

GOD'S STORY

Overview of the Old Testament

Community Group Bible study series

2016

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OVERVIEW

I remember the first time that I clicked onto the fact that the bible is not just a collection of books, but primarily one book, all connected by a single story with many themes and images running right the way through it. Ever since my bible reading has improved dramatically and I have grown considerably in my love for Jesus, knowing that he is the centre point of the great story of what God has done.

This can be a hard concept to grasp by zooming in on different parts of the bible separately, but if we zoom out and look at the bible as a whole, we can start to see how different parts of the bible fit in and how significant they are. I hope these studies can help you and/or your group zoom out and see how God's story flows right through the Old Testament and beyond.

The diagrams at the end of each study are adapted from "God's Big Picture" by Vaughan Roberts, IVP. I recommend the book, which is easy to read and a great way to further into these topics. Some of the study content is taken from 'Full of Promise' by Bryson Smith and Phil Campbell, Matthias Media.

God Bless,



Matt Winter

Ministry Apprentice



COMMUNITY GROUPS

COMMUNITY GROUPS AT TRINITY INNER SOUTH

Regular Bible study in small groups is a great way to grow as a Christian. We see three things as being really important to our groups:

1. GROWING AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS

This is a central goal of all we do at TIS and God's appointed way of doing so is through ministry of the word and through prayer.

2. GROWING IN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

God has called us to be in community with one another and there are many "one another" tasks in the Bible, which simply can't be achieved at a big Sunday gathering and are better done in smaller groups.

3. SERVING THE GOSPEL TOGETHER

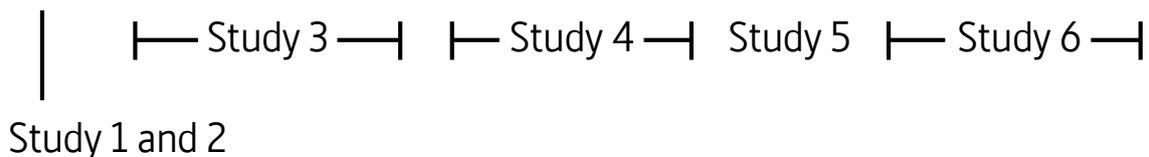
We'd love all our groups to be growing in their commitment to the gospel and how that works out practically at a local church level.

JOINING A COMMUNITY GROUP

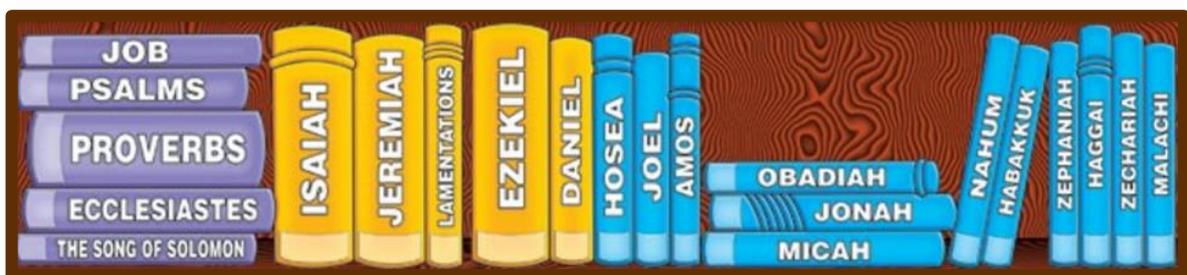
If you are able to join one of our community groups and haven't done so yet, please consider it in the next few weeks. The easiest way to get into a group is to go to our website at www.trinityinnersouth.org.au/#/connect and launch the form at the bottom of the "Community Groups" page. Karl Forsyth our Community Group co-ordinator will get in touch with you.

