

In the Beginning - Session 1: Introduction

“There are a lot of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them.” - Sally Lloyd-Jones from “The Jesus Storybook Bible”

Good stories bring us into the experience because:

1. We identify and empathize with the characters.
2. We hope everything will turn out right in the end for them.
3. We see the story depicting life as it really is.
4. We see the story depicting life as it ought to be, tapping into our hopes using these grand themes:
 - Supernatural or Another World
 - Virtuous Beauty (Courage, Love, Compassion, Grace)
 - Good (or the Hero) Conquering Evil
 - Reconciliation of Broken Relationships
 - Redemption of People and Circumstances
 - Victory over Certain Defeat
 - Good Endings

The Plot Line of God’s Story

God’s Story

Creation

Fall

Rescue

Restoration

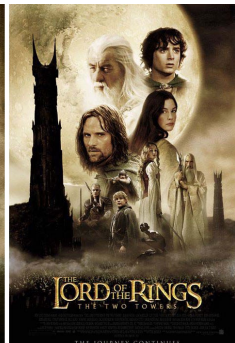
A Story’s Plotline

Exposition (Intro)

Rising Action (Conflict)

Climax (Problem Solved)

Resolution (Happily Ever After)



References to Torah as one book:

- Joshua 8:31; 23:6; 24:26
- 2 Kings 14:6
- Ezra 7:6
- Nehemiah 8:1; 13:1
- 2 Chronicles 34:14; 35:12

Jesus speaks on the importance of studying the Old Testament in Luke 24:44-49.

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Metanarrative

The one overarching story, with one underlying foundational purpose: to communicate that God Almighty is on a mission to rescue humanity from its fallen and idolatrous condition.

- How does the author accomplish this?
 - By repeating words, phrases, clauses, situations, themes, and/or concepts
 - By placing certain sections or portions of text next to one another (i.e., creation, the end of the days)
 - Narrative / Poetry / Epilogue

For the original audience, when Moses wrote “in the beginning” the Jewish audience would have immediately thought about “in the end of days.”

Examples of Moses using Narrative / Poetry / Epilogue as a way to highlight “in the end of days” in his writings:

- Genesis 49 [Genesis 49:1]
- Numbers 23 & 24 [Numbers 24:14]
- Deuteronomy 32 & 34 [Deuteronomy 31:29]

All are long poems with a character asking others to gather to him to hear what will meet them “in the end of days.”

“In the beginning...” - Genesis 1:1

The rest of the Bible explains the implications of this first verse.

In Targum Neofiti, a Pre-Christian Aramaic translation, Genesis 1:1 is translated as, “In the beginning, the firstborn Son of the Lord created the heavens and the earth.”

To best understand why a pre-Jesus translation of Genesis 1:1 may have understood creation to have been by the firstborn Son of the Lord, we should look at the semantic range of the Hebrew word for “in the beginning”. The range of meaning for “beginning” used in Genesis 1:1 -

- beginning
- head
- firstborn
- first fruits
- choicest

The first century Christians also understood the first verse to be pointing to Jesus, as seen in John’s writings: John 1:1-3; 1 John 1:1