

10-SESSION JOURNEY

THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES



THE STORY

Grasping the Metanarrative
in a Postmodern World

BY JEFF REED



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THE STORYLINE 1

On the Road to Emmaus, when Jesus caught up with two of His disciples and they didn't recognize Him, they were talking about the events that had just happened to Jesus. They clearly didn't understand the significance of what had just happened. He began talking to them about Moses and the Prophets. In doing so, He was reshaping their understanding of the storyline of the Scriptures.

Luke does not give us Jesus' explanation to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, but in the book of Acts, he does choose to include the speeches by Peter, Stephen, and Paul, in which they started with Moses and the Prophets and opened the Scriptures, just as Jesus did. Peter alludes to all parts of the Story in his five sermons in Acts. But it is Stephen's speech to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (53 verses) and Paul's speech in the Jewish synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia on his first missionary journey (26 verses) that give the fullest explanation of the storyline.

In this section, we are going to recreate the storyline based on how the Apostles told the Story, after Jesus opened their minds to an accurate understanding of the Scriptures when He interpreted it for them after His resurrection. Peter's starting point was Genesis 12:1–3, as was Stephen's. Paul quickly moved to David. All gave the essence of the storyline that Jesus gave on the road to Emmaus, as they began with the Law and the Prophets. In this section, we will recreate the storyline as told by Jesus and His disciples.



Study the Scriptures

READ THE PASSAGES: ACTS 3:11–26; 7:1–53; 13:13–41;

Think Through the Questions:

1. Where is the main point of the Story to be found? What are the three parts of the Scriptures? What does each main section include?
2. What are the high points of the Story?
3. In what way are Peter, Stephen, and Paul telling the same story?
4. Why are Peter's, Stephen's, and Paul's stories a good place to begin in recreating the storyline Jesus explained on the road to Emmaus? (See p. 4)

Summarize the Core Teaching of the Passages:

Write a paragraph, outline, annotate, or chart your conclusions—whatever best communicates for you. Summarize the main points of the storyline in a way that will help tell the Story to others.

Core teaching of Acts 3:11–26; 7:1–53; 13:13–41:



Consult the Scholars

The following comments are designed to help you better understand the passage and to stimulate your thinking on the implications of the teaching.

Read and Reflect on this Brief Commentary on Acts 3:11–26; 7:1–53; 13:13–41

Three Apostolic Storylines

Each of the disciples—Peter, Stephen, and Paul—begin at the same point, the promise given to the Jews’ ancestors. They all go back to Genesis 12:1–3.

Peter begins his speech by referring to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and finishes his speech with a quote, Genesis 12:1–3: “And in your descendants all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Stephen begins with the story of Abraham. Embedded in it is the promise given to Abraham and his descendants from Genesis 12:1–3.

While Paul picks up the Story majoring on David, he begins with the fact that God chose the Jews' ancestors, and He made a great nation out of them, as promised, while they were enslaved in Egypt.

The point is they all began the Story in the same place. Stephen gives us a more detailed storyline, so we will review it first. Then we will look at Paul's storyline, since it is extensive also.

Stephen's Storyline (Acts 7:1–53)

Stephen's storyline has 4 movements:

Movement 1: From Abraham to Joseph

Movement 2: From Joseph to Moses

Movement 3: From Moses to David (and Solomon)

Movement 4: From David to the Prophets

Though Stephen does not develop the Prophets, he lumps them into a section that illustrates the nation of Israel rejected the plan God delivered to them through the prophets; they rejected all the prophets God sent them. How does he use the Prophets? He quotes from them twice to illustrate that the nation constantly rejected God's plan. The ultimate rejection was the promised Prophet, whom Moses spoke of, who would bring fulfillment to the promise given to Abraham and his descendants to bless all the families of the earth.

