

Similar / Parallel Stories in the Bible

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The Bible is filled with many stories – in both the Old and New Testaments.

- Some of these stories give us historical accounts.
- Some of these stories teach us about God and Jesus.
- Some of these stories are intended to be applied to our lives.
- Some of these stories have similar themes.

In this class, we will look at some of these similar stories.

- We will not find any hidden secrets or anything like that.
- The best we can do is to gain a little more insight and appreciation for God's Word.
- This is not a bad thing !!

Stories with repeated themes may be significant

- If God repeats something, he wants us to pay attention.
- From one story, we can maybe gain more appreciation for it's parallel story.
- We have to be careful not to read anything into the "parallel" stories.
- Each story can stand on it's own

We want your input – can you find some parallel or similar stories in the Bible ?

- Think about it over the next week.
- At the start of class next week, we will take a few minutes to gather your thoughts.
- This will help determine the topics we will cover in the coming weeks.

Possible topics for the quarter:

<i>Something Good Happens (this week)</i>	<i>Trials</i>
<i>Sacrifices</i>	<i>Turnarounds</i>
<i>Transitions</i>	<i>Taking Life – Killing innocent man</i>
<i>Healing the sick</i>	<i>Tests</i>
<i>Name changes</i>	

Parallel Theme: Something Good Happens

We start with a bad situation ...
Follow with a period of waiting ...
God touches the situation ...
Something good happens !!

Note that the entire Bible is filled with many more stories of good things happening !!

Passage 1 – Noah's Ark

Genesis 6 (Wickedness of world), Genesis 7-8 (Ark), Genesis 9 (Covenant with Noah)

Bad situation: Earth was corrupt except for Noah and his family. Genesis 6:6 says that the Lord regrets putting humans on the earth.
Period of waiting: 40 days and 40 nights of flood. Water flooded the earth for 150 days.
God touches: God sent a wind (spirit) over the earth. Waters recede.
Something good: Earth has been cleansed. Noah built an altar to the Lord. God's covenant with Noah.

Note: The Lord had Noah prepare for the flood.

Passage 2 – Egyptian Captivity

Genesis 47:11 (Israelites in Egypt), Exodus 3 (Burning Bush)

Exodus 7-11 (plagues), Exodus 14:13-31 (parting of the sea)

Bad situation: Israelites oppressed in Egypt.
Period of waiting: Israelites captive for 430 years. This starts with Jacob's arrival in Egypt.
God touches: God sends the plagues. Parting of the sea.
Something good: Moses and all Israelites sang praises to the Lord. Israel was free.

Note: Somewhat of a double parallel – due to Israelites being led in the desert for 40 years after escape from Egypt.

Passage 3 – Jonah and the Fish

Jonah 1-2

Bad situation: Wicked people of Ninevah, Jonah flees from the Lord
Period of waiting: 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the fish. Jonah prays.
God touches: God commands fish to release Jonah.
Something good: Jonah obeys the Lord and goes to Ninevah. The people of Ninevah believed God and were not destroyed.

Note: The Lord provided the huge fish to swallow Jonah.

Passage 4 – Temptation of Christ in the Desert

Matt 3:16 – 4:11, Mark 1:9-13, Luke 4:1-13

Bad situation: No bad situation – Jesus was just baptized by John the Baptist !
Period of waiting: Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights. The devil tempts Jesus.
God touches: The devil leaves Jesus and angels attend to Him.
Something good: Jesus begins to preach.

Note: The scripture doesn't mention prayer by Jesus during this time. Was he totally alone with the devil – separated from God ? Or was he totally with God at this time ?

Passage 5 – Saul's Conversion

Acts 9:1-19

Bad situation: Saul was actively persecuting God.
Period of waiting: Saul was blinded for 3 days and did not eat or drink. Saul was praying.
God touches: God restores Saul's sight using Ananias. Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit.
Something good: Saul was baptized. Saul becomes even more active in spreading the Word of God.

Side note: Saul's baptism was first – then he took food even after 3 days of hunger.

