

Creation
 Fall & Flood
 Blessed to Bless (Abraham and Sarah)
 Jacob becomes Israel
 Leah & Zilpah, Rachel & Bilhah
 Slavery & Exodus
 Wilderness, Law & Halacha
 Judges & Conquest
 12 Tribes demand a King
 Saul, David, Solomon
 Captivity (Assyria, Babylon, Persia) & Prophets
 Messiah

Creation Story and the Fall
 Call of Abraham and Sarah
 Migration of Jacob's tribe to Egypt
 Moses and the Exodus
 Wilderness, Law, Priesthood, Tabernacle
 Judges and the Conquest
 Saul, David and Solomon
 Captivity (Assyria, Babylon, Persia) & the Prophets
 Messiah

Creation
 Abraham
 Egypt
 Wilderness
 Conquest
 Monarchy
 Captivity
 Prophets
 Messiah

Israel as the Growth of a Person

Conception.

God conceives of a culture in which to bless the world out after the fall of creation.

Birth and Infancy.

This "blessing culture" begins in the call of Abraham and Sarah to start a family in Canaan.

Childhood.

The "blessing culture" grows to tribal size in Isaac's son Jacob (four "wives") and twelve children.

Teen.

The culture grows to full nation size in Egypt, is set eventually free from slavery by Moses, and lives in a rebellious in-between period wandering in the wilderness, where they develop laws, a priesthood, sacrifices and a tabernacle.

Young Adult

The people are up and down in their commitment to God and are led by various religious judges as they attempt to take back the land of Canaan by military conquest.

Settling Down

Israel asks for a King and have a 120 year period of relative unity, wealth, and stability in Kings Saul, David and Solomon, when they settle down into a capital city of Jerusalem and build the temple as a unifying place of worship.

Mid-Life Crisis

Solomon, though initially wise, divides the nation into political "taxation" regions, marries hundreds of women from foreign nations with various religions, and the nation falls apart.

Wisdom Years

God sends prophets to bring Israel back to faithfulness and preach that invasion from Assyria, Babylon and Persia is God's punishment, and that a future Messiah (anointed leader) will come and reign.

The Story of the Hebrew and Christian Bible “in brief.”

God creates the heavens and the earth in six days, resting on the 7th. God creates human beings in the divine image and places them in the Garden of Eden. They disobey God by eating from the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil* and are removed from the garden. Cain kills Abel in the first act of violence which eventually escalates into God destroying humanity with a flood, except for Noah and his family.

God calls Abraham and Sarah, descendents of Noah, to move to the Land of Canaan and grow his family into an expansive tribe, numbering the stars in the heavens and grains of dust on the earth, **whose purpose will be to bless all the people of the earth**. Abraham’s descendants grow from a family, to a tribe, and eventually follow Joseph to Egypt during a famine. The Hebrews thrive in Egypt, growing into a nation, until a pharaoh enslaves them for around 400 years.

Moses rescues the Hebrews from slavery and leads the battered nation into the wilderness for a time of testing and purging. God gives them the Ten Commandments (Decalogue) as well as 613 laws that make up the Hebrew “pathway” (Halacha). Moses develops a priesthood, a system of sacrifices, and a Tabernacle.

The Israelites move back into the *Land of Canaan* under the leadership of Joshua and a theocratic network of Judges. For a period of 300 years they work to repossess the land of Canaan. It is a bloody period of warfare and undulating faithfulness. Eventually, the tribes of Israel settle into the land and ask God for an earthly king, to be like the other nations around them.

The United Monarchy is a period of 120 years of unity and relative stability under Saul, David, and Solomon. A capital city is established in Jerusalem, a Temple is built, and worship is centralized. Solomon begins his reign in wisdom, but his marriages to 700 wives of foreign religion, as well as his 300 concubines, culturally divide the nation which eventually is broken apart and divided.

Prophets arise during this time of confusion and religious syncretism, calling the now divided Kings back to God. Part of the prophet’s message is God’s judgment, punishment and discipline that occurs through a series of foreign occupations; the Assyrians in the 8th century BC, the Babylonians in the 6th Century BC, then the Persians, the Greeks, and eventually the Romans. The Babylonians destroy the temple and the Persians allow them to rebuild it.

Within the prophet’s messages is the promise of a coming Super-Leader (an elevated anointed (Messiah), prophet, priest and King) who would save Israel and bring all the nations together. Christianity believes Jesus to be the fulfillment of that promised leader, who brought healing, truth, and final atonement to every human being. Through Jesus, all the people of the earth will be blessed, fulfilling the original promise to Abraham and Sarah.