Paul's Storyline (Acts 13:13–41)

Paul's storyline is the same, but with a different emphasis. He quickly passes by the beginning of the Story, just referring to the Jews' ancestors—but they all knew who they were. God chose Israel and promised to make a great nation out of them. He did as He promised. They grew to be a great nation when they were in captivity in Egypt. The people rejected God's plan and didn't enter the land, thus they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Then God gave them judges, and after demanding a king God gave them their first king, Saul. Then God replaced Saul with David who was after God's own heart, willing to follow all of His plan. From David's line came the Savior Jesus. He sent John the Baptist to announce the coming of this promised one.

Then Paul addresses the Jews of the synagogue directly, calling them the descendants of Abraham's family. He states that the leaders of Israel did not understand the very words of the Prophets they read every Sabbath and killed Jesus, but God raised Him up. He then quotes from two Psalms that predicted Jesus would rise from the dead. He ends with a quote from the Prophets warning the Jews of the synagogue not to wind up missing the great thing God is doing now!

The Composite Apostolic Storyline: The Old Testament Walk Through, Part 1

All three men—Peter, Stephen, and Paul—followed the same storyline. They each followed the storyline but selected different warnings and promises that point everything to Jesus, the coming Messiah. That is the pattern we will follow in this study. In this session we will follow the storyline. Then in sessions 3–9 we will do just as the disciples did: dip into parts of the Story with different key passages from the Scriptures for a more in-depth look at how they all point to the Messiah.

We will begin by telling the Story in a way that sets up all the key passages Jesus used to open the minds of the disciples to understand the Scriptures. Hopefully most of you will be able to experience the storyline by the unique way this section is intended to be taught, led by a leader. Ideally it would be done in an informal setting—a living room of a home, outdoors in some oral settings, or some other informal setting. How to teach this session is in an accompanying booklet, *How to Teach the Story*. This method is for both literate and nonliterate learners.

The storyline commentary below would be used by a teacher who is actually conducting a Walk Through of the storyline during the meeting time with those in the study. It lists the main points of the Story for a leader to use to lead the group from point to point. We have italicized and underlined the parts of the Story for participants to memorize and give in response. Both parts of the Review are memorized exactly so the whole group can go through the Story together. If there isn't a teacher to lead the Walk Through, just read the storyline and memorize the underlined responses in the Review sections.¹

Jesus opened the minds of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus because they had missed the point of the big Story. The following is the Story Jesus told to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, as recreated from how His disciples then told the Story to others. It is the heart of the Jewish Scriptures, now called the Old Testament. When Jesus turned to the Scriptures—the Law, the Prophets and the Writings—this is the Story He was interpreting for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as He opened their minds to understand how all of the Story pointed to Him and His kingdom. So here is the storyline in brief—a walk through of the Scriptures—with all the essential main elements of the Story.

The Map of Israel (The Storyline's Geographical Context)

Before we begin walking through the storyline itself, we need to lay out a map of the Old Testament geography so that we can situate the stories and characters in their setting. We will start by establishing North, South, East, and West on our map. Then we will establish the four corners of the map. In the NW corner is the Black Sea, in the NE corner is the Caspian Sea; in the SE corner is the Persian Gulf and in the SW corner is the

country of Egypt. Along the West side of our map we have the Mediterranean Sea. There are two major rivers on our map. (Refer to the map at the back of the booklet.) The first is the Euphrates River which flows NW. Alongside the Euphrates River flows the Tigris River. A large arc of land from the two rivers toward the Mediterranean Sea is called the Fertile Crescent. The land between the two rivers, at their base, is where most believe the Garden of Eden was located. (Today, this is the area of Iraq where ISIS started; and ISIS controls the two rivers.) The land along the Mediterranean Sea where most of our action will take place is Canaan. A little sea just east of the Mediterranean Sea is the Sea of Galilee, where many Bible stories took place. Out of it flows the Jordan River, which dumps into the Dead Sea, and beyond it is the Red Sea.

Before you start to walk through the storyline, review.

