

# GOD'S STORY



THE **GOD**-CENTRED  
SELF-FINDING  
NARRATIVE

seth emery

**This short booklet captures God's Story and the basic patterns and themes that come together in a short book called Picture the Story© published 2018.**

**The full version of Picture the Story delves into the Good News of the Kingdom and gently speaks to sceptics and seekers alike with stories and vulnerability. As well as a deeper look at Chiasms in the scriptures and how the bible points to Jesus and His kingdom.**

God's Story was written by Seth Emery  
and produced by 4thSeedMinistries

*The full version of Picture the Story can be found in printed Book and eBook form, and purchased from either [www.sethemery.com](http://www.sethemery.com) or [www.4thSeedministries.com](http://www.4thSeedministries.com)*

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**AN OLD**

**NEW RETELLING**

There are many ways to retell God's Story depending on what you want to highlight. We see Jesus doing this on the road to Emmaus, highlighting certain themes and events of the story.

### **Luke 24:27**

***Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.***

One of the most common retellings is a simple 4 act drama: creation, fall, redemption and restoration. Many theologians, authors and teachers have used this format and explained it well. I have particularly appreciated how Soma have explored this. *Soma is a family of Churches around the world seeking to live on mission together*

They have expanded it into a 22 part resource called, "The Story Of God". Where they teach the heart of God through key biblical stories. They also have a Story of God designed for Kids (22 weeks). *You can find both of these and many more helpful resources at SaturateTheWorld.com*

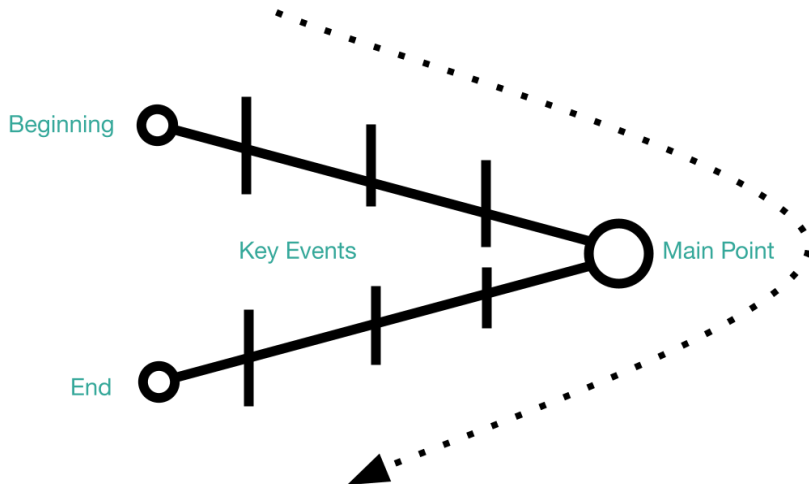
All the retellings of God's story highlighting different aspects of his Story. I recommend you explore different versions to see the good news clearly articulated through different lenses.

The lens we want to look though is a lesser known way to read the story of God, at least in our modern context. It is actually a very old way and most likely one the early readers understood well.

When God tells us His own story (the bible), he has done it in a very sophisticated and beautiful way. There appeared to be a type of mirroring in the story, which is known as a chiasmic structure (Chiasm or Chiasmus). It's a literary form designed to make crystal clear what the point is, that the author is making. But it is done very differently from the typical western way.

Instead of having the punch line or final conclusion at the end of the story, *(which is what we do in the west - think of almost any movie/story - and why the creation, fall, redemption, restoration way of sharing is so common in the west)*

What a chiasmic retelling does, is have the main point right in the middle. It tells a story leading up to the main point, and then retells a new story (mirroring the previous) in light of the main point.



