

THE TRUE STORY OF GOD, THE WORLD, AND US

Week 1 – GOD’S PEOPLE IN GOD’S PLACE

Bible Reading: Matthew 3:13-17 / Genesis 1:1-28

Big Idea: God made the world and rules over the world as the loving King. He created a good and blessed place for his people to delight in together.

Key Question: Have you ever thought of the Bible as being a story, one clear story that takes you on a journey?

Key Verse: *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."* (Genesis 1:28)

Talk Movements include the following:

1. World Story / Your Story: The different stories in the Bible are like the towns along a highway. Do you know Bible stories but not the Bible’s STORY? How does the Bible guide me? How does God talk to me? Does God love me?

2. Read the Bible Story: The Bible’s a story that takes you on a journey: a beginning a middle and an end. This series is a scenic flight that helps you see where each bit fits into the Bible’s STORY. So, let’s take off at the beginning...

3. Main Character: God is the central character in this story. “God” 30 times in ch1. God creates everything...rules everything... by his Word... including YOU...entering the story at chapter 2.

4. Support Role: we’re made in the image of God, to relate and to rule as his representatives. God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule (God is king).

5. Plot: The good/blessed creation... the very good pinnacle of creation ...us? The plot is already screaming at us: what went wrong? Will it ever be made right again? Can our role be restored?

6. Jesus’ Story: Matthew 3:17 (Jesus’ baptism – the son God delights in) and 9:9 (Jesus’ calls Matthew to “Follow me” – he sees our shame and calls us to follow him). Over the next 10 weeks we’ll see how God’s plan centres on Jesus, especially his death/res.

7. Our Story/Your Story: God’s story is centred on Jesus. What’s your story? Who are your plans centred on?

Songs: All Creatures of our God & King; Our Saviour & our King; Jesus; Rejoice; Blessed Assurance

Video of a version of this talk: <https://vimeo.com/214367967>

Video of the Kids Spot: <https://vimeo.com/214370067>



Movement 1 -WORLD/YOUR STORY

Welcome to our BIBLE IN TEN series

'THE TRUE STORY ABOUT GOD, THE WORLD, AND US'

10 WEEKS in the Bible...the Bible's true **story** about **GOD...THE WORLD...and US**

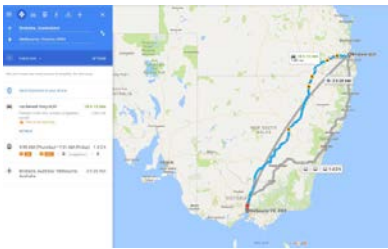
But I wonder if you've ever thought of the Bible as being a STORY?

...ONE CLEAR story that takes you on a journey?

...a story, a journey that WE ALL CAN UNDERSTAND?



Phil is a Pastor from Brisbane, and he tells this true story...

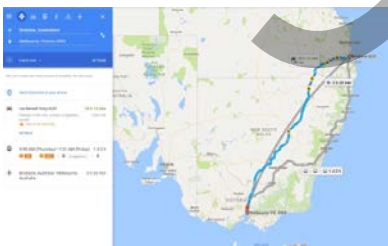


"My brothers, their wives, and children live in South West NSW, in the Riverina, just off the main road between Brisbane and Melbourne.

"Our eldest daughter was recalling recently the long road trips we've done over the years, and those we did when she was little.



"We'd wake up early, and head off in the pre-dawn darkness to beat the western heat of the day. We'd put our two children, still asleep, in their car seats.



"As we journeyed on that long road between Brisbane and Melbourne, the Newell Highway, they'd ask, "Where are we?" As the journey wore on, "Are we there yet?"

"The truth was, as little kids, other than home and the people they knew at our destination, they only had a vague concept of the journey and the towns along the way...Goondiwindi, Dubbo, Jerilderie..."



For many of us, the various stories of the Bible are like that...

NOAH and a FLOOD



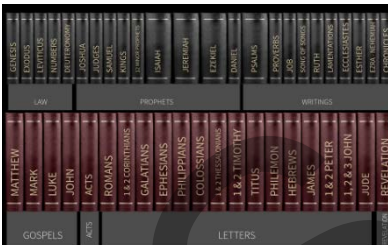
JONAH and a WHALE



JESUS and a CROSS



These stories can feel like those towns did for Phil's children as they passed through them on the long road trip. Part of a journey...or better a story that fits together and makes sense, but we're not really sure how all these stories FIT TOGETHER as one.

