

## Bible Summary

The first book of the Bible, **Genesis**, describes how **God (the first person of the godly trinity)** created heaven and earth and everything on it. He then created the first humans, Adam (from dust) and Eve (from Adam's rib), to take care of the earth and enjoy His company particularly in the Garden of Eden. This garden was amazing, and God told Adam and Eve that they could eat anything they wanted except from two specific trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. During this time Satan, who was one of God's angels, wanted to be worshipped instead of God so he and his followers were turned out of heaven. Satan took the form of a snake and entered the Garden of Eden. He convinced Eve that God was not telling her the whole truth and convinced her to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Eve shared the fruit with Adam and their eyes were opened to the realization that they were naked, so they hid from God. This is how sin was introduced into the world. God found Adam and Eve and told them that they would now have to leave the garden. He did not want them to also eat from the Tree of Life thus allowing them to live forever. By listening to Satan, Adam and Eve traded a peaceful life in God's presence for a shortened life of constant struggle and distance from God. This is how death was introduced because of sin.

In the course of time, Adam and Eve, had children and their descendants populated the earth. Unfortunately, this population did evil things. God was sorry He made humans and decided to start over. Only one man was found at this time who God favored, Noah. So, God told Noah to build a large boat for his family and two of every creature on earth. After its completion, God sent so much rain that the earth flooded and drowned everything outside Noah's boat. After 40 days, God allowed the water to recede and decided not to destroy humans through a flood again. He set a rainbow in the sky as a reminder of this promise. Noah and his family safely left the boat with all the animals and repopulated the earth.

Again, the people of the earth followed their own evil desires instead of God. They decided to prove that they were better than God by building a tower to heaven. God saw what they were doing and changed everyone's language so they could not work together and accomplish something so wrong. The people were also scattered around the globe at this time. God did not speak to them for thousands of years that we know of except for one recorded event in **Job**. Then a man named Abram or Abraham was born and God decided to make his descendants into a great nation that would tell others about Him. Abraham believed God would do this even though both he and his wife were old and childless. Abraham had his entire household circumcised as a sign of this commitment with God. In his 90's, Abraham's son Isaac was born. God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his son. When God saw that Abraham was sad, but willing, God provided a ram to sacrifice instead. Sacrifice was a reminder to the people that the consequence of sin is death as Adam and Eve first introduced in the beginning of creation and later resulted in the flood. This example of sacrificing someone as precious as your one and only son to atone for sin also foreshadowed what Jesus, God's one and only son, would do for us as our sin sacrifice. God told Abraham again that his descendants would be a blessed nation of faith who would represent Him to the world and eventually provide the Messiah who would once and for all overcome sin and provide eternal life with God for those who believe. The Messiah would reestablish the life with God that was lost in the garden.

Abraham's descendants did increase through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. Jacob fathered 12 sons who made up the 12 tribes of Israel (also known as the Jewish people). Jacob's favorite son was named Joseph. The other brothers were jealous of Joseph's preferential treatment, so they sold him to some passing slave traders and then told their father Joseph was dead. God eventually placed Joseph in government leadership and through this, saved the Egyptians and Joseph's family from a terrible famine.

Long after Joseph's death, the Israelite population grew to such a number that the Egyptians enslaved them to keep them subdued. The Israelites asked God to rescue them from this terrible life. He sent Moses, a man who had been saved by an Egyptian princess from death as a baby and later exiled from Egypt, to tell the Egyptian Pharaoh to release the Israelites from captivity and let them find a new place to settle. The Pharaoh was not willing, but after a series of plagues described in the book of **Exodus** (the last one being the Passover which is still remembered and celebrated today), he eventually let them go. Unfortunately, Pharaoh changed his mind and chased the Israelites and other followers of God to the Red Sea. God miraculously parted the sea providing a safe path for His people's escape and then drowned the Egyptians who followed. God led His people to a new place called Canaan. When they saw that the current residents were strong, they did not trust God to settle them in that place. Only two followers, Joshua and Caleb, urged the others to trust God and proceed, but they did not listen. Because of their disobedience and disbelief, God had them wander in the nearby desert for 40 years until this generation of unbelievers died and a new generation was born. During this time, God cared for His people by providing food, giving commandments (**Exodus 20**) and rules for living (**Leviticus**), and organizing government (**Numbers**). It was a bumpy road, but eventually God allowed the new generation to settle in Canaan lead by Joshua. **Deuteronomy** records Moses' final words to the people before his death and their relocation.