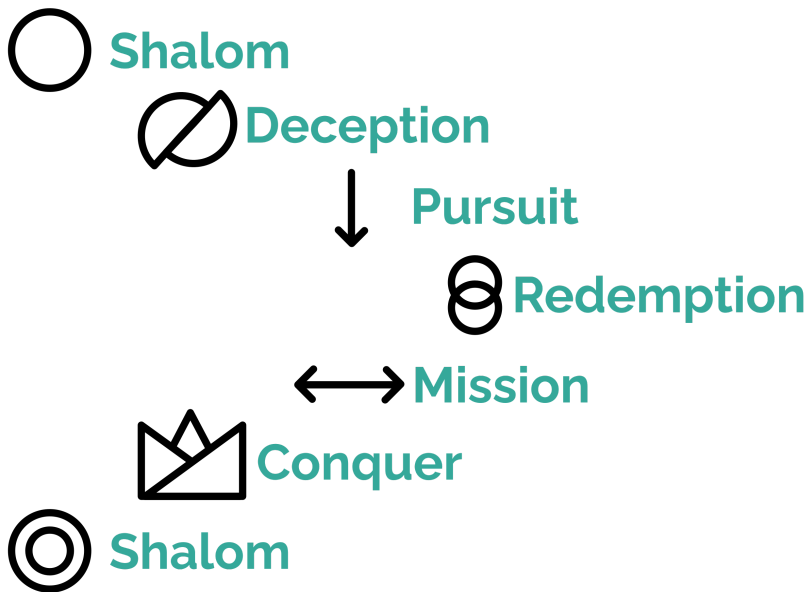
**THE STORY**

**AT A GLANCE**

This way of retelling God's story does not cover everything, but what it does highlight is powerful. It is simple by design for these three reasons...

1. Easy to **remember and share** (regardless of age)
2. Focus is actually on **God, not us**.
3. One way in which we can have **shared language/understanding**, that Keeps God's presence, power and purposes at the centre of the Story.

### The seven basic chapters to the Story:



Each one of those 7 chapters to God's story has some key theological themes and events. Notice who is doing the action and who is being affected by events.

GOD'S

STORY





# SHALOM

(FIRST)

In the beginning, God existed.

He always existed and never began. He was, and still is, a complete loving family in and of himself.

Then he decided to create angelic beings, messengers, who serve him and worship him. He even allowed them to choose whether or not he was worthy to be served and worshipped. And some of them chose to turn from him - which is a story that one day we will hear in full, but that is not for now.

Sometime after these things, God spoke... and with his Word, a universe was born. Creation as we know it began to sing of its maker. For the first time in history light came from something other than God himself. He created suns, stars, atoms, molecules, emotions, weather patterns, animals, plants, oceans and atmospheres. Everything was as he intended it to be, perfectly reflecting his glory, and he saw that it was good.

From among his creation, he chose to show his glory in a unique way. It was different from the way stars reflected his power, different from the way the mountains and the lakes sang his praise. He chose to create humans in his very likeness, man and woman in his image. He breathed his life into their souls, lovingly and intimately creating them. They were God's special treasure, and he saw this was *very good*.

God let them partner with him and share in the responsibility and cultivation of his beautiful creation. He told them to care for the place in which he had put them, to rule alongside him in this kingdom he had breathed into life.

God told his image-bearers to fill the earth and multiply his image, reflecting his glory throughout all the world, in a way only humanity could.

All of creation was in right relationship with their creator and loving king. Everything was living life in the fullest sense, exactly as God designed and created them to live.

## GROUP DISCUSSION -

- What was something that stood out to you or refreshing to hear?
- Who is God in this story?
- What does he do in this story?
- Who are we in this story?
- What do we do in this story?
- How do we live in light of this story?



# DECEPTION

Man and Woman regularly walked with their creator in the perfect and beautiful environment he placed them in. God showed them the most satisfying and enjoyable way to live; with Him as their carer and provider.

Everything they needed was there, including life itself. But, even within this amazing gift, their eyes began to wander from God's goodness.

Deception crept in and a seed of dissatisfaction took root in their hearts.

"What if God is holding something back from us?"

"What if there is more satisfaction and enjoyment that he isn't telling us about?"

Deceiving themselves, they tried in their own strength to become like God, even though they were already made in God's "very likeness". Mankind rejected God's kingdom of peace and chose to place themselves on the throne of their lives, turning their backs on their good king. Their hearts turned from their maker to their own desires.

