

## From Eden to Eternity -- A Review (Non-controversial)

by Joelee Chamberlain

The Bible is such an interesting book. It is full of true stories, isn't it? Of course, the whole Bible is about God and how He has made a way for us to be with Him forever, and that's the most important part.

Now, at other times I've told you a lot of the true stories from the Bible, haven't I? But sometimes it's hard to remember all of those stories and just what order they come in, isn't it? So I thought that today it would be fun just to quickly go over the stories and some of the names so that we can more easily remember them in order. After all, they are all part of God's word, the Bible, aren't they? And the whole Bible is pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, isn't it? Both to the first time when He came to die for our sins and to the second time when He will come again as King of the whole earth, too. So let's go over it all again very quickly, all right? I think you will enjoy this!

But first. Remember, the Bible is divided into two big parts. And do you remember what we call those two big parts? Yes, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament tells about when God first created the earth and the oceans and the sky and everything in them, and then the Old Testament goes on and tells about the time before Jesus came to earth. The Old Testament covers a very long time, about 4000 years! After that comes the New Testament, and the New Testament covers a very short time, only about 100 years, and tells about the time when Jesus came to earth, starting from when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, then it tells about when Jesus was on earth, how He died for us, was alive again, and then what His apostles did after Jesus went back to heaven. So let's begin with the Old Testament and quickly talk about some of the stories and people in the Bible.

Let's start at the very beginning. First we talked about when God created the heavens and the earth, everything, doing it all in 6 days. Now, who was the very first human being? Yes, the first man was Adam, and then his wife Eve. The Lord God made them, just like He had made everything else, and He put them into the Garden of Eden.

Then we talked about the Garden of Eden and the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. But then the snake tricked Eve, didn't he? And Adam and Eve disobeyed, they sinned by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the one tree in that big garden that the Lord had told them to leave alone. So then Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden so that they couldn't eat from the tree of life, didn't they? But God promised that someday one of their descendants would overcome the snake. That is, of course, talking about when Jesus will overcome the devil. You remember all of that, don't you?

Well, then Adam and Eve had many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. And then after many, many years, way over 1000 years, just about everyone had become wicked except a man named Noah. So do you remember what the Lord God did about all of that wickedness? Yes, the Lord sent the big Flood. But first God had Noah build an ark, didn't He? A big boat, and Noah and his 3 sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives, and animals went into the ark, and God sent the big

Flood which wiped the earth all clean again. Yes, the Lord washed the whole world clean again with the big Flood, but He saved Noah and his family and the animals in the ark. And you remember all of that, don't you?

Well, after the Flood a lot of people were born, and then about 400 years after the Flood Abraham was born. You remember Abraham, don't you? God made a covenant with Abraham and said He'd be with Abraham and Abraham's descendants and that they would be His special people and that one of his descendants would be a blessing to all the nations of the world. Of course, that is talking about Jesus, isn't it? Well, Abraham had a son named Isaac, and Isaac had a son named Jacob. And the Lord made the same covenant with Isaac and Jacob. The Lord gave Jacob another name, too. Do you remember what that other name was? Yes, Jacob's other name was Israel. Well, Jacob had 12 sons. There were Judah and Levi and Joseph and Benjamin and the others. And all of Jacob's descendants became known as the children of Israel (Jacob's other name). Today we call the children of Israel "Jews."

Now, there was Joseph, one of Jacob's sons. Well, Joseph's brothers were jealous of Joseph, and the brothers sold Joseph as a slave into Egypt, but then Joseph became very important in Egypt, didn't he? And when the famine came, Jacob and his family all moved to Egypt where Joseph took care of them. You remember about that, don't you? And Jacob prophesied that someday one of his son Judah's descendants would be a very special king of the whole world. (Of course, that means Jesus, doesn't it?)

Then some years after Joseph and his brothers were dead, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, made the children of Israel to be slaves. But then who led the children of Israel out of Egypt, do you remember? Yes, the Lord sent Moses and his brother Aaron to lead the Jews, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

And the Lord sent 10 plagues on Egypt before the king of Egypt would let them go. At the very last plague before the children of Israel left Egypt, the Lord "passed over" the houses that had the blood of a lamb around their doorposts (as the Lord had commanded them), and no one inside that house died that night. The children of Israel were to remember this every year in a Passover celebration. We know that this was also a picture-prophecy of Jesus, don't we? Jesus, Who is called the Lamb of God and Who would die for our sins, and we are saved from our sins by His blood if we believe in Him. And we know that Jesus died for us because He loves us. But back to Moses and the children of Israel.