Now the Israelites have their own land. God provides leadership through Joshua and later **Judges** to promote faithfulness. This is also around the time that the **Book of Ruth** takes place. The people eventually rebel against God by demanding a king to lead them like all the other nations. This is a terrible insult since God is their king, but God allows His people to change their leadership to a monarchy first with King Saul (**1 Samuel**), then with King David who wrote many of the **Psalms (2 Samuel)**. When David's son Solomon becomes king, he builds the first temple in Jerusalem for worshipping God. King Solomon also wrote **Proverbs (most of), Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes (1 Kings)**. During David and Solomon's reign, Israel prospered because they honored God. David is even described as "a man after God's own heart." At the end of his life, Solomon turned away from God and was followed by a series of kings (**1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles**) who alternately followed God or worshiped false gods. Despite unfaithfulness by His leaders and people, God still showed patience and care by providing prophets (**Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Ezekiel**) to teach the people. The prophets heard directly from God and were sent to the kings, temple, and common areas to remind people to worship the one true God only. Sadly, God's people refused to worship God alone. They turned their hearts to themselves and false gods until their nation dwindled in size and influence. **Lamentations** records the prophet Jeremiah's grief at seeing God's people rebel and their home and temple destroyed. Eventually, Israel was divided and conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians (**Daniel**). Only a few old and weak people were left behind. Everyone else was again enslaved by foreign countries.

After 70 years of captivity, God allowed the first exiles to return to Jerusalem, Israel's capital (**Ezra**). Everything is demolished. The people start rebuilding God's temple and God sends His prophets

**Zechariah and Haggai** to urge people to return and build homes so He can again bless His people. Many try to stop the Israelites from rebuilding their homeland. Then a little later, an even more sinister plot to kill all Jewish people is planned by an evil Persian leader. The plan is stopped through Queen Esther and others as recorded in the **Book of Esther**. **Nehemiah** now adds his efforts to rebuilding Jerusalem by supervising the construction of a protective wall around its borders. This effort is again met with much resistance and the people take to building with a tool in one hand and a sword in the other. God sends His prophets **Joel and Malachi** to remind the people to follow Him only or judgement will again come to them. Malachi closes with "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." This is the end of the **Old Testament**.

400 years after Malachi's prophecy is recorded, the **New Testament** begins. **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**, also known as the gospels, describe Jesus' life on earth. They record how **Jesus** was born to a young virgin woman, Mary, through the Holy Spirit thus making Him both God and **man (the second person of the godly trinity)**. When Jesus was about 30 years old, He visited His cousin John to be baptized. God already had John living out in the wilderness, warning the current generation to repent of their sins, follow God, and be baptized as a sign of their new life. Jesus began His ministry teaching all people (Jewish and non-Jewish) about God and performing many miracles. He had many followers but chose 12 men to be his special disciples. The Pharisees, or teachers of God's law, hated Jesus because they did not believe He was the son of God. They plotted to kill Jesus and with the help of Judas, one of His disciples, they located Jesus, arrested Him, and sent Him for crucifixion. Jesus died during the celebration of Passover (the remembrance of the final plague in Egypt where death passed over those with blood on their door). Jesus is the final Passover lamb. His voluntary death on the crucifixion cross is a fulfillment of God's plan to restore the broken relationship between Him and His people. God allowed His one and only son to pay the death penalty for mankind's sin (remember how God gave an earlier sign of His plan when Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac, but God provided a ram instead). Fellowship with God was broken when Adam and Eve disobeyed Him in the Garden of Eden. They introduced sin, difficulties, and death into the world. Throughout the Old Testament we read how God continually seeks to restore fellowship with His people through restarts, discipline, laws, sacrifices, prophets, judges, and kings. Now the promised Messiah, Jesus, conquered our punishment of death once and for all through His death and resurrection. After returning to life 3 days after His death, Jesus met with His remaining disciples (Judas hung himself after betraying Jesus) and followers. He talked about heaven and urged them to tell everyone what they witnessed. Jesus returned to His Father in heaven but promised to return later. Jesus also sent the **Holy Spirit (the third person of the godly trinity)** to help all believers in the meantime.

The Holy Spirit arrived during Pentecost allowing God's followers (those who believed Jesus) to feel His presence in their very hearts. Believers heard from God directly instead of relying on judges, kings, prophets, or priests. They were also able to do the same miraculous things Jesus did. This new generation of spirit filled believers told everyone about Jesus and started churches (**Acts**). During this time, many letters were written by the disciples (**James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, 1,2 and 3 John, Hebrews**) and disciple/missionaries like Paul (**Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus**) to instruct the new churches.

They shared the truth of Jesus' life, warned against losing faith and false teachers, and encouraged the believers.

The final book of the Bible, **Revelation**, is the part we have not lived yet. It describes a vision given to John, the last surviving disciple of the 12. The vision describes how Jesus will return to earth again, but this time as the King of Kings. At this time Satan and all evil will be destroyed forever. The earth will be made new. Everyone who believes God and accepts His son Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for their sins will spend eternity with God. **"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I hear a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'** He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

**Revelation 21:1-5**