

HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

**“I have not shunned to declare to you
the whole counsel of God” Acts 20:27**

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Lesson 1

Introduction/Christ in the Bible

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Let's pray.

Lord, we come, with fear and trembling because whenever we are to exegete Your Word verse by verse, we feel so comfortable because it is Your Word. And yet when we go into any class that is not a verse-by-verse exposition it seems like man's thoughts enter in and get in the way. It causes a little bit of fear and trembling. It reminds us of what James says—"Be careful and do not many of you be teachers because there is going to be a judgment, a scrutiny about it" (cf. James 3:1). So Lord, I pray that You would certainly keep me from twisting the Scriptures in any way. Keep us from that peril of 2 Peter 3 where they twisted the Word to their own destruction. Help us to see the whole and the unity of the Bible. Help us to follow sound principles in all of our exegesis and interpretation. May this prove to be something that keeps us from error, Lord. We ask for Your help in this. We bow before You and pray that You would give us childlike hearts. Make us babes in the heart, Lord, willing to submit and obey. If You reveal anything in Your Word to us, may our hearts be willing to put it into practice, to observe it, and to do it. Lord, open our eyes that we might see Your perspective. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

This class is called "The History of Redemption." It is a survey of the whole Bible. We will go through the whole Bible twice from Genesis to Revelation. The first time we go through it we will emphasize what God did; the second time through, we will emphasize

what God said. It is a history but it is a special history. It has two main objectives. The first objective is to see the unity of the Bible as it presents God's plan of salvation for mankind from Genesis to Revelation. We want to string the pearls onto the same chain, so that we can see that there is a unity to the sixty-six books of the Bible. The Old Testament begins in Genesis 1:1 with God; the New Testament begins in Matthew 1:1 with Christ. There is a unity, a wholeness, and an integrity about the sixty-six books of the Bible. So, one of the purposes is to for us to see that integrity.

**This course has
two main objectives:**

First: to see the unity of the Bible as it presents God's plan of salvation for mankind from Genesis to Revelation.

Second: to review the general content of the books of the Bible for the purpose of integration and to see the thematic relationships.

The second objective is to review the general content of the books of the Bible in order to see what the Bible is all about. We want to review the general content of each of the books of the Bible in order to see their integration and thematic relationship. The theme of the Bible is redemption—the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We want to keep that theme in mind as we move through the sixty-six books of the Bible. As we begin to see how God has worked in this world to provide salvation for man, our appreciation for God and His Word will no doubt grow.

Actually, the term I like to use for this is “logical mapping” of the Bible because that is what we will do. We want to set the Bible out like a map. When we hold the map out completely open, we get to see the relationships of the main roads, the side roads, the freeways, the interstates, and the states. We can get perspective when we know where we are because we can see the whole map. And that is what this class is about.

So we approach the survey of the Bible from two points of view. First, we will look at what God has done and is accomplishing in history. Secondly, we will look at what God has spoken or revealed in terms of Scripture.

We have two basic theologies today in the church. One of them is called dispensational theology and the other is covenant theology. When a person focuses on what God has done and how He has acted through the periods of history, he will become a dispensationalist. If a person focuses on what God has said, then he will become a covenant theologian. What I hope to show in this class is that we do not need to become either one; when we read through the Bible, we are going to see what God has done and what God has said are never in conflict. We do not have to polarize and choose a theology. We need to step back and see the whole forest and not get lost in the trees.

I see more false teaching and false doctrine—even among Calvary Chapels—because people focus on the trees and do not ever bring the relationship back to the forest. We are hoping to step back during this course and see the whole forest in order to keep the theme of the Bible, which is redemption, before us.

First of all, when we go through the Bible, we are going to look at what God did. And then when we go through the second time from Genesis to Revelation, we are going to look at what God said. And then we are going to make a comparison at the end of dispensation and covenant theology.

The purpose of the class is to make sure that we go through things point by point, because we hear and understand and retain about 62% of what we do hear. And so hopefully, by the time the class is over we can step back and see these things.

In Acts 20:27 we read, “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.” Paul did not just preach part of the Word; he preached the entire, complete message of God. He gave the whole counsel of God.

We are told to, “Study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen who do not need to be ashamed.” Why? It is because we are “rightly dividing the word of truth” (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15). How can you rightly divide something if you have never seen the whole thing?

Let’s say your room orders a pizza and you get a whole pizza. Maybe three people in the room paid for the pizza. Maybe six people in the room paid for the pizza. Or maybe three paid but you are still going to share it with five of them, even though they did not have money. The point is that you do not know how to divide that pizza until you know the whole deal. Unless you want to just divide it in twelve slices and everybody just digs in. One guy eats three and by the time the last person gets there, there is one little slice and somebody has picked off the olives. That is a bummer. But if you see the whole thing then you can rightly divide it. Likewise, people often try to rightly divide the Word of God, but they have never even seen the whole picture. They are trying to make some kind of division on a little bit of information and they have not stepped back to see the whole thing.

We are fitting together pieces of a puzzle...

**You must see the whole if you are to rightly
divide something.**

**First rightly unite and then rightly divide the 66
pieces to form the whole.**

It is like having a puzzle with sixty-six pieces. You throw out those sixty-six pieces, shuffle them like a card deck, and then you are going to have to put them together. You fit a little piece at a time until finally you get to where you can see the whole thing. You say, "Right! Now I have the picture!" And now it is not so puzzling. Then the next time you go on vacation, you may take some friends with you and you can take the same puzzle. This time when you throw it back out you will probably be more prepared to put that puzzle together again, won't you? You will remember, "Oh yeah, I remember this piece. I remember that. I had trouble with that. That fits right over there." And the more you get back and see the whole thing, the easier it is to put the pieces where they belong.

Whenever we are interpreting and applying the Bible we want to make sure that we keep before us the central theme of the Bible, which is the theme of redemption. That is the basic hermeneutic principle. You must always bring things back to redemption and we are going to try to do that in this class.

Christ is the theme of each of the eight sections of the Bible

The Law: The foundation is laid for Christ (Genesis – Deuteronomy)

History: Preparation for Christ (Joshua – Esther)

Poetry: Aspiration for Christ is expressed (Job – Song of Solomon)

Prophecy: The Expectation of Christ (Isaiah – Malachi)

Gospels: The Manifestation of Christ (Matthew – John)

Acts: The Propagation of Christ (Acts)

Epistles: Interpretation and Application of Christ (Romans – Jude)

Revelation: The Consummation of all things in Christ (Revelation)

The unity of the Bible is Christocentric as a whole. The key to the interpretation of the Bible is Jesus Christ. Christ is the theme of each of the eight sections of the Bible. The first section is the Law. We have the foundation that is laid in Jesus Christ in the Law. Next in Genesis we have the doctrine of election, which comes from the seed that is Christ. After this we have redemption. Then in Leviticus we have sanctification and the setting apart of His people. In Numbers we have the direction of God's people. In Deuteronomy we have the instruction of God's people, not unlike the Epistles that explain to us these things. So that is the first section of the Bible, the Law. This is laying the foundation for all the rest of the Bible.

The second major grouping of Scripture is history and that is recorded from Joshua to Esther. The history is just a preparation for Christ. Joshua goes in and possesses the land, and then Saul comes and stabilizes the land. David shows up and expands the land. Solomon comes on the scene and glorifies the land and the nation. But beginning in 1 Kings 12 there is a division. The land begins to be divided and they deteriorate from Samaria to Jerusalem. The Israelites are deported to Babylon for seventy years. But even after that we see evidence of God's faithfulness as Esther is providentially protected, Ezra

comes back to restore, and Nehemiah comes back to reconstruct everything. And so God is still faithful.

The history is just a preparation for Christ; and so, as you read the history, you always want to keep in mind why the history was written. It is possible to come up with some real wild interpretations of Scripture within the history of Israel. But if you will always go back to the fact that the history of Israel was to prepare the world for the coming Messiah and you relate your interpretation to that theme of redemption, you will be kept from error. What is the history of God's people? It is the story of their failure and God's faithfulness, and it is a wonderful history.

Then you get into the third section of Scripture that is poetry. In poetry what you are seeing is an aspiration for Christ. That is what is expressed from Job to the Song of Solomon. If you will interpret the poetry section of Scripture on the basis of it being an aspiration and desire for Christ, again, you will not find yourself in trouble or off on some tangent somewhere. You will always bring it back to the purpose of that section of Scripture. It is all about aspiring and wanting a relationship with Jesus Christ. That is why it was written.

Prophecy is the fourth section of Scripture. Prophecy is the expectation of Christ. From Isaiah to Malachi it is one prophecy after another.

Then the fifth category is when you get to the Gospels and you see finally there is the manifestation of the Christ that was promised. The Messiah is here. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give us four pictures of Him that are quite beautiful.

In Acts the sixth area of Scripture is the propagation of Christ throughout the world.

The seventh category is the interpretation and application of Christ in the Epistles, from Romans to Jude.

And finally, the eighth section in Revelation gives us the consummation of Christ.

So, we have the same plan from the very beginning; from Genesis 15 to Romans 4 there has been one plan that God has given. What is that plan? It is the plan of redemption. You can become redeemed because you can be made righteous by faith in Christ. The Old Testament and the New Testament have exactly the same plan. It has not changed.

Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4 reveal the same exact plan. It is the same promise. God said that He would come and dwell in Abraham's midst. God took His name and put it right in the middle of Abram's name. He put *Yahweh* right in the middle and made it "Abraham" (cf. Genesis 17:3-5).

We see in the 2 Corinthians 6:16 that God wants to dwell in our midst. We know that Christ in us is really the hope of glory (cf. Colossians 1:27) and there is this relationship that is established.

So the plan and the promise are still the same today. If we will separate ourselves, set ourselves apart, God will come and dwell in our midst. That is what God has always wanted—to live, to abide, and to dwell in us.

In Genesis 17, the Old Testament sign that someone was in a relationship with God was circumcision. What is the sign in the New Testament? It is still circumcision. In the Old Testament, it was a circumcision that was outward. But God wanted it to be inward not just outward. In the New Testament He makes it clear that outward circumcision really does not do you any good, but it is an inward circumcision of the heart according to Romans 2:28 and Colossians 2:11. So the sign has not changed; it is still the same sign—it is circumcision.

And the Mediator is the same from beginning to end. It has been the one Man, Jesus Christ. So in all of these sections of Scripture, God has kept the same plan. He has kept the same design. He has kept the same covenant. He has kept the same relationship. He has kept the same mediator and nothing has changed in all of these things.

So we want to take a few moments to focus on Christ. I want to go through and read these because even before we get started in the class, I want to think about Christ and how He is the theme of every single book in the Bible.

Begin in Genesis and think about it; He is the Seed of the woman. God said to Satan,

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed: He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. (Genesis 3:15)

That is where the whole concept of election begins. It is in the Seed. Just as when a seed comes forth and forms a flower, everything about it—the smell, the shape, the texture, the size—was in the seed. It develops into this beautiful flower. So it is with our salvation. It is in the Seed. The Seed is Jesus Christ and He is what develops. So in Genesis, He is the Seed of the woman.

In Exodus He is the Passover Lamb.

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. (Exodus 12:3, KJV)

Our redemption has been based on the Passover Lamb that shed His blood as a perfect, spotless sacrifice. Christ is the Lamb of the book of Exodus. We cannot read Exodus without realizing that all of the deliverance that takes place in Exodus reflects the deliverance that is in Jesus Christ. We want to point to Him.

In Leviticus He is the atoning sacrifice.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it
to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls:
for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.
(Leviticus 17:11)

The one thing that really sanctifies us and sets us apart is the blood of Jesus Christ. Even in the New Testament that is why communion is such a heavy issue. We read in 1 Corinthians 5:11 that with certain people we are not to eat. Does that mean that we cannot eat an In-n-Out burger with them? No, it means that we cannot partake of communion with them. It is okay to go have a sandwich with them and share with them no matter who they are. But communion, His atoning life blood, is the one thing that sets us apart from everybody else. That is our sanctification. People can come up with all kinds of weird concepts from the New Testament about sanctification. If they would just get back and see the big picture in the Bible, they would not have all this weirdness in their doctrines because it is Christ who sets us apart.

In Numbers He is the smitten rock. In Numbers 20 He says,

Take the rod, gather the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes and it shall be to you his word. And you shall bring forth to them water out of the rock so that you shall give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses lifted up his hand and with his rod smote the rock twice and the water came out abundantly and the congregation drank and their beasts also. (cf. Numbers 20:9–11)

The Lord is giving direction to His people. If you read the book of Numbers at one sitting, and relate the theme of Numbers to the theme of the Bible (which is redemption), you will see that receiving direction from God is all about the smitten rock. What does that tell you? What is the first question you should always ask in terms of direction? Most

Christians today do not ask it; that is the last question you ask. You usually ask, “Will every thing work out so I have enough money? Will every thing work out so that all is hunky-dory?” No, the first question in terms of direction should always lead you to the smitten rock, which is a picture of Christ on the cross. And the first question in terms of direction you should ask, as a Christian is: “How much of the cross is involved in it?” But isn’t that often times the last question you ever ask? Well, let’s go do it. And the Christian thinks, well, if it all works out so perfectly for me, well then, maybe that is God’s will.

The reality is that God is directing your life to the cross. The Holy Spirit is leading you to the cross. Your direction should be toward the smitten rock. And the whole book of Numbers is about how God directs His people. But if you do not see the big picture, you will come up with weird ideas about how to find direction from God. Instead of asking all your friends and getting a hundred opinions, ask this simple question: What does the smitten rock have to do with the cross? If you are moving in that direction, it is the Holy Spirit who is leading you and not the flesh or the desires of the fleshly mind. This is a huge issue.

But notice how gracious God is in terms of His direction. Even when leadership fails, God is still gracious. Moses was supposed to speak to the rock because it was a picture of the resurrected Christ who would lead the children of Israel. But he smote the rock twice because it worked for Moses once before. When leadership fails to do what is right, you might think that your life could get messed up because you were following the wrong leaders. However, even if leadership has failed, God is still gracious. He pours out water abundantly and supplies our needs.

There is great comfort in God’s grace because you cannot be led in the wrong direction. God is somehow going to work to pour out blessings in your life and bring you to the place where you ought to be.

One of the reasons He gives you the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit is so that you can lay your life down at the cross, so that you can take up the cross and follow Him. That is the real demonstration of power and dynamic in your life. The knowledge of that comes to you as you stand back and see the big picture of how the book of Numbers fits into the theme of redemption.

In Deuteronomy Jesus is the faithful prophet. God says,

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren,
like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he
shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.
(Deuteronomy 18:18)

Jesus is the true prophet and the faithful one. “Never man spake like this man, Christ” (cf. John 7:46).

Look at some of the other things here. They are amazing in terms of history. How is Christ portrayed in the books of history? In Joshua, the first thing we see is that Christ is the captain of the Lord’s host. He is the Savior.

And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua,
Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon
thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:15)

Here is the pre-incarnate Christ and Joshua is having a “Christophany” because he is seeing Christ, the captain, who has come to possess the land. It is Jesus and Jesus only who can lead you into victory. You will not be able to come up with some system to do it yourself, or some program to accomplish it. It will have to be done by the captain of the Lord’s host. He is the one who will conquer all your enemies. Look to Him. You need to take your shoes off your feet, recognize how holy He is, bow before Him, and expect Him to bring the deliverance and the victory into your life. He is the captain.

In Judges He is the divine deliverer.

And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. (Judges 2:18)

Even when we are oppressed, the Lord is our deliverer. Often times we are oppressed because we bring it on ourselves. In the book of Judges, why were they oppressed? They were oppressed because they had not obeyed God or done what God asked them to do. They were sitting there crying, moaning, and groaning, saying: “Oh, my life is so bad. I have got all these enemies and they are coming in and attacking me. There is spiritual warfare going on. It is too hard and I am vexed.” We often bring it on ourselves just because we do not have faith and we do not obey God. But what does God do? He is still the deliverer. He stays with a judge here and there and He delivers the people. Jesus Christ is portrayed as the deliverer of His oppressed people, even when they bring the oppression on themselves.

In the book of Ruth, we see that He is the kinsman redeemer. He says,

And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. (Ruth 3:12)

This is a picture of Jesus Christ purchasing a gentile bride, just as Boaz becomes the kinsman to purchase the field for Naomi in order to get Ruth for his bride. Ruth shows us that our devotion and loyalty also ought to be to the Lord. Wherever He leads us, that is where we go; that is where we follow. Christ is the kinsman redeemer in this book.

In 1 Samuel He is the anointed one, the Messiah.

The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed. (1 Samuel 2:10)

And so He raises up Saul—in that sense, a type of Christ, the Messiah—because he was anointed by Samuel the prophet and he stabilized the nation. Jesus Christ is the anointed one.

In 2 Samuel He is the son of David.

I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. (2 Samuel 7:14)

David did commit iniquity and God did chasten him. But David was a picture of a greater one than himself, the Son of David who will rule and reign for God. He expanded the nation.

Then Solomon came along in Kings and glorified the nation. It was a beautiful picture as he built the temple for the Lord.

He is viewed in 1 Chronicles as the builder of the temple.

In Ezra He is the restorer of the temple according to all that God had commanded.

In Nehemiah He reconstructs the whole nation.

In Esther He is our advocate because He preserves the nation. There was a providential protection there and He used a beautiful woman to preserve the entire nation. He would

have preserved it even if this beautiful woman would have declined her challenge to go before the king. He said, “Deliverance would have arisen from another place” (Esther 4:14). Jesus Christ is our advocate in this book

But in all the books of history, with all of the things that are there, we would not want to miss the big thing. We are so prone to just slide across and think that we understand it all. Remember that all of these books were selected by the Holy Spirit and put together in this fashion because the Holy Spirit’s job is to point us to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “When I give you the Spirit of truth He is going to reveal to you more of who I really am” (cf. John 16:13–15). All of the sixty-six books of the Bible compose a picture of Jesus Christ.

Let’s look at the books of poetry and see what goes on there. In Job He is the living Redeemer. “I know my Redeemer lives and I shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25). That is what God wanted. In Job 9:33 He said, “Someone who might lay his hand upon us both.” God was referring to a living redeemer, a mediator—which we find in Jesus Christ.

In the Psalms, He is the praise of Israel. He is the worship, He is the communion—Christ is all. “And let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord” (Psalm 150:6). Jesus explained to the men on the road to Emmaus that everything that was written in the Psalms (Scriptures) was written about Him (cf. Luke 24:27).

In Proverbs He is the wisdom of God. “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old” (Proverbs 8:22). Colossians 2:3 says: “In whom [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” He is the wisdom of God.

In Ecclesiastes He is the great teacher. Ecclesiastes 12 says something that is very interesting.

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. (Ecclesiastes 12:11)

All that is hammered out in your life and fastened proves that ultimate satisfaction can only come from a relationship with one Shepherd. If you do not have that relationship with the one Shepherd, your life will be vanity. But if you see the relationship you have with the one Shepherd then your life has meaning and every goad and every little nail that gets hammered out in the course of your life is important. The fact that you are taking this course might be one of the nails, one of the goads. It is a part of your life because the sovereign God (the one Shepherd) is leading you; therefore, there is meaning and purpose in everything that you do and nothing is in vain.

And finally, in Song of Solomon the poetry speaks of “the fairest of ten thousand.” It says, “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand” (Song of Solomon 5:10). The true lover of my soul is Jesus Christ.

Two Questions to Ask:

1. What is the emphasis of this part of Scripture on Redemption?

2. How does this part of Scripture relate to other parts in terms of Redemption?

If you were to read books like Ecclesiastes or Job, or even the Psalms and Song of Solomon, and you do not bring it back to the theme of the Bible (which is the redemption that is in Christ), you could easily twist the Scriptures to your own destruction. You could come up with some wild doctrines. It is so important that you understand that the basic hermeneutic principle of all Scripture is to bring everything back to the theme of redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Look at how Christ is portrayed in prophecy. He is the suffering servant in Isaiah.

He is the new covenant. The only surety for the new covenant in Jeremiah is Christ.

In Lamentations He is the Man of sorrows and He is acquainted with grief. It says,

Let him sit alone and keep silent, because God has laid it
on him; Let him put his mouth in the dust-- there may yet
be hope. Let him give his cheek to the one who strikes him,
and be full of reproach. (Lamentations 3:28–30)

When you read Lamentations you see just how alone and how sorrowful the Lord sits, how His face went into the dust, and how His cheeks were smitten because of us. But His grace was sufficient.

In Ezekiel you see the glory of God.

In Daniel the coming of the Messiah was promised. Christ is the stone who is cut out without hands. He comes and smites the whole earth.

In Hosea we see Him depicted as the lover of the unfaithful. What a beautiful picture. It says in Hosea 3:1,

Then said the LORD unto me, “Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.”

You can be a sorry adulteress, a whore of this world, having friendship with this world, and yet Jesus Christ still loves you, according to the love of the Lord. That is pretty amazing. And it just shows the love of Jesus Christ and how faithful He is.

In Joel He becomes the hope of Israel in the last days.

He is the husbandman of Amos. He is the vinedresser; Jesus put it in the parable. “My Father is the vinedresser” (John 15:1). And in Amos He is the husband who brings them back.

In Obadiah He is the Savior.

He is the resurrected one in Jonah.

Christ is the ruler of Israel in Micah.

He is the avenger in Nahum, which is pretty amazing. That whole section there of Nahum is a difficult passage of Scripture. Christ is a stronghold. I believe this is referring to the imprecatory nature that is also found in some of the Psalms. Nahum 2:1 says,

He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily.

He is described here as the one who dashes in pieces. He is the avenger.

Remember the imprecatory Psalm that says, “Happy [shall he be], that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones” (Psalm 137:9). We read that and we just cringe. We think, “How could that ever be Jesus Christ?” But in Nahum we see this is Jesus Christ, ultimately. He is the one who comes in as a flaming fire taking vengeance upon those who know not God and obey not the gospel. He does it because they deserve it and it is a righteous thing to do.

Now we always like to focus totally on the fact that He is a God of love—and He is. He loves us even when we are unfaithful. But He is also portrayed as the avenger.

He tells us that vengeance is not ours. We do not have anything to do with it. We are to turn the other cheek. We are to love our enemies. But we still see that Christ will be portrayed as the one who takes vengeance. It will be His job and He will do it. This is why in Isaiah we have that prophetic picture of Him. He is just dripping with blood. It is the blood of His enemies because of the righteous justice of God. Taking a baby and bashing his head up against a rock is nothing compared to an eternal hell. When you start thinking about that in relationship to an eternal hell, it is a very small thing. “Paul, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, persuaded men” (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:11). I often do not think we have any clue how terrible and awful it is for someone not to receive Jesus Christ before entering into eternity. We do not like to think about it, do we? I do not like to think about it and I know you do not like to think about it either. But it is still portrayed in the Scripture and it is part of what we need to see as well.

In Habakkuk He is the holy God.

He is the King of Israel in Zephaniah and the desire of all nations. He is the true Prince of Peace in Zephaniah. The world has always wanted peace, but it will not happen until the desire of all nations comes.

He is the righteous branch in Zechariah.

In Malachi, “He is the Sun of righteousness rising with healing in His wings” (cf. Malachi 4:2). I love it because it ends in Malachi as the Sun of righteousness is rising up with healing in His wings and there is hope. The Old Testament ends on a note of hope.

Then we come to the New Testament. And since we know that so well, we are just going to go through it really fast and look at it.

In Matthew we see that Jesus is the King of the Jews.

In Mark He is the Servant of the Lord.

In Luke He is the Son of Man, the perfect man.

In John He is the Son of God. The supreme Word became the supreme Person.

In Acts He is the ascended Lord and He is ruling over the church.

In Romans He is the righteousness of God. He is our righteousness.

In 1 Corinthians He is our sanctification.

In 2 Corinthians He is all of our sufficiency.

In Galatians He is our liberty because Christ set us free. It was for liberty and freedom that Christ did set us free; so, stay free.

In Ephesians 1 He is the exalted head of the church and He is holding all the joints and bands together forming the church; that is His work.

In Philippians He is our joy because that is connected to the gospel. Every time you give out the gospel the byproduct is joy.

In Colossians He is the fullness of deity, the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form.

In 1 Thessalonians He is our comfort because He is coming again and we are going to be raptured.

In 2 Thessalonians He is our glory because we are to be manifesting His glory and He causes that to happen.

In 1 Timothy He is our preserver.

In 2 Timothy He is our rewarder.

In Titus He is our blessed hope.

In Philemon He is our substitute.

In Hebrews He is our high priest.

In James He is our wisdom.

In 1 Peter He is the cornerstone. He is the rock.

In 2 Peter He is the precious promise by which we actually become partakers of the very divine nature of God through faith in His promise.

In 1 John He is our life.

In 2 John He is our truth.

In 3 John He is our way.

In Jude He is our advocate.

And in Revelation He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

The point is that the Bible is Christocentric in its unity. Jesus is the key to the interpretation of the Bible. There are two questions to ask yourself. The first question to ask is: “What is the emphasis of the Scripture that I am studying, in terms of redemption?” You should always ask yourself that question if you want to follow true biblical hermeneutics. That will be the first question to ask yourself. What does this part of Scripture have to do with the redemptive theme of Scripture? If you are studying Hebrews, then ask what that book has to do with the theme of redemption. You have to bring everything you learn and discern back to that theme, in order to keep yourself from going off onto a tangent. Ask that question with every book of the Bible that you study.

The second question to ask is: “How does this part of Scripture relate to other parts of Scripture in terms of the theme of redemption?” That is the ultimate principle. Remember when you are reading the sixty-six books of the Bible, you are reading that which has been selected by the Holy Spirit to tell the story of redemption. You would not want to miss that point.

I wanted to take time in the beginning of this course to quickly run through and confirm in our hearts and minds the fact that it is all about Jesus Christ. When we study we want to ask the Holy Spirit to bring out those things that have to do with the redemptive theme and how each book is portrayed around that theme. This approach to studying the Bible will keep us from heresy, I guarantee it. And it will always focus us where the Holy Spirit is trying to lead us, which is to Christ.

Lord, thank You for beginning a good work in each of us.
And increase our faith to believe that it is going to happen.
And everything You promised us, in time is going to

happen if we will step out and keep trusting You and believing You to work. We want to do that. So grant us faith, Lord, as we go through Your Word and see it. Build up our faith. It is a holy faith because it is centered in You and in Christ Jesus our Lord in whose name we pray.
Amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 2

God at Work in Human History

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Let's pray.

Father, we know that You are so excited and pleased with Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. I mean, You leaned out of heaven and said it a few times. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And we notice that You always wanted that even when Abraham said he was just not totally satisfied with Eleazer, though he was a good guy. But he wanted his own son. And you just kind of went, "Amen. That is what I want too, Abraham. You are going to get it and so am I." And through that supernatural birth of Isaac, who pointed forward to that perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, who had it in His heart, Abba Father, and pleased His Father.

Lord, we want to see You more clearly in Your fullness and to see in Your Word that just from beginning to end, it has all been about Jesus and the redemption that is in Jesus. And so Lord, help us to just revel in it, to meditate on Jesus, to see the new and fresh aspects of our redemption from Genesis to Revelation. Not just in class, but I mean during our private times or reading Your Word or maybe in another class or just being off and listening to a tape or having devotions. Lord, help us to see over and over the theme of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, for Your glory. Amen.

God is working. God Himself, without human help, is at work throughout all human history. And we are going to learn three concepts this morning, or think about them. The first concept is this: It is a work, not merely an idea that ties the books of the Bible together. So, many times we think it is just the idea or the doctrines. It is not.

God is Working

**God Himself, without human help,
is at work throughout all human
history.**

KEY CONCEPT #1:

**It is a *work*, not merely an *idea*,
that ties the books of the Bible
together.**

When we first go from Genesis to Revelation we want to look at what God did. And our salvation is based not on a concept or an idea or a doctrine of atonement. Our concept—what we want to get is this: Our salvation is based on an activity of God. It is something God really did. Not just a thought process.

And so the question we first ask is this: Is your salvation based an idea or an activity of God? Well, what about Romans 8:9–11? Let's read it. Now tell me, is this a concept or is this in reality an activity?

But you are not in the flesh, but you are in the spirit. [I mean, even this morning. You are in the spirit.] If indeed the spirit of God is dwelling—[and that is present active

indicative—continual, linear dwelling. He is dwelling in you right now.] Now if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is dwelling in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His spirit who is dwelling in you.

Now tell me, is that an idea or is that a real activity of God? The salvation you are experiencing right now—The Holy Spirit, if He is dwelling in you and you are truly Christ's, and if you are truly Christ's He is dwelling in you, you are experiencing the real activity of God in your life. It is not just coming and learning a bunch of concepts and thoughts and theologies. But it is reality.

And in Ephesians 1:19-21 we read:

And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at the right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this life but also in that which is to come.

So isn't this real activity? This is something God did. This is something God is continuing to do now presently and will continue to do in your life until we are brought to that full redemption of the body.

And so our salvation is an activity of God. And that is why we go through from Genesis to Revelation the first time to talk about what God has done. Not so much what He said, but what God has done. We will talk more about what He said.

Now, obviously as we go through, you cannot separate what God has done from what God has said because they are not two separate things. They go together. But we kind of divided them up so that you can see the relationship better in the end.

Our salvation is an activity of God, so certainly it was in the mind of God before the foundation of the world, wasn't it? He thought it. So much so that Scripture says, "The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). God, when He thinks something in His mind it is like it is as good as done. You see, you and I think things but it does not mean anything if you think something. You can sit here and think, "Boy, I would love to take that girl out to dinner." That does not mean a thing. That is just you thinking. When you think it is not like when God thinks. When God thinks it is as good as done. When you think there is a whole lot of pain and sorrow because she may not be interested at all. But from the foundation of the world, God thought it. But He is described as the Lamb that was actually slain from the foundation of the world. That is how close God's acting and doing is connected with God speaking and thinking. It is just in another whole realm.

However, it is the cross of history upon which Jesus died—that is the activity of God. And so it is quite an amazing thing. Are you saved by the cross of history or by the doctrine of atonement? What really saves you? Well, the fundamental unity of Scripture is not merely an idea. It is the real historical work of God. Specifically it is the work of God concerning the redemption of mankind. And everything else in the Bible is related to this main thing of both the old and new covenants—the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

So salvation is based on what God does, what He has done in the past, what He is doing in the present, and what He is going to do in the future.

What is an Old Testament definition of grace? If you were to define grace in terms of the Old Testament, how would you define grace? Is it looking forward to the cross? To some extent, but it is even more than that. What is grace in the Old Testament? It is simply this: Grace is God doing it. Write that down. Grace is God doing it.

Now what is faith then? And you know what? That is grace in the New Testament too. Grace in the New Testament and the Old Testament is the same thing. Grace is God doing it. That is why in the New Testament we say, “When you have grace you have no more excuse for not doing it, do you?” Because if God gives you grace that means you have the ability of God to do it. So how can you possibly make an excuse when you have the power and dynamic of the eternal God, the Omnipotent One, the Almighty El Shaddai, and you are saying, “I could not do it. Would you please give me grace because I could not get it done.” That is just a misinterpretation of grace and we need to rephrase that stuff.

I heard it again yesterday. Somebody said, “Could you give us grace?” It was like, “Oh man, here we go again. You meant, could I give you mercy. Yeah, I could give you mercy. I cannot give you grace because grace means you have the dynamic and power of God. And if you have the dynamic and power of God, you do not have any excuse for not doing it. You have the resurrection life of Jesus Christ and you are going to say, “Well, give me grace.” You do not understand grace. Grace is God doing it in the Old Testament. And grace is God doing it in the New Testament.

What is faith then? Faith is a response to God doing it. That is what Abraham did. He responded. And his first response was really simple. The only thing Abraham said was what? He said, “Amen.” That is all he said. “Amen. Okay.” That is where he started. He responded with an affirmative. “Okay. You are going to do it. Let it be done. I am all for it.” That is where you start.

Well, what is the wrong response then to God doing it? The wrong response to God doing it—which is grace and you ought to have faith and a proper response in His grace—the

wrong response to God doing it is you trying to do it yourself. And that happens so many times. When that happens in the New Testament we call that the what? They are in the flesh. When you say someone is in the flesh what you really mean is this: they are trying to do themselves what God wants to do. And we call that the flesh. And it is because it is man trying to do what only God can do. When what God wants from us is the right response to Him doing it.

Now He has already done it. “In Christ Jesus He has given you all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). We have the dynamic and power for life. And when I fail I cannot say anything except this: “I just fell short of what was supplied me. I had it; I just fell short of it.”

And that is why we go through the Epistles and learn how to interpret and appropriate and apply Jesus Christ. That is what is so wonderful about going from Romans to Jude and spending time there. Because it teaches you, in that section of Scripture from Romans to Jude, you are learning how to interpret, to see and apply Jesus Christ in real life so that it is God doing it and not us that is doing it. And it is a beautiful thing. So, the first concept is basically that it is a work that God is doing. And He is the one that we look to.

Now, think about this. Since it is a work and not merely an idea that ties the books of the Bible together—what if God quit working? What would happen? Well, it would all fall apart, wouldn't it?

**He holds all things together
by the word of His power.**

**If God quit working the positive particles
of all atoms would split apart!**

**Apart from Him there is no salvation.
He alone is God.**

***“This is the work of God that you believe on
Him whom He has sent.” John 6:29***

Right now if God quit working today every positive part of every atom would just split. I mean, scientists do not even understand why the positive particles of the atom are held together. They go and they have figured out a way with the isotopes in order to split an atom. They can divide those positive particles of the atom and it causes a chain reaction. We get this atomic bomb. But they do not really understand why the positive particles in the center or nucleus of an atom are able to stay there and hold their position. Because they are supposed to really be repelling but they do not repel. They just sit there in the center of the nucleus of the atom and nobody can understand. But they figured out how to throw an interference in there. And if they throw certain isotopes in there they can cause an interference and then those things do go [ffft joom]. And it just goes into a chain reaction and you have got an atomic bomb.

But we know from the Word of God that “all things are held together by the word of His power” (cf. Hebrews 1:3). And so if God quit working for just one second, all of the atoms of the universe would just [ffft]. You would not even have to worry about homework or anything. It would be just like—it would be all gone, you know. And the elements melt with fervent heat. So it is like we just cannot afford for God to quit working. And our whole salvation is based upon what God has done and upon His work.

All right, what else besides working is God doing throughout the Scriptures? Well, He is not just working but He is speaking. He is explaining. He is exhorting. He is predicting. Jesus summed up the whole thing very well when in Matthew 11:2–4 He said this: “Go tell what you hear and see.” What they were hearing was doctrine, theology, truth. But what they were seeing were the very deeds and working of God. And Jesus told them, “Go give them both of those things. Go give them the whole counsel of God. Give them both what God has done, what God has said. Put them together.” And I think that is great.

We learn that God is speaking and what God says is related to what God is doing. In Amos 3:7 the Scripture says,

Surely the Lord does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared who will not fear. The Lord has spoken, who can but prophesy?

So the supreme Word and Person Jesus Christ became the supreme work. And that is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:2, “I have determined to know nothing except this: Jesus Christ [That is His person] and Him crucified [that is His work].” The supreme Word, the Person became the supreme work. And so there is a relationship between what God has said and what God is doing.

And the historical books talk mostly about what God is doing. The other books speak about what God has said. And we are going to look at both of them because, you know, it is like the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. It is hard to separate God’s mind and His concept with the fact that it is already done because if God says it, it is already done whether it has happened yet in a historical context or not—it will because it is God that is doing it. Isn’t that neat?

Now we get excited on birthdays, don’t we? But when does God get excited? He gets excited on conception day. Ryan and Gina they are going to be really excited when that

baby finally pops out. It will be great and they will take that date and they will go, “All right, that is the birthday.” And everybody will celebrate that day because that is what we see as humans. But you know when God got really excited? He got excited on conception day; they probably did too. But you know, something that God looks at and He says, “Boom, right here, this is the beginning of life.” And that is a “God thing,” you know. I mean, really it is. That is not weird. God designed that. And if you think God is not excited about that, then you just do not understand God.

It is just like when He came to Abraham and Abraham said, “I have got to have my own son, God. I love Eleazer and he has been great, but I just have to have my own son.” And God went, “Yes! Abraham, you want the same thing I want. Ever since I have created man I have wanted someone that would like rule for Me, someone who would be in relationship with Me and I need that.” It is like God could not get it until He sent His only begotten Son, His beloved Son Jesus Christ, because the rest of us always fell short of that. And if there could have been any other way God could have arranged it He would have done it. But He could not and so He sent His own Son to do it.

And so God gets excited because of Who He is on conception day, whereas like us, in the natural, we get excited on the birthday, on the delivery day.

Key Concept #2

God does everything progressively.

As His plan begins to unfold, we understand more of His ways.

Since the days of Genesis, God has worked through trusting souls.

His plan and program has been progressively revealed through Jesus Christ.

But God is not just working and doing things, He is also speaking in Scripture. And we will look at that. And so the key concept number two is this: God does everything progressively. That is just the way He likes to do things. And as His plan begins to unfold—and it does like the unfolding of a flower—we understand more of His ways. As God worked throughout time, He worked through these trusting souls. He started way back in the days of Genesis and we can see that He has progressively revealed His plan and program through Jesus Christ. That is just the way God likes to work.

Now, why are vast periods of time in the Bible just passed over while other periods are recorded in detail? Don't you just hate that sometimes? And we will see—maybe not, I don't know if we will see it, maybe we will this week, if not, next week—how in Genesis 1–11 you have all this big stuff that took place. It was huge, wasn't it? And it just passed over stuff. It is like, there are things I want to know about in Genesis 1–11 and He did not tell me. It is like, I want to know about that whole thing. How did evil start? Why didn't you tell me how evil started there, Lord? I want to know that whole thing about Satan and how he could be the covering cherub and be created that way and then all of a sudden he

is evil. You can go from Lucifer, this light-bearer, and he can turn into Satan this adversary of God. I would have liked to have known more than just saying, “Well, he fell.” But He did not tell me any more. I would like to have known about the angels and the stars and all of that kind of stuff. But He does not give us that information. And even throughout the Bible He will go through big sections of history and there will not even be anything recorded about that section of history. And then you will get to the next section of history and there will be all of this stuff about this little period that lasted for ten years. And you go, “What is up with that?”

And you begin to realize that the Bible has been selectively chosen by the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit has put these things in the Bible for us to read because they had to do with one theme and that is the theme of redemption. And He has told us everything we need to know about that theme of redemption. So it is a sovereign selection of God.

But God reveals things progressively. What did God simply say to Abraham and what does that statement include? What did He say to Abraham in Genesis 12? Now you go through Genesis 1–11 and there is all this big stuff. You get to Genesis 12 and from Genesis 12 to the end of the book, for thirty-nine chapters, all about one guy—Abraham and his family. And you go, “Well, how come I got 1–11 and I got the creation of the world. And I have got the creation of stars and animals and whales. And I have got man. I have got the fall of man. I have got woman. I got this whole thing with Satan coming in. I have got the Tower of Babel which I wish I know more about the Tower of Babel and the whole thing, you know, but I do not. And there is the flood, destroys the whole earth.” And all of this stuff is going on and you go, “How come we do not know more about that?” And then you turn at chapter 12 and for the rest of the book of Genesis, from chapter 12 to the very end, you talk about one guy, Abraham. And you go, “What is up with that?”

Well, it is because the Holy Spirit is selectively choosing what is revealed. And He is doing it on the basis of a theme. And the theme is redemption. But He does it progressively. And it is just like He starts with a seed and it becomes fully developed. He

starts with an acorn and it becomes an oak tree. He starts with a sperm or an egg and then that DNA code begins to unfold and pretty soon there is a person and there is twenty-three chromosomes of the man and twenty-three chromosomes of the woman and there they are. The two have become one flesh. He starts with Abraham and He ends up Israel, a nation. He starts with one guy, an individual, and a nation develops. He starts that you are born again and then you grow into full maturity in Christ. You start with the incorruptible seed to being born again. And then pretty soon you are in the fullness of Christ. It is amazing. He starts with disciples, just twelve of them, and it goes and develops into world evangelism.

So when God does something He just likes to do it in a progressive way because, well, that is just who He is. So He goes from Abraham, an individual, to a family. And who is the head of the family? Who started the family? Jacob. Jacob started the family. Then He went from a family to a tribe. Where do we catch the tribe? How many people were in the tribe when the tribe started? Seventy, seventy people were in the tribe and those seventy people left and went down into Egypt. The tribe developed into what? A nation. And we see them at Sinai and they are this nation. But it is a nation that started way back with one guy, Abraham. And then the nation develops in Acts 15 into what?—this international scene. And finally, Isaiah 2 prophesies that it is going to become a universal situation. And then eventually in Revelation 21, by the time we get there it is a whole new heaven and a new earth. But it all started with one guy and it just keeps progressively developing and getting bigger and bigger and bigger.

It was the same kind of thing when He started with the tabernacle. It was this little tent of a tabernacle where God was dwelling out in the middle of nowhere. And the tabernacle developed into what? They finally developed it into a temple. Well then the temple developed into what? It developed into Christ in the flesh, God with a body. Then God with a body—Christ in the flesh—said, “It is best that I go away.” They said, “Oh, no, no. Stay here. It would be better if You just stayed here and be Christ in the flesh.” And He said, “No, you guys do not understand anything. I need to go away.” They said, “No, stay here. Stay in the flesh.” “No, no. I need to go away because I need to develop into

what?—the church.” And the church is going to develop into?—the next thing coming will be the kingdom. And the two will become one. And after the kingdom, we will go into eternity. And it is like everything God does He just, pop, pop, pop along the way, does it progressively and it keeps developing. That is just the way He likes to unfold things. That is our God and it is really neat.

So, God has a plan and God has a goal. So the key concept number three is God is going with purpose towards a goal. So, we first learned that is an activity of God that is the basis of our salvation, not just an idea. Then we learned that God is going to do His activity progressively. Little by little it is going to unfold. But thirdly we learn that God is going with purpose towards a goal.

Key Concept #3

God is not random.

**He is going with purpose
toward a goal.**

Now when I grew up, well, I used to read the paper back home. And my favorite philosopher, my little guy that I read all the time was a guy named Hambone. Now some of you, if you are not from the South, you did not grow up in the South, you never read Hambone. Hambone was this old country boy. And Hambone used to say, “Some folks don’t get nowhere cause they weren’t going nowhere in the first place.” I thought, “That

is a lot of wisdom in that.” Even at Bible College some folks do not get anywhere because they were not going anywhere to begin with.

When you set a goal, you start heading toward the goal then you get somewhere. Oftentimes when you are just random, you know, you may, but oftentimes when you are random you do not end up anywhere. You can just go around in circles if you are not careful.

Well, God is not random. We know that because Jesus was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. There is nothing random about that. God had a goal and He is going with purpose towards that goal. And we see that we, in 2 Peter 3:13, we, according to His promise are “looking for a new heaven wherein dwells righteousness.” We are somewhat in sync with God’s goal. What does God want to do? Well, He reveals it in Scripture. Here is God’s goal. And you can bet your bottom dollar God is going to accomplish His goal.

The first is found in Numbers 14:21. He says, “Truly as I live.” What does that mean? It means if I am God and I am alive, this is going to happen. And He is God and He is alive. And as truly as He is God and He is living and He is the living God, here is what is going to happen—“All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” The whole earth is going to be filled with the glory of the Lord. That is God’s goal. That is God’s purpose. It will happen if He is alive and He is God. And last time I heard He is still alive and He is still God. And He is progressively, little by little, accomplishing it.

You turn on the news today and you read what is happening in the Middle East. You know what is happening? God is little by little, progressively, accomplishing His goal. And that is why it is so good to step back and see the big picture so we do not get weird when we are found in a little section of history, because God will accomplish that goal. All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

Now He says it again in Habakkuk 2:14. He says, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” Well, how do the waters cover the sea? Pretty well? What a colloquial expression. Well, that is the way the earth is going to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. And His ultimate fulfillment will be found in Revelation where you see, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men. He will dwell with them. They shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).

This is something that God has always wanted. And our potential is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ and to live like Christ on earth and to rule for God. That is what God has always wanted. That is His desire.

Where is God going with His program of redemption? What is He going to do? He is going to fill the earth with His glory. That is where God is headed. Are you in sync with God? Do you have as your goal the same goal that God has as His goal? Do you really understand and know God’s goal? Because if you do not know God’s goal and you are not walking in step with God, it is like you may hear Jesus say to you the same thing that He had to say to Peter. “Get behind Me, you adversary! Get behind Me, Satan. You are not walking with Me, you are against Me.” You need to get with the program. And the program is to fill the earth with His glory.

Well, the question remains then, what is His glory? Well the answer is this: God will be glorified when the earth is filled with people who live like Jesus Christ. And we, according to His promise, are looking for the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. He called you, 2 Thessalonians 2:14, “by our gospel for the obtaining of [what?]” The gospel will enable you to obtain what?—the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**God will be glorified when the earth
is filled with people who live like Christ.**

***“According to His promise, we are looking
for new heavens and a new earth in which
righteousness dwells.”***

2 Peter 3:13

**Do you see God’s view of the
chief end of man?**

As the Westminster Confession says, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” It has all been, from beginning to end, about having such a relationship with God that He could be your progenitor and He could put in you His own life. And He does that through Jesus Christ so that now today we already have the life of Christ in us. And the life we are living by faith really is the life of Christ. We are dead but we are alive and we are alive with His life. And He wants to fill the earth with His glory. Right now He is doing it through the church. And when the church comes together and there are two or three together, Christ is in the midst. And Christ wants to fill us with His dynamic life and His glory, which oftentimes is revealed in love, because God is love.

The world is able to look on and observe and see God is alive. How do you know God is alive? I know it because Jesus Christ is meeting in the midst of those two or three who are loving each other so much, in such a way that is so observable that we can tell that God is a living God and He is alive. And the earth is being filled with the glory and dynamic of God who so loved the world that He gave Jesus Christ. And these people are living in such a way that we know they have a relationship with Jesus Christ because they are giving themselves in ministry to one another and to the rest of the world. And we can

see the Spirit and dynamic and life of Jesus Christ in and through them. And so we know God is living.

And that is largely what we should be doing now as the people of God. And if we fall short of that glory, the glory of that kind of love, we have no excuse because grace means God is doing it and He has given us sufficient grace to be able to accomplish that. No matter what our circumstance of life is we have that ability to live the life because it is Him living the life in and through us. He is working in us both to will and to do and to cause this to take place. We have to just rest and yield and allow it to take place.

So it is quite an amazing thing that goes on here. So that is His glory. It is the same old issue. It has not changed. What did God want from the beginning? He wanted a people that would rule for Him. He said, "Adam. Why don't you rule for Me? Hey Adam, I will even make you a helpmeet. I will make you a woman because you are going to need it. You are going to need a lot of help." And He just wanted them to rule for Him. But what did they choose? Yeah, Eve was deceived in the thing. Adam was not deceived in the thing. Adam chose, "Well, you know what? I would rule for You, Lord, but right now I have got to please this woman." So he bit into it and everything changed. And what God has always wanted was a man that would rule for Him. And so from Adam on the story of man has been well he will almost rule for God.

What was so great about David when you get to him? It was simply this. He was not some kind of perfect guy or anything at all. It was just that God could say, "He was a man after My own heart." I mean, he wanted to rule for God even though he stumbled all over himself. At least he wanted to. And a greater One than David has come. That is Jesus Christ. And in Jesus Christ is the Abba Father. When He was in the Garden of Gethsemane He was crying, "Abba, Father." All He wanted to know was this: "God, You have got to tell Me. If I am supposed to go to the cross tomorrow and lay My life down and be silent and all that stuff that is in the prophecies, I just have to know, is this really Your will?" Because He was still human and it was like, "This is not going to be easy, is it?" It is like, "Is this really Your will? All I got to know is, is this Your will, God?" And

He was crying, “Abba, Father what is Your will? I have got to know Your will.” And He prayed and God showed Him the will. And once He understood completely and thoroughly and came to the grips that this is the will of God, then He set His face like flint and He went. And it was for the joy that was set before Him. Pleasing the Father, He went. Yes, our salvation was a byproduct, but ultimately He wanted to rule for God and He wanted to please the Father.

And now He has sent the Spirit of His Son into my heart and your heart. And His Spirit is crying within you and me, “Abba, Father!” And we want to please the Father and do His will. There was a time in your life you did not want anything to do with God’s will. But now you want God’s will. And the Holy Spirit is in you lusting to the point of envy. There is a jealousy that goes on, a fight. You know how it can be. You know it in human relationships how jealousy can get in. But the Holy Spirit wants all of us. And it is not that we need more of the Holy Spirit. It is just that He needs more of us. And we need to yield to Him and let Him have all of us, because if He gets all of us He is going to lead us on into the perfect will of God. And the Abba Father that is within us because of Christ. And we will be filled.

And the earth begins even now through the church to be filled with the glory of God. But that is not the ultimate. It will not be until Jesus returns that we see the ultimate and we see the kingdom. Well, the real ultimate will be after the kingdom and the new heaven and the new earth are established wherein dwell righteousness. And that is why Peter says we are looking for that. Is your goal the same as Peter’s goal? Do you have this great hope to see God’s goal accomplished on earth? I mean, it is no problem with God’s will being done in heaven, is there? I mean, didn’t He tell us to pray even on earth, pray that His will would be done where?—on earth. Why? How? Just like it is in heaven (cf. Matthew 6:10). God is not having a problem having His will done in heaven. And everybody says, “Well, let’s just go to heaven and have God’s will done.” And God is saying, “I would really like to get My will done on earth, thank you very much.” He says, “I have always had it done in heaven. That is not a problem. I would like to see My will done on earth. That is My goal.” Heaven is easy. He wants to see it done on earth. And

begin now through me and through you as we yield ourselves to Him completely. That has always been His goal.

Well, as we begin the first act we see that God is going to build a nation through the channel that He has provided. And we are going to look, starting next week we are going to look at Genesis 12 through 1 Kings 10. This is the first section of Scripture that has to do with the history of redemption because God is going to build a nation. It is going to be His channel to provide redemption. And the redemption is the theme, the heart of the history, the prophecy, the poetry, the whole drama of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. And it is going to prepare us for the Messiah to come. And then the Messiah is going to be provided. So it is clear that God's program develops progressively.

And there are three major acts. There is the rise of His program. There is the fall of His program, you might say. And there is the rebuilding of the nation to prepare for Christ. And that is what is promised in Genesis 12. And it is accomplished from Genesis 12 to 1 Kings 10. That is our first big section of Scripture.

So, before the drama begins what we are going to see in Genesis 1–11 is we are going to see the creation and fall of man because God is just setting the stage, showing us that we really need God. We cannot do it without Him. We are dead in the water without Him. Then we see the destruction through the flood in 6–9. Then we see everybody scattered at Babel because it is the same old story, who will rule for God?

Now it ends at verse 9 and you really begin, you might say, with what God wants to do in Genesis 11:10. What takes place there? In Genesis 11:10, what happens? You have the beginning of the Hebrew race, which is the channel for redemption. You had Adam who was the head of the original race. You had Noah who was the head of a new race after the flood. But now you have Abraham, the head of a new race, or a new channel of redemption. We will see that.

And so as we compare Genesis 1–11, dealing with the whole world, Genesis 12 is going to shift right down to one guy. And we are going to focus on him. And while 1–11 is devoted to heaven and earth in general, 12–50, thirty-nine chapters are devoted to one man and his family.

So, how would you sum up what God is showing or doing in Genesis 1–11? What do you think is happening there? I can only sum it up as this: God is setting the stage for redemption. He has selectively chosen certain things to reveal to us that set the stage for the drama that He wants to talk about. And it is a drama. From Abraham on it is just a big drama. And if you love drama you will love the Bible because it is the drama of redemption. And Genesis 1–11 sets that stage for us to go.

So, you know, He alone is God. Without Him we are dead in the water. And so God is showing us the great need for a salvation and His intervention there.

Now as we go through you will note this: What do the first two chapters of Genesis and the last two chapters of Revelation have in common? What does Genesis 1 and 2 and Revelation 21 and 22 have in common? There is no sin in Genesis 1 and 2. And there is no sin in Revelation 21 and 22. In the first two chapters of the Bible there is no sin. In the last two chapters of the Bible there is no sin. What is all the rest of the Bible about? It is about sin and how to be redeemed from that sin. That is why we say the theme has always been the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is largely what God is doing.

Now, that cry from Genesis 3:15 is going to develop until it is answered. And God is for us. And part of the reason God is for us, I think not only because He created us in His image, but one of the practical reasons that is a byproduct of that is this: Did man invent sin? Never. Man did not invent sin. Satan invented sin. And that is one of those things in Genesis 1–11 we wish we knew more about, isn't it? How did Satan invent sin? I wish I knew more about that. All I know is he was given a position and he decided he did not like it. You know. He was given this position and he just said, "Nope, I do not want that." And he moved out of his place and ever since everything has been messed up. And he

went and he infected man with it too. So man did not originally start with sin and man is not going to end with sin either, because of the theme of redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And Satan is finally going to be cast where he belongs because hell was prepared, eternal destruction and Ghenna was prepared for Satan and his angels not for man. It is a shame that people choose to go there with him.

In closing, let me ask you this: How would you sum up how we learned about these different issues in Genesis 1–11? All right, think about it. I am going to give you a statement. You tell me whether you learned this from what God did or from what God said.

We learn in Genesis 1–11 God is a God to be feared. How do you learn that—from what God said or from what God did?—from what He did.

God is able to create and destroy. How did you learn that?—from what He did. He did it. You saw it. It happened.

He is patient with sinners but He judges. How did you learn that? From the way God did, from the way God acted.

He is a loving God but He is also righteous. You learned that from what He did.

He is concerned about His earthly creation and He is concerned personally because He came and talked to guys. How did you learn that? I mean, because He came down and He did it. He sat with them.

He has complete control over His creation. How did you learn that in Genesis 1–11?—from what He did. He caused a flood that breaks upon everything.

He is a God of new beginnings. How did you learn that? He put Noah in that ark and brought him out and said, “Hey, start over. I know it is muddy but do what you can.”

He rescues those who trust in Him. How did you learn that?—from what God did.

And He keeps His promises. How did you learn that and how do you know that?—from what He is still doing.

Our salvation is directly related to an activity. It is what God is doing, not just concepts and ideas there.

So what else does God reveal about Himself? What I see is this. God reveals that He is a lover, that He has a beloved Son, and that there is a spirit of love between them. He is a triunity. And that is the basic foundation stone of all communication. Apart from this foundation stone there is no such thing as communication because He is the eternal God who has always been in perfect communication with Himself. There has always been a lover, God the Father. There has always been a beloved Son to receive that love, Jesus Christ. And there has always been a Holy Spirit who is the spirit of love between them. That has always existed. That is why communication between people is so cool.

If I can love you properly according to the Word of God, it is so neat because there is a God kind of communication going on. And that is part of the eternal God. We have that because we are created in His image. I mean, think about it. You can sit in this room and even your brain is a tri-part. And you can sit here and you can think about what is being said, and you can have a conversation with yourself about it, and then a third part of your brain can remain to make a judgment about what you are talking about to yourself. Isn't that weird? Even your brain has a tri-part relationship. And it is because we are made in the image of God who is a triune God who has always been a lover, had a beloved Son and a Spirit of love exists between them.

And His purpose of creation is for His own glory and that largely has to do with a manifestation of who He is and He is love. And He decided to create us and pour out His love upon us regardless, uninfluenced, because He is just that kind of person. No wonder Jesus would come along and say, "Let My life be in you and you will prove to be a loving

person. You will love your neighbor as yourself. You will love God with all your heart. And nothing can stop it because you have My grace, My working, My ability in you.” You know, now that is life.

Salvation is what God has done, what God is doing, and what God is going to do. And I find real security in that myself. He started it; He will finish it.

And we will begin looking next week at the first act in the drama of redemption as it begins with Abraham.

Let’s pray.

Lord, help us as we go through to see the drama that is involved in redemption. But to see it not just from our perspective Lord, but I just need to see it afresh from Your perspective. And I just pray that You would show us all the potential we have to be part of Your plan, to be part of Your glory. And that the love wherewith You have loved us could truly live and abide in us to where we love You and love our neighbor as ourselves and have a special love for believers among ourselves so that Your glory is brought to earth. And I cannot think of anything more glorious than this kind of love. Lord, we will be the first to admit we have fallen short of the glory. We thank You that Jesus Christ has not fallen short at all in any point in any way. And as He lives in and through us, we can see that we can be brought to maturity.

Cause us to grow up and be 100% in sync with Your theme, redemption, and the glory You want to bring through Jesus Christ in our lives now to this world. Let Your kingdom come, we pray. Let Your will be done on

earth as it is in heaven, for Your glory. As Jesus said, “Abide in Me, My words abide you that you might have My joy and that My joy might be full in you.” Affect redemption in us, Lord. And help us to see it more and more as we go through this class. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 3

The Drama of Redemption Begins

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Let's pray.

Father, we do want to pause and just thank You so much for this day. Lord, we know that our redemption is something that You planned from the beginning. And it is just so overwhelming to think that You have chosen us and You have set Your love upon us. You know, and here we are wanting to know more about You, about Your Word that You gave us, that You inspired by the Holy Spirit, that canon of Scripture that was collected and testified to that the Holy Spirit wrote it. These sixty-six books we have, Lord, we just stand in awe sometimes of Your revelation. And we see in it there is a unity and a plan and we just want to thank You for the plan You have had for us from the beginning, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And we thank You for our salvation, Lord. It is just good.

And so Lord, we thank You that we stand here today right before You, not because of anything we have done or said but because of what You have done, because of what You said about us in Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray, amen.

So we saw that God is working. He is doing things. He is saying things. And it is an activity of God that saved us. It was not just an idea but it was the real cross of history that brought about our salvation. And the Lord has promised that as the waters cover the

sea so will the knowledge and the glory of the Lord cover the earth. That God is going to have a people on earth that is filled with Jesus Christ, conformed to His image, and it is going to bring glory to Him. So, God is going with purpose toward a goal.

You will need to know those Scripture verses, Habakkuk 2:14 and Numbers 14:21. Those are important verses because they explain the goal of God. And we see His target that He is shooting for is not so much heaven as it is earth, right now. I mean, that is why we are praying, “Your kingdom come on earth. Let it be done just like it is in heaven.” That is the way He wants it done.

And so God has set the stage. He has created man but man has fallen. He has had to destroy the earth with a flood because man was so wicked. And even at the tower of Babel now, He has scattered man. Because the real issue with God—and it is still His issue this morning—is, who will rule for God? It has always been the big issue with God. Because His throne is the center of the universe, the thing that stays on His mind often is: who will rule for God? And that is what God, ever since He created man, has wanted a man to rule for Him. “Just have dominion and rule for Me,” that is all He really asked.

But man decided, “Well you know, I would rather rule for myself. I appreciate everything you have done for me, God. But I would like to just kind of go it on my own.” And that has been the problem. And so God is desiring to have people who would rule for Him.

ACT I

Genesis 12 – I Kings 10

Act I Abraham – David (14 generations)

Act II David – Babylon (14 generations)

Act III Babylon – Christ (14 generations)
(Matthew 1:17)

So let's begin Act One, actually. There are five acts in the drama of redemption. Act One begins in Genesis 12 and goes to 1 Kings 10. That is Act One that we will begin today. It has eleven scenes in it. We are going to do, hopefully, six of the scenes today and five of the scenes next week. And so we will hopefully finish Act One in two weeks. So, Act One starts in Genesis 12, goes to 1 Kings 10. What God is doing, as the drama of redemption begins? He is building a nation through which they can be a channel for redemption. That is God's goal. And He wants to bring salvation to the world, but He builds this nation to do it through. And we are going to see today He chooses one man.

Now, I like the way the Holy Spirit divided up the Bible in Matthew 1:17. He made it real simple and real clear, when He said that from Abraham to David were fourteen generations. And from David to the Babylonian captivity were fourteen generations. And from the Babylonian captivity to Christ were fourteen generations. Matthew 1:17. And that really is Act One. Or the drama of redemption that we are going through goes from Abraham, the one man, until Christ finally comes.

The Patriarchs

Genesis chapters 12-50

**God begins to build a nation
through Abraham.**

And so we are going to begin to look at Scene One today, the Patriarchs from Genesis 12–50. As we saw, God did all these big things in Genesis 1 through 11. Now, from chapter 12 to the end of the book of Genesis, all God is going to talk about is this one guy and his family pretty much. And it is quite amazing.

So, God starts with one man. He gives a covenant promise to Abraham in chapter 12. He says,

Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

Five Seed-thoughts

“I will make you a great nation.”

“I will bless you and make your name great.”

“You shall be a blessing.”

**“I will bless those who bless you, and I will
curse him who curses you.”**

**“In you all the families of the earth
shall be blessed.”**

So He gives five seeds for the recovery of man. The first seed is: “I am going to make you a great nation.” God says, “I will do that.” Secondly He says, “I will bless you.” Then He said, “You are going to be a blessing.” And then He said, “I am going to bless whoever blesses you and curse whoever curses you. In other words, I am going to sovereignly protect you.” And then He said, “In you all the nations and ethnics of people on earth will be blessed.” So He made five promises to him in Genesis 12:1–3. But He started off simply by just saying, “I will bless you.”

Now, what does it mean when God says “I will bless you”? What did that include? It included these five seeds. What else did it include? I mean, it included redemption. But did it include breakfast? Yeah, it included breakfast. Did it include marriage? Yeah, it included marriage. God just simply says, “I will bless you” and then He starts unfolding the blessings. And when you get through unfolding them, it is everything. But He starts with a little seed—just, “I will bless you”—and before it is over, look at all the things that have happened to Abraham, his family, this great nation. And even his seed, Jesus Christ, who is going to come back and rule and reign and all the earth is blessed.

So God is doing this and He is revealing it progressively like He likes to do. And so the key phrase is: "I will make you a great nation." His whole plan is presented here like a blue print. This is where it starts, Genesis 12, with one man. God is going to do it.

Now all the families of the earth will be blessed. In light of the command in Matthew 28 which says,

Jesus came and spoke to them saying, "All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations [every ethnicity] baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20)

In light of that command, in other words, how does it relate to Matthew 28? When God says, "Abraham, I will bless you. I will make a great nation of you. I will curse people that curse you. I will bless people that bless you. You are going to bless all the nations of the earth." Do you see how He started with Abraham and He went through 'til the time of Christ, because we know from Galatians 3 that the seed is really Christ.

Turn in your Bibles for just a moment to Galatians 3 where it says in verse 14 that Christ was cursed. And why was Christ cursed? He says, in order that,

In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (cf. Galatians 3:14)

Wow! So the very blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles. But that blessing, it says even in Galatians 3:14, is found where? In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham comes.

So God is going to build this great nation by providing the Savior in the Old Testament. But when the Messiah comes, the Messiah is going to build the church by proclaiming Himself as the Savior. And so in the Old Testament we have the Savior provided. In the New Testament we have the Savior proclaimed. But they are tied together in the promise that God made to Abraham. Galatians 3:14, Paul's understanding of it by the Holy Spirit is that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham comes. And he calls it the promise of the Spirit through faith. In other words, you can be born again and receive the Holy Spirit, be born of God, brought into His family, and receive the very blessing that was promised to Abraham. That is pretty radical, isn't it?

Turn to Romans 4. We see what He said. In Romans 4:9, speaking of this blessing, he says,

Is this blessing then upon the circumcised or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.

So he brings up Abraham because that is where it started. And it was through faith that Abraham received the righteousness because he was looking forward to the promised Seed, which was Christ.

Again, in Romans 4:16,

For this reason it is by faith that it might be in accordance with grace in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. As it is written: a father of many nations have I made you, in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being those things which do not exist.

So the promise was made to Abraham and anyone that believes the promise really is a true descendant of Abraham. They are made so by their faith. And they enter into all those covenant blessings that have been promised by God.

Is the Church a Nation?

- **Do we have a people with a language?**
- **Do we have laws, leadership, and government?**
- **Do we have a homeland?**

And so God begins with this one man. And this is huge as far as God is concerned because He set the stage, showing man what a failure he is. But if God is going to build a nation through this guy, what do you have to have to build a nation? Well, three things are required to build a nation. You have to have a people with a language. You have to have government. That is, leadership and laws by which to govern them. And you have to have land, a homeland, to live in. Without those things you do not have a nation. Any nation that is recognized by the United Nations today has to be a people with a language; they have to turn in their constitution, their laws, their government, how they function; and they have to actually have a homeland, a place to dwell. If they do not have those three ingredients they cannot be a nation.

And so God is going to build a real nation. And I think that is important because Jesus Christ is going to return to earth physically, bodily, and He is going to rule on a real earth. It is not just some pie-in-the-sky thing. It is something God has been doing from the beginning.

Now the church, in a sense, is it a nation too? Well, you have to ask, it all depends. It is a holy nation, but in what other sense is the church a nation? Does it have a people with a language? Does the church have its own language? Yeah. We do have our own language, don't we? It is a spiritual language. And there is the Abba Father of the Holy Spirit within us. But we do have a language. We are a people with a language. Do we have government? Do we have laws? Do we have leadership? Yes, we do. Do we have a homeland? Yeah. It is just not here. But we do have a homeland. And so in a sense, we are a nation. We are just different than a nation that is on earth.

God is building right now a nation on earth because He wants to bring the Messiah through this. He has to have this.

Now how did God do it? God picked a barren woman. In Genesis 15, Abraham is seventy-five years old and God comes and promises that he is going to have a child. Now if you are going to start a nation and you said, "I promise you I am going to make this great nation out of you, and your descendants are going to be like the stars of heaven on a clear night." Would you have chosen a woman that could not get pregnant to start your nation? From a practical standpoint, what would you look for if you were going to build a great nation? I mean, get real! I would be looking for—I would say, "All right. This woman looks like she could have some babies, you know." Okay, you choose them.

But is that what God did? No! God chose a woman who was not able to have children. Why did God do that? Because He wanted to make clear this is God's work, not man's. It was so opposite of everything we would have done if that was our goal to build a great nation. So it tells you that this is a supernatural nation. God is doing it. And it is really neat to see the way the Lord does it.

So Abraham, you know, is seventy-five years old. All God says is, “I am going to do it.” And He delights to work in and through impossible situations.

So in Genesis 16, we actually have the birth of Ishmael because Abraham waited ten years and after ten years he took things into his own hands and he tried to do what God said He would do. Now that is a common mistake and we call that an Ishmael. You know, when somebody says, “Don’t create an Ishmael,” what they mean is do not go out and try to take things into your own hands and make God’s will come to pass. But we are so prone to do that. We read a promise in the Bible. And we take that promise and we hold onto it for a while. Maybe we meditate on it. We memorize it. And then all of a sudden, you know, we decide that we just really need to help God cause this thing to happen. And so we find ways to make it happen. And that is usually done in the flesh. Not that it is bad necessarily in and of itself, but that is just still in the flesh. Why?—because it is man trying to do it. But God has promised He will do it if we have faith and if we believe and wait upon God.

Now personally, I think he did pretty good, Abraham that is. Really he waited eleven years. It says ten, but actually when you read it, it was like he was eighty-six. He was seventy-five when he got the promise and he was eighty-six when he had the kid. So really that is like eleven years. We just said ten for a round figure. Now, for me to wait ten or eleven years for anything, I think is pretty good. Matter of fact, to wait ten minutes is pretty good. And so after this time you can see where you might be tempted to go, “Well, you know, maybe God wants me to help out.” But God wants to do it because He is great and He wants to prove that He is the one that is doing it.

