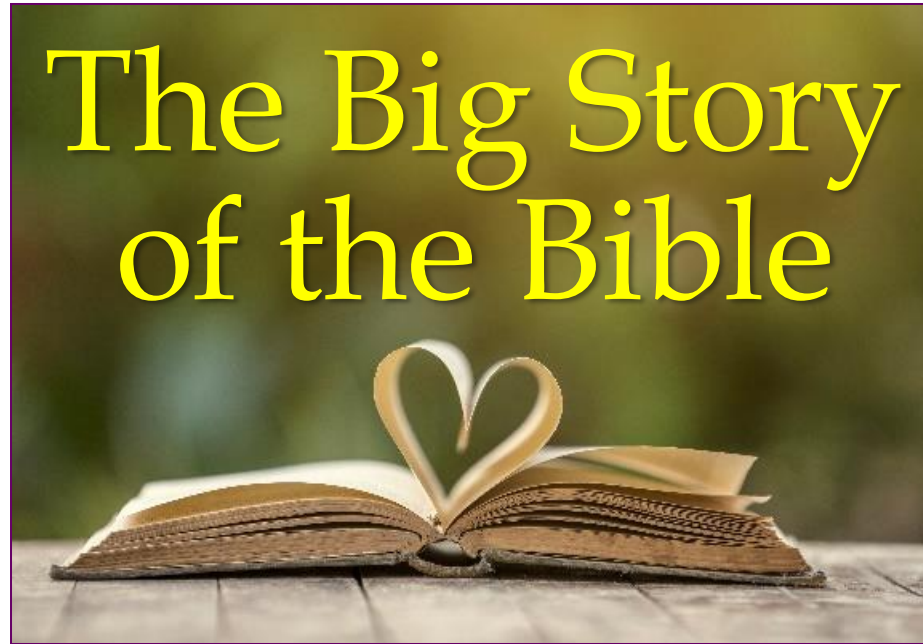


The Drama of Scripture: Part One



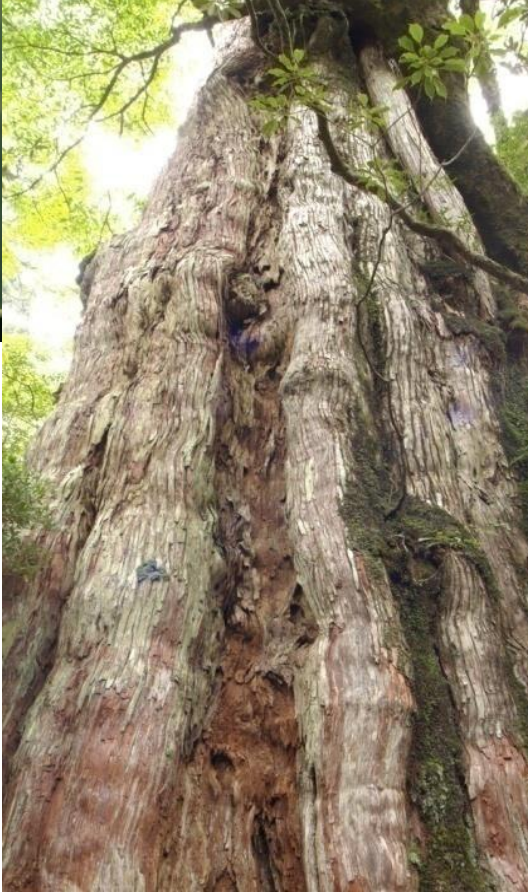
The True Story of the World



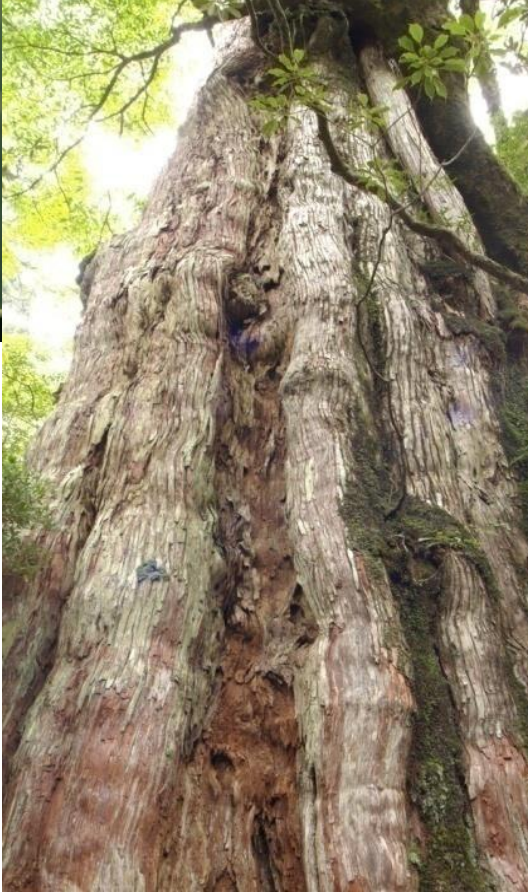
Once
upon a
time
there
was a
frog ...



