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the word on the street

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Contents

<i>Foreword by Dr David Trobisch</i>	9
<i>FAQs</i>	11
<i>Upgrades</i>	15
<i>The Big Picture</i>	21

Old Testament

History of a Nation

The Pentateuch / www.instruction-manual.com.ot

Genesis / Stuff Starts Up	27
Exodus / Shift Yourselfes!	51
Leviticus / God-Reps' Orders of Service	58
Numbers / Stats	59
Deuteronomy / Maker's Instructions	61

History Section / www.new-nation.com.ot

Joshua / Good from Evil	65
Judges / New Line in Leaders	67
Ruth / Foreign Girl Gets God	69
1 Samuel / Kingmaker, Book 1	70
2 Samuel / Kingmaker, the Sequel	81
1 Kings / Carry on Monarchy	86
2 Kings / Carry on Monarchy Continued	94
1 Chronicles / Events, Part 1	101
2 Chronicles / Events, Part 2	103
Ezra / We Can Rebuild it	109
Nehemiah / Another Brick in the Wall	114
Esther / Total Holocaust of the Jews?	122

The Wisdom Books / www.peoples-poetry.com.ot

Job / Mess Happens	131
Psalms / Song Lyrics	142
Proverbs / Wise Up	179
Ecclesiastes / What's the Point?	185
Song of Songs / You Are Gorgeous!	189

The Prophets / www.couriershotline.com.ot

The Major Prophets / The Famous Four

Isaiah / No Pain, No Gain	195
Jeremiah / Warnings with Tears	206
Lamentations / A to Z of Grief	210
Ezekiel / Wot, No HQ?	213
Daniel / God's Running the Show	220

The Minor Prophets / The Dangerous Dozen

Hosea / Your Wife's a Tart!	227
Joel / Pest Control	230
Amos / God Hates Your Religion	233
Obadiah / Rival's Revenge	236
Jonah / Courier on a Detour	237
Micah / Justice's Downside	239
Nahum / Nineveh's Nightmare	242
Habakkuk / Sort It Out, God!	244
Zephaniah / Judgement Day and Beyond	247
Haggai / Renew the HQ	249
Zechariah / Get Shovelling!	250
Malachi / Halve Your Double Standards	253

N e W □ e s □ A m e N □

New Promise

The Liberator

Matthew / Mark / Luke / John / 4D Biography	261
---	-----

The Jesus Liberation Movement

Acts of the Apostles / JLM: The Early Years. 343

Paul's Work "Sent Items" Box

Romans / Paul to JLM Rome Branch. 355

1 Corinthians / Paul to JLM Corinth Branch 372

2 Corinthians / Paul to JLM Corinth Branch 379

Galatians / Paul to JLM East Turkey Branch 386

Ephesians / Paul to JLM West Turkey Branches. 392

Philippians / Paul to JLM Philippi, Greece Branch 401

Colossians / Paul to JLM Colossae, Turkey Branch 407

1 Thessalonians / Paul to JLM Thessalonica Branch. . . . 412

2 Thessalonians / Paul to JLM Thessalonica Branch. . . . 417

Paul's Private "Sent Items" Box

1 Timothy / Paul to Timo 421

2 Timothy / Paul to Timo 425

Titus / Paul to Titus 429

Philemon / Paul to Philemon. 432

Other Email Writers

Hebrews / Jewish System Changes. 437

James / James to JLM-Jews 445

1 Peter / Pete's Circular No. 1 449

2 Peter / Pete's Circular No. 2 455

1 John / Jonno's Turkish Circular. 459

2 John / Jonno to a Local JLM 466

3 John / Jonno to Gaius. 467

Jude / Jude's Circular. 468

Revelation / Apocalypse Soon 470

Rob's Story 489

The Big Picture

To work, to grab the attention, you need a story that impacts the audience. What about a film to launch the movement? Clearly, you'd need a genuine hero. Someone everyone will empathize with. Someone noble but common. Safe but dangerous. Pure but streetwise. Gentle but confrontational. Someone with supernatural powers used only for the benefit of the community.

Then you'd need a "baddie". An enemy force. Something all-enveloping, ruthless, sinister. Ideally this battle should have a back-story centuries old, only now coming to a climax. Maybe you'd kick off with an exciting opening sequence of genuine horror. Why not open the film with shocking scenes of babies being murdered and one family, babe in arms, racing from the infanticide?

Having established the scale and intent of the opposition, you'd show the hero growing to confront this evil and discover his mission, to save the planet from this insidious, all-consuming power. A small group of followers would supply different viewpoints through which you'd see him begin to fulfil this mission. They'd work well to draw out the principles of his radical thinking. They'd also provide humour and light relief with their mess-ups.

The danger facing the hero would gradually build as he confronts the authorities, who are the prime suspects in a conspiracy theory of the control of the masses through a dominating worldview and an elaborate political system ensuring the subservience of the people. Time-honoured blockbuster stuff.

