

What is the Bible About?

There are many answers a Christian might give upon being asked the question—“What is the Bible About?” Some might answer, with good reason, that it is about God’s plan for redeeming man. Others might answer that it is about the Messiah, the Christ—and they would be correct. Still others might say that it is all about God’s love for man. That, too, would be a good answer.

When asked the same question, those who may not be Christians, but claim to be somewhat religious, might have good answers, too. One common answer given is that the Bible is about how to live a good life. Another similar answer is that the Bible helps people get through the rough times in life. These are valid points. The Bible does do that.

Of course, there are those of the world who reject God and the Bible, but that is another subject. These people, generally, don’t concern themselves with the Bible’s subject matter. This is a sad thing on many levels. One irony is that the very subject of the Bible shows God’s love for all of mankind. Indeed, when one examines the Bible from front to back, what the Bible is about becomes apparent. It is about the wonderful desire of the mighty creator to have a relationship with the pinnacle of His creation—man. This powerful subject incorporates all of the above mentioned answers given by Christians and non-Christians alike.

Dwelling with Men: God at Creation

God created man in His own image (**Genesis 1:27**). Nothing else in His creation holds the place He reserved for man. God places man as supreme over all else that has been made (**Genesis 1:28**). God even created a special place for man to begin his life with God—a place toward the east in Eden (**Genesis 2:8**). God provided everything that man needed and God walked with him there and talked with him there. This is what man needs and God desires—man and God dwelling together in harmony. However, man sinned and was cast out to no longer dwell in Eden with God: *“So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life”* (**Genesis 3:24**). As seen in man’s story following, God did not forget man or neglect to inform man of His will. God even gave Cain specific words to encourage him to overcome sin, but Cain did not heed God’s warning. Cain would no longer be in the presence of God. *“Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden”* (**Genesis 4:16**).

Dwelling with Men: God Among His Nation

God’s desire for man to be able to dwell with Him cannot be overcome. He has had a plan for accomplishing this since before the foundation of the world (**Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20**). God’s plan continued to move forward through the days of men like Noah and Abraham who walked with Him. God made a promise to Abraham that his family would become a great nation, but that the people would be enslaved in Egypt (**Genesis 15:13**). One of the very reasons for this was that God was setting this people apart as a nation for His own and He would declare them to be His by bringing them out of Egypt: *“Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians”* (**Exodus 6:7**).

When giving these people a law, God also gave them instructions for something else—a place set apart for Him. *“Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them”* (**Exodus 25:8**). This had been God’s intention all along: *“I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. They shall know that I am the LORD their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the LORD their God”* (**Exodus 29:45-46**). Our common word for this structure is “tabernacle.” This word does not mean “tent” as many suppose, but is a word that simply means, “dwelling place.” This was God’s place among the people until the days of king Solomon, who built a more fixed structure according to God’s wishes. This Temple was God’s place among His people. However, once again, man severed that relationship. Israel was taken away because of sin, and the presence of God left the Temple (**Ezekiel 10:18**).

Dwelling with Men: God on Earth

God’s plan still moves forward. God’s desire is still the same—man and God dwelling together. For this to happen, since sin and God are not compatible, God took a most amazing and wonderful step—God came to earth to dwell with men in a physical way. *“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’ For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ”* (**John 1:14-17**). Most men rejected the Christ: *“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him”* (**John 1:11**), but there are some who do accept Him and they are the people that are His. *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”* (**John 1:12-13**).

Those who are His, obey His commandments (**1John 5:1-5**). It is by His blood that was shed that men can be freed from the burden of sin and be in the relationship that God desires (**Ephesians 1; 1John 1**). Those who have put on the likeness of Jesus’ death in baptism are the ones who walk in a new life (**Romans 6:1-4**). Those who have been baptized have put on Christ (**Galatians 3:26-29**).

Dwelling with Men: God Among His People

Those that are in Christ are in His church. His church is made of all individuals of every place and time who have followed His instructions and availed themselves of His blood that was shed. They now are His saints (the ones set apart). They are His people (**1Peter 2:9**). God dwells with them (**2Corinthians 6:16**). Not only does God dwell among His people, He dwells in His people (**Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 3:16; James 4:5**).

Dwelling with Men: With God Eternally

Through His saints, God has made His great desire to be so. Additionally, He has promised that those who are His when time is at an end, will have the benefit of dwelling with God eternally. *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne,*

saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.' And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' And He said, 'Write, for these words are faithful and true.' Then He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son'" (**Revelation 21:1-7**).

—S. Scott Richardson Sr.