



GODSPEED

Reading the Bible in Light of the Big Picture

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 1:29 -- Here God fulfills His promise

Suggested Reading

The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name, by Sally Lloyd-Jones. For children.

The Big Picture Story Bible, by David Helm and Gail Schoonmaker. Also for children.

The ESV Study Bible

God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Story Line of the Bible, by Vaughan Roberts. This is not technical and is a great introduction to this whole subject.

According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible, by Graeme Goldsworthy. This book is more technical and goes into greater depth.

Creation

Gen 1-2

Separation

Gen 3-11

Promise & Preparation

Gen 12 - OT

Fulfillment & Application

NT

Glory

Revelation



If you are relatively new at reading the Bible – or you want a fresh look at it -- read one of the children’s books recommended above. Then get an ESV Study Bible and read the introduction to whichever book you are reading from.

“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”

Luke 24:27



GETTING THE BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE BIBLE HELPS US UNDERSTAND GOD'S PLAN AND OUR PLACE IN IT

What role do the books of the Bible play in this big story?

Genesis 1-2: Creation

Genesis 3-11: Separation – from God through sin. The need for a Savior.

Genesis 12 – 50: The promise to Abraham and the establishment of God's chosen family, from whom God gives the Messiah.

Exodus: the release of God's family-nation from slavery. They continue on to fulfill God's plan, leading to Jesus, who also "came out of Egypt."

Leviticus: How will a holy God relate to unholy people until Jesus comes?

Numbers: fear, disobedience and faithfulness in following God into His promised Land -- the place of the Messiah.

Deuteronomy: Moses' reminder to follow God and trust Him fully.

Joshua: taking possession of the land God promised

Judges: consequences of not taking possession of the land completely. Desire for a king who would solve the problems.

Ruth: God uses a non-Israelite to further his plan – a reflection of his promise to be a blessing to all the nations.

1 Samuel – 2 Chronicles: the successes and failures of the kings, in preparation for God's perfect and eternal king, Jesus.

Ezra – Nehemiah: God brings his people back from exile to continue using them as a light to the nations. They are spiritually

renewed and they renew the city of Jerusalem.

Esther: God uses this courageous heroine to save his people from annihilation.

Job: Even when Satan attacks and life is hard, God is in charge. Jesus shows his power over Satan at the cross and the empty tomb.

Psalms: the expression of joy and struggle of God's people. These help us stay on God's side and not defect when life is hard.

Proverbs – Ecclesiastes: wisdom and its shortcomings help us to desire Jesus.

Song of Solomon: the expression of romantic love in its redeemed form – as God designed it.

The Prophets: God shows his faithfulness to his people by calling them to repentance and reformation when they wander away spiritually.

Gospels: God fulfills his promise through the Messiah, Jesus.

Rest of the New Testament: Jesus' followers apply salvation to their corporate (church) lives and personal lives, while passing the message of salvation to others. Jesus delays his return so more can hear the good news. That's our part in the plan.

Revelation: The kingdom of God in its perfect form, the glory of the Lamb and the blessing of God's presence for those full of faith in Jesus.

Questions you can ask yourself while your reading the Bible that will help you see the big picture and see Jesus in all of it.

- What stage of the big story is this?
- How does the story I'm reading show us God's ability to bring about his promise? (For example, his protection of Israel – which is the promised nation of the promised Messiah – through the courage of Esther.)
- How does this story reveal human sin, God's holiness and the need for a Savior? (For example, the Israelites making the golden calf?)
- Who in this story is like Jesus? How does this story prepare us for the coming Messiah? (Example: David, through his successes and failures, prepares us for the ultimate and perfect king. Solomon and his wisdom, along with his failure to follow it, shows us the need for a perfect "wise man.")
- How do the principles in this passage I'm reading help me to

live under God's good rule and apply his salvation to me? (For example, Proverbs or New Testament letters)

- How does this story reflect God's call to reformation, keeping his people aligned with his big plan? (For example, the Prophets or Hebrews)
- How does what I'm reading remind me of the conclusion of the big story? (For example, Revelation or Matthew 24-25)

Why is it important to see the big picture?

- We might dismiss some parts as not relevant
- We might miss the entire point of what we're reading
- We might fail to worship the Father and the Son in our reading
- We will be shallow in our understanding of the Bible
- We'll likely be bored and miss the richness of the story
- We'll have less to pass on to the next generation

"And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." *Genesis 12:2-3 -- Here God makes His promise.*