Bible ‘plot structure’ – a ‘big story’ view



GOD - Fundamental to Christian belief is the existence of God as Father (mind/word), Son (body/flesh) and Holy Spirit (spirit/power).

At first, there wasn’t anything at all. Nothing! So God set to work. But he didn’t use his hands or a special machine. He spoke, that’s all. He said, ‘I’d like some light.’ And there was light. God spoke the whole of creation into being. It took six days and on the seventh day, he rested.



CREATION - The universe and human life are God's good creation. Humans are made in the image of God; humans are mind, body, and spirit.

Now everything was ready. Good and ready. So God spoke again. 'Man and woman,' is what he said, as if he were calling the names of his very best friends. And out of the dust came Adam and Eve. To enjoy all that God had made. To take care of it for him. And to talk with him. 'This is the way things ought to be,' God said at last. 'This is what I call good!'



THE FALL - Humans have a tendency to go their own way rather than keep their place in relation to their creator. This attitude is called 'sin'.

'Welcome to my world!' God said to Adam. 'It's good, isn't it?'

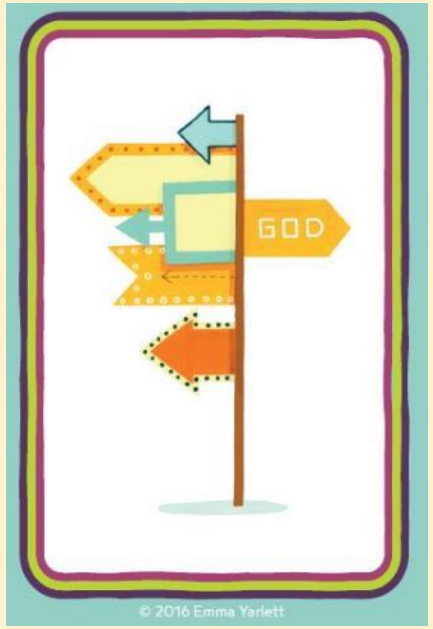
'Welcome to my garden!' God said to Eve. 'This is the most beautiful place of all. And I want it to be your home. Take care of the animals for me. Take care of the plants. And eat whatever you like. There are plenty of trees to pick from.'

Adam and Eve didn't know what to say. They looked at the garden. They looked at each other. And then they smiled the world's first smile. Life was going to be perfect here. Just perfect.



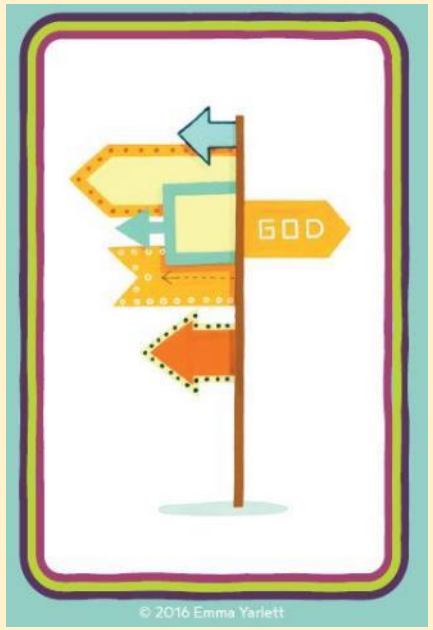
‘There’s just one more thing,’ God said. ‘Do you see that tree over there? The one in the middle of the garden? Well, the fruit on that tree is not good for you. If you eat it, you will make me very unhappy. And you will have to leave this beautiful place.’

Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan and they disobeyed God; they ate some of the fruit from the tree. God knew that they had done this. They had rebelled against him and he had to turn them out of the Garden of Eden. They had learned what it meant to be bad and they had changed God’s world forever.