Review:

What direction is this? North
What direction is this? South
And this? East
And this? West
In this corner we have? the Black Sea
In this corner? Caspian Sea
In this corner? Persian Gulf
And in this corner? Egypt
Along the West we have what big sea? the Mediterranean
We have two major rivers: the Euphrates
And next to it? the Tigris
The large arc of land? the Fertile Crescent
The land where most of our storyline takes place? Canaan
The famous sea here in the land? Sea of Galilee
Out of it flows? the Jordan River
Which dumps into what Sea? the Dead Sea
And beyond it is the Red Sea

The Backdrop to the Story: From Creation to Abraham

Our Walk Through starts in Genesis 12, but a lot happens in the first 11 chapters. Genesis 1–11 serves as the backdrop to the Story, and situates it in the larger plan of God to restore man back to Himself. While it is foundational and will be used by John in Revelation to show how God will accomplish restoring creation to His original plan, it serves as an introduction at this time.

The backdrop: God, in eternity past, created the heavens and the earth. This is recorded in Genesis 1 and 2. Then the fall of man occurs in Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve disobey God and eat from the tree of good and evil. Cain murders Abel in Genesis 4.

Evil continues to develop, and God destroys all mankind in the great flood but preserves Noah and his family. They then re-populate the world—all in Genesis 6–8. There are genealogies in Genesis 5 and 10 tracing Adam to Noah to Abraham, which begins the Story of Israel. The first 11 chapters of Genesis serve as background, situating God’s focus on choosing Abraham, who would become the father of the nation of Israel, thus beginning the Story—God’s plan to restore man to Himself and set up His future kingdom through Abraham and his descendants.

The Story Jesus Told

From Abraham to Joseph

Just as with Stephen’s sermon in Acts 7, our storyline begins with Abraham and his family. Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of many nations. He was born in Ur of the Chaldeans so our Walk Through starts in Ur. God tells him to leave Ur to go to a place He will show him. So Abraham leaves Ur with his family: his wife Sarah, his father Terah, and his nephew Lot. Thus our four main characters are Abraham, Sarah, Terah, and Lot. They leave and travel up the Euphrates River, because it is the trade route, until they come to the town of Haran, where they live for 23 years and become very rich. Terah dies at Haran. Then Abraham, Sarah, and Lot go SW to the land of Canaan, and settle there. God promises Abraham three things: land (Israel today), descendants (a great nation will come from his line), and blessing (through Abraham, God will eventually bless all the nations). Abraham has two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac has two sons: Jacob and Esau. Jacob has 12 sons. The second to the youngest is Joseph.

Review

Our Walk Through starts in what town? Ur

Our 4 main characters are? Abraham, Sarah, Terah and Lot

God tells them to leave, so they go up what river? Euphrates

For what reason? It’s a trade route

Until they come to what town? Haran

Where who dies? Terah

They leave Haran and go into what land? Canaan

Where God promises Abraham three things: land, descendants, and blessing

Abraham has two sons: Ishmael and Isaac

Isaac has two sons: Jacob and Esau

Jacob has how many sons? 12

The second to the youngest is? Joseph

From Joseph to Moses

The Story now focuses on Joseph. It is through Joseph that God will begin to fulfill his promise to Abraham and his descendants to make them a great nation. This comes about in an unusual way through the life of Joseph, who is willing to follow God’s unfolding

plan. Joseph is Jacob's favorite son, his second youngest. Jacob bestows on him a coat of many colors. Joseph's older brothers all hate him, so he is sold into slavery in the country of Egypt, in the house of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials who is the captain of the guard. There Joseph rises to become manager over Potiphar's house, but Potiphar's wife tries to seduce him, then lies about him, and Joseph winds up in prison. Joseph rises to the top in prison, where he is put in charge of all the prisoners. He eventually interprets Pharaoh's dream of a coming famine and is put in charge of Pharaoh's house. He literally becomes second in command to Pharaoh. Because there is famine in the land of Canaan also, through a number of circumstances, Joseph brings his family down to Egypt, sparing them of the famine. There they grow in numbers. Jacob blesses his sons and dies. The key to Joseph's success is summed up in some of his closing words to his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." Through Joseph God preserves Abraham's lineage and grows Israel into a great nation, 2 1/2 million people. After Joseph dies, a new Pharaoh takes over who does not know Joseph, and he is afraid of the large number of Israelites, so he puts them into slavery. We call this the 400-year Egyptian captivity.

