

# Lesson One: The Big Story

## The Big Verse: Genesis 1:1

Why call this verse “the big verse”?

It is the very first verse of the Bible--like the gateway or the doorway to all that follows.

If you can read this verse and believe it—you are ready for the rest of the Bible.

Nothing in all the rest of the Bible will require more faith than this verse.

If you believe in this God, you are ready to read His Book, the Bible.

## Some Things You Need to Know about the Bible Before You Start Studying and Reading the Bible

The Bible is not one book, but it is actually a collection of 66 books.

There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament.

These “books” were written over a period of about 1500 years with about 40 different human authors on 3 different continents. Even though this is true, the Bible is unified and tells one cohesive story.

The content of the 66 books comes ultimately from God even though human beings were used by God to write the books.

“**Inspiration**” is the word used to describe how God worked through human beings to give them the words and thoughts which appear in the Bible.

Read **II Timothy 3:16-17** to see what the Bible says about its origin. **II Peter 1:20-21**.

**None of the books of the Bible were written in English.** The original language of the Old Testament was Hebrew with a few small sections of Aramaic. The original language of the New Testament was Greek. Every English Bible has been translated from the original languages into English. There will be minor differences in wording going from one English translation to another.

**You will want to have a standard translation** like the King James Version, New King James Version, New International Version, New American Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, English Standard Version, etc. These are “committee” translations using many scholars from many different religious backgrounds to make the translation. Most other translations are made by 1 person or a very small group who have a particular viewpoint. They are useful and interesting but should be used for devotions or comparison more than for serious study. There is value in comparing translations when you study/read the Bible. No one translation will get it right every time.

**There are three kinds of Bibles available:** Simple Translation, Reference Bible (has cross-references and maps and a concordance) and Study Bible (has all the features of a Reference Bible but also has introductions to each book and explanatory notes).

All the “books” of the Bible are divided into chapters and verses. These divisions were not in the original inspired writings but were added sometime after the Bible was completed.

First comes the **name of the book**.

Second comes the **chapter in the book**.

Then comes a mark called a **colon**

After the colon comes **the number of the verse(s) in the chapter**.

With this information you can find any verse or verses in the Bible.

One thing you can do to help yourself get around in the Bible is to memorize the 66 books in order. While you are working on this, you can use the Table of Contents page in the front of your Bible to help you find a particular book.

## The Big Story

Every story has a beginning, a middle and an end. God's story for us has a beginning, a middle and an end.

### The Beginning

Genesis 1-3 is the beginning of the story.

We have the days of creation.

Day One: light.

Day Two: the skies and the seas.

Day Three: the grass and the flowers and the trees.

Day Four: the sun and moon and stars.

Day Five: the fish and the birds

Day Six: animals and finally mankind

### Some Things to Notice:

1. Everything God made was good. At the end of each day of creation, God makes a comment: Genesis 1:10; 1:12; 1:18; 1:21; 1:25; **1:31**  
In 2:18 we finally come to something that was not good. In 2:21-24, God created Eve for Adam and made them husband and wife in order to correct what was not good.
2. Everything that God made was for the use and control of his highest creation: human beings. Genesis 1:26-30. Also see Psalm 8:3-8.
3. Genesis 2 is a retelling of the creation story with emphasis on the creation of Adam and Eve and their placement in the Garden of Eden.
4. Adam and Eve were given work to do in the Garden and also some basic instructions about how they were to live in the Garden.  
They were allowed to eat of **the tree of life** as well as all the other trees. 2:9  
They were not allowed to eat of **the tree of knowledge of good and evil.** 2:15-17
5. The Serpent (a very common name for the Devil or Satan in the Bible) comes to Eve and tempts her to eat the forbidden fruit.

Was there an element of truth in what the Serpent said to Eve? 3:4-5

Why do you think the Serpent comes to her and not Adam?

Why does Adam eat the fruit that God had forbidden? 3:6

Does 3:8 tell us anything about the relationship between God and Adam and Eve?

6. When questioned by God, Adam and Eve want to "pass the buck" to someone else for what they had done. 3:11-13
7. There are consequences:
  - for the Serpent (3:14-15) crawling on his belly, a crushed head (destruction)
  - for Eve (3:16) increased pain in childbirth but will still want to be "with" Adam  
Adam is given "rule" over Eve  
\* Please note that before this moment, who "rules" is not an issue  
Genesis 1:26-28 Adam and Eve are co-rulers of creation
  - for Adam and for the earth itself (3:17-19)  
The ground itself is cursed  
Work becomes hard.  
Weeds and thorns grow among the plants for food.  
Death comes—human beings die and return to the ground.
  - for both Adam and Eve (3:20-24)—cast from the Garden, cut off from the Tree of Life
  - for all mankind (Romans 5:12) Sin entered the World

What is the “sin” mentioned in Romans 5:12?

“Sin” has more than one definition in the Bible

Sometimes “sin” means disobedience or transgression

The “sin” in Romans 5:12 = a power or force that constantly pulls

us down into disobedience and away from God. See Romans 7:14-20

8. The World before Adam’s sin and the World after Adam’s sin were very different.

We live in a world that has been infected with the power of sin.

We are constantly being pulled down by this power.

Inevitably, we sin, even when we are doing our best not to.

9. This is the beginning of the story

Everything as God created it was Good.

Adam and Eve lived in a garden where all their needs were supplied.

They had work but it was not back-breaking work.

They had a fellowship with their creator on a daily basis—“the walk”

They had access to the Tree of Life—life forever in the Garden w God..

Then everything changed—they disobeyed God and sin entered the world.

They were removed from the Garden, cut off from the Tree of Life.

They were cut off from that daily walk with God—spiritual death.

They begin to die physically—sickness, disease, aging, suffering, worry, etc

All this happened because “sin entered the world” through Adam’s disobedience.

Three chapters into the Story and everything has gone horribly wrong.

## **End of the Story**

The End of the Story is found in the last chapter of the Bible: Revelation 22:1-5

God is giving us a vision of heaven.

In the vision of heaven we find the “tree of life” again—transplanted in heaven

Everything that was lost in Genesis 3 is restored in heaven.

## **The Middle of the Story**

Everything between Genesis 3 and Revelation 22 is the Middle of the Story

This is what God did to restore to us everything that we lost in Genesis 3.

There are many details and lots of people and nations mentioned, but the thread of God’s story runs through it all

The Main part of the Middle: God sent His Son into the world to take away our sins

by his death on a cross and make it so that we could get back to fellowship with the Father and have access to the Tree of Life.

## **Why is sin a problem?**

I John 1:5 God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Sin is like a dark stain on our souls: it is a darkness that becomes entwined with our souls.

God does not hate us—on the contrary He loves us supremely.

But His light and our darkness cannot co-exist.

Light always destroys darkness—

All of us have sinned and have this darkness—Romans 3:23

Sin is what got Adam and Eve removed from the Garden.

If sin is not dealt with we cannot return to the Garden where God is waiting.

The Bible is the story of what God did to bring us back to Himself and what we must do to walk with Him again.