

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE: SECTION SUMMARIES

CREATION: THE GOD OF ALL LIFE

In the beginning God created everything that exists. He made Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden of Eden. God gave them tasks to accomplish and his words to obey. For food he allowed them the fruit of all the trees in the garden except one, which would result in death if they ate of it.

FALL: REJECTING GOD'S VISION FOR LIFE

The snake persuaded Eve to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit. She gave some to Adam and he ate also. Then God spoke to them in judgment and sent them out of the garden into a world now under the same judgment.

FLOOD: GOD JUDGES & COVENANTS TO PRESERVE LIFE

Outside Eden, the human race became so wicked that God determined to destroy every living thing with a flood. Noah and his family were saved by building a great boat at God's command. The human race began again with Noah and his three sons with their families. God promised to never again destroy mankind in such a way.

GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE

Sometime in the early second millennium BC God called Abraham out of Mesopotamia to Canaan. He promised to give this land to Abraham's descendants and to bless them as his people. Abraham went, and many years later had a son, Isaac. Isaac in turn had two sons, Esau and Jacob. The promises of God were established with Abraham, passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob and his descendants. Jacob had twelve sons, and in time they all went to live in Egypt because of famine in Canaan.

GOD RESCUES HIS PEOPLE

In time the descendants of Jacob (renamed Israel) living in Egypt multiplied into a very large population. The Egyptians no longer regarded them with friendliness and made them slaves. God appointed Moses to be the one who would lead Israel out of Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. When the moment came for Moses to demand the freedom of his people, the Pharaoh refused to let them go. After God sent ten destructive plagues, Pharaoh let Israel go, but then pursued them and trapped them at the Red Sea. God opened a way in the sea for Israel to cross on dry land, but closed the water over the Egyptian army, destroying it.

COVENANT & LAW: GOD EMBRACES & INSTRUCTS HIS PEOPLE

After their release from Egypt, Moses led the Israelites to Mount Sinai. There God gave them his law which they were commanded to keep. At one point Moses held a covenant renewal ceremony in which the covenant arrangement was sealed in blood. However, while Moses was away on the mountain, the people persuaded Aaron to fashion a golden calf. Thus they showed their inclination to forsake the covenant and to engage in idolatry. God also commanded the building of the tabernacle and gave all the rules of sacrificial worship by which Israel might approach him.

After giving the law to the Israelites at Sinai, God directed them to go in and take possession of the promised land. Fearing the inhabitants of Canaan, they refused to do so, thus showing lack of confidence in the promises of God. The whole adult generation that had come out of Egypt, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, was condemned to wander and die in the desert. Forty years after leaving Egypt, Israel arrived on the east side of the Jordan River. Here Moses prepared the people for their possession of Canaan, the promised land, and commissioned Joshua as their new leader.

THE LAND: GOD'S PLACE FOR HIS PEOPLE

Under Joshua's leadership the Israelites crossed the Jordan and began the task of driving out the inhabitants of Canaan. After the conquest the land was divided between the tribes, each being allotted its own region. Only the tribe of Levi was without an inheritance of land because of its special priestly relationship to God. There remained pockets of Canaanites in the land and, from time to time, these threatened Israel's hold on their new possession. From the one—man leaderships of Moses and Joshua, the nation moved into a period of relative instability during which judges exercised some measure of control over the affairs of the people.

KINGS & PROPHETS I: GOD SHAPES A KINGDOM PEOPLE

Samuel became judge and prophet in all Israel at a time when the Israelite people demanded a king who would rule them like surrounding nations. The first king, Saul, had a promising start to his reign but eventually showed himself unsuitable as the ruler of God's covenant people. While Saul still reigned, David was anointed to succeed him. Because of Saul's jealousy, David became an outcast. But when Saul died in battle David returned and became king (about 1000 BC). Due to his success, Israel became a powerful and stable nation. He established a central sanctuary at Jerusalem as well as a permanent army. David's

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son Solomon succeeded him and the prosperity of Israel continued. The building of the temple at Jerusalem was one of Solomon's most notable achievements.

