

Preparing the Way

Promises



Preparing the Way

➤ Series set up...

➤ John 1:1-5...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.



Preparing the Way

- Series set up...
- John 1:1-5...
- The Old Testament all points to Jesus
- Not a book of unrelated stories
- Ultimately the Bible is the story of God and his most loved creation – people
- Jesus' birth was much anticipated and was God's "plan A" right from the beginning
- 300+ prophecies pointing to Jesus



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- God created and it was good
- Adam and Eve rebel against God
- Sin and death enter the world – all creation affected and infected
- God promises deliverance
- Gen 3:15... And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- Eventually Adam's descendants forget about God completely
- God sends a flood – only Noah and his family saved
- Gen 12 – God breaks into Abraham's world and promises that all nations would be blessed through his line



God's BIG Story Unfolds

Gen 12:2-3...

² "I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- Eventually Adam's descendants forget about God completely
- God sends a flood – only Noah and his family saved
- Gen 12 – God breaks into Abraham's world and promises that all nations would be blessed through his line
- Abraham – Isaac – Jacob
- Jacob renamed "Israel"



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- Famine forces Jacob's family to move to Egypt where Joseph is second to Pharaoh
- Genesis 45:7-8... ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸ "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- Famine forces Jacob's family to move to Egypt where Joseph is second to Pharaoh
- Time passes, great deeds of Joseph forgotten, Israel enslaved
- The people cry out and God hears – sends a deliverer, Moses
- God makes a covenant with his people at Mt Sinai



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- The people are rebellious and God refuses to let them into the land he has chosen for them
- Next generation goes in and possesses the land under the leadership of Joshua
- Time of the judges – people forget God
- Israel asks for a king
- Saul crowned king, but rebels against God



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- David chosen by God to rule Israel
- God promises that David's throne will last forever
- Promise of a messiah (a King through the line of David)



God's BIG Story Unfolds

2 Sam 7:11-12, 16... “The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.

¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- David chosen by God to rule Israel
- God promises that David's throne will last forever
- Promise of a messiah (a King through the line of David)
- Time of the kings – Israel forgets about God
- Prophets sent to turn people from their sin and rebellion
- People refuse to listen



God's BIG Story Unfolds

Isaiah 30:8-11 (Israel's heart revealed)...

⁸ Go now, write it on a tablet for them,
inscribe it on a scroll,
that for the days to come
it may be an everlasting witness.

⁹ For these are rebellious people,
deceitful children,
children unwilling to listen to the LORD's
instruction.

¹⁰ They say to the seers,
"See no more visions!"
and to the prophets,



God's BIG Story Unfolds

Isaiah 30:8-11 (Israel's heart revealed)...

“Give us no more visions of what is right!
Tell us pleasant things,
prophecy illusions.

¹¹ Leave this way,
get off this path,
and stop confronting us
with the Holy One of Israel!”



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- The prophets reveal that it was always God's desire for his people to return to him, not to punish them
- People refuse to listen, and God's promised judgement happens exactly as he said it would
- Israel falls first in the 8th century
- Judah falls in the 6th century
- The people left go into exile



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- During 8th – 6th centuries, prophets begin to become more specific about Jesus
- Isaiah 7:14... Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
- Micah 5:2... But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.



God's BIG Story Unfolds

- Judah restored
- Temple rebuilt
- People subject to other nations and kings and oppressed by them
- Roman occupation – paves the way for the messiah (Christ) to be born
- Jesus' birth came at a time when Rome had conquered the known world and there was relative peace



What Does the Story Reveal about God?

1. God is sovereign

➤ Telling the story like this makes it very clear that God is actively moving history to where he wants it to go

➤ Isaiah 55:11... so is my word that goes out from my mouth:

It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.



What Does the Story Reveal about God?

1. God is sovereign
2. God's Desire is to Save
 - God knew we could never get to him, so he came to us
 - All of God's work to save his people sees its fulfillment in Jesus
 - God actually became a human!



What Does the Story Reveal about God?

1. God is sovereign
2. God's Desire is to Save
3. God Uses Ordinary People to Partner With Him in His Saving Mission
 - The people in the stories were not special or better people.
 - God often uses unlikely people
 - Rahab, Tamar, Ruth



What Sort of People Are We?

1. Soft-hearted towards God

- Trust God, his word and his promises
- Hebrews 4:7... “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”



What Sort of People Are We?

1. Soft-hearted towards God
2. Thankful for His Great Gift to Us
 - Christmas for the believer is a time to remember that God came to us.
 - The light of life came down and dwelt among us as one of us!



What Sort of People Are We?

1. Soft-hearted towards God
2. Thankful for His Great Gift to Us
3. Participants in the On-going Story
 - God is still on his mission to seek and save the lost
 - He wants us to partner with him
 - You are now part of his story. What part will you play?

