

# INTRODUCTION

I have been teaching the Bible for over 30 years. I have taught kids, teenagers, middle aged and older adults, both single and married. I've taught Sunday school classes, mid-week Bible studies and made presentations on mission trips. So I have been doing this for a long time. I have read and studied all 66 books of the Bible many times through. I know all of the basic settings, themes and characters in each book. However, it was not until a few years ago when I attended Dallas Theological Seminary that I was introduced to the idea of the Bible as ONE unified story. It was then that I decided I wanted to write this book. After several attempts and rewrites what you have here is the end result.

The Bible is HIS Story. It is God's story. The Bible was written by 50 different human authors over a period of 16 centuries in 3 different languages and on 3 different continents. Each book was independently written with each human author knowing virtually nothing of the other authors' parts. And yet, somehow, it is ONE unified story. How can this possibly be? Here's how – the Bible was inspired by ONE divine author, God the Holy Spirit. In the storyline of the Bible the one true and living God reveals to us humans HIS character, HIS desires and HIS plans.

My purpose for writing this book is simply to tell the story of the Bible from beginning to end and to do it as clearly as possible. If you are a person who has little or no Bible knowledge then this will give you a basic understanding of what is in the Bible. On the other hand, if you have extensive Bible knowledge then what is presented here should tie things together for you. It is even possible that you may learn something new. Perhaps it will prompt you to think about things you already know just a little differently from the way you previously thought.

There are some real challenges in telling the story of the Bible. The first is to resist the very strong temptation to jump ahead and introduce characters or events that appear later in the story. Most of us are familiar with many of the characters and events and we have a tendency to want to fast-forward to the "good" parts of the Bible. But it is important that we allow the storyline to develop. If you tell any little kid a story they have heard before out of order they will be quick to stop you and say, "No, that's not how it goes!" As I tell the story pretend like this is the very first time you have ever heard it.

Another challenge in telling the Bible story is determining the best sequence to follow. Most of the Bible is in chronological order, but some of it is not. In this book I will

tell the Bible story in the order that the events most likely took place. In a few places it was necessary to follow some other logical sequence which I will explain.

Whenever you tell a story it is important to determine how much detail to go into. I wanted to be true to the text. I believe that everything written in the Bible is the inspired word of God. It is all here for a reason. However it is not my goal to engage in any great theological discussions or to try and unlock the deep mysteries of the Bible. I just want to tell the story. So, for the sake of time and clarity I have focused on only the main storyline. In the appendix I have included some of the questions I have been asked that are not part of my biblical storyline.

Finally, as we go through the biblical storyline you will see two lines that run parallel with each other event after event. I call these the “top line” and the “bottom line.” Top line is God’s way. Top line is God’s will and His desire. Bottom line is any other way other than God’s way which is, as you will see, always the wrong way. We will track these two lines all the way through the Bible story.

The Bible quotations selected are in **bold letters** and are taken from the New English Translation (NET).

It is my prayer that this book will be a blessing to you.