Eventually, inevitably, it'd build towards confrontation and the tragic betrayal of the hero by one of his own crew. Rifle-fire scenes propelling you through his false trial and execution at the hands of the corrupt authorities. Slow up to show his heroism prevailing right to the end with his harrowing call for his executioners to be forgiven for what they're doing. The crowds would turn against him and the hero would die an unheroic death. Long pause. The shell-shocked cinema audience would rustle their bags and make to move – but the credits would refuse to run.

It can't stop there. There has to be a reversal, a twist. Something that changes the worst thing that could happen into the best thing possible. You'd need to have a visual mechanism, maybe 3D film footage, to give an insight into the supernatural side of events as they unfold below the surface. You'd see the dead hero travel into the underground headquarters of the enemy and wrestle Death himself into submission. Bloodstained and scarred the hero would walk away with the power over life and death. He'd come back to his crew with a package that would change their lives for ever.

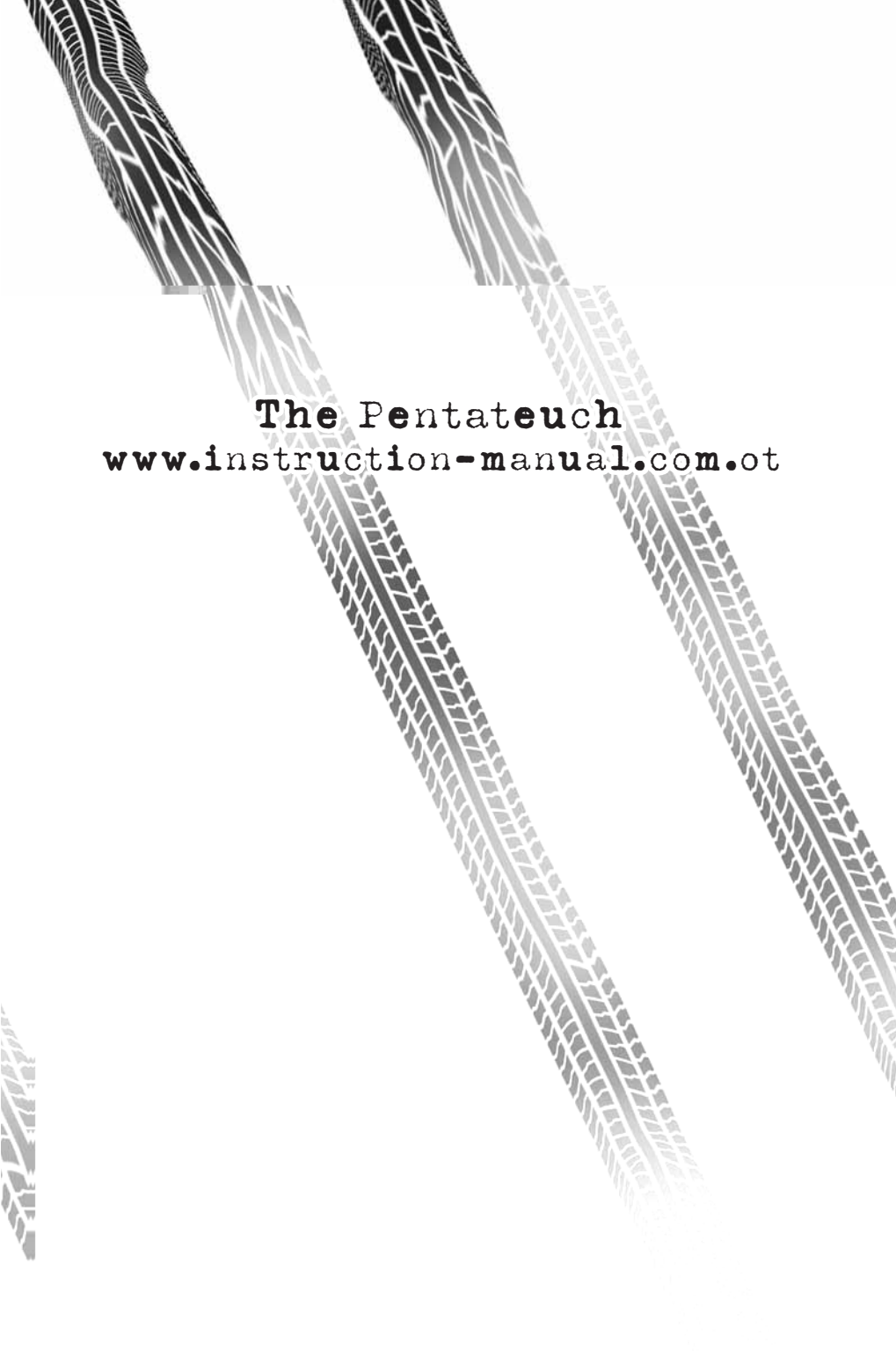
Then the credits could roll with God right at the top so no one misses it while groping for their bag.

Read on.



Old Testament

History of a Nation



The Pentateuch
www.instruction-manual.com.ot



Genesis / Stuff Starts Up

Something out of nothing (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

1-2

First off, nothing . . . but God. No light, no time, no substance, no matter. Second off, God says the word and WHAP! Stuff everywhere! The cosmos in chaos: no shape, no form, no function – just darkness . . . total. And floating above it all, God's Holy Spirit, ready to play.

