

God's Great Story

Advance in Faith 101



Lesson 2 The Christian Story - Part 2



1. Introduction

Last week we considered the beginning of the story of the Christian faith, a story which begins to answer the 'big' questions humans have always asked; who are we, where do we come from, where are we going, what are we here for, why is the world the way it is and what can we do about it?

Just as the Jewish nation's beginnings involved 'wrestling with God', so their history became the story of God, Yahweh, continually stepping in to rescue them. This after-all is the mission of the Messiah;

Paul tells the story, in the form of a great Jewish-style thanksgiving-prayer: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, who ...' has now accomplished the long-awaited purpose. It is the story of creation and exodus, of redemption and inheritance: the great Jewish story, now seen from a new angle, the redefined royal angle, the Messianic angle that never entered Herod's head.¹

Exodus 2:23 – the Israelites, now a large population within Egypt, are rescued by God and lead by Moses to the land from which Jacob and his family came. This is the story of "The Exodus".

This is THE story for the nation of Israel.

Exodus 19:3-6 – God begins a new nation by giving them a constitution by which to live, the 10 Commandments.

Joshua 1:1-5 – Israel, under Joshua, moves into their homeland.

1 Samuel 8:4-9 – Israel asks for a king to rule them. This is a significant move out from the way in which Yahweh wishes Israel to go.

1 Samuel 16:1 and 13 – David is appointed king of Israel.

2 Samuel 7:16 and 2 Chronicles 7:17, 18 – God covenants with David that his dynasty is to be an everlasting dynasty.

¹ N. T. Wright, *Twelve Months of Sundays: Reflections on Bible Readings, Year B* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2002), 87.

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1 Kings 11:43, 12:1, 16 – Rehoboam's actions split the nation of Israel into 2 parts, Israel, formed by 10 tribes also known as the 'Northern Kingdom' and the 2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin, usually called 'Judah' in the southern part of the land.

2 Kings 17:5, 6 – the Northern kingdom is destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BC and the people are forcefully evicted (exiled) from their homes.

2 Kings 24:14, 15 – the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, sacks Jerusalem and the Jews living there are taken into captivity (exile) to Babylon. The kingdom of Israel, both north and south, has ceased to exist. The idea of a descendent of David's being a king forever must now take on a new meaning.

Isaiah 35 – The hope to come.

Isaiah 51:1-5 is an example of how God, through his messengers or prophets to Israel, began to give the Jews hope in a new type of king and the establishment of a new kingdom.

Group Questions:

- Take some time to reconsider the answers to those big questions that the Christian faith offers:
 - Where do we come from?
 - Why are we here?
 - What is a human being?
 - Is there something wrong with the world and what can/has been done about it?
- Are there parts of the Old Testament story that you find difficult to accept?
- If the Old Testament is the story of God bringing about his plans through Israel, do you think that God was working in other places in the world at the same time?

You are always more than welcome to email me any questions that might arise from our discussions or your own reading. My email address is graham.irvine@riverviewchurch.com.au