

"The Beginner's Bible"

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[0 : 00] Book of Matthew chapter 1. We will be foregoing the regular 2nd Corinthians study for a study on Christ and his birth this morning in honor of the upcoming holiday.

You'll find Matthew chapter 1 at the start of your New Testament on page 1491. Today, I'm going to teach you the whole Bible.

I hope you don't have anything else going on, because this might take a while. There's a lot of stuff in here. I'm just kidding, but I'll try to keep it to a reasonable length.

But we are going to cover, at least in a high-level way, the entire story of the Bible.

You may ask yourself, what's wrong with you? What's wrong with this guy that he would try to teach the whole Bible in one sermon?

[1 : 08] I'm glad you asked. I have three reasons for you. The first is that you need to know that Jesus' birth is not just a random event or a late idea on the part of God, but as part of his plan from before the foundations of the earth were ever laid.

He intended that all things would continue about as they have, all the way to the point of Jesus' birth. This is not some plan B, some afterthought, some solution to a problem that unexpectedly came up.

You know, I designed this thing, it was going good, and then, oh, there was this problem, I need to send my son to go fix it. No, God, from eternity past, knew exactly what his plan for creation would be, and that included this event of the birth of Jesus.

You need to know that, and so that is the first reason that I'm covering the whole Bible story today. The second reason is that you need to know that this book, this compilation of 66 books, has one cohesive message.

That message is all around Christ and his gospel. You need to know that everything in here is built to point towards this God incarnate who we celebrate his birth this Christmas season.

[2 : 41] If you understand that this is one message, one cohesive, united story, you will understand your Bibles better, you will understand God better, and you will be able to grow more in the knowledge of God as you use all of Scripture to teach you of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And the third reason that we have this message of the whole Bible that we're going to be talking about today is that you have a place in this story.

This whole Bible is not just an isolated book that sits over here, one cohesive unit, but this is the story of the universe, and your place is as a character in the grand story that we will be covering today.

We all start our stories, our place in this story, on the wrong side. You're not the hero of this story. You're not the good guys. If this was Star Wars, you would be part of the Empire under Darth Vader, fighting against the plucky rebels who are fighting for good and justice and everything that we love.

[4 : 05] You do not start on the good side. But the big plot twist, the wonderful upset that happens in this story, is that there suddenly becomes a way to change sides.

That with Christ, his coming, and his death, we who were once on the bad side, through trusting in him, may change sides to the good side.

The side that ultimately wins. Know that you have a part in this story, so you must know about it, so that you know your part.

We are going to go through five texts this morning, and we're going to use those texts to summarize the whole message of Scripture, and to give context for this wonderful moment that we celebrate, which is the birth of Christ.

There are five points and five texts. Each point will have one text. Point number one, the beginning. I know I asked you to turn to Matthew, but we're going to go a bit further before that.

[5 : 21] You can just turn to page one of your Bibles, Genesis, the beginning. I hope you don't have trouble finding it. It is right there at the start.

Genesis, page one, comes before page two, and after page zero, so it should be easy to locate.

Genesis, chapter one, verses one through nine, the beginning.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, Let there be light. And there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness. He called the light day, and the darkness he called night.

[6 : 26] So the evening and the morning were the first day. God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters. Let it divide waters from waters.

And thus God made a firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament heaven.

And so the evening and the morning were the second day. Then God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.

And it was so. And God called the dry land earth. And the gathering together of the waters he called seas. And God saw that it was good.

We could go on, but this is the creation account, the very beginning of the story. Before this, there is simply God.

[7 : 29] And we know that the very start of everything is the creative act of God in beginning the universe. Here we learn some important details.

Everything in this story starts with God. He is the first thing. There is nothing that comes before him.

He is before the beginning. He is God. In his wisdom and in his goodness, he creates a world.

Out of nothingness, by mere word of his power, he causes a universe to spring into existence.

Galaxies and galaxies, millions of light years apart, billions upon billions of stars.

And at the center of his creation, he makes earth. And at the pinnacle of his creation of earth, he creates mankind and places them there and creates them in his own image.

[8 : 42] And notice what God says about this creation. It was good. It was sweet. Wonderful. It was a pleasing place to be.

In saying that creation was good, God says, this thing I've made is a reflection of who I am. You think of the goodness here and it tells you about the goodness of me.

A good God creates good things. And so, our good God creates a good world. When the world was made, it was a good place.

And God sets this grand story into motion. He created the world and everything by his power.

And he purposes it for his ends and for his glory. Everything that comes after in the story we must know starts here with God.

[9 : 58] Everything else must be understood in light of a God capable of speaking the heavens into existence. Of a God who is responsible for the entire universe.

Not some God like other myths and legends have who takes what's there and shapes it up a bit. like a potter with some clay. But a God who everything in existence comes from.