By then there were many, many of the children of Israel, thousands and thousands of them. There were 12 tribes that made up the children of Israel. The tribes were named after Jacob's 12 sons, the tribe of Judah, the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe of Levi, and so on. Well, after Moses led the children of Israel out Egypt, the Lord gave His law to Moses and told Moses to teach it to the children of Israel so that they would know how to be good and how to properly worship the Lord.

Another thing that the Lord had Moses do was to build the beautiful Tabernacle. You remember about the Tabernacle, don't you? It was the special tent that was used in the worship of the

Lord God, and the Jews carried this Tabernacle around with them all through the 40 years in the wilderness.

And the Lord gave the children of Israel food. What was that food that God gave them in the wilderness, do you remember? Yes, it was manna. And God fed and took care of the children of Israel and protected them for the whole 40 years. And the Lord led them during all of this time by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. God was with them all of that time.

And Moses prophesied about a great prophet who would someday come that they were to listen to. Of course, that great prophet is Jesus, isn't He?

Then, after Moses died, who became the next leader of the children of Israel, do you remember? Yes, it was Joshua. And Joshua led them into the promised land of Canaan. And the Lord helped them conquer the land of Canaan, and they lived there then, didn't they?

Well, at first the Lord was their only King (though they couldn't see Him, of course), and they had judges (like Gideon and Ehud and Samson). Ruth (David's great-grandmother) lived at that time, too. But then later they wanted a man to be their king, someone they could see. So who was their first king, do you remember? Yes, it was Saul. Saul became the first king of the Jews. But then who was the next king? That's right, the next king was David, wasn't he? This is the same David who had been a shepherd and who had killed the giant Goliath with his sling. And David was descended from Jacob's son Judah.

David was a good king. And God told David that his descendants would be kings, and that someday one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever. Who will that be who will someday sit on David's throne forever? Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ, of course! Jesus is a great-great-great-great-grandson of David through his mother Mary, isn't He?! And someday He will be King of everyone and everywhere and will sit on David's throne forever. But that hasn't happened yet. It won't happen until after the Lord Jesus comes back to earth again. But let's see now, we were talking about King David who lived thousands of years ago, weren't we?!

Well, King David wanted to build a temple for the Lord, but did God let David build a temple? No. Instead, the Lord told David that his son Solomon would build a temple. So when Solomon became king, Solomon built a beautiful temple in Jerusalem for the Lord, and they didn't need the Tabernacle anymore. Remember, Jerusalem is the city that the Lord said was His city, that He had put His name there. We can't see God's name written there on the city, of course, but Jerusalem is very special to the Lord. And the Jews would all go there to the temple that Solomon had built in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the Lord and to worship the Lord.

But Solomon, who was very wise, became very foolish, and he began worshipping idols. Imagine that! So when Solomon got old and died and his son Rehoboam became king, the Lord took 10 of the 12 tribes of the Jews away from Solomon's son Rehoboam and let a man named Jeroboam be king over the 10 tribes. Yes, then the Jewish kingdom was divided into 2 kingdoms, wasn't it? Do you remember the names of those 2 kingdoms? That's right, Judah and Israel.

Rehobaom's 2 tribes were called the kingdom of Judah, and Jeroboam's 10 tribes were called the kingdom of Israel. There were no good kings over the 10 tribes, the kingdom of Israel, at all. All of them worshipped idols. The worst one was the wicked king Ahab who had a wicked wife Jezebel. (We talked about Ahab at another time, didn't we?) Well, the Lord sent many prophets to the kingdom of Israel. There were the prophets Elijah and Elisha and Jonah and others. These prophets warned Israel and warned Israel. "Stop worshipping idols!" they warned. "Stop being wicked!" But Israel kept on worshipping idols and being wicked in other ways, too. So finally the Lord let the Assyrians come and carry the people of the kingdom of Israel away as captives. This was their punishment for worshipping idols and for the other wicked things they had been doing.