Passage 6 – Death and Resurrection of Christ

Matt 27:32-28:10, Mark 15:21-16:20, Luke 24:45-53, John 19:16-20:31, Acts 1:1-11

Bad situation: Jesus was put to death on the cross.
Period of waiting: In the tomb for 3 days.
God touches: Jesus was raised from the dead !
Something good: Jesus ascends into Heaven !

Other Passages

Battle of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-27), David & Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

Discussion & topics for thought:

- Sometimes God touches one, sometimes many. God pays attention to each and every one of us - and uses us to His glory.
- Why the period of wait ?
 - Sometimes time is needed for things to "sink in".
 - Prayer during the period of wait.
- When God touches the situation, we are most impressed with the physical – but should be more impressed with the non-physical.
- Something good always happens when God is involved !

Parallel Theme: Desert Walks

There are a number of instances where people spend time in the desert ...

In these cases, God uses the desert to transform ...

Passage 1 – Moses / Israel

Moses leads Israel into desert (Exodus 16)

- God provided for them in the desert.
- God wanted them to take only what was needed for that day. God was testing the Israelites.
- God provided for them for 40 years. The reason they lived was that God was with them. This makes us realize our dependence on God.

Wanderings in the desert (Deut. 2)

Moses never entered the promised land (Deut. 32:51-52)

- Because of broken faith
- Similar to all of us – we don't enter Heaven if we have broken faith.

Israelites were "cleansed" in the desert for 40 years – all men of military age were dead (Joshua 5:6)

Passage 2 – Saul's pursuit of David in the Desert

- The desert was used as a hiding place by David: 1 Samuel 23:14, 1 Samuel 23:21-29

Passage 3 – John the Baptist

- Raised in the desert: Luke 1:80
- Matthew 3:1-12, Mark 1:1-8

Passage 4 – Jesus

- Temptation of Christ by the devil: Matt 3:16 – 4:11, Mark 1:9-13, Luke 4:1-13
- Lonely places: Luke 5:16

Passage 5 – Saul / Paul

- Saul's conversion in the desert: Acts 9:1-19

Desert Walk Discussion

What led up to the various times in the desert ?

What is common between the time spent in the desert ?

What was the common result of the desert times ?

Desert:

- A desert is a place of extremes – heat / cold.
- Survival is difficult in the desert.
- Spending time in a desert can break us physically.
- Time in the "desert" also includes a period of isolation.

In Larry's 4/3/11 lesson, he talked about "Cave Training" – very similar to our desert discussions

- Shows us the need for prayer.
- We need to uproot our self-sufficient and independent spirit. We must learn to depend on God.
- Teaches us to find comfort in God's plans.
- God knows, God cares, God works it for good.
- Helps us to see the value of what we have and the need to be grateful.
- Don't complain about the caves – thank God for them !

Other "desert times":

- Jonah
- Job
- Joseph (the pit/the servant/the prison/etc)
- Daniel (the Lion's Den)
- Several of the prophets

Application to our lives:

- In the context of these discussions, a desert can be any place/state in which we are forced to learn something.
- Faith is tested – once we are broken, we can come out of it stronger spiritually.
- When God leads us into the "desert", He is allowing us to learn something about ourselves.
- In addition to the literal desert times mentioned in the Bible, what are some figurative "desert times" in our lives ?

Parallel Theme: Sacrifice

The Bible mentions sacrifice a number of times.

Passage 1 – First offering – Cain and Abel

Gen 4:3-7

- First example of an offering.
- God accepted Abel's offering, but did not accept Cain's offering.

Passage 2 – Noah coming off the ark

Gen 8:15-22

- First mention of sacrifice in scripture.
- Used clean/pure animals and birds.
- Sacrifice is a form of thanks.

Passage 3 – Abraham & Isaac

Gen 22:1-18

- Sacrifice as a form of obedience.
- Looking ahead, God did not withhold us from His Son.
- Blessings come after sacrifice.

Passage 4 – Pharaoh / Egypt

(a) Exodus 10:24-26, (b) Exodus 12:24-28, (c) Exodus 13:11-16

- (a) Moses asking Pharaoh to allow Israelites to sacrifice.
- (b) Passover sacrifice.
 - Obedience.
- (c) Sacrifice as form of ceremony.
 - Sacrifice firstborn.
 - Redeem firstborn sons - deliver from sin.