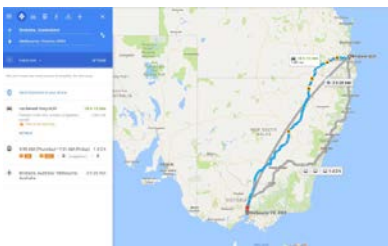


Now look...the Bible IS a big book...it is like a long road trip...

39 books in the OLD TESTAMENT - at the top there ...Law books, Prophetic books, other Writings all telling the story of Israel, before Jesus.

27 books beneath them - in the NEW TESTAMENT...the Gospels (the story of Jesus), Acts (the story of the early church), the Letters and Revelation (the story of people like many us - learning to follow Jesus)

However, ALL these books - ALL 66 OF THEM... they actually tell...



ONE STORY, that's like one long journey with all the bits linking together like towns along a highway...

ONE STORY. ONE **CLEAR** STORY.

ONE STORY WE **ALL** CAN UNDERSTAND.



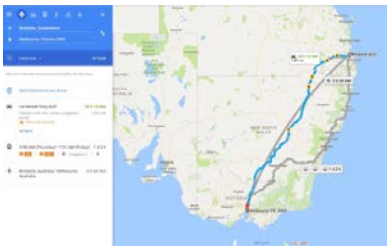
If you've never read the Bible at all, or it's been a long time since you have, the best place for you to start is by reading the true story of Jesus – such as Mark's Gospel in the New Testament. Now Mark's Gospel isn't at the start of the Bible's story, but it is at the heart of the Bible's story. That's why it's good to read that if you've not read anything else before (or for a long time).



This Bible in 10 series is going to be really helpful for you, whichever part of the Bible you're reading.



A couple of years ago Phil was flying from Brisbane to Melbourne. It was a clear day and Phil could see familiar sights...



...familiar towns on the road between Brisbane and Melbourne, Phil said to himself: *“There's Dubbo... there's Jerilderie... hey...hang on...there west of Jerilderie and Finley I can see...”*



“...bright green against the western brown landscape I can see my brothers' farm – their 100-acre rice paddies!”



Phil had a bird's eye view – the big united picture of scenery he had known for years as bits and pieces...now he was seeing it as parts linked together.

Now, that's what the next 10 weeks are about...

...the Bible in ten easy lessons

...taking a good look at the big picture

...taking a scenic flight over the entire Bible



Seeing the patterns

...seeing how it all fits together

...noticing all the main landmarks and getting our bearings

You're going to love it – because what we're going to do with the Bible is...



...we're going to read it as united story that takes you on a journey, which is exactly what it does.

And you know what happens when you do that?

...instead of *frustration* and *confusion*

...a whole bunch of OTHER FEELINGS kick in

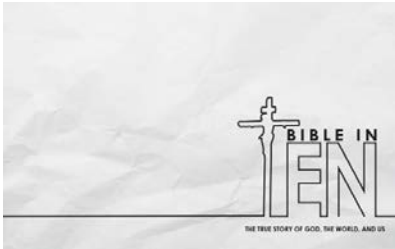
This clear sense of what THE WORLD is meant to be like

...this clear sense of what WE'RE meant to be like

...this awesome sense of a GOOD LOVING GOD ruling it all

This AMAZING sense that

...you're not just reading A story...someone else's journey...you're reading YOUR story...the journey God is inviting you to join him on...



Movement 2 – THE BIBLE STORY SO FAR

THE TRUE STORY ABOUT GOD, THE WORLD AND **US** – **you see?**

...hey: come the journey with us these ten weeks!

...FIND YOURSELF IN THE BIBLE!

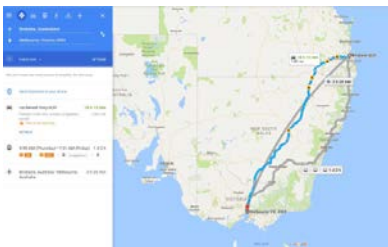
OK...but WHERE TO START?



Like Phil's big-picture overview flight from Brisbane to Melbourne...



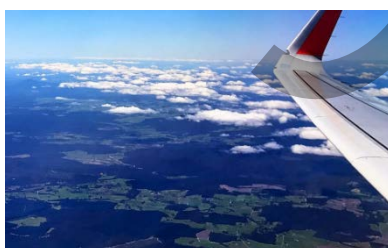
Started at Brisbane...



