

# Full Summary



## Creation

The earth starts formless and empty. God forms it and fills it, establishing his kingdom on earth. God makes people in his image to act like him, to also form and fill and establish his kingdom on earth. God plants a garden, a miniature version of the kingdom intended to be spread. In it, the Tree of Life represents enjoying the benefits of God's rule and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil represents fulfilling the responsibilities. The earth is perfect but not finished. The plan is a worldwide kingdom, everywhere for everyone.



## Fall

The man and woman are tempted by a snake. They disobey God and eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Rejecting the responsibilities of God's kingdom means losing the benefits. God throws them from the Garden and they lose access to the Tree of Life. They are disconnected and distanced from God. Life becomes incomplete and fractured. With no-one to spread it, God's plan for a worldwide kingdom is threatened. God says there will be generations of tension between Team Human and Team Snake, ended by a future Snake Crusher. People have a sin problem and continue to be snake-hearted, forming and filling the earth with chaos, death and darkness.



## Promise

God chooses a man called Abraham and promises that his family: will be God's people, growing into a great nation; will live in God's place, a land of their own; will be blessed under God's rule; and will be a blessing to all people. This is the original plan. Through Abraham's family, God guarantees his plan for a worldwide kingdom.

## **Rescue**

God repeats the promise made to Abraham about his family first to his son Isaac and next to his grandson Jacob, who is renamed Israel. The family move to Egypt where they grow into a large nation, the Israelites, but then become enslaved for 400 years. God raises up Moses as a leader and liberates his people.

## **Law**

After their rescue, God appears dramatically at Mount Sinai and gives the Israelites the law. It includes the Ten Commandments and national laws. The people realise they are sinful and so are incompatible with a holy God. Moses acts as a representative between them and God. The people fail to get close to God their own way by building a golden cow. God gives them designs for a tent, the Tabernacle. They accept God's way to get close to him by building it and God moves inside. Tabernacle laws and rituals show how to be connected and close to God: priests show the need for a representative and sacrifices show the need for sin to be covered. After 40 years wandering the desert, Moses delivers a dying speech reminding them of God's promise, and the benefits and responsibilities of living under God's rule.

## **Land**

Joshua leads the Israelites into the promised land. After overcoming the resistance, the land is shared out between all the people. God's people are now in God's place, their own land. Over the years, the people repeatedly fall into a downward cycle: rejecting God; being defeated by enemies; being rescued by a heroic judge who God provides; then rejecting God again. The people desperately need a leader.

## **Kings**

The people reject God as their king by demanding a human king. First is King Saul, who rejects God and spirals downwards like the people. Next is King David who reflects and represents God. He obeys and enforces God's law, recognising this kingdom is God's kingdom. God promises David's family will be a dynasty and he will have a son who will be the kind of king that God is. This son will build God a temple as a permanent place to live. Through him, God will establish his kingdom forever. King Solomon, David's son, builds a temple and his reign is a high point of unmatched peace and prosperity. This is the most God's promises have seen fulfilment.

## **Split**

After King Solomon, civil war divides the kingdom into ten northern tribes and two southern tribes, 'Israel' in the north and 'Judah' in the south. Most kings are bad and the good kings eventually die. They need God to keep his promise, raising up a good king from David's family and establishing an eternal kingdom.

## **Exile**

The northern tribes, Israel, are taken into captivity by Assyria and disappear from history. The southern tribes, Judah, are taken into captivity by Babylon. The population is shredded to pieces. The capital city and its temple are destroyed. God's people are no longer a great nation and are no longer in their own land. God's kingdom lies in ruin.

## **Return**

After decades in captivity, the Israelites are released and return to their land. Ezra leads the rebuilding of the Temple. Nehemiah leads the rebuilding of Jerusalem's city walls. This restoration feels incomplete. The story still waits for the promised king who will fulfil God's plan and rebuild God's kingdom into the worldwide kingdom it was intended to be.

## **Jesus**

Jesus fulfils the promise made to Abraham's family and David's family. He is uniquely blessed under God's rule, enjoying the benefits and fulfilling the responsibilities. He is a blessing — the promised king who spreads God's rule to the world. Through him, God establishes his kingdom. Jesus publicly announces the arrival of God's kingdom and demonstrates power to bring it from heaven to earth. He teaches a surprising message: of heavy responsibilities and high benefits; of the kingdom looking small and weak but having disproportionate influence and value. Jesus is a surprising king who chooses victory through apparent defeat by suffering and dying on a cross. Jesus dies on the cross. He lets the Snake bite his heel; acts as our representative and our sacrifice; is disconnected and distanced from God instead of us; and takes our sin, chaos, death and darkness. Jesus comes back to life. He crushes the Snake; saves us from our enemies and ourselves; renews connection and closeness with God; and gives us his beauty, life and light. Jesus reinvites us to join in with the original plan for the world, to join him as he expands God's kingdom to everyone everywhere.

## **Church**

Jesus ascends to heaven. Soon after, on the day of Pentecost, God pours out his Spirit on his people. He now lives inside them. The Spirit empowers this community, the church, to witness about Jesus and to spread his kingdom across languages and cultures to the ends of the world. This is where we live in the story.

## **Forever After**

When Jesus returns, there will be cosmic renewal. God's plan will be complete: one man and woman in a small garden becomes countless people from all nations in a worldwide city. The Tree of Life continually flourishes, watered by a river flowing from God's throne. Connected and close to him, his people enjoy full kingdom benefits, life as it's supposed to be. No Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil exists — Jesus has fulfilled all kingdom responsibilities, so there is no possibility of failure. God's people live in God's place, blessed under his rule by King Jesus who is the blessing to the world. He will permanently establish God's kingdom, everywhere for everyone, forever.