But in the meantime, what about the kingdom of Judah? Did the kingdom of Judah have any good kings? Yes, some were good, but some were bad. And all of the kings of Judah were descended from David, weren't they? Well, then the kingdom of Judah became very wicked, too, worshipping idols. But one of their good kings was named Josiah, and Josiah destroyed all of the idols. But then later after Josiah died, they had idols again. And the Lord sent to the kingdom of Judah lots of prophets to warn them, too. He sent Isaiah and Micah and Jeremiah and others. "Stop worshipping idols and being so wicked!" they warned the kingdom of Judah. "Remember what happened to the kingdom of Israel!" But the people of the kingdom of Judah kept on worshipping idols and being wicked. So finally the Lord let Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, come and conquer the kingdom of Judah.

And then Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, knocking it all down and burning it, didn't he? And Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the beautiful temple of God that Solomon had built so many years before. He knocked it all down, too. And Nebuchadnezzar carried the people of the kingdom of Judah away as captives to Babylon.

Four of those captives were Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo. You remember them, don't you? Daniel became a great prophet in Babylon. Later Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo were thrown into the fiery furnace, but the Lord rescued them. Another time Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, but the Lord protected Daniel. You remember those true stories, don't you? And Daniel, like Isaiah and Micah and other prophets, also prophesied about when Jesus would come.

Another of the men who was carried away captive was Ezekiel who was a great prophet, too.

Well, a little later when Daniel was still alive but was an old man, a little later the Medes and Persian conquered the Babylonians, and then the Medes and Persians ruled the Jews in Babylon.

Now, did the Jews ever get to go back to the land of Judah and Israel and to the city of Jerusalem? Yes. Remember, that 70 years after Nebuchadnezzar carried them away as captives, then the Persian king Cyrus let them go back at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. (This fulfilled prophecies that Isaiah and Jeremiah had made many years before.) King Cyrus said that as many Jews as wanted to could go back and rebuild the city of Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Ezra led some of the Jews back, and later Nehemiah led some more back.

So the children of Israel rebuilt the city of Jerusalem and they rebuilt the temple, though it was much smaller and much less beautiful than the temple that Solomon had built but Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed.

Well, the Persians were ruling the world then, and one of their kings was Ahasuerus who married the beautiful Jewish girl Esther. You remember Esther, don't you? And when the wicked man Haman wanted to kill all of the Jews, Queen Esther was able to save them and have Haman killed instead!

That's all pretty exciting, isn't it? And that very, very quickly covers the whole time of the Old Testament, the about four thousand years before Jesus came to earth. Did you enjoy that? Good! But now let's go on.

Well, many years went by, and though the Bible doesn't tell us a lot about it, from history we know that later the Greeks, led by Alexander the Great conquered the Persians and were the rulers of the land of Israel and ruled the Jews. Then after that the Romans conquered the Greeks, so then the Romans were the rulers of the land of Israel and ruled the Jews. And there wasn't a Jewish king of the Jews. In fact, there hasn't been a Jewish king of the Jews since the Jews were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, under the Romans there was a man who was a king of Israel, but he wasn't a Jew. This was the wicked King Herod. And then, remember, while Herod was still king of Jerusalem, the Son of God, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem, and that's where the New Testament starts, isn't it? Yes, the New Testament starts when Jesus was born and came to earth. Remember, Jesus is God the Son. But why did God the Father send Jesus to earth? That's right. Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth as a human to make a way for us to be able to go to heaven and be with Him some day.

Do you remember the name of Jesus' mother? Yes, it was Mary. And Mary was a descendant of Abraham and of Judah and of King David, wasn't she? And this made Jesus a descendant of Abraham and of Judah and of King David. Just as God had prophesied. And Mary's husband was Joseph. And Jesus had a cousin named John the Baptist who told people that their Saviour (that's Jesus, of course), their Saviour was going to be coming.

Well, Jesus grew up, and He preached about the kingdom of God and did many miracles. And Jesus chose 12 apostles, 12 men who would be special to him. There were Peter and James and John and 9 others. One of them was Judas, and he was the one who would betray Jesus. But that was part of God's plan, too.

So finally, after Judas betrayed Jesus, the wicked people put Jesus on a cross, and He died there. Now had Jesus ever done any sins Himself at all? No. Not even one. So when Jesus died on the cross, He was dying for our sins, wasn't He? But did Jesus stay dead? No! What happened 3 days later, do you remember? Yes! After 3 days Jesus was alive again; He was resurrected! (All of this was just as God's prophets had said would happen.) Jesus was alive and His friends saw Him, and He was with them for 40 days. And hundreds of people saw Jesus alive.

