

## Weekly Grace — (compiled by your Chaplain)

### The Bible From 36,000 Feet

The Bible is a big, and on the face of it, confusing book isn't it? Some have therefore concluded that it's just a bunch of made-up stories and traditions, much like hot cross buns and the Easter Bunny. If you have even a short browse, you'll find there's lots in it about God, the origin of the universe, humans, rebellion against God (called sin), salvation, Israel, human failure, the church, the future and so on. But how can we make sense of it all? ***We need a map!*** Just like a map can help us orient ourselves in unfamiliar territory, a simple cover-to-cover Bible map can help us make sense of the Big Story of the Bible.

So, let's have a go at a map, a Big Story summary:

#### **Cover-to-cover Bible map:**

*Creation -> Corruption -> Covenants -> Christ -> Church -> Consummation*

**The Big Story:** *God Saves Sinners (indifferent, self-serving rebels like me, and you!)*

Of course, these are all loaded terms that beg explanation and qualification, so deep breath, here we go!

#### ***Bible road-marker: Genesis chapters 1-12***

**Creation:** God is the good and loving creator of the world and therefore the ruler and king of the world. God created humanity and put us in charge of the world as his image-bearers, under God's good authority. So, in the beginning, God created an extraordinary and beautiful world, and people to enjoy God and the world that they are to care for, and it was very good.

**Corruption:** Alas, the goodness becomes tainted. We humans rebel against God, committing cosmic treason by defying God's authority, rejecting the good God who made us, and declaring ourselves to be in charge. This rebellious attitude is what the Bible calls 'sin'. Everything broke. With our spiritual umbilical to God severed, human relationships also broke and the world itself became a mixed and hard place. But God is too good and too just to let rebellion and the effects of rebellion continue indefinitely. We cannot save ourselves any more than we can jump across the Great Australian Bite or throw rocks and hit the moon. God alone can save us.

#### ***Bible road-marker: Genesis 12 - Malachi (the rest of the 'Old Testament')***

**Covenants:** God begins to save humanity, making covenants, a contract of love, with a chosen people – starting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The chosen people and their leaders continually break the covenants, like an unfaithful spouse. They are eventually divided and estranged from their homeland. But God remains faithful.

***Bible road-marker: The Biographies of Jesus written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John***

**Christ:** At the right time in history, because of His mercy and love toward us, God stepped into creation as one of us, to finally save us. Jesus of Nazareth was born of a woman, lived the life of perfect obedience and righteousness that *we cannot live*, then willingly died in our place to bear the punishment of death that *our treason* rightly deserved. *This is the high-point of the Story: Jesus died in our place*, “the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18; Romans 5:6-10). His death, burial, then his rising from the dead three days later (attested to by many reliable witnesses) proves that Jesus has conquered death, and fully paid the ransom that sets us free from our sin.

***Bible road-marker: Acts - Jude***

**Church:** Christians are the ‘church’, a people who have simply turned away from being their own lord and saviour and turned to King Jesus, trusting in him and so receive His gift of eternal life and the gift of His Spirit. They live under a new covenant through Christ, adopted by God as daughters and sons - an international community, a living temple of God’s presence, with God’s law written on their hearts.

***Bible road-marker: Revelation***

**Consummation:** Jesus promised to return at the end of time, completing the establishment of his kingdom, remaking the universe and resurrecting our bodies. All humanity will individually stand before King Jesus to be judged, giving an account of their lives. Those who have trusted in Jesus as their King and Saviour will enjoy everlasting life with God in his new creation forever. Those who have remained rebellious against him will be shut out of his good presence, his kingdom, and suffer death and everlasting ruin.

So let’s read God’s Big Story, the Bible for ourselves. And let’s accept the gift God offers us, by trusting Jesus and enjoying him forever! Will you begin today?

***Bibliography:***

- 1 London Institute of Contemporary Christianity – “Whole Life Whole Bible”
- 2 Matthias Media – “The Essential Jesus”
- 3 Steven R Cook – “The Gospel in Two Minutes”