And it was good and it is his. But if it was good why are things so bad now?

That brings us to our next point the promise. after the account of the creation of the world and its goodness we start to see a problem creep in.

This place that was meant to be a wonderful reflection of who God is suddenly is not so wonderful and not so good.

[11 : 05] The problem that creeps in is the problem of sin or disobedience to God. God himself is the source of goodness.

He is the fountain of life and we belong to him because he is our creator. So when we reject him we reject life and goodness and what is right.

When this happens we suffer. just as a man who rejects food starves so too when we reject God we suffer and we die.

The death talked about in scripture when the sin of Adam and Eve occurs is not just a punishment but it is the natural outworking of rejecting the God of life.

No one is surprised when a person who rejects medicine for their illnesses ends up sicker and so no one should be surprised when mankind rejects the God of life that they find themselves threatened with death.

[12:21] We see this happen in the narrative Adam and Eve with their sin as representatives of all of humanity reject the God of life they reject the God of goodness and they choose a path of death and sin and suffering and so the world is fallen plunged into darkness lost from its good purpose just as if I had opened up the engine of a running car and chucked a wrench into it suddenly it doesn't work so good.

The pieces that were meant to kiss together to flow with one another are now wrenched up and broken apart by the thing that was not supposed to be there.

So too the good order of this world is wrenched apart by sin and its purposes are sullied like throwing dirt into a glass of good water even a little bit ruins the purpose of the whole thing no longer refreshing but disgusting fit only to be poured out.

Fortunately that's not the end of the story. It's not simply that the earth was good and now it's bad and then God casts it out and that's it.

But a promise comes. Turn a few pages forward to Genesis chapter 3. Here we will read of God's grace to sinful mankind and of a promise he makes to people in a fallen world.

[14:11] Genesis chapter 3 verses 14 and 15. And so this is after the fall, after the sin, God is giving out curses and speaking his words in response to what has happened.

So the Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the cattle, more than every beast of the field on your belly you shall go and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

Here God answers mankind's worries. He answers the brokenness that has crept into the world immediately after the wrench has been tossed in and everything's been mucked up.

God comes by and in the midst of the curses he gives a promise of hope. this second verse here verse 15 is a promise that God will one day right what has been wronged.

[15:44] So we read that God makes man makes the serpent and the woman to be enemies of each other.

That he makes the descendants of the serpent the seed of the serpent to be enemies of the seed of the woman. Then we learn that the child of the woman will crush the head of the serpent.

This is a picture of a fatal blow. what God is saying here is that one day there will come someone born of woman who will kill Satan, who will destroy his power, who will place his boot on the head of the enemy of man and of God and put him to a final end.

That means that one day the first person responsible for all this brokenness and fallenness will be put to death.

This is a promise that God one day will send someone to save his world and to right the brokenness and the wrongness. The world broke and God told people what his answer would be.

[17:10] As strong as WD-40 and duct tape are, they can't fix all problems, at least not this one.

God's answer to the problem of sin is that one day he will send a human being, a seed of the woman, who himself will have his heel bruised, that means he will suffer, but in his suffering he will crush the enemy of man, that is Satan.

know that the world was good, but is broken because of sin, and God promises a solution in a child of the woman, a human who would crush the head of the serpent.

love love. So we have the first creation, we have the first beginning, then the fall, then the promise that leads to new hope.

The first creation was broken down, and so a new creation is needed. that brings us to our third point, the new beginning.

The promise of Genesis 3 points all the way forward and will one day be answered in this baby lying in a manger.

[18:46] Turn with me back to Matthew chapter 1. You'll find it at the start of the New Testament, page 1491.

Just as Genesis is the start of the Old Testament, so too Matthew is the start of the New Testament. This isn't an accident, they are meant to match up with each other.

You had the first creation, it was broken, it fell, and in the New Testament, at the Genesis of the New Testament, Matthew, you have the new creation beginning.

And it begins in the most unlikely way with a baby in the manger. So, Matthew chapter 1, verse 1. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David. all over this chapter is the idea of a new beginning, of a second chance, of a redemption.

[20 : 06] First, as I was saying, it matches with Genesis being the beginning. That means that through the events that happen in this gospel, there will be made a path all the way back to the perfection and the paradise that was once enjoyed before the fall, to a world that you can look out at and say, this is very good.

Then again, we have another match to Genesis. It says the book of the genealogy. Here, the word genealogy is the Greek *geneseo*, and that is the word that is translated genesis.

You could translate the first line of Matthew as this, the book of the genesis of Jesus Christ. This is not an accident, but is meant to highlight that Christ brings with him and secures by his life and death a new creation, a new genesis, a new beginning.

beginning. Christ is here and he is the new beginning. Look further down at verse 18.