STUDIES OVERVIEW

These studies make their way through the Old Testament in 6 separate studies. Most of the narrative of the Old Testament is contained in the first half, from Genesis to Esther, where we'll spend most of our time:



We'll do two studies on Genesis, which is so important in setting up the story that follows and from there we'll accelerate through the rest of the narrative. The second half of the Old Testament contains the wisdom literature, from Job to The Song of Songs, and the prophets. We'll touch on these at different points of well:



STUDIES OVERVIEW

STUDY	TITLE	PASSAGE
Study 1	Good Things Go Bad	Genesis 1-12
Study 2	Promises, Promises	Genesis 12-50
Study 3	The Great Escape	Exodus - Joshua
Study 2	The Kingdom Comes	Judges – 1 Kings
Study 3	The Kingdom Falls	1 Kings and 2 Kings
Study 1	Promises and Prophets	1 Chronicles - Esther

THE BIBLE PROJECT VIDEOS

As you work your way through the studies you'll notice that each week there are videos to watch. These are fantastic videos and very helpful in understanding big parts of God's story in a short time. All videos referenced are created by *The Bible Project* and are free to view and download from their website www.jointhebibleproject.com or from Youtube.



At the end of this booklet you can find specific links to each of the videos referenced, if that is helpful to you. Please let us know if you need any help accessing these videos.

We hope you really enjoy these studies and there's a feedback form at the end of the booklet which we'd really like your group to complete.

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 1

TITLE: GOOD THINGS GO BAD

OVERVIEW: Genesis 1-11, We See God creating the world, the fall and the way sin spreads across the world.

The bible is a complex book. Some of us will know it quite well, some of us may not have looked at it much at all, and many of us will know parts of it well but have no idea about the rest. In these studies, we are aiming to take a quick skim through the story of the Old Testament, getting an overview of the main events and themes. We won't be able to look at many things in detail, but getting an idea of how it all fits together will make it less confusing and help us to see how the bible is primarily one story about what God has done. Let's start at the very beginning...

READ GENESIS 1:1-2:3

1. What reoccurring words or phrases do you notice?
2. What do you think these patterns tell us about God and the world?
3. What things reflect the fact that humanity has a special place in God's plans?

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 1

READ GENESIS 3

4. Genesis 3 records the rebellion of Adam and Eve against God's rule. This is often called 'the fall'. How is the fall typical of all sin (3:1-7)?

5. In Genesis 3:8-24, God punishes Adam and Eve for their rebellion. Things have changed. How is the created order now different?

Watch "The Book of Genesis Overview Part 1" by *The Bible Project*, which gives us a quick overview of the first 11 chapters of Genesis. You might like to flip through your bible afterwards and see where some of the stories are.

6. What were the main events of chapters 4-11? How do they demonstrate the spread of sin and the worsening of creation?

7. Despite all the bad things that happen in these chapters, what evidence is there of God still actively blessing his creation?

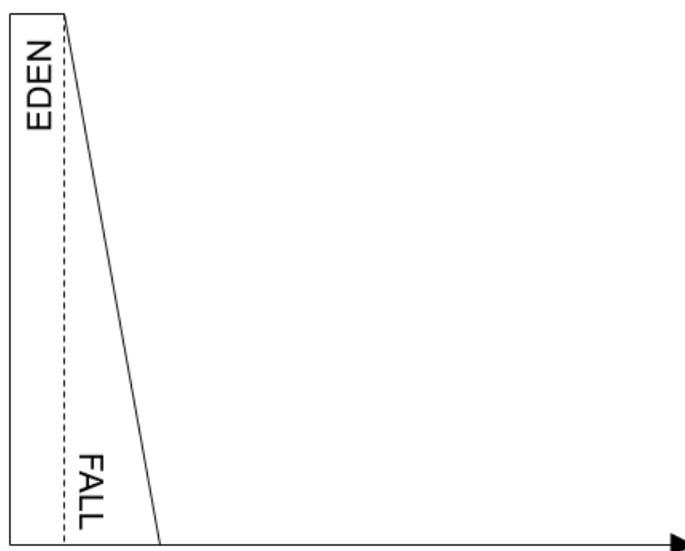
GOD'S STORY – STUDY 1

IMPLICATIONS

8. Read John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:15-17. From these passages, what was Jesus Christ's role in creation? How should this affect the way we respond to Christ?

9. Because of the fall, life in the world is a mixture of good and bad, achievement and frustration. In what specific areas of life are you feeling this?

Pray, giving thanks for the good things in the world and pray for each other in light of all the difficult and bad things that are in the world because of the fall.