Now, God came to Abraham in Genesis 17 and you know the story there. The word Abram means “exalted father.” And Abraham means “father of a multitude.” Well, both of those are pretty strange names for a guy that is ninety-nine years old and does not have any kids. If names mean anything, this guy is walking around and his name means father of a multitude. “Well, how many kids you got, Abraham?”

“Well, none yet.”

“How old are you, Abraham?”

“Ninety-nine.”

“Uh-huh. Who gave you that name?”

“My God. He is so great.”

“I can see your God is pretty—Yeah, He is right on.”

I mean, think about the testimony that Abraham had to maintain. And think about the scoffing or the laughing or the jeering that could have taken place as he walked around with the name, “father of a multitude.” And still, he is not having any kids through Sarah. So it’s pretty amazing.

Now, does God work this way in your life? Often times it seems He does. And what God did when He took Abram’s name in Genesis 17, He inserted His name *Yah* or *Yahweh* and He revealed Himself as *El Shaddai*. He was the all-sufficient God. And He just put His name right in the middle of Abram’s name. Separated it and put *Yahweh* right in the middle. That is what God has always wanted is just to dwell in our midst. And as He builds this nation, a channel to bring redemption to the world, He is wanting to do it supernaturally; so that man will not boast because man will boast wherever he can. And men like for men to boast. They really do. That is why teachers become such an issue in the church. That is why Paul had to write and say, “I wish everybody would just quit saying, ‘I really like this teacher and I really like that teacher. And I really like this other teacher.’” “Who is coming to speak in chapel?” It is like you hear it all the time. It is like it does not really matter as long as the Lord speaks.

Paul wrote to the church and said, “As long as you keep thinking that way, you are just proving that you are carnal. You are proving that you are in the flesh.” Men love to boast in men. It is just something about our flesh and it is still in the church today. It is like Paul had to write and say, “Hey, God was trying to rid us of that kind of stuff from the very beginning. What matters is if God has put His Spirit within you and put His name upon you.” Then God can use anybody.

And so, God comes and He has this great name change for Abram because God wants to do a supernatural work. And so Isaac is finally born in Genesis chapter 21. This is twenty-five years after the promise. How many of you have waited twenty-five years for something that God promised you? I mean, that is a long time to be waiting on God. It was not Abraham, but *God* was going to build the nation.

Let's turn to Hebrews 11 and let's read what is there because it is very important to recap what is said here. Hebrews 11, beginning in verse 8. Because, you know, every time when you look through history, every time God wants to do something great, what does He normally do? Think about it. Every time God did something great, pretty much in history, what did God do? It is very simple and very natural. But in His case it was always supernatural. Every time God wanted to do something great He just had a baby born. You can trace the works of God, pretty much, by just a baby is born. And this little baby grows up and becomes some awesome person that God has used and God still works that way today. If He wants to do something great He usually just has a little baby born. That baby grows up. It might be you. And you do not even know it yet. I am sure Joseph did not know it until much later in his life, all that was going to happen. You know, none of them did. They grow up and God then just uses them. Cause God chooses to. And that is the way God likes to do things. And that is what He did with Abraham, He had Isaac born.

But in Hebrews 11:8 we read:

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even

beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. (Hebrews 11:8-12, NASB)

So through this one man—God calls him as good as dead and I guess God knew. He said, “No way is this guy going to have any kids. He is just as good as dead.” But he did. And even Sarah, by faith, believed in the promise of God. She considered God, just like Abraham did not consider his own body. And so, you know, the real test of faith is found there beginning in verse 17.

By faith, Abraham, when he was tested [and this is always the test of faith] offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offered up his only begotten son. It was he to whom it was said, “In Isaac your descendants shall be called.” He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type. (Hebrews 11:17-19 NASB)

The Test of Faith

Genesis 22:1-3;11-12

**Isaac was the key to
the fulfillment of God's promise.**

**Abraham trusted the ability of God
doing the work!**

(Hebrews 11:17-19)

So Abraham so believed in God that he was, after receiving Isaac, able to offer him because he believed that God would even raise him from the dead. Now the test of faith is always what you look at. It says, "Sarah considered God and Abraham considered God." It was not like they looked around and—he did not look at her and say, "Dear, you are looking better today. And I am feeling a little better myself. We are both a hundred years old but you are just getting better every day. Let's just have a kid today." It was not like that. They looked at each other and went, "You are old!" And she said, "Yeah, well, you are as good as dead." But they said, "Let's don't focus on what is natural. Let's don't focus on what we see here horizontally. Do we or do we not have the promise of the living God that He is going to give us a child?" And so they considered God and because of faith in God, they were able to enter into and become the instruments that God worked through in the way that He wanted to do it. It is pretty amazing what the Lord is doing.

Faith Tested through the Seven Separations of Abraham

- **Gen. 12:1 Familiar boundaries & country**
- **Gen.12:1 Kindred & old associations**
- **Gen. 13:1 The world, Egypt**
- **Gen. 13:11 Carnal self-advantage**
- **Gen. 14:17-24 Desire of ill-gotten money**
- **Gen. 17:18 Fleshly man-made attempts**
- **Gen. 22:8 The supernatural gift**

I think we have to take a moment and turn to Genesis 12 in our Bible. We have to look at Abraham because he was so great. He was tested in many ways like I am tested and you are tested. I want to look at the test that he went through beginning in chapter 12. And just remind ourselves of them. He is asked to make seven different separations in his life, you might say. It is like, God came to Abraham and said, “Abraham if you want to really be used by Me and you want to see My power, My work, these are some things I am asking you to do to prove that you really trust Me and that you believe. And if that is the case, I am going to work and do mighty things in and through you.” And if he is the father of all them that believe, then he is the father of you and me. And if he went through this as the father of all those that believe, aren’t you going to be challenged on the same kind of situations and testings that Abraham went through? Well, yeah, maybe not exactly. You are not going to be ninety-nine years and be wanting to have a kid probably. But you are still going to face something similar to that in your life.

And He begins giving seven separations. And I want to give you those seven separations that Abraham went through because I believe they relate to your own testing in your own

life. And Abraham is the foundation stone here. Chapter 12:1 The Lord said to Abram, “Go forth from you country.” In other words, the first thing he had to separate from was his own country, everything that was familiar to him, all the boundaries that he had known. He grew up knowing, “Well okay, this is a boundary line and that is a boundary line. And this is my country. I know where that is and I know where that is at.” And he was familiar with it. But God said, “You have got to get away from the boundary lines. You have got to move out, Abraham, beyond the boundary lines. You cannot stay where you are familiar with things because if you do, you are going to trust in the arm of flesh.” That is what will happen.

What about you? Do you enjoy being right where the boundary lines are and you feel pretty comfortable there? I do. But God is calling me out beyond that. He wants me to be able to trust Him and not rely on the things I am familiar with.

And not only that, I mean those are just geographical things. But look at the rest of it. He says, “And I want you to separate from your relatives and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you.”

So I mean, his kindred, his family, his associations, friends and loved ones that he grew up with all of his life. He was from Ur of the Chaldees. And he had to separate not only from geography but from relationships that he had known, very close and personal relationships.

Now God may call you to the same thing. You make friends, they are your good friends; but often times if you are going to follow God, He is going to make you leave them. You say, “Well, that just sounds terrible.” Yeah, but He wants you dependent on Him. “There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother” (cf. Proverbs 18:24). And you have got to put God first. And He is going to say, “You are going to have to separate not only from geography, but you are going to have to separate from personal relationships that you have held dear if you are going to step out in faith and really say and believe that God is all.” And you withhold nothing from Him. You give Him everything.

And so He starts with simple geography but moves on to those harder things to separate from, like relationships. And it is not that they were bad relationships. It is just that God is calling you out to be separate and He is going to carry you on. And that is a real test. Are you willing to give up those kinds of relationships in order to establish your own personal relationship with God? That is one of the areas I believe we fail at pretty quickly. At least I do.

Then he goes on. Look at chapter 13 for the third thing that he has to be involved with in terms of separation. It says, “So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev. He and his wife and all that belonged with him and Lot went with him.” So God called Abraham out of where? He went up from Egypt. God called him out of Egypt—which is actually a prophecy in the New Testament. That is part of the reason Jesus had to go down into Egypt for a time so that He could come out of Egypt because He was fulfilling a type of what from the very beginning Abraham went through. That God was going to call His Son out of Egypt. And we know Egypt is a type of what?—the world. They always looked back. They would be out in the wilderness and they would look back to Egypt and they would think, “Man, I wish I could go back there because it was pretty nice. The leeks, the garlic, the onions—just all the different spices we had to eat. It was just so much better than what we have out here in the desert. And all we get is this manna every day and it is the same thing. You get breakfast, lunch, and dinner and there is no change. It is just I wish I could go back and have the variety that the world provided.” And Abraham had to separate himself from Egypt.

And I think that is one of the things that is going to happen in your life—if it has not already—God is going to call you out to a separation from the world and the things of the world, so that you will not love the things in the world. You won’t love the world system and all it has to offer. Nor will you even love the things that are in the world. They will mean less and less and less if you are called out to be separate to follow the Lord.

And when he got called out from Egypt, look what happened there in Genesis 13:2-3. “Abraham was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.” He had all that stuff. And he went on these journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Aia. Now he was at Bethel when he left and went down into Egypt. When he came out of Egypt where did he go back to?—Bethel—to the starting place. Isn’t that amazing? It was like almost all the time he was in Egypt he did not make any progress. He had left Bethel, went to Egypt, spent all that time in Egypt, came back out and had to start all over again at Bethel, which is the starting place. Read the story of Elijah in 2 Kings 2 and how he started from there and went all the way over to the Jordan.

So he had to separate from the world if he was going to make progress with God. And the sooner you separate from Egypt, the world, the sooner you will get to the starting point to be walking with God. And it is like until you get separated from the world, you have not even really started. But God takes him to that place and says, “Get back to the place of simple surrender where you worshipped Me at Bethel, at the house of God.” So he did.

All right, the fourth separation is found in verse 11 there in Genesis 13. You know the story. He and Lot are there together. Their cows are just multiplying and their flocks. They are just getting blessed. But they cannot live off the same land anymore because they are so rich and they have so many animals to feed and to water. Something has got to give. So verse 11 says, “So Lot chose for himself all of the valley of the Jordan.” Well, Abraham had said, you know, “Take what you want, Lot. I do not really care.” So Lot lifted up his eyes, he looked, he saw the valley and how watered it was. And right behind it was Sodom and Gomorrah. And he said, “I think I will go that way. That is the best place.”

But Abraham had separated himself from that. Lot chose the carnal walk. And the carnal walk can be determined so simply in the life of a Lot. What is the carnal walk? It is simply what? It is choosing for yourself. That is all the carnal walk is. You do not have to

be a rocket scientist or some spiritual giant to know what the carnal walk is. Lot chose for himself.

How about you, are you in the carnal walk? You say, "Well, I am not carnal!" Well, if you are choosing for yourself you are. That is what carnality is. It is choosing for yourself. You say, "Well, I thought it was when you start listening to all this stuff." No. A carnal person is someone that chooses for himself. That is what Lot did.

Abraham did what? He said, "I am not going to choose. God is calling me out of that carnal walk. God is calling me out of that kind of situation. I will not choose. Lot, take whatever you want. You take the high road and I will take the low road. It makes no difference. I am going to let God choose for me." I do not know what is best for my life and I am not going to make that choice. You look all around and you think, boy, it looks better to go that way. That looks all green. And you look over there and it looks all deserted. That is just dry. But, what do I know? That looks green; that looks dry. Does that mean anything? Well, only on the human level. On the human level it means I ought to go that way. It's green. And I will just not go that way, it is dry and brown. It is a desert. But he says, "You know what? I cannot make decisions that way anymore. I have got to let God make those decisions. I cannot go by the seeing of the eye. I have to remove myself from the carnal walk that Lot got involved in and suffered for because he chose for himself." He looked and said, "That is the best thing for me." And Lot went that direction. And you know what happened and the influence that came into his life.

Whereas, Abraham went the dry direction, the barren direction, the desert direction, and he got blessed because God blessed him. And so it does not have anything to do with circumstances. It has to do with your relationship with God. Do you want to separate from choosing for yourself? Then let God choose for you. You will be blessed.

It is the same thing with marriage. You want to choose your own mate for marriage? That is what most people do. "Well God, this is who I want." And then they start praying for it or they start looking for it, rather than saying, "God, I do not know. Why don't You

choose for me? Why don't You cause my heart to be open to whatever You want and whoever You want in my life?" That is what He did with Isaac. Isaac did not have much of a choice, did he? But the Lord blessed him. Well, Rebecca did not either, did she? But the Lord blessed her. I mean, she had a choice and it was just to go with Eliezer. Will you go with this guy or not? And she said, "I will go." So she made her choice. "I will do it. I believe God is leading and I will do it." And then God blessed them both.

So, you have got to separate from the motive of self advantage. I wish the church today could get that message of Abraham. And it fits so with Jesus Christ, doesn't it? These things that were worked out in Abraham's life are things that we see so perfectly in the life of Jesus Christ, who did not choose for self advantage, who humbled Himself, laid His own life down to save others. But leave it to you and me, if we are in the carnal walk, you will choose for your own self advantage. Even churches do this.

It is hard to find a church that will actually help another church. You know one of the biggest problems we have on the mission field today is that churches will not help the other churches. Everybody is over there trying to build their own little kingdom. And they see an opportunity—whoosh—they go right for it and try to cut everybody else off. "We are the successful ones over here in this area." And that is one of the biggest problems on the mission field today. It is sad because it is a carnal church choosing a carnal walk for its own self advantage. And you see Abraham is called and said, "You got to get out of this." He is the father of all that believe. So I have get out of it too.

Well, he goes on to the fifth separation. I love this one. He has another test. And there is a situation because Lot has gone where he should not have gone anyway. And these kings Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar. You know, four kings against five. They rise up and they are going to Sodom and Gomorrah. Verse 12 says they also took Lot, Abraham's nephew, and his possessions, departed for he was living in Sodom at the time. It is like Abraham says, "Well, I guess I better go help my carnal, fleshly nephew. He needs help. Somebody

has captured him.” And that always happens when you get in the flesh, in the carnal walk, you get captured.

Genesis 14:14 says that Abraham heard his relative had been taken captive, so he led out his trained men and he went in pursuit. Then he defeated Chedorlaomer.

And that is where verse 17 says, after the defeat, he met Melchizedek, king of Salem. In verse 18, he was priest of God Most High. And verse 19 says,

And he blessed him and he said, “Blessed be Abram of Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” He gave him a tenth of all. The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.” Abram said to the king of Sodom. “I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten. [I am not going to give that back unless you want it back. I do not think you do.] And the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; Let them take their share. (Genesis 14:19-24)

Abraham had to separate himself even from what might have been considered a legitimate supply. Because this guy was the king of Sodom and he was very rich and he said, “You have helped me out, now let me bless you and help you out on your way.” And Abram said, “You know what? I appreciate it but I already told you that my God is the possessor of heaven and earth. My God is God Most High. And if I take your stuff and I am made successful from taking your stuff, then how am I really going to give God all the glory for it?” He says, “I do not want your stuff. I will not even take a sandal

thong.” You know if somebody has blown out a flip-flop, he says, “I don’t even want the stuff to repair or fix it because I won’t take anything from you. I just want God to get all the glory for every bit of the supply that comes because He is God Most High and I can trust Him to supply my needs. And I do not need help from the king of Sodom.”

At first you might think that sounds kind of prideful but it really was not. It was humility. It was God and Abraham having a relationship and Abraham having his face fixed on God. He said, “God you said You would supply my needs, now I believe it. And I am not going to take help from somebody else where it might look like they helped me instead of God.” That is pretty amazing, isn’t it? That is a hard thing to separate from, from the riches that might be available to us. But he is going to trust God.

Well, let’s go on to chapter 17:18. I love that story. Here where Abraham waits about eleven years, goes out and Sarah says, “Here, let’s try Hagar.” And they have a kid by Hagar, Ishmael. And eventually Ishmael becomes such a problem in life that in Genesis 16:12 it describes him as this: “He will be a wild donkey of a man.” In other words, he is going to be a total jackass. And his hand—notice what it says about him—“His hand is going to be against everyone and everyone’s hand will be against him.” I mean what a guy! There is nobody this guy gets along with. Doesn’t it remind you of what we read in Galatians again? “The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit lusteth against the flesh.” And Ishmael is a type of the flesh. And it is like he just does not get along with anybody. And nobody else is going to be able to get along with him.

But here is poor Hagar she has been kicked out of the home because, for one, her son is just a hellion and causes problems. And Abraham finally had to let her go. She is out in the middle of this field and she is like, “What in the world is wrong with my life? I am standing here with my son and it is in Genesis 16:13, Hagar called the name of the Lord who spoke to her: “Thou art a God who sees,” or *El Roi*. And she named the place *Beerlahairoi* which means “the well of the living One who sees me.” Because he came to her and he told her there in verse 11, the angel of the Lord appeared and said, “You are

with child and you shall bear a son and you shall call his name Ishmael because the Lord has given heed to your affliction.”

So God still blessed her and He still blessed Ishmael to a certain degree, because He is a God who sees where you are. And even though He was building the nation through Abraham and his seed Isaac, because of the relationship there, He still sees everything. And He is a God who wants to bless.

So anyway, back to chapter 17:18, the sixth separation of Abraham. And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee.” He said, “That is what I want.” Because God had reconfirmed the promise to him and he just wanted the work of his own strength to be blessed before God. And he had to separate from that. God had to say, “Abram, I cannot and I am not going to bless the work of your own flesh. I am not going to do it. You are going to have to give that up, Abraham.”

And that is the hardest thing in the world to give up is the work of our own hands because you were so involved in it. And you thought you were blessing God and you thought you were doing God’s will. You made all this stuff happen in the energy of your own strength. You worked hard. You caused it to happen. And then, there it is. You are wanting to say, “Oh, bless that God. Please bless that, God.” And God says, “I am not going to do it. You are going to have to separate from that.” You have got to get away from wanting God to bless the work of your own strength and your own hands. When it has been because you are trying to help God accomplish His purpose. He says, “You have got to give that up.”

It is funny, you know, the church needs to give it up. That is why so many things done in the church today are backwards. They are not what is followed in the book of Acts. Every time in the book of Acts that God worked, there was a prayer meeting first and then there was direction from God during the prayer meeting and then they went and did what God directed. That is not what you see in the church often today. What you see today is men

decide what they are going to do and then they go out and recruit people to pray for it and to back them up in prayer. That is not the way the early church went.

The early church said, “No, first let’s minister to the Lord. Let’s get before Him. Let’s pray. Let’s get before God and let God speak. And if God speaks and says do something that is what we will do.” It was prayer and fellowship with God that was backed up by their work. But so many times it is the opposite of that. It is us just deciding what we want to do and then we start getting people to pray about it. Say, “Would you back me up?” And it sounds all spiritual. “Yeah, I am really getting a lot of prayer warriors to back me up.” But did God direct it, is the issue.

And that is kind of what Abraham was doing. He was saying, “God, bless all that work that I have caused to happen.” And God said, “You have got to separate from that, Abraham. And you have got to wait on Me.” And so he separated the sixth time.

Then finally in chapter 22, we see the last separation of Abraham. And I wish we had time to read the whole chapter but we do not. Chapter 22, He tests Abram and says, “Well, now you have got Isaac. He has been supernaturally born. What I want you to do is go offer Isaac up as a sacrifice.” And this is the hardest separation of all in life. It is one thing to say, “Get out of here; leave geographically what is familiar to you.” That is hard, but you can do it. It is harder even to say, “Cut some of the relationship ties you had so that God will know you are just going to follow Him and you love Him more than you love father, mother, sister, brother or anybody else on earth.” That is a hard thing to do. Or to say, “I am just going to give up the world, the world system, all the things of the world. I do not need those things. I am going to separate from that. I am not going to choose for myself anymore. I am going to let God make the choices in my life. I am not even going to accept money if that money and accepting of that money won’t in some way prove that God gave it, that God did it, then I do not even want it. I want it to be totally God. And I am not going to ask God to bless just the work of my hands or something I caused to happen.”

But then God finally comes through and He does the supernatural thing. And maybe you have got the supernatural gift or some supernatural calling. God does the supernatural thing and then God turns around and says, "Guess what? I want you to give up the supernatural thing too." And you say, "Wait a minute, wait a minute. I thought that was where You were trying to get me to. I thought I have been doing all this other stuff and I have separated and separated and separated. And then You finally did the supernatural thing because I had faith and I trusted You and I separated from all this stuff and now you are telling me you want me to give up the supernatural thing too." And God says, "Yeah. I mean, I want it to be about Me and you and our relationship, man. I can do supernatural stuff all day long. I am God. Just because you cannot do supernatural stuff and you feel like the supernatural thing is a big deal, it is not a big deal with Me. I am supernatural. I just do supernatural all the time."

And so He says, "You have even got to give that up because I want to test you and prove where your heart is really at. Is it for God?" Easy to say, "My heart is for God." But look at the father of all of those who believe, Abraham, the one that the nation was built through. And look at what test he went through and he did prove his heart was for God. And he believed, "Okay, if You are the supernatural God and You gave me the supernatural gift of the son, I can give You the son up and if You need to You can raise him from the dead. I guess that is Your business. I will be all about the obedience and trusting You and I guess You will be about the miracles."

And that is exactly what happened. And God intervened because God Himself would provide a lamb. But do you see in Abraham's life, as God begins to build the nation, what kind of man does God want to build anything through? He wants a man that will rule for God. He wants a man that will be in relationship with God. It has all been about that from the beginning. That is what He has always wanted. That is what He wants today. And it can be a woman, a man or a woman, just a person that will just rule for God. That is what He wants. And He chooses this man to build the nation through. So the test of faith; Isaac is the key to the fulfillment because Abraham is counting on the ability of the One doing the work, and that is God.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 4 God Works Through the Patriarchs

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So Genesis 25:20, if you would turn there, it says in verse 20 that Isaac was forty-two years old when he married Rebekah. Now, how old was he when Rebekah had their first kid Jacob? He was sixty years old. So when little Jacob the heel catcher came out, holding onto Esau's heel, they had been married for eighteen years. So again, we see what? God had reiterated the promise, but how long did it take God to work again? Well, with Abraham it took about twenty-five years. But with this situation with Isaac and Jacob it took eighteen years.

And it just blows me away because often times it just takes God a long time to do what He wants to do. And I think, "Well, You are God. Why can't You just do it right now?" And God is like, "Well, I could if I wanted to, but what I want to do is develop you. And I want to test your faith and develop your faith and test your relationship with Me. So it is going to take some time because you are the problem. And you are why it is taking so long." And I am sitting here going, "God, why are You taking so long?" And God is really saying, "It is not Me, it is you. You are the one that needs more work."

Isaac was the only patriarch that never left the land. Everybody else did. He stayed right in the land and never left. He stayed there and dug wells all over the place. Seven times it mentions that he dug wells. Went back and re-dug all the wells that Abraham had dug that the Philistines had filled up with dirt. He went back and just uncovered them all. So, it is quite interesting there. And even his enemy Abimelech was made to live at peace with him

And certainly in Isaac's life, Proverbs 16:7 came true. It says, "When a man's ways please the Lord even his enemies are at peace with him." And so this guy that hated him actually became at peace with him. And he never left the land. He was there. Even receiving of his wife Rebekah was quite supernatural. But then he got Rebekah and it

says here in Genesis 25:21, “Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer.” And Jacob and Esau were born, but God chose Jacob. So this is now eighty-five years from the original promise made to Abraham, but God is still building His nation.

Now let’s look just briefly at the offering of Isaac before we move on. We will compare Mount Moriah with Mount Calvary. (The following charts are being reviewed by the instructor as he teaches this section of the lesson.)

<u>The Offering of Isaac</u>	
Mount Moriah	Mount Calvary
<i>“Take now thy son</i>	<i>God...hath spoken to us by His Son. (Hebrews 1:2)</i>
<i>Thine only son</i>	<i>God...gave His only begotten Son. (John 3:16)</i>
<i>Whom thou lovest</i>	<i>The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father. (John 1:18)</i>
<i>And get thee into the land of Moriah.”</i> (Genesis 22:2)	<i>Solomon began to build the house of the Lord...in Mt. Moriah. (2 Chronicles 3:1)</i> (What was probably the same spot became the place of the temple sacrifices.)

In Genesis 22 we read: “Take now thy son.” But at the cross we read God has spoken to us “by His Son.” On Mount Moriah it was: “Thine only son.” But we read at Calvary: “God gave His only begotten Son.” At Mount Moriah it was: “Thy son whom thou lovest.” And we read in John 1:18, “The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father.” And He said to Abraham, “Get thee into the land of Moriah.” And we read, “Solomon began to build the house of the Lord...in Mount Moriah” (2 Chronicles 3:1), the place the temple sacrifices were offered, which they believe today was actually Golgotha, where the cross took place.

The Offering of Isaac *Continued*

“Upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of.

And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him. (Luke 23:33)

And offer him there for a burnt offering

Sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:5-10)

Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.” (Genesis 22:4)

*God before hath showed by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer. (Acts 3:18)
(The Father knew before the foundation of the world.)*

In Genesis 22:2 it says, “Upon one of the mountains that I will tell you of.” And in Luke 23:33 it says, “And when they were come to place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him.” Regarding Isaac it says, “And offer him there a burnt offering.” Hebrews 10:10 says, “Sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Genesis 22:4 says, “And Abraham lifted up his eyes and he saw the place afar off.” And in Acts 3:18, “God before has shown by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer.” So the Father knew from the foundation of the world, He saw from afar off that His Son would suffer. Abraham also saw from afar off.

The Offering of Isaac *Continued*

Genesis 22:6

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. And they went both of them together.

And He, bearing His cross, went forth. (John 19:17)

(See also John 18:11)

Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself... This commandment have I received of My Father.

(John 10:17-18)

Genesis 22:7

Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

Genesis 22:6 says, “And Abraham took the wood and the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son. And they went, both of them together.” And it says of Christ, “He bearing His cross went forth” (John 18:11). “Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself... This commandment have I received of My Father” (John 10:17-18). So it was Jesus and the Father together that laid Jesus’ life down, even as Abraham and Isaac went together. In Genesis 22:7 Abraham asks, “Where is a lamb for a burnt offering?” And we read in John 1:29, “Behold, the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world”—the Lamb of God.

The Offering of Isaac *Continued*

Genesis 22:8

God will provide Himself the Lamb. So they went both of them together.

The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
(Revelation 13:8)

I delight to do Thy will, O my God. (Psalm 40:8)

Genesis 22:9

Abraham built an altar there, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar upon the wood.

Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

(Acts 2:23)

The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
(Isaiah 53:6)

And verse 8, “God will provide Himself the Lamb. So they went both of them together.” Well Revelation 13:8 says, “The lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.” He said in Psalm 40:8, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God.” God provided His Son. And Jesus said, “A body You have provided for Me.” Then Genesis 22:9, Abraham built an altar there and he bound Isaac his son and laid him upon the altar upon the wood.” Acts 2:23 says, “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” Then Isaiah 53:6, “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all,” so God planned it.

The Offering of Isaac *Continued*

Genesis 22:10 <i>And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.</i>	<i>It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. (Isaiah 53:10)</i> <i>My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?</i> <i>(Matthew 27:46)</i>
Genesis 22:11 <i>The angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven.</i>	<u><i>Contrast with:</i></u> No voice from heaven. <i>He saved others, Himself He cannot save.</i> <i>(Matthew 26:53-54; 27:42)</i>
Genesis 22:12 <i>Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.</i>	When God speaks of deep grief He compares it to the loss of an only Son. (Jeremiah 6:26)

Genesis 22:10, “And Abraham stretched forth his hand and he took the knife to slay his son.” And we read in Isaiah 53:10, “And it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” Then Matthew 27:46 says, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Genesis 22:11, “And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven.” But the contrast is that with Christ, no voice from heaven was heard, only: “He saved others, Himself He cannot save” (Matthew 27:42). And “Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son,” God said to Abram in verse 12. And when God speaks of deep grief, He compares it to the loss of an only son, like in Jeremiah 6:26. So God knows what it is like to have that kind of commitment.

The Offering of Isaac *Concluded*

Genesis 22:13
***Abraham took the ram,
and offered him up for a
burnt offering in the stead
of his son.***

***He is brought as a lamb to
the slaughter...He shall
bear their iniquities.***
(Isaiah 53:7,11)

“And Abraham took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son” (Genesis 22:14). “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter...He shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:7, 11).

So Isaac was a type of Christ and the promise was reiterated to him. But then after Isaac came Jacob. Jacob stole the blessing, obviously, yet God used him. He was quite a character. Now Jacob received the promise and then he received his wife, Rachel. She was barren though, too. So Abraham’s wife was barren, Isaac’s wife was barren, Jacob’s wife was barren.

But Jacob had twelve sons from four wives. So here is how it happened. Jacob’s wives and children were: Leah, she had Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Isaachar, and Zebulun. And I will tell you, that is quite a story when you read it there in Genesis 30 and how that Leah had the first kids. And then Rachel got jealous and so Rachel went and got Bilhah, her concubine and said, “Here have some kids through my concubine.” So Bilhah had two kids, Dan and Naphtali. And then Rachel had another kid or two. And then Rachel stopped for a while and she got a bit jealous. So she said, “Well, I am going to go get my

concubine, Zilpah.” And Zilpah had Gad and Asher. Then later Leah began to bear some more. So it was like the race was on. All four of these women were like—particularly the two Leah and Rachel were like, “We are going to have kids for Jacob.” And so Jacob ended up with twelve sons from four different women. And you go, “What is up with that?”

And that is how God built the nation. Right now He is just doing extended family. And you go, “What? I mean, that seems a little strange, doesn’t it?” But yet that is how God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. I mean, I would have never dreamed this would have been part of the story of redemption. Much less, the fact that the tribe that Jesus came from was what?—Judah. And Judah was from Leah. And Leah is not even the woman he wanted to marry. You know, Jacob got tricked by Laban. He wanted Rachel and you know the story. On his wedding night, he pulls the veil off and it is like, “Leah, what are you doing here?” “Well, I am the oldest and you get me first. You get Rachel later.”

You know that story with Judah in Genesis 38. What an amazing story with Judah and Tamar! Remember that? How Judah was out and he had to go check on the sheep. And Tamar was out playing the role of a prostitute. And Judah turned aside and went unto Tamar and had relations with her. And she says, “You have got to give me something. Give me your signet ring. Give me your staff. Give me your cords.” Judah did and He said, “I will get them when I come back.” But you know, things happen and you don’t come back that way or you come back and she is not there. He is looking for her and three months later she starts showing that she is pregnant. And they bring attention to it and they say, “Look, this woman is pregnant by harlotry. We need to—she is supposed to have been your son’s wife.” And he says, “Well, burn the woman! If she is pregnant by her harlotry, just take her out and burn the girl. She ought to be burnt.” And then she comes forward and says, “Well, I am pregnant by the guy that gave me this signet ring, these cords, and this staff.” And he goes, “Ah. You mean, you were the one dressed like a harlot up by—I have slept with my son’s wife? And she is pregnant.” It is through this seed that Jesus Christ comes? And you go, “Man, isn’t that weird?”

But this is showing how fully Jesus identified with us as sinners and how fully the true God, who is without sin, humbled Himself to be associated with you and me. I tell you, there are some messed up families. This is the bloodline of Jesus Christ. It went from Adam to Noah to Abraham, and then to Isaac and then to Jacob and then to Judah and then to David and then to Christ. That is the bloodline.

And so right here in the middle of this whole messed-up, extended family, God is still building a nation—trying to—and to bring forth the Messiah. So, if God can work through such messed up situations as this, don't you think He can work through your life? I do. You say, "Well, my life is messed up." Well, so what? It is not as messed up as you think it is. There is nothing too difficult for the Lord. He can really work in unique ways.

And so, what is the one thing these women have in common? Well, you know, they cannot have kids. And God is always referring to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "I am the God of the three guys who had wives who could not have babies. That is who I am. But, because I am supernatural, eventually in My time..." You see, and that is the thing. He makes all things beautiful in His time. We always want it right now. But in His time, God brought about things He had promised.

Tribal Framework Begins in Genesis 30

Framed by the 12 Sons of Jacob

*“All the persons of the house of Jacob,
that came into Egypt were seventy.”*

(Genesis 46:27)

All right, Scene Two. That was the end of Scene One. We have eleven scenes to go through in Act One. Obviously we are not going to get to them today. But in Scene Two, God builds a tribal framework and it is from the sons of Jacob. There must be a foundation or a structure to build a nation on.

So Joseph is seen as the preserver as God takes His people into Egypt. He sends Joseph on ahead. Joseph is sold into slavery, gets down into Egypt and rises up to be second in the nation. Was that a God thing, or what? Yeah. I mean, that is pretty amazing. And he is just going ahead and preparing the way for this nation to come down because God wants His people down in slavery in Egypt. And you say, “He does?” Yeah, God’s plan is that His people go down into slavery in Egypt. And all the persons of the house of Jacob that came into Egypt were seventy. Is there a nation yet? No. This is not a nation. There are seventy people in this big extended family all fighting with each other. This is the beginning of the nation.

Can you imagine, ladies, being one of four wives? Married to the same guy and each of you has kids by the same guy and you are all trying to live in tents together? Can you

imagine what that would be like? And that is how God starts the nation? Man, I cannot imagine it.

How does God create the nation? He has to first obtain a people with a language, right? Because to have a nation you have to have three things, right? People with a language, is the first thing. Does God have a people with a language yet? No. What has He got? He has got a family that just has seventy people in it. That is a start.

People

Multiplication of People (Exodus 1:7)

Egyptians try to eliminate the Jewish Problem (Exodus 1:8-20)

Oppression and infanticide failed because God was at work!

So in Scene Three, what is God going to do? Well, He is going to multiply the people in Egypt. Does it work? Yeah, it pretty much does, doesn't it? He gets this people and He multiplies them because (this is Scene Three) He has got to build a nation.

How long were they there? Four hundred years. Now, what did they do? Those seventy people who went in came out 400 years later and how many people came out 400 years later? Josephus and others say three million. There are some liberal scholars who say it was only a million and a half. You know, but whether there was a million and a half or

three million—I tend to lean toward the more conservative view that it was around two and a half to three million.

For 400 years and all they did in slavery was make bricks and babies because there was not anything else for a slave to do. They did not have video games. They worked and made bricks during the day. They got off. When they went home at night they did not have any recreation. It was not like they had basketball courts and stuff like that for them. They were just slaves. So you are sitting home at night, well, what do you do? So for 400 years under the protection of Egypt because they were in slavery and they did not have anything else they could do—and the more help you had, the better it was, wasn't it?

I mean, they were out there making bricks. And they finally said, “You got to make bricks. We are not even going to give you straw to make bricks. You got to even go get your own straw.” And it was like, “What? We need a larger family. We need more help.” It is kind of like the agriculture days, you know, when you had big farms. And when you had big farms, you had big families because you needed the help, didn't you? Today it is the opposite. You can hardly afford to have kids. It is like, man. So the families have gotten smaller because of the way society is organized. But it used to be the more kids you had the better because they needed to work the farm.

Well, in slavery they needed as many as they could get. Somebody had to do the work. So for 400 years God just made a people. And at the end of 400 years there is two and a half to three million people and these people have a language. And it was all because of slavery.

Now, the Egyptians tried infanticide. They tried to get rid of them. They tried to kill all the babies as they were being born at one point. Remember? They said, “We have got to stop this nation. This nation is growing too big. What we need to do is kill all of these boys.” And so they started killing all the babies to keep the nation down from getting too big. But God still interceded and the nation grew to this huge nation. So God has got a people with a language finally. God is at work.

Now I doubt during those 400 years when they were making bricks during the day and babies at night, they all stopped now and then and said, “Well, you know, God is at work. This is really God, isn’t it?” I mean, if you had been there would you have stopped and said, “Boy, isn’t it good that God is at work?” Would you have ever said that? I doubt it. Matter of fact you would probably have thought, “I wonder what ever happened to our God? I wonder where He is at?” And yet God was working.

How many times is this true in your own life now? You are going, “I wonder what happened to God. I wonder where He is at.” And God is working. You feel like you are in slavery but God is at work.

And He is building a nation and that is way He does it. First He gets a people.

Moses the Leader **Exodus chapters 2-4**

God is going to provide Israel with a leader
Moses is raised in Pharaoh’s house
(Exodus 2:5-10)

How did God provide initial training for Moses?

What is the significance of this training?

All right, Scene Four. They have got a people with a language. What do they need next for a nation? They need leadership. They need laws. And so He brings Moses on the scene. He is going to provide Israel with a leader.

And in Exodus 2, Moses was raised in Pharaoh's house by no small accident but by the sovereign plan of God as his mother sends him down the river, you know, in the bulrushes. And the king's daughter's handmaid finds him and brings him in. Moses gets raised with the best education and the best opportunities of anybody. And God is providing initial training for the leader of the nation. He sends him to the best schools in all the world for forty years. He just gets training like nobody has an opportunity to have training. What a blessing in many ways. But it was also a curse in some ways, obviously. But do not make light of the fact that he really got trained. And God is using a pagan nation to train His leader.

You think God would send somebody to a secular college? Sure He would. God uses a pagan nation to train this guy, in Acts 7:22. His education includes athletics, art, writing, music, geometry, literature, law, astronomy, medicine and philosophy. That is what we know of that is in writing that they would have to take at the time of Moses if they were trained in the schools of Egypt. He was taking all those subjects.

When he got through he could have chosen a career in official life or literary life. He could have been a soldier. He could have been anything he wanted to. He had the best schooling and training that any money could have bought.

Now, what happens is Moses tries to take leadership a bit early. It is not God's time. And it is described in Acts 7:23-29, it says:

Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian, for he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. And then next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them saying, "Men, you are

brethren; why do you wrong one another?" But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" Then at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

So it was like he knew God had called him to leadership. He started to step up to the plate to be the leader. And everybody else did not understand that he was called to leadership. Plus, he realized people knew he had killed this Egyptian. He thought, "Man, I am in trouble." And so he just fled in fear and went out in to the desert.

But God wanted to use that too. Why?—because God has got to have a man that will rule for Him. God has to have a man that will cooperate with Him.

So God appears to him in the desert and says, "Look, I am glad you got the good education—matter of fact, I am the one that sovereignly led you into that home and that family so that you could go to these kind of schools and be educated so that later you could be a leader of My people. But there is something you missed in all that education you still have to get. And that is you need to learn how to humble yourself and rule for Me. And I am going to teach you that out in the desert. I am going to make you so dependent on Me that when I get through with you, you won't want to do anything except the things I want you to do. But then you will have the ability to do it, because you have the training of but worlds, you might say. So you have been really blessed." So God is going to use Moses and make him the great deliverer. And He does.

So the issue has always been and still is today, God wants somebody to rule for Him. But what kind of ruler is Moses? He is a reluctant leader. He says, "Who am I? I mean, why should I do it? My family is nothing special. Why should I be the leader?" And he thinks of reasons why he should not be the leader.

And then he says, “What shall I say? I have never been—the one thing I was not good in was speech class. Give me a geometry problem. I can do that. But I cannot speak. What am I going to say? And even if I was to speak,” he says, “they are not going to believe me. And I am not eloquent in the presentation of it.”

So, I mean, he was very reluctant in his leadership. But God has a plan and He is training Moses. So he spends forty years as a dignitary. He spends forty years as a desert shepherd. And then he spends forty years as the deliverer of Israel. What a unique position. He is the deliverer. He is the lawgiver. He is the builder. He is the commander in chief. He is the judge. He is the author of Genesis to Deuteronomy. And he is the intermediary between God and Israel. Now that is a unique fellow. God raised him up because He needed a leader to build a nation.

So what has to happen? They’ve got to get out of the land because you cannot have a nation within a nation, can you? You’ve got to get out in order to have your own nation. So the people have to be brought out to function as an entity.

So God tells Abraham, “You are coming out.” And God is going to do it. He is going to deliver them from Egypt and bring redemption. So the beginning of the process takes place in Exodus 5. Pharaoh increases the pressure on the Jews. He is making life miserable. He is going to make it so miserable that they are actually going to be willing to leave. Because it is going to take a lot to move this many people out. But God is going to deliver them.

And He starts by just making them absolutely miserable. You think, “Well, that is not the way I want You to deliver me, Lord. Don’t make me miserable, please.” But that might be the way God chooses to deliver you.

And so finally Moses has to go and say, “Let my people go!” And Moses repeatedly asks Pharaoh to let his people go. Pharaoh repeatedly agrees and then he refuses. He basically lies. He says, “Okay I will do it.” Then he goes, “No, I won’t do it.”

So God unleashes His awesome power in the ten judgment blows against the Egyptians. And if you remember those plagues, He turns water into blood and frogs and lice and gnats and flies and boils and sores and hell and fire and locusts and three days of darkness and the death of the cattle and finally the death of the firstborn. And it is neat as God brings these plagues against Egypt showing that He is sovereign, He is in control. He attacks the very objects of Egyptian worship to show how very powerless they are. I mean, the Nile, the frog, the earth, the scarab beetle, the bull, the atmosphere, the sun, and Pharaoh himself, were all objects of worship in Egypt. And God just attacked every one of them and said, "I am the true God and I can get rid of these other gods any time I want."

And then He institutes the Passover and says, "This is how we are going to get out of here." And it is quite a unique thing. It must be a lamb. And we know Christ was the lamb. It has to be a spotless lamb. And Christ was spotless. And the blood has to be shed so there can be life. And Christ's blood was shed that men might have life. And so they are delivered.

And so even there, we see God is going to deliver them but He is going to deliver them and make them a separate people. And one of the things that stands out about the Passover is that whole concept of how they had to go through and consecrate the place and bring the leaven out because there could be no leaven, no sin, no iniquity.

And that is how separate God wants His people. He wants a people that have no leaven, don't have any sin in their life. He wants us to abstain even from all appearance of evil. That is how much God wants us separate. He wants a unique separate people to work through. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Proverbs 8:13). We are to abhor evil, to abstain from all the appearance of evil. These are things that God expects in our life because "a little leaven will leaven a whole lump" (Galatians 5:9). And so when we are in Christ, we are given that very righteousness of God in position. But it is also to become practical in our life. And He wants us to be separate. And as He delivers us He is expecting a separation, but it is found in Christ.

And so He gets them out of the land, delivers them with a great deliverance. And as He gets them out what He does is gives them a constitution for the nation in Exodus 20. Now they have laws to govern them. And no nation has ever had a constitution like this one. I mean, even our constitution is based largely on the Ten Commandments.

So at this point, you know, they have a people with a language. They have a leader in Moses. But they also have laws that are written down, the Ten Commandments given by God. And no nation has ever had a start like this. And it is sad that our nation has gotten to the point that we are removing the Ten Commandments from our court system. And you just wonder what in the world will we base our decisions on if we do not have the foundation of God to determine what is right and what is wrong? But they had it. God gave it to them. It was really neat.

They had what was called the *Shema*. Anybody know what the *Shema* is? Well, let's read about it because it was so important to them. Turn to Deuteronomy 6 and let's read the *Shema*. It was so important to the Jews that they follow God's law that they had three things that helped them. One was called the *Shema*. The other was called the *tephillin*. And the third was called the *mezuzah*. What was the *tephillin*? Anybody remember? You find it in the New Testament in Matthew and the Gospels that Jesus referred to all the time. The *tephillin* were those Scriptures that they wrote on their hand, carried on their hand and on their head. They had certain portions of Scripture that were so important that they would actually tie them to their head and also wear them on their hand. That was the *tephillin*. So the law was so important to them, it had to be bound to their body. So they would put them in a little box, tie them onto their head, and put them in a box and tie them onto their hand. You know, sort of like, well, they carried their Bible everywhere they went. The law was that important to them that they had to have it just bound to their body.

Now they had the *mezuzah* also. And what was the *mezuzah*? When they went home, they had a little box of Scripture, a roll of Scripture, a scroll that was stuck up on the door that represented the law of God. And every time they went into the house, what did they have

to do? They had to—normally what they would do was they would kiss their finger, you know, and then they would touch the *mezuzah* showing a sign of what? Devotion and love for God's law. Or you could do it vice versa. You could touch the *mezuzah* and kiss your finger. Either way you were making that connection that you were devoted and in love with God's law.

So they had the *tephillin* there bound to them and they had the *mezuzah* on their houses. But as little kids, when they first started, you might say elementary school or kindergarten, they had to memorize the *Shema*. And so let's read the Scriptures that you would have had to memorize as a little kid. Because this is how they felt about God's law. And there are three Scriptures. The first one is Deuteronomy 6:4–9, if you want to write them down. The second one is Deuteronomy 11:13–21. And the last one is Numbers 15:37–41. We are going to read them real quickly. Deuteronomy 6:4–9. This is the first one that they had to memorize.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (NKJV)

So He was talking, obviously, about the *tephillin* and the *mezuzah*, wasn't He? And that is why they developed these things because God had commanded that they actually do that. Write them on your head and your hand, so to speak. And put them on the front porch of your house. That was the first Scripture.

The second one that they memorized was Deuteronomy 11:13–21.

And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock that you may eat and be filled. Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD'S anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

(NKJV)

So they had to memorize that. And then the last one was found in Numbers 15:37–41.

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners

of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.”
(NKJV)

Wow! Now, you know, we read how in Matthew 9 and all where the Pharisees were always lengthening their tassels to seem even more spiritual. But the purpose of the blue tassel was like, well, some people might wear a rubber band on their arm or they tie something on their foot or their arm. And it is to remind you to do something, right? You go, “Oh, yeah.” And so the tassels of blue were just to remind them that they had to do God’s Word. And it was so important that they follow His government and that they follow His law.

So they have been started as a nation from a guy from Ur of the Chaldees, one guy, builds up his family, you know, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All their wives are barren but God does a supernatural thing. So God is beginning to work. He builds this tribal framework in Scene Two, and seventy people, this extended family takes off down into Egypt. But God has already gone before them and prepared the way by Joseph because God has plans for them.

They get down there and they end up staying for 400 years just making bricks and babies! And they come out with close to three million people and they are this huge nation with a language. They are a people but they are really not a nation yet because they don’t have any leadership. So God raises up Moses. And He prepared that. And He trained Moses for that. And along with that, He brings Moses to Sinai in chapter 19. You know, then in

chapter 20 God gives him the Ten Commandments. And so they have this tremendous law. They have been delivered from Egypt. They are a people with a language and they have a law.

What is the one thing that they do not have yet that will make them finally like a real nation? They do not have a homeland. So, what we are going to look at next time is God's people getting their land, because God is building a nation and to have a nation you have got to have this people with a language, laws and leadership, and then you have to have a homeland. And God is going to give it to them.

Now what is neat about what is going to happen in the last days is what? There is going to be one people. There is not going to be any more twain, Jeremiah says. But they are going to be one. There is not going to be a division. They are just going to be one people, not a north and a south, but they are going to be one people. And God is going to bring them back and He is going to write the law where?—on their hearts. So instead of it being worn on their hands and on their foreheads and put on the doorposts of their doors and stuff, when the Lord does the work in the last days with this nation, He is going to bring them back and He is going to write the laws on their hearts, and He is going to give them all the land that He promised from the very beginning.

And I believe that is going to happen. And there are a lot of people who say, “No, that is not going to happen. All of this stuff has been spiritualized and it is just happening in the church.” But the church is not promised a homeland here. It is promised heaven; that is our homeland. But the nation Israel has been promised a homeland here and I believe that, through Judah, through David, and finally Christ as a descendent, He will return and He will give them all these things. So it is pretty neat to see the Lord beginning to work.

So let's pray. And I hope that you are beginning to see—and you will as time goes on. You will see more and more as we go through the class just the beauty of the history. I never really enjoyed history. I am not sure I still do, but—when I began to see the Lord working in history then it was like, wow, there is something to this! You know, being

able to see God at work. And by knowing the past and seeing God work in history, maybe you can begin to see more of what God is actually doing right now today too. And when we see our place today in history, it can help us to focus on what is the priority of God's heart and what He wants today.

Father, we thank You that You are the One that began the work and You are the One that is continuing to do the work. And not one promise is going to fail. And so, Lord, increase our faith as we look through the Word. Even at the big things and we step back and get a larger picture of it, Lord, it should just build us up in our faith knowing that not one promise will fail. You will do all You said You would do. And we see it. So now all the promises of God that are yea and amen in Christ Jesus are ours. Help us to hang onto them, to claim them, to hold them dear in our hearts, to walk by them and to be used by You. Open our eyes that we can see clearly for Your glory, Lord. That we can walk in just a real kind of faith that pleases You and trusts You fully and for our good that we can be a blessing to others. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 5 The Building of a Nation

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Father, we just want to say thanks this morning. Thanks for waking us up. Thanks for a great day. Lord, we look forward to just walking with You today, realizing and recognizing that You have been working from the beginning of time. You were actually working before time. And You are still all about doing Your will and accomplishing the things You intended to do. And it is just a mystery to us, Lord, why it takes so long in our view. I mean, why are we here today and things are still going on? And who knows, I mean, we have a couple more years or whatever. We think we see things in Your Word concerning prophecy, concerning Your plan that You laid out that You are going to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And we just want to see Your whole plan and where we fit in and have an impact and take a grip upon our worldview, our thinking, and therefore our action and our behavior. So, we just want to say thanks, Lord, for time to get together and to study and to look at You and what You are doing. Show us these things in Your Word. We ask that You would just give us revelation. Let us see things that we can only see when You show them to us by Your Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Well, we have got a people with a language. We have got a measure of leadership and we have got laws. One thing we do not have yet, as God is building it, is land. So they need a homeland and God is going to give them a homeland.

So, we begin with Scene Seven in Act One which goes from Genesis 12 all the way up to 1 Kings what?—1 Kings 10. God is doing what in Act One? God is building a nation. And that is what you are seeing Him do, because He is building a nation for a purpose. And the purpose is: He wants to bring His Messiah through that nation to redeem the world. He promised it to Abraham. He said, “I will do it. Abraham, it will come from you. And your seed is going to bless the whole world.” And so, because of this promise to one person, Abraham, it is going to happen. And so let’s look at God building the nation.

Failure to Enter the Land

Numbers 13-36

Moses Sends out the Spies (Numbers 13:1-2)

Moses’ Orders (Numbers 13:17-20)

The Spies Reported on the Land (Numbers 13:25-29)

Remember, they are an untrained, unequipped army going against a walled city.

They spoke the truth. They must trust God.

Their unwillingness to trust God was their sin.

Now, they are out, but God wants to get them into the land. So Moses sends out spies. And you know the report that comes back from the spies. And the report is basically, “We can’t do it.” But you have got to remember they were untrained people. They were unequipped as an army. And they are going to go up against a walled city? No wonder they came back. Did they speak the truth when they said, “We can’t do it”? Were they just being negative? Some people think they were just being negative. I do not think so. Were they just being down and kind of having a narrow view of life? Huh-uh. They came

back and said, “In all reality, we can’t do it.” And they spoke the truth. It was no different from Abraham and Sarah looking at each other at a hundred years old saying, “You know that you are as good as dead. You can’t have a kid. I can’t have a kid. What’s up with God giving us this promise?” And it was the same thing here. They couldn’t do it. So they could not do it unless they trusted God who said He would do it. And so their sin was their unwillingness to trust God. It was not the fact that they looked at it and said, “It is too big for us.”

But isn’t that the same kind of sin that you face today? Your sin is not the fact that you recognize certain limitations in your life. Your sin is that you do not trust God to overcome those limitations. What grace really means is that you are not responsible for what you can do. Grace means you are now responsible for what God can do. That God has given dynamic and power and He can do all things. And “we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us” (cf. Philippians 4:13). So, it is kind of the same thing that we face today is what they were facing then.

But God is going to get them into the land because He is faithful. Now, they are unwilling to trust God. They murmur against Moses and Aaron. Thank God that Moses and Aaron were the kind of leaders at that time to just bow humbly and say, “God, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing. They do not understand the plan.”

And that happens so many times in your life too. When you do not understand God’s plan, you murmur, you complain, you gripe. You say, “I do not understand that.” You just start like, “Oh, blah blah blah!” And life is all this and it is because you do not understand how wise God is in working things out in your life.

Now of course Joshua and Caleb have faith because their eyes are on God. And they are trying to persuade everyone. “Yeah but, let’s trust God. I mean, God took us out of Egypt didn’t He? If He did the big thing, can’t we trust Him for smaller things?”

And it is funny how we can trust Him that He saved our soul for all eternity and is taking us to heaven, but we do not believe He is going to supply our needs on earth. It just does not make spiritual sense to say God did the big thing for you but He won't do the little things. Of course He will!

So, they are going to be destroyed because God is upset with them. Except Moses prays and intercedes. And there he is definitely a type of Christ in his mediation. But God is going to set him aside because He says, "I swear in My wrath." He says, "These people will not enter rest. I swear in My wrath these people will not go into the land." It is not going to happen because they would not do it God's way. They had to do it their way. And God says, "I want total, complete trust in the fact that I do it."

And we know that rest comes at what point? Rest always comes at the point of obedience. The moment you obey there is rest in your life. Until you obey there will be discord. There will be tension. There will be fretting, anxiousness. Rest always comes at the point of obedience, the obedience of faith.

And so if they would step out and trust God, they would get rest. But they did not and so God says, "I am not with them." He puts them aside and He says, "This generation is going to die out in the wilderness."

Now later in the Psalms God said they should not have died out there. He said, "It was their fault. It was not My fault." And God was mad that they died out there because they should not have died out there. They should have believed God. They should have entered into their rest by simply obeying God through the obedience of faith, but they would not do it.

But if you don't obey, guess what? God says, "I will find someone else who will." And that is always the case as well. God is not going to keep from doing His will because I fail in my own faithfulness. If I fail, God will raise somebody else up. If you fail in what God has called you to do, God will raise somebody else up. God is not limited by our

failure. What happens is we miss out because we are not willing to walk in faith and take those steps into the land that God has provided; into all the promises that are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. And so we see these things happening even in the natural, which we see also in the New Testament in the spiritual realm, mostly in Hebrews and 2 Corinthians. But God is doing a work to build a nation.

Now, Psalm 106 says, “Then they despised the pleasant land [that is what God had provided for them] they did not believe His word, but they complained in their tents and they did not heed the voice of the Lord. “Therefore, He raised up His hand in an oath against them to overthrow them in the wilderness, to overthrow their descendants among the nations and to scatter them in the lands” (cf. Psalm 106: 24-27). It is almost surprising to read that, isn’t it? I mean, you don’t think of God getting so upset at a person—in this case a people in general. He has promised that He is going to take these people and He is going to do all this, but He is at the point right now it is almost like, you know, “I am also entering an oath. I swear in My wrath they won’t get there. I am so mad at these people for not believing Me. I am so upset at these people for not trusting Me.”

And that is the same issue in the New Testament because sin is not an issue anymore, is it? The way I understand it and read Romans, sin is no longer an issue. Jesus Christ took care of sin. Through the obedience of one Man it was taken care of. The only issue now is not sin. The issue is what do you do with Jesus? Will you believe Jesus? Will you receive Jesus? Will you put your faith in the One that God has given to take care of all the problems and issues of mankind? And so it is kind of the same thing here. He is like, “Man, if they would have just believed and trusted we could have gone on.”

So what keeps you out of the land? Well, obviously in Hebrews 3:8-18, He explains it this way: “And with whom was He angry for forty years?” Have you ever been angry at someone for like a couple days? Is there anybody you are angry with right now? How long can you stay angry? You know how much fun it is to be angry? And you see that person and then you just kind of go, “Grrrh.” It is like you don’t even want to see them, do you? I mean, you avoid seeing them because you want to go the other way because

you don't want to be angry because it takes so much emotional energy to stay angry. God was angry for forty years. Of course, He has got more emotional energy than you do. But I just cannot imagine being angry for forty years. That is a long time to be mad. But God is speaking of Himself as a man and relating to us how upset He was. "Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?" (Hebrews 3:17) He was mad that they died out there. "And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest but to those who were disobedient?" (Hebrews 3:18). And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

And the word for disobedience is the word that we get *pistos* from in the New Testament. It is from *peithōs*. It is the same word that we translate unbelief, but in the old days they translated it disobedience because there is really no difference between disobedience and unbelief. It is the same thing because what God wants in the New Testament is the obedience of faith that points to and sees Christ.

So he says again, "Take care brethren, lest there just be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart [or disobedient heart] in falling away from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

So, it is not trusting God that keeps you out of the land. And so many times, in my life, there is unbelief—because I am looking with my head and my own eyes saying: "Well, I cannot do that because I cannot figure out how that can be done." And therefore I go, "I guess it is not going to happen." And I just put it aside because I cannot figure it out. But if God has given me a promise and said He will do it, then He wants me to trust "Him who can do exceedingly abundantly above all I ever think or ask" (cf. Ephesians 3:20) that He will do it.

Just because I cannot figure out how God is going to do something does not mean that God is going to do it or not do it. Because He can make it happen and He can make a way when there is no way. I know that is the big issue in my life in getting into the land of the promise of God is that I just don't believe Him, and so I scheme to get it done my way.

This is not too different from the guys in the early days saying, “Well, okay, it does not look like God is doing it. Why don’t we help God do it?” Then I have directive prayers and I say, “God, why don’t You try this? If You are really smart, God, why don’t You try this?” And I begin to pray certain ways. And all the time I should just be relaxing, entering into belief and trust that God can do it in a way I don’t know about. I just have to keep stepping forward in faith and trust in Him with expectant hope. Oh, that is the Christian life in the New Testament.

Well, they finally get victory. Joshua goes in. There is going to be a conquest of the land because Joshua and Caleb do have faith. And God renews the promise in Joshua 1. And now in Joshua and Caleb, God is happy. And Joshua was a servant, of course, before he became a leader. And that is a great principle in Scripture. You are always to be a servant first and a leader second. And then God gives him the conditions of the new promise and He sends the commander of the Lord’s army, the Captain of the Lord of hosts to do it. They have great victory.

But then they enter into defeat because in Joshua 7 we have this sin there of Achan. And in Joshua 7:20–21 we see what happens with Achan. He said, “I saw. I coveted. I took. And I hid.” And that is usually the way sin works. You see it first. Then you covet it. You have a desire for it in your heart. You want it. Then you go take it. And then you try to hide it because you know it is sin.

And so, although God had brought them in and shown them that He would give them great victory and He would help them possess the land, they entered into a real problem because of the sin of Achan and his tent, the hidden sin. And we see there that you cannot move forward with God until you deal with hidden sin. God can be standing right there all around you saying, “Here you are. I have brought you here. You are at the point of victory. But if you have got hidden sin in your life you will not be able to move forward.” That is just the way it is.

It is the same principle in the New Testament. We read in Galatians 6 that “Whatever you sow, you are going to reap it” (cf. Galatians 6:7). That is just a law and it takes place.

So, here they are and they are in this situation. They are at the driveway. I mean, they are near the front door of the Promised Land. It is like they are ready to pull their SUV right up in the driveway and say, “I’m home. I am in the promised land.” But they cannot quite do it because sin keeps creeping up among the nation. And that is holding them back from the plan of God and the promise of God. And it is so amazing to me.

Entering the Land

- ❖ **God performed a miracle to get them out (Red Sea) and a miracle to get them in (Jordan River).**
- ❖ **Who went into the Promised Land first?**
- ❖ **What did they build first?**
- ❖ **Two things were necessary before engaging the enemy: Purification and Passover**

Then they finally get into the land because God is gracious. He takes them in. Who went in first? The priests. The priests go in carrying the ark because they are following God. And He told them to stay how far behind?—about a half a mile. He said, “I want you guys to stay about a half a mile back from the ark. And I want you to watch the ark and wherever the ark goes, you follow the direction the ark goes.” The ark had the very presence of God.

And that is always the way direction should be. We don't run out ahead of the Lord. We stay back behind the Lord. We watch the ark. We see the presence of God. That is what Proverbs 3:5–6 means when it says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Don't lean on your understanding because you don't know where to go or what to do. But in all your ways acknowledge Him”—or more literally—“acknowledge His presence and He will direct the path, your path.” So you kind of hang back. You watch where God's presence is going in your life. And wherever God's presence is going and you recognize His presence in your life, that's the way you go. And so God says, “I will lead you in.” And He did.

He performed a miracle to get them out of Egypt and He also performed a miracle to get them in, taking them through the Jordan River as the priests stood there.

Now although the Lord is revealed as Captain of the Lord's host and the symbol now is the sword, the strategy in holy warfare for the soldier of the Lord is to build first, not a fortress, but what did they build first?—an altar, a fortress of worship and prayer. The first thing they did when they crossed over and got into the land was to build an altar and begin to worship God. And that is neat. Because there are two things that are really necessary before you engage an enemy. They have crossed the river. They are going to go in and they are going to do spiritual warfare. They have got to drive these inhabitants out. And you might say, “Well God, why don't You just go drive them out for us? We are tired. We have been walking for a long ways. We have been carrying everything and we crossed the river. And here we are. We don't feel like fighting. We don't want to deal with Moabites and Canaanites and Hittites and Philistines and everybody else. We are just like, why don't You just go do it? You said You were going to do it.” But God says, “No, you are going to have to fight.”

And to be successful in the fight, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, there are two qualifications. First, they had to be purified by circumcision. Now, that is the craziest thing I have ever heard of. They are getting ready to fight, like in two or three days. And He says, “Get all the men together. All right, guys, we have got to circumcise

you.” I mean, can you imagine? We are getting ready to start the NFL season. Football teams are gearing up. They are getting ready to play maybe for even the Super Bowl. Three days before the Super Bowl they call the whole team and say, “All right guys, we have got to circumcise you.” They are like, “What? How are we going to play the Super Bowl in such a condition?” Well, basically the answer is this: you won’t be able to unless somehow God supernaturally gives you victory. You cannot put a circumcised, freshly circumcised football team out on the field and say, “You guys, go win the Super Bowl.” That is not going to happen.

But God likes to do that kind of thing. But what He wants is for us to trust that He will. That goes against everything my natural mind says. My natural mind, when I go in to fight the enemy says, “No, you don’t do that and then go out and fight. You won’t be in any condition to fight.” But God says, “Wait a minute. Holiness and purification is more important than anything else. And if you will trust Me in that, I will fight for you.” So they had to be circumcised, purified in that way.

Just like in the New Testament what? We are circumcised in our heart. We have the foreskin of our heart moved away so that we can see the Lord and focus on the Lord and walk with Him and be holy as He is holy. And as it says in 1 Corinthians 5, we have got to take out the leaven, remove the leaven, remove the sin” (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:8). We cannot have any of it in our life because if we have sin in our life, we won’t be able to have victory. And we have that ability through the circumcision of Christ, knowing we died with Him that now we can actually put to death the members of our body and walk in victory” (cf. Romans 8:13). And He expects us to do it.

Secondly, was the Passover because this was a covenant that they entered into with God and the victory had to come, really, through Jesus Christ. And so that is going on. So it was a strange way to enter the land, but that is God’s way to enter the land.

And if you are having any problem with entering the land, even today, it is probably because of a lack of purification in terms of the circumcision of your heart, or a lack of

relationship through the Passover or through communion, in that every time we remember communion we judge ourselves and we put our sin away and we stand holy and righteous before God completely. And if we keep entering into the righteousness that is ours in Jesus Christ, and the sanctification that is ours in Jesus Christ, we are going to see the life of Jesus Christ and the victory and God is going to be glorified.

Division of the Land

Joshua 13-21

**East Canaan: Half tribe of Manasseh,
Reuben and Gad
(Joshua 13)**

**West Canaan: The rest of the tribes of Israel
(Joshua 14-21)**

**What God said He would do, He did
(Joshua 21:43-45)**

So, they get into the land. But what do they do when they get into the land? First thing is they divide the land. Joshua says, "We are here. We are in it. Let's divide it up into east Canaan and west Canaan." And so that is what they did. Half the tribe was Manasseh, Ruben, and Gad; they went to east Canaan. And then the rest of the tribes in Joshua 14-21, they went and settled in west Canaan. The east Canaan guys were mostly cattle herders and things like that. They had a lot of cattle. They needed a lot of water. They stayed in the areas where they could get grass and water and all that kind of stuff. They had to be there. And then the other tribes said, "Well, we will go further in toward the west."

So, what God said He would do, He did do. He brought them into the land and they are there. And Joshua 21:43-45 says,

So the Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers and they possessed it and lived in it. And the Lord gave them rest on every side according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not one of all their enemies stood before them. The Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed. All came to pass. (NASB)

Now, that is amazing to read. Well, if that is the case then why don't we just close the Bible? I mean, has God had a plan? Well, it sounds like he is saying here He has just about finished His plan. And Joshua and all these guys got rest. The enemies were, you know, what does it mean when it says this? Is God through with His plan? No. And did they possess all the land? No, they didn't. Then why does the Bible say they did, when they didn't? Is the Bible lying? Is the Bible telling something false? No, you are the problem. The way you read it is the problem and the way I read it is the problem. He does not mean all exclusively. You know, you have got to decide. Is it all inclusively or all exclusively? When you see the word *all* you have to decide what the word *all* means. And here, it means in general.

In other words, in general they were possessing most of the land and most of the enemies were destroyed. But we know for a fact, that not all of the enemies were destroyed were they? No. And one of the big failures in Joshua's life was what? Perhaps his biggest failure in his life was what, as a military commander and general? What city did he not take? He did not take the Jebusite city, which God wanted that as His capital. God wanted that to rule from. He wanted to rule out of Mount Zion in Jerusalem, which was the Jebusite city. Joshua never took it. He tried and then he just failed. He could not do it.

So when it says they got in there and had rest in all the land, it does not really mean all. It means in general all, but not every point. So sometimes the way we read the Bible can kind of mess us up. And then you will have some liberal scholar come along and say, “Okay, there is a problem in the Bible. This did not happen and that did not happen. And see...” And it has to do with the way we read it.

And so they got in and they mostly had victory but there were still problems. And they were not really in possession of the land, in total possession. Though they were there and they possessed certain parts of the land and they were all over the land possessing certain parts of the land, they did not possess all of the land. Okay?

Joshua’s Farewell Address

**Observe the commandments given by Moses
(Joshua 22:5)**

**A warning to continue
and the results if they do not
(Joshua 23:14-16)**

**A challenge to serve the Lord
(Joshua 24:14-15)**

So Joshua gives his farewell address. And he says, “Observe the commandments given by Moses.” He takes them back and says, “Remember what Moses said? We’ve got to do it.” He warns them to continue and tells them the results if they don’t continue. And he challenges them to serve the Lord. He says, “As for me and I my house we are going to serve the Lord” (cf. Joshua 24:15). I don’t know what the rest of you people are going to

do, but my house is going to serve God. And I hope that your house will serve God.”
And he challenges them as they have gotten into the land.

Now, Joshua 24:14-15 says,

Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and truth. And put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the river and in Egypt.

Serve the Lord! Put these gods away!

And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served which were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

He says, “I am putting away all those gods and I am serving the Lord.” So, they are in the land.