Review

Joseph is favored by his father, hated by his brothers, so he is sold into slavery in the country of: Egypt

In the house of Potiphar

Where he eventually becomes: second in command over all of Egypt

Because of the famine, Joseph brings his family down to Egypt.

There Israel grows into: a great nation. How many people? 2 1/2 million

After Joseph dies, a new Pharaoh takes over, and we have the: 400-year Egyptian captivity

From Moses to Joshua

Toward the end of the 400 years, the people cry out to God for a deliverer. So God raises up a mighty deliverer named Moses. He tells pharaoh "God said, 'Let my people go'!" Pharaoh doesn't listen, so God sends plagues. They worship frogs so God gives them frogs! They worship the river so God turns the river into blood. All the plagues are related to their gods. God brings about the plagues for three reasons: to convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, to convince Israel to follow Moses, and to put down the Egyptian gods. Moses leads the nation of Israel out of Egypt. Then after parting the Red Sea, Moses leads them south to Mt. Sinai, where God gives them the Law. At Mt. Sinai, Israel formally becomes a nation. God gives them the Law, which essentially becomes their constitution. The Law has three divisions: civil, ceremonial, and moral. The moral laws are called the 10 commandments, which are actually the first principles of the whole Law. There are 613 laws all together! God forms the entire law into a covenant with Israel: if they obey, they will be blessed; if they disobey, they will be cursed. In a way, this forms the rest of the history of Israel, until the coming of Christ. They say they will obey! So Moses leads them just south of the land promised to Abraham, to a town called Kadesh Barnea. They send

12 spies into the land, to see if they can conquer it. When the spies come back, 10 say no because they are afraid and 2 say let's go, God will give us victory. The two are Joshua and Caleb. As a result, they decide not to enter the land, so God sentences them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until everyone over 19 years old dies, everyone except Joshua and Caleb. Then Moses leads them up to the plains of Moab to enter the land a second time. Here he preaches five big sermons, in essence, he gives them the Law a second time, before they go into the land: God promises again, if they obey the Law they will be blessed, and if they disobey they will be cursed. Moses dies and a new leader is raised up—Joshua.

Review

Then God raises up a deliverer: Moses

Pharaoh won't let the Israelites go, so God brings about plagues for 3 reasons: to convince Pharaoh, to convince Israel, and to put down the Egyptian gods.

Moses then leads them out across what sea? Red Sea

They take a right to Mt. Sinai

Where God gives them: the Law

There are three divisions of the Law: civil, ceremonial, and moral

The first principles of the Law are called: the 10 commandments

How many laws are there all together? 613

God makes a covenant with them—obey and be: blessed.

Disobey and be: cursed.

They say they will obey so Moses leads them across the wilderness to what town? Kadesh Barnea

Where they send how many spies into the land? 12

And 10 say no and 2 say go.

The two are: Joshua and Caleb

As a result, what do they do? wander in the wilderness

For how long? 40 years

Until: everyone over 19 dies

Except: Joshua and Caleb

Moses then leads them up to: the plains of Moab

Where he gives them the Law: a second time

Then God raises up a new leader, General: Joshua

From Joshua to the Exile

Joshua then leads them across the Jordan River at flood stage. Right square in their way, in the middle of Canaan, is Jericho, in essence the capital of Canaan. It has two huge walls around it, the inner wall is wide enough you can drive chariots on it. God gives them a strategy, which Joshua obeys: March around the walls each day for six days and on the seventh day, blow your horns and the walls will fall down. Archaeologists have uncovered those very walls today, one falling out and one falling in. We say they have a "smashing success." Next they go 14 miles NW to a much smaller city Ai, but they are

defeated. Why? Because Achan steals some of the treasure and hides it in his tent, against God's command. We say they suffer "Achan de-feat." Once Achan is taken care of, they win victories in the region of Gibeon by separating to the north and the south—an excellent military strategy. Then Joshua takes his soldiers on a Southern campaign, and they take the South totally as God commanded. He then turns north, but only takes the north partially, not fully obeying God. The land is then divided up into 12 parts because of the twelve tribes of Israel—Jacob's 12 sons. Following the division of the land, God raises up judges to rule the land. Some judges are good and the people obey God, some are bad and the people disobey God. Some of the judges are well known: Deborah is the only female judge mentioned; we know Samson because of his great strength; and Gideon is a judge as well as a warrior. The period is characterized by ups and downs; we say it is characterized by anarchy.