Who
lived
at the
bottom
of a
tree ...



Which
was part
of a
much
larger
rainforest
where
other
frogs
lived



And peering out from the tree tops,
the vast rainforest appeared to the
frogs to be all there is ...

How amazed those
little frogs would be if
it was revealed to
them there was a
much bigger reality
beyond what they
could see ... where
much bigger things
were going on ... and
that they had an
important role to play
in it all ...







The universal human quest is to make sense of life:

- *Who am I? Where did I come from? What is my purpose? What shall I do and how should I act ... and why?*
- *Religion & Philosophy, Science & Technology, the Arts and Politics ... all ways of seeking and making and expressing meaning!*
- Every person embraces a faith system (everybody believes something), whether it is consciously thought out or not, whether it is cohesive or fragmented, whether it is consistently applied or not ...



- Belief systems are referred to in various ways. The most unambiguous term is “worldview,” which is the “Big Story” (meta-narrative) that becomes the paradigm or framework through which we make sense of our world and the foundation upon which we build and live our life into that world
- How does my life fit into the larger picture?

“The way we understand human life depends on what conception we have of the human story. What is the real story of which my life story is a part?”

(Lesslie Newbigin)



Through the Bible, God reveals the true meta-narrative of life, so it is important not to miss the overarching story to which all the underlying sub-plots and twists and turns belong.

The risk in not comprehending the big picture is that we may misunderstand and misapply any smaller part of the story if it is not considered in the broader context of the whole story.



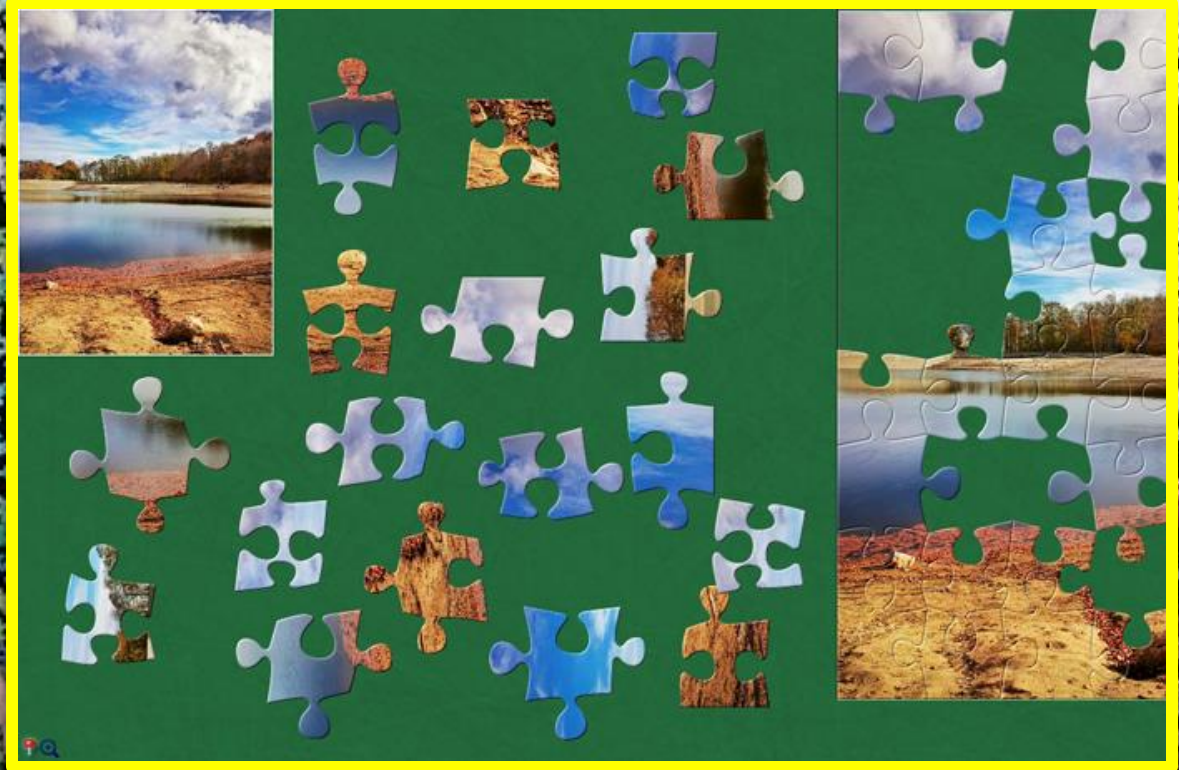
When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question **to test him**.

³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment.

³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall **love your neighbour** as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 22:34-40

Matthew 4:1-11



The Development of the Main Plot of the Bible Story: God's Plan to Redeem Creation ...