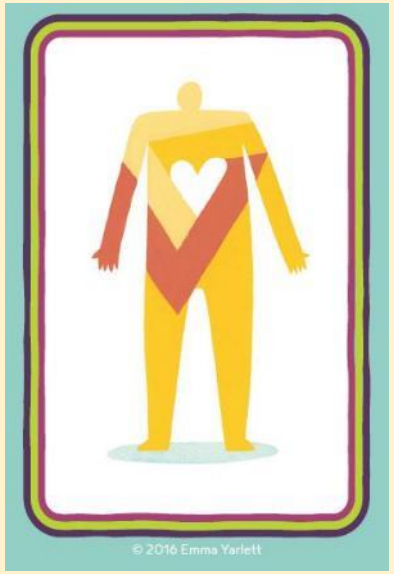


THE PEOPLE OF GOD - The Old Testament tells the story of God's plan to reverse the impact of the Fall - to save humanity. It involves choosing people - the Israelites.

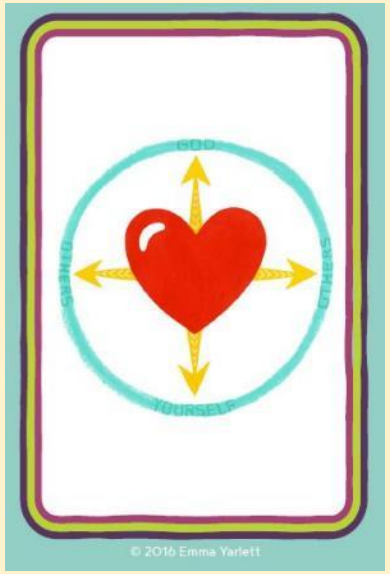
God will show this people how to live in a proper relationship with him. God found a good man named Abraham. He called him and lead him to his 'Promised Land'. He gave Abraham a son, Isaac. God tested Abraham's love for God by challenging him to kill Isaac. Abraham passed this test and God allowed Isaac to live.



Throughout the Old Testament, Abraham's decedents, the Israelites (also known as Jews or Hebrews) keep losing their way and forgetting God. God sends prophets to persuade them to stick with God. God's plan seems to end in failure when the Israelites are exiled far away from their homeland waiting for a 'messiah' - a rescuer to come to save them.



INCARNATION - The New Testament presents Jesus as the answer. He will repair the effects of sin and give humans a way back to God. God has arrived in 'flesh' - incarnation. God, in the form of Jesus has come to live among humans and show them how to live.



GOSPEL - Gospel means ‘good news’. Jesus brings ‘good news’. He tells people that they should love everyone else as much as they love themselves. They should especially love the poor and the weak - this is how people can show that they love God.



SALVATION – Everyone knows that they have sometimes done wrong and deserve to be punished. In ancient times, people would offer a white dove or a baby lamb to God. This is how they would seek forgiveness from God for their sins.

By offering a perfect, white animal - one that had done no wrong - they were asking God to accept its life in place of punishing them. This was called a ‘sacrifice’.

Christians believe that Jesus was God and was without sin.

Only Jesus was good enough to offer his own life in place of humankind’s.



Long ago, God tested Abraham. He challenged Abraham to test his love for Him by offering to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Now God shows His love for humankind by offering His son as a sacrifice. Jesus was a sacrifice to God for the forgiveness of the sins of all humankind.

Through his death and resurrection, Christians believe that sin has been dealt with; sins are forgiven and God's relationship with humans is restored.



KINGDOM OF GOD - This does not mean that no one sins any more! The Bible says that God's 'Kingdom' has begun in human hearts through Jesus.

Jesus describes a vision of life, lived in the way God intended for human beings, in the Lord's Prayer. He says *give us today our daily bread* - he means that everyone should have all their physical needs met. *Forgive us our sins* - everyone should be forgiven their mistakes and in turn should forgive others their mistakes. *Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil* - he means don't let bad things happen to us and help us not to do bad things. God sent the Holy Spirit to empower humans to live this attractive life and follow Jesus' example.