Now, what happens after they get into the land? They divide it into east and west. How are they doing? Well, we find out they are not doing that well. Joshua told them, look you have got to get rid of all the idols and the gods. But they just would not do it. His house served the Lord. Other people served the Lord a little bit. Some served the Lord more than others. But a lot of people did not serve the Lord at all. And what happens is we have the time of the judges.

Tribes Established in the land **(Judges)**

**Tribes take their inheritance,
but they were incomplete.
(Judges 1)**

**There was a lack of unity in the land.
They are not a nation, but 12 states.
Because of this, they are constantly
hounded by other nations.**

They have a bunch of tribes all around the land. And the tribes take their inheritance but in an incomplete way. So they did not possess all the land. There was a lack of unity in the land. They are not a nation. They are twelve states but they do not really have a federal union. It is like with the United States we have a federal union among the states and we are truly united in that way.

So because of this they (God's people) are constantly hounded by other nations. Because what happened was, they attack your state over here. They come against you. But the people over here, way out with the half tribe of Manasseh they are like, "Well, that is their problem. We are handling our state over here. You guys, sorry, you will have to handle whoever is attacking you over there." And so in a sense it is like when Jesus said, "Don't think on your own things, but think on other people's things." That was their sin. They were in disunity and they were not in brotherly love because everybody was doing what was right in their own eyes and concerned about their own life and about their own battles and about their own victories. And they did not care about other people across the land who were having problems. Is that true in the church today? In many ways it is.

We are concerned about our little group. Sorry, that the other little group is having some battles. And often times we do not run to their aid. And why don't we?—because of the lack of unity. There is no coherence sometimes. There should be because we have it. We are just disobedient to it, which is a worse sin than theirs. They did not have it. We do have it. We have one Lord, one faith, one hope, one baptism, one calling, one Spirit, one goal, one plan. And it is a greater sin today for us not to go to the aid of all who name the name of Christ, than it was for these guys in the book of Judges and just out in their little areas of the land doing their own thing. But that was what was happening.

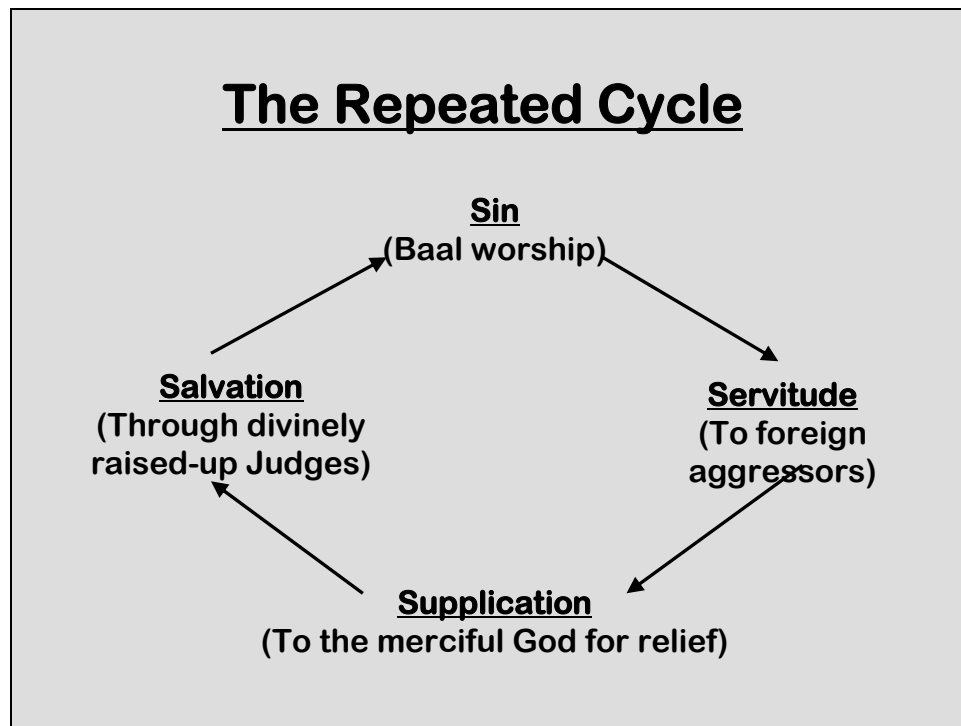
So the problem—Moses gave the people three commands when they entered the land. Deuteronomy 7:1–5. He says, “When you get there, there is three things you have got to do.” He says, “First, you've got to destroy all the inhabitants of the land.” What did they do? You can read it in Judges. They did not do it. They said, “Oh, we like you guys. You have got some neat things. We could learn something from you.” And so they would keep certain people. They did not destroy all the inhabitants of the land.

Secondly he said, “You have got to shun the false gods.” Well, that did not happen either, largely because they like a lot of the foreign women, the guys did. And they said, “Oh man, she is cute.” “Yeah, but she worships Ashteroth.” “I know, but she is still cute. Big deal.” So they married women and the women brought in the false things because the guys were walking in the flesh. That's what they did. And he says, “Don't intermarry with the pagan neighbors.” They did it.

So they didn't do the three things that Moses said you have got to do this if you want to have victory. If you want to get into the land and possess the land, you have got to destroy every enemy. You have got to destroy every fleshly sin. You have got to destroy fornication. You have got to destroy uncleanness. You have got to destroy drunkenness. You have got to destroy obsessions. You have got to destroy evil thoughts. You have to destroy everything that comes against the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And you have to shun every false god. Every form of covetousness that might be in your heart, every desire that is beyond what God has provided you, you have to destroy it. You have to do

away with it. And you cannot be unequally yoked. He says, “And then you can walk in victory.” But they did not do it.

Well, so what do they need? They need deliverers in the book of Judges. And these guys are temporary local leaders. God uses a pagan nation to discipline His people. And you kind of go, wow, that is amazing! You mean God lets these pagan, idolatrous sinners whip His own children? God says, “Yep, I will.” God likes to work through natural means. He is supernatural and He is using these super means through nations in a natural way to discipline His own children because He loves them and cares about them.



So judges keep getting appointed and empowered by God. They are just crisis leaders. It is nothing but total crisis management in their lives. I know Christians like that. Their whole life is total crisis management. They go along until there is a crisis. “Oh God, help me! Deliver me, God! Oh God, if You deliver me I will do this.” And their whole life is just crisis management. They do not have a steady, disciplined walk of obedience, following God’s plan.

So the repeated cycle goes on. They start with sin and Ba'al worship—things like that. They go into servitude because of it. Then they supplicate and cry out to God and say, “Be merciful. Relieve us, God.” And then God brings salvation through a judge. That cycle continued during the time of the judges. It was quite amazing.

So, and how long did that time last, the time of the judges? We know slavery lasted 400 years. The time of the judges lasted 330 years. So for 330 years they just went through this cycle. They would enter into sin. That would bring them into servitude. They would finally go, “Oh, sin is bad! And it hurts!” And then they would cry out and say, “God, help me!” And then God would deliver them. And then they would go right back into it again—over and over—the cycle.

The Judges of Israel

Othniel	Ehud	Shamgar
Deborah	Gideon	Tola
Jair	Jephthah	Ibzan
Elon	Abdon	Sampson
	Samuel	

And you see some of the judges that were raised up. They were really cool. I kind of like Ehud—because he was left handed. When he went into Eglon's little palace there in Moab and Eglon is sitting up on the cool of his roof and everything. Ehud strapped a dagger on his right thigh. And he went over and locked the door. He said, “I have got some secret news to tell you from God, Eglon.” He says, “But I need everybody to

leave.” And Eglon says, “Yeah, everybody get out of here!” And he went over and he locked the door. And he pulls a dagger out with his left hand. He sticks it in and Eglon was a very fat man. And he stuck his hand, the knife into where the blade went all the way into him. It says, “And the fat came around the blade and you could not see the blade.” And then it says, “But the refuse ran out.” So in other words—and then the people outside were going, “Hey Eglon, what is going on?” And they started saying, “Well, maybe he is taking a nap.” And it says in Judges 3, “Well maybe he is relieving himself.” So they thought he was up on the roof using the restroom or whatever. And they waited until they got anxious and finally there was no answer. So they went to get a key and they opened the door and they go in and the guy’s dead! And of course, Ehud split during that time and he is gone. He has got the army and he comes back down and they slay them. They killed like 10,000 of them just in one day.

I mean, so they would match up with these nations that God said you are not supposed to have anything to do with these guys. And then God would raise up a deliverer. And he would deliver them. And this just happened over and over and over again.

Of course the ladies like Deborah, I am sure. And you know that Deborah is the only judge that was both a prophetess and a judge. There was only one other judge that was both a prophet and a judge and who was that? Samuel. So Deborah and Samuel were kind of on the same wavelength there. Who was the prophetess in the New Testament that kind of I always think corresponds to Deborah. Anna. Remember, in Luke 2:35, Anna was a prophetess. And so, I mean, God raised up this woman and she encourages Barak. She prophesies and tells him, “The Lord has given you the victory, Bud. Get out there and fight.” And he would not have done it. I mean, he would not even go out and he said, “You come with me.” She said, “Yeah, I will come with you.” And then she prophesies because the Spirit of God comes on her. And that prophesy encourages him to go out and fight.

And during that fight you know what happens. Cicero starts heading back home and another woman, Jael, who was the wife of Heber the Kennite, she is out there. She brings

him in. He is all tired. He is exhausted from the fight. He lies down. She covers him up. She goes and gets a tent peg while he is sleeping, drives it through his temple all the way into the ground. And it says, "And he died." Imagine that.

So, I mean, it is like, look what God is doing. God would just show up and deliver them through all these natural but supernatural means. And it is quite neat to see this time.

Well, you know, I would study Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. They are all great. We do not have time to go into them. But each of the judges was tremendous.

So, what is the need? Well, the book of Judges is characterized by just gross idolatry and gross immorality. "In those days there was no king in Israel. Every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6). So, what is the need? The need is for a king. There has to be some unity brought to this nation. They are in total disunity during the time of the judges. Do you see it? There are twelve different states. They don't care about anybody else but their own little state. And there is no real unity. Everybody is just—every man for himself.

But God is faithful during this time and keeps raising up deliverers. Why does God do it? It is because He cannot deny Himself. He looks down and He says, "This is all I have to work with?" Sometimes He probably does that at Bible College here. God is in devotions this morning. He is looking out and goes, "This is all the devotion I got?" But guess what? He cannot deny Himself. And so He will work in spite of what He has to work with. He does that in my life.

But what He really wants is somebody that will be king, somebody that will rule for Him. And that will rule in faith and trust Him. So, you come at the end of the book of Judges, to Ruth. And I love this because this Moabite Gentile becomes the grandmother of the King. And you know she is just a faithful woman.

Ruth
**The Moabite Gentile becomes
Grandmother of the King**
(Ruth 4:18-22)

In the Days of the Judges
(Ruth 1:1)

The Faithfulness of Ruth
(Ruth 1:16-18)

The Grandmother of David
(Ruth 4:13-17)

In the Lineage of Christ
(Matthew 1:5)

Now I like Vance Havner's description of Ruth, the book. He says, "Ruth is a lily pad or a lily in the mud pond of Judges." And it is so true. You go through Judges and it is just like this big mud pond. There is just sin and servitude, you know, and failure over and over again. Of course, God has given victory. But all of a sudden there is this little lily just floating out in the middle of the mud pond. And the lily is Ruth. And it is a beautiful story because—you know the story. If you have ever seen the shepherds' fields outside of Jerusalem, there in Bethlehem (which means house of bread) a famine comes on the nations. And you have got Naomi and her husband Elimelech and they got two kids, Mahlon and Chilion. And they decide, "Well, we cannot starve to death." But they are off in the shepherds' fields. And they are looking off and you can see in the distance the mountains of Moab because they always have snow on them. And the snow melts and they have water over in that area, so they are able to grow things.

But there in Bethlehem it is just as dry as it is up in Twin Peaks and Running Springs and all of that area right now where the fires are breaking out. And there is just no hope for them there. So they said, "We have got to leave what is called the house of bread, ironically, and head over to Moab." And they do. Well, they get there. Elimelech dies.

But then Chilean takes Orpah to be his wife. And Mahlon takes Ruth to be his wife. Then those guys die. And then poor Naomi, she is just left there and she decides after a few years, “Things are better back in Bethlehem. I don’t have anything here. I am going to go back to my people.” And she returns back to Bethlehem but she changes her name to Mara, which means bitterness, because she says, “The Lord sent me out full, but I came back empty.” But in the process Ruth is faithful and she says, “I won’t leave you. I have got to be here with you. Entreat me not to leave you.” She says, “I want to go with you. Your God will be my God. Your people will be my people. (cf. Ruth 1:16). I am staying. I am hanging around” (cf. Ruth 1:16). And she did.

And so this Gentile girl comes back. But they have got to get out into the fields. It is harvest time and the poor get to glean in the fields. They go out. She starts gleaning in the field. It happens to be the field of Boaz. And Boaz takes a liking to her. Even tells the men, give her a little extra. I think he was impressed. I don’t know if it was because of the way she looked. But he tells her later he was impressed with her because of her faithfulness to Naomi. He said, “Here you are a foreign woman and your heart is so right.” He said, “You are a great woman. Who wouldn’t want a woman that has this kind of heart and faithfulness and loyalty?” He said, “Man there was something that was just beautiful in her.” And he noticed it. And so he was blessing her and Naomi says, “Stay in that field cause that guy is going to keep blessing us.”

And sure enough she finds out Boaz is a kinsman or literally a *goel*, which the word *goel* is like thirteen times in the book of Ruth. He is the kinsman redeemer and he can redeem the land. He can purchase back what they had lost. And so Naomi says, “You hang in with him. Matter of fact, while he is on the threshing floor, I want you to go down at night and I want you to uncover his feet—because that is our custom. If you go down and the poor guy is trying to sleep, pull the covers off his toes and lay down at his feet.” She thought, “Have you ever smelled the feet of a guy working in the fields during harvest?” But she goes down, she uncovers his feet with the blanket that was there and she lays down at his feet. Well, in the middle of the night, he wakes up. Well, I would too if somebody uncovered my feet probably.

Anyway, back to Boaz and his cold feet. So he is startled. He wakes up in the middle of the night and it is like, “What is going on?” And she says, “Well, will you be the kinsman?” And he is like, “Yeah. I would love to.” So he goes to the gate, gets ten guys at the city gate. And he says, “I want to redeem this field for Naomi. I want to marry Ruth, this Gentile, take her as my bride. But you are the nearest kinsman so I have to have an okay from you.”

And you know the story there in Deuteronomy where it tells the story, if you have a family, have a brother, he dies, you have a responsibility to raise up seed to the family. I think it is Deuteronomy 17. And if you won't raise up seed to the family, what is supposed to happen is the person that will raise up seed to the family he comes, you have to take your sandal off. Loose your sandal, give it to him and he spits in your face. And why does he spit in your face and you have to loose your sandal? And you are known as the guy who loosed his sandal and had his face spit in because it was selfishness. That is why. And what God was hinting at in Deuteronomy was you can't be selfish. It is not just about us four and no more. You have got to be concerned about the rest of the nation. You have got to be concerned about the rest of the tribes. You have got to be concerned about the rest of the states. You can't just live for yourself. And so they had this custom developed for people that were selfish.

And that is what Boaz basically said to him. “Look, you know, you can redeem the thing. But you are not going to get anything from redeeming this field because it is going to go back to Naomi. And then like, whoever Ruth connects with, if she marries a guy from here or whatever, either way it is going to go to Naomi. But if she marries a guy it is going to go to him and it is going to stay in the family.” And so this guy is thinking, “Man, I have already got enough kids to feed. I have got a wife. I have got to work.” He says, “Sorry, can't do it. It is just too much—you are asking too much.” So he says, “Fine. You spit in my face. I will loose the sandal.” I think by this time they had quit the spitting in the face and they just loosed the sandal. But initially in Deuteronomy you had to spit in their face too because of selfishness, really.

But here is Boaz. He does not care because he is thinking, “I want this Gentile bride.”
And he takes a Gentile bride.

Now, who is Boaz? What is his background? What nation was he from? He was a Canaanite. His mother was Rehab the harlot. His mama was Rehab. He was Canaanite, well, half Canaanite. And who was Ruth?—Ruth, the Moabite. And the Canaanite and the Moabites were not supposed to have anything to do with God’s people. But Boaz the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabite come together and have a baby. His name is Obed. Obed has a baby. His name is Jesse. Jesse has a baby. His name is David the king. And we see when Samuel anoints him it is from Jesse the Bethlehemite. You know, the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, from Bethlehem. So they started out in Bethlehem. They ended up back in Bethlehem, just like we read in Revelation 5 that He is the root of David, Jesus Christ. He was before David. He is actually David’s root. That is why he could call him his son. It says, “How can he call him his son. I thought he was his lord. Is he his lord or is he his son? How can you be both?” Well, how can you be the root of David when you come after David? Well, unless you are God. And He was the seed of Abraham.

Same parable Jesus told in Matthew 13:44, right? Remember the parable of the treasure that was in the field? And the guy buys the field to get the treasure. And Boaz married the Gentile woman. He bought the field to get the woman that he loved.

So, what is going on? What is needed at this point? What is happening here? I think that was Deuteronomy 25:5–10, the custom of removing the sandal. If you want to read that, it is kind of cool.

Unity

- ❖ **There are 12 separate states.**
- ❖ **There is not a nation.**
- ❖ **They need a king, a political leader.**

So they are in the land but do they really possess all the land? No. Joshua did not take the Jebusite city. God had promised what? In Genesis 17:6 what did God promise Abraham? Do you remember? He said, “From your loins will come forth [what?] kings.” He said, “Abraham, I promise that you are going to have kids down the generations and some of them are going to be kings.”

So, is it wrong for God to give a king? No, because God promised kings to Abraham. So you see how God is working. God is doing this, isn't He? It amazes me how God does this. If I was God, I would not have done this. If I was God I would have just said, “Enough of this mess. Let's just do it. Either let's just save these people or kill these people. I am tired of messing with these people.”

But God goes through all this history. That is why I am convinced—and that is why I want you to go through it because there are people today who say all this stuff is spiritualized and God is not going to bring His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. I think that is a total lie. I believe God is going to bring His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. I believe the waters of this, you might say, the kingdom of God on this earth will be as the

waters cover the sea. He promised it in Numbers and Habakkuk 2:14. God has a goal. God has a plan. And He is going to establish this perfect theocracy on earth. And we are headed there. And we will finish up. Actually we are going to finish up the rest and nail down the theocracy in the next lesson.

Father, we thank You for the fact that You are working. We thank You that You work in spite of our unfaithfulness, our unbelief. You work, in fact, when we fail one time. And then You would think we would learn it, and we go back and we fail again. And You would think we would learn and then we fail again. And it is like You to just keep going seventy times seven. And we are amazed at what You did in history, Lord. But aren't You still doing it right now in my life and in the life of everyone here? You began a good work in us. You have a plan and You will complete it. And I am sure of it. And I am more sure of it the longer I look at Your Word, the longer I see the real truth in the history of what took place here, Lord. I am so sure that nothing, nothing, nothing will thwart Your purpose. Nothing. And nothing can separate us from the great love that You have for us in Christ. Because I have seen what You have done in the past and I know that You are going to finish it in the future. And we are part of it right now. We thank You, Lord. Show us more of what we are as we go through too and how we can be used by just trusting You, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

**“Lesson 6
Prophets, Priests, and Kings**

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Well, the children of Israel need unity. They need a king. They've got twelve separate states. They are not a nation really. They are close to it, but they need a political leader. And God is going to give them one. And so there is a transition from Eli to Samuel. Eli was a priest/judge. Samuel was a judge/prophet. And you know the story. Hannah comes on the scene in 1 Samuel, which is the first book in the Bible to use the word *anointed*. And *anointed* is where the word *messiah* comes from, and so Jesus is the Anointed One. He is the Messiah, "the one upon whom the Spirit of the Lord came" in Isaiah 61. And He preached the favorable year of the Lord. He preached the grace of God because He was the grace and truth of God.

And so, here comes Hannah. She is speaking in her heart, only her lips are not moving. Her voice is not heard and Eli actually thought she was drunk. And Hannah said, "No, my lord. I am a woman oppressed in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:15). And Eli answered, "Go in peace. And may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him" (1 Samuel 1:17). Well, in due time after Hannah had conceived, she gave birth to a son and she named him Samuel.

So here again, every time God wants to do something new, what does He do? If He is going to do something great, it usually is this: He just has a little baby born. And so here comes Samuel, the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. So he is a prophet. He is a child of prayer. Hannah was barren. Here we go again—she is crying out to God saying, "Why can't I have a kid?" She is so intense and emotional about it that everybody thinks she is drunk. Yet God hears her cry. He answers and we have little Samuel born. And he is committed to the Lord even before he was born. And he is established as a prophet because God is establishing now a channel that He can speak through. He wants

to prophesy. He wants to speak to His people. He wants to bring His people where they need to be, but He needs a spokesman. He needs a prophet.

Just like in the New Testament it says, “Despise not prophesying” (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:20). Why? Because God is trying to get His people to where they need to be and we do not want to despise it.

God speaks directly to Samuel and He establishes him as a judge. So Samuel is a guy that really unites the nation. How does Samuel unite the twelve states? It is by prophesying the word of God. And as he prophetically gives God’s mind, God’s heart, God’s direction to the people, and the people begin to come together. Now God has a channel He can speak through and it is Samuel the prophet. God needs that.

So what brought about the great revival that took place after the time of the judges? Well, the Lord brought it about through a praying mother, through a chastened people who sensed their need, and through a faithful prophet who spoke God’s word.

And usually you will find those three things as ingredients for revival. You will have a group of people pray. You will have another people that know they have a need. And then you will have the Word of God going out and revival takes place. You pretty much have to have all three of those things to see great revival.

So, we have a praying mother, a chastened people who sensed their need, and a faithful prophet who preceded the revival. Do they still need a king? Yes, because you have to remember what God is doing at this point, He is building a great nation through which He is going to provide salvation to the whole world. They have to have a king to have a nation. So it says,

Appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations. But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel and the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in

regard to all that they say to you. For they have not rejected you, they have rejected Me from being king over them. (1 Samuel 8:5-7)

So, what is up? Does God want them to have a king or not have a king? One moment it sounds like God says, "Have a king." The next moment God says, "Boy, I wish they did not want a king." And you are like, "Well, what does God want?" He wants to be King. And He wants them to want a king that will rule for God. But that is not what they are asking. They are saying, "We want a king that is just like every other king on earth. We want to be like everybody else. We do not want to be different. We want to be like them." And so it was not that they were asking for a king that was so bad. It was that they wanted a king just like every other king. They did not want a theocracy. They did not want God to rule. And often times that is no different today, is it? We will let God be in charge as long as He just lets us be like everybody else. But do not ask me to be different. That is not the kind of king I want, but that is the kind of King God is.

A Monarchy

The Reign of Saul

(1 Samuel chapters 8-31)

So, what do they need in Scene Ten? They need a king. Are they going to get one? Yes. So, God is going to establish what is called a monarchy. In 1 Samuel chapters 8 through 31, you will see the reign of Saul. As Saul comes on the scene, he begins a monarchy. We do not really want a monarchy, we want a theocracy. And as Israel demands a king, what is wrong with the demand? They wanted a monarch not a theocracy because a monarchy leaves out God. A monarchy is when man does it. A theocracy is when God does it.

What about you in your life? Do you need a king? What kind of king do you want? Do you want it where man does it, or do you want it where God does it? And that was the issue going on there with God. So He was upset that they wanted a monarchy. But He would have been tickled to death if they would have said, "We want a theocracy." And He told Samuel the deal. He said, "They are not really rejecting you, man. It is Me they are rejecting because they want a monarchy, not a theocracy."

So God gives them king Saul in 1 Samuel 9. And Saul's failure is seen. He is jealous. It causes him to seek to kill David on several occasions. So David has to flee for his life. Throughout this period of his life, Saul's son Jonathan remained David's close friend. Jonathan was a brave, godly man. And it was Saul's carnal anger that dragged Jonathan down to death. For further study you can look at 1 Samuel chapters 13–31.

So, Saul made some huge mistakes in his life, but he is the king. And it is interesting what conditions God gave for kingship back in Deuteronomy 17. He says, "When you get into the land and you want to establish a theocracy, here are the conditions for starting toward a theocracy." Now, let's read them because it is really neat to see how to do it. First, He says:

Set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses. [It has got to be God's choice.] You may not put a foreigner over yourself. Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to

multiply horses since the Lord has said to you, “You shall never again return that way.” (Deuteronomy 17:16)

So, He says, “You cannot go back to Egypt and get all their horses.”

Neither shall he multiple wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself. (Deuteronomy 1:17)

It is because gold and money will make your heart turn away too. It is deceptive. There is something about it that just tricks you. So you cannot multiply wives and you cannot multiply money. But here is what he should do”

He should write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priest. And it shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right or to the left.
(Deuteronomy 17:18–20)

Wouldn't that be neat if every time we had a president inaugurated in the United States he had to handwrite a copy of the law out? And then he had to read it all the days of his life. He had to read it every day. First thing he did when he gets up he reads God's law every day. God says, “That is the way it ought to be.” And He says, “And I do not want him to exalt himself above his countrymen. I want him to remain humble. I want him to be a humble guy that will just submit and rule for Me and read My law and do what My law says.” So, it was pretty amazing what God initially wanted.

Saul had so many failures. And two of his big mistakes were simply that he intruded into the priestly office when he was not supposed to. You remember in 1 Samuel 15, he was not supposed to be a priest but he went ahead and took the responsibility of a priest. And then secondly, he did not fully obey God.

So Saul was a monarch. He did things his way. He did not do things God's way. And that is where we learn that obedience is better than sacrifice because we have to learn to do things God's way. That is what is important. We say, "Yeah, but what if I do it my way but I give You a bunch of gifts or something?" God says, "No, that is not what I want. I just want you to do it My way. I am King. I am God. I am Lord. I do not need all that other stuff. I just want simple obedience." That is a theocracy and Saul was not giving God that.

The LORD Rejects Saul

- **His Zeal without Knowledge**
- **His Hypocrisy and Rebellion**
- **His Sinful Impatience**

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king."

(1 Samuel 15:23)

Saul ruled for himself and Saul did what he thought was best. He wanted to spare Agag's sheep and stuff or cattle, and he spared the best. He said, "Well, I think that is best. That is what I am going to do." It did not matter if God said, "Don't do it." God said, "Kill them all." He said, "Well, that does not make sense to me. I am going to do it this way."

God says, “Well then you cannot rule for Me. I reject you as being king. You are not the real king. I have got to have somebody that will actually rule for Me”—because that is a theocracy.

So in 2 Samuel to 2 Kings 10, we see the reigns of David and Solomon. We are getting to the theocracy. A theocracy is God ruling the nation through a man. And this is the only one really that has ever existed to this point in time on earth. But I believe there will be another one when Jesus Christ returns.

So David is victorious in war. He is a war hero. He is called in 1 Samuel 16 which says, “I have selected a king for Myself from among the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite” (cf. 1 Samuel 16:1). Isn’t that neat? Just like Matthew 2 fulfills the prophecy of Micah 5:2 that Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah and that He came out of Bethlehem.

And Bethlehem Ephrathah, though it was small, you shall
be great among the nations because the Messiah, the
Anointed One comes out of you, Bethlehem” (cf. Micah
5:2).

And it is neat to trace that whole story with Ruth because it came from Bethlehem, all the way, full circle around Moab, its mountain, and back to Bethlehem. And then when you get even to Revelation 5 there you are again. And it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Theocracy
2 Samuel - 2 Kings 10
The Reigns of David and Solomon

**A theocracy is God ruling the nation
through a man.
This is the only one that has ever existed.**

David – Victorious in war

Called (1 Samuel 16:1-23)

Trained (1 Samuel 24:1-7; 26:8-12)

David was the one that God chose because God does not see as man sees. God looks on the heart. And when you are going to have a theocracy, the issue is looking on the heart. 1 Samuel 16 “God looks on the heart; He does not see like men see” (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7). And that is what He wants today.

So David is called, he is trained, he goes out and defeats Goliath. But why did he do it? Remember why he defeated Goliath? What was the whole deal there? What was David’s heart there? He had two things on his heart. One, he says, “I want to honor God.” That is the issue. “And I want to glorify God’s name.” So already, here is David ruling for God because his heart is right. Did he have problems? Yeah. But his heart was right. And God says, “Boy, this guy is close to what I want,” because He is looking at the guy’s heart.

David is made King **over all Israel**

(2 Samuel 5:1-5)

This was 14 years after he was anointed king.

**He spent 7 years running
and he spent 7 years reigning
over Judah.**

David is made king over all Israel. He spent fourteen years as the anointed king, seven years running and hiding, and seven years reigning just in Judah. He was not over the whole land for fourteen years. He is anointed king but he is not really the king. In God's eyes he is king, but for seven years he is hiding and for seven more years he is just in Judah alone and nowhere else does he have some measure of fame. But God said he is going to be king so they are going to make him king because God's promise does not fail.

Finally David does reign and this is how the theocracy works. God rules through a man whose heart is right with Him. He wants to build God a house because he loves God so much and his heart is right. But God says, "You cannot build a house because you are a man of war and you have got blood all over your hands. You are war hero and we appreciate that." Because see, Saul established the nation, but David expanded the nation because he was such a war hero. The way David expanded the nation was by killing a lot of people. And he would go out and fight and he would wipe out whole groups of people and he would expand the nation. So he just had blood everywhere, all over his hands. He was a bloody man. So God says, "You cannot do it."

But He does establish a covenant with David and He says, “David, I promise you that there will always be somebody from your loins who will be the guy that rules in Israel. He has got to come from you because you are the guy that has a heart for Me and wants to do everything I ask you to do in terms of rulership.” And so that prophecy was fulfilled in Luke 1, ultimately in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Son of David, which means He has throne rights.

That is why I believe there will be a millennial reign on earth, because Jesus Christ came from David and David has a right to sit on a throne and judge on earth. And when Jesus Christ returns He will set up for a thousand years those throne rights on earth. And many people say, “Oh no, that is just all spiritual.” No, it is not. And that is partly because of what we are going through now with all of this history. Everything that God is doing here, taking all this time to put it into history, is because God intends to actually fulfill His plan. And that plan is having a people on earth that are completely ruled by God and filled with God. That cannot happen until the True Ruler that comes from the loins of David returns to do it. And that will be Jesus Christ. And what a glorious time that will be and quite amazing.

David’s Sin

Adultery

(2 Samuel 11:1-5)

Murder

(2 Samuel 11:14-15)

David’s Repentance

(2 Samuel 12:13-14)

Compare to Saul’s repentance: (1 Samuel 15:24-31)

Godly grief vs. worldly grief: (2 Corinthians 7:10)

David’s Psalms of repentance: (Psalms 32 & 51)

But, David, he was a man. He sinned, didn't he, by committing adultery? He murdered but he repented. Now, the difference between David's repentance and Saul's repentance was what? David's repentance was real. Saul's repentance was just for a short time until things did not work out again and then, "Oh sorry, that happened." But back in the flesh again and repenting again. But David is like truly repentant and has a godly sorrow that works real repentance; where Saul had a worldly sorrow that brings worldly grief. And if we want to read Psalm 32 or 51, we can see his repentant heart there before the Lord.

But really, I like the way that Acts 13 describes David. In Acts 13:20–23 it describes him as a man after God's own heart. And to me that is the best description of all because that is really who he was. But even in David's case, though he was the king God chose—is God a respecter of persons?—no.

The Irrevocable Consequences of Sin

"However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."

(2 Samuel 12:14)

So what happens? We see the irrevocable consequences of sin. 2 Samuel 12:14 says,

However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.

And so the child of David and Bathsheba died. And you remember David went in and fasted. He was before the Lord and they came and said, “The child is dead. You need to rise up, anoint yourself, go back and get to work.” And he did. And then some people had a problem with that. And they said, “You should be mourning more.” He said, “No, God said it is over. It is a done deal. I need to get back to work. The kid is dead. There is nothing I can do about it.” And so he had to move on.

But you know that whatever we sow, we reap. There are consequences for our sin. There is for mine, always has been and always will be. And there is for yours. And that has been true from the Old Testament right into the New Testament. And sin just causes problems, so no wonder we need to do our best to stay away from it. Because God is no respecter of persons, even if it is David the king that He has chosen, He still has to punish sin.

Solomon **Peace and Prosperity**

(1 Kings 1-10; Joshua 24:1-13; Nehemiah 9:5-10; Acts 7:2-50)

Solomon appointed by David
(1 Kings 1:28-31)

Solomon's request for wisdom
(1 Kings 3:7-14)

Solomon will build the Temple
(1 Kings 5:3-5)

Solomon comes on the scene after David. Saul has established the nation. David has expanded the nation. But now it is going to be glorified through Solomon. There is going to be peace. There is going to be prosperity everywhere. Mainly because of what David did, but Solomon is appointed by David. His request is for wisdom, you remember. And then he actually builds the temple that David wanted to build. Solomon does it. He is like his father in the sense he is a prolific writer. He wrote 1,005 songs and 3,000 proverbs. Nine hundred of them are in the Bible. And we have the others in apocryphal literature and stuff, but 900 pieces of what he wrote are actually in the Bible. He was quite a guy, Solomon was prolific.

So the glory of the Lord filled Solomon's temple just as it filled the tabernacle. They are in the land. They have expanded the nation. They are glorifying the nation. They have possessed the land. They have put all their—David is actually the one that went in and got the Jebusite city. I mean, he defeated the kings in the Jebusite city, something Joshua could not do because there was a greater than Joshua coming. And the greater than Joshua that came was David. Joshua could not take the Jebusite city. David came and he took the Jebusite city. But there is a king greater than David too and that is Jesus Christ, who is greater than either Joshua or David.

But here is Solomon enjoying the fruits of the labor of David and the warfare. And God is there because, of course, God is omnipresent. He is an infinite Spirit. He has manifested His presence in a tangible manner in the temple, but He did not dwell totally in the temple. I mean, it was the presence of God there, the *Shekinah*, the glory of God there. But that does not mean God was all there. He was still omnipresent. He was everywhere. And they are in this nation, in this land.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

**The Queen of Sheba verified the reality of
God's blessing on Israel.**

(1 Kings 10:6-9)

***"Behold, the half was not told me. You exceed in
wisdom and prosperity the report I heard."***

The queen of Sheba actually comes and visits Solomon. And she checks him out and verifies the reality that God's blessing is on Israel. And she says, "I have heard stories about this place. And I thought the stories had to be just ridiculous. This cannot be true. That is ridiculous. I do not believe that." And another story comes in. "You ought to hear about this kingdom over here and Solomon and what is going on." And she says, "No, really?" And the reports keep coming in and finally she says, "Get my camels and get my stuff." And she takes off and she comes across the desert. She travels hundreds of miles.

She wants to come into Solomon's kingdom. She gets there and what does she say? She says, "You know what? I heard all these stories and I thought this was just ridiculous that something like this could even exist."

You know, Solomon and the Israelites developed hydraulics. And they had hydraulics. Solomon's gardens were one of the Seven Wonders of the World because through hydraulics he had developed a system that came up. And they had a watering system, a terraced garden with watering systems all through Solomon's pools and all through his gardens and stuff. And it was like people could not believe it. It was unbelievable. But

God had given him wisdom and no doubt he was probably the guy that came up with the whole concept of hydraulics. And later we use it for a lot of things. But, I mean, Sheba got there and she says, “Even half of what has been told about this kingdom [she says]—I have only heard half of it and I did not think that was true. And now I am here and I just cannot believe what I am seeing.” And there never was a man as wise as Solomon in that respect.

How could you be so wise and so stupid at the same time? He excelled all the kings of the earth, it says. So, Act One actually ends on this glorious note. Israel is a theocratic nation. God is ruling His people. They have a great house built for God and they have a great nation. God has filled the house. And the Lord has done what He said He was going to do.

But the issue is this—what is wrong? How come, if now we have gone from what God promised and we have gotten to this place, there is a glorious nation, God’s house is there, the Shekinah glory of God is filling the place, then why don’t we just end the Bible here? I mean, what is up? What is going on here? Has God’s goal been accomplished yet? Why not? Why hasn’t God’s goal been accomplished? It looks like He has done everything He said He was going to do. I mean, as far as I can tell, He has. But what is His goal? He wants the people on earth, the whole world, all people from every tribe, every tongue, every ethnic, every people—He wants the whole world to be filled with people that are in a theocracy. But was the whole world filled with a theocracy?—no, just one place.

You have got this queen that comes over and she says, “Wow! There is no nation, no people that has ever had what you have.” I mean, the guy had 700 wives. I mean, just him. And he had 300 concubines. So, I mean, can you imagine the money, the wealth that it would take? And I was reading where they said the average king in that day might have like anywhere from three to—a real successful king—could have up to twenty wives. That would just be excessive. That would be really pushing it. Sheba comes over and he has 700 wives.

So, what is going on is that—what has not happened yet is what we should still be praying about, I hope. Are you praying this? “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Is God’s will being done on earth as it is in heaven at the point of Solomon? No, not even Solomon is doing God’s will. As a matter of fact, Solomon is out multiplying horses and multiplying wives, which was not God’s will. But he is still allowed to be king and God is still glories in it, to a point.

Will there come a time when God’s will shall come and God’s will shall be done on—where?—earth? Will that happen? Yes. The seed began with Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross when He died. And still God is going to get a people on earth that are filled with God. That is His goal, that is where He is headed and that is where He is taking us.

Act One
Ends on a Glorious Note

Israel is a Theocratic Nation
God is ruling His people
God’s Great House was Built
God filled the House

But...is the whole earth filled with His glory?
(Numbers 14:21; Habakkuk 2:14)

All right now follow me for a moment. I want you to be able to know this. I want you to be able to write it down from memory. Here is kind of what we have gone through. We have done Act One, which is what? You should know that. God is building a nation, a channel through which He can bring what? The Messiah. Redemption. That is Act One.

What did God do in Genesis 1–11? What do we call that? He is setting the stage, right, in Genesis 1–11? God did all these big things: creating the earth, creating heavens, creating man. Man falls into sin through the influence of Satan, but God gives a promise in Genesis 3:15. He says, “I will bring a Redeemer from the Seed of the woman. I am not going to leave you, man, in sin.” Why? It is because the first two chapters of the Bible, Genesis 1 and 2, do not have any sin. That is the way we started out.

The last two chapters of the Bible, Revelation 21 and 22 do not have any sin. That is the way we are going to end up. We started out without sin. We are going to end up without sin. But everything from Genesis 3 to Revelation 20 is all about sin and how God removes and takes care of sin. We call that redemption, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

But He sets the stage saying we are dead in the water. He takes us through a flood and everything else. He scatters them at the Tower of Babel. God does all these huge things but He ends in chapter 11 with the birth of the Hebrew race because God wants to do something through one man. God begins to work through one man and that is Abraham. And what God says through him is, “I am going to take you, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I am going to build a nation through you, Abraham. I promise.”

So, how does He do it? Well, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it gets to this point where we have Jacob and he has got twelve sons. These twelve sons of Jacob are going to be the tribal framework that is going to begin the nation. But one of those sons is special. He is a little unique. This son’s name is Joseph and he gets sold down into Egypt. And while they are down in Egypt, God is just preparing a way to take care of them. And they are down there for what? Four hundred years. And what are they doing? They are making bricks and babies. I mean it is just like there is nothing else to do. But they are just making bricks and babies.

And God then says, “Okay, I have got this huge nation now. I have got all these people and they have a language. I have kept them confined. They cannot go anywhere. They are

servants and all they can do is to make a big nation.” That is what they do. He raises up a leader within them and that leader, Moses, takes them out. And they cross through the sea and come out on the other side. God supernaturally delivers them from Egypt and takes them through the sea. They pass right through the sea.

And so they have got this big nation out here and it has got all these people in it, millions, maybe three million people. Two and a half to three million people are out there and there is this huge nation. Do they have a leader? Yes, they have got a leader. And who is that leader? That is Moses. So Moses is out here leading them.

What do they need now? They have got a leader but what are they missing? They need law. So He gives them the Ten Commandments and they have law. But they are still not where God wants them. They have not reached the goal yet, but they are getting there.

Well, Moses dies. God buries him. God takes a shovel, buries His workman and God carries on the work, right? So, He has another guy lead them out and they cross the river. And this guy takes them out. They cross the river. God took them out supernaturally here. He brought them in supernaturally here. They got into the land and what is the first thing they did? They divide the land into what?—east and into west. They have a leader and his name is what? Joshua. And we have got east Canaan and we have got west Canaan.

But the problem is that once they got into the land, they did what we can do. They settled down, got a little lazy, got a little selfish. They said, “You know, it has been a long trip, we finally got some land here. I know God said we have got to go drive everybody out. But I am just really tired of fighting. My kids are tired of fighting. My wife is tired of me being gone. We just—I am just tired of doing what God said.” And so they settled down and they did not complete what God said. Joshua tried to encourage them. He said, “Look, for me and my house we are going to serve the Lord. I hope the rest of you guys will do it.” But for the most part, you know how that goes. It is always a few, isn’t it, who end up doing stuff?

So what happens is they enter into a time called the time of the judges. And you have got all these groups of people during the time of the judges and different little states. They are in the land but there is no unity. So what God does during the time of judges is that He will raise up a judge here and deliver them. Then He will go over here in this area of the land. He will raise up a judge over here and that judge will deliver them. He will pull Deborah up over here. She will deliver them. Or He will pull Othniel up over here and they will deliver them. And the whole period of the judges is described as a time where they “did what was right in their own eyes” (cf. Judges 21:25). It was just a time of total disunity.

So for them to become a nation, they have got to be unified. How do they get unified and who unifies them? Well, Samuel does. How does he do it? He takes disunity, this time where He raises up judges here and there, and He brings unity to it. They have got their twelve states still, the twelve tribes, but there is a unity to them. There is coherence to them. They have this unity because of the prophecy of God. There is a prophet of God speaking for God. And really they are beginning a theocracy.

But what happens is they say, “We want a king like everybody else. We think the prophet Samuel is really cool and everything. We know we hear from God when he speaks, but we want our own king just like the rest of the nations.” And so what they do—God says, “Okay, I will give you a king.” And so here is God in all of His holiness and omnipotence, He wants a king and that is Saul. He gives them Saul and He wants to rule through Saul and rule the nation.

Saul, he looks a little different. The only problem with Saul is that he is a bit empty. Because I do not think he has a real heart for God. He has a heart for himself and therefore he is empty. It is like what it says in Proverbs. “She that lives in pleasure is empty while she lives.” And it is so true. Well, he is not the answer because what do you call this? When you got a guy that rules for himself, what is the name of this? It is a monarchy, isn’t it? But what does God want? God wants to rule through a man and He finally gets one.

God wants to rule through this man who has a heart for Him, and that is David. And so God raises up a man that has a heart for Him. And David—though this guy was good as a monarchy—what did he do that was good? He established the kingdom, because some government is better than no government. It is better sometimes to even have bad government than to have no government. I mean it is better to have Nero than it is to have nobody. And we have seen that throughout the history of mankind. One of the bad things about the last days is that the man of sin is called “the man of lawlessness.” He is going to set up a government that is so against God, it is going to be the worst government that has ever existed on earth because it is going to be lawless and against God. And that is the government of the last days, lawlessness.

But David is here. And Saul has established the kingdom, but David expands the kingdom, the kingdom of God on earth. But then along comes David and finally from David is Solomon. He sort of had a heart for God, but I do not think he had a whole heart for God. He was not as bad as Saul, but he was not as good as David. He had a half heart but God still works through him. And what happens here is what? This nation becomes just glorified. There is just glory in this nation. And so he glorifies the nation.

So God has done what He said He would do. He has set the stage for redemption. He has come to one man. He has called that man out through his family. And through those twelve sons He set a tribal framework. Joseph goes down, prepares the way in Egypt. They grow into this huge nation. God leads them out miraculously and supernaturally. Takes them out in the desert, gives them the leadership, and gives them the law. And then when Moses dies He buries His workman, raises up Joshua, leads them through the river into the land. They divide it into east and west but they do not really take the whole land. And then they divide up because of their selfishness and their concern for their own families and not finishing what God said to do. They do what is right in their own eyes. And God has to come along and say, “Oh man, they are still My people! They are rebellious. They are disobedient. They are selfish. They do not want to rule for Me. They are just so ignorant! But I still love them and I said I would build a nation. I am going to do it.”

So He raises up Deborah and He raises up Gideon. He raised up Ehud. He raises up Othniel. He raises up all these guys to come deliver them. Until finally, Hannah is there praying. She cannot have kids. She is upset and she is thinking, "Why can't I have kids? Everybody else can have kids. I am so upset about it." And she is so upset about it everybody thinks she is drunk. And her heart is being poured out to God. And she says, "If You just give me a kid, God, he is Yours." And God says, "Oh, a heart that is totally surrendered. What do you know!" And God takes that totally surrendered heart and gives her a baby. And Samuel becomes the prophet of God that brings unity to these twelve states. And it is like they really are a nation for the first time now, because they have unity. And God is ruling. And a theocracy is beginning.

But they want to be like everybody else. Boy, don't we find that today? Often times aren't we right here? God wants to prophesy through His Word. But what do we want? We have got to have some speaker come in that is famous. And if we cannot have that somehow we just can't seem to hear God. Isn't that amazing? We are not a lot different today than they were then because we are fleshly and we work on a horizontal plane often times, but God wants to just speak through His Word. And He can use anybody. He can use you. Hopefully that is what you are doing here, because He is going to prepare you to do it.

So He speaks through Saul and He brings him in and uses him. Even though they wanted a king to be a monarch and God wanted a theocracy, God is still faithful. And Saul actually establishes the nation until finally David is raised up. He has a heart for God. And David expands the nation through warfare. And he is a great war hero. And then Solomon comes on the scene and he glorifies the nation.

So God has done what He said He was going to do. He has built a channel, a nation through which He is going to bring the Messiah. And the Messiah comes as the root of David. And that is why I believe, because of all this history that goes into this, there will be an actual thousand year reign on the earth. Jesus Christ will return and sit on the seat of David on his throne. God promised it. It will happen.

So we are at this point where God has provided the nation. But it is still not, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” It is because there is still not a people on earth that are filled with Christ. There is still not a total theocracy on earth, is there? Right? So that is where we leave it. And because there is not, next time we will start Act Two. This is the end of Act One.

In Act Two God is going to deal with this issue because this is still not what He wants. And when God does not get what He wants, He has a way of dealing with it and getting it. I mean, you do, don't you? When you do not get what you want, do you have your ways to try to get what you want? Well, God is the same way. I mean, He is not like you in that respect or me in that respect. He does not do it in a selfish, sinful way. But the bottom line is this: when God does not get what He wants, God has a way of getting what He wants. And we will begin to see next time in Act Two how God goes about getting what He wants. And as it was worked in the Old Testament, it will work out right now in your life as well.

So let's pray,

Lord, help us to see that not one word that You promised will fail. You did it in the Old Testament. You brought it forward. You brought Christ. And then now You are building Your church and we know that when that is finished, when that is complete, that we are in a time right now where Your grace is calling people out. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ. I mean, when we see what You are doing it is quite amazing to us and to know that it will happen. But then right now we are in a time where we have an opportunity to go out and tell people the good news about Jesus. And I thank God. I look at this and I think, Lord, if I went out and told people this they would think I was nuts. And they would not believe me.

But You said, “The gospel, the good news about Jesus; it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first.” So, Lord, help us to see from Your perspective what is going on in terms of history on earth, learn things from it, and realize where we live now today. We want to get out the wonderful good news around this earth, because You are going to call every tongue, every tribe, every ethnicity, every people to be there. And it will be so neat to be one of the people that were so yielded to You and living in Your theocracy in such a way that we might go where You lead us. We might go where You guide us, wherever that might be. And we would share the good news about Jesus. And then there will be people there because we were obedient to You and not just selfishly concerned about our own little thing, just like they did in the Old Testament. Lord, deliver us from that kind of selfishness and bring us into the heart of Jesus Christ who came to give His life a ransom for many. For Your glory, we pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 7 God Scatters the Nation

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Let's pray.

Father, I just thank You so much for today. Thank You for the life we have, the awareness and consciousness of You. To just be still and know that You are God and that in eternity past, so to speak, You had us in Your mind and decided to create us and make us in Your image. So Lord, we grieve about the whole situation and the world in general, because we know it is not what it ought to be. And we know it is not what it is going to be, because You have promised that there will be at least a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. So we look for that. We hope for that. So Lord, keep us from going astray. Just keep us on the path of discipleship, of being conformed to the image of Christ and walking in fellowship with You and enjoying You now, as well as forever.

So as we look, Lord, at the history of what You did, it just, it reaffirms and solidifies our commitment to have hope, to be patient, because we see that You worked. And we have hope that not one of Your promises will fail. They will, in good time, all be accomplished. So Lord, we just acknowledge You as the sovereign God. So just enable us as we go through Your Word, Lord and see some of the big things in terms of history, that we would look into it but we would see You and see Your hand there and know that nothing has really changed. Things are pretty much the

same. You are still just marching out Your orders and Your command and Your will shall be done. Lord, let us find where we fit in it and be part of it. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Act Two

God Scatters the Nation

(1 Kings 11 - 2 Chronicles 36)

Well, we saw God set the stage in Genesis 1 through 11. And He began the drama of redemption, you might say, in chapter 12 of Genesis. Act One is from chapter 12 of Genesis all the way to 1 Kings 10; that is Act One. And Act One was the building of the nation. Did God build the nation? Yes, a glorious nation. It ended you might say, as a glorious nation at least externally, but there were some problems internally.

And now we move on to Act Two. And Act Two begins in 1 Kings 12 and goes through to the last book of the Old Testament, which is 2 Chronicles 36. Now it is not the last chapter in your Bible, but that is the last chapter in the Jewish Bible, because that thus ends the history, you know, as far as they read it.

So Act Two will carry us from the time God scatters the nation until the time that, really, it is rebuilt, you might say. We are going to look at that, which includes 1 Kings 11 to 2 Chronicles 36. It begins with Solomon's downfall.

Solomon's Downfall - Decline

**Spending much time on his home and
little time on the house of God...**

(1 Kings 6:37-7:51)

Collecting horses and wealth...

(1 Kings 10:26-38)

Marrying foreign wives...

(1 Kings 11:1-6)

*God gave an early warning by Moses
regarding this potential problem.*

Solomon begins to decline. Solomon spends more time on his own house than he does on God's house in 1 Kings 6. And that is often an indication of where our heart is, if we are spending more time on our things than God's things. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then the other things will be added" (cf. Matthew 6:33). Even in 1 Timothy 6:9-10 we are warned about getting our hearts set on riches and what it can do. And Solomon began to focus on himself, take care of his own situation. And then he went on and said, "Oh, okay, I guess I had better build God's house too." But he really spent more time on his own than on God's. He collected horses and wealth. He took many foreign wives in and loved them, and they divided his heart.

So God comes and he gives an early warning by Moses, you might say, on this potential problem. And God is like that. He is always warning us about what is going to happen in the future if we do not change. We see it in history. But I can guarantee that there are

God's children today who have received warnings from the Holy Spirit, that have received promptings from the Holy Spirit or from the Word of God, and you just kind of know it as a check in your spirit. If you do not change—it is like God just warns you. If you do not turn around then you are going to have a downfall. And you have probably been there in the past, where you have had those kinds of warnings, you have not heeded those kinds of warnings and then—boom—you fell.

I was talking to a girl yesterday that had to leave school yesterday. It was like the same thing. She had a warning. She said, "I had a couple warnings. It was like, don't go that way. Don't go that route." But it is like, she said, "I just did not listen." And the next thing you know, boom. You are down.

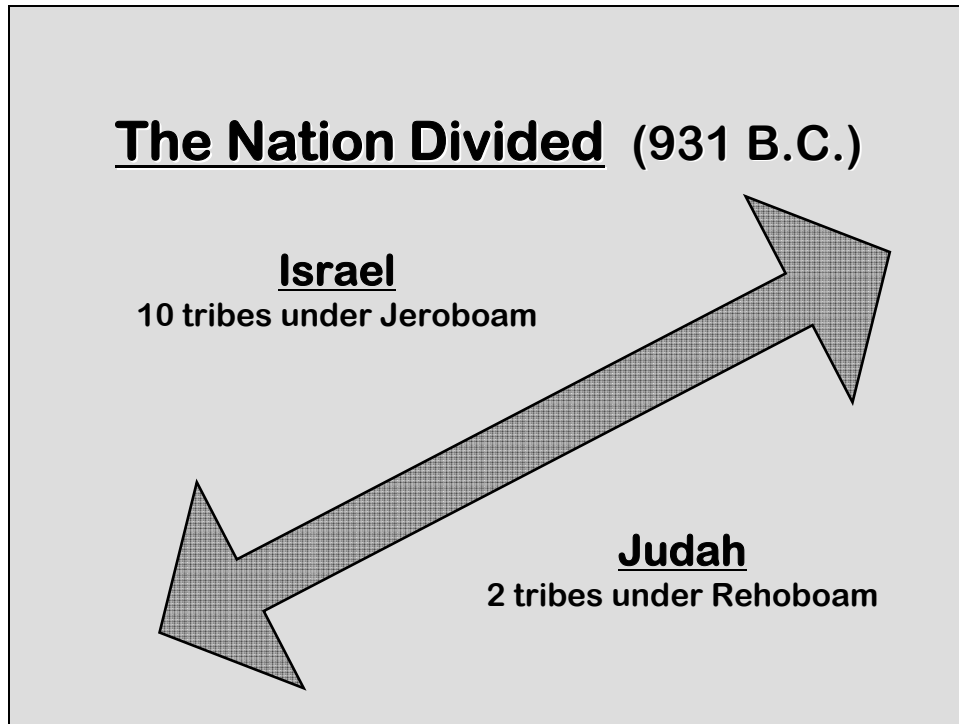
Well, 1 Kings 5 says, "Then King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all of Israel. And the labor force was 30,000 men, ten thousand a month in shifts. One month in Lebanon, two months at home. 70,000 who carried burdens. And 80,000 who quarried stone. 3,300 from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies who supervised the people who labored in the work" (cf. 1 Kings 5:14-16). So he built this huge labor force and said, "You have got to go out and work for two months and then you can come home." Or, "You have got to go out and work for one month and then you can come home and stay for two months. But then you have got to go back out again and work another month." And so he was always disrupting the family, sending the guys out for a month at a time. Then he would bring them back. Then he would send them out for a month at a time. You know, because he wanted to keep his building programs going.

And the people did not like that and you would not like it either. 1 Kings 9, this is the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised: "Whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion, he did." In other words, he built whatever he wanted to, wherever he wanted to. But he was on this huge—he just wanted to build and expand and have more. He could not be satisfied with what he had. And he was, in a sense, glorifying the nation, but he went beyond. It sounds like he was excessive in it.

And 1 Kings 11 says, “But King Solomon loved many foreign women and he had 700 wives, princes, 300 concubines. And his wives turned his heart away; for it was so, when Solomon was old that his wives turned his heart after other gods. And his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God as was the heart of his father David. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods” (cf. 1 Kings 11:1-8). So the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel who had appeared to him twice. You would like, man, you would certainly remember that.

So, what happens is, God says, “I have got to turn away from My people because now I do not have a guy who is ruling for Me any longer. He is not like his father David. He started out okay. I appeared to Him twice, but he has not heeded Me. And if he is not going to rule for Me then I do not have a theocracy.” It is just total hypocrisy. It is just a form, an external shell.

So, he gets turned away from the Lord. So, when you look at the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, each reigning for forty years—we have a total of 120 years where the nation was united. I mean, after that time of judges and everything where they were so dissipated and scattered and things were horrible, we have had a wonderful time where the nation has been united together under rulership, and all the other nations have feared this nation. It has been 120 years of really bliss, in many ways.



But because of this situation with Solomon and his heart, the nation is divided in 931. God takes the ten tribes of Israel and He moves them north. And He leaves the two tribes of Judah south in Jerusalem. The ten tribes of Israel go under Jeroboam. And the two tribes of Judah stay under Rehoboam there. So it is just interesting to see what God does.

Now God says He is going to do something about the deterioration. He tells Solomon He is going to divide the nation. He warned him. And God tells Jeroboam He going to give him ten tribes of the divided kingdom, or the divided nation. How does God do it? Well, He does it through a prophet. And God tells Solomon first that, “You are going to lose the nation.” So the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel who appeared to him twice. And God had commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after all gods. But he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.

Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, “Because you have done this and you have not kept My commandment and My statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the

kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless, I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David. But I will tear it out of the hand of your son. [You know, that is Rehoboam. He says, “I am going to tear it out of the hand of your son Rehoboam.] However, I will not tear away the whole kingdom. I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen. (cf. 1 Kings 11:11-13)

So God says, “I have to discipline. I do not have a choice, really. But I am not going to totally wipe you out. And the reason is because of a covenant and a promise that I made to My servant David.” And it is like, “You had better be glad I made a promise to him, because if I had not made the promise to him, Solomon, you would be wiped out.”

So God comes and He gives Jeroboam ten of the tribes. And He did it through a prophet, Ahijah. It says,

Now it happened, at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite came and met him on the way. And he had clothed himself with a new garment and the two were alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him and tore it into twelve pieces, and he said to Jeroboam, “Take for yourself ten pieces. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel, ‘Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and I will give ten tribes to you. But he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. However, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand because I have made him ruler all the days

of his life for the sake of My servant David whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you. [Ten tribes] And to his son I will give one tribe that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself to put My name there.'" (cf. 1 Kings 11:29-36)

So, this prophet comes and he comes in a dramatic way. He gives the prophecy. He wears a new coat, or a cloak, comes up to Jeroboam, takes his cloak off. Of course, it says there was not anybody around. They were alone in the field. He just rips his thing off. And he is standing there basically naked and he just like, tears the whole thing up into twelve pieces. And then he gives ten of the pieces to Jeroboam and says, "This is what God is doing. He is tearing it out of the hand of Solomon. He is giving you ten and he is going to keep two."

God Executes Judgment
He divides the Kingdom (931 B.C.)

Strife between Jeroboam and Rehoboam
(1 Kings 12:19-24)

Jeroboam is cut off because of sin
(1 Kings 13:33-34)

So God says, “I am going to execute judgment.” And He divides the kingdom. This happens in the year 931. Strife begins to develop between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. Rehoboam is the son of Solomon. And Jeroboam is cut off, though, because of sin. He has to leave.

Now, here is the way the revolt went. You know the story, probably well. 1 Kings 12:1. Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all of Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. You know, he is Solomon’s son. Solomon has died and they are going to crown Rehoboam king. Then Jeroboam—because he had been down in Egypt—he had fled because he knew Solomon was trying to kill him. But now Solomon is dead and he comes back. And he says, “Okay.” Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and they spoke to Rehoboam saying: “Your father made our yoke heavy. You remember he sent us out. He worked us like dogs. I mean, the yoke was too heavy. We did not like it. The taxes were too much. Now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you” (cf. 1 Kings 12:3-4).

That was actually a pretty good deal because Jeroboam had a following. And he was coming and saying, “You know, we will follow you if you will just lighten up. You know, we cannot keep doing what your father did. We want to know what is going to happen.”

In verse 5 he said to them, “Well, depart for three days then come back to me.” You know he wanted to check it out. And the people departed. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he was still alive. But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him. And what had they told him? They said, “Look, they are right. Lighten up. If you will lighten up, these people will serve you and everything will be fine.”

But he rejected it and he consulted the young men who had grown up with him who stood before him. You know, peer pressure.

And the young men, who had grown up with him, spoke to him saying: “Thus shall you speak to the people who have spoken to you saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy but you make it lighter on us.’ Thus you shall say to them: ‘My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s waist. And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges or scorpions.’” Then the king answered the people roughly and rejected the advice which the elders had given him and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men. So the king did not listen to the people for the turn of events was from the Lord, that He might fulfill His word which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. (1 Kings 12:10-15)

It is amazing, isn’t it? Now, doesn’t it say in Proverbs 21:1 that the king’s heart is actually in the hand of the Lord and the Lord can turn the king’s heart just like water courses are turned? Although we do not understand the mystery of everything, history bears it out over and over again. The Lord actually turns the hearts of kings. He says, “For the turn of events was from the Lord.”

I mean, anybody with any sense should have taken the advice of the elders, particularly when you see ten of your twelve tribes coming against you saying: “If you don’t lighten our load, you know this is going to create a problem.” And he should have lightened their load. But the Lord just hardened his heart. Or, the Lord cooperated in some form with hardening his heart. However you want to explain it, the result is the same. The turn of events was from the Lord and it was to fulfill Scripture.

Everything the Lord has promised in Scripture will happen. If He has to turn the heart of a king to make it happen, it will still happen.

Verse 16 says:

When all of Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered: “What portion have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David.” (cf. 1 Kings 12:16)

It is like they said, “We are going back, the ten of us (ten tribes), we are going back and you guys just build your own stuff from now on. You two little tribes left, Judah and Benjamin, you can build all you want. We are not helping. We are going back and we are starting our own thing. We have got ten tribes; you have got two. Have fun!”

Well the two tribes could not even afford to keep the place painted. So, I mean, they could not even keep the place clean. So they were left by themselves there.

So Israel departed to their tents. But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelled in the cities of Judah. Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue, but all Israel stoned him. [That is, Adoram was stoned.] And he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. (cf. 1 Kings 12:16-18)

So he realized he had to leave or they would problem kill him too. And so he took off.

So here is this strife between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. You have got the ten northern tribes of Israel and they are against the two tribes of Judah. There has been a division ever since 931 B.C. when this took place. So from 931 B.C. it says, till this day...

Now, it came to pass when all of Israel had heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent to him, called him to the congregation, made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only. [And of course, Benjamin] And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were warriors to fight against the house of Israel that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. But the word of God came to Shemaiah, the man of God, saying, “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people saying: ‘Thus says the Lord, “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house. For this thing is from Me.’” Therefore, they obeyed the word of the Lord and they turned back according to the word of the Lord. (cf. 1 Kings 12:20-24)

Well, I do not know what he was thinking. You know, that he was going to go out and the two tribes were going to defeat the ten tribes, but I guess because he had some measure of an army. But as he heads out, a prophet comes and says, “You cannot do it.”

Does that remind you of anything in the New Testament? Do we have the same principle applied to the church that was applied to Israel? Yeah, we do, don't we?—same exact principle. You are not supposed to do what? Not hate your brother. But not only that, do what? What do we not do in the New Testament? We don't take vengeance. But specifically, how does the New Testament say we don't do these things? We don't even do what? “You are not even to take your brother to court—don't take your brother to court and that before unbelievers” (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:6).

You know, these guys are getting ready to go out and fight their own people, their own brethren. And God says, “Stop! You cannot do that. I won’t allow it—can’t have that.” And He says the same thing in the New Testament. It can’t happen. There is a unity under the headship of Jesus Christ. And He says, “It is for that reason you are not to take your brother to court.” He says, “Why wouldn’t you rather suffer loss than to take your brother or sister to court before unbelievers and let the world look on and say there is no unity in Christ.” And Paul goes on and says, “What I would prefer is just take the least member of the body of Christ and have him judge the situation.” He said, “That would be better. If you went to your church and said, let me find the least little Christian in the church. Oh that guy. He is the most unspiritual in the church. Let’s get him or her. And let them be the judge. That would be better,” he said, “than going to court before unbelievers and showing to the world the disunity under the headship of Jesus Christ.”

Interesting that the same kinds of things He commands in the Old Testament—He hasn’t changed in His view of how things ought to work. God has given us the same thing in the New Testament.

So Jeroboam is cut off, obviously because of his sin. It says,

After this event, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way but he [again] he made priests from every class of people for the high places, whoever wished, he consecrated him. And he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth. (1 Kings 13:33-34)

So it is like he said, “Oh, everybody can be a priest.” You want to be a priest? Sure. And then he said, “Well, I think I will be one too.” And people were offering sacrifices in high places. And God had specifically set up a place because He was trying to unite the nation and said, “This is where the sacrifices will take place. Not out there, right here.”

And so they were in disobedience and not under the headship of God. Many today are not under the headship maybe of Jesus Christ, or the lordship of Christ and things don't work so smoothly because of it.

So, what happens then, in Scene Three, is that the ten northern tribes are removed and they are scattered. God said He would do it, didn't He? I mean, He promised it and God did it in 722 B.C. So in 931 they are split. But in 722 God brings a nation against them, Assyria. And so Sennacherib actually captures Israel. And we see the reason for the judgment and the beginning of the Samaritans.

Now this took place over 200 years after God told Jeroboam it would happen. So God takes His time to fulfill His promise, but He still fulfills His promise. So, God is doing it, but how is He doing it? God is performing His will through a pagan nation. God raises up a pagan nation to judge His people because they are not listening to Him.

And sometimes we forget. Would God allow, if the United States throws off our inheritance, despises our birthright as a nation, and we continue that way, would God allow of foreign, evil nation to rise up against us? Sure He would. He would not have a problem with that. He did not have a problem with it in the Old Testament. He was always using things like this to discipline and to chastise and judge His people. And that is just the way it happens in life.

So God tells Jeroboam in 1 Kings 14 what is going to happen. He says,

Moreover, the Lord will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam. (1 Kings 14:14)

He says, "I will get someone who wants to serve Me. I will just have to raise him up Myself."

For the Lord will strike Israel as a reed shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the river because they have made their wooden images, provoking the Lord to anger. And He will give up Israel because of the sins of Jeroboam who sinned and who made Israel to sin. (1 Kings 14:15-16)

So He says, “It is going to happen, Jeroboam.” So they get carried away in 2 Kings 17 and God does it.

5 Now the king of Assyria [that is Sennacherib] went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years.

6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7 For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods,

8 and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

9 Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city.

10 They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.

11 There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger,

12 for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, “You shall not do this thing.” (2 Kings 17:5-12)

So God is judging them because, as we will see when we go through the prophets, God warned them over and over and over again, but they would not listen. And so God says, “I will judge you.”

And that is always the way. We get a prompting from the Holy Spirit. We get another brother or sister telling us something. We hear something in a church service or a chapel or in our devotions or just reading the Word, and we get promptings all the time, warnings. And if we do not heed those warnings then eventually judgment has to come.

The reason for the judgment, He says in verse 13—

13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.”

14 Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.

15 And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around

them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them.

16 So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molten image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17 And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone. (2 Kings 17:13-18)

So the Lord allowed Assyria to come down against His people because they just totally rejected the Lord. They did not want to walk with God and they proved it. And God said, “Okay.” And He disciplines them and takes them away by Sennacherib.

Now, some of you have read some of the history of that. It is quite interesting because everybody feared the Assyrians because of their torturous ways. You know, they were the people that were known to often times go into a place and they would cut your hands off. And then they would string you, like you string fish on a string. They would run a string up through your jaw. So they would take everybody in this room, they would cut our hands off. They would string those that lived—they’d string all together. They would start over there and they would run a string through my jaw, out my tongue, and run it right through yours, out your tongue to the next person. And they would string us like you string fish on a line. And then they would walk you back to Assyria, those that survived. And then they would kill you later in front of the rest of the people, so you had something great to look forward to—but that is just the way they were. Then they would just burn everything. And they would—they didn’t just take over places—they tortured people and so they were a very feared people.

