

A Summary of the
BIBBLE

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In memory of John M.

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Preface



I was raised in a family that did not practice any particular faith. Consequently, I had no understanding of what the Bible was about nor what the Jewish or Christian faith was about. By the time I was in high school, I did not believe that God existed. God was a myth to me.

Between my first and second year of college, I had a powerful experience. It was like an awakening; I realized that God existed. From that time forth, I was seeing with new eyes. I could look at the stars and know God was out there. I also knew there was some kind of spiritual world.

A few months later, I saw a book on my childhood bookshelf that I never read: *The Story of Salvation*. The book turned out to be a summary of the Bible. For the first time in my life, I learned what was in the Bible: how it began with God creating the world, how man was created, and how God has been and will be directing human history to its end. When I finished the book, I understood who the Jewish people were, who Jesus was, why Jesus was crucified, how he rose from the dead, and how the world will eventually end with a final judgment. Christianity made sense. I wanted to be a Christian and by God's irresistible grace eventually became one a couple years later.

Over the last forty years, I have grown in my experience in the Christian faith. Over the last thirty years, I have read the Bible from cover to cover every year. Over the last twenty years, I have studied theology. Given what I have learned from reading the Bible repeatedly and from the teachings of widely respected theologians throughout

church history (e.g. St. Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards), I was comfortable to express the Bible's overall message in the form of this summary.

From my studies, I learned that there are three stages of having a saving faith. The first stage is the informative stage, where the person becomes informed of what the faith is about. The second stage is the agreement stage, where the person agrees that the information is true. The third stage is the trusting stage, where the person trusts and relies on the information as the truth and will stake his/her life on it.

The purpose of this summary is to help with the informative stage. As I needed at the beginning of my Christian experience, this summary is to help the reader understand what is in the Bible from start to finish. Whoever reads this summary should know that having this summary in his or her hands is not a coincidence. It is God who draws us to Himself. My hope and prayer is that God will use this summary to inform readers how they can make peace with God; have all their misdeeds, great and small, be completely forgiven by God; and commit themselves into a loving and intimate relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Without a doubt, to make peace and commit to an intimate relationship with God is the *most* important decision anyone could make. Indeed, such a decision is a matter of eternal life or eternal separation.

Another purpose of this summary is to be a resource to those who are saved. Saved Christians realize and embrace their duty to spread the good news to others. They also understand and trust that God will work through their efforts to achieve his eternal purposes.



Without holiness no one will see the Lord

—Hebrews 12:14 ESV, Written in a letter to Christian Hebrews circa 60 A.D

Starting from the first Book of the Bible—Genesis: The Bible begins with how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit created the visible universe as we know it and everything within. Out of nothing, something was created by something not of the universe, something self-existent and mutually exclusive from the universe—God. Natural science will not be able to explain the supernatural. Furthermore, it is a scientific (and logical) impossibility for the universe to create itself.

Included in God's creation was his creation of the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve. They had physical bodies that were created to exist for eternity; their bodies would not decay nor die. Different from all the other creatures on the earth, Adam and Eve were made in the image of God, having the capacity to relate, think, plan, manage, create, etc.

Our first parents were placed in paradise here on earth (Eden—somewhere in the Middle East), and every day, they lived in the presence of God. Among the fruit-bearing trees, there were two particular trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve were allowed to eat from any tree; however, God commanded them *not* to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Should they disobey God's command, they would experience physical death; their bodies would no longer be eternal. This is

known as a *conditional* covenant. Adam and Eve would live forever as long as they kept the one command.

Among God's creation were angels. They are creatures; however, they do not have physical bodies like mankind. They are unseen spiritual beings that continue to exist in our physical world (although they appeared sometimes in the Bible, like to Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, Joseph, and Mary, to name a few times). One of the chief angels, Satan, rebelled against God. To this day, Satan, whose power exceeds any human power on earth, along with a host of other demonic angels, exist in this world but are under God's sovereign rule.

Satan deceived our first parents into thinking that if they ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they could be like God. Satan flatly lied to them by saying that they would not die if they ate the forbidden fruit. The idea of being like God became extremely attractive to them, and so they ate. Instantly, they realized their guilt of breaking God's command and became ashamed.

In futility, Adam and Eve tried to hide from God; but God knew exactly where they were and confronted them. Although they tried to pass the blame, our first parents knew that they disobeyed God's command. God pronounced his judgment: from dust they were created, to dust they would return. No longer pure and blameless, i.e. holy, they could no longer live in God's presence. Death and decay would now happen. Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden of Eden and therefore no longer had access to the tree of life. Our first parents would continue to relate, think, plan, manage, and create but not without pain, suffering, and the looming certainty of death and decay.

And so the human race began under these dire terms. Everyone born thereafter has the sinful inclination to be their own god, to decide for themselves what is good and evil. They do not trust nor obey nor rely on nor acknowledge God. God is not in the forefront of their thoughts. They have suppressed any truth about God and who he is. Instead of worshipping the Creator, they worship themselves and the creation. Adam's and Eve's sin in disobeying God resulted

into the Fall of mankind, i.e. being born with a sinful nature. We sin because we are sinners; we are not sinners because we sin.

However, in their divine and eternal love for mankind, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (known as the Holy Trinity, i.e. one in essence, three in person) provided a solution that will restore eternal fellowship with human beings and allow them to once again live in the presence of God. That is, God provided a way to satisfy his judgment against mankind's innate sinful nature to be their own god and make mankind holy and pure again without any trace of sin. This is commonly referred to as God's plan of salvation. This plan would take time to reveal and make it very clear that this plan was indeed from God.

As the human race grew in numbers, God's invisible hand was at work to put his plan of salvation into place. Throughout mankind's history, God began to choose, inspire and had a relationship with certain individuals to carry out certain duties that would give patterns, symbols, and indications as to what God's plan would be. These individuals had faults and failures like us today, but God by his divine grace worked through them to achieve his ultimate purposes.

- Enoch was the seventh generation after Adam. Although not blameless and pure, Enoch nonetheless had a relationship with God. He trusted God for who God was and depended on God to be the one who gave him life. By God's sovereign power, God took Enoch before Enoch experienced death.
- A few generations later, there was a descendant of Enoch named Noah. By God's sovereign plan, Noah was inspired by God to build a huge boat to save his family from God's punishment of mankind for their sinful nature. The punishment was a flood that put to death every human on earth, except Noah's family of eight.
- A few generations later, there was a descendant of Noah named Abraham. Abraham lived circa 2000 BC and was inspired by God to leave his homeland (geographically around southern Iraq) and to settle into a new territory