The Story So Far – The Fall

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 2

TITLE: PROMISES, PROMISES

OVERVIEW: Genesis 12-50, God makes promises to Abraham and we see that he intends to fix the broken world.

1. A television reporter stops you in the street and asks 'what's the biggest problem with the world?' How do you answer?

Last week we saw that after God created the world to be good, things quickly went downhill, spiralling to a point where the world was broken and in desperate need of rescue. You might like to watch "The Book of Genesis Overview Part 1" by *The Bible Project* again as a recap.

In Genesis 12 – 50 we see God's plan to rescue the world begin, starting with Abraham (who was originally called Abram)

READ GENESIS 12:1-9

2. What does God promise Abram in these verses?
3. Compare Genesis 12:2 with Genesis 11:4. What do these verses tell us about humanity and God?

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 2

READ GENESIS 15:1-6

4. God repeats his promises to Abram. What new things do we discover about God and Abram in these verses?

5. How do God's promises to Abram reflect a return to the good creation, like we saw in the garden in Genesis 1-2?

The remainder of Genesis details the next few generations of Abraham's family, finishing with the story of Joseph. Watch "The Book of Genesis Overview Part 2" video by *The Bible Project*, taking note of who Abraham's descendants are and what they do.

6. Do you think it's surprising that God would use the family of Abraham as part of his plan to restore the world?

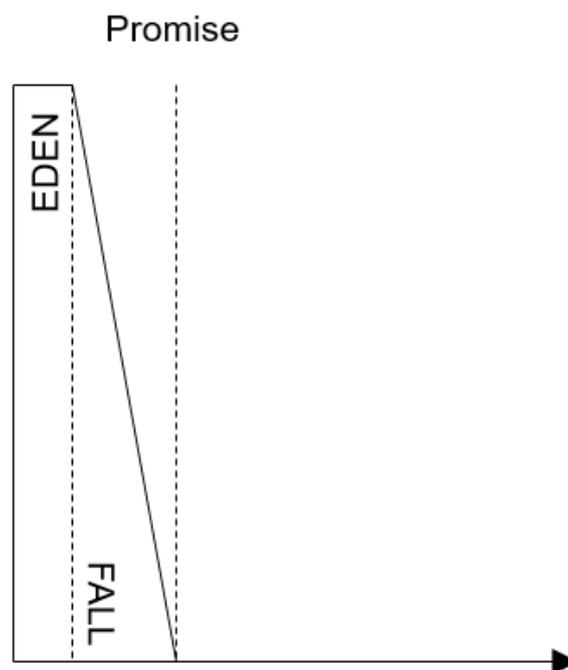
GOD'S STORY – STUDY 2

IMPLICATIONS

7. How would you respond to the comment: “God doesn’t care about the world, if he did he would have done something about all the evil things that happen.”?

8. Read Romans 4:18-25. Abraham trusted in God’s promises, how is this similar to the way in which Christians trust in Jesus?

Pray for each other and give thanks that God loved the world enough to do something about the broken world.



The Story So Far – The Fall and a Promise

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 3

TITLE: THE GREAT ESCAPE

OVERVIEW: Exodus to Joshua. God's promises begin to be fulfilled as his people are rescued from Egypt and reach the promised land.

1. Try and remember what we've looked out in the first two studies. Can you recall the promises God made to Abraham?

READ EXODUS 1:6-12

2. What parts of God's promises to Abraham do you see being fulfilled?

READ EXODUS 6:1-8

3. Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, are persecuted by Pharaoh and subjected to slavery. What does God plan in response?

Pharaoh refuses to let Israel go free despite numerous plagues sent by God. Watch "The Book of Exodus Overview Part 1" by *The Bible Project*.

4. What finally forces Pharaoh's hand?

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 3

READ EXODUS 19:1-8

5. After they've escaped from Egypt, what is God now going to do with Israel? How do these plans relate to his promises to Abraham?

In the second half of the book of Exodus, God is on Mount Sinai with Moses and gives him various laws and instructions, mainly concerned with how to build the tabernacle - the place where God is to live with the people.

Next, the book of Leviticus focuses on the rituals and practices the Israelites must follow to be pure and to be able to live with God.