And you think, “How could God allow such an evil people like that to come and take over His people and discipline them?” But God does. He allows that kind of thing to take place. And of course, Judah is thinking at this time—it is 722 B.C. and Judah is thinking: “Well, they got what they deserved. They are a bunch of rebellious tribes. They should have been down here with us all along. They should not have gone up there. God has judged them.” Have you ever thought that about somebody else? “Oh yes, they got what they deserved.”

But here is Judah, down in the south, and their heart’s really no different. And God takes another few years, until 586, to prove to Judah that she is no different than her sister. Her heart is just as wicked.

So Judah is removed and scattered. And in Scene Four, Judah walks in Israel’s footsteps. And God informs Manasseh and then we see God’s view.

In Jeremiah 32, what is God’s view about Jerusalem? Do you remember what it says there in Jeremiah 32:31? It says—and this is God’s view. It is chapter 32:31. God says,

Indeed this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger
and My wrath from the day that they built it, even to this
day, that it should be removed from before My face.

So God is so angry at this point, even with Judah, He says, “Jerusalem, that they are taking their rest in, and their refuge in,” He says, “I have not liked this city since the first day they built this city. Because when they built this city, they were not really building it to Me. They were doing it for themselves. And they have done every kind of evil here.” But they trusted in the city. They trusted in Jerusalem and we will see that in a minute. They knew Psalm 125 like you know John 3:16.

And so Judah sinned like Israel sinned. And the Lord spoke by His servants the prophets and He said:

11 Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations [he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with idols]

12 Therefore, thus says the Lord God of Israel, “Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle.

13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.

[I mean, “I am going to clean this place right off the face of the earth.]

14 So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies. And they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies

15 because they have done evil in My sight and provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day. (cf. 2 Kings 21:11–15)

I mean, God is ticked off and He is going to wipe them out because they have done worse than the foreign nations. I mean, it is like, sometimes we even see this in the church in the New Testament, don't we? I mean, we are reading in 1 Corinthians 5, and Paul has to write to the church in Corinth and he said: “Excuse me. There is a guy in your church that has his father's wife? What? I mean, people even out in the world have enough sense to know that you don't sleep with your father's wife.” You know, he says, “But that is in the church!” And so, things have not changed that much from how bad they were in the Old Testament until what still continues to go on, often times, in the church today.

So in 586 God has warned them. He uses Babylon to come down against them. And He destroys the only theocratic nation that we have had. And it is a very significant historical event.

However, it ends on a note of hope and we read in 2 Chronicles 36:23,

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!

That is how the Old Testament ends. It ends on a note of hope of going up to build God a house. And no doubt that is why the Jews ended their period of history there with 2 Chronicles 36. And they have been under discipline ever since.

But let me ask you this, when will God's discipline be lifted from the people? He says, when they turn and repent. And it is confirmed in Acts 3:19, right? When there will be seasons of refreshing that will come from the presence of God, when they return and remember, Peter was preaching that, wasn't he? And he said, "If you guys would just repent the Lord would come right now." And Peter was hoping that would happen in the early church. But the nation, as a whole, just went, "Nah, forget about it." Though there were many Jews that were receiving the Lord. But there will come a day when the nation as a whole does repent. And as Deuteronomy 30 promises, at that point, the discipline will be lifted. It may take the Great Tribulation period—I am sure it will—to get them to a point where they are actually willing to repent.

So, here they are, the fall of Jerusalem.

And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God.
(2 Chronicles 36:15-16)

I mean, the Lord has compassion. He says, “I am sending messengers to tell you that you have another chance. I will take you back. I will still take you back after all that has happened in our relationship. I will still take you back.” But when He sent the messengers, they mocked the messengers—

16 ...despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people till there was no remedy.

[There is just “no way” these people are coming back.]

17 Therefore, He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with a sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak. He gave them all into his hand.

18 And all the articles of the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon.

19 Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious possessions.

20 And those who escaped from the sword, he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia,

21 to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay

desolate, she kept Sabbath to fulfill seventy years. (2
Chronicles 36:16-21)

So they had desecrated the Sabbath for 490 years. God came and said, “Look, you will go into seventy years of captivity.” And they were carried off for those seventy years.

**If Babylon was so evil,
why is it called:**

“The Jewish Miracle?”

Psalm 137:8

So why is Babylon called the Jewish miracle? Because what was Babylon the center of? And we all know it has been the center of it from the beginning. Even back in the plains of Shinar, in the book of Genesis, we know that Babylon has always been the center of idolatry.

And so, what does God do? What is the problem with His people? They became idolatrous. They had other gods before the true and living God. How did God cure the people from idolatry? Where did God cure the people from idolatry? He took them to the center of idolatry in order to work on them and cure them from idolatry. It is sort of almost like fight fire with fire.

But Babylon has been called the Jewish miracle because their problem was idolatry and God took them off to Babylon, the center of idolatry from the whole world, and He began to cure them from idolatry, so that at least a remnant and a group would want to come back and follow the true and the living God.

And that is what we read in the imprecatory Psalm 137:1-9, it says,

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

[They are like 700 miles away from their homeland and they are by this river and they are weeping.]

2 We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst of it.

3 For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a foreign land?

5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!

6 If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth-- if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, “Raze it, raze it, to its very foundation!”

8 O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, happy the one who repays you as you have served us!

9 Happy the one who takes and dashes your little ones against the rock!

Which implies—that is one of the things that the Babylonians did as they came in—they took the babies of the Jews and they took the little babies and they busted their heads open on rocks. So, I mean, it was just a horrible experience.

But there are consequences for sin. And if you do not see anything else in this story, you need to begin to see that as far as God is concerned, there are always consequences for sin. And the consequences are severe. And they are terrible. And it is like the sooner we begin to realize that as a reality then maybe the fear of the Lord will be the beginning of some wisdom.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 8

God's Restoration and Preservation

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Well, let's summarize Act Two.

Summary View of Act 2

***931 – The Nation is Divided:**

Jeroboam (10 tribes of the North)

Rehoboam (2 tribes of the South)

***722 – Northern 10 Tribes Judged by Assyria**

606 – Nebuchadnezer Invades Jerusalem

597 – Nebuchadnezer comes back for more

***586 – Nebuchadnezer makes a final end of it**

(70 years of captivity in Babylon)

In 931 the nation is divided. Jeroboam gets ten tribes, goes to the north. Rehoboam stays with two tribes in the south. The two tribes are Judah and Benjamin. Then in 722, the northern ten tribes are judged by Assyria. And of course, Judah is in the south thinking—“well, she is finally getting what she deserves.” But later, in 606, Nebuchadnezzar actually invades Jerusalem, takes a lot of the temple treasures back to Babylon and says, “I will check you guys later.” He comes back in 597 a second time for more. And that is when he takes 10,000 of the princes and the choice people, probably when Daniel went off with him. And then he came back a final time, a third time in 586 and that is when Nebuchadnezzar made a final end of Jerusalem and he burned it to the ground. He took the temple apart or I mean he just destroyed everything that was there. And they went into seventy years of captivity.

Kings and Chronicles Compared

Kings

Political View

Written by a Prophet

Message of Judgment

Man's Failings

Chronicles

Spiritual View

Written by a Priest

Message of Hope

God's Faithfulness

- **Kings provides the headlines and front page news items. (Man's View)**
- **Chronicles is the editorial page of priestly commentary. (God's View)**

So that is the way the history works out for them. So, when you look at the Kings and the Chronicles and you compare them, and you look at this history, when you read the Kings you are going to get the political view. But when you read the Chronicles you are going to get the spiritual view. Or, you know, the reason for that is the Kings were written by prophets, but the Chronicles were written by priests. And the prophets were always prophesying concerning the world situation, but the priests were writing about the personal, religious situation. And so when you read Kings you are getting the more political, prophetic view. But when you read Chronicles you are getting a spiritual, priestly view. And so, in Kings you get a message of judgment. But when you get to Chronicles you get a message of hope because what is God trying to do? He is wanting to change our hearts. And there is hope for that.

So in Kings you see man's failings but when you read Chronicles, you see God's faithfulness. And you cannot read the two apart from each other. You really need to read them together to get the whole picture because Kings is sort of like reading a newspaper. You read the headlines and you read the front page news items. You know, you just pick

up a newspaper and you go, “Oh okay, what is happening?” And you get the general picture of what is happening in the world. But when you go to Chronicles you get the editorial page. You get the priestly commentary. And so Kings is more from man’s view and Chronicles is more from God’s view. And you put the two together to get a whole picture of what happened during that time of the history.

What books were written during the seventy years of captivity? Well, Ezekiel was written and Daniel was written during that time. And it is interesting that as Ezekiel is on the river Chebar, he introduces a word to us we know of the Lord. And it is the word *Adonai*, which means absolute ruler. That He is the possessor and ruler of all of earth. And it is interesting that while they are down there not owning anything—they are 700 miles away from their home, sitting by the river of Babylon. They cannot even sing the Lord’s song. And you read the book of Lamentations and just the feeling that is there. And it is at that point that Ezekiel uses the word *Adonai* over 200 times in the book of Ezekiel, speaking of the lordship of God because God is going to bring them back eventually. But He has got to teach them His lordship before He can really do all that He wants to do. They have to be broken completely for God to be able to work. And it is no different for us, the same principles apply.

But it is not only Ezekiel, but there is Daniel. And Daniel is a statesman. And by the way, what tribe was Daniel from? He was from the tribe of Judah. Didn’t God say that He would always have somebody from the tribe of Judah sitting on the throne until the Messiah came? Isn’t it interesting that even during the seventy years of captivity, when they were removed from the land, that while they were in a foreign land, who was the guy that stayed second in charge to the king all the time, running the whole kingdom, right through about five different guys? It is Daniel all the way. There is a guy from the tribe of Judah ruling. And God never broke His promise. And then they were back. And then finally one comes, born of Mary, through Nathan, a true son of David that can sit upon the throne of David, and that is Jesus Christ.

But they knew the Scripture, Psalm 125:1–2, as much as we know John 3:16. You ask any kid that goes to Sunday school in almost any church in town here, and say, “Can you quote me one Bible verse?” And there is a good chance that they one that they will probably come up with—if they don’t know any other Bible verse, they might know John 3:16. “For God so loved the world....” Well, the same thing would have happened back in their day with Psalm 125:1–2. You could take any little kid and say, “Quote me one verse that you know from the Old Testament.” And if there was any verse they would know, it would be this one.

Those who trust in the Lord are like mount Zion which
cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains
surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people,
from this time forth and forever.

Now can you imagine what they thought when they saw Assyria take Israel away and then they saw Babylon take Judah away and destroy Jerusalem? Then it is like, what? I mean, it is almost like God is dead, isn’t it? And many people think that is why the name God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, because it is during this time that Esther is up in the 120 provinces of Persia, later. And His name is not mentioned, but they were being preserved nonetheless. Though His name is in acrostic form, at least the tetragrammaton is in acrostic form in the book of Esther, which we might be able to see later.

But here they are and it is just unbelievable, you know, what has happened during this time here of history. It is amazing.

In 931, what took place in 931? The nations were split. Up until that time, you might say, we had 120 years under Saul, under David, under Solomon and we were united as a nation. But all of a sudden in 931, there is a split. And we know there is a group that goes to the north under who?—under Jeroboam. And there is a group that stays in the south under Rehoboam. Now which one was Solomon’s son? Rehoboam. And how many stayed with him? Two. And how many went north? Ten.

And then what happened to them—in 722 something took place. What happened in 722? The nation of Assyria came down against the northern tribes of Israel. And so, they are attacked by Assyria, by Sennacherib. He comes down and he carries them away, that is, Israel. But Judah continues on for a while. And they think they are pretty cool. But in 606, they get a visit by Nebuchadnezzar. They get another one in 597. And then finally in 586 he comes back and he totally destroys these people. So they get a visit from Babylon. And Babylon comes down and wipes them out.

So God has now destroyed both Israel the northern kingdom, and Judah, the southern kingdom. And it is always like when you go into the books of Kings and you start reading in Chronicles and all the prophets as they start prophesying and you are always trying to remember like, well, which prophet prophesied where and to whom? And either they were prophesying to the northern tribes of Israel or they were prophesying to the southern tribes of Judah because there was a distance between them. And the capital for these ten here was what? Where was their capital? Samaria. And the capital down here was what? Jerusalem. So you have—these guys have Samaria as a capital in the north and these guys in the south have Jerusalem as a capital. There is a difference. And the prophets are going to them all the time, when you get to the section of the prophets. And they are just taking one message after another message as God sent all of His prophets out to just say, “Turn! Repent! Change and we can work this out. I am a forgiving God. But if you are going to keep going off with every green tree on every high hill, there is going to come a point where I just cannot do this anymore. And I am not going to do it anymore.” And so they did, and so, with Assyria, He took them off early. And then He took Judah off later.

So then they did what? They went down and they were taken away. This is the line of redemption here. So for seventy years, they are in Babylon. So they went from what? They went from a theocracy to what? A pagocracy. For seventy years. And their whole land is destroyed. But God isn't through with them because He wants to bring them back. And what happens? When does He bring them back? They come back again at what point? 536. What happens in 536? Cyrus issues a decree in 536. So in 536 Cyrus, King

Cyrus says, "Okay, you guys can go back." Who went back? Zerubbabel. All right, Zerubbabel goes back. Zerubbabel heads back in 536 and what do they do? What is the first thing they build when they get there? Not the temple. Not the wall. They build an altar. The first thing that they build is an altar. Isn't that important? I think so.

Isn't that the way in our life? So many times we want to build a temple. We want to build a wall. And the first thing we ought to build is an altar out of our heart to serve the Lord. We want to do this. We want to do that. And we got all these things going on. But what God wants is a broken and contrite heart. He wants our heart on the altar. That is what He always wanted. That is what He wanted with these kings and they would not rule for Him and they would not follow Him. And that is why they went through all of this mess, you know.

So in 536 Cyrus says, "You can go back." So we call this what? What would you call this? I call it the first return. How many returned? Almost 50,000—but something happened. They got there and things what? Like usual, people have great starts, don't they? And then they kind of like—it fizzles out. You start doing it for a while and you say, "Well, this is just too much work, man. I need to go build a house. My wife says she is tired of living in this tent. If she is tired of living in this tent, I am pretty tired of it too then." So it is like they take a break. But what happens later? Something else takes place. It resumes when? In 520 by whose decree?—Darius. Darius gives a decree and in 520 the thing resumes. So they resume work because they are going to try to build God a temple.

I mean, that is what they wanted to do, right? The work is resumed. You can read about it in Ezra 4:24 and Ezra 6:1–15. So this has taken place. Now, they resume the work. Work on the temple is resumed. How long did it take to finish it? Once they resumed the work, and they really got into it, how long did it take them to finish the temple? Four years. So the temple was finished in what year? In 516 the temple was finished, complete.

So they are back in the land. They finally have a temple to worship at and it is complete.

Then what takes place after that? What is going on outside of the area because not everybody is there? Where are the rest of the people? They are in Persia, aren't they? And we know what is going on there. In 479 and in 478, we know that in 479 they had 180 day party and Vashti was summoned to go kind of show herself off at the party and she would not do it, for whatever reason. And so she got displaced and Esther came on the scene and she became the queen.

And so, God is working, isn't He? I mean, it is like, if God can work through a beauty pageant, I do not think there is any limit to what God can do. So, you know, the king is upset with Vashti and so he calls this beauty pageant and says, "I am getting a new queen because when I throw a party, you need to show up and look good." And so God uses that. God is doing it. But look how God does it. He chooses the most interesting ways, it seems, to do things. And it is pretty amazing.

So, what happens though while they are there is—you know the story—Esther has an opportunity. In 473 Esther stands up and she does what? She preserves her people because they are going to just do away with her people. It looks like a lot of neat things are happening. So when Ezra goes back in 458, we will call this the second major return. And then when Nehemiah goes back that is the final or the third major return of the people to the land. So they return first under Zerubbabel. They return again under Ezra. And they return finally under Nehemiah. And in these three stages the work is complete.

And then at that point, what do we have here? We have 400 silent years until Jesus Christ comes on the scene. And so that is what is happening in terms of the timeline of the history that we are looking at here.

So that gives you an idea of what is taking place. But God is doing it. And you need to know this timeline. How are you going to read the prophets? You will never understand the prophets and you will always misinterpret the prophets if you do not understand the history to which they are prophesying into. You won't get it. So you have got to understand this history of what is happening to appreciate what the prophets are saying

and what they are addressing. And there are many principles, when you start going through the prophets that apply. Like we have already seen, just in the history, there are principles that apply to the church. Well, when you go through the prophets there will be principles that apply to the church, but they are founded upon this history that we see.

Act Three

God Restores Israel to the Land for the coming of the Messiah

Ezra - Nehemiah - Esther

So, we begin Act Three and God is going to restore Israel to the land for the coming of the Messiah, as we read in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther because His plan has been to bring the Messiah. So we are going to go through it rapidly.

Jeremiah prophesies of the restoration. In Jeremiah chapter 29, he says, "After seventy years God is going to visit you. God is going to cause you to return. His thoughts are going to be back there towards you. He is going to gather you. And every place He has driven you away, He is going to bring them back from those places. And He is going to bring them back to the land." And He says, "Then you are going to call upon Me and you are going to pray to Me and I am going to listen to you. You are going to seek Me. You are going to find Me when you start searching for Me with all your heart. I will bring you back, I promise" (cf. Jeremiah 29:10-13). So God keeps His promise.

Now, Jeremiah prophesied that. Well, while Daniel was reading Jeremiah—you know the story—he discovers this prophesy. And Daniel goes, “Oh, yea. We are right at the end of the seventy years of captivity.” And so...

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face...(cf. Daniel 9:1-3)

And he begins to fast. So he understands the word of God. And instead of doing what I would have done, he sets his face to fast. Because I just would not have done that. I would have probably just thrown a party and invited everybody and said, “You know, God’s word says we are going to be restored! Isn’t that great?” And that is what I would have done. And that is probably what you would have done because that is what we are still doing.

But when he (Daniel) reads God’s word he becomes so impressed by it and he is so serious about it. And he knows God wants prayer and prayer is the way that we cooperate with God’s will being done on earth. And so when he reads something that is God’s will, he gets down and starts praying about it. And it is so special and intense. He says, “I have to both fast and pray about it.” That is a man who has a heart for God and is in cooperation with God.

Whereas me, you know, I would have just said, “Well, God said He was going to do it. He did everything else He said He was going to do. I might as well chill out. God will do it.” And how many times that is our attitude even in these last days, isn’t it? When God has told us it is time to work. It is time to rise up. It is time to awake out of sleep. It is

time to be serious about the gospel going out to the world. It is time to be on our knees praying that God would send people out with the gospel. Why? Because we see and we know that the world cannot last a whole lot longer like it is. Things have got to change. We know it as sure as we are living and breathing. But oftentimes what we do is say, "Well, the Lord is coming back." And we see it and we know all of this stuff is happening. And we see what is happening in the politics of the world today, therefore, let's just chill out. Let's don't do anything. Let's just wait. It will happen.

Instead, it is like, let's be like Daniel and let's really start praying the Lord of the harvest to send people out into the harvest field. That is a real understanding of what is going on. And that is what Daniel does when he reads Jeremiah.

The Temple and the
City of Jerusalem are Rebuilt
Ezra and Nehemiah

God told Cyrus King of Persia
that He would rebuild the Temple
(Ezra 1:1-4)

The prophets spoke clearly about this
(Jeremiah 29:10-11; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1)

So in Scene One, the temple and the city of Jerusalem are being rebuilt, Ezra and Nehemiah. Now both books begin in what country? Ezra begins in it and Nehemiah begins in it—in Persia. But where do both books end? They end in Jerusalem. Ezra starts in Persia, ends in Jerusalem. Nehemiah starts in Persia, ends in Jerusalem.

So God tells Cyrus king of Persia that He is going to rebuild the temple. And He does. And the prophets speak very clearly about it.

Now, why are the last two verses of 2 Chronicles the same as the first two verses of Ezra? Because originally it was thought Chronicles and Ezra were just the same book. They were not two books. And you read the old Bibles, the old Jewish Bibles, and they were just one book. They were not separate books because they were of the same history. And that is one reason, too, why 2 Chronicles was the last book in their Bible.

So, here they are. The Babylonian captivity ends by way of a Persian decree. And the Lord stirs up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia. And Cyrus says,

All the kings in the earth, the Lord God of heaven has given me. He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who among you of all His people will go up? May his God be with him. Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, for He is God. (cf. 2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

So it is like—God stirs up a king and he makes the proclamation. And he provides them with silver and gold and goods and livestock. And they take off. And all these freewill offerings come in for the house of God. And they are off to go back and build the house of God. It is a great time because they have been through this complete devastation. They cannot even sing the Lord's song in a foreign land. They have been wiped out completely. Now it looks like God is going to bring them back. So their hope is renewed. And the Lord uses Cyrus this way.

In Isaiah 45 we have that neat prophecy. He says, "I have chosen you. I have anointed you, Cyrus. You are, in a sense, My right hand. I have held you there and I am going to use you. And I am going to go before you. And I want you to know, that I am doing it so

that you can know that I, the Lord who called you by your name, am the God of Israel.” (cf. Isaiah 45:1-3).

So God is working for His people. He is going to bring them back. And He says, “I have called you by name and I am doing all these things.” So, who is doing it? God is doing it.

What is grace in the Old Testament? It is God doing it. What is grace in the New Testament? It is God doing it. That is what it is. God is doing it. “He began a good work in you and He will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (cf. Philippians 1:6). God is doing it. He started it and He will keep doing it.

It takes some weird turns, doesn't it? Look at your life. Doesn't God's grace take some really strange turns in your life? But who is doing it? God is doing it. Does He do it through your rebellion? Yeah. He does it when you are good. He does it when you are bad. God is doing it. He just doesn't stop. And He wants all the ends of the earth to look to Him.

So 50,000 return under Zerubbabel. They go through 700 miles of trackless desert. They get there and it says, “All whose spirits God had moved, they arose to go up and build the house of God” (cf. Ezra 1:5). Isn't that neat? So God is doing it.

And from this time on they were called what?—Jews. Why? Because that is when Judah (the people from Judah) came and they started calling them Jews because their name was Judah. They referred to them by that name, Jews. So that is when the name Jew began, when these people went back with Zerubbabel and most of them were from Judah.

And the temple is rebuilt. There is a mixed reaction to it. It was a place, though, where they could meet God. Only a small remnant returned. Most of the Jews remained in the provinces there in Persia.

And so the first thing they build was what? In Ezra 3:2 it says they built an altar. They got there and they arose and built the altar of the God of Israel. And they set the altar on its bases. And they had daily burnt offerings from the first day of the seven month. Although the foundation of the temple of the Lord had not yet been laid, they did this with permission. This is because we must first get the altar of our hearts right. But then Zerubbabel finally rebuilds the temple and that takes place in Ezra 3.

And we see the mixed reaction. Many of the old guys were going, "This isn't a temple!" And the new guys were all excited. "Yeah, this is a temple. This is great!" But the old guy says, "Oh man, you should have seen Solomon's temple. This isn't a temple." But the important thing was they were back in the land as God promised and they were seeking the Lord.

And there were hindrances all the way as they were trying to build. You know, and I think we need to expect that. Even when you know it is God's will, there are going to be hindrances. And especially if you know it is God's will because the enemy is not going to sit still while you are trying to accomplish God's will on earth. Somehow we think, as Christians, once we have found God's will and know God's will, it is just going to automatically happen without any effort on our part. And this is not true because He has chosen to work through you. And so you are going to find hindrances.

Like Paul said: "You guys pray for me because there are many open doors, but also, there are many adversaries." He said, "I am really going to need your prayer support to go into these new fields to do church planting." And it has not changed. It is the same today as it was then.

Which two men encouraged the work to continue?

- **Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo.**

“You dwell in sealed houses and God’s house isn’t finished? No wonder your life is like putting money into a bag with holes!” (cf. Haggai 1:1-9)

- **When things look grim, remember who began the work...**
 - **It is God at work!**

So, who encouraged the work to be completed? It was Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. He said, “You dwell in your sealed houses and God’s house is not finished? No wonder your life is like putting your money into a bag with holes. You know, put God first. Get out there and do His will” (cf. Haggai 1:6-9). And so, God is working because He is stirring up the spirit of His people.

And He can still do that today. He still does do that today. And that is why we just get on our knees and pray. Lord, stir up people to go where You want them to go. Lord, send out laborers into the harvest field. And if we will get on our knees and pray, God will stir up the people. He says that He will.

So Ezra gets back there and we see the place is complete. But note this: the 49,690 people are called “all Israel” in Ezra 2:70. You might want to hold that and go over to the book of Romans and read Romans 9, 10, and 11. When it says, “All Israel shall be saved.” But here in this case, who is all Israel? All Israel is just the remnant that returned. It wasn’t really all Israel, completely all Israel, was it? It was just that little group that went back to the land, 49,000 of them, and they are called “all Israel.” Because they were

representative of the people God chose. But it really wasn't in the sense that we think of all Israel, you know. It was like at least ten tribes missing. And it is interesting when we get to the book of Romans, we will see that phrase again "all Israel." And when you get there, you might want to remember or put a note in your Bible, jot a note there to think about, hey, I need to at least weigh the fact that the term "all Israel" is used in the Old Testament in Ezra 2:70.

What happened between Ezra chapters 6-7?

The time of Esther fits between Ezra chapters 6 & 7

➤ **3 world battles were fought:**

- **Salamis**
- **Thermopylae**
- **Marathon**

➤ **2 world leaders died:**

- **Confucius**
- **Buddha**

Well, what happened between chapters 6 and 7 of Ezra? We don't have time to go into it, but three world battles were fought—Salamis, Thermopylae, and Marathon. All those battles were fought in the middle of that and two world leaders died. Confucius died and Buddha died. That was all happening right between chapters 6 and 7 of the book of Ezra. So there was a lot going on in the world at the same time that God was working with His people.

Artaxerxes finances Ezra's expedition and gives him all the help that they need, and Haggai and Zechariah are prophesying to go back and finish things. This is because Darius had found an old decree that King Cyrus had made. And he was not going to be

outdone. He said, "I will do better than that. I will give you more stuff to work with." So he encouraged them and got them back. And his mother, his stepmother being Esther did not hurt anything.

And you know Ezra's prayer of confession and how sincere it was. And he just said,

God, I am ashamed. I am embarrassed. I don't even want to lift my face up to You. Our iniquities they are over our heads. Our guilt has grown to the heavens. But for a brief moment grace has been shown from the Lord our God to leave us an escaped remnant, to give us a peg in His holy place that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. (cf. Ezra 9:6-8)

So, I mean, he was like Daniel in that he just confessed that it was their fault and he was very glad that God would give them any opportunity whatsoever to return and establish that relationship with God.

The City of Jerusalem is Rebuilt

The Wall is Rebuilt

(Nehemiah 1-6)

**They rebuilt the city, but they were not a Theocracy.
They were under Persian rule.**

**The majority were still scattered
throughout the 127 Persian provinces.**

(Ezra 9:8-9; 13-15)

They do not have a King, but are under Gentile rule.

(Nehemiah 9:36-37)

So the city is rebuilt. The wall is rebuilt, you know, with Nehemiah. And everything is back but they are not a theocracy, are they? They are still under Persian rule. The majority were still scattered through 127 provinces in Persia. And they do not have a king. They are under Gentile rule. So it was not like before, even though they are back. They do not rule themselves. Nehemiah was the cup bearer there to Artaxerxes. You know the story of how he gets to go and take a little sabbatical and be involved in rebuilding the wall. The Lord answers his prayer and he is off and running.

So he comes to Jerusalem thirteen years after Ezra and he starts working. He says, "Let's finish the wall of the city, guys." He says, "You have got an altar. You have got a temple. You have been in your houses. Let's fortify the city." And so they rise up to build but they are met with opposition because it is like—"You can come and worship and that is cool. But don't try to become some real national, political entity. And don't build this wall around your city because we are going to fight back" (cf. Nehemiah 2:17-20). And they did fight, but God helped them and they still built it.

But something was missing in the temple and that was what? They had a temple but what was missing in the temple? Well, when Moses finished the tabernacle, what do we read in Exodus 40? God filled it with His glory. When Solomon finished in 1 Kings 8, the temple, what do we read? God filled it with His glory. But in Ezra 6 when they finished the temple, what do we not read? There is nothing in there that says God came and filled it with His glory. It just says the temple was finished, period, end of story. They got a building.

So when did the glory of God actually enter the temple again? It entered it when Jesus Christ came and walked in and cleansed it. That is when the glory of God came back to the temple—to that one anyway. So that is the next time, in the person of Jesus Christ, and He cleansed it. His glory was in the world in Christ. And His glory is now in the world in every true believer. His glory is in you. His glory is in me. We are the temple of

the Holy Spirit right here on earth, our bodies. So God's glory is in a temple today, but it is different. We will talk more about that next time.

So after the close of Nehemiah, you have these 400 silent years. And the rest of the Old Testament books, Job through Malachi, retrace and amplify the history that has already been described. They contain what God said during those years. So when we go back through the Bible the second time, we are going now from Genesis to Revelation to look at what God did in terms of history; but we are going to go back through again and we are going to look at what God said more than what He did. But we will place on top of what God did, what God said. So it is important you know what God is doing or else when we go back through and talk about what God said, you are going to go: "what has that got to do with anything?" Well, it is based on what He did.

God Providentially Preserves His People

**Many of the Jews did not return to Jerusalem
from Babylon but remained in Persia.**

Esther makes no mention of God.

Hebrew Acrostic 1:20; 5:4; 5:13; 7:7

**God providentially controlled circumstances and events
so that His purposes were fulfilled.**

And then while all this is going on, up in Persia in those 127 provinces, you've got Esther. The people are scattered and the Jews who did not return back to the land are there. But even though Esther does not make a mention of the name of God, there is a Hebrew acrostic in Esther 1:20; 5:4; 5:13; and 7:7. So they believed that God could be

met in Jerusalem and perhaps that was another reason why they did not mention His name at that time. They had some weird ideas about things.

But here she is and God has preserved His people through three great distresses. In Egypt in 1500 Pharaoh wanted to exterminate the seed. God said, "Can't do it. I will preserve them." Assyria in 722 and Babylon in 586, don't you know Satan would have liked to wipe out the Jewish people completely at that time. God judged them for their idolatry but He preserved them and restored them back to the land. So they did not get destroyed then either. And then in Rome in 70 AD when Titus came in, God did not allow them to be totally wiped out either. And He said in Romans 11:5, "I will always keep a remnant and a seed." And why is He even doing that? Because like He promised, "and all Israel shall be saved" (cf. Romans 11:26). There will come a time in history, in the end, where there will be a turning back to God, nationally. And so Israel's continuance and development is a riddle of history that mocks all explanation apart from God. God is the only reason they exist as a nation.

He is the only reason that they are still living today over there. When you have got the whole United Nations against them and it wishes they could just wipe them out of the picture. They know if they could just remove Israel it would take care of all the problems, in their view. And so everybody is still against them. Except we are kind of hanging in there with them, thank the Lord.

But Esther gets this opportunity to go save her people and you know that story. It is a wonderful story. She learns about Haman's plot against the Jews. And Mordecai comes to her and says, "Look, if you think in your heart that you are going to escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews," he says, "you are thinking wrong, girl."

If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows

whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. (Esther 4:14)

And then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai:

Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan and fast for me and so I will go to the king, which is against the law, and if I perish, well, I perish. So they sought the Lord with all their heart in fasting and prayer. So it was when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court that she found favor in his sight and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. And Esther went near and she touched the top of the scepter. (cf. Esther 4:16 to 5:2)

There again, the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. And He turned it. So Esther was used, not only to turn the king's head, but to turn his heart. The first time he saw her, she turned his head. But later, she turned his heart for a good thing.

And then of course Haman is hung, you know, on the same gallows that he made for Mordecai. His pride went before the fall. So the Lord has worked and the Lord continues to work.

Next time, we will look at Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and we will go on into the New Testament. God has built His nation, He has scattered His nation, He destroyed them because of their idolatry, and the fact that their hearts turned away from Him. But He brings them back, even after prophet after prophet after prophet after prophet went to them and they still rejected Him. Now this is what gets me, after all of that, it is like God says: "I will not be defeated! Love will never fail!" And He still finds a way, because of His love. Not that their love didn't fail, because their love did fail. But God says, "My love is not going to fail." And so, because of His love, He still brings them back, restores

them, lets them, you know, build the temple, build the altar, build the city back, you know.

And He is going to send His Son to be the Savior of the world because “God so loved the world that He gave His Son” (cf. John 3:16). God is doing this all through history and it is like people don't even, they are not even aware of it. And don't understand that it is His history. It is His story. And He has not changed at all in where He is going with His plan. And when Jesus comes, they reject Him.

Now, you would think—I mean if I was God, I would have sent one prophet anyway. That would have been it. Then I might have sent two prophets, I don't know. I could have sent two. If I was having a good day, I might have sent two. The chances of sending three, I don't know about that. But I mean, just prophet after prophet after prophet was sent—all the rejection! Bringing them back, doing it, and then sending His Son. Then they reject His Son and it is like, that is it! I mean, you know, don't you have to close the book sometime and just walk away? And it is like, you know, man...

But that is not God's heart. And so even after they have rejected Jesus, I believe, He is still holding His hand out to them. And the gospel goes out. And this is so tender, isn't it? Do you see God? He sends the gospel out and how does God say the gospel ought to go out?—“to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” And it is just like, boy, what is this weird, strange relationship that You have with these people? That now, after this, You still are saying that even in the gospel goes to the Jew first and also to the Greek. And if they return—and they will at some point—then You will graft them back in. And it is just, you see the love of God as it goes through history and it just never quits. It never ends.

And then I think, “That's our God.” And when you see Him, you are changed more into His image. When you meditate on it, when you take time to study to show yourself approved, and even looking at the history alone without even looking at a Bible verse, just looking at the history alone and meditating on the history, you see your God. And

you can be changed more into the image of your God when you see that's Him and that's the way He works.

And the next time you are in a relationship and things kind of go sideways a bit that you cannot help, start thinking: "Well, what about my God? How did He deal with relationships that didn't seem to go right? How did He deal with it? What did He do?" He just had grace. You know, when I say I have just had all I can take of this relationship; but grace comes along and says, "Oh, I have got a whole lot more to give to this relationship." And that is just our God. And that is the way He did it in history. And that is the way He wants to work in my life and your life.

Let's pray.

Lord, we thank You that after these silent years that the fullness of time came. You sent forth Your Son. And now we look at Jesus and we see the Alpha, the Omega. We see the Logos, the full mind of God. And the heart of God so perfectly demonstrated in Jesus laying His life down on the cross for us and shedding His blood for us. I mean, there are days when I just want to have an intimate relationship with You and I mean, you know, it is just wonderful. And then there are other days, in all reality it is like, well, I am just busy. And that is sad that we can still, after You have done so much for us that our hearts can still be so rejecting and so selfish and turned inward. And yet You still love us. And it is like, it is beyond us because we just don't usually love the way You love. And we give up quickly. And our strength runs out almost immediately.

So Lord, we pray that You would fill us with Yourself and change us evermore into who You are, Your image. Lord,

we are seemingly, totally at Your mercy and we cry out for that mercy. And yet at the same time, we receive and accept the grace that does more than we ever deserve and supplies us with Your life and Your power. Lord, we thank You that Your grace is sufficient for whatever we will face today that Your grace is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we would ever really even think was possible.

And it is Your love, Your patience, Your faithfulness; and You won't fail Yourself. And so, Lord, thank You for beginning a good work in each of us. And increase our faith to believe that it is going to happen. And everything You promised us, in time is going to happen if we will step out and keep trusting You and believing You to work. We want to do that. So grant us faith, Lord, as we go through Your Word and see it. Build up our faith. It is a holy faith because it is centered in You and in Christ Jesus our Lord in whose name we pray. Amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 9 The Gospel Is the “Good News”

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Let's pray.

Lord, we do pause and thank You that this is Your day and we just want to stop and say that we recognize that all through the day. Today as we continue to look at Your work, what You did, what You are still doing, and then the final completion of it on earth, show us. Just help us to see it because it is Your work and we want to appreciate it just like when someone else does a work of art or something, we look at it and hopefully if it is good, we appreciate it. Lord, we look at Your work and what You have done and it is good. We just want to see it, look at it, appreciate it, and also see where we fit in it. So just give us a perspective, Your perspective, of where we fit in these days we live, for Your glory. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

All right. Well, just to review Acts One, Two, and Three, there is an actual review in the Scripture itself in Matthew 1:17 that shows us the first three Acts. It says,

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; and from David until the captivity in Babylon were fourteen generations; and from the Babylon deportation to Christ are fourteen generations.

So as Matthew is dividing up the book, in the beginning of Matthew as he is getting ready to proclaim from the Gospel of Matthew, “The Messiah has come.” It is interesting Matthew's history. He says, God chose Abraham and He took that one man and He built

a nation up until David the king.” And it was a glorious nation. God did that. That was fourteen generations.

Then he said, “From David until the time the nation began to fall apart, and decline, and be divided and all, until it fell into the Babylonian captivity, was also fourteen generations.” But then, of course, God took them out of the Babylonian captivity and restored them and then brought the Messiah—that was fourteen generations. So that was Matthew’s view of history and how it took place in the first three acts. And God is providing the Messiah.

The purpose for the gospels: obviously, they tell us the ultimate reason for making this nation is that this nation is the one God would send the Messiah through. He would provide salvation for the whole world and it would come through this particular nation (John 4:22). God promised it. But the gospels are also a faithful work and shows what God did, but also what He said at that time and the purpose for which Israel was first created. It begins a transition program of redemption from the nation Israel to worldwide evangelism. We see that in Acts 1:1-9.

So, when you compare the gospels you may think: “Were there four guys that just sort of collaborated, verbatim, their stories?” I do not think so. As a matter of fact if you have four people come in and they tell you the exact same story, verbatim, word for word, what do you know? You know that they have talked and they planned ahead and said, “This is our story. We are sticking to it.” But when four people come in and tell you basically the same story, with a bunch of difference and personal, you know, reflections and all, then you know you are getting a picture of what? The real story.

And that is what happened with the gospels. You have four different guys and they are giving you a picture. It is sort of like: you have got a publican, you have got a fisherman, you have a physician, and you have this guy that is pretty well-to-do. Mark 1:20 says that John was on the boat with his father Zebedee and the hired servants, at the time that he actually left and began to follow Jesus. So he was from a pretty well-to-do family to have

hired servants. You know, they were at least middle class or upper middle class or whatever. So you have four different guys from four different kinds of walks of life and they are giving you a picture of Jesus Christ.

And it kind of reminds you of Van Dyck’s painting that he painted of Charles I because they wanted to do a bust of Charles I. So they had Van Dyck paint three sides of Charles I. They painted his face. They painted the left side and the right side. They rolled it up. They sent it on a ship down to Rome. And they got Bernini, who was the renowned sculptor of that day, to sculpt a bust of Charles I. And it is in the London Gallery today. You can go look at it.

But with the gospels, we not only have the front view, the two side views, we also, with the gospel of John have a view from the top. So, we even have four views in order to get our picture of Jesus Christ and what He is doing. And so we see in Matthew that He is the King of the Jews. In Mark, He is the Servant of the Lord. In Luke, He is the Son of Man and in John, He is the Son of God. And of course in Acts, He is the ascended Lord of all.

The World Situation

- **World Centralization:** Rome ruled – *Pax Romana*
- **World Degeneration:** 2,000 Lords in Rome had 1,300,000 slaves. Thousands of lives were sacrificed in the arena for entertainment. Tacitus said, “the spirit of the times was to corrupt and be corrupted”
- **Mingling of World Religions:** a migration of gods and idols from the Orient, the Babylonian confusion of deities and religious cults, the State gods, Greek gods, and mystery cults blended together. Rome became a venerator of all deities, a cauldron of mixture.

**What a backdrop for the revelation
of the world Redeemer!**

And so this was the world situation at the time that Jesus came. The world was centralized. Rome ruled. They had the *Pax Romana* and there was peace all over the world. But Rome was the center. There was world cultural oneness. Rome was eclectic. It combined the best of the existing cultures into one. There was world trade and communication because the Greek language was the international language. It was the *lingua franca*. It was the language of everybody, you might say, and there was freedom to trade in every area.

There was world degeneration though—take Rome alone—Rome had 2000 lords in the city and those 2000 lords had 1,300,000 slaves. That’s a lot of slavery. And thousands of lives were being sacrificed in the arena for entertainment. It was a bloodthirsty place. Tacitus says, “The spirit of the times was to corrupt and to be corrupted.” It was just a horrible place. There were more divorces than there were marriages, a lot more. And it was just, when you read the records of Rome, it was just a horrible place at that time. They were degenerate.

But there was a mingling of world religions. You had a migration of gods and idols from the Orient. You had the Babylonian confusion of deities and religious cults. You had the state gods, the Greek gods, the mystery cults blending together, so Rome became like a venerator of all deities and a cauldron of mixtures.

What a backdrop for the revelation of the world Redeemer! He comes into this situation. That’s why it says in Galatians 4 that God’s timing was perfect. “When the time had fully come...” (cf. Galatians 4:4). And it is not talking about when Mary had reached her last trimester. But when the time had fully come historically, God sent forth His Son. At the right time, historically, “He was born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Now if it is so important to God to be right on time, historically. Does that tell you anything? Because we have a tendency to say, “What’s the big deal? History, history, history, history! Who cares?” Well, God cares. And He does things in perfect timing.

And that is what is neat about looking at history and getting a big picture of it and then stepping back, of course, and seeing how things fit and also where we fit. Jesus Christ came into this world context to work and teach, laying the foundation for the church of Jesus Christ.

And what did He do when He entered into the world? Well, He did three basic things. He did miracles. He trained twelve guys to go out. And of course His greatest work is He laid His life down as a sacrifice for the sin of the human race. But as He began to work, you can categorize the work of Jesus Christ first by His miracles.

What was He doing? He was proving that He was God and that was the purpose of the miracles. He was doing miracles in terms of physical healing. He was doing miracles over nature. He was doing miracles over the supernatural. He was doing miracles over death. And the signs and the reasons that Jesus did these things was to prove that He was God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I mean, that is why He would heal leprosy, so that they would go, “Whoa, nobody can do that! Only God can do that.” He would raise the dead. And He was proving all along—casting out demons—He was God.

But He also was preaching. And preaching was primary. It says in Mark 1:38, “Let us go that I may preach there also, for that is what I came out for.” And He went preaching and casting out demons. So Jesus was healing and doing things like miracles, but He was also preaching. And He went all through the regions preaching the kingdom of God that it had come unto us. So, that is what God was doing at that time.

Now, concerning His word, He wanted it to go out so He took twelve guys, He trained them, He selected them. He chose twelve. And He implemented that “with Him” principle. That is the way Jesus did discipleship. He appointed twelve to be with Him and then He sends them out to preach. And He would mentor them. He would give them an opportunity as He would guide them to go out. And He would let them fail. They would come back and He would say, “Well, okay. You made a few mistakes here but, okay. In that case right there, why couldn’t you do that? Well, I can tell you. You need a little

more faith for that one. You need to spend some time fasting and praying if you are going to handle that kind of thing. You can't just walk up there and do it." And so, they would come back; He would instruct them. And finally there would come a time when He would give them independent practice. He would just send them out. And He had to commission them. And so He said, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

And so His work of redemption: securing the eternal redemption of all who will accept Him personally, the great substitutionary work of Jesus Christ on the cross, proving that He really is the Messiah.

Second Corinthians 5:21 says what? "He who knew no sin..." Literally, in the Greek it says, "He who knew no sin, sin was made, on our behalf so that we might be the righteousness of God." So, this is the great work of Jesus, to take sin and remove it. Because we saw in the first two chapters of Genesis there is no sin, right? In the last two chapters of Revelation there is no sin. And the rest of the Bible is about sin and how God deals with sin. And so Jesus actually removed that sin, the eternal Word of God. And people have to decide to receive Him or reject Him. He makes God known. "He is the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form" (cf. Colossians 2:9). "He is the Lamb of God that is taking away the sin of the world," John said (cf. John 1:29). We believe in Him for eternal life because He has eternal life in Himself. "He that hath the Son hath the life. He that hath not the Son hath not the life" (cf. 1 John 5:12). Eternal life is in His name.

Closing Scene of Act Three

The “Good News” is the Gospel

Now we are ready to go to the nations.
We have something to tell that can
reconcile man to God.

So, here He is in the world and He is redeeming the world and reconciling the world unto God. This is His great work. Now the message that He gave is called “Good News,” the gospel. And so, at this point we are ready to go out to the nations. We have something to tell them that can reconcile man to God. We have the gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 15: 3, “Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Do you see how amazing that is? Here is Paul, looking back from the very beginning. Paul says, “This is what God intended. This is what God planned.” God went all through the course of human history and now we have come to this pinnacle point where God is actually becoming incarnate and giving His Son. And now that His Son has died, buried, and rose again the third day, we have something to tell the world. Before this all they could say was, “Well, wait. Look forward. Someday God is going to redeem mankind.

You know, He has promised it.” And they just kept waiting for it and waiting for it. Then all of a sudden, there comes a time in history and Paul says, “We have got it! We have the thing that reconciles God to man. We have the gospel.” There is nothing more precious and more valuable than that. That is why Paul was able to totally give himself over and be eclipsed by the gospel. It was his life: “To live was Christ; to die was gain” (cf. Philippians 1:21). I mean, he knows that we now have that which can reconcile man to God.

So how important is it to get that gospel out? And part of it was because Paul understood—not just that he was spiritual, he was spiritual—but I think he really understood historically what had taken place to get to this point in history and say, “We got it! This is what God has been doing. This is His work. And we have the gospel. Let’s take it out.”

We have the gospel that is “of God.” Notice the prepositions: “of” God. It is “in” Christ. It is “by” the Spirit. And it is “through” grace. That is the gospel, but that is the gospel in Christ, by the Spirit, through grace. Those are the four aspects that stand out about the gospel. It is sourced in God. It comes in the person of Jesus Christ, is administered by the Spirit that raised Him from the dead. And it is through grace. It is a work of God. And it has one imperative—to make disciples—and three participles: going, baptizing, and teaching

Now, when you are going, baptizing, and teaching, in the New Testament there are these five Greek words that are used for taking the gospel out. Which I think is just interesting to note that God gave us such variety of expression when we get to go out and share the gospel. The first one, *anagellō*, means simply to make an announcement. It is sort of like what we do at devotions. Somebody will stand up and they will just say, “I will to inform you. I want to tell you we are doing this. We have got an ice cream social going on. We have a basketball game going on.” And they start telling you what is happening and they are just making an announcement. That is the word *anagellō*, to make an announcement. So you can go out and you can just announce the gospel. Sort of like, “Hey, I just want to

make an announcement. And the announcement is this: Man can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.” And you make the announcement.

Euangelizō, which comes from the word *eu*, meaning well or good, pleasant, is the word to spread good news. It means or it carries with it emotion. You can get up and make an announcement and just kind of go, “Well, you know.” I mean, you can have emotion in your announcement, I am sure. It depends on who is doing it, doesn’t it? But you can just get up and make an announcement. But *euangelizō* has to have emotion with it. It cannot just be, “Well, I just want to tell you that I received a check for a million dollars in the mail [flat voice] from my grandmother who just left it to me.” That is not the way it would be announced. That is not the way you would tell your friends. That is not the way you tell your friends when you get a ring. “Well, you know, I got a ring, [flat voice]—just wanted you to know.” So, you know, you are thrilled. And so Good News means that when you go out, you announce it with great emotion. You are excited about what God has done. And this word we use a lot in the New Testament.

And I think that was one of the keys to the early church. When they went out, it was not to go out and argue with people. They went out to announce the Good News with great emotion. They were so excited about the resurrection of Jesus Christ out from among the dead, that He was the living God. And so they went out with tremendous emotion telling Good News.

I remember when I was sixteen years old my dad bought me an Austin Healey. As a matter of fact, two weeks ago I went over to Laguna to see that car show because they had about five or six Austin Healeys there and I just thought I would go over and feel the pain, because I sold it to go to college. But, you know, it was amazing. I had this little gunmetal blue sports car and I was sixteen years old—spoiled rotten, obviously—but, I mean, what did I do? I went to all my friends’ houses. I’d go by, pick up a friend, take them for a ride. Pick up another friend, take them for a ride. You know, I was so excited to have some wheels, you know, and some descent ones. I just wanted all my friends to

know. I can still remember doing that. And the gospel should go out with just tremendous emotion, in that sense, and excitement.

Then there is *katagellō*, which means to tell thoroughly, or to compare something down against. That is kind of the apologetics of the gospel, when you are comparing things thoroughly and you are comparing it down against a certain plumb line. And so, we can go out and give the gospel in a very thorough way, which includes those people that have that apologetic mindset.

Then there is *laleō*, which just simply means to talk. It is conversation. You just speak about something very simply. It is like friendship evangelism. You are just talking and you are telling them something.

But then there is *kēryssō*, which means to herald or to proclaim. That is what John the Baptist did, heralding Jesus. That is what Jesus did in John 7:37 when Jesus stood up on the day of the water feast. You know, He said, “Is anybody thirsty?” That means He yelled that out. He heralded out that message there on the steps. He did not just say, [quiet voice] “Anybody thirsty here? Is anybody thirsty here?” He stood up and He said, [loud voice] “Anybody thirsty out here!?” You know, He just began to yell it out and people probably thought, “Who is the weird guy?” So people are gathering around. And when they gather around, He starts telling them, “I am the water of life.” And some of them went, “Yeah, you are.” And others went, “This guy is just crazy, thinks He’s God.” So the gospel begins to come out.

Now, note how the book of Luke ends and the book of Acts begins with what event? What is the big event that Luke ends with and Acts begins with?—the ascension. Luke stops with the ascension and closes his book. The book of Acts begins with the ascension because Act Four is basically this—Act Four is: Jesus Christ now reigning in heaven. The Messiah has come! Okay, Act Three is complete. From Abraham to David, was fourteen generations, from David to Babylon was fourteen generations, and from Babylon to Christ was fourteen generations. The Messiah is here! But now, though the Messiah has

come, He has died on the cross, buried, rose again the third day, Christ has ascended. And Act Four begins from heaven. It starts in heaven. And Christ is reigning there and He is going to build His church as a channel for salvation for every nation. So, Christ's departure was not a sunset like some people think. It was a sunrise. It was the beginning of a new day.

There is a new channel and the new channel is the church. God said, "I will build My church." And He did that. There was never any commission like that in the Old Testament, was there? There was nothing like that. He is going to build His church and He is going to work until the very end of this age and salvation is going to go out. But in the Old Testament the commission was not to go out and bring people in. It was like, stay separate from everybody and make sure that not too many people do get in association with you. But in the church, as it begins to build from heaven, He says, "I want you to go out to every tribe, every tongue, and every people" (cf. Matthew 28:19). So the old channel, Israel, is set aside.

Notice though, it does not say "cast away" does it? In Romans 9–11 what do we read? Particularly in Romans 11:1, Paul asks a question: "Has God cast away His people?" Remember that? And what is the answer? Well, depending on what translation you have, one of them says: "God forbid!" The other one says: "Certainly not!" The Greek word is *me genoito*. *Mē* is the strongest negative you can write. And *genoito* is from the word *ginomai* that means to come into existence. So put them together and it means: "may this thought never even come into existence in your brain." Have you ever had thoughts in your brain that you wished would have never been there. "I wish that thought could have never been in my brain," that is what Paul is saying. He is saying, "If you think that God has cast away His people Israel," he said, "that is a thought that never should have gotten into your brains somehow." He said, "I wished it never existed or had any kind of birth whatsoever."

So Israel is not cast away. Israel is just set aside for a time. And Paul makes that clear in Romans 9–11. And God is righteous to bring them back. Because Romans is all about

what?—I mean, the big thing of Romans is what? The righteousness of God, isn't it? You go all the way through and God is righteous, righteous, righteous! It climaxes really in chapters 9–11 with the righteousness of God. God is right to bring those people back. He has every right to. He is right to forgive us because Jesus died and shed His blood. But we have been disobedient too, so He is right to show mercy on whomever He wants to show mercy. And if He wants to bring them back and graft them back in, that is His business. And He has every right to do it and He is righteous to do it. And nobody can say anything about it.

So, He sets them aside for a while. And notice the difference between the nation Israel and the church. The nation is exclusive but the church is universal. It is all-inclusive. It is everybody and anybody, “whosoever will.” The nation is national. It is Jewish. But the church is international. It does not matter what nation you are from. One particular location is where the Jews were. They were in Jerusalem. But the church is local and indigenous. It can be anywhere. You go and you establish a church in any town, any place on earth. The nation was political, but the church is non-political. That way we can go anywhere. We are not about politics. We are about the gospel. God dwelled in a temple building under the nation. But under the church God dwells in the believer. And so, there is a big difference between the nation Israel and the church.

So the question is: who is more suited for claiming the “whosoever” of John 3:16? Well, obviously the church is. What would happen if Israel had tried to do it? It would have been a mess, wouldn't it?

So the redemptive instrument is the church. And the Bible uses three basic figures to describe the church. The church is like a temple for God. It is like a body for Christ who is the head. And it is like a flock for the Shepherd who is the Holy Spirit. It is a temple, a body, and a flock. And it is being sent out into the world.

Well, what would have happened if Israel as a nation had tried to take the gospel to another nation? How would that be viewed? It would have been viewed as an invasion,

wouldn't it? Because essentially Israel was a passive witness for God, but once the political element is removed then the Lord's people can go to any nation as Christ's ambassador, while remaining politically neutral; hence, the good confession of 1 Timothy 6. So we have changed, or God has changed in the way He deals with the world. And the church is not to be exclusive. It is to involve “whosoever will, Jew, Gentile, bond, free, male, female, just whoever—every ethnic, every tongue, every tribe” (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13). So, there is quite a difference going on.

Act Four

God Establishes a New Channel for Redemption

**Jesus Christ, now reigning in Heaven,
builds His Church as the channel for
proclaiming salvation to every nation.**

Acts 1-7 To the Jews

Acts 8-12 To the Gentiles

Now, this is how Jesus builds His new channel. He builds it from the seeds of Israel. He starts with Jews. And you have seen it. Just look at the big picture. In Acts 1–7 where are they?—in Jerusalem. Who is there?—the Jews are. Who is the main leader there?—Peter. They say James was the pastor of the church but Peter is the guy that is doing everything. In Acts 8–12 what do you have? Where are they at? They are not in Jerusalem anymore. What city do they come from? The church is in Antioch and that is where they are called Christians. And there is transition going on because Barnabas is there, the son of consolation and comfort. But Peter and Paul are there too; so, you've got Peter and Paul but you've got Barnabas, who is like that oil that puts them together.

Then from chapter 13 on to the end of the book, the sight is set toward Rome. And it is focused on the Gentiles. Even though some Jews still accept the Lord, they have really gone out to the Gentiles and Paul is the key guy, as the Holy Spirit separated him and set him apart. Peter stayed ministering, you know, primarily to the Jews. So you have this transition from Jerusalem through Antioch, out finally to Rome. So, God is building His church but He is building His church from the seeds of Israel. And there is a similarity as to how He built His nation, isn't there? He chooses just a few guys and begins to work.

Now, when He chose those Jews, what was the first thing they asked Him in Acts 1? I mean, as He got this little group of Jews together and said, "I am doing something." They went, "Well, okay. Is this the time in history that You are going to restore the kingdom to us?" And Jesus said, "You know, you guys are really slow learners." He says, "I have been trying to tell you the whole time I was going to the cross. You didn't get that. I told you I was going to rise from the dead afterwards. You didn't get that. Now, I am trying to tell you the Holy Spirit is going to come and descend on you and you are going to take the gospel out to the world. It is not going to be a political deal. But you aren't getting that either." It is like, "No, this is not the time that I am going to restore the nation. What is going to happen is that you are going to receive the Holy Spirit and you are going to go out." But it was like that was their question. It would be a normal question for them because that is the way they looked at things.

And being assembled together, we read what? They were told to wait. And that is what they asked. They said, "Are You going to restore the kingdom?" And He says, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons. You are going to receive power when the Holy Spirit comes and you are going to be My witnesses everywhere" (cf. Acts 1:7-8). So He said that this is what is going to happen because He is doing a new thing through a new channel. It is called the church. It is not like it was before. And that is important.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

(Acts 2:1-21)

*“And they were filled with
the Holy Spirit..” (Acts 2:4)*

God reaches everyone in their own language.

So we get the gift of the Holy Spirit. He has been with us. He is in us now. But He also comes upon us and He constitutes the church on the Day of Pentecost. The church is a unique new thing. It is different. It is a different kind of channel that God used in the Old Testament. And that is important to see here because a lot of people don't pick up on that. And that is why they come up with some of these doctrines that get pretty weird. And the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost constitutes what we call the church, the body of Christ.

So in Acts 2 what is going on? You know, they are all filled with the Spirit. And he says, “Everybody is hearing the gospel in their own language.” I mean, that is miraculous! Does that show God's intention of what He wants to do? Yeah. God says, “I want to reach everybody.” And so, there are all these people there on the feast day, everybody from all around the world. You got Parthians and Medes, and everybody is there. And the Holy Spirit comes down and they get to hear the gospel in their own language so that they can disperse out and begin carrying the gospel around the world. That should show you something about God's heart and how important it is to Him to get the gospel out. So He is just looking for people that are willing to be faithful to proclaim the gospel. And He

gives us all of these things that will take place even in the last days. And it will come to: “whosoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (cf. Acts 2:21).

So they continued in the temple, most of the guys, but God had to move them out into world evangelism. So the temple was just too spiritual, political for Israel. And if the church is going to be established in every culture and every nation, it has got to move out to other lands. And He uses persecution to move them out.

The First Progress Report

- **The word of God spreads**
 - **Their faith increases**
 - **The church grows**

Acts 6:7

And the church began to grow very rapidly, providing a strong base that is thrust into other areas. I mean, look how fast it went. One day you have 120 devoted to prayer. The next day you have 3000. Then you have 5000 and then we read more believers were added and then the disciples increased. And the church just keeps being multiplied. So this thing is growing. It is quite amazing. And you get that first progress report there in Acts 6:7. It says,

And the word of God kept on spreading. The number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem. And a

great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

That is just so cool to read. So right there in Jerusalem, God is working; priests are receiving Jesus and it is affecting everyone. The Jews are turned upside down because it is like, “whoa!”—you know. When a priest accepts Jesus it is like: “Oh, my goodness!” It has got to upset people. And everything was being mixed up.

So God moves them out to Judea and Samaria through persecution, and He promised that He would. He starts to go to the Gentiles and Paul is chosen. The door opens for Peter at Cornelius’s house to go to the Gentiles and then the Gentile church is established in Antioch. And this was the first great church and the first time they were called Christians. And they begin to send people out to other cultures. Before this, they were not going to other cultures. I mean, even with Judea and Samaria it is like, “okay, we are still pretty close.” But now, they are going to reach out way beyond any limit they ever dreamed was possible from Antioch.

So, Christ begins to go to all the nations through the new channel, the church, Acts 13–28. He begins in Jerusalem but He ends in Rome and heads to every nation. Acts 13:1 says that there were these guys, “certain prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted and the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now...’” In other words, now being what? Now being this time in history we are ready to go. We could not have sent you out before. The time is still full. God does things at a right time. I mean, it took years before these guys went out. I mean, I would have thought right at the Day of Pentecost everybody should just start heading out. You know, just find a place. Get on a boat and go somewhere. And I still tend to think that way. I am impromptu that way. But God has timing. He had timing then and He has timing now for your life. And if you want to go right now, but it is like God says, “No. I have a perfect time for this.”

And *now* separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them. And after fasting and praying and laying their hands on them they sent them away. (cf. Acts 13:2-3).

So, God is building the church from heaven. He is doing it through the Holy Spirit. So Jesus is in heaven. And as we saw, the scene starts in Acts with Jesus in heaven and He builds His church from heaven. Now that is still going on today. Jesus is still in heaven but what is He doing? He is building His church on earth by His Spirit. It is pretty exciting to think that you can be part of that.



So we look at Paul's first missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas are called, they are sent out and they go to the Jews first. And Paul's zeal, of course, is to establish the believers. They get to Iconium and there is great persecution. God gives them a great burden. They are going to go out and you can see how they began there in Antioch. They just began to move out from Antioch and they just began to take off. They sailed to Paphos and they went on up to these areas of Iconium and Lystra. Then they doubled back and they came

back to Antioch. And that was the first time they ever went out. They were so excited about it and God was doing great things, in spite of the persecution.

Then they came back and said, "Let's go on another missionary journey." And Paul selects Timothy and he says, "We are going to go out and we are going to strengthen those churches that we went out to." And they even meet the Bereans. And so, you see a second journey. They start back again. And they are going to head out. And they were going to go out this way, by Tarsus, because that was Paul's home. And they head on and they just go way on out to visit a few churches that they strengthen. And they just go all the way out, sail back around Corinth, Ephesus, and come back to Caesarea, to Jerusalem, and then back on up to Antioch again. So their second journey was quite comprehensive as they are going out. And the Holy Spirit is directing and leading and motivating them to go out because it is Jesus in them, from heaven, building His church by the power of the Holy Spirit. And it is just really neat.



So then they say, “Let’s go on a third journey and strengthen disciples. And let’s head out to Asia.” And they do the third and the fourth journeys. And you can see again the third journey—because they begin down here in Jerusalem, in Antioch and they head out again. And they go back to strengthen the churches and then they come back to Jerusalem.

Then on the fourth journey they take off and they go way on out, they start heading towards Rome. So, I mean, Paul just would not stop. And you cannot stop a called man or a called woman. When God is moving in them this way, and this is just a drive that he had. He is arrested. He is tried. He is put in prison. And he is preaching the kingdom of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The 6 Progress Reports of Acts

- 1:1 – 6:7 The word spreads & disciples increase**
- 6:8 – 9:31 The church builds in Judea, Galilee, & Samaria**
- 9:32 – 12:24 Herod dies. The word continues to multiply**
- 13:1 – 16:5 Paul and Barnabas separate but the Church grows**
- 16:6 – 19:20 Church overcomes magic practices and cultic literature—the Word of the Lord grows mightily**
- 19:21 – 28:31 Paul takes the gospel to Rome
His preaching & teaching is open & unhindered**

So we see the six progress reports in the book of Acts. They are simply this in Acts 6:7, “the word kept spreading; disciples and priests in Jerusalem; many people were becoming obedient to the faith.” We get a second progress report in Acts 9:31. It says, “The church throughout Judea, Galilee, Samaria, are being built up and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. And you go: “Wow, things are happening!”

Then you get another progress report in Acts 12:24. It says that “Herod the political leader dies, but the word of the Lord continued to grow and be multiplied.” So the political leaders go by the wayside, but the word of God is just growing and multiplying everywhere. And you get another progress report in Acts 16:5, that says, “after the first missionary journey and the council at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas separate.” But we read: “the churches were being strengthened in the faith and increasing in numbers daily.” And so the reports just kept coming in. God is working in a mighty way.

In Acts 19:20, we get the next progress report. The church is overcoming magic practices. And there were books that were worth 50,000 pieces of silver that were burned. So the word of the Lord was growing mightily. And now it says it is prevailing over all these false cults, these false religions, all these sorcerers and magicians. And the word of God is just completely prevailing. And then finally, you get the last progress report of the book of Acts in Acts 28:31. Paul carries the gospel to Rome and he is “preaching and teaching Jesus with all openness, unhindered” (NASB). And even though he might be chained to a soldier, the word of God is not bound. He is unhindered because God is taking the gospel out. The Lord is so committed to build His church.

The Missionary Value of the book of Acts

- **The Church was a missionary society**
- **Paul chose strategic centers like Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Athens, and Rome**
- **The churches were self-governed, self-supported, and self-perpetuated in order to spread the gospel**

Now what is the missionary value of the book of Acts? I see three specific things that stand out. First is this: When you read the book of Acts you find out that the church as a whole was a missionary society. It was not just a few guys. The thing that was so unique about the church in the book of Acts was that they were all going out with that *euangelizo*. They were going out with Good News, spreading the Good News to their neighbors and their friends. They were telling it thoroughly. They were announcing it. They were heralding it. They were proclaiming it. And it was not like it was some evangelist's job to do it. In the book of Acts they understood it was everybody's job to do it. The church as a whole was a missionary society.

Secondly, the thing we notice in the book of Acts is that Paul chose strategic places as centers to get the gospel out, like Corinth. Antioch is where he started, then Corinth, Ephesus, Athens, and Rome. He went to strategic places, which is very important.

That was one of the unique things about being in London was it was so strategic in the sense that the whole commonwealth was there. And you could go out in the streets and parks of London and the church at Westminster was always having people from every

country (just about) coming in, and they would hear the gospel. These people eventually move on and go some place else. Sometimes they go back to their countries. They go other places. And it was a very strategic place to have a church. International, universal cities like this are great places. I mean, you take what has happened even at Costa Mesa here in LA and other churches, people that come from all over.

One of the most strategic places in our day is what? What is probably the newest, most strategic place?—the Internet. You think about these guys and think about where they were able to go to find strategic places to get the gospel out. Think how strategic the Internet is now. And the more we can put emphasis on getting the gospel presented the more it can be hit on all around the world because everybody is getting it. And it is like even out in the remotest places, you would be surprised. You go to some of these little churches setting up and a guy is out there with a laptop and a satellite dish. It happens.

And then thirdly, one of the things that I noticed that was of missionary value to me in the book of Acts was that the churches were established to be self-governing, self-supporting and self-perpetuating in order to extend out the gospel. They said, “Look, you become indigenous. You support yourself. You govern yourself. And it is your job to plant other churches and get it out.” So even the church that was planted had to grow up and become a church planting church. And so, like you say, they started with Jerusalem but they said, “Now this is your Jerusalem. Now you start and you go out to the world.” And I see those as three extremely important values in the book of Acts concerning missions.

Now what is the sign of the end of Act Four? Well, the Great Commission continues until Jesus Christ says stop. I believe He is going to say that dramatically by way of the Rapture of His church. And when He says that dramatically by way of the Rapture of the church—as the salt comes out, the light, in many ways, comes out. But that is not the end because that introduces a transition. We have had a transition from the nation, didn’t we? And it was through the seeds of Israel to the building of the church.

We are going to get another transition at the close of Act Four, the church. The Rapture will take place and this will introduce the transition to the kingdom age that we call the Millennial Reign. The transition phase is called the Great Tribulation. God is moving all over the world, and when it is reached, then comes the end of Act Four. And then God will set up a new channel in Act Five. But we will have about seven years there of transition, as the church is taken and there begins to be a new kind of work on earth during that time, because He is preparing the Jews. Again, I said, they were not cast away, they were set aside. Set aside for a time in history.

But can you see God is a historical God and that He does things on time, in time, every time, at the right time. And that is what is going on now. And we know we are getting to the end of the church age. And soon the church will be taken out and there will begin to be that other transition back to where He receives Israel back to Himself. Because they were not cast away, they were just set aside. But God will do a new thing and He is righteous to do it.

Let's pray.

