



THE VERY GOOD NEWS STORYBOOK BIBLE

Jimmy Scroggins
and Zack Rickards

Illustrated by Mariano Epelbaum



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FROM JIMMY—

To my wife, Kristin. Your grace, elegance, and wisdom never cease to amaze me. Your husband, your children, and your grandchildren all rise up and call you blessed.

And to our grandchildren—James, Wyatt, Willow Kate, and Haven Hope (plus all the others yet to be born). All of you are wanted and loved so much. May you learn to love Jesus with all of your hearts.

FROM ZACK—

To my mom and dad. Thank you for always pointing me to Jesus.

To my wife, Amber. There's no one else I'd rather do life with and share laughs with than you. Thank you for your constant encouragement and unwavering support as we point our three blessings to Jesus.

And finally, to my kids. Ruthie, Crusen, and Corbett. Daddy loves you, but more importantly, God loves you more! That's the very good news.

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INTRODUCTION

Did you know the Bible is one *big* story about the one true God? It is made up of hundreds of stories about hundreds of people and God's love for them. There's a big word for this: *metanarrative*, which basically means a bunch of little stories that make up one *big* story. The big story? That's God's big Plan!

The coolest fact about Bible stories is that they are true! These little stories all have a pattern that matches the same pattern in the BIG story. The Bible tells the story about God's Plan for the way things should be. The Bible also tells the story of the Fall, which is how sin entered the world. Sin breaks God's design and leads people into brokenness. But that's not the whole story. The Bible also tells us about the only way to fix the brokenness—the gospel. It tells us how to get back to God's Plan again! This pattern shows up over and over in the stories of the Bible. One way to explain this pattern is a tool called the 3 Circles.

The picture below is what it looks like.

This pattern is in the little stories and the big story. It all starts with God's Plan. **IN THE PLAN, EVERYTHING IS PERFECT.** Brothers and sisters don't argue. Parents love each other forever. Grandparents don't die. There are no wars or fighting anywhere in the world. Everyone gets along and is happy. This sounds awesome, right? It is! But something goes wrong. It's called sin.



Sin is anything we do that is not in God's Plan. We make a choice we think is better than what God says is best. Everyone sins. You sin. **AND WHEN WE SIN, WE LEAVE GOD'S PLAN AND END UP IN BROKENNESS (THE FALL).**

Brokenness is no fun and makes you feel bad inside. But brokenness isn't the main problem. The main problem is sin. Sin is a huge problem because when we sin, we break God's law. When people break the law in our town, the judge at the courthouse declares them guilty. And then the judge makes them pay a penalty, maybe a fine or time in jail. God is a loving Father, but He is also a righteous judge. When we break God's law, He declares us guilty and will make us pay a penalty like death and separation from God forever. Like we said, sin is a huge problem.

Well, nobody likes living in brokenness, so we all try to fix it. Sometimes we try to get out of brokenness with good things, like friends and family. Other times we try to get out of brokenness with bad things, like lying or hiding. Brokenness feels bad. But God uses brokenness for our good. When we feel brokenness in our lives, it makes us want to change. Brokenness helps us see our sins and makes us want to get back to God's Plan.

Sadly, no matter how hard we try, we can't fix our own brokenness, and we can't forgive our own sins. Don't worry, though; there is good news! God loves us, and He created a way for us to get out of brokenness. God made a way that our sins can be forgiven forever—the gospel. **THE GOSPEL IS THE VERY GOOD NEWS THAT JESUS CAME TO EARTH AND LIVED A PERFECT LIFE.** Jesus never sinned, not even once. He died on the cross for the sins of everyone who believes in Him, and He paid the penalty to the judge for us. Then God raised Jesus from the dead.

We can get out of brokenness when we repent and believe the gospel. *Repent* is a Bible word that means to turn around. *Believe* means to rely on Jesus as the one way to escape brokenness. When we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus, God forgives our sins. God welcomes us into His family, accepts us, and loves us forever. Once we repent and believe, we can start to recover (get back) and pursue (chase after) God's Plan again!

This is the BIG story of the Bible, and you can see this pattern repeated in all the little stories that make up the Bible, including the stories in this book you're holding! Once you learn to see this pattern in the Bible, you can use the 3 Circles to talk to your friends about God's Very Good News!

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THE FIRST STORY EVER

GENESIS 1–3

THE PLAN

The best place to start is the beginning! In the beginning there was nothing. Well, nothing but God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Since there was nothing but Him in the beginning, we know that God created everything. **GOD HAD AN AWESOME PLAN FOR THE WORLD.** He planned the light and the darkness and called them day and night. He separated the waters, creating heaven and earth. He gathered the water together and allowed the land to appear. It was all planned very carefully and with a specific purpose.

