mind, open your Bibles to Genesis; find the **chart** in your bulletin
That's going to be the platform from which we work these next few weeks

I've broken God's Story BC into 13 different historical periods – cover 6 this morning
For each historical period – look at 5 categories and one lesson/application
This is an overview, a fly-by; Cover these very quickly . . .
Turning to some of the key passages as we do, so you can reference them in the future

Starting where the Bible starts, the first historical period (at least on earth), is . . .

Creation

Key People – Adam and Eve . . . Key Place – Garden of Eden

Important Event – week of creation . . . 6 days of work and 1 day of rest

The pattern for our lives

Rest – ceasing our normal work/schedule, to reflect on and appreciate God's work

Key passages (turn there) – Gen 1:1; 2:7-8; 1:31

But what was the purpose?

Was it all just fun and games for God because he was bored with himself?

God's Purpose (in creation) – **To show his power**

Jer 32:17 – (Jer. praying) *'Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who has made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.*

God created all that you see, including you, to show his power

His purpose in telling us is – **To establish his preeminence** (superiority, supremacy)

Is 45:18 – *For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it . . . "I am the LORD, and there is no other."*

It's like God saying – I created . . . got anything to beat that? I didn't think so; Next

Is 44:24 – *Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself*

God created the universe, and told us about it, to establish his preeminence

To fuel our worship

Ps 33:8-9 – *Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.*

God's creative power through his spoken work is meant to inspire our worship

Rev 4:11 (a glimpse of worship in heaven) – *"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*

Think of it – at the *end* of time, our worship is still going to be fueled by God's creation at the *beginning* of time

All of which means – **God is worthy of our worship** (Our Lesson/Application)

Who else did anything like this?

Who else spoke and put the stars in place, and marked out the boundaries of universe?

Who else created such remarkable beauty, intricate detail?

Who else created *you* – in all your uniqueness and wonder?

God alone did it, and God alone has the power to do it

God alone is worthy of our worship because of it

Fall of Man

Key People (players in this case with Satan)

Key Places – Eden and Heaven, because that's where it all started with Satan's rebellion

Rev 12:7-9 – *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

When it comes to the fall of man, that's one of the important events – Satan's rebellion, getting kicked out of heaven, and thrown down to earth

One of God's purposes for this account is . . .

To explain the presence of evil in the world – where did it all start? how did Satan get to be Satan in the first place?

We find out in Rev that he was an angel who rebelled against God, was cast out of heaven, and goes about trying to deceive the world as he did with Adam and Eve . . .

Eventually leading to their disobedience and sin (another important event) – Gen 3:6,19

The sin of A&E led to the sin of Cain murdering Abel due to jealousy (Gen 4:8)

And so the fall began, pointing us to the second purpose in all this, that is . . .

To account for man's condition of death and sin

God told them immediately that death was the consequence . . .

And Paul makes it clear in **Rom 5:12** that the consequence of death applies to all men
Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

Just as Adam died a physical death for his sin, so we will too – it's unavoidable

The fall of man accounts for the condition of death and sin in the world

And clues us in to the fact that – **God will not tolerate sin** (lesson learned)

Yes, God is loving; But he's also just
And whether it's Satan, Adam, or you – sin separates us from God, and he won't tolerate it
He'll either discipline you to bring you back in line
Or give you up to dishonorable passions, to do what ought not to be done
Either way, God will not tolerate sin in his presence

Flood

Key People – Noah and Sons; Key Places – Mt Ararat, the Ark

Important Events – Building of the ark and the flood

The purpose of which was . . . **To punish mankind** – read Gen 6:11-14, 17

But afterwards, God makes a covenant with Noah and all future generations to never again destroy the earth w/ water, and designates the rainbow as a sign/reminder (Gen 9:8-17)

The lesson to be learned here is that – **There is an end to God's patience**

Not only evidenced by flood, but also God's response to the Tower of Babel in Gen 11

There is an end to God's patience

Heb 10:26-27 says it this way – *If we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.*

There is an end to God's patience

If you've never admitted that you're a sinner and invited Christ into your life to save you, committing to live for him . . .

If you've never done that, today is the day of your salvation; don't test God's patience

That brings us to the 4th historical period in the big picture of God's Story before Christ

Patriarchs

Time period – 2166-1876; From Abe's birth, to Jacob's move to Egypt

Key People – Abe, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

Key Places (**map – Fertile Crescent**) – Ur, Canaan, Egypt

Important Events

Abraham's call and covenant – Gen 12:1-2; 15:18

Isaac's near sacrifice (Gen 22:9-12) – went on to have 2 sons, Jacob and Esau

Joseph's betrayal (Gen 37:23-24,28) and rise to power (Gen 41:39-40)

Jacob's move to Egypt (Gen 46:5-7)

God's Purposes –

To establish a people for himself

When God called Abraham, he was creating a new people group

God wanted a people set apart for his purposes

A people devoted to him and him alone

A people through whom he could show the nations his power and sovereignty

A people through whom he could bless the nations

Sound familiar? I hope so, because you and I as followers of Christ and children of God, are now part of that people, set apart for those same purposes