In the book of Numbers, the Israelites journey from Mount Sinai to the edge of the promised land, which unfortunately includes 40 years of wandering the desert due to their disobedience.

Finally, at the end of the 40 years, Moses gives a final speech to the Israelites, which is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy.

READ DEUTERONOMY 30:15-20

6. At the end of the Pentateuch (Book in five parts), Moses gives the Israelites a clear choice. What are Israel's options?

READ JOSHUA 24:1-18

7. This passage gives us a quick overview of what happens next as the Israelites finally enter the promised land. How have things gone? What has been achieved regarding God's promises?

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 3

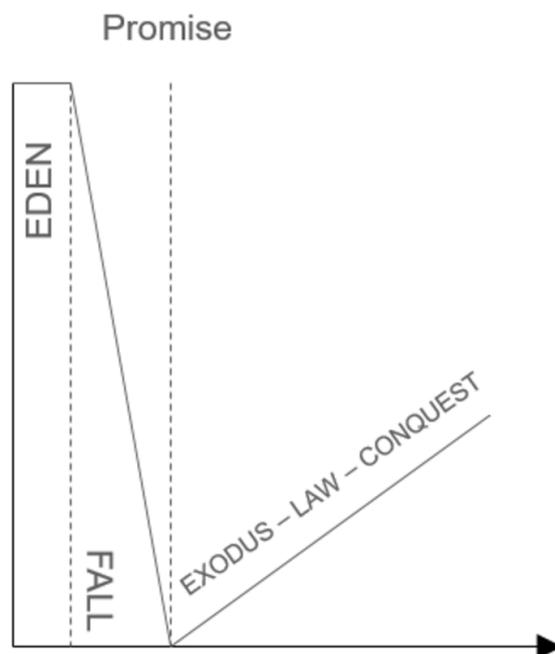
8. Again the Israelites have a choice, what choice do they make?

IMPLICATIONS

9. Read John 1:29. At the Passover, the Israelites sacrifice lambs, and by the blood of the lamb they are saved. How does this foreshadow Christ?

Watch “Animated Explanation of Sacrifice and Atonement” by *The Bible Project*, to see how this theme runs through the whole bible.

10. Moses urges Israel never to forget the Exodus, since it was the event that gave them their identity. The same is true of the cross for Christians. What does it look like to ‘never forget the cross’?



The Story So Far – Things are on the up

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 4

TITLE: THE KINGDOM COMES

OVERVIEW: Judges to 1 Kings. David and Solomon rule Israel as great kings... though maybe not so great after all.

1. Thinking back over previous weeks, what has God promised his people? How are we going at seeing those promises fulfilled?

After the Israelites enter the promised land in the book of Joshua, the book of Judges describes the 'mopping-up operations' as the Israelites try to rid the land of their enemies. Early in the book Joshua dies.

2. Read Judges 2:7-11 and 2:16-21. How does Israel respond after Joshua's death?

Things are not going well. The Israelites begin to long for a king to rule them well and take their nation forward. Earlier in the story, both Jacob and Moses have told Israel to expect a great king to come one day from the line of Judah. The Israelites decide that they need a king to rule them under God, rather than just having God as their king, so they make Saul the first king of Israel. Saul disobeys God, and so eventually David takes his place. David is a great wise ruler, a man after God's own heart – he rules well and writes much of the book of Psalms.

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 4

READ 2 SAMUEL 7:1-17

3. What does King David want to build? (v1-2)

4. How does God respond?

5. What does the future hold for David and his family? (v 9, 11-16)

6. Things are looking good for David, but some years later he commits a terrible sin. Read 2 Samuel 11:1-17. What sin does David commit?

David is devastated by his sin and writes Psalm 51 in response (read it if you have time), but his sin is followed by many scandals in the royal family – feud's, incest, rape and murderous ambition. Eventually Bathsheba's son Solomon inherits the throne.