Next God planned every plant, from the giant sequoia tree down to the tiniest grain of rice. He designed all the beautiful, sweet-smelling flowers and the delicious fruit trees. Even the vegetables like brussels sprouts and lima beans were part of His Plan. He didn't just design the earth, He planned the sun, moon, stars, and planets in outer space too.



God planned and designed and created every sea creature in the oceans deep, from the octopus with its eight legs to the seahorse with its curly tail. He created every bird in the sky, from the soaring falcon to the zipping hummingbird. And He went on to plan every animal, those that growl, roar, squeak, hiss, and bark. He created all the bugs you've ever seen plus the ones you've never seen. And then, after all this work, God planned His most wonderful and special creation: people! God made people in His own image, to look, act, and love like Him. The first person God created was a man He called *Adam*.

Adam lived in the beautiful garden called Eden, and he and God walked together and talked together. Everything was exactly the way God had planned it to be. And God made sure Adam had plenty to eat. Oranges. Apples. Nuts. Berries. Bananas. Potatoes. Carrots. Mangoes. Adam was allowed to eat anything from any tree or plant in the garden. Except for one tree. Adam was not allowed to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God gave Adam this one command to make sure everything stayed good—the way God had planned it.



God also planned for Adam to work. His job was to name every single animal, and he couldn't just call them all "monkey." Adam noticed every animal had a partner. There were boys and girls—males and females—of every kind. But Adam didn't have a female partner. So God put him into a deep sleep and, while Adam was sleeping, took out one of his ribs. From Adam's rib God designed and created a woman. The woman would be Adam's perfect partner. Adam gave her the name *Eve*. God made Adam and Eve to be married to each other, to love each other and take care of one another. They were partners in taking care of God's beautiful garden. God wanted them to have children, who would have children, who would have children, so that the earth would be filled with people. Everything was just as God planned it to be.

But one day the tricky serpent, who was Satan, spoke to Eve. He told her God was hiding something . . . that if she and Adam ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they could be as wise as God. Eve might have thought that if she and Adam ate the fruit, maybe they could be wise "planet planners" like God! And the fruit probably did look tasty. So Eve bit into the fruit and then gave it to Adam, who ate some too.

At this moment, something terrible had happened. **ADAM AND EVE HAD SINNED. THEY HAD DEPARTED FROM GOD'S PERFECT PLAN.**

Suddenly, they realized they were naked and tried to cover themselves. They felt scared. Those scary feelings Adam and Eve had?

That was them feeling brokenness for the first time. This very first sin is called "the Fall." We call it the Fall because it's like Adam and Eve fell down from God's Plan and hurt themselves. God knew what Adam and Eve had done, and He already had a way to forgive their sin and fix their hurt and brokenness. One day God would send Jesus, and Jesus would make everything good again. But for now, Adam and Eve were in trouble.





Like a loving Father, God came to find Adam and Eve. They were naked. They were scared. That brokenness made them feel *bad*. They heard God coming, but instead of walking with Him in the light of the beautiful garden, they hid. When God called out and asked if they had eaten the one fruit He had told them not to eat, Adam immediately blamed Eve. Then Eve immediately blamed the serpent.

God cursed the serpent because Satan was trying to mess up God's Plan. God told the serpent that a man—a descendant of Adam and Eve—would one day come and crush his head. He told Adam and Eve that their lives would be hard. He sent them out of the garden of Eden forever. They had to start over.

But God still loved Adam and Eve, and He didn't give up on them. God made clothes for them out of animal skins and helped them start their new life outside of the garden. God knew this would not be the last time His Plan would be broken because of sin. Adam and Eve had tried to fix the brokenness in their own way. But their way didn't work. They tried to hide and



cover themselves. They tried blaming someone else. But they couldn't fix the brokenness, and they couldn't forgive their own sin. Only God, the Planet Planner, could do that. And He would! One day God would send His Son, Jesus, to crush the serpent's head. **JESUS WOULD FIX THE BROKENNESS IN THE WORLD ONCE AND FOR ALL.** And *that* is God's amazing good news.



Generation after generation of Adam and Eve's descendants looked forward to that day when Jesus would come. But until then, God would keep providing chances for His people to recover and pursue His Plan. People would keep sinning. But they would keep repenting. They would keep recovering. God's Plan is really big. The Fall was really bad. But the good news is really, really good.