We'll read 18 through 21. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. After his mother, Mary, was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she found she was with child by the Holy Spirit.

[21 : 42] then Joseph, her husband, being a just man and not wanting to make a public example of her, was minded to put her away secretly.

But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary, your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, and she will bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Jesus is born without human father. This emphasizes that he is the promised answer to sin. All the way back at the beginning of the Bible, we hear there is a seed of the woman, someone who is highlighted by their birth, specifically from a woman.

Normally we talk about seed and generation as coming from a man, yet God, knowing what he would do in Mary, made his promise clear to those who look back on it.

This here could be none other than the seed of the woman. this here is the promised Messiah who will crush the head of the serpent.

[23 : 14] What we read about here is finally the answer. Imagine if you were to read the whole Bible straight through and to understand the different things that were being talked about.

you find early on an account of the fall of humanity and then a promise given that one day someone will be born of woman and will solve it all.

Then you go through and you go, oh, they have a son named Abel. Maybe this is the seed of the woman who will fix everything. He's killed by his brother.

And certainly the murderous brother, that couldn't be the seed of the woman. Well, then they have Seth. They rejoice.

Maybe this is the seed of the woman. No, he's not. And you proceed onward and onward through character after character. This Moses, he's a pretty great guy.

[24 : 23] He saves a lot of people. Is this the seed of the woman? No. Sin and death stop every last one of them. And you go through account after account, hundreds of pages, thousands of years, looking for that promised seed.

Then you get to Matthew chapter 1. And you hear of the new beginning brought with Jesus Christ. And then you go, maybe this one is finally the one who we've been waiting for.

And then you get to these verses and you find out, unlike anyone else, he was born solely of woman.

That must be him. Here we have the Savior. In this story, in this time, we remember, we rejoice over the first time when the universe got to see the one who would put it all to rights again.

The God who would fix everything who is broken, the little baby who is the hope of the world. There in the manger is our ticket to paradise.

[25 : 42] sacrifice. That is why in Luke, the angels say, we bring you glad tidings of great joy. The new beginning has come, and here is the one who will bring it to us.

Do you ache under the pain of this world? Do you feel a burden on your conscience because of sin? Do you look out at the way the world works and you go, something's not right here. Good. You should. You should feel those things because the world is broken.

And then here is the answer. It may not look like much, but that baby in the manger, if you follow the story, if you watch the details, you will realize that this baby means that one day everything will be right again.

There is a new beginning, a new creation. Everything that's broken will be unbroken. There is hope. That is the twist in the story.

[27 : 03] Nothing short of the creative power of God could make the things right, so he does. He comes in the form of man to bring a new creation, a perfected one, free from sin, to us.

He does so in Christ. But how does he make it right? Is this the end of the story, a baby in the manger? Is somehow that the solution to our problems?

Just having a special baby in our midst and suddenly everything's right again? I mean, I like babies. They're wonderful. You know, you're having a bad day and you come and you see a baby smiling and get to hold them.

I remember holding my niece for the first time. She's so cute. They make a lot of things right, but a baby isn't enough to just fix all the problems of the world.

So we need point number four to show us what is necessary to purchase this new creation, the freedom, the gospel, the paradise of a right world.

[28 : 16] Point number four, the fulfillment. Earlier, we read the promise that God made that one day he would send someone to fix it all.

We saw that that person would crush the serpent's head, but himself would be wounded. And we will read how that is fulfilled.

Turn with me to Matthew chapter 27. You'll find it on page 1542. Here we see the answer, the fulfillment.

Jesus himself, this person who was once a baby crying in a manger, is now suffering on the cross. And if you don't, if you didn't pay attention to the promise earlier, you might go, it's all falling apart. The one who's supposed to save everything, he's dying.

[29 : 19] He himself is being broken by the world too. It's all falling apart. except it's exactly as God planned it from the very beginning.

He will crush your head, but you will bruise his heel. He knew exactly what would happen. The promised seed is also promised to suffer.

we see the one who cried in the manger was ultimately born to cry upon a cross. We earned death by rejecting God, so for justice to be satisfied, one who earned life must die in our place.

We deserve to die, and yet he died for us. He deserved to live, and yet we live in his place.

His birth is like the engagement in a marriage, the first full reality that one day this relationship is coming, and then here we have the wedding ceremony where the new creation is purchased by the blood of our Savior on the cross.

[30 : 48] Read with me Matthew 27 verses 50 through 54. And Jesus, who once cried in a manger as a little baby, cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

then behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the graves after his resurrection.

So they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and the things that happened, they feared greatly, saying, truly, this was the Son of God.

We should wonder that God himself would be found in the form of man, that the ruler of the universe who speaks the world into existence should come down to his creation, take that creation onto himself, and come to serve and to save us.