Now, remember, the Lord had promised King David that someday one of his descendants would sit on David's throne forever, hadn't He? So the Jews knew that they would have a king again someday with a kingdom again. And in the New Testament at the very beginning of the book of Acts after Jesus had been raised from the dead and just before He went back to heaven, Jesus and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives.

And his disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?" Do you remember what Jesus answered them? Jesus said, "It isn't for you to know the times or the seasons; the Father has power over that." In other words, God knows exactly when the Lord Jesus Christ is going to be coming back to be the King and when His kingdom is going to be set up on earth with its center in Jerusalem, but we don't.

And after Jesus told His disciples that, do you remember what happened then? Yes, Jesus started going up from the Mount of Olives right up into the sky, didn't He?! His disciples watched Jesus as He went up into the sky, went up into heaven, until the clouds covered Him and they couldn't see Him anymore! And suddenly 2 angels were there with them, and the angels told the disciples, "Jesus will come again just like you've seen Him go up into heaven." You remember all of that, don't you?

Well, after the resurrected Jesus went back up to heaven, then his disciples started telling people about Him. The apostles Peter and James and John and others went all over doing miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit and teaching people about how Jesus had died for their sins and had then been resurrected, and that they'd seen Him, and that He would come back again as King of everyone and everything. And they began telling everyone this good news, this Gospel, how they could someday be able to go to heaven to be with Jesus if they just trusted Jesus to save them from their sins. And they told how all of this was a fulfillment of many prophecies.

A few years later a man named Paul became an apostle, too, and he told many more people about the Lord Jesus. And the apostle Paul started many churches. We read about this in the book of Acts in the Bible.

But the stories in the Bible don't end there with the apostles going around everywhere telling people about the Lord Jesus and how He died for our sins and was resurrected.

The Bible also goes on to tell us that someday the Lord Jesus is going to come back to earth, just like the prophets had said. And this time He won't come as a little baby! No, this time He will come as a King with a crown! Yes, the Lord Jesus will come charging out of heaven on a white horse on the clouds of heaven!! God's trumpets will be blaring and there will be great shoutings! And the Lord Jesus will bring with Him all of the saints, all of the believers from all time! And they will get resurrected bodies that will never get sick or die again!

And after that God will judge people. And everyone who had not trusted in Jesus to save them will be punished and not be able to be with the Lord, but those who had trusted in the Lord Jesus will

be able to be with the Lord forever. And He'll make a new heavens and a new earth where everything will be perfect. Everything will be happy and good, and there won't ever be anything sad or bad again for believers in the Lord Jesus. The Bible says that God will wipe away all of our tears! And no one will ever get sick or die, and all believers will live with Him forever and ever. Doesn't that all sound wonderful?!

And the Lord Jesus will be the King forever! He will be this King that had been promised to Adam and Eve and to Abraham and Judah and David. God always keeps His promises, doesn't He?! And all believers will be with Him forever! And there will never, ever again be anything sad happening!! Everything will be good and happy!

And you can read more about this second coming of Jesus, this wonderful, happy time, in the Bible by the same prophets who told of Jesus' first coming when He came as a baby, grew up, and then died for us. Yes, prophets like Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah in the Old Testament wrote about both times that Jesus would come. (And other prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel talk about this wonderful, happy time when Jesus comes back, too.) Also, in the New Testament the apostle John who wrote the gospel of John about Jesus' first coming, also wrote a whole book about His second coming, the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible.

And that is the end of the stories in the Bible, and that is the end of the Bible itself where it tells us about "forever and ever"!

Okay. -- So what have we talked about today? A lot of things, right?! And we've talked about a lot of people and a lot of happenings in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, haven't we?. (I've also told you about these people and these happenings before at other times, haven't I?) So let's very quickly go over the names of the people again.

In the Old Testament there were Adam and Eve, then Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jacob's 12 sons (Judah and Levi and Joseph and the others). Then Moses and Aaron. After that was Joshua, and then the other judges like Samson and Ehud and Gideon and Deborah. And that's also when Ruth lived. Then came the kings: Saul and David and David's son Solomon. Then Rehoboam (Solomon's son) who became king of the 2 tribes, called Judah, and Jeroboam who became king of the 10 tribes called Israel. Israel had all bad kings, and Ahab was the worst. The Lord sent Israel many prophets, like Elijah and Elisha and Jonah until finally Israel became so bad that the Assyrians carried the kingdom of Israel away captive.