The people look around and see that all the other nations have kings so they want a king. God tells them you don't want a king; he will tax you and you will have to serve him. Plus God does not want them to have a king, because He is their King, but the people insist. So God gives them a king. God tells Samuel, who is the last judge and the first prophet, to anoint the first king—Saul. You can read about that in 1 Samuel. After God removes Saul, God has Samuel anoint the second king, David, a man after God's own heart. Read about that in 2 Samuel. God further clarifies the promise He made with Abraham by promising David (in covenant form) that the coming king, who will bring in the kingdom, will come from his line, establishing David's throne forever. So the third king is David's son: Solomon. This is described in 1 Kings. Solomon is the one who will build a temple for God. (David and Solomon wrote the heart of the Writings—the third section of the Jewish Scriptures. David wrote the Psalms, and Solomon wrote the wisdom literature: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.) The fourth king is Solomon's son, Rehoboam. He wants to become richer than his father, so he taxes the people to death, and there is a revolt. As a result, the kingdom splits: Jeroboam, a general, goes to the North and Rehoboam goes to the South; 10 tribes go to the North and 2 go to the South; the 10 in the North are called Israel and the two in the South are called Judah.

Then God raises up prophets to try to shape up Israel and Judah, but no one listens. (The writings of these prophets are in the section of the Prophets in the Jewish Scriptures called the Latter Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—and the Book of the 12 Minor Prophets. The Former Prophets give the history of the kings—1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings.) Because they don't listen, what does God do? Just as He promised in His covenant with them at Mt. Sinai and in the second giving of the Law on the plains of Moab, He brings in the Assyrians from the North to take the Northern tribes captive. The Assyrians are cruel and feared, for ripping apart their prisoners while still alive and displaying piles of human skulls. This is 200 years after the split kingdom, in 722 B.C. The prophets in the South then start prophesying to Judah, but they don't listen. So God brings in the Babylonians to take them captive for 70 years. The Babylonians are educators. They take young men like Daniel and his companions and educate them to serve the king by ruling

over their own people. This captivity is 150 years after the Assyrian captivity. Why 70 years? They didn't let the land lay rest every seventh year as commanded in the Law, which is the plan to deal with the poor and let them start over. Then a new empire takes over the Babylonians—the Medes and Persians (the history is recorded in the book of Daniel). Under the Medes and Persians, God allows Judah to come back into the land in three expeditions. The first is led back by Zerubbabel, and he rebuilds the temple. The second is led back by Ezra, and he rebuilds the hearts of the people. The third is led back by Nehemiah, and he rebuilds the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Then there is a great silent period for 400 years between the Jewish Scriptures and the coming of Jesus the Messiah. The prominent world ruler during this time is Alexander the Great. He is Greek, so the New Testament is written in Greek.

Review

Joshua leads them across what river? the Jordan to the “capital” city: Jericho,
Where they have smashing success.

They go 14 miles NW to a little town: Ai where they suffer: Achan defeat.

After they deal with Achan, they take the South how? Totally

And the North? Partially

Then they divide up the land into how many parts? 12

Who are the prominent rulers during this time? Judges

Who is the female judge? Deborah

Who is the strong judge? Samson

Who is the judge “with all the Bibles”? Gideon

The period is characterized by: anarchy

Then they look around and see all the other nations have kings, so the last judge and
the first prophet, who is also the king anointer: Samuel

Anoints the first king Saul, in the book of 1 Samuel.

The second king is David in the book of 2 Samuel.

God promises David his throne will last forever.