Out of all of creation, it was God's own image-bearers who began to live in opposition to how they were originally designed.

This choice of theirs changed everything. Creation itself became broken. Rejection, pain, guilt, shame and fear entered the world because life outside of God's Kingdom leads to death.

However, because God loved his special treasure so much, he sent mankind away from eternal life so they might not be eternally stuck in this broken state of being. For the first time since time existed, the universe mourned together. Every fibre of creation, every emotion and instinct, was affected by the betrayal of God's image-bearers.

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# PURSUIT

Despite their rejection of His good and perfect ways, God promised hope for his image-bearers. His promise was that one-day creation would be renewed and restored through the woman's offspring. Although mankind were daily reminded of the brokenness that deception drags behind it, they joined together with creation in longing for the day of restoration to come.

As the generations came and went, God's special treasures reflected him less and less. They did multiply and fill the earth, but they filled it with lies, pain and evil.

Yet God relentlessly pursued a relationship with his image-bearers, though very few reciprocated his affections. However, He was faithful to let at least one person in every generation turn their hearts back to him as their loving king.

Because of God's unfailing love, he was committed to seeing mankind live as he originally designed them. So he chose to form a people who would tangibly show the world what it looks like to live with God on the throne of their lives. They were to be his people and he would be their king.

He set them boundaries and formed a new identity for them as his nation, to bless the nations.

Their mission was to be reflectors of God's justice, mercy and compassion. In this way, all God's creation would once again see His glory reflected through his image-bearers as He originally intended it to be.

He made his home among them, sending his Spirit to dwell in the midst of his chosen people. It was through this nation that God's promise to the first humans would one day be fulfilled.

But despite his presence, his blessings and his promises, the generations would take turns ignoring their creator.

Yet once again, God did not give up his pursuit. He sent leaders, messengers and spokesman on his behalf to prepare his people for his purposes... But His treasured possession, his adopted people, continued in their rebellion against his ways and rarely listened.

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# REDEMPTION

As God's nation grew and shrunk under different kings, so did their loyalty towards their Creator. God's chosen people were failing miserably at reflecting their true King. Even though God's spirit had dwelt among them, their rebellious hearts they still ignored him.

So God decided to limit his power and glory, and step into his creation. Into the boundaries of time, physics, flesh and even pain. The author of life itself became a helpless baby – needy, dependent and vulnerable. His name was Jesus.

Jesus was born in an obscure town, in a most unusual way – conceived by God's Spirit. As he grew up, he was loved by God, his Father, and by everyone who knew him. As a man, he was led by God's Spirit and every choice he made reflected God's character. Everywhere he went, people experienced how God intended life to be.

He shared God's truth and showed God's power. He called people to live under God's rule and reign, and showed that the Kingdom of God was the atmosphere humans were designed to breathe. But the very ones he came to love, began to hate him because his message was in opposition

to their rebellion. Yet, in God's love, he made a way, to not only forgive them, but to redeem them.

God was pleased with his son and found Jesus' perfect life to be a perfect substitute for his broken image-bearers. Jesus obeyed his father and chose to take on the full effects of mankind's deceived hearts, and willingly paid for humanity's rebellion through the punishment of crucifixion.

God let the ones who were made to reflect him kill him. Creation mourned for their maker, and the world felt its effects.

But three days later, Jesus conquered death when God raised him back to life, and he was seen again by many people as the first of the new creation. Because of Jesus, forgiveness and adoption into God's family became a possible reality for all people, regardless of how broken they were.

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# MISSION

Jesus spent many days with his followers; sharing with them, eating with them, laughing with them and encouraging them in the way of the Kingdom. His resurrected body was a glimpse of what was to come when God would one day unite heaven and earth once again – the new creation with all things under God's loving rule. But first Jesus had to leave his followers and return to his father to prepare this place.

He promised that he would send his own Spirit to come and dwell, not just among them, but now within his people. The Spirit would remind them of all Jesus taught and transform their hearts to be like Jesus. He would give them power to be as they were originally designed to be, walking in the ways of God; Reflecting God's image once again, having Jesus on the throne of their lives.