READ 1 KINGS 4:20-21 AND 1 KINGS 6:1-3

7. What promises do we see fulfilled under Solomon's reign?

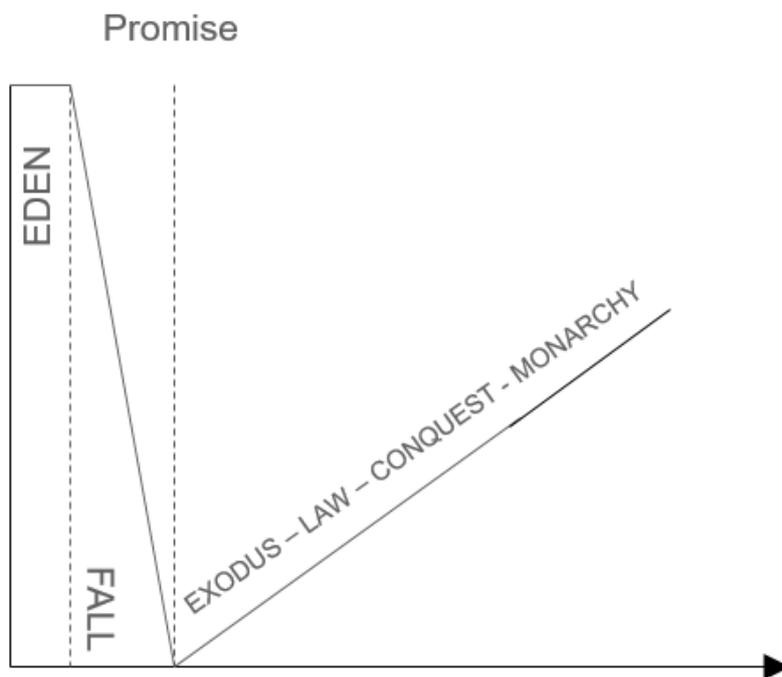
GOD'S STORY – STUDY 4

IMPLICATIONS

The theme of a 'great king' like David and Solomon runs right through the bible. Watch “Animated Explanation of the Messiah” by *The Bible Project* which explains how this theme culminates in Jesus.

8. How is Jesus a better king than David and Solomon? How does he fulfil the promises made to David?

9. What does it look like to choose Jesus as our king?



The Story So Far – A Kingdom Established

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 5

TITLE: THE KINGDOM FALLS

OVERVIEW: 1 Kings and 2 Kings. We see how Israel divides and falls, failing to be the great kingdom it was called to be.

1. Throughout the past 4 studies we saw how God has built for himself the nation of Israel as his 'holy people'. What do you think it means to be a 'holy person'?

Things have been looking pretty good for Israel. They're in the promised land, they've built the temple and Solomon is a wise king, writing books like Proverbs and Song of Songs. It seems like God's promises are finally being fulfilled, but what goes up usually comes down and Solomon crashes down to earth pretty fast.

READ DEUTERONOMY 17:16-17, THEN 1 KINGS 10:23-11:3

2. What are the ways Solomon has failed to follow God as Israel's king?

3. In 1 Kings 11:9-13, what does God say will happen because of Solomon's mistakes?

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 5

READ 1 KINGS 12:1-19

4. What is God's punishment for the way in which Solomon and Israel have failed to be his holy people?

Israel is now divided into two separate kingdoms with separate kings, the large northern kingdom still called 'Israel' and the small southern kingdom of 'Judah'.

5. Divide into two groups and lookup the following passages to see how the kings of the two kingdoms go:

Israel (Northern Kingdom)	Judah (Southern Kingdom)
1 Kings 15:25-26	2 Kings 8:16-19
1 Kings 16:29-33	2 Kings 18:1-4
1 Kings 22:51-53	2 Kings 21:1-6

After many years of unfaithfulness, the northern kingdom of Israel comes under God's judgement and is crushed by the Assyrian Empire. The kingdom of Israel disappears for the pages of history.

The kingdom of Judah doesn't fare much better. Though some of the kings and prophets try to turn the people's hearts to God, the people don't listen. In what's known as the exile, Judah is captured by the Babylonians and what's left of the nation of Israel is taken to Babylon as prisoners.