So the third king is Solomon Who is he? David's son; in the book of 1 Kings.

The fourth king is Rehoboam. Who is he? Solomon's son

He wants to become richer than his father, so he taxes the people to death. As a
result, the kingdom splits.

Who goes to the North? Jeroboam

Who goes to the South? Rehoboam

How many tribes go North? 10

How many tribes go South? 2

The North is called? Israel

The South? Judah

Who does God raise up to try to shape up Israel and Judah? prophets No one listens.
So who does God bring in from the North to take Israel captive? The Assyrians
What kind of people are they? Cruel
How many years after the split kingdom? 200 years
The prophets start going in the South, but nobody listens, so who does God bring
in? Babylonians What kind of people are they? Educators
How long are they in captivity? 70 years
Why? They didn't let the land lay rest
How many years is this captivity after the Assyrian captivity? 150 years
Then a new empire takes over. Who are they? the Medes and Persians.
They allow the Jews to come back in 3 expeditions:
The first is led back by Zerubbabel and he rebuilds the temple.
The second is led back by Ezra and he rebuilds their hearts.
The third is led back by Nehemiah and he rebuilds the walls.
How long of a silent period between the completion of the Jewish Scriptures and the
coming of Christ? 400 years
Who is the prominent world ruler during this time? Alexander the Great
He is Greek so the New Testament is written in Greek.

Conclusion

All along as a nation, Israel missed the very purpose and plan God had for them. God wanted to bless all the families of the earth through them. Instead, they twisted the storyline. They completely misinterpreted the narrative of the Jewish Scriptures until Jesus came and shook up the whole law system they had twisted. Jesus had to open the minds of His followers to the accurate understanding of God's plan. In sessions 3–9 we will examine the key Scriptures and reset the Story, so we can accurately understand God's plan for mankind.

Read and Reflect on Key Quotes:

The quote in this session is from Walter Kaiser, who served as Old Testament dean at Trinity Evangelical Seminary and was president of Gordon Theological Seminary. He has been a personal mentor to me for over thirty years. This quote is from his book *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament*. We will also quote Kaiser extensively in upcoming sessions.

“In emphasizing the one unifying promise-plan of God as the theological center of the whole Bible rather than listing many random and scattered predictions (or even the absence of such an organizing mind behind revelation), this biblical theology differs from the task and results of the discipline known as *systematic theology*.

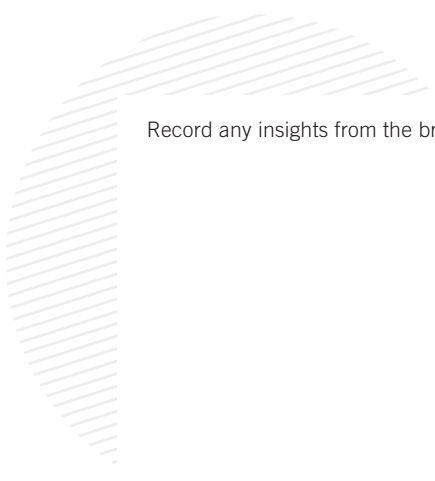
“Systematic theology has traditionally organized its approach around topics and themes such as God, humanity, sin, Christ, salvation, the church, and last things. By contrast, biblical theology has, more often than not, been a discipline in search of a mission

and a structure—often falling into the same topical and structural tracks gone over by systematic theology, even though it severely criticized and stood aloof from systematic theology, claiming it had imposed an external grid (derived from philosophy or the like) on its material.

“Since its inception, biblical theology has had a strong diachronic strain that insists on tracing the historic development of doctrine as it appeared chronologically in the history of Israel and the church. Thus, while it had to be scriptural in *form* and *method* as well as in substance, it had to present itself in the order that God disclosed his revelation over the centuries or decades. It was to be a biblical theology, not a compilation of biblical *theologies* (on the alternative assumption that there was no unity or center to the canon). The use of the singular noun in biblical theology implied that there was an organizing center that could be discovered—that the whole canon expressed the unity of the one mind and unified purpose of God. This unity had to be uncovered before exploring the plan and purpose of God as revealed in the individual books and sections of Scripture.