Flew over that long road trip distance – giving Phil the big picture overview...



...and then landed at the destination – Melbourne...



...so on our 10 week scenic flight through the Bible

...we're going to start at the **BEGINNING**...we're going to take off from **Genesis 1:1**

We're going to go right through the **MIDDLE**...checking out all the MAIN FEATURES of the landscape...STOPPING OVER at the really prominent parts of the story...and in 10 weeks' time...we'll reach the **END**...we'll land on **Revelation 22** - the last chapter of the Bible...the ending of the Bible, but also a NEW BEGINNING.



When you're flying, what's the part of the journey that requires your close attention? The start of the journey! You get to the airport on time, make sure you get to the right gate and then find the correct seat on the plane. A successful flight requires it!



As we launch off on our 10-week Bible fly-over, this over-view journey – the start is really important.

What does the start of the Bible say?

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning...”

A good way to start the story!



The Bible's first few pages set the scene...they give you the BACKDROP - for the rest of the story...they give you key ideas about where the story is heading...and they introduce you to the key characters...***so here's the KEY character...***

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

GOD! Meet the MAIN CHARACTER of the story! God!

*“...in the beginning **GOD**...”*

Page 1 of the Bible - 4 words in - & you meet God ...mentioned OVER 30 times in the first chapter alone!

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

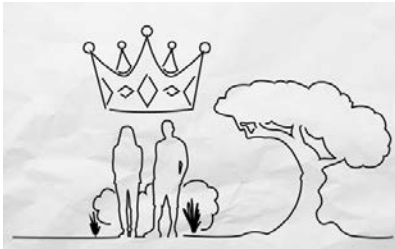
God who creates things from NOTHING

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

...God who creates EVERYTHING:

the heavens and the earth

The ONE TRUE GOD who made EVERYTHING ...when he begins - there is nothing...when he finishes, it's all there. God made THIS WORLD and it belongs to him. God made YOU and you belong to him.



MIND-BLOWING already, isn't it?

...not just a LOCAL god...but **ALL THE UNIVERSE**

...not just a SUNDAY god...but **ALL THE TIME**

...not just SOMEONE'S god...but **YOUR GOD**

Let's read on and GET TO KNOW HIM, which we CAN...

...because did you notice as _____ read Genesis 1 to us...did you notice that God is a SPEAKING God?

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
Genesis 1:3

"And God said..."

The one true God is the GOD WHO SPEAKS, the creator God creates things by his WORD.

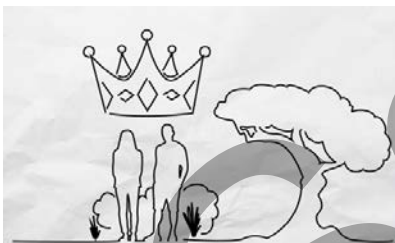
And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
Genesis 1:3

And look at the POWER of his word

He says... **"let there be light"**

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
Genesis 1:3

"and there was light"



TRUE STORY.

...God SAYS it.

...And that's EXACTLY what happens.

And God said...and it was SO.
Genesis 1:6, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30

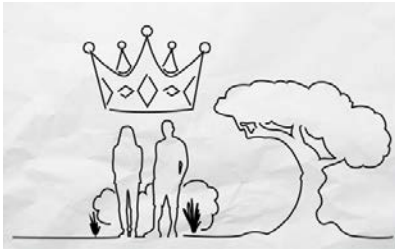
In fact, to make God's POWER REALLY CLEAR...you get this PATTERN all the way through the chapter, did you notice?

AND GOD SAID - AND IT WAS SO.

AND GOD SAID - AND IT WAS SO.

AND GOD SAID - AND IT WAS SO.

God SPEAKS and things come into existence...God creates EVERYTHING...does it by the power of his WORD.



...in the true story about God, the world and us...God rules powerfully by his Word...KING of the world!

You kind of sense already don't you...if all this world leaps into being at his command...US included ...well, that's where WE BELONG isn't it? Under his Word, his rule, his blessing...

And God said...and it was SO.
Gen 1:6, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30

However, you don't just get that pattern we've noticed: "And God said..." "And it was so"

...there was another pattern...

And God saw that it was good.
Gen 1:6, 9, 12, 18, 25, 31

...over and over it's repeated...

"AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD"

The good loving God, delighting to make a good world. But then it BREAKS OUT of the pattern *slightly* – **importantly** –

...in that LAST verse reference there ...verse 31

...because in verse 31... it doesn't just say "*it was good*"

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.
Genesis 1:31

It says...