Passage 5 – Firstborn animals

Deuteronomy 15:19-23

- No defected animals to be sacrificed.
- Cannot eat the blood - must pour it out on the ground like water.

Passage 6 – Jesus

(a) Romans 3:25, (b) Hebrews 7:26-28, (c) Hebrews 9:23-28

- (a) God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement.
- (b) Permanent sacrifice.
- (c) Christ was sacrificed once.

Passage 7 – Ourselves

Romans 12:1

- We are to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Passage 8 – Widow's mite

Mark 12:41-44

- Widow made offering of a small amount – but it was all she had.

Sacrifice - Discussion & topics for thought:

Definitions – from dictionary.com

Sacrifice

1. the offering of animal, plant, or human life or of some material possession to a deity, as in propitiation or homage.
2. the person, animal, or thing so offered.
3. the surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher or more pressing claim.
4. the thing so surrendered or devoted.
5. a loss incurred in selling something below its value.
6. Also called sacrifice bunt, sacrifice hit. Baseball. a bunt made when there are fewer than two players out, not resulting in a double play, that advances the base runner nearest home without an error being committed if there is an attempt to put the runner out, and that results in either the batter's being put out at first base, reaching first on an error made in the attempt for the put-out, or being safe because of an attempt to put out another runner.
7. to make a sacrifice or offering of.
8. to surrender or give up, or permit injury or disadvantage to, for the sake of something else.
9. to dispose of (goods, property, etc.) regardless of profit.
10. Baseball. to cause the advance of (a base runner) by a sacrifice.
11. Baseball. to make a sacrifice: He sacrificed with two on and none out.
12. to offer or make a sacrifice.

Redeem

1. to buy or pay off; clear by payment: to redeem a mortgage.
2. to buy back, as after a tax sale or a mortgage foreclosure.
3. to recover (something pledged or mortgaged) by payment or other satisfaction: to redeem a pawned watch.
4. to exchange (bonds, trading stamps, etc.) for money or goods.
5. to convert (paper money) into specie.
6. to discharge or fulfill (a pledge, promise, etc.).
7. to make up for; make amends for; offset (some fault, shortcoming, etc.): His bravery redeemed his youthful idleness.
8. to obtain the release or restoration of, as from captivity, by paying a ransom.
9. Theology. to deliver from sin and its consequences by means of a sacrifice offered for the sinner.

Atonement

1. satisfaction or reparation for a wrong or injury; amends.
2. (sometimes initial capital letter) Theology. the doctrine concerning the reconciliation of god and humankind, especially as accomplished through the life, suffering, and death of Christ.

Discussion

- Sacrifice mentioned 357 times in Scripture (via simple search on BibleGateway)
- Old saying: In the task of making breakfast, the chicken makes a contribution while the pig makes a sacrifice.
- A sacrifice is an offer - to be accepted or not accepted. The Lord accepts sacrifices when given in the right spirit. Do we accept Christ's sacrifice in the right spirit?
- Sacrifice - is a commitment. It involves death - meaning it's a one-way/non-returnable type thing. Jesus was sacrificed and died a physical death - but was ultimately raised. This was different from a "normal" sacrifice.
- What is the difference between an offering and a sacrifice?

Parallel Theme: Light

The Bible mentions light a number of times.

First Light

Gen 1:1-5

God created light.
Light was good.
Light is separated from darkness.

More Light

Gen 1:14-19

Light to fill the sky.
Two great lights - for day and night.
Even at night, there is light.
God liked the separation of light and darkness.

Light in the wilderness

Exodus 13: 17-22, Exodus 14:19-20

Pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.
God was always leading the way.
Pillars of cloud/fire never left the people of Israel.
Pillar of cloud brought darkness to one side and light to the other.
Separated armies of Egypt and Israel.

Transfiguration

Matt 17:1-5

Jesus, Moses, Elijah, and God all in one place.
Light everywhere !!

Candle and Basket

Matt 5:14-16, Luke 11:33-36, Mark 4:21-23

We are the light of the world.
Light is meant to be seen - we should not hide it.
Let our light shine before men - to praise the Father in heaven.
Body is full of light - no part is dark.
All will be brought out in the open.

