

Major Story Lines of the Bible Pastor Jerry Foote

What is the main story of the Bible? Is there a single theme that ties together the 66 books written by over 40 authors over a period of about 1,500 years? We believe that God is the ultimate author of the book and that he guided each human author down to the exact choice of words. This means that we should be able to find an answer to the question, "What is the Bible about?"

The easy answer is that the Bible is about Jesus: in the Old Testament Jesus is predicted through prophecies, types, and pictures; in the New Testament Jesus is revealed through his life story, his death and resurrection, and the interpretation of the apostles. The basic plot of the Bible is also easy to see: God created a perfect world; humans disobeyed God and spoiled everything; God set out to correct the sin problem and restore his creation; happy ending.

If we look a little deeper, we find that there are several distinct but interwoven story lines that run through Scripture. Each story is illustrated by its use in individual stories, covenants, promises, types, institutions, and theological affirmations. Imagine that each story line is a different color thread in a braided fabric. We can trace each color by itself from Genesis to Revelation without unraveling the fabric. Or we can look at the whole book as a beautiful tapestry in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We will look at seven story lines that help us grasp the story of the Bible:

- 1. Atonement** (the red thread): human sin violates God's holiness and places humanity under God's wrath; God sends his Son to be the sin offering and take our punishment to restore righteousness.
- 2. Home** (the gold thread): human sin leads to exile from the perfect home God provided in Eden; we live in alienation until Christ comes to prepare a place for us where he can live with us and we can be his people.
- 3. Creation** (the green thread): God's perfect creation was marred by human sin and the subsequent curse of God on the earth; the coming of Christ begins the new creation of humanity, community, and ultimately the universe itself.
- 4. Freedom** (the blue thread): human disobedience plunged humanity into bondage to sin, often expressed in slavery and tyranny; the Son came to set us free indeed so that we can freely serve our Redeemer.
- 5. Kingdom** (the purple thread): God gave humans dominion over all his creation; human sin corrupted our ability to see the kingdom of heaven or to rule over it; Christ came as the true King over God's kingdom and over all the world's kingdoms.
- 6. Grace** (the white thread): all that God made was a gift to his people; yet in sinful pride we try to design a system of works and legalism; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ who provides transformation by grace through faith.
- 7. People of God** (multi-colored thread): humans were made to live with God, but sin broke fellowship with God; Jesus came as Immanuel to restore fellowship and to call out a new humanity from every tribe, language, and nation.