

## Storytelling - Chronological Bible Study Framework

**Goal:** Teach a chronological lesson series that gives an accurate overview of the Bible's message with a view to leading people to an awareness of who Christ is, their need of salvation through Him, and how to receive that salvation.

**Summary of the Message:** God's goal for humanity is for people created in His image to have an intimate relationship with Himself and experience true blessing. Despite man's shameful rebellion and defilement through sin and Satan's active opposition to God's purposes, God has worked through the course of history to provide a way to reconcile people to Himself and fulfill His gracious goal for mankind.

**Themes:** (Note that each of these may not be featured in each lesson, but they are strongly recurring themes present from start to finish.)

*A. Relationship:*

God's goal for man created in His image is intimate, loving relationship with Himself.  
(Gen 1:26,27 - covenants; Jn 17:3 - eternal state)

*B. Blessings and curses:*

God's basic intent for man is blessing. That this loving, kindly intentioned God institutes curses reveals the extent of His holiness and sin's shamefulness.  
(God's love and holiness)

*C. Pervasiveness of human sin:*

This theme relates to the Fall, man's ultimate inability to meet the standard of God's holiness - the reality that man is in a position of defilement, guilt and shame before God, and that he is incapable of remedying this situation.  
(original sin/total depravity - need for regeneration through the new covenant)

*D. Satan's opposition:*

From the garden of Eden to the consummation of the age, Satan is actively at work to subvert God's goal of people created in God's image glorifying the holy God through loving, submissive relationship with Him. Satan pervertedly seeks to deflect glory from the true God and direct it to himself. Satan's preeminent activity is deception, causing people to misapprehend truth.  
(truth and error)

*E. God who intervenes:*

In pursuing His goal of relationship with man, God takes the initiative - judgments, covenants, ultimately the incarnation and the work of Christ. This can include the law, sacrificial system, the promised seed, creation of Israel, revelation and prophets, etc.  
(salvation is of the Lord/grace)

*F. God's merciful provision of a substitute (bedel):*

God in his love desires fellowship with man, but man is constantly faced with alienation from God due to man's sinfulness. In his wisdom and mercy, God allows a substitute to take man's penalty. This represents God's mercy, for if he were to

administer strict justice, man the sinner would be destroyed immediately and totally. Man has a need for imputed righteousness for he has none of his own.  
(sacrificial system - Isaiah 53 - Christ's substitutionary atonement)

### G. The Seed:

God specifies that his provision of blessing for the world is to be through "the seed." Who this seed is gets progressively clearer through progressive covenants and revelations. It is Abraham's descendant(s), Judah's descendant(s), David's line – who will be a king or dynasty of kings, etc.

### Proposed Lessons:

*Lesson 1    Gen 1-2                      Creation*

God created man in His own image to have an intimate, personal relationship with Himself.

*Lesson 2    Gen 2:15-17; ch. 3)                      Fall*

The events of the "fall" and the "curse" reveal that God is profoundly holy, that sin is a reality with vastly serious consequences, and that man's act of rebellion resulted in a tragic change in the very nature of man (and the creation).

*Lesson 3    Gen 4                      Cain and Abel*

Sinful man is characterized by a desire for independence from God and this trait led to brother killing brother and the founding of an "anti-God" social order.

*Lesson 4    Gen 5-11                      Sinful mankind judged but not changed*

Despite man's achievements (Gen 4) and God's judgments (flood and Babel), humanity's innate sinfulness is unaffected as seen by the constant presence of physical death, violence and immorality, and pride in human society.

*Lesson 5    Gen 12:1-6; 22                      Abraham*

In pursuit of his goal to bless men through a relationship with himself, God calls Abraham, through whom he will provide a vehicle (Israel, a covenant people) to offer the blessings of salvation to the wrong.

## Lesson 6 Ex 12-14 Passover and Exodus

God intervened to judge the gods of Egypt and redeem his people, but in the process he showed that even the chosen, covenant people were also sinners not worthy of deliverance from judgment, but had to follow God's merciful provision of the substitutionary Passover lamb.

*Lesson 7 Ex 19-20; 32:1-8 Covenant at Sinai*

God adopted Israel as his people and they accepted the covenant requirements of fellowship with a holy God -- total obedience to God's will as expressed in keeping of the law (seriat). Nevertheless, through their history they repeatedly failed to keep their commitment.

*Lesson 8 Lev 16, 17:11 Sacrifice and Holiness*

Israel's calling was to be a holy people who submitted to God's law (šeriat) as expressed (in part) in Leviticus. God does not lower His standards to accommodate the reality of man's sinfulness. Rather he grants a merciful provision to restore men to holiness while teaching them repeatedly of the need to obey and the deadly seriousness of sin.

*Lesson 9 2 Sam 17 David and the Davidic Covenant*

God makes a covenant with David and reveals that the "seed" that will be God's source of blessing and salvation for the world is to be a royal descendant of David. At least by this point in God's dealings with Israel they begin to have expectation of an individual who is going to come and provide blessing and salvation.

*Lesson 10 Deut 26-30; Jer 31, Ez 36 The New Covenant*

Though God gave the law (šeriat) as a merciful provision for people to live holy lives and experience God's blessings, He knew from the start that the law was temporary and imperfect. It could teach man about holiness but it could not make men holy. Therefore, even from the time of Moses when the law was given, and through other prophets, God revealed that he planned a New Covenant wherein he would, in his mercy and his sovereignty, change man's nature and impute lasting forgiveness.

*Lesson 11 Isa 53 Promise of a Suffering Substitute*

As the Jews had learned to expect the "seed" to be an individual and a king who would come and secure God's blessing, God's prophet revealed that this individual would be allowed by God to serve as a substitute -like the sacrificial lambs- to provide forgiveness for the people.

*Lesson 12 Isa 40; Mal 3:1-6; Mt 11:1-19 The Forerunner*

There were prophecies of a special prophet who would come and prepare God's people for a special visitation from the Lord. This prophet was Yahya (John the Baptist) who prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus. Jesus clearly stated that the arrival of the forerunner marked a unique transition in the prophetic plan of God (Mt 11:13).

*Lesson 13 John 3 Jesus' Teaching*

Jesus teaches about God's kingdom and what entrance into it requires -a new nature that results from a "spiritual birth" rooted in a response of faith to Himself. Jesus' miracles were God-given attestations that Jesus was the Promised One. (Note that the characteristics of this "spiritual birth" accord with those of the promised "new covenant.")

*Lesson 14 Heb 1:1-3 Jesus' Work and Person*

Jesus provides the basis for the new covenant (of which he is the mediator) by his death, burial and resurrection. The message of salvation through this work of Christ is the "gospel." He shows a totally different attitude than all other prophets by his words ("Verily, verily I say to you..." as opposed to "thus says the Lord") and his actions and attitudes (receiving worship; contrast Paul and even angels).

*Lesson 15 2 The 1:7-9; Rev 20-22      Jesus' Return*

In God's wisdom and mercy, the time until Jesus returns is a time of invitation to receive God's gracious gift of salvation. When Jesus returns it will be for judgment on those whose names are not in the book of life, who have not "obeyed" the gospel