"...and it was very good."

WHAT just happened? The GOOD world...is now declared by God to be **VERY** good?



WHAT just happened? YOU DID. That's what happened.

...you and me

...because here's the climax of creation

...the moment that makes the good...**VERY** good – US!

So God created mankind **in his own image**, in the image of God he created them; **male and female** he created them.
Genesis 1:28

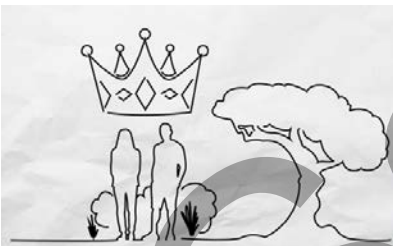


*So God created mankind **in his own image**, in the image of God he created them; **male and female** he created them.*

US...people...male and female...made in God's image - to relate to God and know God...the God who in making people blessed them...

God **blessed** them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."
Genesis 1:28

*God **blessed** them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."*

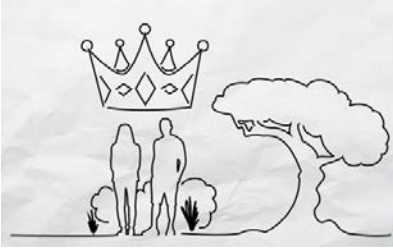


Made to enjoy God's good creation and flourish in it (by the way, which doesn't mean ruin and pillage it).

Made to represent God the good Ruler of creation, as rulers of creation under God...

God...said to them...
"Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."
Genesis 1:28

*God...said to them...
"Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*



Out of all creation, God gave us this special place:

- God's image-bearers.
- God's children.
- God's representatives.

Made to show his loving rule on the earth.

Made to live with God as our King.

To listen when he speaks. To love as he loves. To name as he names.

To be fruitful and multiply.

To joyfully spread his blessing across the earth. Peace and rest.

God's people...

In God's place...

Under God's rule and blessing.



Movement 3 – JESUS’ STORY

Here, in Genesis chapter 1 and 2, is the beginning of **THE TRUE STORY ABOUT GOD, THE WORLD AND US.**

Phil, who we met earlier, says this about flying...



“I like flying – I enjoy the flight to Melbourne – the great bird’s eye view – the big picture of God’s beautiful creation - the towns and cities, the roads and farms people have built.

“However, my journey is also tinged with melancholy moments – as I spot that town along the highway that’s struggled with racial discrimination, violence and crime for generations.

“Other places along the road that connect my memory to people I know – some taken too young by disease – good relationships ruined by foolish decisions – stories of pain, tears and death that I could tell the length and breadth of that highway.”



Next week we’ll see in Genesis chapter 3 how God’s very good creation, that we live in, was spoiled. Why it is that we live with these kinds of stories.

Before you turn the page...there’s a hint of the BIG PROBLEM ahead. The hint’s at the end of Genesis 2.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

This opening part of the story...starts with FOUR words
“IN THE BEGINNING GOD”

Adam and his wife were both naked, and **they felt no shame.**
Genesis 2:25

And then leaves us hanging at the end of chapter 2 with these four words: **“THEY FELT NO SHAME”**

In all the vast array of what is there at creation...shame is not there...



...the joy and wonder of these first people, flourishing in God’s very good creation is spoken of as “no shame”.



It's a big hint where the flight will take us, as we ask:

...how did shame ever enter the world?

...how did shame become a part of our world and our lives?

Friends this is a flight that's going to lead us to JESUS.

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."
Matthew 3:17

Did you hear in the Matthew reading earlier? When Jesus enters the story...we hear God speak again from heaven – like he did at creation...God speaking from heaven as Jesus is baptised, the Jesus who has nothing to be ashamed of:

*"This is my Son, whom I love;
with him I am well pleased."*

...that delight God had in Adam and Eve – here is that delighted voice, speaking about Jesus...the hint that this Jesus is the key to us re-entering God's delight.

Jesus...saw a man named Matthew sitting at the **tax collector's** booth. "Follow me," he told him, and **Matthew** got up and **followed him.**

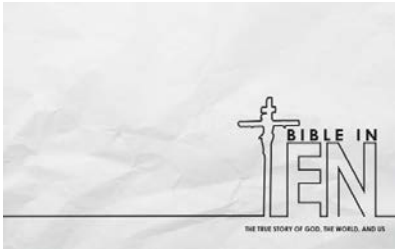
Matthew 9:9

The Jesus who meets people who have much to be ashamed of, like Matthew the compromised and despised tax collector, whom Jesus opens his heart to and calls him to know and follow him...and he does!