To fuel our hope for God's provision

When God called Abraham, he didn't tell him all the steps of the journey

Abraham simply believed God, stepped out in faith, and trusted him to provide

Same is true re Isaac's near sacrifice – he obeyed and trusted God to provide (he did)

That should fuel *your* hope that God will provide for *you* when you're not sure of the end from the beginning, or the journey along the way, or the circumstances at hand

One of the most moving moments of the story, comes in Gen 50 (turn there)

This is where Joseph's brothers, fearing his revenge after the death of their father Jacob

They're standing before him and he says – read Gen 50:19-20

You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good

That, of all reasons, is why we can – **Trust God's Plan**

Because you never know how he's going to use even the bad things in life to accomplish his good purposes – you never know

When evil strikes at the hands of ungodly people – trust God's plan

When you're called to step out in faith – trust God's plan

When the way seems narrow and the destination uncertain – trust God's plan, just like the Patriarchs

Egyptian Sojourn

Sojourn – a stay of undetermined length; longer than a visit but shorter than forever

430 years from the time Jacob moved to Egypt w/ the 70 members of his extended family, to the time some 2 million of them left by way of the Red Sea (Ex 12:40-41)

Key People – Pharaoh, Moses, Miriam; Key Places – Egypt, Midian (**map – The Exodus**)

Important Events – enslavement, call of Moses, plagues, Passover, release

God's Purposes –

To show his concern – Ex 4:29-31

To bolster our confidence in God's promises

In (Gen 28:15) God promised Jacob, long before Joseph or any of his sons were even a sparkle in his eye, that no matter where he or his descendants went, he would bring them back to the land he had promised through Abraham and Isaac

We have the benefit of hindsight – having seen God fulfill his promises then, we have that much more confidence that he will fulfill them now

To foreshadow our salvation

God had inflicted Pharaoh and all of Egypt with plague upon plague

And yet Pharaoh would not relent – he would not let the Israelites go

At which point God threatened one final plague called the Passover – a plague where they were to . . . Take a lamb; A male without blemish or spot

Kill it at the appointed time, without breaking any of its bones

Apply the blood to the door frame

Wait for God to pass over them, sparing the lives of their firstborn

Read Ex 12:12-13 – one of God's purposes in this, other than to win their release from slavery, was to foreshadow our salvation

What the Israelites did with the lamb, God did with Jesus

He took him, the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish (no sin)
Killed him at the appointed time without breaking any of his bones
Applied his blood to the home of our heart, and the debt of our sin
Forgiving us and promising to save us from its consequences for all eternity
And did all of that on the remembrance of Passover, to the day, 1436 years later

God knows your situation

He knows exactly what you need, before you even need it
He knows the salvation you need to avoid the consequences of your sin
He knows the help and encouragement you need in the midst of trials/uncertainty

Maybe you're facing death this morning – God knows
Maybe it's hardship/suffering – God knows
Uncertainty in your marriage or work situation – God knows
Whatever the case – *cast all your cares on him, because he cares for you.* (1 Pet 5:7)

Desert Wandering

A period of 42 years – from the time they left Egypt, spending ~2 years at Mt Sinai . . .
To the time they crossed the Jordan river into the Promised Land after wandering the
desert for 40 years, waiting for the current generation to die, due to their rebellion and
disobedience (Nu 14:26-34)
That was the main purpose of God in all this – **To punish disobedience**

Key People – Moses and Aaron

Key Places – Mt Sinai, Desert wilderness (**map – The Exodus**)

All of which encompassed some major Events that the writers of the Bible refer to time
and again, like . . .

Crossing of the Red Sea (Ex 14:21-22)

God's provision of food while in the desert (Ex 16:11-12)

That was another of God's purposes – **To preserve his people**

He could have abandoned them and started over

But he preserved and protected them because his glory/name was at stake

Another important event was the giving of the Law – Ex 24:12,15-18

Gave him instructions on how to live, how to relate to each other, 10 Commandments

Especially how to worship – that's the 3rd purpose for this time in the desert . . .

To provide for worship – it was through the law that God laid out the specifics of how
they could come clean before him through sacrifices of animals and so on

Part of those instructions included a tabernacle with various furnishings, including the ark
of the covenant from which God would meet with Moses and communicate to him in
the *innermost sanctuary* of that tabernacle

Ex 40:34 says that *the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle*

God pitched his tent and dwelled with his people

Just like Jesus became flesh and *dwelt* among us (tabernacled, pitched his tent among us),
so that we could be *filled* with his Holy Spirit in *our* innermost being

When you have the box top, the story explodes upon your life

Make no mistake – **God always provides** . . . first and foremost with his presence

Summary

Creation, Fall, Flood, Patriarchs, Egyptian Sojourn, Desert Wanderings

That takes us from the beginning of time (at least as know it) to 1404 BC when the

Israelites are poised to enter the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua

Until then, let the box top of God's Story wow you with the truth that . . .

He's worthy of your worship; He won't tolerate sin

There's an end to his patience; You can trust his plan

He knows your situation; God always provides