We should be amazed that the infinite God would humble himself to be a baby, helpless and weak. but he goes even further than that.

[32 : 34] He humbles himself to die on a cross as a criminal in the stead of other criminals.

Consider that after the world fell, he could have wiped it all away and started over, as easy as breathing. there was no need for God to redeem his creation.

He could have said, that's that, I'm starting over. But instead, he chooses at the price of his own son to remake the world.

He did it because he loves us. and he loves us not because we are so lovely, but because he is a loving God.

Here, see the plan of the ages laid down before the foundations of the world that God would save a broken people by breaking his son in their place.

[33 : 50] From the first page of the Bible, this was the plan. and everything that has happened was meant to lead up to this moment. This is the gospel.

Do you want a new beginning? Do you want freedom from this broken world? Are you tired of doing things the same old broken way?

Is life painful and hard? turn to Christ. He is the one who crushes the head of the enemy, who makes the broken whole, who binds up the broken hearted.

He is here to free you, to earn you paradise. Run to him. He does not ask you to be good enough. He has come to heal the broken. You do not need to be strong enough. He will give you the strength. He says, come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

[35 : 06] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Come to him. He calls you out of the brokenness to freely come and receive the new creation.

But this story of beginnings does not end even there. To capture this full journey of scripture, we need to find one final beginning.

One last start. Point number five, the final beginning. I want us to be glad and to rejoice over Christ's coming and over his death.

I want you to feel the joy of the new creation and rejoice at being made new. new. But I recognize that you may ask, where is this new creation?

[36 : 27] Where is this freedom from sin and brokenness? I mean, have you looked at what's going on in the world? It doesn't look like it's all new, like it's all good again.

So if Christ died to bring that, where is it? What's going on? You say Christ came to save us from this broken world?

Why is it still so broken? And why are we still here? Suffering really is still all around.

if you look around, it is not hard to find pain and despair and distress. If this is all that Jesus died to bring, if we are honest, sometimes it doesn't feel like salvation.

Things can be so bad in this current world. What I'm trying to get at is there's more to this story.

[37 : 41] It doesn't just end with a Christ on the cross. What we have right now is just the first taste of that new beginning.

Just that first taste of the rightness that will one day be everywhere. Don't be discouraged at what's going on in the world because one day the full plan, the full new beginning will come.

Turn with me to Revelation chapter 21. You'll find it on page 1898 of your pew Bible. Here in lies the final beginning.

beginning. After this there will be no need for any other beginnings. All will be right and the broken will be gone.

This is one of my favorite parts of scripture. Having struggled with depression for so much of my life, often in despair and discouragement, hearing this, that this painful world isn't the top, but there is a better thing coming, has comforted me in so many difficulties.

[39 : 08] Revelations 21, verses 1 through 5. Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, also there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people.

God himself will be with them and be their God, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.

There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then he who sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

[40 : 26] And he said to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. New heavens and new earth, the broken will pass away.

The Lord himself will dry our tears. the broken will pass away. There will be no more crying, death, or sorrow.

The broken will pass away. The lamb makes all things new. The broken will pass away.

if you don't long for this, you aren't looking close enough at this world. If there isn't something in you that cries out for this newness, you're not looking at what's going on.

Everywhere we turn, drug addiction, broken families, broken friendships, cheating partners, abusive people, predators of all kinds, war, famine, disease, despair, violence, strife, school shootings, bombings, corruption, greed, selfishness, slander.

[41 : 54] People follow passions, movies, fads, influencers, money, feelings, lust, pride, and everything else that leads to death.

Look at your own hearts. Look at how easily you complain even though as an American you're one of the richest people in all of history. Look at how broken you are, how quickly you snap at others and you demand on your way, how self-centered you find yourself even without trying.

how much stuff have you piled up in your life to try to fill that brokenness inside of you?

How easily will you lie and cheat to get your own advantage? Don't you cry out for things to be made new?

I hope you look forward to this promise as you look back at God in the form of a baby. Listen to his final call, Revelations 21, verse 6 and 7.

[43 : 09] And he said to me, it is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

He who overcome shall inherit all things. I will be his God and he shall be my son. Come to him and he will give you this new life freely.

But if you refuse and know that he is here offering it to you and if you do not respond you are spurning the holy God of life but if you refuse be warned your story will come to an end and you will be wiped away a member of the broken world and not of the new.

verse 8 but the cowardly unbelieving abominable murderers sexually immoral sorcerers idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death let us close in prayer Lord we remember you coming we remember that this is the pinnacle of scripture that you yourself have planned to redeem a people from every tribe nation and tongue might we rejoice as we think on these things throughout the final parts of this Christmas season and live our lights lives looking forward to that final new beginning it is in your son's name we pray amen