We will see in this Bible in 10 series how in Jesus, the God who made the world very good, and designed us to flourish in it, opens his heart to us in the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection - and calls us to know and follow him.

We will see that this Jesus is God's answer to the shame of our world and our lives.



Movement 4 – OUR STORY/YOUR STORY

Friends... this series is inviting us to see this:

...we weren't made to live lives of shame

...something AWFUL has happened to bring shame into our lives

...something WONDERFUL has happened to remove shame from our lives.



This is Brene Brown. She's a Social Worker, writer and presenter who has studied shame in depth. Her TED talk on shame and vulnerability has reached almost 30 million hits.



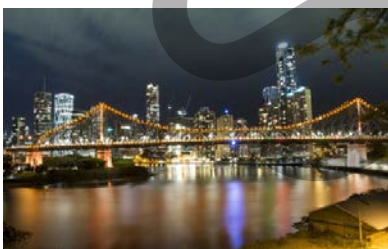
Here's the heart of her message...

***"Shame is the most powerful, master emotion.
It's the fear that we're **not good enough**"***

Adam and his wife were both naked, and **they felt no shame.**

Genesis 2:25

Unlike Adam and Eve at the end of Genesis 2, who felt no shame, we now feel it as the most powerful, master emotion. We fear that we're not good enough, that we won't be accepted. PAUSE



Phil, the Pastor from Brisbane, tells this story from when he was a boy, growing up...



"I grew up on a dairy farm – a place that requires things to be done correctly and on time every single day – cows milked morning and evening – animals to be fed – pastures to be watered."



“I remember as young boy being sent by my dad to do a job I’d seen he and my elder brother do many times – turn on the big hydrant that sent water into the irrigation sprinklers that watered the pastures, that fed those cows, which made that valuable milk.

“The hydrant was old and stiff to turn. I couldn’t remember which way to turn it on. Clockwise or anti-clockwise? The more I tried, the more frustrated I got.



“I felt shame – I didn’t want to go and tell my dad I couldn’t do it. I felt ashamed that I couldn’t do what seemed like a basic, simple, yet important contribution to that morning’s work. I felt I wasn’t good enough.



“The good thing was...this water hydrant was straight over the road from Tom’s place. Tom was our family’s good friend and neighbour. He was a retired bloke who often helped us on the farm.

“Tom saw me struggling with the hydrant and could see I was upset. He came across the road and heard my story – what was going on for me.

“Tom then assured me that it was all going to be okay, even though I’d got this simple task wrong. That I was still loved and accepted by my family and community.

“And then Tom showed me how to do the task, and a simple way to remember which way to turn the hydrant next time.

“The shame was gone...I went home with a spring in my step and gratitude in my heart for good ole’ Tom, our friend and neighbour.”



Phil’s little story of shame felt and shame removed is the kind of story I hope you’ve seen repeated again and again in your life’s story. People like Tom, who’ve loved you by being real about what you were going through, then responding with love and acceptance...

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.
Genesis 2:25

At the end of Genesis 2, Adam and Eve had nothing to be ashamed of – they could be open, real and not ashamed.



Next week we'll see in Genesis chapter 3 how that changed...and became our situation...our world, where we do feel shame. Where it's hard to find safe people to be real and open with – people who will know, love and accept us.



The good news – that I pray becomes clearer, more powerful, and more real for you week-by-week in this Bible in 10 series, is that God has provided that safe place for you...



First in himself – in Jesus at the cross. God knows our shame stories, and when we turn to him through Jesus, he understands, forgives and accepts us. We can live under God's good blessing, with our shame fully removed – faced by God and us and taken away by Jesus at the cross.



Secondly, you can experience that safe place in authentic communities of people – those churches and growth groups that really believe and live this shame removing good news of Jesus.



Where we can hear each other's stories in a safe way, and experience our shame removed. Removed as we speak God's forgiveness and acceptance to one another's hearts – as we speak the shame removing good news of Jesus.



Keep coming along each week – dig deeper in your growth group – so God's good news in Jesus will see your shame stories heard in a safe way and answered by God's love, forgiveness and acceptance in Jesus.

Let's pray.