Lord, we thank You for what we see in Act Four, that You are the one building Your church. You are doing it from heaven by the ministry of the Holy Spirit because You sent Him here to do it. And You sent Him here to reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And You sent Him here to woo people to You. You sent Him here to take away the blindness that is caused by the god of this world and to give the light of the revelation, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. And we believe that, as You said, You would be with us to the end by Your Spirit. And that the Holy Spirit will affect and accomplish the proclamation of the gospel all over this world, to every ethnic people, every tribe, every tongue,

every nation. We just want to be directed by Your Spirit and sent where You want us to go. So Lord, we want to do first our part and that is just submit ourselves to You, present our bodies to You and say, here we are. If we can be used in this time of history that I believe is soon coming to a close, take us and use us, Lord, for Your glory. Let us be part and experience that joy of a soul winner's crown when Paul said, at the coming of Christ you are our joy. You are our crown. It is going to be quite exciting. There is no reward that we could enjoy more than being in the presence of the Lord and knowing that we had a part in other people being in the presence of the Lord. So use us, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 10 Reviewing the Acts of God

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Okay, Act Five. And when we finish, I will try to review the Five Acts for you so that you will have a fuller understanding of that. Okay?

Well, let's open up in prayer and bring our time to the Lord.

Father, we thank You that You are working on the earth. It is exciting to know that You had a plan. Everybody else seems like they have got a plan, all the nations of the earth. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. And we are Your people. And You have this plan of redemption even though man has fallen away from You. And it is quite amazing to us, Lord, that You would be so loving, so patient, so caring to want us at all. And we worship You, Lord, when we see You for who You are. There is no one like You. No one can even come close to the great heart that You have and the great love that You have. Lord, Your very character is amazing—Your kindness, Your gentleness, Your patience, Lord, even today. So we want to praise You and worship You, Lord, for Your mercies that are new every morning, that are over us. You are the awesome God that began this plan and we continue to be part of it. So thank You. Use us Lord we pray, in Jesus' name, amen.

Act Five

**Israel is not banished forever
The broken relationship will be healed**

**God will fill the earth
with His glory through
restored Israel**

In Act Five, God is filling the earth with His glory through restored Israel. God has had this plan from the beginning and He is going to complete it. You know, one of the things that we will see, I think, when we go back through the second time, we will see what God said. We will try to put on top of what God did, what God said and show the relationship. It always amazes me, the heart of God and that concept of the fact that sin is against love. Because—I don't know—some of you may have had relationships in the past. Most of you are not old enough to have had long, long, real long relationships, but you know people who have, or maybe even your parents. But people who have been in relationships where they love someone, they build a relationship and then someone sins against that relationship. There is some infidelity. There is some taking of your affection off the person they committed to have affection for, and they put their affections on another person. And a person that has been through that, their heart is broken. They are just broken open. And you know that is what happened with God. And I do not know about you, but when my heart gets broken open I tend to protect it. It is like: "That is not going to happen again, I can tell you that right now." And you begin to think about how to protect yourself.

But the amazing thing about God is that His heart is so big, even though it has been broken. And He has forgiveness, true real forgiveness. And personally, I think that is what is so beautiful about history is that you have got this thing on a timeline called history, but then there is this thing that is not on a timeline called eternity. And I know that as long as you are living in history, you can forgive with your heart but you still can remember with your head. And it is hard to forget even though you forgive as much as you possibly can as a human being. But what God is going to do is He has taken us completely, He is going to take us completely out of the timeline of history and He is going to put us into eternity. And I just do not even think we can possibly understand how wonderful that is going to be. How new and how unlike anything we have ever experienced. And just to remove completely all of that. How can He do it? How can God. I mean, He did it through the cross.

And so He is building the church right now. What a great time we live in because we are living in a time where God is saying all those people who have committed adultery against Him, all those people that have turned their heart against Him—which is us too—we get to go out and say, “Hey, you can be reconciled to God.” And it’s not just cheap reconciliation. It’s not just oh yeah, everything. You are forgiven. Fine. Catch you later. It is like He really wants to bring us totally in and He wants to be with us and in us and upon us and just so close to us. And we get to go out and tell people that. And it is just great.

But, when He finishes with this time, where it is so free right now—“whosoever will, can call upon the name of the Lord,” you might say—He is going to start Act Five and that is: He is going to fill the earth through restored Israel because they were not cast away. They were just set aside.

The Promise of Complete Restoration to Israel

Compare Romans 11:25-26

with

Jeremiah 31:31-40

When the full number of Gentiles comes in...

So the promise of complete restoration and everlasting covenant, God will remember them. In Ezekiel 16 He promises it. And they will be restored as a theocracy, Ezekiel 36:22–28. When we compare Jeremiah 31 with Romans 11, it says:

When the full number of the Gentiles comes in, lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this, my brethren, [this mystery] a hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the Gentiles comes in. And so, all Israel will be saved. As it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion. He will banish ungodliness from Jacob.” (cf. Romans 11:25-26)

And so God has not cast them away. He has just set them aside. He will bring them back.

The Old Channel (the Church) **Is Removed**

This is called the Rapture

“The Saved Meet the Lord in the Air.”
(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

God has a new channel...

So the old channel, the church, is removed. God has to have a new channel. He will not use the church forever. This is called the “Rapture” from the saying, “meet the Lord in the air” in 1 Thessalonians 4. The day of the Lord, comprises several events, beginning with the Rapture. There follows the appearance of the Antichrist after that. Then there is the Tribulation. Then there is the Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ. And 2 Thessalonians 2 gives you the events prior to the appearance of the Antichrist. And so there begins to be this transition period.

Now, let’s look at the reasons for a pretribulational rapture. The picture of Daniel 7, the heavenly preparation with the saints to return with Jesus after the Antichrist wrecks havoc on earth, fits Revelation 4–5 and the following. There is no mention of the church in Revelation after chapter five. There is, however, mention of the church in chapters 2 and 3 up to the point of a scene in heaven with Christ and the Father.

And so God removes the church and He begins a new channel to work through. It is called Israel. And though it may have some connection with the church and have some similar relationships, it is still new. And we won’t see the church again until they return

with Christ to rule and to reign. So Israel will be prepared for Christ's return through the tribulation prophets. The Antichrist will be revealed and worshipped during this period of tribulation. And that will help get Israel ready to be used the way God wants to use them.

And then there will be the coming of their King. He was rejected at His first advent, but when He comes the second time, they are going to accept Him. How horrible it must have been for Jesus to be rejected.

When He came to His own and His own received Him not,
But [now from that time] to as many as received Him to
them He gives the power to become the sons of God. (cf.
John 1:11-12)

But there is going to come a time when He returns a second time and they will receive Him. They won't reject Him because God is going to do a work. He is going to turn their hearts toward Him. That is a work of God. It is not a work of man. God is doing it.

And Jeremiah 23:5-6 says,

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will
raise up for David a righteous Branch and He shall reign as
king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and
righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved
and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by
which He shall be called, 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

And even the city ends up being called 'The Lord is our righteousness.' He is coming—
this righteous branch of David.

Daniel 7:13-14 says,

I saw in the night visions, and behold with the clouds of heaven there came one like unto the Son of Man and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion. It shall not pass away. And His kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed.

So He is coming to rule and to reign.

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. And He shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 11:15)

The Battle of Armageddon **Ends Seven Year Tribulation**

Zechariah 14:1-15

Revelation 19:11-21

Jesus Christ returns to set up His reign from Israel

Fulfillment of Psalm 2

And so you will see the battle of Armageddon take place at the end of the seven year period. Jesus Christ will return and set up His reign from Israel. And this will fulfill Psalm 2 where God prophesied there about Christ in Psalm 2. You know, when He said to Him—the first prayer that you read in the book of Psalms is in Psalm 2. And it is the Father asking His Son Jesus to pray this prayer. He says,

Son, ask of Me. If You ask Me I will give You the nations
for Your inheritance. And I will give You the utter parts of
the earth for Your possession.

I think it is so cool that when you get into the Psalms, which is a great prayer book and a great praise book, the very first prayer in the whole book is the Father saying, “Son, here is what I want You to pray.” And the Son is Jesus Christ. And He is going to give Jesus an answer to that prayer when He returns the second time. I mean, He has given it to Him in some measure right now as the church is being planned.

And when He returns He is going to set up the Millennial Reign, the thousand year reign. Satan will be bound for a thousand years and Christ will rule and reign for a thousand years.

So what will God do through Israel in Act Five? Well, Romans 11 says,

For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world
[and that is what is happening now in Act Four and if what
is taking place in Act Four is amazing, He says, “Wait until
you see Act Five!”] What will their acceptance mean, but
life from the dead. (Romans 11:15)

Israel shall be over all nations. I will bless those who bless
you and him who curses you, I will curse. And by you all
the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)

In thy seed all the nations of earth shall be blessed.
(Genesis 22:18)

And nations shall come to your light and kings to the
brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 60:3)

And then according to Numbers 14:21, “the glory of God shall fill all the earth.” Because remember, God is going somewhere with a plan. He has a goal and it is to fill the earth with His glory. And He is going to do it in a full and complete way. That has been His goal from the beginning.

We will see the battle of Gog and Magog, which is different from Ezekiel 38–39. And then finally, we will see the loosing of Satan for a short time in Revelation 20 at the end of this particular period on earth.

Then the epilogue will be the great white judgment, the Great White Throne Judgment and the new heaven and the new earth, because you know, heaven and earth will pass away into eternity there.

Second Peter says that the exact process of God’s act of creating a new heaven and a new earth is not revealed in any detail. So, we rest on the sovereignty of God in these matters. We do not know how God is going to do that, we just know that He said that is what He is going to do.

So, it is like this and I want to go over these acts. And I want to review these Acts. Because what you have here is, you have got five acts in history. Now just think for a moment. Whose acts are they? They are God’s acts. In other words, there are five acts of God. And it is sort of like a play. And what we see is that first God sets the stage, because if you are going to do a play you have got to set the stage. And how does God set the stage? He does that in Genesis 1–11, right?

In Genesis 1–11 we have the setting of the stage. God sets the stage. He did that. I mean, He did not have a bunch of stage hands to help Him. I mean, He is the one that created. He is the one that made everything. He is the one that made us and set us here. And the stage is set because even though God created us and we fell away from God and we turned away from ruling for Him through the influence of Satan—the adversary that was once Lucifer but because he would not stay in his place and because of his rebellion and getting out from under God, became Satan.

And the whole world just continued to experience death. Man experienced death. And it ends up in the time of Babel. And all of the nations are confused because they are trying, in their own humanistic manmade way to reach out and worship the stars and worship the creation. And they are worshipping the creation more than the Creator. And it is like God says, “That is the stage.” Man has turned away from God and he is worshipping the creature more than he is worshipping the Creator. And upon that stage God says, “I am going to play out redemption.” And He sort of even gave a promise on that stage in Genesis 3:15. He says, “The woman, from the seed of the woman will come the Messiah.”

But He begins Act One and what is Act One? It is when He chooses that one man Abraham. And through Abraham what does He do? What does God do? God builds a nation. So Act One is God builds a nation. That is basically it. God does it. He takes it from Abraham and it goes all the way from Abraham to where?—Abraham to David. And you know that starts in what?—Genesis 12. And it goes all the way to 1 Kings 10.

So Act One is God building this nation that He said He would build because He wanted to bring a Messiah. But as usual, man messes everything up. And even though God has built a great nation, man’s heart still is not after God. But it is a great nation. It is a theocracy and God is ruling.

So in Act Two what does God decide to do? What does the nation need? It needs to be judged and scattered. So God judges and scatters, or scatters and judges the nation. And

so it goes from this high time where they are in this theocracy, you might say, but they end up where?—in Babylon. So God just totally judges the nation. And we can see that when we start reading in 1 Kings 11 and we read all the way to 2 Chronicles 36, which was the last book in the old Jewish Bible, which included Ezra in it. So the history takes us in Act Two to where God just scatters the nation.

But then, what is Act Three? God is going to restore them. So, God restores. But why does God restore?—to bring the Messiah. He restores the nation to bring the Messiah. So really, when God restores, where do we start reading about that? Let's just say Ezra. It takes you from Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther to what?—to the four Gospels. That is Act Three. God restores the nation. He brings them back so that He can provide the Messiah. So we start reading about that in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. And Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther transition right into the four gospels. And all of a sudden there is the Messiah. He is on earth. He is incarnate. God is here.

So now that Christ is here, then we have Act Four. Christ says, “Well, you know, really it would be best if I left.” You just got here! “Well, I want to build My church.” And so Act Four is God builds the church. He does it from the seeds of Israel. And pretty much you can start with Luke 24 and Acts 1. That is where it begins. And God is going to build His church. And it just continues. The book of Acts continues to go on, doesn't it? It has not stopped yet. There is the former and the latter rain. The book of Acts is just keeping on going, the word of God. We hear all the time a new church is planted. It is exciting to hear. God is just working everywhere. You can hardly keep up with it. That is what is so amazing.

In a sense, Calvary Chapel, you might say is just one group alone and trying to keep up with how many churches are being planted. You cannot even keep up with how many Calvary Chapels are being planted. It is just mind-boggling that all around the world God is still—the book of Acts is still going on and God is still building His church.

The Millennium

The Thousand Year Reign

The Binding of Satan (Revelation 20:1-3)

The Millennial Reign of Christ (Revelation 20:4-6)

But there will come a time—just like He builds that from the seeds of Israel, there is going to come a time where God is going to restore Israel. In Act Five of our study, the Messiah is going to come. God restores Israel and the Messiah comes the second time. Messiah reigns. He is received by the Jews and He reigns. And we have this period of 1,000 year reign, the Millennium on earth.

And just like there was a setting of the stage, at the very end usually you have an epilogue. Or let's say this. At the end of some plays, what do you have? If it is a really good play what is at the end of the play?—an encore. What else? It is the encore, but I think it is going to be a standing ovation. And the standing ovation is what? It is the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness because Satan is bound at the end of all of this. You know, after he is loosed, he is cast into the lake of fire.

So basically, I am just trying to get you to see the big things in Scripture. You need to have this in your mind because it is important for interpreting the Bible. And when we go back through the second time to look at what God says, you need to have this. Because if you are not placing what God says on this, in terms of history, you can get into a lot of

misinterpretation of what God says because you are taking it out of context. God is a God of history, real history and real time. And you cannot just take everything and take it out of the context or else you will end up in a mess.

And so first you have to look at what God did. And these are the acts of God. He set the stage. Then He said, "I will build a nation through which I can provide the Messiah." But He scattered and judged that nation because of their idolatry and their turning away from God. And then He restored that nation so He could bring the Messiah. And the Messiah came. And then He builds the church from the seeds of Israel. But He is going to restore Israel and the Messiah is coming back and there is going to be a 1,000 year reign on earth. But after that is over and Satan is dealt with and all who want to go with him, then there will be the new heaven and the new earth.

And so the Five Acts of history, they are really God's acts. They are what God did. Now He used man. He did it through man, but only in the interim time, right? When He was setting the stage, God did it by Himself. And when we get to the epilogue, the standing ovation, God did that by Himself. We did not help Him create the first earth and the first heaven. And we are not going to help Him create the new heaven and the new earth. Those are things God does all by Himself on either end of history. That is why we say, there was no sin in Genesis 1–2. There was no sin in Revelation 21–22. We begin with no sin; we end with no sin. Everything else is in the middle. It is about sin and sin has to be provided for. And God provides. That is called redemption.

And that is why we say the theme of the Bible is redemption, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And so when you see this, when we go back through and look at what God said in His Word from Genesis to Revelation, hopefully you will be able to take a different little picture in terms of your interpretation of things in history.

Then we will make a comparison of the covenants and the dispensations a bit and try to understand why we have one group that is focused on dispensations and then why we

have one group that is focused on covenants? And they are always pounding at each other. And we won't answer all those questions, but I think you will see some things.

And then when we go through and see what God said, we will make one last little comparison again of covenants and dispensations. And hopefully by then you will have a good understanding of the whole view of the Bible. And you will understand why people come from a covenant view and you will understand why people come from a dispensational view. And you might be able to look at both of them and go, "Well, there does not necessarily have to be a huge conflict here because I see the relationship of what God did and now I can put what God said on top of what God did."

You see that is the problem. Most people do not take the time to study the Bible enough to know the history so that they can lay the words of God on top of the history. So there is not a problem between the covenants and dispensations. But if you do not do both of these you are always going to have a problem between the covenants and dispensations. And you are going to divide into a camp. And I am in this camp and you are in that camp. But if they understood both the history and what was said on top of the history, you see, there is not a problem. They work together fine. So that is what we are hoping to accomplish.

Well, let's pray and we will let you go.

Lord, we, again, we just acknowledge Your sovereignty, absolute Ruler over all, Creator God. You are just worthy to be worshipped and praised and acknowledged. Truly, Lord, we see that You created us, not we ourselves. And You are the One who has been working in history. You said that You would fill the earth with Your glory. And Your glory would cover the earth like the waters cover the sea. And we really believe that, Lord, that we will be part of it in some measure. Though we do not understand all the

details, we believe that we return and reign with You. There is just going to be a glorious kingdom age here. And Lord, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, the imagination of the heart has not quite been able to come up with how wonderful it is going to be, the thing that You have prepared. But the Spirit lets us know that it is real. And we just want to say thanks, Lord, that we are part of it by Your grace. Continue, we pray, to strengthen those that are submitted to You, building Your church in these last days for Your glory. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

**Lesson 11
God Speaks**

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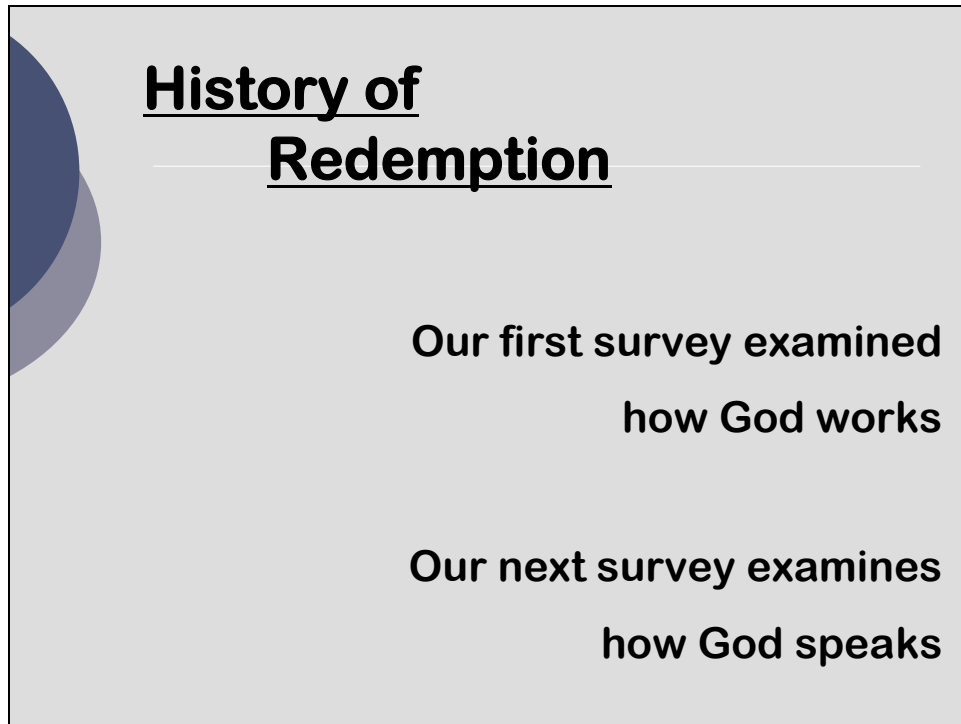
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Let's pray.

Lord, we do want to pause and say thank You today for the opportunity to live, to breathe, to just have our being in You, Lord. And so we worship You, first of all, as Creator. Lord, just to be alive, to have consciousness and awareness. And being created in Your image, what a tremendous thing, Lord. But it is our prayer that Your kingdom would come and that Your will would be done on earth like it is in heaven. We believe that it is, Lord, going to come. And we have seen it throughout history. So Lord, we know our future is wonderful and beyond imagination. And that is such a great comfort to us, as we live here on earth where things are not so wonderful at times. But Lord, it is our prayer, again: Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth like it is in heaven. Increase our faith and our trust today in You, through Your Word and for Your glory, in Jesus' name, amen.



God is speaking. And so we are going to run through this because I want to spend some time on the Abrahamic covenant today. So we are going to run through this first section and take a break. Then we are going to come back and spend a little more time talking about Abraham.

We have seen God set the stage in Genesis 1–11. We saw God build a nation. It took Him time, but He built a great nation. We saw that nation divide. We saw that nation decline, deteriorate, and then it was deported into Babylon. But then we saw God restore that nation, bring them out of Babylon, bring them back to the land and bring His Son, the promised Messiah.

And then His Son introduces the church. And in the book of Acts and in the history that is there, we see the beginning of the church age. We know that the Lord will return and set up His kingdom on earth and that Satan will be bound for a thousand years and He will rule. God will reign. After Satan is loosed, at the end of the thousand years, there will be that final judgment upon Satan and all who would follow him. And then there will

be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness, the one that Peter was looking for, and the one that we are looking for.

And so, we have just seen God work through history. But now on top of that history, we want to see what God says. So, the Creator has spoken to mankind. In Psalm 50:1 it says that He has spoken through Israel in times past or Jesus Christ more recently.

And we can see that in Romans 9 Paul says,

For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. (Romans 9:3-5)

And in Hebrews 1, we know that “God, in various times and in various ways in the past spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, but has in these last days has spoken to us by His Son” (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2). In the Greek it is literally “in Son” that the realm in which God speaks finally is in Sonship, the incarnation of His own Son. That is the last way God has spoken to us.

And so God declares that He has not done this in a corner. He has not done this in secret, but He has spoken so that everybody could know Him.

Isaiah 45 says,

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. I did not say to the seed of Jacob, “Seek Me in vain.” [But

what He said was] “Look to Me and be saved all you ends of the earth.” (cf. Isaiah 45:19, 22)

So God has spoken clearly about how to be saved and what His plan is. “And this is eternal life, that we may know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). God has declared His plan and He has spoken openly. It has not been silently. And His ultimate and final communication to the human race is through Jesus Christ His Son.

And it is fascinating when you consider the concept of *the Word* or *logos*, which was a first century philosophical concept. But now has been raised up to the position of deity in the flesh. That is, the incarnation of God the Son becoming flesh. So that is the *logos*. The Word has become flesh. And as John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Verse 14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt [or tabernacled] among us.”

That is God, you know, bringing His last message to mankind. He is bringing it in the flesh, His Son incarnate. And now His Son, living in us, continues that message as we are living epistles. And so—

We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth...No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (cf. John 1:14, 18)

In other words, He has fully exegeted Him, He has fully told out the story of God by becoming a man. So all we need to know about God, we can find in the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

God Communicates to Us

- 1: Through the heavens
Through design in the universe**
- 2: Through the written words of God
recorded and preserved in the Bible**

Passages explaining these truths:

**Psalm 19 and 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
2 Peter 1:16-21; Romans 10:17**

There are two other ways that God has communicated to us in the past. First, through the heavens—the testimony of design in the universe, God created, His power and His glory, His Godhead is seen in that.

Secondly, there is the written Word of God, the Bible that has been preserved for us. Both of these are explained in one Psalm. We cannot look at all the Scripture references here. But in Psalm 19 we read this, the first and the second way God communicated to us.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech; and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end

of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1-6)

So just the fact that the sun alone exists, God says, and you cannot run away from its heat. It is going to catch you every day. And you are going to know that there is a God just because of His design, because of creation.

But secondly, the Psalm goes on and says about the Word of God:

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping of them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11)

And so you see, just in that Psalm, both the creative power of God and the Word of God. And that is the way God spoke in times past. But the ultimate way He is speaking is now in His Son, through the Sonship of Jesus Christ. And now we have that same Abba Father.

God Speaks Seven Major Times

Genesis 12-22; **Abrahamic Covenant of promise**

Exodus 19-40; Leviticus; Deuteronomy;
Mosaic Covenant of promise

Job; Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Solomon;
Davidic Covenant of promise

Isaiah – Malachi; **The Prophets announce New Covenant**

Matthew – John; **God speaks in His Son**
New Covenant is secured

Romans – Jude; **Epistles & appropriation of New Covenant**

Revelation of Jesus Christ; **Final word consummates**
the New Covenant

Now as we go through this again, what we are going to see the second time we go through, when God speaks, there are four things that you are going to need to look for. Under each of the sections that God speaks—and God speaks seven times—under each of those seven times when God speaks, He addresses four issues. And that is what we are going to be learning, primarily, as we go through the seven major times that God speaks are these four issues.

What God Has Said

**The importance of God's *words*
cannot be overemphasized.**

**The eternal destiny of every human being
depends on their response to His *words*.**

And you cannot overemphasize the words of God. The eternal destiny of every human soul, every human being, depends on their response to the Word of God. Because we are saved by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God that is living and abiding forever. And our response to His Word determines our eternal destiny. So what we are going to see is how God is actually communicating with His people. And God speaks when there is a need. He speaks in different times, in different ways, like the book of Hebrews says, but He speaks when there is a need.

Four Aspects of God's Communication

- 1. The *Need* (occasion)
Why is God speaking now?**
- 2. The *Content*
What does He say?**
- 3. The *Method* of Revelation
How does He speak?**
- 4. The *Response Required*
What does He expect?**

So the first thing we are going to look for when God speaks is: Why is God speaking? What is the need? What is the occasion? Why is God speaking now? I mean, why didn't He speak yesterday about it? Or why doesn't He wait till tomorrow to speak about it? Why does God speak at that time? What was the need? What was the occasion? Why is God speaking? That is the first thing you are going to look for in each of the seven sections. Because God always addresses need.

Secondly is the content. What does He say? Simply, in the first section, to Abraham, why is He speaking to Abraham? Why at that time? Then secondly, what is the content that He gives to Abraham?

Then thirdly, what is the method by which God speaks? How does He speak to him? Because the method changes. Every time God speaks He uses a different method. He changes methods seven times. He does not speak the same way every time. And so you have to notice the method by which God is speaking because that has something to do with the content of what He is expecting.

Then fourthly, what is the response required by God? What does He expect? Because when God speaks, He is not speaking into thin air for no reason. He does not speak in vain. He expects a certain response from you and me every time He speaks.

And so we are going to look for the need, the content, the method and the response. Look at those four things every time God speaks.

Now the Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of promise in Genesis 12–22. This is the first time God speaks—apart from our introduction—this is the first word that is given regarding God’s program of redemption for the human race. You could call it a charter, like the Magna Carta or the charter of our Declaration of Independence. But it is a charter. God is speaking. And the first word that God speaks to Abraham is actually in terms of an unconditional covenant. And the only condition that is attached to it is that Abraham has to leave his land and follow God’s leading.

Now, right off the bat, can you have an unconditional covenant that has certain conditions within it? Sure you can. The unconditional part just means that God is going to take it upon His sovereign Self to fulfill it in His good time. But enjoying the blessing of that covenant might have some conditions. And we will see that as we go through.

So, what is the need? Why is God speaking to Abraham at this time in Genesis 12? Now, you saw in Genesis 1–11, God set the stage, right? All of those things we wanted to know about in Genesis 1–11 but were not really told much about them. We were just told God created the earth, God made man and woman, and brought the woman to him and everything was supposed to be hunky-dory. I guess it was for a while. Then man fell into sin and things just went south, or they went bad. Then the whole Tower of Babel thing, God is scattering men across the earth because they are not really following Him. They do not want to worship Him. They want to go their own way. They do not want to rule for God. And that is the stage that is set.

And then God comes to one man, Abraham. And so, what is the need? The need is critical. Abraham must know God's plan to give him a basis for a faith relationship. And you would not want to miss this because that is also your relationship to God. The way God wants to relate to you is the same way God wanted to relate to Abraham. It is a faith relationship.

Now, we tend to think, "Well, I am not so sure I want a faith relationship. Can't we work out another deal?" And the Lord says, "Nope. What I want with you is a faith relationship." And I have found throughout my life I struggle with that. It is like, "God, I don't really want the faith relationship thing. Could You just like give me a contract. Or could You just like tell me everything. Tell me what it is going to be tomorrow. Just tell me how things are going to be. And I will do my part and You can do Your part." But it is like God says, "That is not the way I want it to work. I want to have a faith relationship with you."

And that is why many people do not have any relationship with God. It is because you cannot just decide to relate to God the way you want to. You have to relate to God the way He wants you to relate to Him. And you can be sitting in Bible College and thinking, "Well, I do not know about this faith relationship stuff. I would rather have it this way." And God is saying, "No, I would rather have it this way. And if you want to have a relationship with Me you are going to have to have it the way I want a relationship. And I want a faith relationship."

And so it is huge. The need—and why is it so huge? Because the backdrop is what?—man has just turned away from God. He does not want to rule for God. He does not want to obey God. And now man is in sin; he does not even have the ability to obey God. So God says, "Yeah, but there is a way it could happen still." How could it happen? It could only happen on a faith relationship basis. That is how we can have it. And so His plan is going to be to send His Son and we put our faith in His Son.

The Need

**God spoke to Abraham at the start of
His great history of redemption.**

**Abraham needed to know
what God planned to give him,
as a basis for a faith-relationship.**

***“Surely the Lord God does nothing
without revealing His decree to his servants
the prophets.” (Amos 3:7)***

But even Abraham, we know, began to see that. And as it said in Amos 3:7, “Surely the Lord does not do anything unless He reveals it to His servants, the prophets.” And faith comes from hearing the word of God.

So as God speaks, we listen to God and we respond in a faith relationship. And that is the need. The need is for man to have a relationship with God because we have lost it. But the way that relationship is going to be developed is the way God wants it to develop and that is a faith relationship. But my need and everybody else’s need is to have a relationship with God. That is my greatest need, is to sit at His feet, to walk with Him, to have His life, to enjoy Him. But I can only do it in a faith relationship.

It is huge. I mean, aren’t even human relationships built that way? A husband and wife need trust. How can two human beings, a male and a female, have any kind of relationship without trust? If there is no trust, there is no relationship because that is a faith relationship.

And we have never had any reason to doubt or to mistrust God. He has always been faithful. He has always done everything He promised to do. Well, He is still fulfilling some things that He promised to do, but we trust Him that He will do it. And our relationship is a faith/trust relationship, just like it is on a human level. You cannot have a relationship with somebody you do not trust. Well, you can have a relationship but it is only going to go what?—just so high. It won't go up to where it needs to go because there will be mistrust. And that is why it is such a huge thing when it comes to relationships.

The Content

Through Abraham's seed, the Messiah will build a great nation that blesses all the families of the earth.

(Genesis 12:1-3)

God will provide through Abraham's seed (Christ) salvation for all who repent and believe.

(Galatians 3:16)

Over thirty times God says He will provide!

Genesis 12:1-3,7; 13:14-18; 15:1-21;

17:1-21; 18:1-15; 22:11-18

Now, what is the content? What does He speak to Abraham in terms of content? What does God say? Well He says, "Through Abraham's seed, the Messiah is going to build a great nation that blesses all the families of the earth." And God will, through Abraham's seed, which seed is Christ. Galatians 3:16 makes it clear that it is not unto seeds (plural) but unto seed (singular) that the promise looked forward to one person that would come from Abraham and that was Christ. And He would provide, through Christ, salvation for all who would repent and believe. Over thirty times God says that He will do it. He will

provide. And what do we say? When God says He will do it, we call that grace. Grace is God doing it. So God says, “I will do it.”

And from Genesis 12–22, in these references, you can see the promise to Abraham begin to develop. The Lord will provide. In the mount of the Lord it will be provided, or it will be seen. He will provide Himself to fulfill it. So, God’s promise is that He Himself will make this happen. He will actually provide Himself as the sacrifice. So in terms of that covenant, that is pretty unconditional. God will do it.

The Method of Revelation

“...and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.’”
(James 2:23)

**This method is appropriate to
God sharing His plans with Abraham.**

Jesus said to his disciples, “*I call you friends.*”
(John 15:15)

Now, what is the method of revelation that God chooses? And I think this is interesting because James 2:23 says that “Abraham believed God.” Why?—because he was called the friend of God. God spoke to Abraham as a friend. And that is so wonderful. The Scripture was fulfilled which said, “Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness and he was called the friend of God” (James 2:23). Now, that was appropriate to sharing His plans. This is the way we speak with friends, isn’t it?

Jesus said to His disciples one day, “I call you friends” (cf. John 15:15). Now, when did He say that? When He started explaining His plan to them and He said, “Look guys, here is the deal. I came down here and I know you are thinking all this stuff about the kingdom and wondering when I am going to restore the kingdom and all. But the reality is this, I am going to Jerusalem and I am going to be dying. I mean, they are going to take Me and they—I am going to be turned over to them and they are going to kill Me. And I am going to die. But I am going to rise again in three days. Three days later I will come back.” And He started explaining the plan to them and He was calling them friends that day.

Because what do you do? Who do you tell what is going to happen next semester? You tell your friends, don't you? You just tell the people who are really close to you your plans. As a matter of fact, what happens when you don't tell them and they find out later, or they find out through somebody else? You didn't tell me! And they start pouting, “You didn't tell me you were going to the mall on Friday. You didn't tell me you were going Friday night to whatever.” And your friends get their feelings hurt, don't they. Because they expect you to tell them what you are doing because you have a relationship with them and you are friends.

But this is the way we relate to friends, we tell them our plans. Isn't it neat that God comes to Abraham and says, “Here's My plan for the world.” He chooses this guy. He comes to his tent there in Mamre, He sits down and says: “Here is My plan for the world.” And He tells Abraham. And He talks to him like a friend. And James says, “Abraham is called the “Friend of God” (James 4:4). I think that's great.

And Jesus got to that point with His disciples. He says, “Now I can call you friends.” And I think we are in that same boat too. The Lord has revealed to us by the Spirit, and we pray for revelation that we might know and discern the will of God, even now for the world. What should you be doing? How should you fit into the kingdom of God now? And God reveals it to His prophets. He doesn't do anything except He reveals it through His Word or to His prophets. He reveals it by His Spirit in your human spirit and through

your mind and the Word of God, so you can know what God's plan is. He is your friend and He tells you His plans for your life.

Jeremiah says, "The plans I have for you are great; I have awesome plans for you" (cf. Jeremiah 29:11). And God will show you those plans.

And as you walk with Him in a faith-trusting relationship, you are His friend. But you cannot do that and walk with the world at the same time because "friendship with the world is real enmity with God" (cf. James 4:4). And God says, "Well, if you want to, okay, that is fine. But that is not the faith-trusting way. That is the world's way." The world wants it this way and this is the kind of relationships the world wants over here. But God says over here, "I want it this way. And you are going to have to walk with Me and trust Me like Abraham did."

The Response Required

The Wrong Response:

**Abraham bears Ishmael through Hagar;
Sarah is despised. (Genesis 16:1-4)**

The Right Response:

**Abraham bears Isaac through Sarah; all nations
shall be blessed because he obeyed God.
(Genesis 22:1-22)**

Well, what was the response that God required from this? The wrong response we see in Genesis 16, which we know Abraham did. He tried to do what God said He would do. And he created an Ishmael. Now in the New Testament we would call this salvation by

works, which is not the way to relate to God. But there are many religions, many false cults, many people today wanting to relate to God by creating Ishmaels. They want to help God do it. And that is salvation by works. But when God says He is going to do something and He does it, we call this grace. And we should simply respond and receive it by faith.

Ephesians 2:8 says,

For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast about it.

And we do. But the right response is in Genesis 22. You are supposed to wait and expect God to do it. And the New Testament abstract on faith is obviously Romans 4, where it records God speaking to Abraham and to Sarah. And it says that Abraham looked at his body, looked at Sarah's body and said, "Okay, this is the deal. I do not deny it. We are old. It is not going to happen unless God makes it happen. What can we do about it anyway?" So they waited and expected God to do it.

And you see the same thing in Hebrews 10:25 through 12:2. This is that great hall of faith and all these people, at sometime looking forward to the promise of God. They never received it, but they died in faith. They just kept looking and saying, "God, I expect You will do it. It may not happen in my lifetime, but it is going to happen." And they continued to trust God and believe in a faith relationship, a trusting friendship with God and that God will accomplish it in His time.

So, when God tells you to do something and you don't do it though, we call that sin. But when God says He will do it, then we are to wait and expect that God will do it in His time. And that is a big part of the unconditional covenant relationship, it is the time factor. Because we tend to say, "Well, it has not happened yet." But it will happen in God's time. There will come a day when those conditions are met and we will see it.

The right response then—

Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but he was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and fully convinced that what He had promised, He also was able to perform. (cf. Romans 4:3, 20-21)

Therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness through the righteousness of faith. That is the right response.

And the same thing in Hebrews 10 it says,

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. Do not cast away your confidence which has great reward. For you have need of endurance so that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise. For yet a little while and He who is coming will come and not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith. But if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not those who draw back to perdition. We are of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (cf. Hebrews 10:23, 35-39)

We are among the group which is called “friends of God.” He has told us His plans. We have heard Him speak His plans to us and like Abraham we have said, “Amen.” God said it. That settles it. Lord, help me to believe it. Help me to wait for it. Help me to expect it. Help me to endure and persevere and not ever draw back from it. And as we believe God that way, it brings pleasure to Him because we have proved that we are really His friends.

And you see it even on the human level sometimes, don't you? Have you ever set a date with someone and said, "I will meet you at such and such a place at such and such a time." And then have you ever done that and gotten there and they were not there? And you are kind of going, "Well, I wonder where they are. They said they would meet me here." And then what if they never show up—you know. Sometimes they would show up late and then they have an explanation for why they were late. You may not like it, but you begin to just expect and wait. But a lot of that has to do with what?—your relationship in terms of your friendship with them.

There are some people you know who have never not shown up. They have always shown up. And they tell you to meet them out at such and such a place at such and such a time, and you are there and it is ten minutes later. You are thinking, man, something must have happened. Or, something is going on, because you know that person. And you know that person would not promise to do that and not be there.

But then there are other people you might know and when it is ten minutes late, you are thinking, "Well, I just better go on and do something then because they have done this to me before. They have done it several times." And you know that you cannot depend on them. They are not going to be here. And you don't know if they are ever going to show up. So you decide to go after a few minutes and do what you are going to do anyway.

And we understand that even on a human level but when we are responding to God, we have no reason not to wait and wait and wait and wait. He will show up. We should confidently expect Him to do exactly what He says He will do. And He does it in His time. "Lord, please show me every day, as You're teaching me Your way, that You do just what You say in Your time," as the song says. And so it will happen.

The Mosaic Covenant

The Law: Exodus 19-40; Leviticus; Deuteronomy

*The second major time God speaks
is 430 years after He gave
the Abrahamic Covenant.*

Secondly is the Mosaic covenant, the law. This is the second time God speaks. Now when God gives the Mosaic covenant, the law in Exodus 19–40, in Leviticus, and again in Deuteronomy, it is the second major time God speaks. 430 years after the promise, God speaks again after the Abrahamic covenant. He speaks to Moses.

Now, what is the need? The people need to be told what God expects of them, what He wants them to know, what He expects them to do. God made man with very few instincts. Not like the animals. We do not have those built-in behavior patterns like animals. But we are learners. God wants a relationship with us where we learn and we grow. We can see that in the book of Matthew and in the book of Ephesians.

But the need is critical. There is this multitude of God's people on their way to the land because God has taken them there. And what they need is direction. They need to know what God wants them to do and how He wants them to do it.

So, you know, people today, even Christians, tend to have a bad taste for the law. But that is probably because we do not understand the purpose for which God gave it. By the law God is saying, "This is what I would like you to be."

And so He brings the people out and gives them the Law. And He spoke on Mount Sinai and said, "This is what I want you to be, folks. This is it. You want to know what I want you to be?" He said, "Here it is." And a lot of Christians say we are not under the law. We are not under the Old Testament law given to Israel, but 1 Corinthians 9:21 says that we are under the law to Christ. We actually have a harder, higher law than they had. The law that we are under is much more difficult than the law that they were under.

Jesus even said in His Beatitudes in Matthew 5:20 that our righteousness really has to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. And it does exceed it because Christ exceeded it. But now Christ lives in us and the law is fulfilled in us because Christ is in us. And if it is not being fulfilled in you, then Christ is not in you. You can say all you want and you can talk all you want. You can go to church all you want. You can claim all you want, but if it is not being fulfilled in you, you are not of Christ and you do not have Christ in you. You have to be born again and receive Jesus Christ to live in you in order for that law to be fulfilled in you. And you do it in a way that exceeds the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees. So that is a great need. We need to know, at that time when He is speaking to Moses, the direction that He wants them to take.

The Content

**Two great areas of truth
that God wants them to learn:**

**Moral Law - Exodus 20:1
Ceremonial Law - Deuteronomy 4:7-8**

So what is the content? There are two great areas of truth about the law that God wants them to learn. Because there is a moral law and there is a ceremonial law. The moral law is found in Exodus 20 and the ceremonial law is found in Deuteronomy 4. So we will look at both aspects of this law.

The moral law is how they are to live, to act, to respond. And that covers every aspect of life. And man needs to learn to act like God. This is the ideal for man's moral character. He said in Leviticus 19:2,

Say to all this congregation of the people of Israel: "You shall be holy [Why?] for I, the Lord your God am holy."

The other laws are an expansion of the moral law. And we know what makes an issue moral. How do you know something is a moral issue? It is really simple, isn't it? What makes something a moral issue?—whether God has said anything about it or not. If God has spoken about an issue, it immediately is a moral issue.

The only things that are not moral issues are things that God has not spoken about. But if God has spoken about it then it immediately becomes a moral issue. You say, “Is abortion a moral issue?” It depends on whether or not God has spoken about it. Is lying a moral issue? Depends upon whether or not God has spoken about it. Is adultery a moral issue? It depends on whether or not God has spoken about it. If God has spoken about it, it is a moral issue.

And He says, the moral law is about you living, really His life and being like Him. Now, an issue is moral because God has spoken about it. If man does not recognize the God of the Bible then he has no real moral restraints. If you don’t believe He has spoken, and He has spoken through the Bible, you don’t really have the moral restraints that are needed to be in a relationship with God and to fulfill humanity the way God intended it to be fulfilled.

That is why it is so important staying in the Word because if you read through the Bible you get what God has to say about things. And you just have more information from God about what is moral and the way He wants us to live.

Now, what about the ceremonial law? The moral law, we go, oh, that is cool. But then He gave this weird ceremonial law. And Exodus 25 says that this aspect of the law is provided for the heart to respond in worship. God provided a place and a ritual to respond to Him. He gave priests in chapter 28. He gave continual worship before Him in chapter 29. And then in Exodus 29:42 God is speaking and meeting and dwelling that they may know that He is God.

And so He gives them this ceremonial law so that they can relate to Him in worship and respond to Him. But it is a heart response though it is done through a ceremony. And that is something we have to keep in mind because there are certain people, in particular, who need a little more ceremony than others. And it does not necessarily mean that the ceremony is wrong in and of itself because God instituted ceremony. Don’t forget. It was not Moses and the guys sitting around going, “You know what? We really need a

ceremony to relate to God with. What do you guys think?” It did not happen like that. God came down and God said, “Let Me give you a ceremony and I want you to relate to Me through this ceremony.”

Now what is neat, in the New Testament, is that He has kind of boiled it down to just two basic things. Baptism is a ceremony by which we relate to God. And Communion is a ceremony by which we relate to God. So we do not have a lot of ceremony in the New Testament. Not as much as they did in the Old Testament. But we still do have ceremony. And it was not our idea. Again, God came down and said in the New Testament, “Here are two ceremonies. I want you to use them to relate to Me.”

And so they are big things. They are not little. And the reason they are not little is because God gave them. It was not a bunch of church leaders that sat around and said, “Well, let’s just do baptism and communion.” That is not how it happened. It was just like in the Old Testament. God said, “This is the way you can relate to Me. There is the moral law and there is the ceremonial law.” And we are even involved in that today.

So the law is progressively given. From Genesis 17 God said, “Walk before Me.” This is the seed of the ceremonial law. “And be perfect.” This is the seed of the moral law. Walk is a ceremony, you might say. That is the external, outward thing we see. But “Be perfect” is inwardly in your heart. That is what God sees. So you have both the ceremonial law. Walk before Me, externally. And you have the moral law, be perfect inwardly. You see that in Deuteronomy 4:7–8. You can see a summary of that. Verse 7 says—Here is the ceremonial law.

For what great nation is there that has a God so near to it,
so close to it as the Lord your God.

Our God is close to us, whenever we call upon Him. He is so close walking with us, among us.

And what great nation is there that His statutes and ordinance is so righteous as this law which I set before you this day?

That's the moral law. He says, "Here is how you are to be. And I give you these statutes to show you how you are to be."

Now what is the method? We have seen the need. We see the content. What is the method by which God speaks? Does He change His method? Does He talk to them as a friend? No! He does speak to them as friend. God shows up. God speaks. And how does He speak? Like thunder! He speaks like lightening. There are clouds. There are trumpet blasts. There is smoke. There is fire. And the whole earth, the mountain is just quaking like an earthquake.

Now what do those things speak to us about? I think they are establishing one issue. And that is, God is in charge. God is the authority. He spoke very authoritatively—He did not come and talk like—He did not sit down in a tent and have tea with Abraham this time. He said, "Moses, I am going to talk to you." Matter of fact, God's talking was so memorable and unique that the people said, "Moses, do you think like in the future God could just speak to you? We don't want Him talking to us. Because we were down there at the bottom of the mountain and we were scared." And it was like all they were hearing was the echo. It was like, "You talk to Him. You tell us what He said. We don't want to talk to Him. We don't want Him to talk to us because God scares us to death when He talks."

So it was not the same way as when He went in the tent with Abraham. You see, the method has changed. God is not talking the same way. This is just like you change your method. Sometimes you talk to people like you are their friend. Other times, when they don't show up on time maybe, when they promised, they may get there and you talk to them differently. You know? Have you ever screamed or yelled at a friend? Not you guys! I mean, yeah, we talk differently to communicate different things.

Well, God is speaking. What is He doing? He is laying down the law. He is establishing His right to direct them, establishing His authority over them. And where there is no authority behind the law, it becomes meaningless. And that is part of the problem we have today in the world. There are all kinds of laws, but they do not mean anything because they are not enforced. But God enforces them immediately. They see it and they say, “Whoa. You don’t want to mess with Him.” A cow touches the mountain and falls over dead, stupid cow! What are you going over there for? It does not matter. The cow was ignorant but the cow still fell over dead. What does that tell you? You don’t mess with God! I don’t care if it is through ignorance. You still die if you touch the mountain. That is authority.

He speaks in a way to cause the people to respect or to fear Him as God. And we have lost a lot of that. It used to be, you know, when our nation was first started, there was a whole lot more fear of God and respect that way. But like it says, when a judgment or a penalty is brought forth and you do not execute it speedily, then the heart of man is set to do evil. And that is the way it is today. You can go do evil and you never know; you might not even get prosecuted for a while. Who knows what will happen?

Well, what is the response He expects from us? The correct response is to obey. It is commitment. You have got to submit and dedicate by free choice to what God speaks. It is a personal commitment to God and what He says. All He wanted was obedience. He said, “Here is the law. You have got to do it.”

Now of course the problem is, we know later, that they cannot obey it. But it does not change the fact that is it a good law. Is there anything wrong with the law? No. It is a holy law. It is a moral law. It has its ceremony. God gave it. There is nothing wrong with it. The problem was never with the law—it still isn’t. It is a great law. The problem is the people were not able to do it.

So when you study law and grace, you see law came after the promise, that is. And it does not change the promise. Galatians 3:17 makes it clear that the promise has not changed because the law was added.

Well, why the law? It was added, not to grace but it was put along with grace. People think the law was added to grace. It was not added to grace. It was not added to the promise. It was not about the promise. It was brought in alongside to help fulfill the promise. It was added because of sin. Romans 3:20 makes that clear. Men were so far off in their friendship with God and in their relating to God, that the law was added to help bring them back closer to a relationship with God so they could be friends with God.

And the Law has two basic functions. It reveals sin and my need for grace, or my need for the promise. And secondly, God's holiness is expressed throughout the Old and the New Testament because the law reveals the holy character of God. The law tells you something about God and who He is and we are to be like Him. The problem is that we just cannot seem to do it. But the law revealed it.

Relationship: Law and Grace

Law

- Shows Need
- Enlightens
- Reveals
- "Thou Shalt"
- Obedience Required

Grace

- Meets Need
- Empowers
- Gives Ability
- "I Will"
- Faith Required

So, what is the relationship of law and grace? Well, the law shows the need but grace meets the need. The law enlightens you, puts light on the subject but that is all. Grace empowers you. It enables you to obey God. It gives you ability for the relationship and the obedience. The law reveals, but grace gives ability. The law says, "Thou shalt do this." Grace is when God says, "I will do this in and through you." In the law obedience is required, but under grace, faith is required.

Faith and obedience are very closely related. We can have faith in Christ and Christ will live in and through us. But if we don't have faith in Christ He won't live in and through us. So, there is the relationship of law and grace.

So the Mosaic Law was for children. Galatians 4:1-6 makes that very clear. And God has revealed more and more about that relationship. And in the New Testament we are not children anymore. We are called sons. We are sons of God, sons in Christ. We do not offer blood sacrifices and we don't go to the temple to meet God anymore. David did that. He was a child and dwelling in the house of the Lord was the greatest thing he could think of. But for us, we live in daily fellowship, walking and living with God every day, everywhere we go because we are in "sonship." In the Old Testament it was like they were children. In the New Testament we are sons. We have grown up. We have come of age, in that respect.

So, let's review the first and second time God spoke. First, Abraham. What was the need? It was to know God's plan on the basis of a relationship with God. That was the need. What was the content? It was all about how God would provide it. Three times God said, "I will. I will. I will. I will do this." So the content was about how God would make it happen. That is grace. What was the method? It was friendship. What was the response God expects? Wait and expect Him to do what He says because He is your friend and He has told you His plans. It might take time, but God will do it. You have got to believe Him.

And you can apply that to your life now, can't you? Some of you have been waiting for certain things to happen in your life and they have not happened yet. Believe God! Wait. Expect. Trust Him. He is the one you need to be looking to, not every other way to fulfill it. And you will create an Ishmael and you won't like it when you get it.

But then when He spoke to Moses, the need is direction and to know what God expects of them. They are out in the desert. They don't know where to go. If God doesn't lead by the pillar of fire, you know, at night and the cloud during the day, they are not going to know where to go. God has to lead them and directed them.

The content is about the moral and ceremonial law, the moral character of man in every aspect of life, how to please God. The method is great authority—thunder, lightening, earth quaking. The response God expects is obedience. “So the law says do this and live but neither gives me strength nor hands. A better word the gospel brings. It bids me to fly and it gives me wings.”

And so we see the first two times God speaks: to Abraham, and then secondly, to Moses. But do you see that when He speaks, He speaks to a need? And then we look at the content of what He is saying. We look at the method by which He is speaking and then the response that He expects from us. And we are going to see that. God speaks seven times. We have already just briefly looked at the first two times God spoke, first to Abraham and secondly, to Moses.

Next we will look at David and the Davidic Covenant and after that, to the prophets. So as we go through seven times God speaks and each time we will find that there is a need, a reason, an occasion for why He is speaking. We will find that there is a certain content that He is trying to communicate. And we want to note that content. And we will see that there is a method that He chooses to do it, because the method always fits what He is trying to do. And then He wants a response from us.

The first response we have seen is faith. The second response we have seen is obedience. It is interesting how faith and obedience go so closely together.

Let's close in prayer.

Lord, we just pray that You would continue to just show us more and more of what You are speaking, what You are saying and how that what You said actually fits well with what we have seen in terms of history what You did. You have a single goal and that is our redemption, the redemption that is found in Christ Jesus. And Lord, we are just so grateful that You are excited about saving us. And that You can bring us into a relationship with You. Lord, may You just give us revelation to see the Bible in terms of a big picture. To step back and look at the whole forest and see the large things that hold and keep the Bible together in its parts so that we can interpret it more properly and correctly. And then fit in and obey and do what You say, because You give us revelation and You give us power by Your Spirit. Thank You for it, in Jesus' name.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 12 Covenants and Promises

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Let's pray,

Father, we just want to pause and just say thank You again for time to get together and to share Your Word together, Lord. And to look at You and just as we look and see how You are so faithful to fulfill Your Word. Lord, we want to praise You as we look at the Abrahamic covenant now since it is the first time You spoke. We just ask that You would help us, Lord, to see and to understand. We know that it takes revelation from You. So show us by Your Spirit things that will be important for our understanding, as we look at the whole of Scripture and how You unfold Your plan of redemption. So we commit this time to You now, in Jesus' name, amen.

Well. Let's turn to Genesis 12 real quickly. Genesis 12 says, and notice there is a sevenfold blessing here: Now the LORD had said to Abram,

Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (cf. Genesis 12:1-3)

So, God gives a sevenfold blessing to Abraham there in verses 1 through 3. But when you turn to Exodus 6:6–8 we see the sevenfold covenant that was made with Israel. First to Abraham, now as He is beginning to speak to Moses, we get also a sevenfold covenant with Israel. He says in verse 6,

Say therefore to the sons of Israel: “I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you for My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you for a possession: I am the LORD.”

So seven times He says He is going to do it. And so we see the sevenfold blessing given to Abraham, but then we see the sevenfold covenant promise given, you might say, to Moses.

Now are these conditional or unconditional promises? Does He say that they have to meet certain conditions for these things? Not really. He is saying that He will ultimately fulfill these things sovereignly. There might be conditions within the covenant that they have to meet in order to enjoy the covenant. But the covenant itself is promised and it will come about.

So when we are talking about a covenant we are talking about that sovereign act of God that He will do it.

Now there are four eternal unconditional covenants that He makes. The first one is Genesis 12:1–3. That is unconditional. The second one is Deuteronomy 30:1–10 is unconditional. 2 Samuel 7:10–16 and Jeremiah 31:31–40. Then there is one that is very conditional and that is Deuteronomy 28:1–68.

So we see there are two kinds of covenants, don't we? One is unconditional, the other is conditional. He puts the "if" there for the conditional covenant. Now the difference is this: there can still be conditions fit within an unconditional covenant. Not a condition as to whether the covenant will be fulfilled or not. Do you understand that? In an unconditional covenant it means God will fulfill it in His time. But the conditions that are within an unconditional covenant have to do with whether you get to enjoy it right now or not. We see that happening, you know, all through Scripture because—for example, when we read the book of Jude—Jude tells us what? "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 1:21). What does he mean by that? He means keep yourself in the place where God can bless you. Is God going to bless you? Well, yeah. And ultimately He is going to bless you with salvation, no doubt. But there might be things God wants to do in your life, He won't get to do them—or let's put it this way—you won't get to enjoy them unless you keep yourself in a place where you can enjoy them.

Let's say God wants to pay your way to an extension campus next semester, just your whole way, everything. But you go out and you do something really stupid and you get thrown in jail during the break. You cannot go because you are in jail. But God was going to pay your way. And it is not that God does not want to pay your way, or that it is even His wills to pay your way. He wants to do it, but you did not keep yourself in a place where God could bless you.

And your parents say, "Well, we want to buy you a new car. The one you always wanted." And you are sitting in jail. Well, they might go out and buy it and bring you a picture of it. "Here is your new car. We bought it for you. Are you liking it?" "Yeah, it is great. I love it." "Are you enjoying it?" "Oh, yeah, it's great, sitting right here in

jail.” It does not mean that the promise is not fulfilled. It means that you might not get to enjoy it because you are not meeting certain conditions.

And so we see that in the covenant relationship. And so these promises, these Scriptures here, are really eternal covenants. When He spoke to Abraham it was an eternal covenant there. When He spoke even to Moses about the land that was something God said He would do, not what they had to do. When He spoke to David in 2 Samuel and said, “I will do it. The seed is yours. I promise it.” In Jeremiah, the new covenant with the people of Israel, He says, “I will do it.” He is going to do it in His time.

But the land conditions, you might say, that was a conditional covenant. They have to meet those conditions for that to take place. But it does have a relationship to other covenants. And we are going to talk more about that because He made it with His covenant people.

In Ephesians 2 it says this:

At that time you were without Christ being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise [particularly to the one made with Abraham], having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus we are brought near by the blood and He Himself is our peace. He has made one new man and we are fellow citizens and members of the household of God. (cf. Ephesians 2:12-14)

So we have been brought in by Christ to a standing and relationship with Him we did not have before. But they had it because God chose them as a people. Now He has made two become one in Christ. But that is not going to be effected until Christ returns.

It is like someone was asking earlier today. What does it mean when Jesus said, “I am going to take the kingdom away from you”—and He was talking to the Jews—“and I am going to give it to a nation who will bring forth fruit” (cf. Matthew 21:43). Does that mean that God cast His people off forever? No. Because when He says “the kingdom,” what is He talking about? He is talking about the rule of faith. Up to that point, they were supposed to walk with Him in that faith relationship. But they had rejected it. God says, “I am going to turn to a new people, a new nation that brings forth fruit, a holy nation, a royal priesthood. And that is the church. “And they are going to walk with Me and they are going to produce fruit.”

Of course we find out later that, you know, we are not as perfect as thought either. And God will later, according to Romans 11, turn back to the nation again and bring them in. Personally, I think that is another reason why Jesus said, “Up until this point in time, people are seeking to enter the kingdom violently. And the kingdom has suffered violence. But from now on it is not going to be that way” (cf. Matthew 11:12). And I know there are different interpretations of that, but when you stand back and look at it as a whole; I think that what we see is that up until the time of Christ, it was okay for the nation Israel to pick up a sword and to drive people out of their land. They had God’s permission and God’s blessing to pick up a sword and say, “Get out of here! This belongs to us.” And there was violence.

But when Christ came, Christ said, “Lay that aside. Vengeance is Mine. I will repay. You guys, don’t do that anymore. We have a different thing going on here. I want you to go into every nation. I want you to go to every people and every ethnic and every country. I don’t want you to run them out of their land, even though all the earth belongs to Me. I want you to take the gospel into it.”

But when Jesus comes back the second time, that will be over. Because He is even coming back in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who don’t know God and did not obey the gospel when it came to them. And He is coming back and He is ruling

with a rod of iron. So it is going to go back to violence, you might say. Before Christ came, it was taken and set up violently. Christ came and so we do not do that now. But when Christ comes the second time, it is going to happen again. See? So, things change and God is going to fulfill these things. And it is pretty amazing to see it.

So, there are three basic doctrines that we find in the Abrahamic covenant. The first one is this: the doctrine of salvation or soteriology which is found in the Abrahamic covenant. Because the blessings that were promised to Abraham, we find in Galatians and in Romans, are the blessings of salvation for the whole world that came through Abraham. And so the doctrine of salvation or soteriology is there. The Messiah came through that line of Abraham as God promised.

The second doctrine that we find in the covenant to Abraham is the doctrine of resurrection. Because Exodus 3:15 says that He is the God of three people: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remember that?

Now when Jesus was here they came and questioned Him in Matthew 22. A particular group, the Sadducees came. And of course the Sadducees only accepted the Pentateuch. They did not accept the prophets. They did not accept, you know, the Psalms and the wisdom literature. The Sadducees said, "We only accept part of the Bible. We accept the Pentateuch, the Law, and that it is." And they just said, "There is no way you can prove resurrection from the Law." And what did Jesus answer them? In Matthew 22:29-32, He says, "You do not know God. You do not know the Scriptures, nor do you know the power of God." And the answer He gave was, "God is not the God of the dead. God is the God of the living. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And Jesus stood right there in front of them and said, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still living."

Same thing He confirms in John 8:58 when He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM. I am the God the living. I am the God of resurrection." And He proved to them from the

Pentateuch, from Exodus 3:15. He said, “That proves that God is the God of resurrection.”

Therefore the promise that was made to Abraham, the promise that was made to Isaac, and the promise that was made to Jacob is still good. And in God’s good time, that promise will be completely, 100 percent, fulfilled—even though people fell short of it in their day.

And that is why you have Hebrews 11 and that whole section there where everybody is dying but still looking forward, holding onto promises that God had made to them. Those people that died that way, sawed asunder and everything else, someday they are going to enter into the joy of the Lord and that promise will be fulfilled.

So the Abrahamic covenant gives us the doctrine of salvation, soteriology. It gives us the doctrine of resurrection. But it also gives us the doctrine of eschatology. And I want you to note that. What do you think was part of the reason the Sadducees got into such trouble? It was what?—their lack of understanding and ignorance of Scripture, and not knowing the power of God. Why?—they only accepted part of the Scriptures. And that is why it is so important you get a whole view of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. That you know every book of the Bible and that you know how every book of the Bible relates to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. If you do not, you will be like the Sadducees. You will be ignorant of the Scriptures and you won’t understand the power of God. And that is what got them in trouble. They only accepted a portion of the Scriptures, little portions and bits of Scripture that they liked. And they do not have a whole view of the Scripture. And that is why I think it is so important to go through and see, as we step back and look at, the big picture of what God is doing and what God is saying in terms of redemption from Genesis to the book of Revelation.

So basically, there are three promises. The first is there is a promise concerning the land. That is the first promise. The second promise is the blessing. And the third is the seed.

So first, look at the land. He promises land. Now that is promised in Genesis 12:1 and it is promised in Genesis 13:14–15. What covenant goes with that, the land promise? The land promise is in Genesis 12:1 and Genesis 13:14–17. Now, what covenant goes with that? What covenant goes with that? The Palestinian covenant—where is that found? It is found in Deuteronomy 30:3–5 in particular. And it is found in Ezekiel 20:33–44. That is the land promise, okay.

Now there is also the second promise, the blessing. What is the blessing? Well, the blessing is basically redemption. And that is national and universal. He promises redemption to the nation, but He also promises redemption to the entire world. So it is redemption. It is nationally and it is universally. Now what covenant do we call that? We call that the new covenant. That is the blessing. And the new covenant is found in Jeremiah 31:31–40. And it is found in Hebrews 8:6–13. In Jeremiah 31 it is national. In Hebrews 8:6–13 it is universal.

And then thirdly, there is the seed promise, the descendants you might say, that is found in Genesis 12:2; 13:16; and 17:2–6. And what is the name of the covenant that goes with the seed promise? It is the Davidic covenant. In other words, this is the throne rights. And that is found in 2 Samuel 7:11–16. And it is also found in Jeremiah 31:35–37.

So what are the provisions of this covenant? Let me just read you a couple of the provisions of the covenant. The things God promises are this: He promises Abraham's name will be great. He says the nation would be built and come from him. He would be a blessing so great that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. He promises him personally that his seed would be given to Palestine forever to inherit. He promises that a multitude of his seed would be like the dust of the earth and like

the stars of heaven. He promises that whoever blesses him would be blessed, and whoever curses him would be cursed. He promises that he will be a father of many nations, not just one. But he would also have many nations, plural. He said kings, plural, would come out of his loins. He would have many kings come from him. He said this would be an everlasting, perpetual covenant. And He said the land of Canaan will be an everlasting possession to you. And God will be God to him and to his seed. And that his seed will possess the gate of his enemies and in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Wow! So that is pretty heavy. So what we see here—are three kinds of promises that were made in this covenant with Abraham. Note first of all, there is a promise made to an individual and that individual is Abraham. That is the first promise, to an individual, to Abraham. He is going to be the father of a great nation, this individual.

The second promise is national and that is made to Abraham's seed. That the nation itself, you know, is promised possession of the land, it is an everlasting possession. That is a national promise.

But the third promise is universal. All families of the earth get blessed. That is a promise to whom? If you are not part of Abraham's seed, in a sense, nationally, then who are you? You are a Gentile. So it was a promise to the Gentiles. So it was a promise to an individual, Abraham. There was a promise then to his nation, which means the Jews or the chosen people that come from his seed. But there is also a third promise to everybody else that is not part of that, the Gentiles. So in the Abrahamic covenant, you have got a promise to an individual, to a nation, and to the Gentiles and the whole world at large.

God is sharing what? He is telling him as a friend, "Abraham, here is my plan. I am going to start with you and I am going to bless you like you would never believe. I am going to build this nation. And from this nation the Messiah is going to come and bring national salvation [which we can read about in Romans 9–11] and then also you

are going to see every nation on earth blessed because of you, your friendship with Me, and your walk with Me.” Isn’t that amazing?

That blows me away. Because you never know—I am talking about you as an individual. You never know what might happen just because you are in a relationship with God. You just do not know what God is going to do. Because of your friendship with God and your walk with Him, your obedience—one act of obedience in your life can bless so many people. It is unreal. I mean, I can think back to a couple of times in my life where I actually obeyed God and because I obeyed God He blessed a bunch of people. And I can tell you right now, I would not take anything for those few times. You say, “Then why don’t you obey Him some more?” I am. But it is like you just never know if you just obey God what He might do. And He promised this to Abraham.

Now for this to take place, for them to have this title deed to the earth, the way it is promised in Revelation 5, what has to happen? Well, three things, basically, have to happen if this promise is going to be fulfilled to Abraham. The way it was given, to the individual, to the nation, and to the universe, three things have to happen.

First of all, Israel has to be preserved. You have got to see that the nation has to be preserved. It cannot happen if God does not preserve the nation. Now, has that been a remarkable thing throughout history, how God has preserved this nation? It has been an amazing thing to anthropologists in particular, and to sociologists. What in the world is going on with God preserving this nation after they have been through so much? But for this to happen to the nation, it must be preserved. And it is.

Secondly, at some point it has to be converted for it to happen. It cannot happen unless the nation gets converted.

And thirdly, it has to be restored. Now I do not know if you want to put restored first before converted. You can decide whether you want to put converted first, then

restored, or restored and then converted. In some ways I see restored might be first because look at what is happening. They are being restored to their land, right? But they are not quite converted. I see a restoration of Israel back to their land, particularly since 1948. But I do not see a real conversion of them yet. So, they have been preserved. They are in the process of being restored to their land, even though there is all this craziness going on in the world. It is amazing that in your generation, in your time, this has taken place in these last days. But the thing we wait for is the conversion of the people.

Will it happen? Yes, it will happen. When will it happen?—in His time—that is the key, in His time. What are we to do in the meantime? Expect it. Wait for it. Don't give up on it. Many Christians have given up on it and said, "Ah well, I will just go back to the old way of thinking, kind of the amillennial thinking that God is never going to do this. It ain't going to happen and I will just give up on it." Don't go that route in your thinking. It is going to happen in God's time. It will take place and He promises it.

So, this is one act of obedience.

Now, there is an interesting Scripture in Genesis 11. If you turn to Genesis 11:31, I just want you to note something there and also in Hebrews 11:8. If you compare Genesis 11:31 and compare it over with Hebrews 11. Genesis 11:31 says,

And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

What I want you to notice is this: God did not bless Abraham or give the blessing to Abraham until when? Until after Terah died. As long as Terah was alive and was leading them around and they settled in Haran, Abraham did not get the blessing from God. But it was after he died that God spoke to him here in chapter 12 and said, “Now, get out of town. Get out of your country. I want to bless you.”

So in other words there was, in a sense, a condition within the unconditional covenant. And it is interesting when you compare it with Hebrews 11 and look at verse 8.

By faith Abraham, when he was called, [And you love this about the New Testament because they do not show your failures, they just show your obediences and your victories—when Abraham was called] he obeyed by going to a place where he was to receive for an inheritance and he went out not knowing where he was going. And he lived like an alien in the land of promise because he was looking for the city of God. (cf. Hebrews 11:8-10)

And so, you know, we see here that just one act of obedience can bless the whole world. Now I know Abraham was special and he was chosen, but in many ways you are special too and you are chosen. And who knows what is going to happen through you. God might call you to some foreign land to take the gospel to people who have never heard it. He might call you to who knows what. But if you step out and obey and follow Him, upon that condition of obedience you bring yourself into the place where God can bless you. Even though the covenant itself is unconditional and God is going to make it happen, your enjoyment of it is all dependent on your obedience and your faith response.

