

Hymns: 65 This Is My Father's World      34 When We All Get to Heaven  
Psalm 93;      Psalm 102:25-27;

You've heard the expression, "he can't see the forest for the trees." Many times in life it seems we get bogged down in the details and miss the whole point. Perspective is important.

Most, if not all of you, have sometime in your life looked down to earth from an airplane, **or** watched a movie that showed you earth from above. If you've used mapping applications on the Internet, you're familiar with Google Maps or something similar and know what it's like to zoom into a region as you move from earth, to country, to state, to county, to city, to neighborhood, to street, to destination address. Well, today we're going to go the other direction, and zoom out and to take a panoramic view of the Word of God.

I'll never forget the experience I had twenty or thirty years ago, while flying in a jet at cruising altitude. The sky was blue, the sun bright, and the clouds *below* were white and fluffy. While clouds *beneath me* were quite strange the first time I saw that, it couldn't compare with what I saw next. It was a rainbow. You're probably thinking that is not so unusual, and it's true, we've all seen rainbows trace across the sky with their array of color and a distinct arch that reaches up and back down. The difference this time was the rainbow was **inverted**. The experience reminded me that God sees many things we cannot even imagine. It also reminds us of the value of changing our perspective.

The idea is that we want to get the **big picture** and **develop a framework** for understanding so we can answer the big questions like:

1. Where did we come from?
2. What message does the Bible convey?
3. How will this all end?

No doubt, when you were in grade school you went to the library and received assignments to write book reports. That's a little bit closer to how we want to approach this topic today. Let's get started.

### Author

Who wrote the Bible anyway, and what do we know about Him or them? One way to answer the question is to say that the Bible was written by a group of authors: Moses, David, Solomon, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, many of the Apostles and others. The truth is, God used those people to pen **His** words. The author of the Bible is God.

We're told the Bible was God-breathed through men chosen by Him as directed by the Holy Spirit. The Bible is called "the word of God" (I Thessalonians 2:13) which was given "by inspiration of God" (II Timothy 3:16).

*For we have **not** followed **cunningly devised fables**, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his Majesty.... Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (II Peter 1:16,20,21)*

The Bible does not simply *contain* the word of God, it *is* the Word of God. It is clean, pure, and perfect (Psalm 19:7-9) as is God Himself. We'll consider the details of the nature of God in the future. For now, we'll simply state that God is holy, glorious, all-knowing, unchanging, eternal, loving, just, omnipresent, perfect, and almighty.

## Theme

What about a theme? Does the Bible have a theme or central message, or is it simply a collection loosely connected stories, poetry, and instructions? Here's what Billy Graham wrote:

*The message of the bible is the message of Jesus Christ who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6). It is the story of salvation; the story of your **redemption** and mine through Christ; the story of life, of peace, of eternity. (Billy Graham, Preface to *What the Bible Is All About* by Henrietta Mears)*

It's **not** surprising that one of the greatest evangelists of all time would see the Bible from the perspective of salvation and redemption. This is actually a very common view, if not the most common, among the *evangelical* community. Billy Graham thus shares company with many holding the view that the theme of Scripture is *redemption* or as some say *reconciliation*.

Others, including Dr. C.I. Scofield, believed (from the Preface of his study bible) "The Central Theme of the Bible is Christ." Among other proof texts, those with this view cite:

[Jesus said] *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and **they are they** which **testify** of me.* (John 5:39)

...[speaking of, Jesus Christ] *his name is called **The Word of God**.* (Revelation 19:13b)

That's getting closer, in my view. I would just widen the perspective a bit more.

What's the theme of the Bible? The Bible is **God's love letter to man** and it's centered around the person of Jesus Christ. Within its pages God reveals to us **Himself and His plan for man**. It's the revelation of God to man and the revelation of man from God. John 3:16 is the most frequently quoted verse in the Bible. It has been called both "the most famous verse of the Bible" as well as "the Gospel in a nutshell." begins "For God so **loved** the world...."

The word *love* alone appears 310 times in the Authorized Version. It's been said that Jesus Christ can be found on every page of the Bible. Jesus Christ **is** God (John 1:1; 8:58; I Timothy 3:16) and "God is love" (I John 4:8). God **reveals Himself** to us through His Son and by His Word. While reconciliation of man to God is one important expression of God's love, the overarching theme of the Bible is encompasses more.

Now we have an idea of the author and theme of the Bible, what about it's size?