And just as he said, the Spirit came and his followers were shown God's mission. To be sent, to share and show the world the great news of what God has done through Jesus. Teaching them how to obey all that Jesus said.

Because of Jesus, adoption into God's family was now possible for all who turn back to him.

This unmerited forgiveness and acceptance was the beginning of the Church. A community of people all over the world who, because of Jesus, once again enjoy a life that is full and complete — living in the ways of God, reflecting His character. Caring for the outsiders, the weak and forgotten, while being a family for the fatherless and a refuge for the oppressed.

God's mission for his Church is to pursue the lost, welcoming them into his kingdom family. God's Spirit empowers his Church to be people who love others and point them to God. But not to "fix" people, that is the Spirit's role. He convicts and transforms deceived and rebellious hearts.

Now creation would once again tangibly see God's glory reflected through his people. His Church, living in God's ways, gives people a foretaste of what life is like in Jesus' Kingdom.

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# CONQUER

God's Story, however, does not end with His Church.

In the same way that Jesus returned back to His father, ascended from his followers to his throne, he will one day return back to his followers. He will return ready for battle, wrapped in his glory and surrounded by his angels.

All of creation will know when he arrives and in bated breath, awaits this second coming.

Jesus will bring salvation to his family and the deceiver will have no chance or ability to stop him. What God promises always comes to pass, and Jesus promised to come back to destroy all evil, sin and rebellion.

Jesus will destroy the deceiver once and for all, and all those who ignore and deny God's loving hand will be turned over to the outcome of their rebellion. Jesus will remove all who are not his people, and they will not experience life which comes from God, life to the fullest.

This will not be a battle with the possibility of several outcomes.

No, the outcome is already seen. Jesus is more than a conqueror, He is the victorious hero. He will squash the deceiver and those who reject his invitation, under his thumb without breaking a sweat.

It won't be a fight, it will be a devastating, demolishing defeat for all those who think they deserve to be God. But for those who God calls his own, there will be no more sickness, pain, or death. They will witness and celebrate in Jesus' victory.

God's heavenly Kingdom will collide with the kingdom of earth, creating a new creation. Jesus will once again take his rightful place on the throne, and all of His creation will finally worship God in fullness and unbridled joy

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# SHALOM

## (FINAL)

This is the final chapter that never ends, where eternal life, endless acceptance and overwhelming joy is found.

God now brings full restoration to all of his creation.

There's no brokenness, deception, shame, guilt, fear or pain because all things are at peace with their creator. His image-bearers join together with creation's song, living face to face with their majestic creator. God himself, in all his untouchable glory, walks among his creation, bringing comfort and satisfaction to all.

Shadows no longer exist, neither are things hidden anymore, because God himself illuminates all things. Creation is complete with every creature living and working as God originally designed.

And so celebration bursts forth in response to the true king seated in his rightful place. Tastes, colour, emotions and songs that have never been experienced are now brought to life as this eternal banquet fills the new creation.

Cultures and languages emerge together as praises endlessly flow from the mouths of every being.

*“You alone are worthy of praise, honour and worship, for your blood has restored and renewed your creation! Your unfailing love and endless pursuit has redeemed your people! You are the one with no beginning and who will have no end. Jesus, you are ruler of all!”*

God's image-bearers finally reflect his fullness, for they have been saved from the penalty of sin, they were being saved from the power of sin, and now are saved from the presence of sin. This is how God always intended his family to be, in tune with their perfect loving father.

Now all of creation, including his image-bearers, take part in God's complete and loving family. All things forever enjoying peace, acceptance, joy, satisfaction and grace.

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**THE GREAT**

**REVERSAL**

God's Story is an amazing testament to His great compassion, goodness, faithfulness, grace and power. We need the whole story to be shared - beginning, middle, end and everything else tying them together.

It doesn't do the Good News justice if God's image-bearers only focus on one piece of this amazing story and view the rest as less important. There is, however, no denying that the pinnacle of the story, 'Redemption', is the most crucial part, the turning point, the game-changer.