In the kingdom of Judah there were some good kings and some bad kings. Josiah was a very good king. But when the kingdom of Judah was bad, the Lord sent them many prophets, too, like Isaiah and Micah and Jeremiah. Finally, though, the kingdom of Judah became so bad that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon carried the kingdom of Judah away as captives. Some of those captives were Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and Ezekiel. Finally after 70 years the Persian king Cyrus said they could go back to Jerusalem, and Ezra and Nehemiah led many of the Jews back to the land of Judah. Esther was the wife of one of the Persian kings. Those people were all told about in the Old Testament, weren't they?

Then, of course, in the New Testament we have the Lord Jesus (Who died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead) and Mary and Joseph, and we have John the Baptist, and Jesus' special disciples like Peter, James and John, and then Paul.

Then at the very end of the New Testament it tells about how someday the Lord Jesus will come back, and we will be resurrected, and the Lord Jesus will be King over everything and everyone.

And then will come the "forever and ever" part!! When nothing will ever be bad or sad again, and the Lord will be King of everything and everyone forever and ever.

Whew!! Those are a lot of people and events that the Bible tells us about, aren't they?! Some of them happened a long time ago, but some of them haven't happened yet, have they? But how do we know that they will happen? How do we know that the Lord Jesus will come back again and that we will be resurrected and that we can live forever with the Lord Jesus as our King? Well, remember all of the other promises that God made in the Bible? Those promises, those prophecies all came true didn't they? They all happened.

I've told you about many of those promises at other times, haven't I? When God told Noah that there would be a Flood but that Noah and his family would be safe, that happened, didn't it? Yes, the Flood came, but Noah and his family were safe in the ark. And when God told Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son even though they were too old to have children anymore, they had a son Isaac, didn't they? And when God told the shepherd boy David that he was going to be the king of the Jews, after a while David became the king of the Jews, didn't he? And when God told Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar would go crazy and be like an animal for 7 years, Nebuchadnezzar went crazy and was like an animal for 7 years, wasn't he? (Remember, I told you about that another time when we talked about Daniel, didn't I?) And when God told that the Messiah, the Christ, would be born in Bethlehem and die for our sins and be resurrected, that all happened, didn't it? All of those things that God said would happen, really did happen exactly as He had said, didn't they?

And there are many, many, many more prophecies that God gave that we can read about in the Bible that were all fulfilled, that all came true, during that time; they really happened just as God had said they would. The Lord kept all of those promises, didn't He? So -- we can trust God to keep His promises about what is going to happen someday but hasn't happened yet, too, can't we?! We can know that the Lord Jesus is going to come back again someday, and we really will be able to be with the Lord someday forever and ever!

Of course, the most important thing in the Bible is what it tells us about the Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus is the one Who saves us from our sins. But how can Jesus save us from our sins? That is the most important thing in the whole Bible to know, isn't it? In fact, it's the most important thing in the whole world! We need to remember that God the Father loved the world so much that He sent us His Son. Remember, Jesus was a man, but He was also God. Jesus had been God the Son in heaven before He came to earth as a baby. And what was the reason that Jesus came to earth as a man? Yes, it was so that He could make a way for us to be with God forever some day. You see, we are all sinners. I'm a



sinner, and so is everyone else. We all do bad things, even when we don't mean to, don't we? And because we are sinners, we can't be able to be with God Who is righteous, can we?

But God loves us so much that God the Father sent God the Son to earth. Yes, Jesus, came to earth to make a way for us to be with God forever. But how could He do that? Well, Jesus never, ever did any sins!! Not even one! Right? But He was put on a cross and died there, to save us from our sins, and He took the punishment for our sins. And He rose from the dead, was resurrected 3 days later. This proved that He was our Saviour.

Now, wasn't that very kind and loving of the Lord Jesus to make the way to save us from our sins? And how are we saved from our sins? Why, all we have to do is to ask the Lord Jesus to forgive our sins and to trust Him to save us, and He will. He has promised that, and God always keeps His promises, right? And then when He comes back someday we'll be with Him forever and ever. I've done that, trusted Him, have you?

I hope this time together has helped you to remember some of the stories and names in the Bible and to remember them in order. Also, I hope it has reminded you of how much God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ love us and how we can be with Him forever.