## Size

Books	66
Chapters	1,189
Verses	31,102

Words	788,280
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Source: <http://www.biblebelievers.com/believers-org/kjv-stats.html>

For comparison, a novel can range in size from 50,000 to 200,000 words. You may be surprised to learn that it takes just 70 hours (or about three full days) to read through the entire Bible. So you if set out to read the Bible in eight-hour daily sessions, it would take you nine days to go cover to cover.

Now, let's swoop down a little closer and see some of the key events recorded in scripture.

### Key Events

1. **Creation First Heaven and First Earth (Genesis 1:1)**
2. Fall
3. Universal Flood
4. Plagues of Egypt
5. Giving of Law (Ten Commandments)
6. Birth of Christ
7. **Death and Resurrection of Christ (Matthew 28:6)**
8. Rapture of Church
9. Tribulation (seven-year cataclysm called, "The time of Jacob's trouble")
10. Millennial (thousand year) Reign of Christ on the earth
11. Final Judgment
12. **New Heaven and Earth (Revelation 21:1)**

### Before the beginning

The Bible speaks of "In the beginning..." (Genesis 1:1). What does it tell us (if anything) about before that beginning?

#### 1. Eternal God

All of these verses speak of God.

*\*Psalm 93:2 Thy throne is established of old: **thou art from everlasting.***

*\* 102:27 But thou art the same, and **thy years shall have no end.***

*\*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (Revelation 22:13)*

***Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. (Psalm 90:2)***

#### 2. God Loved His Son

*\*[Jesus prayed saying] Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me [believers], be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me **before the foundation of the world.** (John 17:24)*

#### 3. God Chose Believers

*\*According as he hath chosen us [believers] in him **before the foundation of the world,** that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (Ephesians 1:4)*

#### 4. Angels

God is speaking:

*\*Where wast thou **when I laid the foundations of the earth?** declare, if thou hast*

*\*understanding.*

*\*Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

*\*Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;*

*When the morning stars sang together, and **all the sons of God** [angels] **shouted for joy?** (Job 38:4-7)*

### **Beginning Compared to End (Paradise lost and regained)**

<b>Creation</b>	<b>New Creation</b>
Heaven and Earth Created (Genesis 1:1)	New Heaven and Earth (Revelation 21:1)
No Death, Sorrow, Evil, Pain (1:31)	No Death, Sorrow, Evil, Pain (21:4)
Communion with God (2:15)	Communion with God (21:3)
New Bride (2:22)	Bride of Christ (19:7)
Tree of Life (2:9)	Tree of Life (22:2)
River (2:10)	River (22:2)

Let's see if we can see the parallels between Genesis and Revelation:

#### Genesis 1

*[1] In the beginning God created the **heaven and the earth.***

*[31] And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, **it was very good.** And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

#### Genesis 2

*[9] And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; **the tree of life** also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

*[10] And **a river** went out of Eden to water the garden;...*

*[15] And the LORD God **took the man**, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*

*[16] And the LORD God **commanded the man**, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*

*[19] And out of the ground **the LORD God formed every beast of the field**, and every fowl of the air; and **brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them:** and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*

*[21] And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and **he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh** instead thereof;*

*[22] And the rib, which **the LORD God** had taken from man, made he a woman, and **brought her unto the man.***

#### Revelation 19

*[7] Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for **the marriage of the Lamb** is come, and **his wife** hath made herself ready.*

## Revelation 21

[1] *And I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

[2] *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a **bride adorned for her husband**.*

[3] *And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, **the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God**.*

[4] *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be **no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain**: for the former things are passed away.*

## Revelation 22

[1] *And he shewed me **a pure river of water of life**, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

[2] *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of **the river**, was there **the tree of life**, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

You may ask, if there's going to be a new heaven and new earth, what will happen to the present heaven and earth? The verse in Revelation said that it passed away. Do we have any more information of exactly how this will happen? As a matter of fact we do.

## II Peter 3

[10] *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens shall pass away with a great noise**, and the **elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up**.*

## Final State

And finally, here's a view of the the final state of things from the Apostle Paul. In I Corinthians 15:28 we read the somewhat mysterious words that Jesus Christ Himself will take His final position as part of the godhead.

*And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall **the Son also himself be subject unto him** that put all things under him, **that God may be all in all**.*

## Conclusion

Do you see the big picture? God is perfect and God is love. He started this world with perfection and in the end He will restore the world to perfection. He started in fellowship with His creation and in the end He will again have fellowship with His creation. He started with a the **Tree** of Life and He will end with the **Tree** of Life, and we **who** know him can share in that life because He gave His Son on **another tree** at Calvary to ransom us from the curse of sin and death.

*For God so **loved** the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)*

## Benediction

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Revelation 22:21)*