A lot of people don't understand the difference and only the Holy Spirit can show you that. I hope He does. I hope you can see it. That is the way it will be the rest of your

life. You have got all these promises from God and God will fulfill them in His good time. But your enjoyment of those promises depends on your stepping out and obeying and following Him in faith. And when you do it, you might be like Abraham and just bless a whole bunch of people, maybe even the whole world. So it is quite neat, just a few acts of obedience.

Now, there are a couple of things that I wanted to bring out. I cannot cover everything because we won't have time to do that. I mean, we certainly appreciate the way God came down and humbled Himself and swore by an oath that He would fulfill these things, and that God condescended in order to give us a note.

The other thing I think was neat was in Genesis 15, if you turn there for a second, Genesis 15 concerning the covenant, beginning in verse 9. He told Abraham that He needed five animals brought to Him. And He said, "I want you to bring them to Me." Why? In verse 8, he said, "Oh Lord, how may I know that I shall possess it? How am I going to know you get the land and everything? How do I know that, God?" In verse 9 and 10 God said, "Well, here is the deal. Bring Me a three year old female heifer, a three year old female goat, a three year old ram, and a turtle dove and a young pigeon." Abraham said, "Okay. Whatever." So he went and he got them. Then he brought them, all of these things, verse 10, to him, "and cut them in two." He cut the heifer in two, big old cow, just cut her right in two. Female goat, cut the female goat in two. Cut the three year old ram in two. Cut the turtle dove in two and cut the young pigeon, little baby pigeon in two.

So Genesis 15:12 says,

When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram.
[He was tired from cutting everything up. It made him
tired, wore him out.] And behold, terror and great darkness
fell on him. Then God said to Abraham, "Know for certain
that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not

theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve and afterward they will come out with many possessions. And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace and you shall be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” It came about when the sun had set it was very dark and behold there appeared smoking oven, flaming torch passed between these pieces. (cf. Genesis 15:13-17).

That was God. Now what was Abraham doing all this time? He was sleeping, wasn't he? Abraham is sleeping and here is God walking like a smoking oven and a flaming torch between the pieces that Abraham cut up.

And on that day God made a covenant with Abraham saying: “To your descendants I have given this land from the river of Egypt as far as the great river Euphrates. (Genesis 15:18)

Wow, do you see it? Isn't that amazing? How many of you remember reading in the Psalms where it says, “He giveth to His beloved while he sleeps”? Why did God put Abraham to sleep? I think because in this kind of unconditional covenant where He promised him the land—who promised the land?—God. Abraham is sleeping. God is walking through the pieces of animals that had been cut apart, the blood covenant. And if so, then when Abraham wakes up, the only thing Abraham can do is what? He is just a recipient, isn't he? He was put to sleep because he is not participating in it. He just has to receive it by faith. And that is what it means. “God gives to His beloved while they sleep.”

It is the same with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What happened during that time of the burial and all of these Old Testament saints are loosed and they are brought out into freedom and victory? It is because God is fulfilling His Word. We just have to receive it by faith. We are not the participants. We are the recipients of it by faith.

And this is happening as God is making a covenant with Abraham that he is going to get the land. Do you think Abraham will get the land? I know he will! It is going to happen in God's good time.

And that is one of the reasons why I cannot go the amillennial route and the whole bit there. I just can't do it. There are times when I would have liked to have done it, because it would solve some of the little problems when we debate. What about this and this and this, you know. But I just cannot go that route because I see God is doing it. And I know He is going to do it in His time and that is what I have to expect, that God will do it. You know, it is a tremendous covenant that God is giving here.

Because we do not have time to cover everything, let's just look briefly at the Palestinian covenant that fits in with this. The Palestinian covenant is that covenant that is affirming here to Israel. It is found in Deuteronomy 30:1–10. So turn in your Bibles, Deuteronomy 30:1–10. Okay. And be reading that while we begin to look at these things. In the first ten verses of Deuteronomy 30 He is promising the land to them. There is the land promise, the blessing promise and the seed promise. The land promise was given to Abraham. And we saw it, while he was sleeping even. So God stated He would do it.

Now, Galatians 3:17 says this:

And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was

confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

That means that the promise made to Abraham really has nothing to do with the law. That was a personal promise given to Abraham that he—that his nation, and eventually the whole world—would enter into these blessings.

What are the provisions of the Palestinian covenant? There are seven of them. The first one is this—and they are not all just from Deuteronomy 30—the first one is this, Deuteronomy 28:63–68, which says that the nation is unfaithful and they are going to lose the land. They are going to be plucked off the land. They are going to lose the land because of unfaithfulness. So the first thing He says is that unfaithfulness will cause them to lose the land. We see that in the first three verses of Deuteronomy 30.

Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. (Deuteronomy 30:1-3)

So God says through your unfaithfulness you are going to lose the land and you are going to be scattered. But He still is going to bring them back.

The second thing God says is that there will be future repentance. He says they will come back, won't they? They will repent. The same thing He said in Deuteronomy 28:63-64 it says:

And it will come about that as the Lord delighted over you to prosper you and multiply you, so the Lord will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you.

And you shall be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it.

Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among the nations, all nations of people, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth.

You know, they are not going to have any rest. They are going to be in despair. But at the same time He says, "But if you repent," He goes and says, "I will bring you back." So that is conditional on how they are going to enjoy what God has promised them. They have to repent.

All right, thirdly, He says the Messiah will return. He will give them the Messiah. Deuteronomy 30:3-5 says,

That the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you.

If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.

The LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed.

Now, which land is He bringing them back into? The land their fathers possessed. Well, wait a minute. Their fathers possessed it, and then they lost it. Thought it was over. No, it is not over. Romans 9–11 says that it is not over. The land their fathers possessed. They didn't possess all. Joshua and those guys led them into it. They possessed it. The land their fathers possessed, that is the land He is going to bring them back to. Well, has He brought them back to it yet? No. So in the future He is going to bring them back to which land? The land they already possessed through their fathers. That is the land He is bringing them back to. We just have to be patient and expectant that God will do it.

And you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul that you may live.
(cf. Deuteronomy 30:5-6)

Wow. So, that is grace, isn't it? That is the Jeremiah 31 covenant. God is going to do this for them. There will come a time when their hearts will change because God will circumcise their hearts. That is the third thing, the Messiah does return,

Fourthly, Israel is restored to the land. They are restored to the land. Not just restored in heart, but to the land.

Fifthly, they are converted as a nation. We just saw that. God changes their hearts. Deuteronomy 30:6. They are converted. "I will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you will live." So God does this work, converts the nation. That is fifthly.

Sixthly, their enemies will be judged. In verse 7 of Deuteronomy 30, “And the Lord your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on all those who hate you and persecute you.”

Now, didn't He promise Abraham that? He said, “I promise you that as an individual but it will happen to your nation too. They curse you, they will be cursed. They love you, they will be loved.”

And lastly, the seventh provision is the nation will then receive her full blessing. He says in Deuteronomy 30:8-9,

And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and observe all His commandments which I command you today.

Then LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body, in the offspring of your cattle, and in the produce of your ground; for the LORD will rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers.

So there will be national prosperity. The only question is when will that happen?—in God's time. Some people say that happens before Jesus returns. Other people say no, that happens after Jesus returns. And that is where you have some debates in the body of Christ as to what the timing is there, in terms of Christ. But the fact remains, God will do it, won't He? He is going to do it.

Now, there are a couple of things that God affirms. Turn to Ezekiel 16, through His prophet, there are five things. We will write these down and these will be the last things we have. In Ezekiel 16 there are five things that are affirmed by Him.

And here is what I get out of this, as you are turning to Ezekiel 16. If these partial fulfillments that have taken place in history were literal fulfillments, if the partial fulfillments were literal fulfillments in history, don't you think the rest of the fulfillments are going to be brought about literally as well? Why would He fulfill part of them literally and then say, "Oh, all the rest of it is just to be spiritualized"? No. Not because it makes it easier for you to put together some kind of theology that makes you comfortable, because you can explain it with your brain now. It is not going to happen like that.

The partial fulfillments happened literally. God is going to fulfill the rest of these things literally, though you may or may not be able to understand it at all. It will happen. And you are to expect and believe that it will happen because you are the friend of God and He is showing you His plan for the entire world. And you fit in it. Right now you just take Jesus out to the people and you tell them the Good News about salvation through Him because time is running out.

So He says in Ezekiel—Let's just read and bring these things out—Ezekiel 16:60–63. It is an amazing Scripture.

“Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.

Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant.

Thus I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, So that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation,

when I have forgiven you for all you have done,” the Lord GOD declares.

Wow. So, what is going to happen? Well, he explains in Ezekiel 16 in the first seven verses, God says this, that He loved Israel in the time of her infancy. Okay, Ezekiel 16:1–7, God loved Israel in the time of her infancy.

What does He say in verse 6 there? He says, “When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood, ‘Live! Live!’ and I made you numerous like plants of the field.” So God says, “In your infancy, when you were just birthed and you were squirming in your blood. You were just a baby,” God said, “I loved you.” That is what He is saying there.

Secondly, in Ezekiel 16:8-14, God says, “I want to relate to you by marriage.” In verses 8 through 14 He says,

“Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine, declares the Lord GOD.

Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil.

I also clothed you with embroidered cloth and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk.

I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck.

I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head.

Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty.

Then your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you,” declares the Lord GOD.

So He says, “I married you. You were at the time for love. I took you in. I developed a relationship with you. I provided for you. I married you. You were great,” He says, “because of Me. I made you great.” Most guys think like that.

There is some relationship there to how husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, no doubt.

But what happened? In verses 15 to 34, the third thing happened. God took her in and married her and loved her. But what did she do? In verses 15 to 34 it says she played the harlot. That is the third thing.

Ezekiel 16:15 says,

But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame, and you poured out your harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing.

That is Revelation 17 if I ever heard it, the harlot of the book of Revelation. God says, “I married this woman. I made her beautiful. I gave her everything. Then she took it and she went out and committed immorality with anybody who would even have her.” And it just broke God’s heart. And she played the harlot completely.

Therefore, what did He do? In verses 35–52, the Lord meted out judgment and He dispersed her. He got rid of them. He said in verse 35, “Therefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord.” This is His wife. He is calling His wife a harlot. “Because of your lewdness, et cetera, et cetera, your nakedness, you uncovered yourself through harlotries which your lovers—dot, dot, dot.” You know. He says in verse 39, “I am going to give you into the hand of your lovers. You can just go be with them then. If you are not going to be with Me anymore, just go be with them.” And He scattered them throughout the world. He said, “If you don’t want Me, go be with them. See how the world treats you, if you like it that much.”

But the final thing is in verses 53–63. He begins in verse 53 and He says there is going to be a restoration. “Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria. I am going to restore you.” Verse 55 says, “And your sister Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state.”

Now, how is that going to happen? It happens in verse 60. He says, I remember what? Why does this happen? God says, “I remember My covenant.” It will happen.

And so as we look at the Abrahamic covenant, I think it is eternal. I think it is unconditional. It is going to happen. Now there are some things within it that must take place for them to enjoy it. But God says in Jeremiah 31, God will do that. There is going to come a time, and Paul said it in Romans 9–11, God is going to work on them again. He is going to work in them again. He is going to work through them again. And He is going to bring them back.

And so, all of those promises were *yea* and *amen* in Christ Jesus. And I know many people struggle with these issues, but if you don’t get anything else, at least get this. Do you see that if you step back from the forest a bit and you are not so close to it, and you are not caught up in the little trees, and you step back and you look from Genesis

to Revelation in terms of its bigness, in terms of the things God did in history, and now as we go through the times He spoke, and how He spoke, and the content He gave with that speaking, when you put those two things together, as you step back, I think it is going to resolve some of the little issues and problems that are brought forth and discussed and argued over in the body of Christ. If nothing else it will at least tell you what is worth fighting for and what is not. Because the big thing is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus and He is doing it.

So where do we fit today? Well, we are in that special, wonderful time before Christ returns to fulfill these things. And we see it happening on the news. And it is amazing every time I turn on the television and see everything is in the Middle East, the whole world, you know, because that is going to effect us. And everything in the Middle East is effecting the entire world because God is remembering His covenant. That is why.

Lord, we thank You for the fact that You created us. You started this whole deal. We have rebelled. Man turned away from You. And that we once who were far off from this and strangers and aliens, now we have been brought into it by faith in Christ. And we are going to be part of it to the very end. And it is just amazing, Lord. So, I just pray that You would grant us a large view and a bigger picture of the Bible as we go through. Help us to see these things little by little so we can interpret maybe in their context more properly. So I pray You will help us as we go through and in time that it will come together and we will see the big picture here. For Your glory, Lord, so we can have confident, expectant faith and hope in You, Lord. So be with us today. Let us have the faith trusting relationship going on right now, expecting You to do all the things You promised, for Your glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 13
The Poetic Books

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The following lecture is provided by Sowing Circle and Blue Letter Bible ministries. More information is available at www.Blueletterbible.org. This course, *The History of Redemption*, is taught by Pastor David Shirley.

We're going to look today at the third and maybe fourth time that God speaks. We will see how it goes. Let's pray.

Lord, we do want to pause and just thank You that we can come to You in the name of Jesus. Thank You that You know our thoughts. You hear us from afar off. And even before a word can be formed, You know about it. So we are confident that You hear us, particularly if we ask in the name of Jesus, things according to Your will. You said it would be done to glorify Your Son. And Lord, we continually pray that Your kingdom would come on earth like it is in heaven. And we pray that You would just be with us as we continue to look at the times You spoke in Scripture, as we look at maybe the third and fourth times that You spoke in the large sections of Scriptures that we would understand Your communication, what You were trying to say. And that it would effect and change our lives by Your Spirit, in Jesus' name, amen.

Review of the First and Second Times God Spoke

- **First to Abraham:**
- **Need** - know God's plan and the basis of a relationship
- **Content** - how God will provide
- **Method** - that of friendship
- **Response** - wait upon God and expect Him to do it in His time

- **Second to Moses:**
- **Need** - direction and what God expects of them
- **Content** - moral & ceremonial law; moral character of life
- **Method** - great authority via thunder, lightning, earthquakes
- **Response** - God expects obedience

Well, let's just review the first and second times God spoke. The first was to Abraham when he needed to know God's plan, which was built on relationship. It was about faith. God is going to provide. And the method is friendship. He speaks to Abraham as a friend and He expects a response and that he would wait. He expects God to do it in His own good time.

Secondly, He speaks to Moses and the need at that time is direction. They need to know what God expects them to do and where they are supposed to go. So He gives them the moral and the ceremonial law. It covers the moral character of man and every aspect of man's life. And the method is through thunder and lightning and mountains quaking. He speaks with great authority. And the response He expects is direct, simple obedience. And so we saw that the law said, "Do this and live." But God said, "Live and do this." He is going to give the power for us to do it.

The Davidic Covenant

The Poetic Books

Third major time God spoke:

**Job, Psalms, Proverbs,
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon**

Now as we continue on, the third time God speaks is found in the Davidic covenant and the poetic books. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. What is unique about this is the need. The need came when? Why does God need to speak now? We know why He spoke to Abraham and we know why He spoke to Moses. But what is the need now during the poetic books, the life of David, Saul, David and Solomon? What is the great need?—because the theocracy actually is at its peak. It has reached its highest glory, all except in the book of Job, which is included. But God is ruling His people, isn't He? There is victory. There is prosperity. What is the great need?

The Need

**That these great truths
should come to abide and
to rule in men's hearts and lives.**

“Thy Word have I hid in my heart...”
(Psalm 119:11)

Well, the need is that the truth needs to come and abide in the hearts and lives of men. The need is to have the Word in your heart. God did not want just an external kingdom, because He had given all the blessings and the prosperity and fulfilled different promises He had made to them. He wanted there to be a real relationship. And so the need is to have the Word in your heart.

Now the content during this time, because they are all in poetic form, it indicates that it is the inner experiences. And that is why He chose poetry. This is particularly in five different areas of life, because when you take the poets, you might say—you take Job, and the description of Job is simply this—what is Job about? In terms of the word in the heart, in terms of an inner experience, Job is about the heart of a man in suffering. You read through the whole book and no matter what else you get from the book, as his life is being poured out and he expresses it, you see the heart of this man during times of suffering. That is why so many people will go to the book of Job when they are suffering loss. You know, many people from these fires who lost their home or whatever, you find Christian people returning to the book of Job. They will read that. Why?—because it is

a book about the heart of man while he is suffering. And it is that inner experience that comes out.

What about Psalms? Well, Psalms covers everything in life. So it is the heart of the people of God in the various circumstances of life. That is the content. Whatever else you want to say about the Psalms, its content covers their heart, their inner experience in just every kind of circumstance of life that you can imagine. And that is why we love the Psalms. Because you can open them, you can turn there and it is just everything you could ever go through in terms of life experiences is found there. And we read them.

Now Proverbs is the heart of a man of God as he wisely faces the practical affairs of life. And it begins with the wisdom of fearing the Lord and respecting and obeying Him. So Proverbs is about the heart as well.

Ecclesiastes is the heart of a man of God as he seeks meaning, you might say, outside of God. And as he seeks meaning outside of God he finds that everything is vanity. But it deals with heart issues. And when you read through Ecclesiastes that is exactly what you are going to see, the heart of that man as it comes out where he is seeking things that are a part from God or outside of God, things that are under the sun, you might say. And he finds out that it is all vanity.

Song of Solomon is the heart of a man of God in the marriage relationship. And when you read the Song of Solomon, if you don't pick anything else up, you should pick up God's intention concerning relationship between man and woman and particularly the heart of a man in the marriage relationship. That is what it should be. And most women are going, "Yeah, right. Show me that man! Where is he?" But typically you can say that but literally, you might say, it is about Solomon and this woman. It really is the heart of a man in the marriage relationship. But we can typically take that and relate it to God and Israel or Christ and the church, which we do later.

The Content

Job: The heart of a man of God during suffering
Psalms: The heart of the people of God in various circumstances
Proverbs: The heart of a man of God as he wisely faces the practical affairs of life
Ecclesiastes: The heart of a man of God as he seeks meaning outside of God
Song of Solomon: The heart of a man of God in the marriage relationship

But do you see the content and that the poetic books are about inner experiences that had to do with the heart? And that is why God chose poetry in this section of Scripture, because He wanted to communicate something. Well, what did God want to communicate? Well, He wanted to communicate His heart and so He chose poetry and these men wrote these inner experiences of the heart. So that is the content.

For example with Job—the heart of a man of God in suffering—the purpose of the book is first to show who God is. Secondly, to show the kind of trust He wants His children to have, to show His favor to His children and His absolute control over Satan, and to answer men’s questions about why a righteous man may suffer. And so God begins to develop out of the heart of Job a revelation of who God is. And when he finally sees God, Job does not have anything to say. He just repents in dust and ashes. And He shows through the book of Job the kind of heart trust that God expects. It is quite amazing, isn’t it? You think, “does God really expect me to trust Him if I had to go through something like Job went through?” And God’s answer is, “You are absolutely right. That is exactly what I expect.”

If my house is burned down in the fire and I lost everything, does God expect me to have this kind of heart trust towards Him where nothing comes out of my mouth that is wrong, because my heart is right with God? Absolutely! That is what He is expecting.

Job

- **Satan and the mystery of suffering pain**
- **There is an extent and limit to his power**

**God trusted Job and said,
“*There is none like him in the earth.*”**

(Job 1:8)

**God’s ways are past finding out;
we need simple trust.**

But then He also shows His favor later. He shows He has absolute control over Satan. And He restores to Job his fortune doubly. And Job finally sees that sometimes a person, even a Christian person, a good person can suffer. The purpose of suffering has to do with our heart and our trusting relationship with Him. Are we going to glorify God in the good times and the bad times? Will we received goodness at the hand of the Lord, but then not receive evil with the same kind of trusting heart? Does our relationship with God have to be based on our own issues and our own ground? Or is it based on the fact of who God is and we trust Him implicitly and absolutely. And Job teaches us that.

But it comes through poetry out of His heart. And Satan’s charge was that Job’s heart was not right but that he served God for protection and for profit. And Satan is always accusing God’s people that way. Well, they are serving God for this reason and that reason. But God trusted Job and only the gold that is worth putting in the fire. That is

God's own testimony of in Job 1:8. There is none like him in the earth. God says, "I am entirely impressed with this man. And I am willing to put him in the fire because I know what he is made of."

In a sense, it is like the New Testament says, "Happy are you, or blessed are you when you go through these trials because God has counted you worthy to be put to the test." (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5). You have enough of a relationship with God that your heart can be tested. And God is going to bring you through it because only the gold is worth putting in the fire so that you can get all the impurities out of it, all the alloys out of it. So it can be a single metallic content.

So if you are going through trials, praise God that He counts you worthy to go through them. Because He is not going to put anything on you more than He knows that you can handle. So Job's testimony in 23:10 is this: "He knows the way that I take. When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He began to understand what was going on.

And the bottom line is what kind of trust and heart do we have? Simple trust in God is the one thing needful because God's ways are past finding out. If you have to understand what God is doing in your life before you can trust Him, you are not going to go very far. You are going to keep hitting a wall. You are just going to stop because "God's ways are past finding out" (cf. Romans 11:33). You cannot understand everything God is doing. But what you can do is still trust Him, still believe Him. And so that is what is going on in the book of Job.

Psalms

- The Psalms give expression to deep experiences, innermost feelings, from the pit of despair to the delights of an abundant life.
- Psalm 37 “*Delight yourself in the Lord.*” This is real fulfillment and acceptable worship.
- Psalm 42 “*As the deer panteth...*” David fainted for lack of relationship with the living God.
- Psalm 84 “*A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.*”

Now look at Psalms as you take this section. Psalms is the heart of the man of God before his God. We have got quite a few authors to the Psalms. You have got David and seventy-three of the psalms are ascribed to him personally. You have got Asaph the Levite who was the head of the choral worship under David. He put him in that position. You have got Solomon, who was the son of David. You have got Ethan, who was a wise man in the time of Solomon. You have got Heman, who also was at that time. You have got Moses, who for sure wrote Psalm 90. And then you have got anonymous writers and even some of those were probably written by David. So we have got different writers, writing about the experiences of life, the heart of a man before his God.

But David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, was a man after God’s own heart, and the Psalms give expression to the deep feelings. From the pit of despair, you go all the way to the delights and heights of an abundant life. So you are going to get the highs and the lows in the Psalms, as well as everything in the middle.

In Psalm 37:4 he says, “Delight yourself in the Lord.” Now that is real fulfillment and that is acceptable worship when you get to the point that you are delighting in the Lord.

“And as the deer panteth”—because David panted due to the lack of relationship. He said, “A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand” (Psalm 84:10). So he wants this relationship with God and he wants to find himself delighting in the Lord.

Proverbs

**The heart of a man of God as he
wisely faces the practical affairs of life.**

**Purpose of the book:
God’s detailed instructions on how His
people should think and live.**

Poetry – Parables - Sharp Questions

- Minute Stories -

Primary teaching method: *contrast*

And then you take Proverbs and you can see how a man of God can wisely face the practical affairs of life. There are detailed instructions here about how you should think and how you should live. And the purpose is stated in the first couple of verses.

Now you are going to find poetry. You are going to find great parables there and sharp questions and little stories, but the primary teaching method is contrast. And the topics that he covers in Proverbs: he covers wisdom, he covers sin, he covers the tongue, wealth, pride, idleness, love, pleasure, success temperance, morals, youth, and he contrasts God with man. He contrasts time and eternity, truth and falsehood, wealth and poverty, purity and impurity, justice and injustice, pleasure and misery.

Then some of the evil people found in the book are: the prating fool, the tale-bearer, the whisperer, the back-biter, the false boaster, and the speculator. And we see social

relationships there. The master and the servant is covered, the rich and the poor, the husband and the wife, and parents and children. So, I mean, pretty much every practical affair of life is found in the book of Proverbs. And we see the contrast there.

So it details how God's people should think and live. Now, note what God gave Solomon in 1Kings 4:29. He said, "Wisdom and understanding, exceeding much, and largeness of heart." And so the purpose of the book is to receive God's instruction and to receive it with meekness. To fear the Lord or respect the Lord, that is the beginning of wisdom. To be meek, humble yourself under the Word of God, and receive the Word of God with meekness—because that is what can really change you, that is what can really save you, and then to put it into practice. So the fear of *Adonai* (that is, lordship) is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). Lordship is a matter of the heart and who rules the heart.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart" (Proverbs 3:5). "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

So, all the matters of life, really, according to Proverbs, are heart matters. And don't think that they are not. Everything that you are doing, from a practical standpoint, is still a heart matter. And that is what Proverbs really begins to show us. And that is why He chose this kind of poetry to bring it out because it is just like Job and Psalms. Proverbs is a heart matter.

Ecclesiastes

The heart of a man of God as he seeks meaning outside of God.

The author's conclusion:

Life without God is meaningless! (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3)

The author's solution:

Fear God and keep His commandments! (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

And in Ecclesiastes you see that he is seeking meaning, but it is that vanity that is outside of God, it shows the futility of pursuing materialistic things or setting earthly goals. If you are doing that, you are setting earthly goals. If they are an end in themselves you are headed towards vanity. But it points to God as the true source of all that is good. So every pursuit of man is a futile attempt if it is excluding God. And only God's work endures. So He can impart true value to man's life and to man's service. So it shows the vanity of achieving happiness by pursuing worldly values.

And without God, life is just meaningless. And He concludes this and this is the ultimate meaning that he gets from it. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God. Respect God. Meekly humble yourself under Him and keep His commandments." In other words, if you really had wisdom you would humble yourself under God's Word and you would do what it says. "For this is man's all" or "this is the whole duty of man." This is all man is supposed to do. "For God will bring every work under judgment, including every secret thing whether good or evil." (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Isn't that interesting? Even in the conclusion he has to mention the secret thing. Why?— because that is a matter of the heart, whether you are truly obeying God or not.

And so everything is 28 times “under the sun.” It is interesting in that in Exodus 12:37 the word “Rameses” means child of the sun. And Israel was called out of Egypt into the Promised Land. Really, you are too big for this world because only the things that are above the sun can satisfy your heart. And that is why you need to set your affection on things above. Since you have been saved and God has come into your life and regenerated you, you are just too big for this world. And there is nothing down here that can totally satisfy you. The only thing that can is if you set your affection on things above. But if you think that something down here is going to satisfy you, you have just made a huge mistake because you are going to find out sooner or later that it did not. And that is why, you know, that is why we keep hearing, “Set your affection on things above.” “Focus on the Lord.” You know, that is so huge because it is true.

And Solomon sees that in Ecclesiastes. Who will rule under the sun for God? Everything has value if the heart is right with God. That is the key, you see. And sometimes we forget that in Ecclesiastes. We focus on the vanity, but we forget that also what he is saying is everything has value if your heart is right with God. If you are cleaning and your heart is right with God that is valuable. If you are serving, if you are playing, if you are working, if you are resting and your heart is right with God, then you are living and having your being in God and there is value there.

So, Ecclesiastes is about the heart. That is why God chose poetry and put it in this section. I hope you see it. I mean, this whole big section of Scripture is all about the heart.

Song of Solomon

Heart of a man of God in marriage relationship

Various interpretations:

Naturalistic, Historic, Allegorical

Purposes of the Book:

Literal: Honor pure human love and marriage

**Figurative: The Lord's love for His wife Israel
Christ's love for His bride the Church**

And in Song of Solomon it is the heart of a man of God, in a relationship with a woman, especially speaking of the marriage relationship. Now, there are a couple of different interpretations of the book. Some take the naturalistic interpretation, a human love story with no spiritual application at all. Others take the allegorical approach to the book, and that is, it is purely figurative and it is not based on any historical fact. You know, there really wasn't even any real love relationship. Like that whole thing was made up for a purpose, you know to teach some point beyond that.

Then there is the typical teaching of the book and that is that it is a teaching by example. It is based on real historical facts. There was a real man and a real woman and they had a real relationship. But they view these historical facts as figurative representations of either God and Israel or Christ and the Church. Some people take it to be like the spirit and soul of man with God as well.

So the thing about it is, if you take the naturalistic or more literal interpretation of it as a man and a woman, you still can make certain applications of it. I know that is where I would stand. I would stand more on the naturalistic interpretation that this was a real

historical relationship between a man and a woman, but you can make application of it to God and Israel if you see that relationship. You can make application of it to Christ and the church, you know.

So there is a difference between meaning and application. And it does not apply in every instance either, does it? If you take it literally, it does not mean that every little thing has to have an application.

So the purpose of the book, literally, was to honor pure human love in marriage; and figuratively, to show the Lord's love for Israel and Christ's love for the church. So it presents true devotion, intimate personal experience and relationship. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. Hurry, my beloved." Some see an application of that in "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus." As we finish out the Bible in the book of Revelation, there is that same cry. Hurry, my beloved. Come quickly! Because we love the Lord and we want Him to return. So we feel a sense of desire to be with Him, to know Him, to worship Him, to adore God as all in all.

Paul put it this way: "To live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). And so you can see both a literal but maybe a typical application here in the Song of Solomon.

So, let's compare Solomon's writings. Song of Solomon was written when? It was written when he was very young. That is interesting. Song of Solomon was one of the first things he wrote. He was young and in love. I think that is just interesting.

Proverbs was written when he was middle aged, probably right at the peak of his intellectual powers, at the peak of his administration, when everything was being glorified throughout the kingdom.

And it is interesting that Ecclesiastes was one of the last things he wrote, written when he was old. Maybe a bit disappointed, a bit disillusioned to some extent with the carnality of much of his life. So it is interesting when he wrote these: young, middle aged, and old.

So did God and does God use natural things in life even when He is communicating Scripture? Sure He does. He always has.

Song of Solomon

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Naturalistic, Historic, Allegorical

Purposes of the Book:

Literal: Honor pure human love and marriage

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Christ's love for His bride the Church**

Now, what is the method? Well, it is in the form of a testimony. It seems that this is not God speaking, rather man. However, God is actually speaking, but He is speaking what?—in the experiences of a man who has in his heart what God wants to communicate. In other words, they are like the living epistles. God is taking real men, real experiences of life and He is speaking through that man's heart and communicating what God wants to communicate because He found a man that is expressing God's heart. And these books are just as much God speaking as God was speaking at Sinai. They are still inspired by the Holy Spirit, although it wasn't—at Sinai God speaking directly. But now God is speaking through people and through their experiences of life. And it is really neat. That's the method God chose, because it is poetry and it is life experience. And that is why God chose that method. Do you see how they coordinate together?

Do you see the need? That this has to be taken from a literal kingdom, you might say, and put into the heart. You know. Do you see the content of the books? How it is all about the heart. And then do you see the method? God takes real people who have what He wants to communicate in their heart and He brings it out. It all relates.

The Response

**Take these words and say them
back to God.**

We can make these our very own words.

**Why not use the Psalms as a
personal prayer guidebook?**

So, what is the response that God expects from this section of Scripture? What does He want? Well, He wants us to take these words and say them back to Him. We can make these our very own words. That is why He gave us these experiences. Don't you like to do that when you read through the Psalms in particular? You just take the Psalms and it is like you can pray them back to God or you can praise them back to God. And it is that way even in Job or even in Song of Solomon.

Well, the Davidic covenant fits with the poetic books, which is interesting because the need is a heart after God's own heart and David was a man after God's own heart. The content is inner experiences of all the areas of life. The method is living epistles because God is speaking through the experiences of a man who has in his heart what God wants to communicate. And the response is "Thy word have a hid" [where?] In my heart" (Psalm

119:11). And that is the response God expects from these poetic books. He really does want us to hide these poetic books in a special, particular way in our hearts.

I mean, life should have poetry—poetry and music and art and all these things—because that is who God is. And when we hide these things in our hearts, then the expression of it can be brought forth as the Holy Spirit directs our life.

So Abraham's covenant emphasized the land and the seed. The Davidic covenant confirms the seed promise. The land promise was confirmed more where?—in the Palestinian covenant, right? So during this time of poetry, this time of David's life, and Saul's life, and Solomon's life, God is establishing the kingdom. He gives, in 2 Samuel 7, the covenant to David. So we want to think about what is the relationship here. Because the covenant to David was focusing on the seed promise, not so much the land, but the actual seed. 2 Samuel 7:12 says, "I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels. And I will establish his kingdom." So what is God going to set up?—David's seed. He said, "David, I am going to set up your seed." Psalm 89 says,

I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David, my Servant, Thy seed will I establish forever and build up thy throne to all generations. My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness, I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before Me. (Psalm 89:3-4; 34-36)

It sounds pretty sure—the great covenant psalm, Psalm 89.

And in Jeremiah 33, God said:

As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea can be measured, so will I multiply the seed of

David. If I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth then I will cast away the seed of Jacob and David My servant. (cf. Jeremiah 33:22; 25-26)

So in other words, God is saying, “If I am not in charge of heaven and I am not in charge of earth, and the stars don’t keep going in their course and the earth quits rotating, then okay, I will do away with My promise to the seed of David.” So God is confirming David’s kingdom, David’s throne, and David’s house. And so the Davidic covenant is different than the Abrahamic covenant because Abraham, you might say, the emphasis is on both land and seed. And the Palestinian covenant in Deuteronomy and Ezekiel tends to emphasize the land. But the Davidic covenant emphasizes the seed.

Covenant Promise to David

2 Samuel 7:16

- **Kingdom** – David’s right to rule political Israel
- **Throne** – David’s royal throne rights; the dignity and sovereign power belong to David
- **House** – David’s physical descendants, the right to rule will never be transferred to another family

So, what does the kingdom, the throne, and the house mean? Because He says in 2 Samuel 7:16, “And thine house, and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee. Thy throne shall be established forever.” So, God is establishing three things: David’s house, David’s kingdom, David’s throne.

But what does He mean by the kingdom? I personally believe that when He says “I am going to establish David’s kingdom,” He is talking about the political rule of Israel. That David will politically rule Israel. That is his kingdom.

Secondly is his throne. That means that the royal throne rights belong to David and to his seed. The dignity and sovereign power belong to David and to David’s seed.

And the house, that means that his physical descendants, people from his family, have the right to rule. And it will never be transferred to another family. God promised it to one family. Remember, God chose one man Abraham and he dealt with Abraham. And then He came to David and He said, “Now it is your family. And I promise it won’t pass from your family. You have the throne rights from the family.”

So, it is the kingdom. It is the throne and the house of David that God is promising.

So what are the provisions of 2 Samuel 7:12–16? We don’t really have time to read it, but you probably should, you know, read verses 12 through 16. I have brought out phrases and portions of it. God promises “to thy seed after thee.” What does that mean? It means that David is going to have to have a child who succeeds him and establishes his kingdom. He says, “The promise is to your seed after you.” And that is what happened. It is his seed. It has to be David’s kid that establishes the kingdom.

Now some people will say, “Well, Solomon was his kid and Solomon did it.” Others say, “No, there is a greater than Solomon that came, Jesus Christ. He is the one that does it.” Secondly, He says in these verses, “He shall build a house for My name.” That is, the kid. David’s kid is going to build a house for God’s name. Did Solomon build a house for God’s name? Yeah, he did. But did the greater than Solomon, is He in the process of building a house for God’s name? Right now! You are part of it. You are a living, building stone within that house.

Thirdly, “I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” So in other words, it is an everlasting kingdom. It is not going anywhere. It is going to be here forever.

Fourthly, “My mercy shall not depart away from him as I took it from Saul, whom I put away.” So that is unique, isn’t it? Because Saul was disobedient and when Saul was disobedient God said, “You know what? You are not king anymore. Bye-bye.” But when Solomon was disobedient what did God say? He said, “Oh, I ought to treat you like Saul but I am not going to. Why?—because of your father David. And because I promised him that I would treat you different.” And so mercy, though Solomon’s sin justified this kind of judgment, God’s mercy prevailed because it is called the sure mercies of David. And so He treated Solomon and his sin differently than He treated Saul. Saul got kicked out of office. Solomon didn’t. He got to stay there till he died. So there is a different relationship. Why? Because it is based on a relationship God had with David. And that is why they call it the Davidic covenant because it was not about Solomon and it was not about Saul. It was about David, who was a man after God’s own heart.

And so David’s house, David’s throne, David’s kingdom shall be established forever. And it is confirmed by promise again and again, in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos and Zechariah. And I wish we had time to look them all up and read them. It is quite unique how often God made promise to David.

Now, is the Davidic covenant conditional or unconditional? Well, although disobedience has caused it to be a tabernacle fallen down—that is how it is referred to. Or a house desolate—it will be rebuilt and restored by the seed. That will take place. And we will see that. You know, we see it in Acts chapter 15, where James stands up to speak at the first church council, that the house desolate will be rebuilt when the Lord returns.

Then it is called an eternal covenant in 2 Samuel 7:23 and Isaiah 55 and Ezekiel 37. They all call it eternal because it is unconditional in that it rests upon the faithfulness of God’s oath. Psalm 132:11. It is a great Scripture where God promises that it is an eternal covenant to David.

So if it is eternal it has to be, in some sense, unconditional from God's point of view. Because God says, "I am going to keep My part of the bargain no matter what man does." And so it rests upon the faithfulness of God and not upon the ability of man. But there will come a day when man will obey. And that is what God promises. And that is kind of more what we get into in the new covenant, is that God ensures that it will happen. Man cannot make it happen; but God can make it happen.

And so note that the covenant was reaffirmed after repeated acts of disobedience on the part of the nation. It is not God waiting for a future obedience as in 2 Chronicles 6:16 where He says, "You shall, if only your sons take heed to walk as you have walked before Me." In other words, right now it is not happening. Why? Because your sons are not walking like they are supposed to. But you shall. When?—when your sons start walking like they are supposed to. Well, when are David's sons going to start walking like they are supposed to? Well it is not going to happen because God has promised that there is a partial hardening going on for a time. Not a whole hardening, but a partial hardening. But there will come a time again when God has a right to work with these people. And that is the most generic form of election that there is, is that God is God and He has a right to do whatever He wants to do. And if He wants to come back and work with them again, He is righteous to do it.

Personally, I think Romans 9–11 is the climax of the book of Romans because Romans is all about the righteousness of God. And in everything that we are reading in Romans, the theme is righteousness. The righteous, the just, the ones that have been made justified or righteous, they are the ones that live by faith. Well, when you get to Romans 9–11, what you are seeing is this issue of the Gentiles and Israel. And God ends in chapter 11 by saying, "God has concluded everybody's in disobedience, both Gentiles and Jews, so He can show mercy on whoever He wants to." And then he begins to explain, "Oh the depth; Oh the wisdom." He is like, "Oh man, look what God did!" Now God can show mercy on whoever He wants to and nobody can say a thing about it. And then he says, "I beseech you by that mercy, since God has shown it to you, present your body—not just your

mind, not just your soul, not just your spirit, present your body, your physical body that you live in here on earth, make a presentation of it to God. That is just reasonable. And it is your spiritual service of worship” (cf. Romans 12:1) He bases that all on the sure mercies of David and what God has done.

So, there is going to come a time in the future when David’s son will walk. And I think it is probably a near future.

And then note this last: that the prophecies were given after Solomon by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 33. So if Solomon was a total fulfillment of all of this, then why give prophecies about it after he died? That does not make a lot of sense does it? So he was not the fulfillment. There is a fulfillment yet to come besides Solomon because of the prophecies given after his death.

So I think it is an unconditional covenant though many see it as simply a conditional covenant. I think there are conditions within it for the enjoyment of it. But they will happen because God swore it. He promised it to David and I believe it will still happen.

So where is Christ seated now? He is seated at the right hand of the Father’s throne, isn’t He? Is that the Davidic throne? Do you think Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father’s throne is the Davidic throne? That is what the amillennialists believe. That is what covenant theology believes. That is what a lot of reformed theology believes. That right now that is the Davidic throne. That is not the Davidic throne. The Davidic throne is for earth. Where Christ is sitting is in heaven. He is not sitting on David’s throne. He is sitting at the right hand of the Father’s throne.

Now when Christ returns from the right hand of the Father’s throne, He will then effect a literal earthly kingdom. Matthew 25 and Luke 1 speak of it. As a matter of fact, in the first church council in Acts 15:14–17, you know it well, what is meant by the tabernacle of David? It contrasts the nation of Israel with the Gentile nations from which God is now taking out a people for His name. He says, “After this”—after what? It is after God takes

out a people from among the Gentiles for His name. “After this, I will return and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen.” Well, who is returning to do that? “The seed of David, not seeds as to many, but seed as to one, Christ,” as Galatians 3:16 says. Jesus Christ returns after the Gentiles have been made complete in terms of a people being called out. That is what we call ourselves, the *ekklesia*, the called out ones assembled. We are called out to be part of the church. When that is complete then Christ returns and rebuilds the tabernacle of David, which is the national Israel.

So, I do not think He is sitting on David’s throne right now like the people who spiritualize the Scripture. He is sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

Now obviously, Christ is not now on the throne of David bringing blessing to Israel. That is not what is happening. But He is waiting for Operation Footstool to be complete. Psalm 110:1, it says, “The Lord says to my lord.” That is *Jehovah* says to *Adonai*. They are talking to each other. The eternal existent, self-existent God, *Jehovah*, is talking to *Adonai*, the Lord of all things, who is risen from the dead and has the right to be Lord of all things, Jesus Christ, true God and true Lord of all, the dead and the living. He says, “Sit at my right hand until....” He says, “Why don’t you take a rest. I mean, the cross was pretty heavy.” Now He is risen. He is ascended. “Sit down at My right hand until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet” (cf. Psalm 110:1).

And note how Jesus used this in Psalm 110 when He was talking to the guys in Matthew 22:43. When they said, “We are going to ask You a question.” He said, “Okay, here is the deal. Let Me ask you a question.” He says, “In Psalm 110, David’s Lord is called a son. How can he call his son lord?” And they went, “That is a good question.” How does a guy call his son, lord? And they said, “We do not know. That is really puzzling.” And He said, “Okay, fine. Then I am not going to answer your question either.” And it says from that day forward they did not ask Him any more questions. That was the last thing they asked Him. Why?—because it dealt with lordship, for one. And they did not understand the fulfillment of prophecy.

So, Christ is not sitting right now on David's throne, as the amillennialists say. That is not what is happening. He is at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

Now, what is the summary of Acts 15, the first church council? When you read it, here is what James says. He says, "Listen to me, God visits the Gentiles to take out the *ekklesia*, a people for His name." Then secondly, James says, "After this [and the prophets agree with this, after this] the times of the Gentiles, when that is over, Christ will return. The Messiah will return." That is the second thing James says. The third thing is, "Upon Christ's return He will rebuild the tabernacle of David, as in the days of old" (cf. Acts 15:14-16). That is a direct quote from Amos 9:11. So James knew the Old Testament pretty well. He just quoted it right out of Amos 9:11. He says, "He is going to do it just like in the days of old."

Then lastly, James said, "Those who remain [that is, the residue of men, whoever is left at that time] will seek the Lord." He is talking about all the Gentiles who are left shall come to a knowledge of the Lord after the kingdom has come.

So God is doing a special thing now, calling out the church. But then He is going to come back. The Lord is going to return. He is going to rebuild the tabernacle of David. And once the tabernacle of David is rebuilt by Jesus Christ, then the residue of Gentiles that were not part of the church, those guys are going to have a knowledge of the Lord too. But it is going to come through what Jesus Christ actually does on earth.

And those are the four basic things that James stands up and explains in Acts 15, which was the very first church council. So it is pretty heavy.

So, the eschatology of the Davidic covenant is this: Israel must be preserved as a nation for His word to be fulfilled literally. Has Israel been preserved as a nation literally? Yes, they are still a literal nation. It has to happen. Matter of fact, it is quite amazing that they have.

Secondly, Israel has to be brought back into their homeland of inheritance with those definite geographical boundaries. Have they been brought back into their homeland? Yes. The fight is over what?—the geographical boundaries. That is what is going on right now. They are there but the geographical boundaries have not been established. It is just a continual issue. It is a fight to the death every day over there; but that has happened, literally, thus far.

Thirdly, David's literal, physical Son must return to rule and reign over His promised kingdom. That will be Jesus Christ, the real son of David, from the seed of David, hence He came through Mary and Nathan so that He would have the throne rights that Matthew makes so clear belong to Him as a literal Son of David. Why did he go to such trouble, Matthew, to explain that? And why did they go to such trouble to keep the records and to make sure that Christ was from this line? So it could be literal. So He could have the throne rights to sit there. If it was just spiritual, they would not need to do that.

Fourthly, a literal kingdom must be established over which He returns and He will reign upon David's throne. The Messiah will.

And then fifthly, this kingdom must become an eternal kingdom and there must be no end to the Messiah's reign.

Well, the first two things have happened literally in the process. And so Psalm 132:11 says,

The Lord has sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn
from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I sit upon thy throne.

So, I believe it really is the climax of the righteousness of God. He is proving in history, real history, that He is Lord and He is righteous and He can do what He wants. And He has decided to show mercy on everybody because everybody has been disobedient. The

Gentiles have been disobedient. Israel has been disobedient. So God can graft back in the natural branches.

But when He grafts us in, we are called the wild branches in Romans 11, right? And when He grafts us in, what does He say about us? What is His description of us, the church? He grafts us in as wild branches; the word is contrary to nature. In other words, we are not normal. We are definitely supernatural. We are heavenly. We are unique. We are the contrary to nature grafted in, the wild branches taken in.

Well, if He can do that, the point is how much easier will it be for Him, to later take again the natural branches and just bring them right back in. If God can do the contrary thing, the wild thing—that is you—then how easy it will be for Him to do the other thing.

So yeah, I see, in the Davidic covenant, I see myself that God is going to come back. That Jesus is going to return literally, and actually set up a thousand year reign and rule on earth. Because everything to this point, you know, it is being fulfilled literally, so why shouldn't the ones that are remaining continue to be fulfilled literally. So, I just can't go the route of the amillennialists. I just can't do it. Not because I don't want to do it. In a lot of ways it would be easier to do that, but Scripture won't let me do it. But a lot of it has to do with your view of the Bible, you know.

And there are basically three views of the Bible. And I will kind of close with that. We have already gone over them once. But the first one is this, is that some people view the Old and the New Testament as just one thing. You know, we have talked about that.

Others view the Old as one thing, and the New as a completely different thing. But then there is that group which is different from both. And they see the Old Testament and the New Testament as one thing but with qualitative differences. And so those are usually the three views. This one is just it is all one, Old and New. It doesn't make any difference. This one is they are totally split. The Old is the Old; the New is the New. Okay, this is

more, you might say, the extreme covenant position. And this is more the extreme dispensational position.

But there is a view that takes both of them and combines them together and says, I see that there is this big thing going on but there are some qualitative differences. And they take both the covenant view and the dispensational view and put them together and center it on the cross, which is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And that is my view.

Which I think is a biblical view. Because I see the covenants and I see the dispensations. But I am not going to polarize to either one of them. The thing that is central is the cross. And I see qualitative differences between the two. But the unity and the oneness is in the cross.

Well, thank You, Lord. Thank You for writing through Job and Psalms and Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. And the message that we get here from You, about Your heart, and how You want to rule every little area of our life from our hearts. So Lord, from beginning to end we sense that it really is about our hearts. So Lord, keep our hearts and help us to keep our hearts with all diligence, because it is the most important thing that we will ever do on this earth, is to make sure our heart is right with You. So have mercy on us, Lord. Pour out Your Spirit upon us. Show us Your great love and help us keep our hearts, in Jesus' name, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 14

God Speaks Through the Prophets

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Let's pray.

Lord, we do thank You that we have time to just look at Your word and think about the big things You have done throughout history and the times You have acted, but also the times You have spoken, Lord. And we see that You act different ways at different times for reasons. And we speak different ways at different times for reasons. And when we see how You have acted, what You have done, and then how You spoke about it, Lord, it just puts it together for us in a way that is large, I guess; a way that we can step back and see, Lord, what is going on. And so as we look at the prophets and think about them, Lord, the fourth major time that You spoke, help us to just catch all of Your heart and why You spoke then and the way that You spoke then as Your communication to us. Lord, because we know that there is meaning for it, meaning for us in it. So we commit this time to You, in Jesus' name, amen.

The Prophets

The fourth major time God spoke:

Isaiah through Malachi

The New Covenant is proclaimed in this section.

The prophets are the fourth major time God spoke. It covers Isaiah through Malachi. And this is where the new covenant is proclaimed by the prophets. And God has spoken to Abraham. God has spoken to Moses. And God has spoken to David. Now God is going to do a new thing, or speak a new way. And that is, He speaks through the prophets.

So, the question is: Why is He speaking? What is the need? What is the content? What is the method and what is the response? In Luke 24:44 we read, “Everything written about Me [that is, Jesus] in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” So there are things written in the prophets about Christ. They have to be fulfilled.

In Acts 10:43 we read, “To Him [to Jesus] all the prophets bear witness.” So the prophets are talking about Jesus. And in Revelation 19:10 we read, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” It really is.

Four Major Prophetic Themes

- * Suffering & Reigning of the Messiah**
- * The Remnant or “elect Israel”**
- * The Day of the Lord**
- * The Kingdom or Millennial Reign**

Now there are four major prophetic themes in the prophets. The first one is this: the suffering and reigning of the Messiah. That is the theme that covers the first and second coming, the suffering and the reigning. Secondly, we read about the remnant or “elect Israel.” That is a theme in the prophets. Thirdly, the day of the Lord is a theme that runs through the prophets. And fourthly, the kingdom or the millennial reign is a theme. Including sometimes the new heaven and earth runs through the prophets. But primarily the kingdom and the millennial reign runs through there. So we have these four major prophetic themes going on during the times of the prophets.

Four Prophetic Points of View:

- * The Prophet's own time**
- * The Captivities and Restoration**
- * The Coming of the Messiah**
- * The Millennium and End Times**

Now, there are four prophetic viewpoints. When a prophet speaks, he is speaking—he is talking and usually what happens is he is speaking to one of four mountaintops. He speaks to these different mountaintops. And the first mountaintop is he speaks to his own time—what is happening right now historically—this is his own time. He is talking at this time. But he also speaks, not only in his own time; he speaks usually about the captivity that is coming, the Babylonian captivity. So he speaks about the captivity. Or, he will go further to the first coming of Christ, which has to do with His suffering usually. And then he will go to the second coming of Christ, to His reigning.

When the prophet speaks, you can discern like Jesus did, even in Psalm 63—Jesus would read a portion of Scripture in the synagogue and He would stop right in the middle of one of our verses. He wouldn't even finish the verse out and He would close the book and He would say, “This day this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears”—that Scripture. But He did not go on and read about the reigning and what was going to happen at the second coming.

And so, whenever you are reading the prophets, you always need to keep in mind the four prophetic viewpoints that prophets are looking at. And certainly that takes revelation of the Holy Spirit to show us what they are talking about. Are they talking about their own time right now? Are they talking about the captivity? Are they talking about the first coming or the second coming? And you can have all of those things thrown together in one big view because God can see it in one big view. And that is one of the dilemmas of reading the prophets and interpreting the prophets. But note that there are these four prophetic viewpoints and you need to be familiar with those when you read the prophets.

The Need

**You can not appreciate the prophets
until you see the need.**

- **Moral law is broken**
- **Ceremonial law is corrupted**

They need restoration & reconciliation.

Now, what is the need? You really cannot appreciate the prophets until you see the need. They had broken the moral law and they had corrupted the ceremonial law. That is a huge issue because marital problems are one thing. But when your wife comes home and she turns to you as her husband and she says she has fallen in love with another man. That is another problem. Everybody has marital problems. You know, trying to make adjustments and things like that. Issues with money, you know, et cetera, et cetera. But when somebody comes home and says, “I have fallen in love with somebody else besides you” that is huge. “And I have had maybe even sexual intercourse with them.” That

changes everything. That is not just a little marital problem. That is a breaking and severing of relationship.

And that is what is happening; they have broken away from God. They have broken the moral law. They have corrupted the ceremonial law. And it is a huge issue with God.

Isaiah 1:1–4 says,

The vision of Isaiah [which he saw] “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: ‘I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me; The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, [They don't know Me] my people do not consider.’ Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward.”

And so, not only does he relate it to the marriage relationship; he relates it with children and their relationship with parents. And he is like, “Whose kids are you?” He says, “You cannot be my kids.” He says, “I cannot imagine what is going on. How can you be turning away backwards like this?”

So the need in the prophets is for restoration and reconciliation. Hosea 3:1 says,

Then the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.”

So God is calling Hosea, who married Gomer, to love this woman who has gone off with other lovers, because that is what God has had to do. And that is just, that is such a hard thing to do. And I think that is why in Matthew that, you know, even Jesus says when He is talking “except for the cause of fornication” or except for the cause of adultery. They said, “Can a man get writing of divorcement?” It is like Jesus said, “No. That is not what God has intended from the beginning. It never was God’s intention.” And then He puts in that little phrase, “You know, except for the cause of adultery.” Why? Because that is so hard as a human being to deal with. It is so hard to get over.

When it speaks in 1 Thessalonians 4:6 about “don’t cross the boundary, don’t defraud your brother in this matter,” the word actually there in the Greek literally means to cross a forbidden boundary. And he is speaking of sexual intercourse. God has set up sexual intercourse for marriage. When it is done in marriage, it pleases God. God is actually happy about it. Because He created it and made it work that way. But when it is not done in the marriage, it has crossed a boundary that God has forbidden. And it causes tremendous harm in the relationship between people. That is just a principle that has been put in by the Creator. And people that disobey it will find all kinds of hurt and pain and suffering emotionally and in many other ways in their life. Because that is just the way it works. Because the manufacturer has made it that way and He has warned us don’t do it. All you are doing is hurting yourself. And then you find out later you really did.

Now, he says to him in Ezekiel 16:8, he says,

When I passed by you and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love. So I spread my wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I sworn an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you and you became mine.

It is like, “I married you,” says the Lord God, “but you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame and poured out your harlotry to everyone passing

by who would have it.” In other words, she did not really limit herself. She just said, “Well, whoever.” And she gave herself over to many lovers.

And so, how do you restore that? How do you get reconciled to someone in that kind of relationship? Well, when you compare Hosea and Jehovah, you see that Hosea married Gomer but Jehovah married Israel. Well Gomer becomes a harlot. Well, Israel does too. She goes after Baal and she becomes a harlot. Not just Baal but many other idols. Gomer becomes a slave. Well, so did Israel. Israel becomes a slave but Israel is bought back from slavery. Hosea and Gomer are reunited. It is a miracle. But Israel and God are reunited, it says, after many days. I think that is still yet to take place. After many days, it has been a long time but it is going to happen.

So we see the need. The need is for the relationship to be restored, which seems almost impossible. It is like Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 33. You just cannot do it. I do not know how that could ever happen. And God says, “Well, call unto Me and I will answer you and I will show you great and mighty things you just do not understand. You do not know. It can be done, Jeremiah” (cf. Jeremiah 33:3). Jeremiah says, “No, it cannot be done. These people are too sinful. They are too, they are just too horrible. It cannot happen.” And God says, “Yes, it can. Because nothing is too difficult for Me.”

But what is the content? What went wrong? Well, God speaks about the problems of the broken relationship. He speaks about the cause, the consequence, and the solution there. So a deep understanding of sin and its outworking in all of life is given in the prophets. If you really want to understand rebellion and sin, go to the prophets. Because He makes it clear that He was not the cause. This was not God’s fault. The relationship broke up, but it was not because of anything God did.

In Micah 6:3 God says, “Hear now what the Lord is saying. Arise, plead your case. My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Answer Me.”

The Content

**What went wrong?
God speaks about broken
relationship.**

***God makes it clear that He was not the cause.
(Micah 6:3)***

Whenever it is a human relationship, you have a husband and a wife; they go through divorce court. You can pretty much be sure, in any husband and wife relationship, you can at least look for some cause on both parts. Because they are human and there is some sin in both of them. Maybe one is more responsible than another. But you can pretty much be sure that relationships between a man and woman, when the relationship does not work, the fault is with both of them. And it is usually not just one of them.

But when it comes to God, God can stand there in divorce case and say, “I did not do anything wrong. You cannot find anything that I did wrong. I did everything right. And the fault is all with the woman who has turned away from God.”

And so you see this deep understanding of rebellious sin. The principle is this: sin is sure destruction. You can count on it. If you are involved in sin right now, it is sure destruction. You say, “Well, I have not seen destruction yet.” You will. It is sure. It will take place. No policy can out maneuver God. Rebellion is ruin. Sin is sure destruction and the prophets communicate that.

Secondly, the heart of God is wounded by sin. Some of you may have been through a relationship where you really loved someone and they hurt you deeply. They broke off the relationship or maybe they committed adultery with another person, or fornication with another person. And you know the wound and how deep it goes. But judgment is God's strange act and He weeps when He has to judge. As Jesus was weeping over Jerusalem looking forward to what was going to happen, probably when Titus came in AD 70. But it is a strange act. And He is wounded, He is hurt by sin. And I think that is one of the things that He is wanting us to get from reading the prophets is just how hurt God is when I sin and you sin.

As David said after the thing with Bathsheba, it is like it just wham, just smacked David up beside the head. And he said, "Against Thee only and against Thee I have sinned" (Psalm 51:4). It was not like he was leaving out Bathsheba or anything, or Uriah, or anybody else. It is just that he began to realize that his sin now became so real that he realized how it hurt the heart of God and he had sinned against God.

If we could only understand that our sinning against God! It is like if we had this wonderful, loving relationship with Him, or say, someone had a wonderful loving relationship with us and they went out and just went off with another person and began to have sexual intercourse with them. How that would break your heart! How that would hurt you deeply! And that is the way God feels when we sin.

So, thirdly though, he does not leave us there in despair. He says the victory is with God because God can remake it. God can recreate it. God is big enough to restore the relationship. On the human level, we see a lot of relationships just crumble and fall apart because we are human. We do not have the ability but God has the ability to restore things. And He can do it and the prophets make that clear.

So the problem is a broken relationship—its cause, its consequence, its solution. God is not the problem. "My people, what have I done? Have I wearied you? No, answer Me, what have I done?" And they cannot answer anything. He did not do anything.

So they speak against idolatry. And the issue again is that of the heart. Who and what we love being what matters. God wants to know, “Do you love Me? Is that what matters to you, is your love for Me?”

And as the mouthpiece of God, the prophet will do two things. He will forth tell. That is, he will give insight into God’s will. And secondly, he will foretell. That is, he will give insight into God’s overall plan. So a prophet speaks forth telling and foretelling. Forth telling is just insight for today, how we ought to live. And foretelling is how God’s plan is going to unfold. And he does both.

Well, is there any hope for the future? Well, yeah. There is hope in the Messiah. To Him all the prophets bear witness.

The Method

**God speaks through the prophets
(Deuteronomy 18)**

“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command Him.”

- * God sovereignly calls the prophet**
- * God sovereignly gives the abilities**

So the method that God chooses is a new method. It is found in Deuteronomy 18:18 where God said, “I will raise up another prophet [Moses]; He will be a prophet like unto

thee.” And the qualification of the prophet is he has to have a sovereign calling and he has to have God-given abilities. We see that in Deuteronomy 18.

Now there are two types of prophets, the oral and the writing prophets. The oral were guys like Elijah and Elisha. We do not have things from them written down but we know they spoke. And the writing prophets though, started about 90 years after the division of the northern and southern kingdoms. Remember? It was when Rehoboam and Jeroboam were having that big issue after Solomon died. Then the kingdom was divided between north and south. That is when the prophets began to speak because that is when all of the idolatry and the division and the turning away from God began to take place. So they are speaking right after this division. After the glorious kingdom was built in Act Two, they begin to speak.

So Deuteronomy 18:15–22 says,

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, “Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.” And the LORD said to me: “What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which he speaks in My name, I will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, “How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?”--when a prophet speaks

in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

So, in other words, if he is really a prophet of God it will come true all the time, not just some of the time.

Now, there are three kinds of prophets: the exilic, the pre-exilic, and the post-exilic; in other words, before the exile—guys who spoke leading up to the captivity; guys that spoke during the captivity (the exilic prophets); and the guys who spoke after the captivity was over, during the time of restoration, the post-exilic. And so we see the pre-exilic prophets: the first one to speak was Obadiah, then Joel, then Jonah, then Amos and Hosea, then Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and finally Habakkuk. The exiled prophets, Daniel and Ezekiel, spoke during the time of exile. And then the three afterwards—Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi—spoke during the time of restoration.

So God was warning so much before the actual captivity took place—wasn't He? Look how many prophets spoke before the judgment came. God warned and warned and warned and warned. He said, "Don't do it. I said, don't do it. I thought I said, don't do it. Didn't I tell you not to do it?" And He just spoke over and over and over again, until finally He had to judge. And then these guys wrote during the time of judgment, Daniel and Ezekiel. And then the other three spoke upon restoration.

So the four prophetic viewpoints again are the prophet's own time, the captivity (which was huge), and the first coming of Christ, and then the Second Coming, the millennial and the end times. Those four are the prophetic viewpoints.

The Response Required

**How does God expect His people to respond
to the words of the prophets?**

- *Confession*

- *Repentance*

- *Obedience*

Now, what response does God expect from His speaking through the prophets? It is basically this: First, admit the failure. He says, "I just want you to confess that you did it. Did you commit adultery with that woman? Or did you commit adultery with that man? Did you turn away from Me and do that?" He says, "I want you to admit it." I did it. Confess it. It has to start with confession of sin. Admit it. And they were prideful. They did not want to admit that they were wrong.

Then secondly, He says, there has to be a turning back to the faithful God. "You have got to turn around and face Me. You have got to repent." He said, "That is what I expect. I expect you to admit it. And I expect you to then turn around and come back towards Me."

And then thirdly, He says, "I want you to go on in faith and obedience and walk with Me." I mean, it is amazing that God would even suggest that we could do this. But we can because of the gift of the Holy Spirit. We can repent. We can confess it, repent from it and begin to walk with Him. So that is the response He requires from His speaking. Admit it, turn back, and walk with Him. It just blows my mind that He would even want that.

So, what are you responding to? Well, in Jeremiah 30 it says, “Your wound is incurable. Your injury is serious.” And I would agree, wouldn’t you? I mean, how many of you would think that that is an incurable situation? I mean, in real life—Hosea and Gomer—I mean, here is a man, married to a woman, and this woman has had sexual intercourse with almost every guy in town and then a lot of people out of town that just were passing through. She did not care who it was. And you think that relationship is going to be restored? He says, “Your wound is incurable. It is serious. It is not light. It is serious.”

But he goes on; He does not stop there and says—what? “I will restore you to health. And I will heal you of your wounds.” With man it is impossible, but with God it is possible because all things are possible with God. And that is where Jeremiah kind of blew it in chapter 33. And God corrected him of course in chapter 32, but he was still having trouble when he got on into chapter 33 that with God it is possible. He can do anything. He created everything. But what you are really responding to he sums up in Jeremiah 31:3. “I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn you.” Just like Hosea had to draw Gomer back, God has drawn His people back to Him. He has drawn me. He has drawn you. He draws everyone back to Himself. He drew it through the love of Calvary. He drew it through the cross. And if the cross does not draw people back to God, nothing will.

No wonder Paul was so determined to be focused on it, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Because if that does not draw people by the power and dynamic of the Holy Spirit, there is nothing else you can do to draw them. But that is what draws me and that is what draws you, when we see Christ died for us on the cross because of His great love for us. We see the length, the width, the breadth, the height that God went through to draw us back and restore the relationship. He sent His Son to die on the cross. And so God is prophesying that through the prophets.

So what does the new covenant guarantee Israel? Well, in Jeremiah 31:31 He says,

I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah after those days. I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts. For they shall all know Me from the least of them to the greatest, for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.

So they are guaranteed a new heart and the foundation is none other than the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because Zechariah 9:11 says, “By the blood of Thy covenant I have sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” It is the blood that brings them out of this waterless pit. And we know that blood points forward to the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. And it is only when they, after God calls out a people from among the Gentiles and then turns to them and shows them the blood of the covenant, then they are called out of that waterless pit because of the blood of Calvary. And they return to the Lord.

And so it guarantees them a new heart. And that is the character of the new covenant. Isaiah says they broke the everlasting covenant. But Isaiah 61:8 says, “I will make an everlasting covenant.” Jeremiah says, “The city shall not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever. They will ask for the way to Zion. They will come that they may join themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten.”

So this is an everlasting covenant of pure grace apart from human agencies and is solely unconditional. God is going to do it. He is going to put a new heart. He is going to put His Spirit within them. He is going to call them back. God does it. He draws them with everlasting love. Only He could do that. It is pretty amazing.

Now, when will it be fulfilled? It appears from Romans that it is going to follow the return of Jesus Christ at His *parousia*, the second coming.

And so, all Israel shall be saved as it is written: “There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away

ungodliness from Jacob. For this is My covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins. (cf. Romans 11:26-27)

It will happen. God will draw them and He will take away their sins. Romans 11:26.

So what is the relation of the church to the new covenant? Well Hebrews 8:8-10 says,

Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will affect a new covenant. Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers [their fathers being the Jews] for they did not continue in My covenant. After those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts.

Well, what days is He talking about? Well, He is talking about the days that James talked about in Acts 15:15-18. James answered,

Listen to me. God first concerned Himself about taking out from among the Gentiles a people. With this the words of the prophets agree. After these things [That is, after calling out a people for God's name] After these things I will return and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which is fallen, that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, says the Lord who makes these things known from of old.

So God was letting it be known and James saw it. And he stood up at the church council and said, "I got it! I understand it." God is calling out Gentiles. When He is finished with it, He is going to turn back to the people of Israel and He is going to put His law in their mind and in their heart. He is going to write it. He is going to draw them and they are never going to turn away from Him again because it is going to be a work of God's Spirit and not by might or power of men. And James got it and he stood up and said, "I got it!"

And he explained it at the first church council. And I do not know why people have had such problems since then.

So what is the eschatology of the new covenant? Well, Israel must be first restored to the land that God promised them. Secondly, Israel has to experience a national conversion, the regeneration of a new heart. That will happen. Thirdly, it has to experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. That will happen. And it has to receive the promised material blessings from the hand of the king. That will happen when He returns.

So, the conclusion is this: the Messiah must personally come back to effect their salvation, restoration, and blessing.

So turn in your Bibles, if you would for a moment, to the book of Hosea because perhaps Hosea is the most classic of all. And I wish we had time to just go through more of it. But we do not. But we will do what we can.

We see the all-conquering, undying love of God through Hosea because he has to choose this woman to be his wife. And, you know, these things were written for our admonition upon whom the end of the world has come. That is what Romans 15:4 tells us. These things of old time have an application to the last days. And you know the story of the prodigal son or the loving father. This is the story of the prodigal wife or the loving husband. And God is calling His people back and it is amazing when you see what happens.

In chapter 3—Well, he says in verse 2 of chapter 1. Let's read that one.

When the Lord spoke first through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea: Go take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry, for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.

I mean, they had never learned from Ahab's sin, so God says, "I am going to give you another way to approach this. I am actually going to have you, my prophet"—and can you imagine what people thought when God's prophet marries this woman? Wow! That would be tough. Can you imagine a pastor having a wife like this? How long would he last at his church?