Genesis 1-2

Genesis 3-11 (sin: the problem)

Genesis 12:1-3 (Messiah: solution for all peoples)

Exodus 24:1-8 (Mosaic Covenant: temporary solution; cf. Galatians 3)

Deut 4:5-8; Ezek 36:22-23; (Romans 2:17-24; a light to the nations)

2 Samuel 7:12-16 (Messiah ... King, Priest, Prophet)

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:23-37 (New Covenant/Restoration)

➤ **Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32** (herald to Messiah; cf. Malachi 3-4)

➤ **Luke 4:18-21; 22:14-20** (Jesus the healer and deliverer, the Lamb of God)

Acts 2

2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:14-21

Ephesians 2:13-22

Romans 8:18-25

Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-5

Paradise

scapegoating, alienation,
violence, *imago Dei* corrupted

Spirit, forgiveness, new Israel (church)
restored *imago Dei* (*Christlikeness*)

peace, reconciliation

redemption of *all* creation

Paradise restored/*back on track*

The Bible's Main Plot is the True Meta-Narrative of Life:

The True Story of the World!

God is the author of life and our story begins at creation – everything is created by God, ordered to God's design and function, and it is very good

God creates humankind as His image-bearers (*imago Dei*; *priests*) ... God's representatives continuing the creative ordering and filling of the earth as stewards of God's creation

Sin disrupted God's purposes ... rebellion leading to corruption and death! God's reign is rejected and alternative stories are developed

Good News! Jesus came to redeem and reclaim all Creation: The Kingdom of God has been and continues to be (re)established so that the “blind” may “see”, the “wounded” may be “healed”, and the “captives” may be “set free”

God's people are called, in the midst of a multitude of wrong headed stories, to point the world back to the *one true story*, and to co-operate with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in continuing God's redemptive mission towards all of Creation. Redemption will reach its climax with the final consummation of God's purposes at Jesus Christ's return ... new heavens and a new earth



Imagine you are sitting in a café with friends when a woman that none of you know rushes in off the street.

“Good news!” she shouts.

“You’ll never guess ... it’s the greatest news ever!”

What is this person talking about ... and why do they think it is OK to barge into the café to disturb the peace of perfect strangers?

Perhaps she has just learned from her doctor that a cure had been discovered for the terminal illness that her son has been battling for years.

Perhaps she has just learned that the Australian cricket team had humiliated “the Poms” by winning the Ashes Test and she assumed we would share her patriotic enthusiasm for getting one up on the mother country.

Perhaps, in a region with high unemployment and poverty, she has just learned that a new industry is starting up in the area next year, promising to create jobs and prosperity, giving hope to the struggling community.

Adapted from N.T. Wright, *Simply Good News* (New York: HarperCollins, 2015).



What makes news “good news”?

The news in each of these scenarios didn’t just come out of the blue. Each case assumes a larger context, as if it were a significant and new (and often unexpected) development within a much larger story.

The mother and her son’s illness: assumes a family’s struggle (happy for them, but not relevant to me)

The cricket result: assumes the long standing rivalry between colonial Australia and Mother England (but one of my friends is an English gentleman who views the news as scandalous and wants to dismiss it as fake news, and the other is an American who knows nothing and cares even less about cricket or the cultural rivalry so dismisses it as a matter of irrelevant provincial foolishness).



**... but we proclaim
Christ crucified, a
stumbling block to
Jews and foolishness
to Gentiles ...**

1 Corinthians 1:23



News is “good news” when:

1. It is a new and exciting development within a much larger story
2. It is about something that has happened, and because of this happening everything will now be different (it’s a game changer)
3. Good news introduces an intermediate period of waiting

MASSIVE EXPANSION PLANNED FOR WHYALLA STEELWORKS

British billionaire industrialist Sanjeev Gupta has announced plans to build the largest steel plant in the developed world in South Australia. Liberty Primary Steel – part of Gupta’s GFG Alliance – today announced major steps towards the transformation of the alliance’s Whyalla steelworks, signing contracts worth more than A\$600m ...

Whyalla Mayor Clare McLaughlin said the projects would be funded in partnership with the relevant investors and stakeholders while the council would seek support from the state and federal governments to ensure “the whole of Whyalla was brought along for the ride”.

“We Are Whyalla is a catch cry that you’ll see more and more over the coming months as we engage every section of our community, as we communicate to every last member of our city our bold and world-reaching plans,” Mayor McLaughlin said.

“It won’t happen overnight, but as sure as the next day will come, the amazing story of Whyalla will unfold.”




What makes news “good news”?

The significant new development within a much larger story that changes everything ...

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ² through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. ³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins *in accordance with the scriptures*, ⁴ and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day *in accordance with the scriptures*, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died ...

1 Corinthians 15:1-6






Old Testament
Scriptures
**“Someone is
Coming!”**

“according to the
Scriptures” is not just
about proof texts
e.g. Micah 5:2



The Four Gospels
**“This is Who We’ve
Been waiting For!”**
Messiah (Christ)
The Gospels are **both**
epilogue to the OT and
prologue to the NT



New Testament
Scriptures
**“Because He
Came!”**

“according to the
Scriptures” is about the
trajectory of Israel’s history
Abraham, Moses, David, etc.

The Bible Presents One Coherent Story