But that alone wouldn't make any sense told outside of the whole story. In fact, it could be totally misinterpreted and even twisted to fit whatever context or purpose we want, if told apart from the full story.

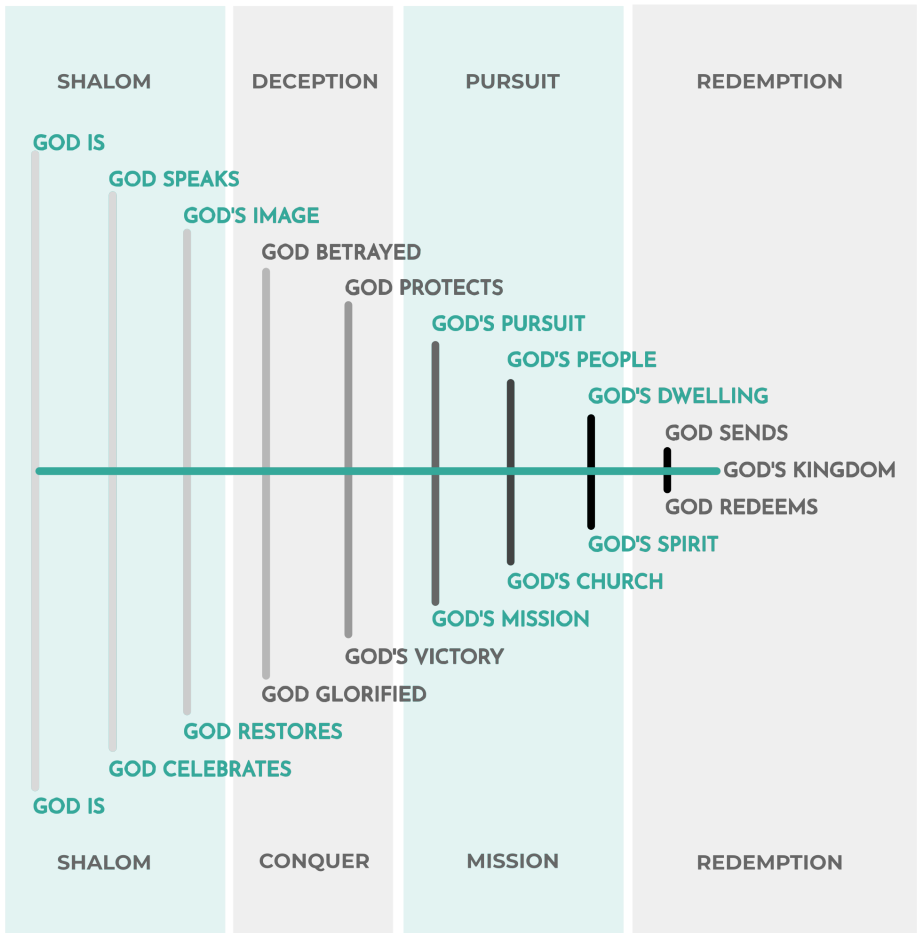
God's story puts us in the right head-space and heart-space to address real-life issues in the here and now because we begin to see the here and now in light of God's purposes.

When we zoom into each of the seven chapters to the story we begin to clearly see that it is all about God. Notice how he is the one who is doing the action and being affected throughout history.

The whole bible is a story of a great reversal, with the middle of the story being the pinnacle, the focal point, the moment when everything changes. After that point the story is retold in reverse, only each moment now builds on the mirroring moment and becomes a fuller version. This is known as a Chiasmic structure, allowing the author to highlight the most important part of the story, like a hinge holding the story together.

In the case of God's Story, the focal point is actually **God's Kingdom**.





## Shalom (first)

- **God Is** - Before anything existed, God is a complete loving community.
- **God Speaks** - His Word ignites all things into existence, creatively reflecting him.
- **God's Image** - He creates humanity to uniquely reflect Him and welcomes them into an intimate relationship with him.