But he says in spite of it, verse 10 of chapter 1. "Yet"—and what does yet mean? That means God still has a plan for you.

Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sands of the sea which cannot be measured or numbered. It will come about that in the place where it is said to them: You are not My people, it will be said to them: You are the sons of the Living God.

God is just so great!

Well, she goes off. She goes off with her lovers. In chapter 2 she comes kind of to her senses for a while. And she says there in verse 7, "she will pursue her lovers but she will not overtake them. And she will seek them but will not find them." Then she will say, "I will go back to my husband, my first husband, for it was better for me then than now." "Of course she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine, the oil. I was the one that was lavishing all this stuff on her."

And so it is interesting how she gets out there, and she finds out that what she thought she wanted was not all that great. And she says, "I was better off with my first husband. If he will still take me, I will go back."

And isn't that the way sin is? We see something. We think we want it. We go after it. We get it. And the sin itself teaches us and chastises us and whips us. And, in a sense, sin is used that way to train us how bad it is. And we don't want anything to do with it. We

want to get back with God, the true lover of our heart and our life. And we see that sin is against love. God loves us completely and totally and we have rejected His love. And that is what is so awful about the sin. And that is what the prophets are communicating. It is horrible.

But the sin teaches. It does me. When I have gotten off into sin and I have realized, gosh, that is not what I wanted. I just thought I wanted that. That is terrible. And it separates me from God.

And so she is led back. And what he says in chapter 2 there, I love verse 14. I mean, he is going to punish her for all the Baals. In verse 13 it says, “I will punish her for the days of the Baals,”—when she was offering sacrifice and all that stuff. Hosea 2:14-15 says,

Behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness
and speak kindly to her. Then I will give her vineyards
from there and the valley of Achor as a door of hope and
she will sing there as in the days of her youth; as in the
days when she came up from the land of Egypt.

Wow, that is so neat. And it says she will call him, *Ishi*, or her husband, her beloved one. So God can actually restore this thing. Now it seems impossible because you could not restore it. If you went through a relationship like this, you would not be able to restore it. But God is going to bring them back into reconciliation. She is even going to be singing. She is going to be so happy because she realizes that God still loves her in spite of what she did. She is restored and it is just, man, it is a beautiful thing. When she puts sin away and she returns to the Lord.

And the Lord responds in Hosea 2:21,

And it will come about in that day that I will respond,
declares the Lord. I will respond to the heaven. They will

respond to the earth. And the earth will respond to the grain. And they will respond to Jezreel. And I will sow her for myself in the land and have compassion on her.

I mean, God responds. When you put away sin, when you admit your failure and you put away sin, and you turn back to God, God responds. Isn't that amazing? Every time, He is just waiting to respond.

And yet some people will continue on in that bad relationship that is never going to get them anywhere. They just think it is. And all the time God is standing there waiting, saying, "Why don't you turn away from it and come back to Me? I will respond. I am waiting for you."

And so, the Lord has a case. He has a controversy against her. And it is a huge case. And in Hosea 4:17, He summarizes the case He has against her. And He says, "Ephraim is joined to idols; Let them alone." That is the problem; there has been a joining. It says that "a man should leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife" (cf. Genesis 2:24). We know what that is talking about, don't we? Joined, made one, one flesh. Joined in that boundary that is supposed to be kept for marriage. And she has been joined to idols. So let her alone. And that is the problem.

And it even says—it is sad because you get to the point there in Hosea 5:3–4. He says,

I know Ephraim and Israel is not hidden from me, for now
Ephraim you have played the harlot. Israel has defiled
itself. Their deeds will not allow them to return to their
God; For a spirit of harlotry is within them and they do not
know the Lord.

And how true that is, that we get to the point when we join idolatry or we join in the wrong relationship, we get to the point that we cannot return. And our deeds keep us from

returning to God unless God somehow miraculously gives us repentance so that we can get out of it. And it is sad.

Verse 11 explains it. Ephraim was oppressed, crushed and in judgment. Why?—because she was determined to follow man’s command. And what does God say He will do? In Hosea 5:15 He says, “Then I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face.” It is kind of like, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed until the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). But God says, “If you want to grieve Me, My response to that will be I will just return to My place and I will wait until you change.” This is because God is patient.

And so, that is what God does. But He says, “In their affliction then they are going to earnestly seek Him.” And so the sin is going to teach them and they are going to get afflicted.

Hosea 6:1 is pleading. He says,

Come let us return to the Lord. [He is pleading with the people, the whole nation.] Come, let’s get back to the Lord, nation; For He has torn us but He is going to heal us. He has wounded us. He is going to bandage us up. He will revive us after two days. He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. (cf. Hosea 6:1-3)

He says, “Forget the past, press on.” Just like in Philippians 3:13-14, “Forget what lies behind and press on.” God is there for you. His going forth is certain, certain as the dawn. And He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth and there will be a fresh start.

But he lays out their problem. In Hosea 6:4 he shows that it is all superficial. He says, “For your loyalty is like a morning cloud and the dew which goes away early.” He says, “You come in and you say you are going to return to Me, but you really don’t return. It is not a true repentance.” It is like a Josiah revival. It was not real revival. You are like a morning cloud, like a mist. There it is. It looks like it is going to happen and then all of a sudden, it just dissipates and I do not know where the cloud went. There is no substance to it. You do not have real heart repentance.

In chapter 7 verse 4 he says, “They are all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker.” So he says, “That is the problem.”

In Hosea 7:8, Ephraim mixes or joins himself with the nations. So, there is not this complete separation that God expects from them. Didn’t He tell them to stay away from the nations? Yeah. What do they do? They go join the nations. Doesn’t He tell us to stay away from the world and that friendship with the world is enmity with Him? Then what do we do? We go join the world and we join ourselves to the world and the world system, and the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. And we are doing the same thing they did. There is no real repentance. And there is not a complete separation from these things in our heart like there ought to be.

And God says, “I see it.” He says, “Ephraim has become a cake half turned.” You know, half baked, not turned. You know, just a one sided relationship. There is sanctification but just on one side. And you know how that is. You have eaten something where they cooked it on one side and didn’t cook it on the other side. It is not complete, is it? It is just partial in its sanctification. The fire has not touched all of their life because they won’t let God touch it. They are lukewarm. They are half baked.

Verse 9 says, “Strangers devour your strength. He does not even know it. Gray hairs are sprinkled on him. He does not even know it.” And that is the saddest thing of all. There is an unconscious deterioration taking place. They do not realize how sin is affecting them and this is the deception of sin.

It is like a person growing old, like me, and getting gray hair. But I know I have got gray hair because I have looked in the mirror and I see it. And other people tell me about it. But this is a person that it is like they are getting old and getting gray but they do not even see it. They do not see the gray. They do not know they are getting old and dying. And that is the way sin is. It deceives you and you do not think you are dying from it. And you do not think you are deteriorating from it, but you are. And you do not realize it and you wake up at the point of death! And sometimes it is too late. And we read that even in the New Testament about someone who commits a sin leading unto death. Paul says, “I do not say that you pray for them” (cf. 1 John 5:16).

So, I mean, this is what is going on here. And it is horrible.

Verse 14, look what God says, “They do not cry to Me from”—where?—“from their heart. When they wail on their beds for the sake of”—they are wailing on their beds. They are sorry about what has happened, but they are not crying to Me from their heart. They are just sorry about the consequences of sin. They are not sorry. There is no true repentance in their heart. Man, it is just amazing what goes on there?

So He says in verse 11 there of chapter 7, “So Ephraim has become like a silly dove without sense.” And what is a silly dove without sense? I see Christians like that. Have you ever been out in a park where there is a bunch of doves or pigeons and watched kids or maybe yourself? Have you had bread or things like that to throw to them? And where do they go? Where does the flock of pigeons go? They just go wherever you throw the bread, don’t they? Sort of like the ducks in the pond over there. You just throw it out, they run here. You throw it over there, they run there. And there are pigeons just all over the place depending on who is throwing the stuff out. And that is the way God’s people were and still are. Somebody can throw out all this false food and they will just run after it. Then they will run over here and they will run over there. We see that even today. They don’t want to endure sound doctrine, but with itching ears they just want to run. Someone is throwing some food out, whoosh, over there they go. Somebody else throws

some more out, whoosh, over there we go. They are like silly doves, just running to and fro, not even knowing what they are doing. And God is standing there for them.

So there is no pleasure for them.

In chapter 8, He says, verse 8, “Israel is swallowed up. They are now among the nations like a vessel in which no one delights, has no pleasure.”

And again in verse 13, “As for My sacrificial gifts, they sacrifice the flesh and eat it, but the Lord has taken no delight in them. The Lord has no pleasure in them.” Man, isn’t that sad? It is because they do not have a true faith to delight in the Lord and expect Him. And they do not bring any pleasure to God. And that is the worst thing about my sin is that it separates me from God to the point He has no pleasure in me. And that is the saddest thing of all. The God, who created me and loved me and died for me, has no pleasure in me.

Have you ever seen a marriage relationship where the people do not have any pleasure in each other? Isn’t that sad? They do not even like each other. There is just no pleasure.

Now if you are not married, what happens when you get to that point? Bye-bye. You are just with someone and you get to that point, you are just like, “I will catch you later.” There is no pleasure here.

But it is so sad to see a situation where God has no pleasure in me because of a lack of true repentance, a lack of true commitment to Him.

So, I mean, He says—what is His answer? Hosea 10:12 says,

Sow, with a view to righteousness. Reap in accordance
with kindness. Break up your fallow ground for it is time to

seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness on you.

God says, “Repent. Break it up, because I can do it.”

And don't you love God's heart? Hosea 11:8. Man that just kills me! God is crying out and He says in Hosea 11:8,

How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? [You know, that was one of the cities in the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah back in Genesis 14 that, when He poured His wrath, they just got burned up. He says], I cannot do that to you. How can I treat you like Zeboiim? How can I do that? My heart is turned over within Me.

Have you ever had your heart just turn upside down and turn over and over because of a broken relationship? Have you ever hurt that much where you just felt like you are twisted and your heart is turned upside down? That is God. God says, “My heart is turned over within me. It is like I love you so much, but you do not want anything to do with Me. All of My compassions are kindled. I will not execute My fierce anger. I will not destroy Ephraim again; for I am God and not man. The Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath” (cf. Hosea 11:9).

Whew, thank God we are not destined to wrath! But even here you can see His love, can't you? Even in the Old Testament you see what He says in the New Testament. He has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation. And it is just, oh man, quite amazing. And He is the Savior. He is going to do it.

Chapter 13:4, He says so.

Yet I have been the Lord your God since the land of Egypt.
[I have always been there for you.] And you were not to
know any God except Me, for there is no savior besides
Me.

He says, “Where are you going to get deliverance? It is not going to happen unless I give it to you.”

And then He concludes in Hosea 14:1-2. I love this. The remedy is found here and the need of grace is really felt here.

Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God. You stumble
because of your iniquity. Take words with you. Return to
the Lord. Say to Him, “Take away all iniquity.” [Do you
see the need for grace is being felt here?] Receive us
graciously that we may present the fruit of our lips.

In other words, they sensed the need to speak to God and they know they can. And so they are going to repent and they are going to confess it.

And then, what do we see? They renounce it and then He says,

Assyria will not save us. We are not going to trust—we are
not going to ride on horses. We are not going to say again
‘Our god,’ To the work of our hands; For in thee the
orphan finds mercy. [You know, we are not going to trust
our own hand. But God will restore them.] I will heal their
apostasy; I will love them freely, For My anger is turned
away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel. [There will
be a freshness, there will be a new start.] I will restore them
and I will start again. He will blossom like the lily. [This is

just a whole new day.] And he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. His shoots will sprout. His beauty will be like the olive tree. His fragrance is like the cedars of Lebanon. Those who live in his shadow will again raise grain and they will blossom like the vine. His renown will be like the vine of Lebanon. (cf. Hosea 14:3-7)

Literally, his scent; it is the word used in viticulture for bouquet. When you open a bottle of wine, they smell the bouquet. And if you are a wine taster, you know, that is the first thing they do. They smell it and go—there is a certain bouquet about the wine. And that is the word that is used here. It says that his renown, his bouquet will be like the wine of Lebanon. It will be so choice.

O Ephraim, from Me...comes your fruit. [So they will be fruitful.] Whoever is wise, let him understand these things. Whoever is discerning, let him know these things. For the ways of the Lord are right and the righteous will walk in them. But transgressors will stumble in them. (Hosea 14:8-9)

Boy, that is the blessed man in the Psalms that walks in the right way, isn't it? Or the wicked man that does not.

Lord, we just thank You that through the prophets You spoke and shared Your heart. And I just pray that when we see this in this section of Scripture from Isaiah to Malachi, as all of them spoke to Israel and Judah and shared Your heart on the matter that You want reconciliation. You do not care what they have done; You are still there for them. Lord, I just pray for everyone here, myself included, we do not want to be deceived by sin because You are not

mocked. We want to confess it, get rid of it, and stay in the greatest relationship with You, the greatest person, who as the greatest love towards us. So keep drawing us by Your loving kindness, Lord, but don't let us deteriorate unconsciously. For Your glory, in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 15 God Speaks in His Son

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The following lecture is provided by Sowing Circle and Blue Letter Bible ministries. More information is available at www.Blueletterbible.org. This course, *The History of Redemption*, is taught by Pastor David Shirley.

Let's open in prayer,

Father, we want to just thank You so much for Your great love for us. And we, every day we can praise You and rejoice for Your new mercies over this day—the sure mercies of David. Your covenant promise is as good as, the heavens continue to run their course, You said, “as night and day rolls on.” So we are confident that You have every intention of fulfilling all Your promises. We think about those people who looked forward to Your Son coming. And He came! And You always keep Your promises, Lord, and we know there are things yet to be fulfilled and we have confidence in those too. So, thank You for all the exceeding great and precious promises that we have even now in Christ. And how we can be partakers of the divine nation and escape all the corruption and junk in this world. So, Lord, we thank You for Your Spirit that You put within us and the work that You are doing. And as we look and continue through Your word looking at the times You spoke, we pray that You would just let us see how You acted in history and how You spoke in history as well; and put it together and have just a larger view, a bigger understanding of Your overall plan through Your word. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

The Gospels
God Speaks in His Son
Matthew - Mark - Luke – John
“In these last days spoken to us by His Son...”

The Gospels. God speaks in His Son. Literally in Hebrews 1:1–3 where it says that God spoke in many ways, in different ways in the past. He spoke by the prophets and all these visions and the ways that God chose to speak, but it says “in these last days He has spoken to us in Son.” Literally that is all it says, “in Son.” We know that it was His Son and in most of your translations you will see *His* in italics because they are identifying the fact that it is not in the original. And what God is emphasizing there is the method by which God speaks. He speaks through Sonship. He offers His Son, the incarnate method, which we will see.

So, we look at Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John today.

God, who at various times in various ways spoke in time
past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days
spoken to us by *His* Son. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Or it is literally, “in Son.” But we translate it “by His Son” because that is the instrument or the method through which God spoke.

...whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who, being the brightness of *His* glory and express image of His person. (Hebrews 1:2-3)

And that is no doubt why Jesus could say; “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father” (cf. John 14:9).

The Need

To sum up all that God had *said* before and all that He would *say* in the future.

**Jesus Christ,
God in human flesh,
gave *the ultimate words of God* to us.
He sums up and fulfills the Old Testament
and proclaims what the future holds.**

Now, what is the need at this time? The need is this: to sum up all that God has said before and all that He would say in the future. God is taking all the times He has spoken....What do you call it when you take those MP3s and you just take everything and crunch it down? Yeah, you compress it. You just bring it down into one little small disc. You can take a whole class and you can condense a whole class of 15 or 16 discs and you can put them down on one disc. And that is kind of what God is saying, you know. “I have spoken and I have spoken, and I have spoken. But really what I want to do is take everything I have said and I want to condense it and I have put it into the person of My Son.” And the person and work of Jesus Christ is, you might say, the condensed

version of everything God wants to say past, present and future. And so we see the need here is to sum up everything that God has said.

In 1 Timothy 3:16 it says,

Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, [How mysterious that is.] He was justified in the Spirit, He was seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, received up in glory.

And this is a tremendous mystery. Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, giving the ultimate words of God to us. So He sums up and fulfills the Old Testament and proclaims what the future holds. And He said, "I did not come to destroy. I came to fulfill and to complete everything that has been said and that has been prophesied" (cf. Matthew 5:17). And He will both in His first and His second coming. So that is the need: to sum up everything God has said and to say it in such a way that man cannot miss it, you might say. And so He said it through Sonship, the incarnate method.

So, we see the New Testament, Acts to Revelation, as a development of what Christ spoke in the gospel. He not only summarized the Old Testament, but He initiated the church age by teaching the disciples. In Matthew 16:15 He asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" They are out there where all the temples of the cults of the world were at the fountainhead of the Jordan River. He took them way up there and He took them in the midst of all those temples and all those cults that are there and He said, "Who do you say that I am?" And of course Simon Peter answered, "Well, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus says, "Yes, that is a revelation from My Father. And it is on this rock that I am going to build the church; that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God. I will build the church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it" (cf. Matthew 16:16-18). And so Jesus is the foundation stone of the new thing that He is going to be doing, the church. So He is the complete representation of God.

Now, what is idolatry? Idolatry is trying to represent God in any other way than Jesus. Jesus is the express image of God. He is the “fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). And when someone tries to represent God in any other way than Jesus Christ—that is idolatry.

So, Jesus Himself said in John 1:18, “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” Or more literally, He has “exegeted” Him which is the word from which we get exegesis. That is, we pull it out. Out of Jesus you can pull everything God wants to say. Everything God wants to declare. Jesus is the *Alpha* and the *Omega*. He is the whole alphabet of God. He is the *logos*, from beginning to end. Everything God wants to say He has said in the person and the work of His Son Jesus Christ. So this *exegeomai* He leads up, draws out, or recounts for Himself all that we need to know about God. So the *logos* of God in human flesh, is the Son of God with the glory of God in Him, the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form. And this is the way God intends to speak.

So what does He say? Jesus says, “I did not come to destroy.” He says, “I came to fulfill the law and the prophets. I am fulfilling everything. For surely I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle will be no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (cf. Matthew 5:18). He gave us His own word. There is not one jot or tittle of the law that is going to pass away until every bit of it is complete. And usually when they refer to the law they included the prophets and the prophecies.

So whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; [Jesus magnified the law.] But whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. You have heard it said...But I say unto you.... (cf. Matthew 5:19; 21)

And even God said, “This is My Son. Hear ye Him” (cf. Matthew 17:5). And they did and people responded, “Never has man spake like this man.” Because He did say, “You have heard it said...but I say...” (cf. Matthew 5:21-22). Jesus not one time said, “Thus saith the Lord.” Not once. He just said, “I say this”—because He was God. He did not need to say, “Thus saith the Lord.” He was the Lord. Now a few times He did say, “It is written” but He is referring to prophecies that were being fulfilled. But He did not stand up like the prophets. The prophets had to always say, “Thus says the Lord. I am speaking for God.” And if it did not come true, they got stoned. Jesus never even said one time “Thus says the Lord.” Nobody spoke like Him. He just got up and said, “I am God. I am the Lord. You have heard it said, but I say unto you.” And He just spoke it with tremendous authority. And people were amazed because He was the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form.

The Content

**Christ’s teachings
fulfill and clarify the past.**

**Christ’s teachings
are seed thoughts for the Epistles.**

**Christ teachings
give the greatest revelation of God.**

So what is the content? We see the need. But the content is all these seed thoughts that He brings. And they have to do with His person, the great revelation of Himself. “I am He” [that is] “I am the Messiah” (cf. John 4:26). He said, “I am the Bread of life” (cf. John 6:35). “I am the door, the Son of God” (cf. John 10:9). “I am the resurrection and

the life” (cf. John 11:25). “I am the way, the truth and the life” (cf. John 14:6). “Before Abraham was, I am” (cf. John 8:58). “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20).

And so the content is primarily about: who He is and how He is fulfilling all that God intended. The content is about: Jesus, Himself personally. He is the fulfillment. And that is why He says, “I, I am the way.” And that is *ego eimi*. In the original language it is emphatic. You cannot say anything more emphatic than that. Jesus stood and said, “I” ego, the emphatic form of I and then He said, “I, me, I am. I, I am the way, the truth and the life” or “I, I am the Messiah.” Everything He talked about, whether it was being the bread of the life, or the living water, or the resurrection, the emphasis was always upon Himself as a person. “I am the fulfillment of these things.”

So I do not see how anybody can read the Bible, particularly the New Testament in the original language and come up with this thing, “Jesus never claimed to be God.” I mean, over and over emphatically He was proclaiming, “I am God. And I am the fulfillment of everything God has ever said or ever will say.”

So He is here “in Son” because that is the way God is speaking, in Sonship.

The Seed-Thought Principle:

***“All will know that you are my disciples,
by your love for one another.”***

(John 13:34-35)

***“Love suffers long and is kind,...love bears all
things, believes all things, hopes all things,
endures all things. Love never fails.”***

(1 Corinthians 13:1-7)

So, the example of the seed thoughts of Jesus: He would say something in the gospels, but it would be a seed thought and in the epistles they expound and explain more fully what the seed thoughts were in the gospels. It is about others; it is about God and others. And when the world sees that it is about God and others and not about you, they go, “You are different than us because my life is about me.” And you demonstrate to them that your life is not about you. Your life is about God and other people. And they say, “Oh, maybe God is real. Maybe Jesus is real because we see it.” You are not easily provoked. People cannot irritate you that easily. I am not saying they cannot irritate you, but not easily provoked. You don’t think evil. That is one of the things about the world. The world thinks evil because they are evil and their thoughts are evil. And their mind is set on the flesh and it is enmity against God. But the Christian, when he sees something, he does not immediately think evil of it. That is not the way we think because we have our mind renewed and the spirit of our mind is renewed. And this is the way we related to one another.

We do not rejoice in lawlessness or iniquity. We rejoice in truth. We bear everything. I mean, you can put so much weight on the shoulder of a true Christian. They can bear it

because Christ is in them and He bore the weight of the sin of the world. And when people come to you for counseling and want to know, and want to share and confess their sins and everything else, it is like, yeah, you can bear it. You can bear one another's burdens. You can care because you have Christ in you and it proves it. You believe all things. You hope all things. You endure all things. Your love never fails.

And so Jesus says in a seed thought, "They will know you are Christians by your love." But in 1 Corinthians 13 and the epistles, they expound and explain more fully what the seed thoughts were in the gospels. And that is the relationship between the gospels and the epistles.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

And that is what is confirmed in Philippians 2:6-11.

Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself that likeness of man, but went to the point of death. And coming in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross [or the death of the cross]. Therefore, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name. Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. (cf. Philippians 2:6-11)

That is a fuller explanation in Philippians 2 of John 1:14. He really tells you what the glory is. The fullness of grace and truth is found in Philippians 2. Because there is a seed thought in the gospels and there is always a fuller explanation of it in the epistles.

The Method

**At this point in the history of redemption,
God doesn't speak through a man;
He becomes a Man to demonstrate and
speak the truth to man.**

This is called the Incarnation.

***Theo-anthropos*
(God/Man)**

Now look at the method. You know, at this point in the history of redemption, God does not speak through a man like He did through the prophets, through the kings, through others, through Abraham, through Moses. But now God actually becomes a man to demonstrate and speak the truth to man. This is called incarnation. He is the God-Man, the *Theanthropos*. And so that is the method He has chosen, to become man, to become flesh.

And this is the, you know, missionary method. That is what it has to do with us. It is our model for missions. If you are going to be a missionary—and you are a missionary—you are an ambassador of God in this world, preaching reconciliation and begging people to be reconciled to God because they can. And the method that God has chosen to work through is the same method, in a sense, that He chose in the gospels when He brought His Son. He says, in the epistles, “You are going to be living epistles.” That is the method. And so we are known and read just like Jesus was known and read and He revealed the Father, now you are known and read and you reveal Jesus. And so that is the method by which God wants people to know Jesus Christ is by my life and your life. That is a pretty

big responsibility to know that people will know Christ by the life that I live. It really brings you into a close relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

And again, that is why it is so important that in the church, or any institution that is called by the name of Jesus Christ that does something public in the name of Jesus Christ, they have to behave in a certain way. And that is why the pastoral epistles were largely written. He says, "I have written these things so that you will know how to behave in the household of God" (1 Timothy 3:15). He says, "I want you guys to know how to act if you are going to call yourselves Christians. There is a certain way and a certain demonstration that has to be made in the church because you are living epistles." And so that is the method, the incarnational method.

The Method Applied Today

The Missionary Model

***We are "Living Epistles"
known and read by all men!***

Now what is the response that God expects? Well, obviously, in terms of Jesus Christ, when He spoke in Son, who fulfilled everything in Himself, the response is you come to Jesus for salvation. "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness to Me, yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life" (cf. John 5:39). You have to come to Jesus to have life. That is the

response God expects. Come to Jesus. To know God and possess eternal life, you must receive and follow Him. John 1:12-13 says,

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right [or the power, the ability] to become sons of God, 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.

So, the response God expects when He brings His Son is that He be received and that people come to Jesus.

The Response Required

We must come to Jesus Christ for salvation.

***“But to as many as received Him,
He gave the right to become sons of God,
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 born of God.”***

(John 1:12-13).

Now, that response requires continuing in His Word. It says in John 8:31, “If you abide in My word and My word abides in you then you are My disciples indeed.” It is a proof that you have come to Jesus. How do you know if somebody has come to Jesus? They continually abide in the Word of God. If they don’t continually abide in the Word of God, they did not come to Jesus. They might have come to a religion. They might have come to a church. They might have come to a tradition. They might have come to something, but they did not come to Jesus. When you come to Jesus it is evident because you are

born by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God that lives and abides forever, and you abide in that Word and it is proof that you came to Jesus.

And secondly, the major proof besides that is that you love as He loved. “A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). So basically that is how you know if someone has come to Jesus. They stay in the Word of God and they love the way Jesus loved, by not loving their life to the point of death, living for God and living for others. And so we can really know. And those are simple things.

Thirdly, they take up their cross. “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). So it is part of our ritual. Every day we decide to die. We just say, “Okay, it is not about me. I am going to die today and I want to do God’s will not my will.” And that is a daily battle because just because I did God’s will yesterday does not mean I am going to do God’s will today. Because I might get up and decide I do not feel like doing God’s will today. I would really like to do my will for a change. And we take the attitude of the world: “You deserve a break today.” But you don’t. The best thing is just to get up and die.

And then fourthly, you will bear fruit. “By this My Father is gloried that you bear much fruit, so will you be My disciples;” or really, “You will prove to be My disciples by the fruit you bear” (John 15:8).

And then fifthly, it means putting Christ above every relationship. “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26). So you know if a person has really come to Christ because there is nothing between him and Christ. It cannot be your country, cannot be your homeland, cannot be your family, cannot be your pedigree, cannot be any relationship on earth. You have come to Christ, you belong totally to Him. He can do whatever He wants with you. And you have put Him above every relationship

on this earth. And then you continually count the cost. “So likewise whoever of you who does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33).

So that was the response God expected and still expects. When you come to Jesus, it is not just kind of a cursory “Oh yeah, I heard the name of Jesus somewhere. It sounded good to me and I accepted. I came to Jesus. Because I heard that if you come to Jesus, you know, like things will work out really great in your life. So I came to Jesus.” That is not coming to Jesus. He explains here what coming to Jesus is. And Jesus never hid the cost of discipleship. It is tremendous.

I was talking with Wes Bentley yesterday. I went and had lunch with him because he is getting ready to build a training center out here for radical extreme missions. You know, we were trying to come up with a curricula so that you could come here for two semesters, then you could do your last two semesters at the missions training center. And it will be radical missions training both spiritually and physically. I mean, it is going to be involved in real physical stuff too because it is for people who want to go out into remote areas of Africa. And just as I was seeing some of the pictures and things that took place recently over there, you realize, man, the cost of discipleship there is real. It is not like here at all. We are not challenged much here. Most of the discipleship here, you have to incur on your own or at your own expense. You have to decide, I am going to do it.

Over there it is like you are put in a situation where it is just going to happen to you. And sometimes that is the best thing for you because “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,” isn’t it? And so you find that out. You will take people who are right here who have willing spirits. Like you, you probably have a very willing spirit, but sometimes your flesh is just so weak, you do not end up affecting the cost of discipleship. But when you are taken and you are put over in some other place where you do not have a choice, then all of a sudden it comes out. And they go, “oh yeah, the spirit really was willing.” And now we see because the flesh has been destroyed and they did not have an option. You know, we see the spirit shining forth and that is the way it is over there.

But the Lord makes clear, the cost of discipleship. That is the response that He expects.

So, let's look at it again. The need is to sum up all that is in His Son or to sum everything up in His Son. That is what the need was and that is what God did. Everything He ever said or wanted to say, He summed up in Jesus when He spoke in the gospels.

The content is "I am He." You know, "I am," whatever He mentioned. With everything, "I am the answer. I am the life. I am the resurrection. I am just everything." There is nothing that He is not. He is the content.

The method is God incarnate. Sonship. What was Jesus' favorite title?—"The Son of Man." Over and over and over again he was called the "Son of Man." The Son of Man because He was God's answer for man; He was the true Son. The method was Sonship, God incarnate. The response is: receive Him and He defines that response.

So, this is the fifth time God has spoken. The sixth time God speaks is in the epistles. And then the last time God speaks is in the Revelation. So, what I want to do is I have got some further things to talk about concerning the relationship between the spiritual and the literal kingdom. The spiritual view says He abandoned all national aspects and He was not offering that to them. That He only came to offer the same spiritual salvation that He offered us. That He did not come to offer any national or political aspects of the kingdom.

The literal view is more that, yes, Jesus did come and offer the same theocratic kingdom that was prophesied, you know, by the prophets. And that is exactly what He was offering to them, but they rejected Him. And that is what we want to discuss and talk about, are these different aspects of the kingdom.

Now obviously, what Jesus did offer was spiritual, wasn't it? Because He did say, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). So even He said that to Nicodemus. So there was a spiritual aspect to what Jesus was offering there. But then, I mean, that is required in the new covenant in Jeremiah anyway. So that does

not mean that the whole thing was totally spiritual. We were already seeing in Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's prophecy that this had to happen.

The ethical aspect of what He offered would be found where, in what particular lesson that Jesus gave? It would be the Sermon on the Mount, right? He is showing the requirements and how you are to live in the kingdom as He gave the Sermon on the Mount.

We see the social, you know, aspect of it because of His miracles, His healings. I mean, He healed a lot of sick and needy people. He did supernatural things. He preached largely to what group, the rich or the poor?—largely to the poor. So we do see some social aspects of what Jesus came and offered at that time.

Then we see the ecclesiastical aspect of the kingdom because He went in and He ran the money changers out of the temple and said, "Hey, I am in charge of this temple. You get out of here. This temple was for a purpose and the purpose was for prayer. And it was prayer for all nations so that they could come and fellowship with God here." And so we see there was an ecclesiastical aspect to what He had to say. "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Mark 11:17).

And there was a political aspect. We see that clearly, obviously in Matthew 25 when He is sitting a throne of His glory and judging the nations of the earth.

And there is a physical aspect, obviously, because it was real blind men that saw, real lame men that walked and real withered hands that were stretched forth. You know real deaf people that heard, real lepers that were cleansed. You know real wind that was calmed and real storms that were spoken to. So we see this real physical aspect of when He came.

So He says in Luke 1:31-33,

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and you shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Now, that is what is being announced in Luke 1 before the birth of Jesus. And just that, you know, is that *Magnificat*, that hymn of Mary that continues there.

And Simeon, what was Simeon waiting for in Luke 2:25? He was waiting for the consolation of Israel. That is what he was waiting for and Christ came and acknowledged that.

Anna, what was Anna waiting for, the prophetess? What did she look for in Luke 2:38? She was looking for the redemption in Jerusalem. That is why she was there. She was waiting for the Messiah to bring redemption to the Jews. She was looking for redemption in Jerusalem, the city of the great king.

The wise men were looking for whom?—Matthew 2:2, “He that was born King of the Jews.”

So, I mean, we see as He is coming, there is a coming to the nation Israel. And when He is announced by John the Baptist, it is: “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And his baptism, John’s baptism was a ritual of cleansing, a water cleansing. And they confessed their sins, but they confessed their sins in anticipation of what?—water cleansing, confession of sins, to get ready for the Messiah, “Receive your Messiah.” And that is what John was heralding. You guys ought to get ritually cleansed. And you ought to confess your sins. And you ought to prepare the way because your Messiah that has been promised prophetically is getting ready to show up. And you as a nation should be doing this.

Christ Himself began to announce this in Matthew 4:12. He said that the kingdom was at hand. “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17).

And He sent them out. When He sent the seventy out, what did He say in Luke 10:9? “Say unto them the kingdom of God has come nigh unto you.” The kingdom is near. “Blessed are your eyes which see the things that ye see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see and they did not see them; and to hear those things which you hear, and they did not hear them” (Luke 10:23-24). But He says, “The kingdom is at hand.” In other words, if the King is here, the kingdom can be offered to them. The kingdom is at hand. It is imminent. It is so close, but in their hearts it was so far away. But Jesus was still there offering this kingdom.

But why did He limit it? And this has always been puzzling to some extent, right? When you read in Matthew 10:5–7 we read: “And these twelve Jesus sent forth. And He commanded them saying, ‘Go not into the way of the Gentiles.’” He said, “I don’t want to see you guys witnessing to any Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans. Don’t enter it.” He said, “I do not want to catch you up around Samaria. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach saying: ‘the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” And He says in chapter 15 verse 24, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

So this is the contingency, you might say. Jesus is offering a message, but He is first only offering it to a certain group. And that is to the Jews. He said, “Don’t go to Gentiles. Don’t go to Samaria. Only go to Jews, because it is to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Well, the message is confirmed. He says, “Art Thou He that should come or do we look for another?” They were wanting to know, “Are You the guy or are we going to have to look for somebody else?” He said, “Well, go back to while John was in prison and look at what you see. I mean, you hear these reports. There is evidence that the kingdom has

come because lame people are walking and deaf people are hearing. There is all kinds of things going on; the dead are even raised up. I mean, come on, John, don't you think that the king is here?" (cf. Matthew 11:3-5). So these are manifestations and evidences that the true King was here.

And even He said in Matthew 12:28, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of God is come unto you." It is here because it is manifested. And these are real miracles. They are not the lying wonders of the antichrist, but real miracles of the true King were taking place. And He says, "That is proof that the kingdom is here and is being offered to you."

And it was spiritual, in the spiritual realm because He cast out devils. He had authority over the spiritual realm. It was true in the natural realm. He could raise people up from the dead. He could speak to storms and winds and, you know, just remove any kind of physical problem whatsoever. And so the kingdom itself, through the prophets, was designed in such a way to show that the curse would be removed from mankind both spiritually and naturally; both spiritually and physically. And that is, no doubt, partly why we pray: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Because we understand how great the kingdom is; but Jesus had the right to the kingdom. The prophets had made that clear.

Now, was it a real offer? I think so. I think He made a genuine offer to them but it was contingent upon them. And this is where we get into that whole thing of unconditional and conditional covenants. Can an unconditional covenant have a contingency within it? That there will come a point when people obey and do what they are supposed to that the thing will actually happen. Yeah, it can. God is going to see that this covenant is fulfilled. It is eternal. It will happen. But we do not see the full manifestation and results of that thing until certain people do what they are supposed to do. And so Jesus comes and I believe He made a real offer to the Jews and went to them first and said, "I am the guy. I am what was prophesied. I am He. That is what the gospels are about. I am. I am Him. I am God in the flesh. I am Messiah. I am the door. I am everything." And they rejected it.

But does that mean that the offer was not real? I think the offer was real. Because He says, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But it depended on their attitude and their response to Him.

Now, we even see that in the Communion, don't we?—at the Lord's Supper, at the very last supper when He was there. He took the first cup. He took the second cup. And at the third cup He instituted something brand new. Because He said, “This is the cup where I stretch out My hands.” And He went to the cross. And He said, “I will not drink the fourth cup until I come back again. I won't drink the fourth cup until I drink it new in My Father's kingdom” (cf. Luke 22:18). In other words, until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” He says, “I will not be here and drink this cup with the nation Israel until they get their attitude right and they change their attitude and start saying, ‘Blessed is the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ our Savior and our Lord.’”

Now, I believe that day will come. There are a lot of people that don't. They say, “Well, that day will never come. That is not going to happen. You guys are wacko. That is just all spiritually fulfilled and that will never happen literally and truly.” Well, I do not believe that. I believe that it will happen literally and truly. I think that is the whole purpose for why He did not drink the fourth cup and said, “I am not drinking the fruit of the vine again until I come back,” is because there is a day when the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 will be effected and the nation will come to Him. Hence, Romans 9–11 and what takes place there. But what is going on in the meantime, obviously, is a bit different.

Now, Jesus even said in Matthew 11 about John the Baptist. He says, “If you are willing to receive him, this is Elijah that is come to you.” Pretty amazing!

Turn in your Bibles to Acts 3 and just look at what was preached here in Acts 3, beginning in verse 19. I mean, do you think this is a real *bona fide* offer? Do you think this was offered in good faith? You know, and if the nation would have repented—because they were not and they did not—but still in Acts 3:19 he says, “Repent,

therefore.” He is talking about their ignorance. He said, “I know you acted in ignorance,” in verse 17. You know, just like their rulers did in the past. He said, “You guys have been acting ignorantly forever.”

But the things that God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that is, Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent, therefore, and return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. And that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you. (cf. Acts 3:18-20)

Now Jesus just left! He had just come, was rejected, He died on the cross, rose, ascended. And then Peter gets up and says, “Hey, repent and receive Jesus. Repent so God can send Jesus back to you, the Messiah.

... Whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things; which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. Moses said, ‘The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me [just like Moses] from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed and everything He says to you. (cf. Acts 3:21-22)

Now, did they give heed in everything He said to them? No. But even Moses says, “Ye shall. You shall give heed to everything this guy says, the prophet that is raised up like me” (cf. Deuteronomy 18:18). That is Jesus. Well, they did not give heed to Him then. Do you think Moses was a liar? No. So, it is going to have to happen in the future for Moses to be true. It must happen or either Moses did not know what he was talking about. There is going to come a day when they will give heed to everything the Messiah says. That is future.

And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people; and likewise, all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and his successors and onward also announce these days. It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham: And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. For you first God raised up His servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways. (cf. Acts 3:23-26)

Of course, you know, he did not get much further in his sermon than that because they had started going nuts again.

But Romans 3:3 makes it clear. Does national unfaithfulness on the part of Israel mean that God cannot fulfill His covenant promise? No. He can still do it in the future. And some people think that minimizes the cross. That if God came and made a real offer to Israel that it would minimize the cross. But I do not think so, because that was all part of God's design.

But God's design is based on what? And here we get into the discussion again. What is God's divine design based on?—foreknowledge. God knows everything, doesn't He? This is the predeterminate council of God. He knows ahead of time. We cannot relate to that, that God can know the end from the beginning and that God can plan something out and still leave us a choice in the middle of it. We tend to go, "Well, my goodness sakes alive! If God planned all this stuff out from beginning to end and this is the way it is going to happen, and He knew it was going to happen, then isn't that necessity? Doesn't that mean that this has to happen this way because God has already predetermined that this is going to be the end result right here." But He did it on the basis of foreknowledge. It does not take away your personal responsibility to do right, or your personal

responsibility to make the right choice. It just means God knew what choice you were going to make long before you ever made the thing.

Well, no wonder He calls it the manifold wisdom of God. So, He foresees the choices that are going to be made. That is Paul's argument in Romans. He says this: "Listen, they stumbled and fell." But how did they stumble and fall? What does he say is the reason? What is the instrument of their stumbling and their falling? They stumbled and fell through what?—unbelief. They stumbled and they fell through unbelief.

But is that, was that unbelief a necessity? Did God insist that they have unbelief? Was it God that made them have unbelief? No. He did not insist on it. It was not a necessity that they did not believe. They did not believe of their own free choice. But He allowed them, just like He allowed the choice for those people that received Him, as much as He allowed the choice for those people that rejected Him. And so God allowed it to happen. God's ways are past finding out because He knows the end from the beginning. And it is just beyond our capacity to think that way.

But He still lays the whole responsibility on them. He says, "They stumbled and fell because of—it was not My fault." God says in Romans, "Hey, not My fault. I am a righteous God. They did stumble and fall, but it is not My fault. They stumbled and fell because of their unbelief." It is their fault and their responsibility that they stumbled and fell.

Did that ever happen before in the Old Testament? Did God know something was going to happen before and still offered them something but knowing they were going to fail in it? Yeah. What about at *Kadesh-barnea*? When He said, "Come on, guys. You are right at the edge of the land. Why don't you go on in?" He offered the land to them and said, "Here is the land." Was that a real offer? Do you think that if that first generation had had faith and believed they would have gone into the land? I believe they would have. But did they? No. Why didn't they? He says, "Because of their unbelief."

But then he writes about this next generation that went in because they had faith and Joshua led them in. And Joshua was prophesied to be a type of Christ, et cetera, et cetera. And you could go, “Well, wait a minute. Does that mean that the first group had to fail so that the second group could be led in through Joshua and be fulfilling prophecy?” No. It just means that God knew what was going to happen long before it ever did happen. But it does not mean that God made them choose to have unbelief.

And so the same thing is happening here, I believe, with Israel. When Jesus comes in the gospels and He is manifest as the Messiah, I think He made a real good faith offer to the nation. And if they would have received it, He would have brought in the kingdom. But they did not receive it. He knew from the eternal past that was the choice they would make. But it is not His fault that they made that choice. Just because He knew it, does not mean it is His fault. They are responsible for their own decision there. So it is a pretty amazing thing. Their unbelief kept them out just like Hebrews 3 and 4 keeps telling us. You know, there still remains a rest to the people of God.

So the battle continues on between the spiritual and the literal kingdom. That is just the way it is.

There are basically three major movements in the book of Matthew. The first movement is the presentation of the King. The second movement is the opposition to the King. And the third movement is the final rejection of the King. And the first ten chapters of Matthew, He is presented as the King to them. Then chapter 11 down to chapter 16 there is just opposition against Him. And then finally from the rest of the book on, they are pretty much rejecting the King. And that is why He moved on to parables and talking to them in those parables because they rejected Him. And He did not do it until then. But in spite of that, He still went to His passion. He wanted to obey God and He wanted to save them and I think He has done that through the blood of His cross.

So when was the offer that He made to them set aside? When did that take place? I think in Matthew 12 is when it took place. Jesus had said so many times, “I have come in My

Father's name but you will not receive Me" (John 5:43). And "I am the Son of David but you won't receive Me." But look at Matthew 12:14 what happened there. In 12:14–15 it says, "They held council against Him [That is, the religious leaders] and they held council that they might destroy Him."

And so when that took place, what is Jesus' response? Well first of all, it says, "When Jesus knew it," right, in verse 15? He knew about it. He knew they were counseling as a nation to destroy Him. And what did Jesus do? It says there in verse 15, "Jesus withdrew Himself from them." A sad day! That is when things really began to change. He had been presented to them. He understood clearly now that they were rejecting Him as a nation. And from that moment on, Jesus began to withdraw Himself from them, in chapter 12.

And what begins in Matthew 13?—the parables, the kingdom parables. He begins to talk to them in parables and what are the parables about? They are about what happens from the time of His rejection by them as a nation until the time of the fulfillment when they finally receive Him. And you can trace the parables. And they line up with the seven churches also. There is a parallel there between the seven churches in Revelation and the seven parables.

But listen to what He says; listen to Jesus' heart. And I am just trying to establish this one fact. Did Jesus make a real offer to the nation Israel? Matthew 23:37-39.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and
stones them that are sent unto thee. How often I would have
gathered thy children together.

It is like, "I wanted to do it over and over. I wanted to gather you together."

Even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and
you would not. Behold, your house is left unto you
desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth

until you say, [I mean, you will see Me, but it is not going to happen until you say this] ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’

Jesus is broken. His heart is ripped apart right now. But He says, “There will be a blessed day. There will come a day.”

In Luke 19:42-44 He says,

If thou hast known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace....

If you had just known what was being offered to you and what could have happened, and the peace that could have taken place. In other words, that sounds like a real offer to me. He is emphatic. He is emotional about it.

But now they are just hidden from your eyes. For the day shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast out a trench about thee and compass thee, and keep thee in on every side and shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee. And they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. (Luke 19:42-44)

Now just because they did not know does not mean He did not make a real offer. He did. And they are going to be trodden down of the Gentiles until, He says in verse 24 of Luke 21, “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” That is the result.

Why? Because Matthew 21:42-43 says,

The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof.

And we know the gospel of the kingdom will be preached again. And there will come a time that, no doubt, they will respond. Jesus looked forward to it and He wanted to see that blessing there. So, you know, there was a real King. He came and He made an offer of a real kingdom. It was rejected by them and then He turned to the Gentiles. And I think He is going to make that offer again.

Well, what do we do in the present time? You know, in our time? Well, Jesus summed it up in one summary statement. He said, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13 KJV). And that is what you do. And you receive power to be witnesses. "Just witness for Me."

Instead, we get all caught up on the specific dates and aspects of when the Lord is coming and if it is this, that, and another thing. And we get all, kind of extreme about it all. When in reality it is easy to see, like the parable of the fig tree that we are getting closer and closer to the end time. But the point is, He says: "Don't be so focused on the times specifically themselves, but receive the power of the Holy Spirit and go take the gospel around the world" (cf. Acts 1:6-8). And so, any time you see some other little thing happening in terms of a prophecy fulfilled, or it looks like the world scene is getting closer to maybe setting the stage for the Lord to return, what that should do for you is not so you can write a book and debate Christians about the exact aspects of that. He says, "Comfort one another with these words" (1 Timothy 4:18). And then get excited. Let it motivate you to take the gospel out.

And it is like we don't seem to have the right response to the things concerning the kingdom and the last days and what is going to take place. O to God that we would! When you see more things happening—I do see them. But what it should do for me is the

same thing it did for Daniel when he saw the end of the captivity. He got down and began to pray and seek God and just desire passionately that God's will be done. We already know what God's will is for our present time. It is to take the gospel to every ethnic, every tribe, and every people. And when we see these things happening, it should just spur us on and say, man, there may be less time than we think. Let's get the gospel out to more people.

It is sort of like—because part of Jesus' coming will be judgment, but it is like if you knew—if you were in some public building or even here at the Bible college as we are in this building. And we know that in thirty minutes, there is a bomb set in this building that terrorists have set. It is going to go off in thirty minutes. There is not a thing you can do to trick it or stop it. This whole building is just going up in thirty minutes. And the time starts ticking down. Well, you know, you try to warn people to get out of the building, but there are a few people left in the building. And it gets down to you got ten minutes left. What would love do with the last ten minutes? Knowing that there are still some people over in classroom D. Wouldn't you run over there as fast as you possibly could and say, "Hey, come on, guys. There's just ten minutes. We have got to get out of range here. Let's go on the other side of campus." That is what you would do if you understood clearly what was going on.

And that is all Jesus was saying. As the time ticks down, He says, "You guys don't need to know so much about the times and the seasons. You just need to see the big thing and know as time ticks down, you should be more excited about the fact that the Holy Spirit is coming upon you to make you a witness in all the world."

But He did make a real offer to them and He is going to send Jesus there.

Let's pray,

Lord, we do pause and we thank You that, you know, when we see things happening in these last days, what it really

tells us is that time is just getting shorter and shorter. The opportunity to take the gospel out, to tell people about Your great love, and how right now it is all just, it is free. I mean, it is so free. You have done everything for us and all we have to do is receive the work that You have done through Your Son Jesus Christ. And we know You are making that offer to the world now, regardless of who they are. Lord, then please show us how we can better prepare, we can better train here, to go out and take the gospel to the whole world. Because we know it is Your will and Your passion and Your desire, Lord. So do that work in us. Make us living epistles for Your glory. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 16 The Living Epistles

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Well, let's pray.

Father, we do want to say thanks for this lovely day that we have to worship You and to live here on earth; moving, living, having our being in You—just acknowledging that You are the Creator. You made this earth the way it is and made us the way we are and everything fits so beautifully, really. And we want to acknowledge and worship You as the great Designer, the great Creator that You are, Lord. And that is just the most amazing thing of all, Lord. How You have loved us and drawn us and called us by Your everlasting love that is in Christ. And as we look through Your Word, Lord, we see it from beginning to end, that theme that You have given us, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the theme of redemption, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And we come to worship You through Him. And we rejoice in Christ Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen.

Revelation 11:15 says,

The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of His Christ has begun. And He shall reign unto the ages of the ages. And the twenty-four elders and those that sat on their thrones before God, fell on their faces, worshiped God and said, “We give thanks to Thee, O Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast reigned [or have begun to reign].”

And so they start announcing that there is going to be this reign, this kingdom. And it has to be to fulfill says Psalm 2:8. You know, while the nations are raging and laughing and saying, “Lord, You won’t rule over us. No way! It won’t happen.” And they are resisting God. And it says that God sits in heaven and just kind of basically goes, “Yeah, right. Like that is not going to happen.” And it is. He sends His Son back and He rules with a rod of iron.

Now, why does it have to happen? Let me give you seven reasons why I think this kingdom actually has to happen and will happen.

The first one is this: It has to happen because of the character of God, His integrity. It is His honor. It is His majesty. He is the one that says to us in Matthew 25:34, “Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

In other words, God Almighty undertook a work and said, “This is what I am going to do.” If He does not finish it and do it—I mean, how can He not accomplish it if He is Lord God Almighty? His very character and integrity demands that we get to that point where the kingdom is inherited by those it has been planned for. And we know that is going to be both Jews and gentiles. But there has to be that fulfillment of the new covenant promises for this to take place. And so it will.

Secondly, one of the reasons it needs to take place is to establish perfect government on earth. We have always wanted it. It is like that is what God intended from the beginning was earth to be governed perfectly, that we have dominion over the earth. He wanted Adam to do that. Adam could not do it because of his rebellion against God. It did not happen. He failed. A new man came and that was the incarnate Son of God. And He established rule for God. He established obedience to God and it was Jesus Christ. When He returns He will set up the perfect government.

In Matthew 19:28 He said, “In the regeneration, you twelve guys are going to sit on twelve thrones judging Israel.” Now, does that sound like that is real or not? That is what He said. You twelve guys will sit on twelve thrones and you will judge Israel.

So it has to happen for Him to set up the right kind of government on earth. Isaiah 1:26 says,

I will restore thy judges as at the first, [just like it used to be] as at the beginning. And you shall be called the city of righteousness, a faithful town.

So He has to come and do the perfect government that He promised. It will happen.

Thirdly, He is going to restore harmony between God and His creation, between the supernatural and the natural. Right now there is kind of a dichotomy between the supernatural and the natural. But it is going to be restored. There will be the original kind of concord that God intended to exist. But that requires a supernatural king and Jesus Christ will effect that when He comes. And all the harmony that was supposed to exist will be there because of Jesus and the changes that take place because they will be supernatural.

Fourthly, He is going to redeem the earth from the curse. He said He would. He said He would remove all the labor and the pain and the groaning and the toiling. He is going to remove that, all those grievous times. That is what will happen.

Fifthly, He is going to fulfill all of God’s eternal covenants made with Israel. He will fulfill the Abrahamic covenant completely. He will fulfill the Davidic covenant. There will be a king in David’s land. The land covenant will be fulfilled, everything about it. Part of that is that He promised in the covenant they would get a new heart, didn’t He? And they would keep His law. He will fulfill that by the new covenant. He will fulfill the new covenant by giving Israel a new heart, and He will put His Spirit in them and they will keep His ways, (cf. Ezekiel 36:26).

Because He already said—remember what He told us earlier? He said, “If you change these laws and you teach somebody different than what these laws are, you are least in the kingdom” (cf. Matthew 5:19). So He is going to come back and fulfill those things. And they are going to be the people that have always in a wrong way gloried in the law. But they are finally going to glory in the law in the right way because they are going to keep it and God’s Spirit is going to be in them and upon them.

Then sixthly, He has to come back and do it because there has to be a final test of fallen humanity. And that happens. It will happen in the most ideal circumstance, when Jesus Christ, the God/man, the *Theanthropos*, is here on earth ruling with a rod of iron. Satan will have been bound. He won’t be bothering anybody whatsoever. But in spite of that, in Revelation 20, men will prove that the heart is the problem. And one last time, it is like God giving them one more opportunity and they blow it.

And so finally, the seventh thing is there is a full manifestation of the glory of Jesus Christ and His covenant. And what is the full manifestation really of that glory? Isn’t it His love, the fact that He loved them to the end? And His passion, even though they rejected Him, His passion was still to die for them. He said, “O I wish I could have done it now. I wish I could have gathered you now. I wish you could have known all of the peace now.” But they did not. They rejected Him but He still died for them. And He will come back and fulfill it in the future. And so it is just a glorious love, the full manifestation of the glory of God through His love, through His passion.

Paul had it, didn’t he? “O” he says, “I wish I could be accursed for the sake of Israel. I wish they would do it now.” But he knew it wasn’t going to happen right now. You know, a few people here and there; but by and large it will happen to the nation as a whole, and all Israel shall be saved.

And so God is right in the way He has approached these things.

Now how does this affect us? You know, when we read Revelation 19:11, we read that Christ returns with His saints. Secondly, we read Armageddon takes place; then we read Satan is bound. Then we read about the thousand year reign. Then we read that Satan is loosed at the end of the thousand year reign. Then we read about the judgment of Satan. Finally in verse 15, we read the second resurrection and great white throne judgment. So, I mean, God has a plan. He is keeping with it. The kingdom will be established and it makes us, you know, completely victorious.

I want to think about just how the parables that Jesus told, after He was rejected, relate to the church. Turn to Revelation 2 and 3 and let's just take a look at that for a moment because there is a relationship there.

The first parable that He told was the Parable of the Sower who went out and he sowed (cf. Matthew 13:18). And when he sowed, he sowed among wheat and tares. Isn't that interesting? And so, this time of sowing and organization, this time of evangelism, was also connected with a time of what?—a time of great persecution. What was the first church in the book of Revelation 2–3? It was Ephesus, wasn't it? It is the desirable church, the apostolic church that went out. It was a real, true situation. And as he was sowing the wheat and the tares, and as they began to, you know, truly evangelize and take the gospel out because of their first love for Him, things began to happen. But later, what began to happen? Tares began to spring up and because of the tares, what also took place in the church?—great persecution. And when you read in church history, what do you read that was the big problem in the church during the second time of great periods of history, was the church of Smyrna.

After Ephesus comes Smyrna, which means myrrh referring to that embalming fluid, referring to death, referring to that persecution that took place there. What was the big problem in church history during this period, during this time? Wasn't it? We had those people that were confessors? It was those people that rejected and those people that stood up in times of persecution. And it created a hard problem in the church because after the persecutions went over, you had two groups. You had the guy sitting next to you who

was persecuted for his faith because he would not offer to Caesar and he would not do these other things. Then you had the other person sitting next to him who just took the easy way out. And so it created a real problem because some people stood up publicly and were persecuted for it and others went and hid. And there was this huge problem in the church because there was this wheat and tares (cf. Matthew 13:36). And we know already that many people told on other Christians. They said, “We are going to take your home. You are going to lose your job. You are going to prison if you don’t tell us where those other Christians are.” And they told. You think that would cause a problem? Man!

And so there was wheat and there were tares. And that is what happened in those first two churches. That is what happened in history.

And then the third parable that He told was what?—the mustard seed (cf. Matthew 13:31). Pergamos means “by marriage.” Literally *per* means by and *gamos* means marriage. And so they married the world. And so we see that mustard seed, the tree that grew up and had all kinds of birds lodging in its branches, and all the worldly influence that is there, which began to develop during that time.

Then the fourth parable He told was about the leaven that a woman hid (cf. Matthew 13:33) and the church of Thyatira. And that is interesting because that is when we see that continual sacrifice and those doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church developing. And you know their great emphasis was on a woman. It was on Mary and the Immaculate Conception, et cetera. Interesting how it plays out in church history there.

Then the fifth parable He tells is the treasure that is hidden (cf. Matthew 13:44). And that is the church of Sardis. The escaping ones that escaped out of that situation that was in Thyatira. They escaped from that leaven that leavens the whole lump. They removed it. They got out. And that was the Reformation. And so there was this treasure hid there even within that government. There were guys like Luther and others that were part of the Roman Catholic Church but they were treasures hidden in there. And they brought forth true doctrines. And finally were forced out of the church. They did not want to leave the

church. They were forced out of the church because they were treasures hidden within the church.

And then the sixth one was the pearl of great price (cf. Matthew 13:46), which He gave everything to buy that field to get that pearl. And it is like that is Philadelphia; that is the love that was demonstrated there. That was the true church taking the gospel out, I believe.

And the final church, Laodicea, was the dragnet parable, a parable about judgment that was coming (cf. Matthew 13:47). And so, you see this similarity in the progress here in church history of what is going to happen.

And I think the reason there is a relationship between the parables that Jesus told in Matthew 13 and the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 is because in chapter 12, after Jesus knew they were rejecting Him as the King, He moved and started telling the parables. But the parables have a relationship to how, after His rejection, history continues to unfold until they finally come back and receive Him. But that does not happen until He comes back in judgment, after the great tribulation period.

So yeah, I see some interesting things concerning the kingdom. I believe when Jesus came the first time, in the Gospels, that He was the God/Man. He was the Messiah. He did come to fulfill and I really believe He offered them, a bona fide offer of a real kingdom, but they rejected it as a nation. And so He turned to the gentiles.

And now it does not matter whether you are a Jew or gentile, bond or free, male or female, you come to the Lord all the same way, until the times of the gentiles is fulfilled. But then, I think He will go back and fulfill the new covenant promised in Jeremiah 31 to the actual nation.

And so Jesus speaks the fifth time through His Son, Jesus Christ, and promises fulfillment of everything. And we will see the fulfillment of that at His second coming.

So, do you see the need to sum up everything? And God did it in Christ. You see the content, how it was about Christ and how He fulfills it and it cannot be fulfilled without Him personally. That is why He has to come back. It has to be Him personally. All these things are connected to Him personally. There cannot be a fulfillment of all these things without the personal Son, Jesus Christ, on earth. It is personal. He went out of His way to show the content was about Him.

And the method was an incarnation. The response is: “Yeah, come to Him.” And all who do are saved and blessed.

So the sixth time God speaks and we’ll look at the epistles. And then finally, the last time, the Revelation, when all these things are consummated. And then we will make a comparison of the seven times that He spoke, we will compare with the seven times He acted. And we will go over covenant and dispensational theology in detail.

The fifth time God spoke was in His Son, the incarnation. And the need at the time was to sum up all that God had said and center truth in the person of His Son. Truth had to become real in terms of the person. And so He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, incarnate.

And the content was about what? Fulfilling and clarifying everything God had ever said or ever would say. God wanted to clarify it in a way we could understand it and never miss it. And so He put it into the person, the God/Man, so that Jesus would live here among us and we would have no doubt about what God was trying to communicate. By sending His Son, living a holy, righteous, just life, fulfilling all the law of God and the word of God and then dying on the cross for us. I mean, we could not miss that; and then God raising Him from the dead. That is a tremendous picture there.

And the content that Jesus taught often had seed thoughts in it. Like, He would say in John 13 remember, “Love one another.” But we get to the epistles and it explains it in more detail. And so He wanted to just sum up and clarify things.

And then the response that He expects is what?—come to Jesus and receive Jesus—that is the response that He expects.

The Epistles
The sixth major time God spoke
Romans – Jude

**The Holy Spirit is with you, He shall be in you,
and He shall come upon you.**

“He shall lead you into all truth.”

Now, today, we will go on and look at the epistles. The sixth time that God speaks is in Romans to Jude. He had said, “He [the Holy Spirit] shall lead you into all truth” (cf. John 16:13). That the Holy Spirit is with you, but He shall be in you and He shall come upon you. And that is what has happened.

The historical background for the epistles is obviously in the book of Acts, because Acts proclaims Jesus, but the epistles explain Jesus. So we see them, you know, they leave us in Rome in the book of Acts. And then the first Epistle we begin with is the book of Romans. And the epistles explain the Christian life. They defend the faith.

So how are they organized normally? You will have doctrine first and then you will have practical experience second. Ephesians is a classic example. The first three chapters are

all about doctrine. And the last three chapters are all about how to apply that doctrine in life. And that is normally the way the epistles are written.

Now what is the need? Well, the epistles are written to whom?—those that had heard the gospel. They had believed unto salvation. “In Him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). So these people had really believed the gospel unto salvation.

They were filled with the Spirit of God. “Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:14). And they had the gifts of the Spirit, “So that you come short in no gift, eagerly awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:7). And they were witnessing in power we know from the book of Acts. “For from you the word of the Lord is sounded forth, not only from Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out so that we do not even need to say anything” (1 Timothy 1:8).

The Need Is Twofold:

- **To understand the essential nature of salvation; to know our provision in Christ.**
- **To know how to work it out in life and service; appropriating our provision in Christ.**

So these people had believed to salvation. They were filled with Spirit. They had the gifts of the Spirit. And they were witnessing in power. That is who they were. Well, you know what the need is then, for a group like that? Well, the need was to understand the essential nature of salvation and to know all of our provision in Christ. And secondly, it was to know how to work it out in life and service and to possess and use our provision in Christ.

So the epistles were written in a personal letter format, explaining the Christian life and the responsibilities that we have because of what has been provided for us. In other words, God has given us the grace for life in Christ Jesus and if He has given us Christ, how will He not give us everything else with Christ? Since He has given us Christ and the grace and life of Christ, we have absolutely no excuses when we do not live up to the responsibilities that He has put upon us, because we have the power. We have the dynamic. We have the ability. And the epistles explain to us what we have in Christ and who we are in Christ, but also what our obligation and responsibility is to live up to Christ. So we are living epistles. And as Christ represented the Father, we now represent Christ on earth. And so the need is to know that.

The Content

The foundational concept of the Epistles is that this new salvation is anchored in a new relationship with a risen Savior.

"In Christ" is found throughout Paul's Epistles.

Key Verse:

"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus..."

(1Corinthians 1:30)

Well, what is the content? The content, the foundational content of the epistle is that this new salvation is anchored in a new relationship with a risen Savior. Life is in Christ, not in us, but in Christ. And the source of this new life is not in the believer, as you might naturally think. But it is in Jesus Christ. And that is why we need to know about Him and what is provided in Him. So we must learn that he or she is united with Christ. “In Christ” is found throughout Paul’s epistles. I think we find it like 132 times. And you just go, wow, it is all about being in Christ. And that captures the truth of our union with Christ.

So the key verse is 1 Corinthians 1:30. It says, “Of Him”—that is, it is God’s doing. He is the source. He is the one that has done this. “Of Him are you”—that is who you are because of what God has done for you and to you. “Of Him are you in Christ Jesus.” God has done a wonderful work and it is that of putting you in Christ Jesus. And so that is now who you are and the content is all about what God has done and what He has made you in Christ Jesus. So, it is about who and what Christ is and who and what we are in Christ.

And the Person of Christ, He is our wisdom. He is our justification. He is our sanctification. He is our service. He is our glorification. He is our patience. He is our compassion. He is our hope. I mean, He is our life. Christ is just everything to us. And we have everything that He is. So, “All things are of Him, through Him, and to Him” (Romans 11:36).

So the epistles deal with just about every problem that a believer could face. And the basic issues are dealt with in Romans and first and second Corinthians. Life problems are addressed in the general epistles. And then of course the pastoral epistles, Timothy and Titus, address their special problems.

Now we will take just a quick look at them. The book of Romans shows Christ as our righteousness. It is all about who Christ is and what we have in Him. 1 Corinthians shows

that Christ is our Lord. And the answer to every problem in the church is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We know that. I mean, Romans 1:17 tells us about the righteousness of God.

But 1 Corinthians is about the Lordship. He is Lord both of the dead and the living. He should solve the division problems of the church when we recognize His lordship. We have got everybody saying, "I am of this" and "I am of that." But when we see that there is one church, one body, as it teaches us in 1 Corinthians. So there is one hope, one baptism. He is promoting His lordship. And the key word throughout the whole book of 1 Corinthians is Lordship. That is the answer to every problem in the church. And it still is today. And 1 Corinthians shows us that Christ is Lord and He is Lord of all. And if we bow to His Lordship, it would solve a lot of divisions and problems in the churches today. But that is the real issue there. You know, even when we go to the supper there, communion, it is called what? It is called the Lord's Supper. Everything in the book is about the Lord. He is Lord and that is the theme of it.

Second Corinthians is about Christ as our sufficiency, that we have everything in Christ. And the ministry of reconciliation is committed to us because God was in Christ. And that is why we are so sufficient. God was in Christ, the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form and now Christ is in us. So He always causes us to what? Triumph. We can always triumph because the fullness of the Godhead was in Christ and Christ is in us. How can we not triumph? We are so sufficient in Christ. There is no way that we cannot triumph. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus. And so, 2 Corinthians speaks all about how sufficient we are. And it brings it down to the simplicity that is there in Christ. We have His life; therefore, we have everything that makes us sufficient for life and ministry. We lack nothing. And He makes that clear in 2 Corinthians.

In Galatians we see that Christ is our liberty there. And it is all about the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is there is tremendous liberty there and the freedom that we have in Christ because He is living in us. And the life we live now really is a life of freedom because we are not in bondage in any way because it is Christ living His life in us. And we are living it by the faith of the Son of God. There is tremendous freedom

throughout the book. Paul is in travail, obviously, to have Christ formed in them because he wants them to have this new experience, this new birth and this freedom when Christ is formed in you. So there is a liberty and a freedom of living in the Spirit of Christ there. And it is really neat. I mean, Christ was cursed for the whole purpose that the promise of the Spirit could come to us, he says. That is the way it is presented. So it is all about the Spirit and the freedom we have in the Spirit.

Now Ephesians is about Christ being our all in all. And of course, we see “in Christ” there more than any other epistle and the unity that we have. The one body defined in Ephesians. And so the whole concept of being in Christ and walking worthy of being in Christ and our position in Christ; it is a tremendous epistle. Christ is our all in all.

In Philippians Christ is obviously our joy, but it is a gospel joy. And we have the attitude of Christ and “we can do all things through Christ” (cf. Philippians 4:13). And so it is about joyful Christian living, you might say, as Paul said, “For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). So he has tremendous joy because of the hope that he has. And he counts everything just rubbish for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. That is the greatest gain in his life, knowing Christ. And so just tremendous joy in carrying out the gospel and being in this relationship with Christ. There is tremendous joy in humbling himself, in serving other people by carrying out the gospel. It is all about Christ and our gospel joy in Him.

In Colossians, Christ is our life and we are complete. We are absolutely perfect and complete in Christ. We have a new position in Him. We have a new relationship in Him. We have a new fellowship in Him. We are made perfect and complete in every way. Because Christ is in you, you have the hope of glory. And your life, he says, “is hidden with Christ in God” (cf. Colossians 3:3). That is where your life is. And that is why he says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16). Let it dwell richly in you because Christ is your life from beginning to end.

