THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

Seeing the Entire Bible as One Story of Jesus, from Genesis to Revelation

One Story. One GOD. One Kingdom. One Plan.



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A Note to the Reader

THIS BOOK TRACES the Bible as one continuous story, and it reads the Old Testament in the light of Jesus Christ, the way the apostles did. When the risen Lord walked the road to Emmaus, He opened the Scriptures beginning at Moses and all the prophets and showed the things concerning Himself, and the first preachers of the church learned to read the whole of Scripture that way. That's the path these pages follow.

As you read, keep one simple distinction in mind. There's what Scripture plainly says, and there's what it draws out by pattern, by type, and by the way one part echoes another. I've tried to honor that difference, and to lean hardest on the connections the New Testament itself makes. This is a book of teaching and devotion, not a verse-by-verse commentary. At times it gathers many passages into a single thought, or follows one thread of meaning across the whole story. Where it does, I've aimed to say what Scripture warrants and nothing more. I'm just a man, and the final word is never this book.

So read it with your Bible open. Search the Scriptures for yourself, the way the Bereans did, to see whether these things are so. My prayer isn't that you'd take my word for it. It's that the same King who opened the understanding of His first disciples would open yours, and that you'd come to see, and to love, the one great story of the King and His kingdom.

If anything in these pages stirs up pain that feels too heavy to carry alone, please talk with a pastor, a counselor, or someone you trust. If you ever feel like ending your life, call or text 988 right away. In the U.S., that line is open any hour of the day or night.

Introduction

Where This Book Came From

YOU'RE HOLDING THE result of many years of work. This book didn't come together in a single season. It grew out of years of research, years of studying the Scriptures, and years of teaching the Bible, and all of it has been brought together in these pages so you can have it in one place.

Along the way, one thing kept getting clearer to me. The Bible isn't a pile of separate pieces. Law, history, poetry, prophecy, Gospel and letter all lean in the same direction, toward the King. Every time I followed that thread, I saw GOD a little more clearly, and I wanted you to have that same view.

That's what this book is for. I'm not trying to hand you a new teaching or the last word. I'm trying to help you see GOD a bit clearer, so that when you open your Bible, you recognize the King you meet there. Seeing Him more clearly won't make every question easy. It can make your reading steadier, and it can make your trust in Him a little deeper.

I'm one man with a Bible and a lot of years of study. I'm not a replacement for your Bible, your pastor, or your own prayerful reading. Please check what you read here against the Scriptures, and hold on to what holds up.

Why This Book?

YOU PROBABLY OWN a few good books about the Bible already. Some explain its history, defend its truth, unpack its hard passages, or walk through it one book at a time. This book was written to do something a little different, and something I believe is deeply needed.

Most of us learned the Bible in pieces. We learned the stories one at a time, in Sunday school and sermons and devotional readings, and we treasure them. But somewhere along the way, many of us never quite learned how all those pieces fit together. We know the stories of the Bible without ever really seeing the story of the Bible. We can tell you about Noah and Abraham and David and Daniel, but if you asked us to explain, from Genesis to Revelation, what the whole thing is about, and how it all connects, we'd find ourselves reaching for pieces that never quite assemble into a whole.

I wrote this book because I'm convinced that the greatest thing that can happen to a reader of Scripture is to have their understanding opened, so that the whole Bible comes alive as one connected story. When that happens, everything changes. Passages you have read a hundred times suddenly link to passages a thousand pages away. The Old Testament stops being a long, confusing wait before the good part and becomes the very thing that makes the good part land with power. You stop reading the Bible like a book of scattered quotations and start reading it like what it truly is, the greatest story ever told, told by the only One who was there for all of it.

That's what this book is for. Not to add more information to what you already know, but to give you the thread that ties it all together, so that you can see the one story running through the whole of Scripture, and find the King it has been about from the very first page.

Why Read the Bible as One Story?

YOU MIGHT WONDER whether reading the Bible as one story is just a clever idea, a nice way to organize things. It is not. It's the way the Bible was written to be read, and more than that, it's the way Jesus Himself read it.

On the afternoon of His resurrection, the risen Lord walked with two heartbroken disciples on the road to Emmaus, and instead of simply telling them who He was, He gave them a Bible lesson. Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, Luke tells us, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. He took them through the entire Old Testament and showed them that all of it, every part, had been about Him the whole time. And then Luke records the sentence that gave this book its theme: "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." (Luke 24:45)

That's the heart of it. Jesus read the Scriptures as one unified story that pointed to Himself, and He taught His followers to read them the same way. The apostles never forgot that lesson. In every sermon they preached, they traced the one story of Scripture straight to Jesus. If we want to read the Bible the way its own Author intended, the way the risen King taught, the way the first church proclaimed, then we must learn to read it as one story. Not sixty-six separate books, but one book. Not many disconnected messages, but one unfolding plan. Not a scattered collection, but a single grand narrative about a King and His kingdom.

When you read the Bible this way, you aren't imposing an outside idea onto it. You're finally reading it as it asks to be read. And you'll find, as countless believers have found, that the whole of Scripture opens up to you in a way it never did when you read it only in fragments.

Learning to Read Like the Apostles

SO HOW DO we learn to read this way? We could invent our own method, but there's a far better path. We can go to school with the apostles, the men the risen King personally taught, and learn to read the Bible the way they read it.

The New Testament has preserved for us four great sermons that are, in effect, surveys of the whole Bible. Jesus on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. Peter at Pentecost in Acts 2. Stephen before the council in Acts 7. And Paul in the synagogue at Antioch in Acts 13. Four different

men, in four different settings, and every one of them does the same remarkable thing. Each one opens the Scriptures, traces the one story from the beginning, and lands on Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and reigning. This isn't a coincidence. It's a method, the apostolic way of reading Scripture, taught by the risen King and practiced by His church.

This book is built to teach you that method, so that by the time you reach the final chapter, you can begin to do what those four men did. You can stand anywhere in the Bible, in Genesis or Leviticus or Isaiah or Luke, and see the one story running underneath, and trace the thread to the King it all points to. To help you practice, every chapter of this book closes by pressing the questions the apostles asked, questions that keep drawing our eyes to GOD, to His kingdom, to the covenant, and above all to Christ. And at the back of the book, you'll find those questions gathered together as a tool you can carry with you into any passage for the rest of your life.

How to Use This Book

YOU DON'T HAVE to read this book fast, and you don't have to read it alone. There are ninety chapters, so you could read one a day and finish in about three months. You could also take one chapter a week with a friend, your family, or a small group.

Every chapter closes the same way, so you'll know what to expect. First comes the Apostles' Lens, a short question or two drawn from the way the apostles read Scripture. Then comes One Line to Carry, a single sentence you can remember through the day. After that is Your Seven-Day Step, one small thing to try over the coming week. Last is a short prayer you can pray as written or put in your own words.

Keep your Bible open as you read. The Scripture quotations in this book come from the King James Version. If something puzzles you, mark it and bring it to your pastor or a mature believer. A question isn't a sign of weak faith.

And go easy on yourself. If you miss a day, pick up where you stopped. Nobody's grading you. The goal isn't to finish the book. It's to know the King better when you do.

My prayer for you, as you begin, is simple. It's the very thing the risen King did for those two disciples on the Emmaus road. I pray that as you read, He will open your understanding, that you might understand the Scriptures, and see, perhaps for the first time, the whole Bible as one magnificent story about the King who loved you enough to come and win you back. Let us begin.

Pat Williamson

KEEP READING

You've just read the opening pages of

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The full book is available as a digital download.

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