John the Baptist

John 1:6-9

John the Baptist was not the light - but was witness to it.
The true light was coming.

Jesus is the light of the world

John 8:12

Jesus says that he is the light of the world.
Whoever follows will never walk in darkness.
Whoever follows will have the light of life.

Death and Resurrection of Christ

Matt 27:45-46

Mark 15:33-34

Darkness came over all of the land.
Both passages are identical - therefore significant !!
At end of darkness, Jesus was asking why God was forsaken Him.
Was Jesus alone and separated from God during this darkness ?

Darkness

Ephesians 5:8-14

Live as children of light.
Fruit of the light.
Wake up and let Christ shine on you.

Discussion:

What does light signify ?

What does darkness signify ?

Parallel Theme: People who didn't die & people raised from the dead

A few people in the Bible did not experience a physical death and many more were actually raised from the dead.

Did not die

Enoch

Gen 5:21-24, Hebrews 11:5

Great grandfather of Noah

Walked faithfully with God for 300 years

"then he was no more, because God took him away"

Elijah

2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah and Elisha

Parting of the Jordan – similar to the parting of the Red Sea by Moses

Elisha succeeded Elijah as leader

Raised from the dead

Jesus

Matt. 28:5-8; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5-6

Witnessed by women

Son of the Zarephath widow

1 Kings 17:17-22

Raised by Elijah

Son of the Shunammite woman

2 Kings 4:32-35

Raised by Elisha

Man was raised body touched Elisha's bones

2 Kings 13:20-21

Jairus's daughter

Matthew 9, Luke 8:41-42, 49-55

Raised by Jesus

Son of the widow of Nain

Luke 7:11-15

Raised by Jesus

Lazarus

John 11:1-44

Raised by Jesus

Eutychus

Acts 20:7-12

Raised by Paul

Tabitha/Dorcas

Acts 9:36-42

Raised by Peter

Many saints rose from the dead at the resurrection of Jesus

Matt. 27:50-53

Discussion

Who was Jesus raised by ?

Parallel Theme: Humor

Humor is used to make points in subtle ways. There is probably more humor in the Bible than we realize – since today’s culture is vastly different from that of Biblical times, we probably don’t understand or can’t appreciate some of the humorous stories that are in the Bible. However, there are some stories that we can appreciate !!

Funniest One-Liners

1. King Achish to the men who brought him David, who was feigning madness: Why did you bring this lunatic to me? Does it look like I have a shortage of lunatics in my entourage? I Samuel 21:15
2. Aaron to Moses after Aaron had made a golden calf for the people: They brought me [their golden earrings]; I threw them into the fire; and, “presto,” out came this calf. I have no idea how it happened. Honest! Exodus 32:24
3. Demon to the exorcists who tried to cast him out by reciting, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out of him”: “**Jesus** I know, and **Paul** I know; but who [in the name of Hades] are you guys?” And the demoniac jumped all seven of them and whipped the tar out of them until they ran out of the house naked and wounded. Acts 19:15-16
4. Paul on the Circumcision Party in Galatia: I wish that those people who are commanding you to be circumcised would be cut off completely! Galatians 5:12
5. Jesus to the crowd in the Sermon on the Mount: How can you possibly tell your brother, “Hey, I think I see a little speck in your eye,” when you have a log sticking out of your own eye? Matthew 7:3
6. Proverb about being too cheerful: If you rise up very early in the morning and wake your friend with a wonderful blessing, your friend will count it worse than receiving a curse. Proverbs 27:14
7. God to Moses after Moses said that God’s prediction of food was “impossible”: Did I miss something? Since when have I become weak? Watch me work! Numbers 11:23
8. Dialogue between Samuel and King Saul after a battle in which Saul was to have killed everything:
Saul: You will be so happy! I just finished doing every single thing that the Lord commanded me.
Samuel: Is that so? Then why, pray tell, do I hear the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle in the background?
Saul: Sheep, what sheep? Oh, you mean **those** sheep. Well, uh, I can explain that.
I Samuel 15:13-15
9. Sarah to Abraham (after Sarah told Abraham to sleep with Hagar, who subsequently became both pregnant and insolent): This whole thing is your fault. Genesis 16:5
10. Elijah to the prophets of Baal when Baal did not answer by fire: Maybe you’re not shouting loudly enough. Baal might have a hearing problem. Maybe he is in the middle of an important conversation and hasn’t noticed your calls. Wait a minute. I know what it is. He is going to the bathroom and can’t get up right now! Or, perhaps he is on vacation or is sleeping. I Kings 18:27
11. Luke on the mob who was yelling, “Great is Diana,” and trying to kill Paul: Meanwhile, inside the amphitheatre, some were yelling one thing and some were yelling another. The whole assembly was in utter confusion, and most of the people there didn’t even know what the meeting was about or why they were there. Acts 19:32
12. Jesus to those Pharisees who kept the man-made rules of the Mishnah but not God’s commandments in the Torah:
You blind guides! You strain the gnats out of your soup [the gnat is an insect that is not kosher and should not be eaten], and then you swallow a whole camel!
[The camel is also not kosher, but is a little bigger than a gnat!] Matthew 23:24
13. Proverb about meddling: If you meddle in a quarrel between two other people, you will end up like somebody who has picked up a mad dog by the ears. Proverbs 26:17
14. God in response to criticism by the people: Woe to the man who argues with his Creator. Does the pottery argue with the potter saying, “Just a second, you’re making me wrong”? Isaiah 45:9

