

WHAT IS THE BIBLE ALL ABOUT?



The Bible is the best selling book of all time. Many believe it to be the word of God and have even risked their lives for it. So what is it all about?

The Bible is a large book containing history, laws, poetry and wisdom but at its heart is one key message:

GOD CALLS US TO TURN TO HIM

The Bible shows how God has continually reached out to mankind, calling us to turn to him and the life that he offers (Genesis 4:7, Micah 6:8, Isaiah 55:6-7, John 3:16-17, Acts 17:24-31, 2 Pet 3:9).

The Bible begins with the creation of the first man and women, Adam and Eve. God gave them a beautiful garden with no weeds or hardships, but Adam and Eve chose to disobey God for the false hope of something better (Genesis 2 & 3).

Adam and Eve then faced the consequences of a world with sin, which became increasingly filled with violence, corruption and ultimately, death (Genesis 4-6).

God is hurt by our rejection, but he forebears with us. He is merciful, kind and slow to anger (Jeremiah 3:12-13, Exodus 34:6-7, Jonah 4:2, Psalm 103:8-18). God continually reached out, calling people to repent and show their faith in different ways, at different times (Genesis 6:9-14, 12:1-7, Exodus 12:11-13, Jonah 3, Isaiah 1:16-20).

Some people faithfully responded (Hebrews 11), but God promised a son who would one day overcome sin completely (Genesis 3:15).

THE NATION OF ISRAEL

God called the Nation of Israel to be his special people, because of the faithfulness of their father, Abraham (Exodus 19:5-6). Most of the Old Testament is about God's work with them.

Israel became a witness for God to all the nations (Isaiah 44:8, Josh 2:11). As foretold, Israel miraculously escaped slavery in Egypt (Gen 15:13-14, 50:24, Exod 12-14), conquered the promised land (Joshua 6), returned from captivity in Babylon (Jer 29:4-10, 2 Chron 36:11-23) and even recently returned to the land in 1948, centuries after deportation by the Romans in AD70 (Isaiah 43:5-12, Ezek 36:24, Deut 30:1-6).

A PROMISED SAVIOR

God also gave Israel the promise of a special descendant who would lead people to turn their hearts to God and bring about his ultimate plan for worldwide peace, justice and plenty for everyone (Isaiah 11:1-10, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Deut 18:15-22).

Promises to Abraham

"in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"
(Genesis 22:18).

Promises to King David

"I will raise up your offspring after you... and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."
(2 Sam 7:12-16).

THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament this promised descendant is introduced to us (Matt 1:21, Luke 1:31-33, Gal 4:4, Hebrews 1:1-3):

*"Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham"
Matthew 1:1*

The first four books of the New Testament record the life, teachings and miracles of Jesus, giving evidence that he really is the promised deliverer and the Son of God (Matt 7:28-29, Mark 2:10-12, John 20:31). But contrary to expectations, Jesus did not become king. He was crucified and died (Matt 27).

THE RESURRECTION

What is recorded next is the most significant and controversial event of the Bible: After three days Jesus was raised to life. It was unbelievable, even to his close disciples (Mark 16:11-13). Yet, the New Testament records that Jesus appeared alive to many after his crucifixion, and this compelled them to believe and risk their lives to preach that Jesus is in fact the saviour sent by God, and even now extends forgiveness to those who turn to him (Luke 24, 1 Cor 15:3-8, Acts 1:1-11, 4:8-20, 17:24-31).

God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah...repent and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

Acts 2:36-38

JESUS IS COMING

The book of Acts records the start of the early churches after Jesus was taken to be with his father in heaven (Acts 1:1-11). The remaining books of the New Testament are letters encouraging the believers to follow Jesus' example of love while waiting faithfully for his return as king (Eph 3:14- 4:6, 1 Thess 3:12-5:11). Our loving creator calls us to hear his son (Matt 17:5, Heb 1:1-2).

*"Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end."
Isaiah 9:7*