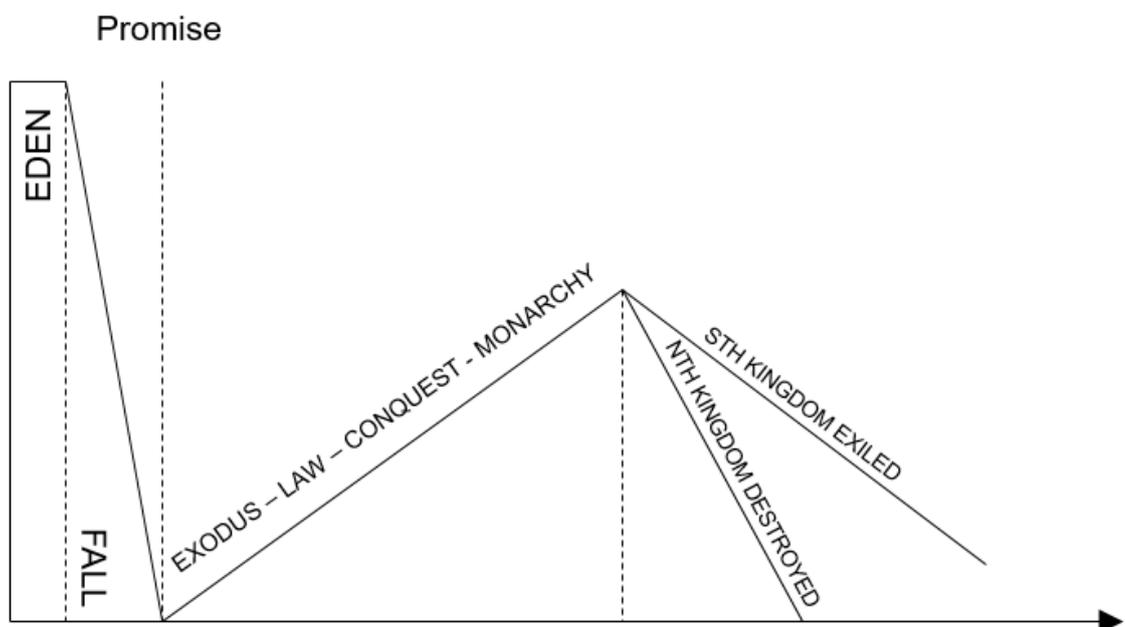
GOD'S STORY – STUDY 5

IMPLICATIONS

6. Read 1 Peter 1:13-16. As followers of Jesus we, like the Israelites, are called to be holy. What do you think this looks like practically? How do you think you are going at this?

Watch “The Gospel of the Kingdom” by *The Bible Project*, which shows how despite Israel’s destruction, the people still have a king who reigns – God himself.

7. When things are going badly, how might you share the ‘good news’ that Jesus is the king with others?



The Story So Far – The kingdom divides and falls

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 6

TITLE: PROMISES AND PROPHETS

OVERVIEW: Chronicles to Esther and the Prophets. The Jews live in exile and we see how the Prophets point to Jesus for total fulfilment of God's promises.

1. This table gives an overview of some of the key things God has promised his people during these studies. Discuss how these promises have / have not been fulfilled up until this point.

Person	Promise	Fulfilled?
Abraham	Descendants into a great Nation Land to live in All nations blessed	
Moses	Israel will be God's prized people Israel will be a holy nation of priests	
David	His son will establish a house for God His son will have an everlasting throne God's love will never be taken away from his son	

READ LAMENTATIONS 1:1-8

2. Israel's Southern Kingdom of Judah has gone into exile in Babylon. Why has this happened to 'Jerusalem'? What does this reveal about how the Jews must have felt?

GOD'S STORY – STUDY 6

There are many incredible stories during the time of Exile like the stories of Daniel and Esther.

READ DANIEL 3

3. What is impressive about the way Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego act as exiles in a foreign land?

4. How does the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, respond to this incredible incident?

Through the time of Israel's demise and exile, prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah encouraged the people to hope for the future.

5. In pairs, pick one of these passages and look it up:
 - Isaiah 11:1-6 and 53
 - Jeremiah 31: 31-34
 - Jeremiah 33: 14-17

How would the words of these prophets give the people hope for the future?