3-5

Day one: Then God's voice booms out, "Lights!" and, from nowhere, light floods the skies and "night" is swept off the scene. God gives it the big thumbs up, calls it "day".

6-8

Day two: God says, "I want a dome – call it 'sky' – right there between the waters above and below." And it happens.

9-13

Day three: God says, "Too much water! We need something to walk on, a huge lump of it – call it 'land'. Let the 'sea' lick its edges." God smiles, says, "Now we've got us some definition. But it's too plain! It needs colour! Vegetation! Loads of it. A million shades. Now!" And the earth goes wild with trees, bushes, plants, flowers and fungi. "Now give it a growth permit." Seeds appear in every one. "Yesss!" says God.

14-19

Day four: “We need a schedule: let’s have a ‘sun’ for the day, a ‘moon’ for the night; I want ‘seasons’, ‘years’; and give us ‘stars’, masses of stars – think of a number, add a trillion, then times it by the number of trees and we’re getting there: we’re talking huge!”

20-23

Day five: “OK, animals: amoeba, crustaceans, insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals . . . I want the whole caboodle teeming with a *million* varieties of each – and let’s have some fun with the shapes, sizes, colours, textures!” God tells them all, “You’ve got a growth permit – use it!” He sits back and smiles, says, “Result!”

24-31

Day six: Then God says, “Let’s make people – like us, but human, with flesh and blood, skin and bone. Give them the job of caretakers of the vegetation, game wardens of all the animals.” So God makes people, like him, but human. He makes male and female (for the “how”, see later). He smiles at them and gives them their job description: “Make babies! Be parents, grandparents, great-grandparents – fill the earth with your families and run the planet well. You’ve got all the plants to eat from, so have all the animals – plenty for all. Enjoy.” God looks at everything he’s made, and says, “Fantastic. I love it!”

2:1-3

Day seven: Job done – the cosmos and the earth complete. God takes a bit of well-earned R&R and just enjoys. He makes an announcement: “Let’s keep this day of the week special, a day off – a battery-recharge day: Rest Day.”

Then we rewind a bit for the detail on people’s arrival on the scene.

–Rob

First of billions (Genesis 2:7-9)

7

God takes some mud from the ground, and moulds the essential chemicals into the shape of a man. Then he breathes his life into the body and the man starts living.

8-9

God places the guy in the special garden he's planted, called "Eden". God's planted loads of types of trees in the garden – they look great and their fruit tastes great. Smack bang in the middle of the garden are two one-of-a-kind trees: "the tree of life" and "the tree of knowing right from wrong".

We get some detail on the local rivers making the area fertile, and then . . . –Rob

Adam needs a partner (Genesis 2:15-25)

15-17

God gives the man a job: warden in the Eden Garden. Job spec – to protect and till it. In God's Contract he clearly states the man has free pickings of anything that grows in the garden, except the tree that tells you the difference between right and wrong. If you eat from *that* tree, the rules are pretty direct – you'll die.

18

Then God says, "He's doing all this solo and it's wrong. Adam needs a partner."

19-20

God parades all the animals in front of Adam to see what names he'll give them. God doesn't dispute any of his names, no limits on the wacky scale: whatever he calls it, that's its name. Adam gets through the lot – the cattle, the birds, the beasts – but none is anything near partner potential.

21-22

So God puts the man under some sort of divine general anaesthetic, carries out a ribectomy, then closes up the gap in his side. God works on the rib until he's sculpted it into woman-shape, and then he presents her to Adam.

23-24

"Whoa! Now we're talking!" says Adam. "She's like me . . . only not. Same bones, same skin, same shape . . . only not. She's . . . uh . . . sexy. If I'm 'man', she's . . . uh . . . 'woman'." (Which is why when people get

married, they leave their parents behind and set up their own family unit. Sex makes them one person: you can't tell where one stops and the other starts.)

25

They're both stark naked, not that they've noticed – they've got no hang-ups about nudity.

Enter "Mess" stage right (Genesis 3:1-24)

1

Now the snake was top of the Animal Cunning League. Undisputed King of Sly among all God's creative work. He sees the woman, slithers up to her and asks, "Are the rumours true? Did God really slap a ban on eating the fruit off these trees?"

2-3

"We can eat what we like," answers the woman, "apart from the fruit off the tree right in the middle. If we eat off that, we'll die."

4-5

"Die?! Unlikely!" sneers the snake. "God well knows that if you eat off that tree, it'll open your eyes to a few things. You'll know the difference between good and evil, just like God does – so you'll be like God!"

6-7

The woman eyes up the fruit and thinks, *It does look pretty tasty – especially if it's instant wisdom in a couple of bites.* So she grabs herself a juicy one, and takes a large chomp out of it. Then she hands it to Adam, and he takes a mouthful too. Straight off, their eyes are opened and they realize they're stark naked. A new feeling – embarrassment. They stitch together some fig leaves and cover the necessities.

8-9

Later in the day, the heat has eased off a bit and they hear God's footsteps in the garden. Seconds later they're hiding from him behind some bushes. God calls out, "Adam, where've you got to?"