Biblical humor to start the day

- Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth? A. Ruthless.
- Q. What do they call pastors in Germany? A. German Shepherds.
- Q. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible? A. Noah He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.
- Q. Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible? A. Pharaoh’s daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a Little prophet.
- Q. What kind of motor vehicles are in the Bible? A. Jehovah drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden in a Fury. David’s Triumph was heard throughout the land. Also, probably a Honda, because the apostles were all in one Accord.
- Q. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible? A. Samson. He brought the house down.
- Q. What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why he no longer lived in Eden? A. Your mother ate us out of house and home.
- Q. Which servant of God was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible? A. Moses. He broke all 10 commandments at once.
- Q. Which area of Palestine was especially wealthy? A. The area around Jordan . The banks were always overflowing.
- Q. Who is the greatest babysitter mentioned in the Bible? A. David He rocked Goliath to a very deep sleep.
- Q. Which Bible character had no parents? A. Joshua, son of Nun.
- Q. Why didn’t they play cards on the Ark? A. Because Noah was standing on the deck. (Groan.)
- PS... Did you know it’s a sin for a woman to make coffee? Yup, it’s in the Bible. It says . . ‘He-brews’

Parallel Theme: People who did as God commanded when it didn't make sense

A number of times in the Bible, people are told to do something that doesn't make sense to them at the time.

Noah and the ark

Genesis 6-8

- Noah didn't question God – he just did it.

Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice.

Gen 22:1-18

- Abraham didn't question God – he was going to go through with it as God commanded.

Battle of Jericho

Joshua 6:1-27

Digging ditches

II Kings 3:16-17

- The children of Israel dug ditches for rain when there was no sign of it.

Feeding five thousand

Luke 9:10-17

Counter-example ? (People who didn't do as God commanded when it didn't make sense)

Forbidden Fruit

Genesis 2:15-17, Genesis 3

Uzzah and the ark

1 Chronicles 13:7-10

Parallel Theme: To tell or not to tell

Sometimes in the New Testament, people are told to tell what they have seen. Sometimes they are told to not tell what they have seen.

To Tell:

Resurrection of Christ

Matt 28:5-10

- Tell the disciples

Great Commission

Matt 28:16-20, Mark 16:15-16

Candle/Basket

Matt 5:14-16, Luke 11:33-36, Mark 4:21-23

- Do not hide the light - i.e. tell the good news

Not to tell:

Peter's Confession

Matthew 16:17-20, Mark 8:30

- Jesus warned to not tell anyone about Him.

Jesus heals the Deaf and Mute man

Mark 7:36

- Jesus commanded not to tell anyone
- The news got out anyway

Jesus heals the sick

Matthew 12:15-21

- Isaiah prophesied that it would not be told until "he leads justice to victory"