



## The Story so Far . . .

### **The Bible**

The Bible is God's book. God is the author of the Bible, but He used human beings to write it. Every word in the Bible comes from God. The Bible has one story – Jesus and His Kingdom.

### **The beginning of God's Kingdom**

In the beginning God created a perfect world. He created human beings (Adam and Eve) to be in a relationship with Himself and to obey His words. God had a special place called Eden where He lived with His people. In the beginning, God put His people in His place and asked them to obey His words. God had established a Kingdom - God's people, living in God's place, under God's rule and blessing.

### **The ruin of God's Kingdom**

An angel from heaven called Satan rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven to the earth. He entered the Garden of Eden and tried to destroy God's Kingdom. God gave human beings the role of ruling the world, but they failed in a big way. They wanted to be their own rulers, deciding for themselves what is right and wrong. They listened to Satan and rejected God's authority and His loving rule. The result was a broken relationship with God and the Kingdom was ruined.

### **God's punishment**

God judged human beings and threw them out of His place and did not let them go back into the Garden of Eden. The punishment was a broken relationship with God and with each other. Death entered the world. The Kingdom God had established was ruined.

### **God's promise**

But God also acted in grace and promised a Rescuer-Ruler who would come and defeat Satan and rebuild God's Kingdom. The Rescuer-Ruler would come from the family line of Adam and Eve and rescue people back into the Kingdom of God. The rest of the

Bible is the progressive story of how the promised Rescuer-Ruler will come and establish God's Kingdom.

### **A new beginning**

In the story of Cain and Abel we saw that human rebellion had been passed on to the whole human race. We all die because we have all chosen to be the rulers of our own lives. However, human rebellion increased to the point where God decided to judge the world. In the flood God re-created the world and gave human beings a new beginning. By saving Noah He showed His commitment to restoring His Kingdom through the promised Rescuer-Ruler.

### **Human rebellion again**

But things soon went wrong again. People disobeyed God's words to populate and fill the earth. They tried to stay in one place and build a city for security and a tower for their own religion. Like Adam and Eve they tried to become like God, and make a name for themselves. God judged them by confusing their language, scattering people over the whole earth. God's purposes were still fulfilled.

### **The promised Kingdom**

God's response to the rebellion at Babel was to choose a man called Abraham. God graciously promised him three things: a land, a people, and a blessing. God was re-establishing His Kingdom through the family of Abraham – God's people, living in God's place, under God's rule and blessing. God tested His own Kingdom promises by asking Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham obeyed God, but just before he was about to kill Isaac, God provided a substitute sacrifice in order to keep His Kingdom promises.

### **From slavery to service**

God's promises to Abraham involved his children living in a foreign land as slaves for 400 years. Through Joseph God's people went to live in Egypt and after some time they became slaves to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God then sent Moses to Egypt to rescue His people, but Pharaoh refused to let them go. So God fought for His people as the Warrior-King against Pharaoh and destroyed their enemy. God then brought Israel to Mount Sinai where He gave them His rules. He was now their King and so they could not

live any way they wanted. Israel was to live in obedience to God, and so like Adam, be a priest to the world. Through Israel God would rule and bless the world.

### **From Sinai to Canaan**

At Mount Sinai God instructed the people to build Him a tent. God's plan was to rescue back a people for Himself so that He could live with them. God was restoring His Kingdom – God's people, living in God's place, under God's rule and blessing. However, it was not long before Israel disobeyed God and broke the rules of the covenant. But God was able to keep the covenant going by graciously providing a sacrifice and a priest to help pay for the people's disobedience. When Israel reached the Promised Land they refused to enter it because they were scared of the people. God punished Israel for 40 years in the desert, yet He remained faithful and eventually brought their children to enter the land, along with Joshua and Caleb. Just before they entered the land Moses warned them: "If you obey, you will be blessed. If you disobey, God will punish you by removing you from the land".

### **From Canaan to exile**

Through Joshua's victories Israel inherited the land God promised to Abraham. During the first 350 years in the land judges ruled Israel. But the system was not working – Israel needed a king. God's Kingdom could not come until Israel had a king. Israel's first three kings were Saul, David and Solomon. Each of them were good in different ways, but they all failed and disobeyed God. After Solomon the kingdom declined, and eventually God removed the people from the land due to their disobedience. God's Kingdom was ruined again. However, all hope was not lost. God had promised David that from his family there would come a King, whose Kingdom God would establish forever. This King was the promised Rescuer-Ruler that was introduced at the beginning of the Bible.

### **From exile to Canaan**

Before, during and after the exile God spoke to His people through prophets. They were people called by God to speak God's words to His people. Their message was simple – Israel had sinned, God would remove them from the land. But they gave a message of hope – God would be faithful to His promises. He would bring a remnant back into the land. In particular God promised a new

covenant, one in which He would change the human heart to obey His laws, and also in which He would forgive people's sins forever.

When God's people arrived back in the land there was great expectation for the restoration of God's Kingdom. The temple and the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt. However, the people's hearts had not changed and they soon disobeyed God's rules again. God was going to come in judgement to His temple. We were left waiting for the promised Rescuer-Ruler who would finally change the hearts of God's people and restore the Kingdom. There were 400 years of silence and God's people still waited...

<b>God's Kingdom</b>				
<i>Constitution: 'I will be their God, they will be my people'</i>				
<b>God's promises</b>				
	<b>Place</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Rule &amp; Blessing</b>	<b>King</b>
<b>Creation</b>	Eden	Adam & Eve	God's word	Adam
<b>God's Kingdom ruined</b>				
<b>Abraham</b>	Canaan	Abraham's family	God's promises	Kings from Abraham's family
<b>Israel in desert</b>	Tabernacle	Israel nation	God's rules	Tribe of Judah
<b>Israel in Canaan</b>	Temple in Canaan	Israel nation	God's rules	David, Solomon
<b>God's Kingdom ruined...again!</b>				
<b>Israel in exile</b>	Return to new temple in Canaan	Remnant	New covenant	A perfect King is promised