## Deceit

- **God Betrayed** - Humans desired to be their own God and turned their hearts from their father, and his kingdom - in complete opposition to what they were designed for.
- **God Protects** - He finds, covers & sends mankind away from eternal life so they might not be forever stuck as eternal sinners.

## Pursuit

- **God's Pursuit** - He reaches out, promises restoration & faithfully cares.
- **God's People** - He forms a people with a new identity, to reflect God's compassion, mercy and justice to the nations. They are blessed to be a blessing.
- **God's Dwelling** - He creates a way for rebellious hearts to become relational, making his home among them. He speaks through prophets, kings & unlikely ones.

## Redemption

- **God Sends** - Jesus, God's Son, the Messiah, the Christ, God with us, was sent. As a helpless baby (*adopted by a human father*) - servant & saviour, Jesus shows us the true reflection (image) of God.
- **God's Kingdom** - Jesus was sent to us to show and share an upside-down kingdom culture. True humanity. He ushers in His Just and Gracious kingdom.
- **God Redeems** - As the perfect image-bearer & perfect substitute, Jesus takes the weight of the world & conquers death and sin. *So that we can now be Adopted by a heavenly father - and we become the **sent** ones.*

## Mission

- **God's Spirit** - God, himself makes a home in the hearts of his people. *No longer just **dwelling** among his people, but now within his people - We become his tabernacle, his temple, his home.*
- **God's Church** - He forms a family of families through adoption. They are empowered by the Spirit for God's purposes, to live out the Kingdom. *We (you and I) are added to **God's Chosen people**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation .*
- **God's Mission** - His plan is for every man, woman and child to hear & see and experience The Truth of his kingdom. *His mission is ours - to **pursue** the downtrodden, hurt, blind, lost, welcoming all back to the father's heart, to become adopted heirs of the kingdom.*

## Conquer

- **God's Victory** - Jesus returns for his Bride. And demolishes the deceiver. *He finds us, covers us with grace. (just as he did in the beginning) but now he puts an end to the very one thing he was **protecting** us from to start with.*
- **God Glorified** - Finally receiving the full glory he deserves - Jesus once again sits on the Throne. - *the throne that we tried to sit on - Every knee bows and all creation worships their creator. The **Betrayers** become the worshipers.*

## Shalom (final)

- **God Restores** - Now all of creation is back to its original design. *His broken **image-bearers** and now all of creation, back into that face-to-face intimacy once again, reflecting Him in every facet.*

- **God Celebrates** - Eternal Banquet. An endless celebration of God's unfailing grace. Full satisfaction & joy experienced in all of creation. *First God **Spoke** and his voice brought forth Creation - now all creation lifts its voice in celebration, singing praises with endless words of rejoicing for the things he has done.*
- **God is** - The only Light, the only King, the loving father - *but now sharing his love and goodness forever, enjoying his family, his special treasure and beautiful creation.*

What a great reversal indeed!

The whole Bible, God's Story, clearly points to the fact that God is doing something in this world, though we may very easily overlook it. **But it all leads up to Jesus showing and sharing the Good news of his Kingdom.** His Kingdom is the better option for his image bearers and apparently very important to him,

The Kingdom of God is the space where God's will is being done. It is where the active exercising of God's power and authority is at work. It is wherever God's rule and reign is seen, both in the hearts of man and in the fibre of creation itself.

God's story shows us that...

# The Kingdom of God is the atmosphere we were designed to breathe.

With Jesus on the throne of our lives, ruling and reigning as the good shepherd king. Like a fish out of water, we find death if we attempt to live in any other atmosphere. But in His kingdom we find life, full life, eternal life.

**That is where we come alive. This is why Jesus was sent.**

[4thSeedMinistries.com](http://4thSeedMinistries.com)

Though this resource is just beginning to scratch the surface of the greatest story ever told, it gives us a simple way to realign us to the bigger picture of who God is, what he does and who we are in light of that.

Written for those who are walking together following Jesus, leaning in and interested to know the good news of the Kingdom.

We recommend you read this slowly, over several weeks and journey with a handful of others.



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**G a t h e r e d . C h u r c h**

Produced in partnership  
For the sake of the Kingdom