
The Bible in Four Acts

Act Two: NATION

INTRODUCTION:

Big picture of the Bible: Two ways of seeing the picture

1. Chronological unfolding
 - A. Act 1: Creation – Genesis 1-11
 - B. Act 2: Nation – Genesis 12 - Malachi
 - C. Act 3: Salvation – The Gospels
 - D. Act 4: Mission – Acts – Revelation

2. Imbedded in this is the theme of the Bible which is **Sin, Judgment, and Salvation**

Scene 1 FAMILY

A. A pattern of rebellion was established in Genesis 1-11

A pattern has appeared where people rebel against God, God judges them, God Redeems them, and then the rebel again.

Rebellion – Judgment – Salvation – Rebellion

1. First rebellion -- Garden of Eden (Genesis 3)
First Judgment – The curse on Serpent, Satan, Woman, Man
First Redemption – He made them coats to cover them

2. Second Rebellion – Cain and Able (Genesis 4)
Second Judgment – Cain becomes a marked man
Second Redemption – Eve had a son named Seth who followed God

3. Third Rebellion – “Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5)
Third Judgment – The Flood (Genesis 7-8)
Third Redemption -- Humanity preserved (Genesis 9)

4. Fourth Rebellion – Tower of Babel (Genesis 11)
Fourth Judgment – Dispersion
Fourth Redemption – A nation is about to rise

B. God has been making covenants with his people where He promises certain things to them.

1. Covenant Promise of Gen 3:15 -- The first great Gospel Promise

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

2. Covenant Promise of Genesis 9

Genesis 9:5–7 “Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from *every* man, from every man’s brother I will require the life of man. 6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man. 7 “As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.”

Genesis 9:11–13 “I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.” 12 God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; 13 I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

3. Covenant promises with Abraham

God made a promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 formalized it into a covenant in Genesis 15.

Genesis 12:1–3 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the **land** which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great **nation**, And I will **ble**ss you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

LAND SEED BLESSING

Scene 2 FAILURE

The cycle of Rebellion, Judgment and Redemption continues

God chose a man and a family to bless and to build, but they were human and they sinned.

A. Abraham failed

Genesis 12:8 “... and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

1. He asked his wife to lie and say, "I'm just his sister"

Genesis 12:11–13 It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 "Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."

He did it again in Genesis 20

2. He listened to his wife and took a second wife

Genesis 16:1–2 Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no *children*, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing *children*. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

3. Though Abraham was weak at times, he believed in God

Genesis 15:6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

B. Abrahams Children and Grandchildren failed

1. His son Isaac also lied about his wife (Genesis 26:6)

2. His grandson Jacob was a deceiver and was deceived. Genesis 27-50

But God, in mercy, chose to bless him and use him. It was to fulfill God's plan, not because Jacob was good.

3. Jacobs sons were wicked

a. The sons murder a whole town of men (Genesis 34)

b. Some of them intermarry with the wicked people of the Land (Genesis 38)

c. The sons of Jacob plan to kill but then only sell their brother Joseph into slavery (Genesis 37)

4. God uses Joseph's slavery and a famine to protect Abrahams family by taking them to Egypt for 400 Years.

Scene 3 **FREEDOM**

A. **Abraham's family becomes a Nation (Exodus)**

1. About 400 years later
2. About 2.5 million people from the original 70
Remember God promised Abraham blessing.
3. God used Moses and many miracles to deliver Israel from Egypt.
They didn't know God or even His name. When God was done they knew a whole lot.

Plagues in Egypt, Parting of the Red Sea, Water in the Desert, Food in the Desert.

B. **The Law was given in two forms**

1. The ten commandments were summary statements driving at the core truth about God and man.
2. The religious and national laws were to run the nation with God as their King. (Exodus – Deuteronomy) The Torah. The Law.

C. **Truth about the Law**

1. It was both their religious system and their national system. They had no other government at this time.

Some of it is hard to understand, but most of it makes very good sense after serious thought.

2. The law could not save a person from sin.
 - a. If a person believed God and obeyed Him, God would forgive sin based on a heart that was surrendered to God.
 - b. God said repeatedly that He did not want sacrifices if their heart was not right. "A broken and contrite heart the Lord desires".

D. **Though the Law may seem hard to us, it actually provided a very large amount of freedom.**

It was not until the people demanded a King that things got truly hard.

Scene 4 **FAITHFULNESS**

The cycle continued: Rebellion. Judgment. Redemption.

That is really the story of the Old Testament. God remained faithful even when His people were not.