“The best proposal for such a unity is to be found exactly where Scripture itself pointed in its repeated references. I believe that the most suitable candidate for the unity or center of God’s disclosure is to be found in the ‘promise-plan’ of God as revealed in repeated references throughout Scripture. The promise form of biblical theology focuses on one all-embracing divine word of promise rather than on its many scattered predictions (which is what most think of when they hear the word ‘promise’), and it traces the growth of that declaration of God in the large teaching passages in each era of divine revelation. Usually in dogmatic or systematic theology, the texts used to support the doctrine discussed are scattered verses (rather than large ‘chair,’ or teaching chapters or pericopes) distributed over the length and breadth of the whole Bible.

“Whereas systematic theology generally separates prediction from promise, omitting references to the threatening aspect of the promise and the judgments of God as well as the historic *means* that God used to keep his word alive and ultimately to bring his word to pass, biblical theology insists on keeping both the threatening aspects and the predictions of hope together as alternative parts of the same promise-plan. It also traces the intermediate historic means, or links by which that word was maintained in partial fulfillments until the final and complete fulfillment came in Christ. Thus the promise was not simply a predictive word that remained inert and in word form only until it was finally fulfilled in its end point; it was a word that was maintained over the centuries in a continuing series of historic fulfillments that acted as earnest, or down payments on that word that still pointed to the last or final fulfillment.”²



Record any insights from the brief commentary and quotes.



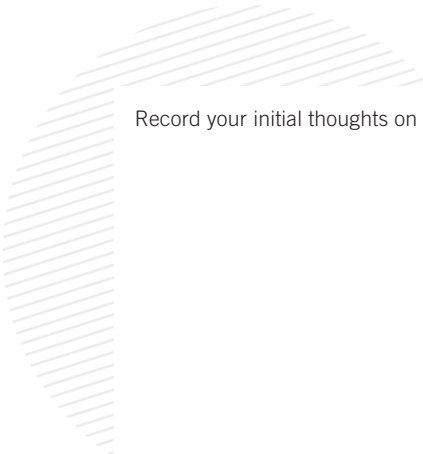
Think Through the Issues

The nation of Israel completely and consistently rejected the unfolding plan of God and twisted the storyline. They missed the point of the Story.

ISSUE: Jesus' storyline—opening the minds of His followers

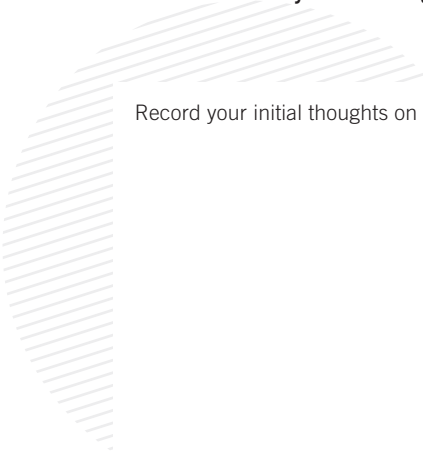
Think Through the Issue Before Discussion:

1. Even though they were God's chosen people, why do you think the nation of Israel missed the main point of the Story?
2. According to Jesus, what is the main point they missed?
3. What exactly did He explain to them?
4. Even though many of us know parts of the Story of Jesus, even those in other religions know them, why do you think we do not know the essence of the storyline today?



Record your initial thoughts on the issue before discussion.

Discuss the issue in your small group.



Record your initial thoughts on the issue after discussion.



Apply the Principles

It is now time to respond to what you have studied and discussed. Take your time on this section.

Think Back Through the First Three Steps.

Design an Application for Your Life.

Whether we believe in Jesus or not or are a Christian or even if we are from another religion, we still need to understand this Story, since it is the storyline for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the only three world religions that combine history (the immanent) with the transcendent. (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, for example, recognize the spiritual but reject the “this world” historical realities.) After going through this session, summarize the essence of the big Story.