LOOK AROUND.
WHERE DO YOU SEE
GOD'S PERFECT
PLAN IN CREATION?

A ZOO ON a BOAT

GENESIS 6–9

After Adam and Eve got kicked out of the garden, things were bad—*really* bad. They did have kids who had kids who had kids. The earth was filled with people, but that's not the bad part. The bad part was that everything the people thought, imagined, and did was totally evil. People had forgotten God's awesome Plan for the world. And all those evil thoughts and actions created all kinds of brokenness.

God was very sad about the brokenness in the world and sorry He had ever made people. He decided to wash the earth clean, using water to wipe every living thing—person, animal, bird—off the face of the earth. But

THE
PLAN

ONE MAN LOVED GOD AND WANTED TO FOLLOW HIS AWESOME PLAN:

Noah. When God looked at Noah, Noah's faith moved the heart of God.

God spoke to Noah and told him about His decision to wash the earth clean with a flood. The flood would cover the entire world and destroy everything, including all the animals and all the people. The flood was going to be the end of all the sinning, evil, and brokenness in the world.



The flood sounded like bad news to Noah, but the good news was that God would use Noah and his family to start over. And God had a very important job for Noah. He was to build a boat. Well, not really a boat, but an ark. Noah had never seen an ark, so God's Plan must have sounded crazy at first. God wanted to save Noah's family; they just needed to trust God and build the ark.

Noah was a farmer, not a boat builder. Plus, he didn't live near any water, so he had never needed a boat before. But he trusted God. God gave Noah instructions to build an ark big enough to hold Noah's family, at least two of every kind of animal, and all their food. The ark would be huge, but it would still float!



Noah was more than five hundred years old when he started building. The people around him might have wondered what he was doing.

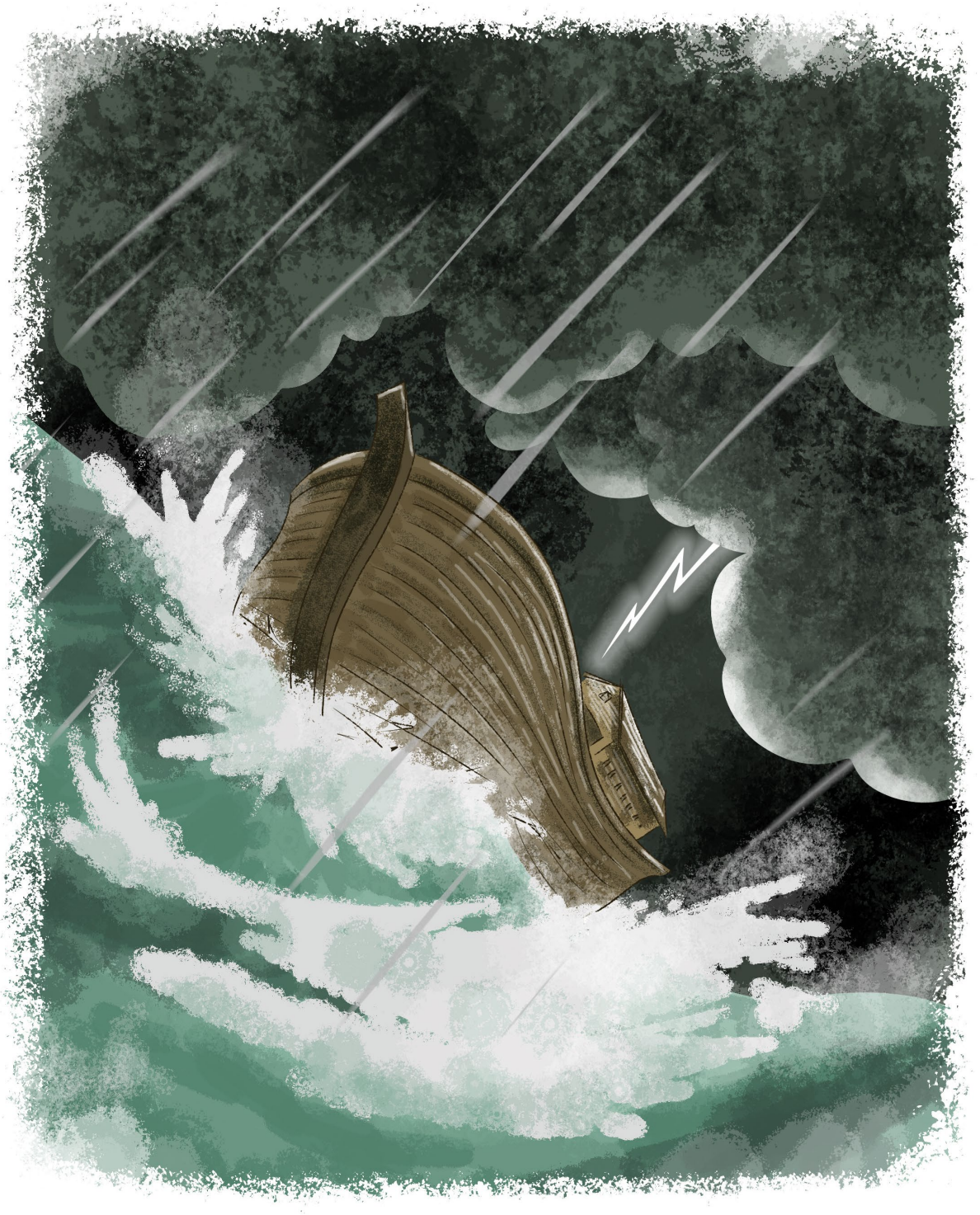
THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR SIN AND BROKENNESS. They continued to do whatever they wanted, hiding from the pain they felt and the pain they caused. Little did they know that God was providing a way out for Noah and his family—a fresh start to recover and pursue God’s original, awesome Plan.