KINGS & PROPHETS II: GOD DIVIDES THE KINGDOM PEOPLE

King Solomon allowed political considerations and personal ambitions to sour his relationship with God, which in turn had a negative effect on the life of Israel. Solomon's son began an oppressive rule which led to the rebellion of the northern tribes and the division of the kingdom into north and south. Although there were some political and religious high points, both kingdoms went into decline.

EXILE: GOD DISCIPLINES HIS PEOPLE

A new breed of prophets warned against the direction of national life, but matters went from bad to worse. In 722 BC the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the power of the Assyrian empire. Then, in 586 BC the southern kingdom of Judah was devastated by the Babylonians. Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed and a large part of the population was deported to Babylon. The prophets of Israel warned of the doom that would befall the nation and repeatedly called the people to repentance and renewed faithfulness.

RETURN: GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE AGAIN

In 539 BC Babylon fell to the Medo-Persian empire. The following year, their king Cyrus allowed the Jews to return home and to set up a Jewish state within the Persian empire. Though God's people celebrated their return, there was local opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. Many of the Jews did not return but stayed on in the land of their exile. In the latter part of the fourth century BC, Alexander the Great conquered the Persian empire. The Jews entered a long and difficult period in which Greek culture and religion challenged their trust in God's covenant promises. In 63 BC Pompey conquered Palestine and the Jews found themselves a province of the Roman empire.

CHRIST'S COMING: GOD'S TRUE KING ARRIVES

The province of Judea, the homeland of the Jews, came under Roman rule in 63 BC. During the reign of Caesar Augustus, Jesus was born at Bethlehem, probably about the year 4 BC. John, known as the Baptist, prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus.

CHRIST'S MINISTRY: GOD'S TRUE KING BRINGS HIS KINGDOM

Around age 30, beginning with his baptism, Jesus started his ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing that lasted about three years.

CHRIST'S RESCUE: DEATH, RESURRECTION & ENTHRONEMENT

Growing conflict with the Jews and their religious leaders eventually led to Jesus being sentenced to death by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. He was executed by the Romans just outside Jerusalem, but rose from death on the third day and appeared to his followers on a number of occasions. After a period with them, Jesus was taken up to heaven.

CHRIST'S CHURCH I: GOD'S PEOPLE ON MISSION

After Jesus had ascended, his disciples waited in Jerusalem. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended on them and they began the mission of proclaiming Jesus and making disciples. As the missionary implications of the gospel became clearer to the first Christians, local proclamation was extended to world evangelization. The apostle Paul took the gospel to Asia Minor and Greece, establishing many churches as he went. Eventually a church flourished in the heart of the Roman Empire.

CHRIST'S CHURCH II: LIFE AS GOD'S PEOPLE & CHRIST'S CHURCH III: GOD'S SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE

As the gospel made inroads into pagan societies it encountered many philosophies and non-Christian ideas which challenged the apostolic message. The pressures to adopt pagan ideas and lifestyles that faced the people of God in Old Testament times were also a constant threat to the churches. The real danger to Christianity was not so much in direct attacks upon it, but rather in the subtle distortion of false teachings and the allurements of worldly living. Accordingly, God instructed his people in how to live holy and distinct lives, holding fast to the message of the gospel and living as counter-cultural gospel communities throughout the known world.

CHRIST'S REIGN: THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S KINGDOM

God is Lord over history and therefore, when he so desires, can cause the events of the future to be recorded. All sections of the New Testament contain references to things which have not yet happened, the most significant being the return of Christ and the consummation of the kingdom of God. No clues to the actual chronology are given, but it is certain that Christ will return to judge the living and the dead. The old creation will be undone, the new creation will take its place, and Jesus will reign with his people forever.

(Portions adapted from *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* by Graeme Goldsworthy)

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