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of how the Jews are allowed to return to Jerusalem, concluding the narrative of the Old Testament. The country is a shadow of its former self, and in many ways it seems as if God's promises have gone unfulfilled.

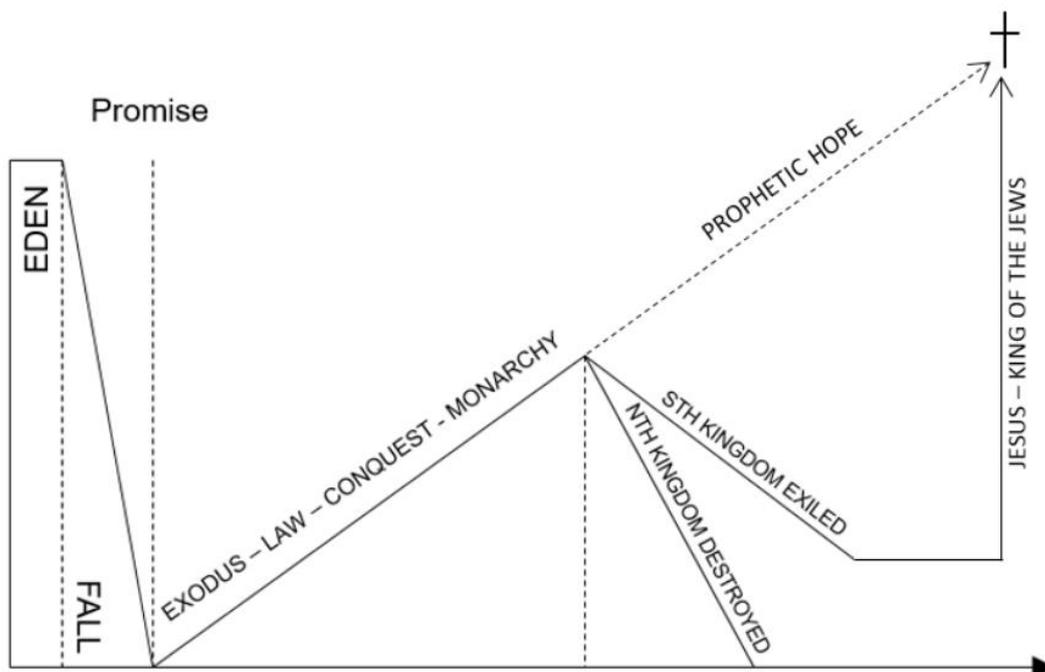
GOD'S STORY – STUDY 6

Watch 'Animated Explanation of the Covenants' by *The Bible Project*.

6. Even though at the end of the Old Testament it seems that God's promises have not been fulfilled. How are God's promises finally fulfilled in Jesus?

IMPLICATIONS

7. Read 1 Peter 2:11-12. How is the situation today for Christians similar to the situation of the Jews when they were in exile in Babylon? How would this change how Christians live?
8. What hope do Christians have for the future? How does this help Christians to live as exiles?



The Story So Far – Christ Fulfils the Promises

REFERENCES TO VIDEOS

All videos referenced are created by The Bible Project and are free to view and download from their website: www.jointhebibleproject.com or from Youtube. The links to the particular videos referenced follow:

The Book of Genesis Overview Part 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOUV7mWDI34>

The Book of Genesis Overview Part 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpbWbyx1008>

The Book of Exodus Overview Part 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uf-PgW7rqE>

Animated Explanation of Sacrifice and Atonement

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_0lRWGLdnw

Animated Explanation of the Messiah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dEh25pduQ8>

The Gospel of the Kingdom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmFPS0f-kzs>

Animated Explanation of the Covenants

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ferLlsvlml>

FEEDBACK

We'd really appreciate feedback on the series, how helpful you found it and any suggestions for improvement. If you are able please send any feedback via email to: office@trinityinnersouth.org.au

BOOKLET

1. Were the studies helpful?
2. Would you use them again if they were produced in future?

OVERALL

1. Did the series help you understand how the bible flows together as a single story?
2. How would you like to see them made better?
3. Did the studies raise any big questions for you?

Any other comments would be welcome.

NOTES

TRINITY INNER SOUTH CHURCH A TRINITY NETWORK