Day after day Noah worked. He stayed faithful to God and continued to build the ark . . . for nearly one hundred years! Finally the ark was finished, and it was time for the flood. God brought at least two of every animal, bird, and creeping creature to Noah, and the ark-boarding began! When Noah, his wife, their three sons, their wives, all the animals, and all the food was in the ark, God shut the door.

Then it happened. *Drip. Drip drop.* Noah and his family could hear the raindrops hitting the roof. The drops quickly turned into a storm of rain pounding on the ark. It rained and rained and rained. Then they felt it. The ark broke free from the ground and began to float. It rained for forty days and forty nights with no breaks. But then one day the rain stopped. The ark was floating alone on a world that was completely covered with water. It floated for a very, very long time.

While they floated, Noah and his family must have thought about what had happened outside the ark. Every bug and animal not on the ark? Dead. All the birds who had nowhere to land? Dead. And saddest of all, the people were dead too. They were punished for their sins. God provided a way out for Noah and his family because they believed God and got on the ark.



After many months in the ark, Noah sent out a dove to see if the waters had dried up. The dove went and came back. After a few tries, the dove didn't return. She had found dry ground! Then one day Noah looked out to see land! God told Noah and his family to get off the ark. They released the animals to fill the earth once again and return to the way God had planned for life to be in the beginning.

Noah built an altar and worshiped the Lord. God promised never to flood the entire earth or curse the ground again. To remind His people of this promise, God placed a beautiful rainbow in the sky. Every time God's people saw the rainbow, they would remember God's promise to them. God told Noah and his family the same thing He had told Adam and Eve—have children and fill the world with people.

This was all good news. But God knew it wasn't the final solution. Noah and his family would sin. People would hurt and kill each other again. People would forget about God's awesome Plan for them.

NOAH'S FAMILY GOT A NEW START, A CHANCE TO RECOVER AND PURSUE GOD'S PLAN, but there was still a promise to be fulfilled. There was still a Son who would one day come.



When God rescued Noah and his family, He gave us a picture of how He would one day rescue all kinds of people by sending His Son. Just like Noah and his family were rescued from the flood, God would rescue people from their sins by sending Jesus. And that's the Very Good News!

WHAT DO YOU
THINK NOAH SAID WHEN HE
HEARD THE GOOD NEWS THAT
HE AND HIS FAMILY COULD BE
RESCUED FROM
THE FLOOD?



ARE YOU READY TO HEAR THE

VERY GOOD NEWS?



The Bible has hundreds of stories—from exciting to tragic, strange to amazing. But they all tell one big story, a three-part story about God's Plan for the way He designed things to be, how sin caused the Fall, and how Jesus fixes the brokenness.

Author Jimmy Scroggins developed the **3 Circles** method as a simple way for people of all ages to understand and share the gospel. In this unique Bible storybook, readers ages 6 to 10 can discover the method's repeating pattern—God's Plan, our Fall, and the Very Good News of Jesus—throughout the Bible. They'll better understand God's unending love for us and how to share it with others.

With engaging illustrations and thoughtful follow-up questions, this collection of twenty stories shows readers that throughout the Bible and throughout their lives, Jesus is there, healing the brokenness. And that is Very Good News!



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