And when we get to 1 Thessalonians, we see that He is our hope. And He is the coming One. At the end of every chapter, all five chapters in 1 Thessalonians mention the second coming of Jesus Christ because that is our hope. And he just shows us that our hope is to be set completely, fixed completely on the second coming of Jesus Christ. And it is all about that kind of a living hope that we have in Him. So it is the gospel of hope. Christian conduct is seen there in the light of hope. That is why it mentions faith, love and then hope is third. It is not faith, hope, and love. But it is faith, love, and then hope. And we have these things because of the hope that we have in Christ.

Then you get to 2 Thessalonians and you see Christ and He is our returning Lord. It speaks of the day of the Lord over and over there. And it is a picture of Christian history. And in chapter 1 you have a revelation of who Christ is. In chapter 2 you have a revelation of who the antichrist is. So first you get a revelation of Jesus Christ, then you get the revelation of the false christ, or the antichrist who is a fake christ. And then chapter 3 tells you what your responsibility is when you live between the revelation of Christ and the revelation of the antichrist. And it lays out the responsibilities in chapter 3 of a Christian in light of this real view of history. So, as God looks at it, there are only two men being revealed in these last days. One is Christ and the one is the false christ. And what is our responsibility and how should we relate to that? Well, that is found in 2 Thessalonians 3 and the day of the Lord. It is going to be a day where He comes back in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God and obey not the gospel. And so certainly a lot of our responsibility that he explains there is about us taking the gospel out because the Lord is returning. The day of the Lord is coming and it is coming soon.

Then in 1 Timothy, we see Christ as our teacher. And we are to know what our calling is. And he explains that in 1 Timothy pretty well. He is the pastor of the church, you might say. He is the one that made the good confession there. And so Timothy is the teacher and he is the pastor.

In 2 Timothy we see that He is our example. Actually, Titus would come after the book of 1 Timothy where he tells us not only to know what our calling is, but Titus tells us to enter our calling which is good works. And it is all about the good works. But 2 Timothy is about remaining and abiding in your calling. And Christ was our example and left us an example of suffering and how we are to guard the gospel and suffer for the gospel, endure hardship for the gospel, be a good soldier for the gospel. And it is all about perseverance and endurance there.

And so in the book of Titus, Christ is our pattern of good works there. So this is our method, you might say, for discipleship. Then in the book of Philemon, Christ is the master of relationships. It does not matter whether you are a slave or a free man. He tells you how you can have a relationship and how that relationship is based on Christ and your oneness in Christ there, so it is how we should behave in that respect, in just a real brotherly relationship. And He does change every relationship in life.

And then in Hebrews He is our intercessory high priest, no doubt. And He is at the throne. As a matter of fact, in Hebrews 13:10 He is our altar. We have an altar and the altar is Jesus and this is what faith in Christ does. So, we become partakers of that and it kind of explains the new covenant in a lot of ways as well. But ultimately we would have to say it is Christ the intercessor at the throne; that He really is our altar in every way in His new ministry.

Then in James, He is our pattern, you might say. It is very practical. James and the Sermon on the Mount, have a great relationship to one another. And there are 54 imperatives in the book. I mean, it is just filled with you got to do this and you got to do that. And you must do this and you must do that. It is a very imperative book, saying, "This is the pattern. This is the way you have got to walk." He expects it and it is very practical in terms of life. It explains how to love your neighbor in a practical way and not showing partiality for one. He is very practical in these relationships.

In the book of 1 Peter, He is the cornerstone. And the message is primarily the true grace of God because it is built on the cornerstone of grace. And grace is what God did. And what God did was make Jesus Christ, the stone that was rejected, the very foundation cornerstone of our faith. And it is receiving that grace. And then he tells us how we can work that grace out in Christ. And it is all about the true grace of God.

Then 2 Peter is about the true knowledge and how He is our strength. And the resources that we have, His divine power, His life, His divine nature, and how He rescues us from temptation. And the best polemic against any kind of apostasy is just a godly life. And it comes from knowing our resources, a true knowledge of Christ there in 2 Peter, because He is our strength for life.

In the book of 1 John, obviously Christ is our light and our fellowship, our advocacy. You know, we are born of Him and we have eternal life. It says, “We are in Him who is true and in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” So, we have His life and fellowship. “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (cf. 1 John 5:20).

In 2 John, Christ is our truth. There are thirteen verses in 2 John. In five verses, he mentions the word “truth.” So the theme is on truth and the caution is against false teachers. So he explains Christ’s relationship with false teachers, particularly in verse 10. And we should abide in the teaching of Christ.

In 3 John it is about Christ being the way. The word walk is used and the way is either humility or pride. That is what he contrasts there. And our way is humility. So it is about how Christ walked in humility and about how we walk in humility.

The book of Jude is about us being preserved and kept, being guarded to the very last day. And he contrasts these men: “but you,” he says it several times...“these men, but you.” And how we are to live, but how we are guarded. The faith that was once for all delivered to the saints should be guarded as well there.

And then finally, in the book of Revelation, we have the final consummation of the true King of kings and Lord of lords.

So, in the epistles we are just seeing Christ explained and what we have in Christ explained over and over. And as we see Him, we then draw, by the Spirit, who He is to live off. We feed on Him. We abide in Him. And that is one of the neat things about having devotions and having devotional time, is like, you get alone, you see Christ. And when you truly see Him, you start feeding on Him. And you start realizing, "Oh, He is my kindness. I do not need kindness, I have Christ. Christ is the kindness in me. I do not need patience. Christ is the patience in me. I do not need love. Christ is the love in me. I do not need humility. Christ is the humility that is in me." All of these things that we need in life, we have in Christ. But we only experience them when we truly see Him by revelation and feed upon Him. And all of that is in the epistles and it is a beautiful picture.

And then the book of Romans is the most complete and systematic of all the epistles, the theme being the righteousness of God. You see in the first eight chapters, doctrinal salvation. And it is all about the sins, you might say, that have been forgiven us. And therefore, we have grace and we can live and do the Christian life. The foundation is grace, which is found in Romans 3. The means by which you access it is faith there. And the result of it is assurance.

And when we have this life, then we live and do it. We see in Romans chapters 6 through 8, the practical way that we live and do the Christian life. That is all about doctrinal salvation and the righteousness that we have in Christ. That we are actually made righteous, but we also live righteousness because of Christ.

Then chapters Romans 9 through 11 I think is the keystone and arc of the book because it is the righteousness of God. It is a dispensational history of the calling of Israel. It is a true history in terms in God's view. He elected them and He rejected them, but He will

convert them in the end. And so it is God's view. You cannot divide the epistle properly, and you cannot divide the Word of God properly without error or confusion until you see God's view and God's place of Israel. So God gives you His view of real history in Romans 9 through 11. And if you miss His view of history, you miss the keystone and the arc of the book because it is about how God is righteous in all of His dealings in history, particularly as they relate to the election, the rejection, and the conversion of Israel. And He has every right to do that.

And then in the last part of the book of Romans 12 through 15, you see righteousness in terms of practical behavior. These are the living principles that we are to live by. And we see the mutuality there of the body of Christ. We see the obligations we have in brotherly love. And we see the consideration we ought to have for one another. And he addresses all of those practical things. So, as you go through this, we are justified and that means we are just declared righteous. We are sanctified and that means we are actually made righteous. And that is happening now. And he says, "Don't be deceived." Jesus even said it. "He who practices righteousness is righteous" (1 John 3:7). And he who doesn't, well, you know them by their fruit. You know them by their life. Jesus asked the question, "Can the fountain send forth bitter and sweet at the same time? No. Can a fig tree produce olives? No. Can a vine produce figs? No" (cf. James 3:17). He says that it does not happen. Do not be deceived. It is very simple. If there is reality there, if there is true sanctification, there will be fruit of their righteous life.

And then finally, glorification is simply righteousness achieved. And that is achieved when Christ is revealed and we are revealed with Him in glory. And we will be complete and perfect in every way, having our new glorified bodies.

And so it is about justification, sanctification, glorification that we have in Christ. So, you know it is a beautiful picture. And that is the content of the epistles.

The Method

Personal letters to “living epistles”

**Explanatory letters develop
the life in Christ.**

**This method trains the *minds and hearts*
of “living epistles” and the truth
becomes their own.**

Now, what is the method? Well, pretty simple. We see the need. We see the content. And we see the method here. The method is just personal letters to living epistles. Explanatory letters develop implications and obligations that are part of the life in Christ. God is concerned with developing the life of the believer and growth and maturity, growth in grace. So the method trains your mind and heart so that truth becomes your own. And you become a living epistle. And that is why God chose this method of writing. So our need to grow into maturity is met, in some ways, by the very method itself. Showing us that we really are living epistles and He wrote letters, *epistles*, to living epistles so that they could grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And it is a great method. It works well.

The Response Required

Appropriate Christ by faith

- Realize by revelation all you have and are in Christ.
- Reckon to be true all that you are and have in Christ.
- Receive and rest in all you have and are in Christ.

And then finally, what is the response He expects? He wants us to appropriate, by faith, Christ and all that He is; realize by revelation, all that you have and are in Christ. Then reckon it to be absolutely true, what you are and what you have in Christ. It is a done deal. And then to receive it by faith, to yield and submit to it to the point that you can really rest in it. That it is yours. And so the response is simply an appropriation of who Christ is. And so that is what is in the epistles.

Let's pray and thank the Lord for what we have in the epistles.

Lord, we want to just say thank You that You have left us here to be Your representatives, to be Your ambassadors. And that You are still calling out to the world saying, "Be reconciled." And You have chosen us as living epistles to do that, to reach out and show the world who You are. That You have not left Yourself without witness. We are Your witnesses. And we cannot do it in our own strength. And then we start reading the epistles and we begin to see You

and realize that, oh, You are our life. You are our sufficiency. You are our strength. You are our hope. You are our justification. You are our sanctification. You are everything. And so Lord, we thank You for the epistles and how rich they are concerning You. Lord, the joy that we have found in You, the hope and the love. Lord, how wonderful it truly is. And we just thank You for it. May we grow in Christ. We pray in Jesus name, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 17 The Last Time God Speaks

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The last time God spoke. So let's commit our time to Him.

Lord, we just thank You again for time to think about You and look at Your sovereign plan. We do believe that as You placed us on earth, You created the earth for us, put us here. You just wanted us to live for You and walk in fellowship with You here. And have dominion of it and rule for You and not for ourselves. We thank You that we see now that in Christ, that is how this is going to be accomplished. And we do recognize and set our hope completely on the *parousia*, and the power of Jesus Christ coming to reign upon earth. And we look forward to that time when You come, that You fulfill and complete all of Your promises that You have made concerning this earth. Help us to be encouraged and receive the things that You want us to see about You in the last time that You spoke concerning the Revelation of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Revelation

The Seventh Major Time God Spoke

**This is God's final word to man.
It reveals the end time prior to Christ's return.
This is a book of future prophecy.
It is full of symbolism mostly rooted in the O.T.**

The seventh major time God speaks. It is God's final word to man. It is given to the saints to reveal the end time prior to Jesus Christ's physical return to earth. It is a book of future prophecy and as such, it is full of symbolism. And nearly all the symbols are rooted in the Old Testament.

And the Apocalypse actually fulfills the promise of Jesus when He said of the Holy Spirit, not only that "He would lead you into all truth," but He also said, "He shall show you things to come" (cf. John 16:13). And the Holy Spirit is the one that has given the Apocalypse, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It is the inspired Word of God, given by the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit did come and lead us into all truth, primarily in the Epistles. But now He is showing us the things to come in the Revelation. And so Jesus' word that, "the Holy Spirit would come and lead you into all truth and show you things to come" was fulfilled in the Epistles and in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Need

The great need is Jesus.

**Only one man, God's own Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
can satisfy God's righteousness and take us "*beyond
paradise!*"**

On us – *need a new name* (2:17)

In us – *need a new song* (5:9; 14:3)

Around us – *need a new Jerusalem* (3:12; 21:2)

Under us – *need a new earth* (21:1)

Over us – *need a new heaven* (21:1)

Before us – *need the eternal love of God* (3:12)

The need is with all the evil in the world, and particularly at that time, the great opposition that was there to the church and the persecutions that they were going through. The Christians needed assurance of victory. They needed to know that Christ and His people will eventually win the spiritual war and the actual war. And so it proclaims the victory. And that was the great need at the time, to know that victory is sure. And the book of the Revelation does a great job of showing us that victory.

A cry develops and it is fulfilled in Revelation 22:20. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." And as you begin the book and you go through it, this cry slowly develops until you get to the end. And it closes with this cry: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." "Behold, He comes with clouds and every eye shall see Him. Surely, I come quickly," He says.

So all of our hopes wait on one hope and that is why we set our hope completely upon the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We just have this one hope in Him and we have great assurance because of Him.

The Content

- ***Chapter 1*** The Person of Christ in Glorified Power
- ***Chapter 2 & 3*** Christ in the Church on Earth
- ***Chapters 4 & 5*** The Church in Heaven with Christ
- ***Chapters 6-18*** The Great Tribulation in the World
- ***Chapter 19*** The Return of Christ to Reign
- ***Chapter 20*** The Millennium Reign of Christ
- ***Chapters 21 & 22*** The Eternal State Revealed

The content is simply this: Revelation chapter 1 is the person of Christ in glorified power. We see Him. It is a revelation of Christ.

In chapters 2 and 3 we see the church on earth.

In chapters 4 and 5 we see the church in heaven with Christ.

In chapters 6 through 18 we see the great tribulation that takes place in the world.

In chapter 19 we see the return of Christ to reign along with His saints.

In chapter 20 we see the millennial reign.

And then in chapters 21 and 22, we see the eternal state revealed.

And so it is a very simple content about Christ and what He is going to accomplish at His final and full revelation.

The Method

**This book was directed by Jesus Christ
through angelic messengers
to the Apostle John.**

The inspired message is literal.

**The message is communicated through
symbols.**

Then the method is that it is directed actually by Jesus Christ, through angelic messengers to the apostle John. He says it is the revelation that God gave Him. And He gave it to His angel and His angel gave it to John. And only the child of God will understand the spiritual message because it is very symbolic. However, the message is not symbolic. It is real and literal. It is to be received as an encouragement to persevere in total commitment to Jesus Christ until He calls us home. And yet it is apocalyptic, symbolic literature because a lot of the things that have to be explained, you just cannot put them into words. It was too hard for words to express and so they used symbols.

And so the response requires personal boldness to stand. You can compare Ephesians 6 and how we have the whole armor of God and with the whole armor of God we are to stand. We stand in all that we have.

Well, how can you be troubled when you are receiving an unshakable kingdom, even if you are being persecuted, as they were at this time in the early church? The only way you can be troubled is if you lack vision, if you lack *epignosis*. If you lack revelation on God and who He is and what He has got planned for you, then you can be troubled and

shaken. But if you see the victory is sure, and you see the glorified Christ, and you see the church, taken up into heaven, and you see them returning with Christ in great glory, and you see Christ setting up His kingdom and returning as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, then you realize you have an unshakable kingdom and it does not matter what you are going through. And that is largely, the response that He expects from us, is to have that kind of, relationship there.

I mean, the very cause of the consummation is revealed in the name. He is the Lamb. He is the Lamb that was slain. And the reason that we are having the consummation is because He gave Himself for us, “To Him that loved us and washed us in His own blood” (cf. Revelation 1:5). He is the one that is coming back for us and it is just a beautiful picture. And we know that is the reason for Christ coming back, really.

I mean, you see in Revelation the very nature of history, how the unseen is connected with the seen because things lived out on earth—and the battlefield is earth. Behind it all are these unseen powers, all these battles that are taking place in heaven that are affecting what happens right here on earth. So earth and heaven are kind of fused into one drama of redemption. But Jesus Christ is the victor and He returns King of kings and Lord of lords. And it is just a beautiful picture.

So, all of our hopes are set here on the return of Jesus Christ. “Behold, He cometh with clouds and every eye will see Him” (Revelation 1:7). And His coming is a proclamation of victory. And we will see Him returning in this victory.

The words “overcome,” “prevail,” “conquer,” and “victory” are all the same Greek word. If you took your English translation and went through it and took those words “overcome,” “prevail,” “conquer,” and “victory” and looked them up in your *Strong's* concordance, you will find every time they are the word *nikao*. *Nikao* means to rule or to conquer. And what He wants us to get from that, I think, is that conquerors never quit and quitters never conquer. That is just an absolute principle of life. Conquerors never quit and quitters never conquer. But because we are in Christ and He is the conqueror, He is

the *nikao*. And when you read it in the Greek language, it is even more prevalent because every time you see overcome or prevail, every time you see the words conquer or victory, every time you see that word *nikao* you realize this book is all about the conquering Jesus Christ. And it is almost like a magnification of the fact that in the Epistles it says He always leads us in triumph because that is who He is, He is the conqueror. He never quits and He never fails; He is always with us, so it is a beautiful picture.

And the whole teaching, you might say, culminates here because at the end, of course, we see a new heaven and we see a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. And God finally does, after all the events of history and things are over, God creates a new heaven and a new earth and He has those people on earth that He has always wanted to be here in earth, living like Christ with His life in us. So, redemption reaches its end and the Redeemer finds His joy. “He hath prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:16).

Now, we always tend to think about us and how great it is going to be for us because we are so self-focused. But we are not the One who went out and prepared the city. We are not the one who went out and built the house. We are not the one who provided the salvation, the means, the grace, everything. He did it. This is something that God has done from beginning to end. He has prepared for us a city to dwell in forever and ever and ever and ever. And it is like it is the book of His joy because we think we are going to be glad when He comes back, but He is going to be so much more thrilled to come back and to set up His kingdom. Not only to show who He is, but because He loves us so much and He has been preparing this. He has been excited about this for a long, long time. It will be that fulfillment of the new covenant promises for this to take place. And so it will.

Secondly, one of the reasons it needs to take place is to establish perfect government on earth. We have always wanted it. That is what God intended, you know. The Lord has been preparing for us a kingdom, and unshakable kingdom and a city and a dwelling place. And the joy that He receives when we are there and we are enjoying Him and His

righteousness is just a tremendous joy. It is a wonderful thing. And so, really, that is the book of the Revelation.

So we live in between two prayers. We live in between the prayer “Thy kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10) that Jesus gave us when He was here incarnate in the Gospels, and the prayer of Revelation 22:20, “Even so, come.” And as a Christian, you are praying both ends of that prayer in your prayer life. You are praying, “Thy kingdom come and be done on earth, even as it is in heaven.” But you are also praying, “Even so, come.” In spite of what is going to happen on this earth, “Even so, come.” In spite of the judgments that have to take place, “Even so, come,” because you know that this has to take place for the final consummation to happen. And so we are asking for His kingdom and we live between those two prayers, between Matthew 6 and Revelation 22. That is our life.

The Response Required

“Stand in the battle.”

“*Look up, for your redemption draws near*” and “*be faithful unto death.*”

(Revelation 2:10)

This requires personal boldness.

And the response that God expects from the book of the Revelation is simply, you might say, “look up because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:28). But as you are looking up and seeing how close your redemption is, you are able to do what?—to be faithful unto death. That is part of the response.

Do you remember Stephen in the early church as he was being stoned? And it is like he is looking up and as he is looking up, he is seeing the face of God, you know the face of Christ. And it is like he is almost enjoying his stoning. You are like, what's up with that? He is faithful to the point of death because he sees God. He sees the victory and he knows where he is going. And it is like Paul said, "It is far better to depart and to be with Christ than to stay here" (cf. Philippians 1:23).

So in the midst of all this persecution that was going on in the early church, they needed to know the victory was sure. And they did. And the book of the revelation covers the victory that we have in Christ Jesus in the final consummation of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And it does it in such a unique, symbolic way, through these signs and symbols. They are visuals so that we can picture and see these things going on.

But the response is, look up! See it! Know it is real. And as you see where you are headed, you can be faithful to the point of death. Because Jesus was faithful to the point of death and God raised Him from the dead. And if you are faithful to the point of death, God is going to raise you and give you a crown that is going to be very glorious. And it is like they say, "The sufferings of this present time are not even to be compared to the eternal weight of glory that you receive in the kingdom" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

So this requires personal boldness and being faithful to death. Love not your lives unto death that is the message there.

Well, let's pray.

Lord, we are amazed that You would speak to us at all, but yet You are trying to communicate, You are trying to get our attention. You are trying to speak to us. And You want to love us and pour out Your life into us and upon us. We are just so privileged and so blessed. And we thank You that You want to speak to us. I just pray that as we go

through, you know, and continue to look and make comparison of what You did in history, and then the fact that You spoke seven major times throughout history, we just want to see these things and put them together, you know, into one big picture, Lord, so that we can appreciate You more. Really it is about You, Lord and it is not just so we can have the knowledge. The Bible is inspired by You and by Your Spirit. There is no book like this, Lord, anywhere on earth. So, we thank You, Lord, for the inspiration of Your Holy Scriptures and for the way that You speak to us, even now, Lord. We pray You would give us ears to hear what the Spirit says to the church, that we might rightly divide the word of truth because we get anchored solidly in who You are and what You have planned. Lord, let us see it clearly so that we can defend the once for all delivered faith, for Your glory in Jesus' name, amen.

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HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 18

Dispensational and Covenantal Theologies

Brought to you by:

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We will pray and then get started. We are going to try to do a comparison today of the covenants and dispensations. The first hour I am probably just going to put on the board and then the second hour we will use the project to do more of a comparison. The first hour we just want to kind of review in our minds what the dispensations and covenants are. Then we want to come back and actually try to make a comparison of them and some principles to follow when looking at Scripture.

So, let's open up in prayer and give our attention to the Lord and to study and to thinking about Scripture.

Lord, we just want to pause and thank You that You are our God. And we know that history is so real because it is You. It is Your story. It is You unfolding what You are doing from the beginning. Lord, and as strange as it can be and as mysterious as it is, still, in spite of it all, we know that You are above all and all things are of You and through You and to You. You are in complete control, ultimately, of everything that is happening and that has happened. So Lord, enable us to just get the big view of things and try to put things together so that our basic, hermeneutic principles would be correct and we could rightly divide the word of truth. So Lord, help us to see these things for what they are and to appreciate both. To keep seeking and keeping our eyes on You, and letting You be the center, and that all of our thinking from Genesis to Revelation would be Christocentric. And that we could find peace and harmony and unity in the one new Man, Jesus Christ, no matter what view we might take, in terms of history or interpretation.

Lord, for Your glory we pray these things in Jesus' name,
amen.

There are basically seven dispensations and seven covenants. Now, there is one dispensation that is part of the Abrahamic covenant, which would be called the Palestinian covenant that would be included with Abraham. So, I hate to call it that. Actually, I would rather call it the land covenant. But as we look at these things we will go through dispensations first.

There are two words that we need to know. The word for dispensation is *oikonomia*. It is about from the noun *oikas*, which means a house. *Oikonomia* means a household or a stewardship. The word *oikonomia* or dispensation is found in 1 Corinthians 9:17. It is found in Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 3:2 and 9. It is found in Colossians 1:25. And it is found in 1 Timothy 1:4. I will say them briefly again. 1 Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 3:2 and 9, and Colossians 1:25 and 1 Timothy 1:4. That is the word *oikonomia* for dispensation.

The word "covenant," *diatheke*, is found in Galatians 3:15; Hebrews 9:4, 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 3:14; and Matthew 26:28. So we are going to try to do a comparison of these two schools of thought.

The seven dispensations that we will go through are: first the dispensation of innocence. That is found in Genesis 1–3. And you know, when you think of a dispensation you are talking about a management, a stewardship. Paul said he received the stewardship of the gospel. He called it the dispensation, or the administration or the management; and so it is just, the word for a household or the management of a household.

And the thought behind dispensationalism is that God manages His household differently through periods of time. In other words, in one period of time God manages His household this way. Then God switches and in another period of time called, "the period of conscience," God will manage His household differently in a period of conscience.

Then when He switches to human government, God manages it differently. And so God goes through these different phases of time and during each time God manages His household differently. Not unlike what might happen to a normal household.

When you first get married you manage your household one way, because it is just the two of you. You even cook differently. Sometimes you don't cook; you just go out and eat. But once you get pregnant and have children—I mean even before that— let's say you get a dog. That's what I did. That is how I prepared for training children, I got a dog. It was actually pretty good preparation. And if you met my boys you would know why. So, I mean, it changes your life when you do anything. Then when you get pregnant and have kids, you manage your household different. Then your kids start school. Then they go to college. Then you don't have a household because you are paying for the college. Then they graduate. They get married. Then they have kids. And you have grandkids.

And so, all through life, during different periods of life you start managing your household differently just because of the time period that you are in with your life. Then you become a senior citizen and you get discounts on your meals. I am looking forward to that. I have only got like two and a half years to go. Now I go out and I see all these senior specials and it is like I cannot get them. I have to pay full price, you know. And I am thinking, "Man, in two and a half years I can get this special." But then they will probably move it to five years back or something. But your life changes at different times.

The idea is this: God does the same exact thing through every dispensation. He does basically these five things. The first thing God does is God gives a distinct revelation, a divine revelation. He communicates to mankind some divine revelation. Now, what happens is, after He communicates that revelation, then secondly, God gives a specific test concerning that revelation. It is a test of obedience, usually. Then thirdly, what takes place is man usually fails. Well, always fails the test. I mean, failing tests has been part of our history so don't worry about it. It is the history of mankind. We have failed more tests; that is just what we do, we fail tests. But after the failure, the fourth thing that takes

place is that God brings a judgment; He has to because of His righteousness. He brings a judgment for the failure. But after the judgment God always provides a new beginning, which is called the new dispensation.

So, in other words, during the time of innocence, God makes His revelation of Himself. Then He expects a certain test, as when He expected them (Adam and Eve) not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But they did it anyway, they failed the test and because they failed the test, there was a judgment. They were kicked out of the garden. But then God started a new period of time, a new management, a new way to deal with mankind.

You see, that same progression happens during each of the seven dispensations. God deals the same way every time. And there is the same story every time until you finally get to the very end and God creates a new heaven and a new earth. And because we are changed and we have resurrected and glorified bodies, and Satan is finally where he ought to be, then there is a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. And there is no more failure. There is no more need for tests. You know what I mean? All of that is over.

And so that is the dispensational view of history. So let's take a look at it.

The first period is called "innocence." Now, that is Genesis 1:28 to Genesis 3:24. And in innocence, what do we mean by innocence? Do we mean innocence in the sense that a baby is innocent? When you look at a baby and you say, "Oh, how sweet! Oh, how innocent!" Is a baby really innocent? No. A baby is underdeveloped. Given him time, let him develop. Will he be innocent? No. He is just underdeveloped. You say, "Oh, how sweet, how innocent!" That is not what we mean by innocent here.

Adam and Eve were truly innocent. They were not just underdeveloped. They were innocent. They did not know evil. And so God put them there and He put them under a test of obedience. They could have become righteous. Were they righteous? No. They

were not righteous either. You mean, Adam and Eve were not righteous? No. They were not righteous. Adam and Eve were innocent, not righteous. If they would have obeyed, they would have been what? Righteous! If they would have done the right thing, they would have been righteous.

That is why even in the New Testament, we read what? “Be not deceived. He that doeth righteousness is righteous” (1 John 3:7).

They were innocent, not knowing right or wrong. They were completely, truly innocent. But they had a choice of doing the right thing to become righteous, or doing the wrong thing, disobey and become unrighteous. And we know what happened. They failed the test and they became unrighteous. They went from innocence down to unrighteousness because they failed the test.

Now, God gets glory when we obey. When we do the right thing, God gets tremendous glory. Even today, when we are born again and we are living in this situation that we have of the flesh and the spirit and all that, God still gets glory every time we obey. He is glorified. When we disobey then, of course, His name is smeared. But when we obey His name is glorified.

So they are in this perfect environment in the Garden and so the dispensation ends, you might say, with failure because man has got to make a choice. He makes the wrong choice. “His eyes are opened and he knew nakedness” (cf. Genesis 3:7). So Adam hid himself from God. God comes and says, “Adam, where art thou?” And that really is the question isn’t it? Where are you? Are you in Adam or are you in Christ? Well, he was in Adam. He failed. He became unrighteous.

And of course, God did not leave him there, did He? God went and made coats of skin. They covered themselves with fig leaves because they knew they were naked and had to do something about it, so they tried to cover their failure. They tried to cover their disobedience and their sin, which is what you try to do. You try to cover up all your

failure and disobedience and sin. You don't want everybody to know. But God says that won't work. He says, "But I will make coats of skins" (Genesis 3:21). An animal had to die. His blood had to be shed. God is the first one to kill an animal. And He covered them (Adam and Eve) with these skins.

So, what do you call that? According to our definition of grace in the Old Testament, what do you call that? God doing it, right?—God is doing it. He is doing grace. That is the thing that He does. God starts a new dispensation and it is called "conscience." He sticks them out of the Garden of Eden and He says, "I am not through with you yet." So conscience goes from the Garden of Eden until the time of what? Conscience dispensation will start in the Garden and where will it end? It will end at the flood, okay? So it will go from the Garden to the Flood.

And what takes place here, if you will turn in your Bibles to Genesis 6, you can see a couple of interesting things. And the knowledge of good and evil awakened what we call conscience. And his approach to God is now going to have to be based on a system of sacrifice. God started it by killing the first animal, shedding its blood, and clothing them with skins. But the problem with the situation under conscience is what we read in Genesis 6:1–2, that they began to break down every God-given barrier. Man, because his heart was evil continually and corrupt, started breaking down these barriers.

Then in verse 3 we read that God was still gracious and that He postponed judgment for 120 years. He did not want to judge. That was not what He really wanted. It was not His nature. It was not His desire to judge. But He says, "I will be patient." And He was patient for 120 years before He had to bring judgment during this time of conscience.

In verse 5, you cannot help but realize how degenerate man is becoming. It is just getting worse and worse and worse. Then by the time you get to Genesis chapter 6:11–12, they are almost to the point of saying, "God, we don't want anything to do with You. Just depart from us. We don't even want to know You." Then in 6:4, you read what? "There are mighty men of renown." What does that mean? I think it means ultimately that we

had reached the high point of civilization. Man had developed his civilization to a very highly educated point. And it wasn't just that there were great men that were tall and giants, it includes the fact that civilization had really developed. And there was a high point.

Now God is warning and saying, "Man, if you don't change I am going to bring judgment." But does man pay any attention to the warning? No, he doesn't. But in the midst of all this, according to Hebrews 11, there is a blessed hope. And the hope is the fact that Enoch was translated out of that whole situation. So, isn't that the way it is going to be in the last days? It says, "As the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (cf. Matthew 24:37). In the last days we are going to be breaking down every God-given barrier. Are we breaking down the barriers? Sure we are. Every God-given barrier that has been given we are breaking it down today in our developed, highly developed civilization with all these men of renown. And the more we have men of renown and the more educated we get, it seems like the more barriers, God-given barriers, we are just breaking down.

And that is why I tend to lean towards thinking we need to stand for some standards even in the church. Not because we don't believe in grace; we do believe in grace. But when people are in leadership and they are to be governing the church, because of the high standards that need to be kept, they need to be dealt with and we need to get rid of their position. It is not that they cannot still serve in the church. They can still serve in the church. But I lean toward the fact that people who sin, ought to be dealt with and they should not be allowed in leadership anymore. Why? Because we are breaking down almost every God-given barrier there is. At some point, somebody has got to stand up and say, "Let's hold the standard high. Let's keep it high." Not because we do not believe in grace, but because it was so important to counteract the broken down barriers that God has given.

And so, a lot of times, when somebody says, "What is your opinion about something?" My opinion won't be from a specific Scripture verse, it will be from my understanding of

Scripture as a whole. It is from what I see happened from Genesis to Revelation, going through these periods of time.

But side by side through all of this corruption during the time of conscience, God has developed what? He developed a way to relate to Him. But it is on the basis of animals being killed and their blood being shed. There is a sacrificial thing going on and being developed side by side. So it is pretty amazing. So that is conscience. Does God finally bring a judgment for man's failure? Yes. He brings the flood and He wipes the place out.

But after the flood, does God start over again? Yes. After the flood God says, "Okay, we will start a new period." And it is called human government. Well, it certainly relates to Noah. The first one is called a covenant of works. The second one is the covenant with Adam. And the third one, the covenant of Noah, you might say. It is the covenant of human government.

Now the key to it, you might say, is found in Genesis 9:6. He says, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by men shall his blood be shed. [Why?] For in the image of God made He man." In other words, capital punishment has to do with the value of human life. And because human life is so valuable because it is created in the image of God, God says there has to be human government established. And the purpose of the human government being established is to promote the value of human life.

And God says, "How do you do that? How do you promote the value of human life?" He says, "You put a high premium on it this way: If a man kills another man that man has to be killed. That is how you do it." And so He institutes human government. Not so that people, as individuals can take revenge, but so that human government can deal with the issue of capital punishment and promote the value of human life. And if you take a human life then you should lose your human life, because that is how valuable human life is. And if you don't hold that kind of a standard then the value of human life is lowered. And pretty soon it is not a big deal and people are not valuable. And hence, that is one of the big problems we have today in our society with the whole issue of abortion. Is that if

we are allowing human lives to be taken, then we are devaluing human life. But God set in human government that if you take a human life, you ought to lose your human life. Why? It is because man was created in the image of God.

So Noah comes out of the ark and God starts a new thing. The first thing Noah does is he builds a what? He builds an altar and he offers sacrifice. And the Lord it says, “smells the sweet savor of that offering” because we know that ultimately pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the sweet savor offering. But what is happening here under this new test of obedience here is that man is responsible to obey government. But does man obey government? No. What man proves is that he won’t govern for God. But not only will man not govern for God, what will man do? He won’t even govern himself properly. He fails the test.

And so, what God does is He brings a judgment upon them in such a way that He has to send the flood. And man is completely judged. And He rejects, you might say, all the people that reject His government. But then He selects, after this, a certain man. After He judges them, He selects a man named Abraham and begins a whole new thing called promise. And Abraham was just a Gentile. He was from the Ur of Chaldees. God selects this guy and says, “Because of grace I will start over again and I will do this new thing.” So man failed to govern for God and man failed to even govern himself properly.

Now during that time of human government, who else rose to the scene that was of renown? Nimrod, whose name means rebel or rebellious one, is the epitome of all those who rebel against God. He is the spirit of antichrist. He is the spirit of lawlessness, of *anomia*. And so we see this counterfeit taking place. But we know it will finally be fulfilled because Isaiah 9 says the government shall rest upon His shoulders. That is upon the Messiah, upon Jesus Christ.

But during this time of human government, man fails again. So God says, “Well, okay. I have got to deal with man differently.” So far God has tried innocence. That did not seem to work for man. He has tried conscience. That did not work for man. He has tried human

government. That is not working for man. So God says, "I will try promise." So He calls out Abraham and says, "I will deal in a new way." And at Genesis 12 we begin God's selection after His rejection of man in general. He said, "I cannot accept man in general because their heart is evil continually. They have built this Tower of Babel and they are totally against Me. Now I am just going to select one man and his family and I am going to start a whole new thing."

So He did. He selected Abraham. And God said in Genesis 12 (seven times), "I will, I will, I will, I will"...that is grace. God is going to do it. And His promise is that He will bring the Messiah. And that sacrificial death of the Messiah will be the ground of blessing for all mankind.

Now, all Abraham did in Genesis 15:6 was what? He just said, "Amen." He said, "Okay, if that is what You want to do, amen. I believe it. Let it be. Amen." He just gave consent and acknowledged that if that was what God was going to do, that was what was going to happen.

Now, did Abraham have a seed? The promise was to Abraham's seed. What kind of seed did Abraham have? Did he have an earthly seed? Yes. But did he also have a spiritual heavenly seed? Yes. Remember Abraham had two kinds of seed. He had a true earthly seed, but he also had a heavenly seed. And so the promise was to Abraham, both to his natural seed and to the spiritual seed, the heavenly seed that would come later. And so He made this promise to Abraham.

And He offered the people a relationship and it was based on this wonderful promise. But the people did not want to relate that way to God, unfortunately. And they did not follow God. They continued to get worse and worse and worse and worse. And so God said, "Well, I have to help these people. I have to add something to enable these people." And so He added the law. Now, why did God add the law? What does the New Testament tell us? It was largely because we did not know how to act. We would not act right. We would not act morally. And God said, "Well, I will give them the moral law and even the

ceremonial law so they will know how to act and walk with Me because they don't seem to be able to have that gracious relationship that I want them to have."

So God added the law. And so He started a whole new way of relating to men because men said, "We don't even want God to talk to us anymore." They even said, "Moses, you go talk to Him. We don't even want to hear from Him." And so God gave the law and a new period began. They really rejected the grace relationship that God was giving them. So He added the law.

The problem with the law, of course, was they could not keep the law either. The law was moral, just, good, holy, all of those things. But man could not keep the law. So God brought judgment upon them when they disobeyed the law. They failed continually. And it lasted all the way until finally He sent His Son, whom He promised to Abraham. And they proved that they did not want the promise because they did not want the Son who was the promise. And the prophets all along the way stoned and killed the people who even prophesied about the Son who was the promise that was coming. And then when the Son came, they actually killed the Son. So they did not want that relationship with God.

But God still says, "I am going to deal with you and I am not going to give up on you." And so after the law, He sent His Son and we entered the period, in terms of dispensational thought, the period of grace, when Jesus Christ came. "Moses brought the law, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (cf. John 1:17). And so, a whole new way of relating to people began. And we live in that period now, called the age of grace. When you look at things from a dispensational viewpoint, we are in the period from Acts 2 until Revelation 19.

So, the point of testing during this period is what? What test has He given man that man continues to fail, largely? What is the test point during the period of grace? It is to receive Jesus Christ. That is the test. All you have to do is receive Jesus. But is man, as a whole around the world, is he receiving or failing the test? He is failing the test. They are still

rejecting Jesus Christ even though God is graciously offering a relationship based on grace through Jesus Christ. Man is failing that test.

Now according to dispensational thought and view, man fails the test and judgment has to come, why? Because what is the condition of the church, according to dispensational thought, at the end of this grace period? What is the last church that was given in prophecy according to Jesus Christ? *Laodicea*. So the church ends in a period called *Laodicea*, which means the professing church is basically something that has lost its salt and it ought to be trodden under foot of men because it is worthless. And the church age ends as a worthless failure.

And then God has to bring an apocalyptic judgment on the earth. Judgment begins at the household (same word as management, dispensation), the household of God. And if it begins there, he says, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (cf. 1 Peter 4:17–18). So at the end of this period of grace comes a judgment because man has failed again. Even the church has failed. Or the professing church, at least, has failed to be what it was supposed to be. And that is the view.

And so then God does what? The last dispensation, God says, "Well, I am going to relate to man differently." So that is the kingdom. That is the thousand year reign. Jesus Christ returns and He sets up a thousand year reign. During the thousand year reign, man has to go to Jerusalem and has to submit to Jesus Christ and His rule, during the thousand year reign. If he does not, he does not get rain for his crops. His land is not blessed. His nation is not blessed. And of course, Satan, fortunately, is bound for a thousand years during this time. But we know that he is loosed at the end so that he can, what? He can bring that test again. There is a little bit of a test all during the thousand year reign because even though Christ is ruling with a rod of iron, men still have to go to Jerusalem to worship. And if they don't, they won't get blessed. If they do, they will. That is the way it is.

But at the end, when Satan is loosed and tempts them, does man pass the test or fail the test? Man fails the test again. So God has to judge Satan, the beast, the false prophet, you

know, the antichrist. They are all thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone and all the men that rejected God's plan are thrown in there too. And then God finally starts the final new thing, which is the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness. So that is the dispensational view. That is the way they view history, is going through these time periods. Okay?

Now, let's just, let's quickly try to go through the covenant view and then we will take a break. Then we will come back and discuss it all. Let's start with the covenant view and the *diatheke* or the cutting through. The covenant view believes that there is really just one covenant. Okay? That is important to know. There is really only one covenant. And that is the covenant of grace. But the covenant of grace is unfolding like a flower. And it starts with works: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and the new covenant. It just begins and it slowly is just one unfolding flower.

In other words, the dispensational view does what? They make a break between this time period and this time period and this time period and this time period. There is a break between each one. In the covenant view there is no break. It all builds upon this one. This one builds upon this one. It keeps building and building and building until it is finally unfolded and you see this just been one new covenant all along. There is no break.

So when you start thinking covenant theology, you have got to get rid of your breaks, as far as time period or else you cannot think like a true covenant theologian. Okay, there is no break. There is just one covenant, and it is called the covenant of grace. And so it builds on top of the previous covenant there. It is progressive.

The Father chose. The Son paid the penalty. And the Holy Spirit will apply the work of the Son. And that is just the new covenant. It is a bond in blood. The bottom line of a covenant is what? What is a covenant? It is an agreement. Probably a better word is that it is an agreement, but it is a relationship. There is a relationship built on blood. *Diatheke* means, "cutting through." They cut the animal in half. They walk through the bloody path. It is a relationship based on blood.

And so, what we see here I think one of the best definitions of the covenant thought process was given by Charles Spurgeon. And let's just read what Charles Spurgeon had to say (in his sermon) about the eternal covenant between the persons of the Godhead, because that is where it begins. And Spurgeon says this, under his definition of the covenant of grace. First of all, the Father speaks. Let's read there what the Father speaks. This is what the Father says when He speaks.

The Father says,

I, the Most High Jehovah, do hereby give unto my only begotten and well-beloved Son, a people, countless beyond the number of the stars, who shall be by him washed from sin, by him preserved, and kept and led, and by him, at last, presented before my throne without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. I covenant by oath, and swear by myself, because I can swear by no greater, that these whom I now give to Christ shall be for ever the objects of my eternal love. Them I will forgive through the merit of the blood. To these will I give a perfect righteousness; these will I adopt and make my sons and daughters, and these shall reign with me through Christ eternally.

That is what the Father said. And it is based on what?—the blood.

Then what did the Son say? Jesus Christ, the Son said this:

My Father, on my part I covenant that in the fullness of time, I will become man. I will take upon myself the form and nature of the fallen race. I will live in their wretched world, and for my people I will keep the law perfectly. I will work out a spotless righteousness, which shall be

acceptable to the demands of thy just and holy law. In due time, I will bear the sins of all my people. Thou shalt exact their debts on me; the chastisement of their peace I will endure, and by my stripes, they shall be healed. My Father, I covenant and promise that I will be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. I will magnify thy law, and make it honorable. I will suffer all they ought to have suffered. I will endure the curse of thy law, and all the vials of thy wrath shall be emptied and spent upon my head. I will then rise again; I will ascend unto heaven; I will intercede for them at thy right hand; and I will make myself responsible for every one of them, that not one of those whom thou hast given me shall ever be lost, but I will bring all my sheep of whom, by thy blood, thou hast constituted me the shepherd—I will bring every one safe to thee at last.

That is what the Son covenants by blood.

And then, finally, the Holy Spirit covenants this:

I hereby covenant, that all whom the Father giveth to the Son, I will in due time quicken. I will show them their need of redemption; I will cut off from them all groundless hope and destroy their refuges of lies. I will bring them to the blood of sprinkling; I will give them faith whereby this blood shall be applied to them, I will work in them every grace; I will keep their faith alive; I will cleanse them and drive out all depravity from them, and they shall be presented at last spotless and faultless. (Charles H. Spurgeon)

So, what is man's part then? If this is the eternal covenant, what does man do in relationship to what God has covenanted to do? He simply consents. He simply agrees. He receives. He accepts it. This is sort of like in Genesis 15 when Abraham said, "amen." God said that He would do it; Abraham said, "Amen."

So the covenant of works—the first one we would look at would be—Adam's relationship to God in the Garden. And you know, Romans 5:12–21 speaks of the new relationship that is based on the second Adam, or the last Man, you might say—Jesus Christ. And there are definite responsibilities here and there is obedience. I mean even in the covenant relationship there is this obedience. If this is the eternal covenant, what does man do in relationship to what God has covenanted to do? He simply consents. He simply agrees. He receives. He accepts it.

Now many covenant theologians do not include the covenant of works within the covenant thought process. Which I do not think you can do. I think you have got to include it because there has to be consistency. If you are expecting the dispensationalist to take all seven of their periods, then you have to expect the covenants to take all seven of their periods. The reason that many covenants won't include the covenant of works is because it is based on works. It is based on obedience for man; because if the first covenant was based on obedience of man, and man failed it and did not really enter into it fully, then there is the opportunity for maybe a later covenant to also be based on the obedience of man.

Now, of course we understand that the only way man can be obedient is if Jesus Christ lives in him. We cannot be obedient on our own. But still we speak of the obedience of one Man, the Man Jesus Christ. So from the very beginning of the covenant of works, we see God does expect obedience from mankind, even in this gracious covenant.

And that is why I see grace is for the purpose of obedience. Why do you have grace? You have the dynamic of the Holy Spirit, the power of the life of the risen Christ who is ascended and praying for you; so you can obey and keep the law, so you can keep the

covenant, so you can keep the relationship. God has intended that from the beginning. It is based on His relationship with His own Son. And Spurgeon brought that out well in his understanding of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and what they covenanted before the foundation of the world. And so, He does still expect us to have a true relationship of obedience there.

So that unfolded into the Adamic covenant which God made with Adam in Genesis chapter 3. Now Adam is outside the Garden, but the covenant is just unfolding, getting larger and becoming more visible. And the responsibilities still carry over. It is just the basis of man's relationship has changed a little bit, but obedience is still expected. And although man cannot relate to God anymore on the same basis except through Jesus Christ, he still has to relate to God based on obedience. The problem is, man is not just partly impotent; he is totally impotent to do it. But because of God's gracious covenant, it can eventually take place through Jesus Christ. And so God graciously gives in Genesis 3:15, the promise of a Redeemer. And so the covenant view is just seeing that God has unfolded from works to Adam and in Genesis 3:15 He brings the promise of a new Redeemer.

And then God unfolds His covenant further, because only grace can rescue man. God enters into a covenant with Noah and Noah's covenant builds on the other covenants. The heart of the Noahic covenant is a covenant of grace, the same thing. God spares him and his family. And it says, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). Right? So it is still a covenant of grace. And He just says, be fruitful, replenish the earth; multiply, your seed upon the earth again." And He says, "don't take anybody's life." But it is still a covenant, a relationship that He has with man. Do (observe) capital punishment and you can eat meat from now on, too. God added a few things in His relationship. He said, "All right, you don't have to just eat vegetables anymore. You can eat meat. Just don't eat it with the blood."

So the relationship is unfolding. God has still got the covenant; He is just showing more things in terms of relationship with man. His covenant with Abraham is also a serious

covenant based on blood. And Abraham has to sacrifice even his own son. And he gets to the point that Abraham is going to sacrifice his son and God stops him and says, "I have provided a sacrifice. It will even be Myself because I am still pointing forward from the same covenant in the beginning. I am still pointing forward to the time I am going to bring My Son and He is going to fulfill what is called the new covenant."

And so do you see how the covenant just keeps unfolding? It is just like a flower that is growing. It is the same covenant of grace. It has not changed. It is just that, you know, God reveals a few more things about it as time goes on. And just because you are in a gracious covenant with God does not diminish your responsibility towards God or towards man. Some people think it does, but He still wants obedience and He wants it to be a joyful kind of obedience. You cannot enjoy the covenant apart from true submission and obedience. Abraham could not enjoy it unless he submitted and obeyed God and nobody else can enjoy it unless they submit and obey God. Jesus was the one Man that was obedient and now He is in us and His same Spirit is in us crying, "Abba, Father." We want to obey and submit to God because of the gracious covenant that was made there.

Then He comes to Moses, after saying that Abraham would be the new guy and be the key for a relationship with the world because He would bring the Messiah through this guy. And so He gives a little more information on how He is going to unfold the new covenant by saying, "You are the guy. It is your family. It is your descendants. It will come through you."

But then He turns because of who man is and what man is and He makes a covenant with Moses. And the Mosaic covenant is from Genesis 19 through Exodus 24 primarily. You see four key viewpoints and several points that are important about this covenant. The Abrahamic covenant was not annulled. His promise to Abraham was not annulled by the law. If you are thinking from the covenant viewpoint, then we are just having a further unfolding of the original covenant, not an additional thing. The dispensationalists say, "Well, the law was added." But the covenant viewpoint is, no, not really. Not in that

sense. They are saying that the promise is the same. And it is temporarily replaced, you might say, by a different kind of relationship.

Secondly, the law was not something new. It was not something added. God's requirement of obedience was the same. It never changed. God is just unfolding more clearly what He expects. That is the covenant viewpoint. He was not adding something but He was just explaining obedience more clearly by giving the law.

Thirdly, the law does not end, or at least the moral law does not end with the Mosaic covenant. You know, it continues on, because moral law was never given as a way of salvation. So the covenant viewpoint says, "Look, God never gave the law as a way of salvation to begin with, so why would the law ever end." So they see the law continues on—the moral law, not necessarily the ceremonial law—because they see that as more cultural. But the moral law continues on. It has never changed. It is just an unfolding of what God expects. And He is making clear the kind of relationship and obedience He wants. So this covenant just builds on the former covenant. It is not something added that goes away.

And then fourthly, he says the law was given and God made it more specific so that we could see the need that we have, that we could see the reality of sin. That we could humble ourselves and be taught better how to obey God, because that is what God wanted from the beginning in the covenant relationship.

Then finally, to get to David and God makes a new covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7. And God says that this is uniquely messianic: "Not only have I chosen a nation through which the Messiah will come, but now I have chosen a family. And the Messiah has to come from this guy's family. I am being more specific in My relationships." Because He is trying to narrow it down to His Son Jesus Christ. And so they are only fulfilled in the seed of David. And of course the big question between covenant and dispensation theology kind of comes there because is it literal or is it figurative? Is it literal seed or the

figurative seed there? So He promises, from David's family, I will bring forth the Messiah.

And then finally, we get to Matthew and that is the difference. Dispensationalists will say, "We went from Exodus 19 to Acts 1 and then the new dispensation of grace started here." But the covenant theologian will go, "No, no, no. We went from Exodus 19 to Matthew 1. And the seed of David showed up in Jesus Christ and we got the new covenant. End of story." You see? There is a difference in the way they are viewing history. One says, "We go to Acts chapter one." And the other one says, "No, no, no, no! We went to Matthew chapter one and the seed of David showed up, just like we start in Matthew when it says that Christ is from the seed of David." Therefore, it is like that is the big deal and that is the end of the story. So, the covenant view is like everything starts there in Matthew 1. But the dispensational view is like: "No, no, no! It does not start until Jesus ascends to heaven and sends the Holy Spirit. And then we begin the new age, the grace age." So you see how they differ.

But this one (the covenantal view) is just an unfolding of the former promises that were made to Adam and to Noah and to Moses and to Abraham, down to David. And then finally the new covenant in Jeremiah 31 is made to Jesus Christ. And that will be fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ and it will be ratified by His own blood.

Look at a comparison of their views. I just want you to understand, if you can, the two views, because you are going to be faced with this when you talk to people the rest of your life, however long you live, in the church. These are the two basic camps of understanding Scripture. Some people are covenant theologians and some people are dispensational. And then there is a whole bunch of people in the middle that are a mixture. But these are the two big things. So it is good for you to understand how people are viewing history and how they are viewing Scripture this way.

<u>Dispensational Views</u>	<u>Covenantal Views</u>
1) Innocence / Edenic	1) The Covenant of Works
2) Conscience / Ante-Deluvian	2) The Adamic Covenant
3) Government / Post Deluvian	3) The Noahic Covenant
4) Promise / Patriarachal	4) The Abrahamic Covenant
5) Law / Mosaic	5) The Mosaic Covenant
6) Grace / Present	6) The David Covenant
7) Kingdom / Future	7) The New Covenant

You can see that innocence is the time that relates to works. Conscience is the time that relates to Adam. Human government is the time that relates to Noah. Promise is the time that relates to Abraham. Law is the time that relates to Moses. Here is where the problem comes in right here. This is the big problem because you cannot say grace is necessarily the time that relates to David. Can you? Grace is the time that relates to what?—to the new covenant. You don't necessarily relate that to a new covenant. Well, dispensationalists do. But the kingdom relates, maybe more, to the promise to David and sitting on his throne. And so when you get to this point, they match really well, till you go right on down here. Till you get to this point everything is pretty, it is fairly easy to find a good relationship between these two camps of thought. But when you get right here they crisscross and they divide in their theology. And so whereas, grace relates more to the new covenant and the kingdom would relate more to David.

This is where they start changing in the way they relate to one another. So they view it just as an unfolding of one covenant to the next to get to the new covenant. But these guys say, "No, no. That is not what happened in history. What happened in history is after the law, came Jesus Christ who brought grace. And later He is going to come a

second time. This is the first coming and this is the second coming. And He is going to bring a kingdom after that.”

But the covenant theologians go, “No that is not the way you are supposed to look at it. You know, don’t worry about that.” And that is why a lot of the covenant theologians tend to be more amillennial in their thought processes. There is not going to be a future thousand year reign because of the way they view Scripture. On a lot of things we agree up to that point. Then there seems to be the real issue and the battle in the theology is what happens in these last two little sections.

So you kind of have to decide, well, which one are you? You know, where are you at? But you definitely, if you understand the thought processes of the one people that look at divisions and periods of times of history, you look at it one way. And the people that look at it as one eternal covenant from the beginning, unfolding and just the same covenant just unfolding like a flower until it finally is in full bloom in the new covenant, then they have a different view of Scripture. So, let’s make a comparison of the two systems and some of their main tenets.

Comparison of Theological Tenets	
<u>Covenant</u>	<u>Dispensational</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God has one people: OT and NT compose the body of Christ • God has one plan: throughout all the OT and NT ages • Salvation: one plan of grace throughout history since the fall • Eternity: all who make up the body of Christ will be together in one place in His presence • The Church: includes all redeemed people since the fall • Christ: offered a spiritual kingdom and not an earthly one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God has two people: Israel in OT and the Church in NT • God has two separate plans: one for Israel; another for the Church • Salvation: early view had two plans & modern view is by faith in Christ • Eternity: Church rules w/ Christ in the New Jerusalem; while Israel is head of the nations • The Church: born day of Pentecost; OT saints not in the body of Christ • Christ: offered real kingdom to Jews; kingdom postponed until Millennium

First of all concerning God's people, covenant theology has this view that God has one people, the church, with two manifestations of it. One is in the Old Testament and the other is in the New Testament. And what God has been doing since the fall of man, concerns the calling out of a people to be His own. And the saints of God of the Old and New Testament compose the one body of Christ. And so they do not see the church as being a new thing, but they see the church as always existing. The church existed in the Old Testament. And the church existed in the New Testament.

Dispensational theology, however, has two people. There is Israel in the Old Testament, the earthly people and there is the church, in the New Testament, the heavenly people. There is an antithesis between the two people and the two do not meet, as far as equaling each other in the two periods of dispensation—the Old and the New.

So you see concerning God's people, the covenants see one people; the dispensationalists see two people—an old and a new—Israel and the church.

Then, concerning God's plan for His people, covenant theology says that since God has one people, the church, it has one plan for every age. Since Adam fell until the very end of time, it unfolds like a flower and there has only been one plan. There has not been a bunch of plans, just one.

Whereas with dispensational theology, its view says, "Since God has two people (Israel and the church), God has two plans. He has a plan for the earthly people (Israel, the kingdom) and He also has a plan for the church. And so they view, the church as this parenthetical period until God gets back to Israel. It is called the kingdom. And it is explained in Romans 9 through 11. So God's plan is to call out an earthly people for Himself, or a heavenly people for Himself, in the New Testament era.

The covenant view says that there is one plan. The dispensationalists say, "No, there are two plans. There is one for the Old Testament Israel that will still be fulfilled. But there is

one separate plan for the church.” They have a different thing and they get raptured and they go to be with the Lord and they come back. So, they see two different plans.

Now concerning salvation, covenant theology says that God has had one plan of salvation for His people that began to be worked out since the fall of Adam. It holds that the plan is a plan of grace and that each covenant is an outworking of the everlasting covenant of grace, as we read that Charles Spurgeon so well put. The content of faith of both Testaments has been the Lord Jesus Christ. Though obviously, the New Testament era has a deeper concept of understanding in its content of faith concerning Christ.

So passages like John 5:39, where Christ commanded the Jews to search out the Old Testament Scriptures because they testify of Him; and John 5:46 where Christ said Moses and the prophets wrote of Him; and Luke 24:27 where Christ began at Moses and the prophets and expounded the Scriptures of things concerning Himself, convince the covenant theologian that the Old Testament does have in its content the revelation of Jesus Christ. Therefore, faith had for its content the person of Christ also. Thus, to deny that the faith of the Old Testament saints was faith in a Messiah is to make them completely ignorant of the interpretation of the Old Testament revelation which they had received. Thus, covenant theology holds to one plan of salvation for God’s one people as He works out His one plan throughout history since the fall. See, that is their view.

Now dispensationalists, their view has been in some controversy. It believes in one plan of salvation or two. Modern dispensationalists argue for one plan of salvation—salvation by faith. Yet some like Charles Ryrie argue for a salvation by faith, but meaning a salvation by faith in God without any content of Christ. The controversy over whether dispensational theology has held to two plans of salvation may well go back to statements made by early dispensationalists. For example, the Scofield Reference Bible states:

As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ. The point of testing is no longer

legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ.

So they view that in the Old Testament it was legal obedience. Whereas the covenant says, no, it was faith in the Old Testament too.

Lewis Sperry Chafer writes this, as a dispensationalist:

With the call of Abraham and the giving of the law and all that has followed, there are two widely different standardized divine provisions whereby man, who is utterly fallen, might come into the favor of God. Under grace, the fruit of the Spirit is that which indicates the present possession of the blessing through pure grace. While under the kingdom, the blessing shall be to such as merit by their own works.

So in other words he says, like during the covenant of works, that when we get to the kingdom reign it will be very similar to what the covenant of works initially was when God first started with Adam. God will go back and relate to the people under the same kind of thing. That is what Lewis Sperry Chaffer says.

In this age, God is dealing with men on the ground of His grace as it is in Christ. His dealings with men in the coming age are based on a very different relationship. At that time the King will rule with a rod of iron. There is no word of the cross. There is no word of grace in the kingdom teachings but it will be ruled with a rod of iron. So he says that is going to be just like the initial covenant of works. Any view of two plans of salvation would be strongly denied by modern dispensationalists. If you went to Dallas Theological Seminary today, they would say, no, there is just one plan.

Now, concerning the eternal destiny of God's people, covenant theology says that since God has one people, one plan for all these people, and one plan of salvation concerning the redemption of His people, God has also one place in eternity for them all. That place in eternity and for eternity will be in His presence for all those who make up the one body of Christ.

Dispensational theology says—in some, not all. Some dispensationalists hold that the church will sit with Christ the King on His throne in the New Jerusalem, as He rules over the nations of mankind, while Israel will continue as head of the nations on earth. So Israel has one position, the church has another position. The distinctive of these two people continuing throughout eternity is the conviction of many dispensationalists, but not all. So some dispensationalists believe that, others don't.

Concerning the birth of the church, covenant theology holds that the church existed prior to the New Testament era, even back to the Old Testament period, including all the redeemed people of God since the fall of Adam. Certainly this view would agree there are two testaments, but not two people of God. There are two different sets of ordinances for the two testaments, but a local manifestation of the body of Christ. But there is still only one body.

What took place on the Day of Pentecost was not the birth of the church as the body of Christ, but the empowerment of the New Testament manifestation of the body of Christ.

Whereas the dispensationalist says: "No, the church was born on the Day of Pentecost and it did not exist before that time or that point of time in history. The body of Christ is strictly New Testament, not to be found in the Old Testament. The Old Testament saints do not make up, or are not part of the body of Christ. The New Testament believers are the bride of Christ. They are something new, something different."

But the covenant says: "No they were not. We are all the same."

But the dispensationalist says: “No, it is a new thing. It started with Pentecost.”

The covenant says: “No, it did not start with Pentecost. That is just another unfolding of the flower, another form or manifestation of the old church.”

All right, what about the purpose of Christ’s first coming? When Christ came the first time, the covenant theologian says that the purpose of Christ’s first coming was to establish the new Israel; that is the New Testament era of the New Testament manifestation of the church. Actually, this was a continuation of God’s past plan with a definite historical change. And the church was now related to God in a new and better covenant, yet which was still a manifestation of the old covenant of grace. The kingdom, which He preached, was not the offer of an earthly kingdom, but the authority of the king over the life of the one who would accept Him. Thus the kingdom Christ spoke of and offered was a present spiritual invisible kingdom. Christ never offered an earthly or visible kingdom. You see that?

But the dispensationalist says: “No, the purpose of Christ’s first coming was to establish an earthly kingdom in the fulfillment of Old Testament promises to Israel. Christ came forth preaching and offering the kingdom to the Jews. And had the Jews accepted His offer, an earthly visible kingdom would have been immediately established. Then He would have fulfilled that promise. But they didn’t. They rejected it and therefore He turned to the gentiles. So their view of Christ’s first coming is different as well.

Now, regarding the postponement of the kingdom, covenant theology has no concept of a postponed kingdom because it does not believe that Christ offered the Jews a literal and physical kingdom at the first coming. So the covenant says there is going to be no future kingdom because He did not even offer it when He came the first time. There is not such thing.

The dispensationalist believes the kingdom that Christ offered the Jews at His first coming has been postponed until the millennial reign because the Jews rejected the King.

Then God moved to put, you know, plan one, the kingdom, in temporary abeyance, while at the same time He began the unfolding of plan two, the church. The church is only a parenthetical period until God can get back to plan one, the kingdom. Before God returns to unfurl plan one, plan two must be brought to a close by the Rapture of the church from the earth. The Rapture will be followed by a Great Tribulation period. Thus, the church's Rapture is a pre-Tribulational rapture, which will bring judgment on a Christ-rejecting gentile world and the purification and preparation of His people, the nation of Israel. And then they will receive the King when He comes back the second time.

So their view of the postponement of the kingdom is different too. The covenant says that there is no postponement because there is not really an earthly kingdom. But the dispensationalists say: "No, there is an earthly kingdom. It has been postponed and like what you read in Romans 9 through 11, it insures that He will work with them again." And so their view of history is different.

Concerning the church as the work of God, the covenant theologian believes the calling out of an elect people—that is the formation of the ecclesia—has always been God's primary work. Therefore those of covenant persuasion, who hold to a Rapture of the church from this world, would place it at the end of the Tribulation period. They would argue that it is only the dispensationalist's strong antitheses between Israel and the church which created a pre-Tribulation. That is the dispensationalist has to get the church, plan one, out of the world before the Tribulation so God can get back to plan one, the conversion and purification of Israel.

On the other hand, the one holding to a covenant view may—not all do—see that God will deal with Israel again in the future. But what He does, He shall do through the New Testament manifestation of the church. Therefore, some covenant theologians would argue that the church will pass through the Tribulation and will be God's instrument of redeeming Israel. Those saved during the Tribulation will be added to the one church and will be part of the one body of Christ. These men would argue that it is not the Rapture passages of the Bible which would lead a dispensationalist to a pre-Tribulation Rapture,

but his concept of the church as standing totally antithetically to Israel and not capable of being on earth during the time God works with this so-called earthly people.

But the dispensationalist says that the church is a parenthetical work of God. Hypothetically, if there had been no rejecting of the kingdom by Israel, there would have been no church. Before God gets back to that primary work (the kingdom of Israel), the secondary work must be graciously brought to an end by the Rapture of the church at the beginning of the Tribulation period. So, they have a different view, obviously, of God's relationship to the church.

**“Behold, the days are coming,
says the LORD, when I will
make a new covenant with the
house of Israel and with the
house of Judah.”**

Jeremiah 31:31

Now regarding the fulfillment of the new covenant, covenant theology is convinced that the promises of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31 are fulfilled in the New Testament.

Dispensationalists, like Darby, held that the new covenant in Scripture was made with Israel and Judah and not to the church. Fulfillment will be at a later time, to them. Mention of the new covenant in the New Testament has no reference to the church.

C. I. Scofield held that there is one new covenant with a double application—one to the church now and one to Israel in the future. Another view believes that there are actually two new covenants in the New Testament—one with Israel and the other with the church. The biblical references must be divided into three distinct and separate applications: those in the Gospels (which refer to the new covenant), along with the references in Hebrews 8, 9, 10 and 13, have application to the new covenant with the church. Those references in Hebrews 8:7-13 and 10:16 would refer to a new covenant with Israel. Finally, Hebrews 12:24 would refer to both of them being brought together. So they disagree on the fulfillment of the new covenant as well.

Now regarding the problem of amillennialism versus pre-millennialism, covenant theology, historically has found, for the most part, an amillennial theology, defining the kingdom as strictly spiritual, invisible and present now in this era. However, it is not correct to say that all covenant theologians are amillennial. Some, in recent years, have been strong pre-Millennialists. That is to say, they not only hold the kingdom to be present now in its spiritual form, but they would also hold that there will be an earthly kingdom in the future, but without the return of the Old Testament memorials, which dispensational pre-Millennialists would see. They would also hold that God will deal with Israel once again, but not outside of the church. So there are some covenant theologians that do believe there will be a future millennial reign. It will be brought about by the church and that is why it is post-Trib.

The dispensationalist theology has always gone hand in hand with pre-millennialism, though in many senses, a different brand that one would find in a covenant pre-Millennialist. It would be true to say that all dispensationalists are pre-Millennialists and that most dispensationalists are pre-Tribulation Rapturists. But it would not be true to say that all pre-Millennialists are dispensationalists, or that all pre-Millennialists are covenant theologians because they are not. So, they disagree in how that will be formed at the Second Coming.

The Second Coming of Christ. The covenant theology views the coming of Christ as the culmination of God's one total plan, the calling out of a people for Himself based on His everlasting covenant of grace. Some believe His coming will lead immediately to the final judgment and the eternal state. Others believe His coming will be followed by the millennial period and then the final judgment of all men will take place, followed by the eternal state.

Whereas, dispensationalists see the Second Coming of Christ fulfilling a manifold purpose that consisted of His coming for His heavenly people, the church, at the Rapture. It also consists of His coming in power and great glory to bring final judgment on a gentile, Christ-rejecting nation—all the nations that rejected Christ. The two comings are separated by a tribulation period where God purifies His people, the Jews, and begins His judgment on the nation. The Second Coming in power and great glory will be followed by the millennial period, which will then lead to the final judgment of all men and then the eternal state.

So you can see, all the way through, almost every major issue, the view is different. And why is it different? In the conclusion, there is just a different view of history. And the dispensationalists see a time of innocence that goes into a time of conscience, to a time of human government, to a time of promise, to law, to grace and then finally the kingdom, and then the new heaven and the new earth. Whereas the covenant says, no, it is just an unfolding of works from Adam to Noah to Abraham to Moses to David and finally to Jesus Christ Himself. And then He will return and bring about the new heaven and the new earth.

So, you know, let me come back to the original statement. All men have a theology—women too. All women, all men have a theology. Many have embraced one of these two systems. Others have little or no idea of what constitutes their theological system. Nonetheless, they do have a means of understanding God. They do have a system of theology and a world view. Everybody in this room has a world view. Whether you can identify it or not, you still have it. It is there. You have a theology whether you know it or

not. It is just some people have take the time to identify what they believe; others have not.

So, perhaps the discussion has left you a bit bewildered. Well, if great men of God have disagreed and still do disagree on systems of theology—and it must be admitted that the two systems we have discussed are not the only systems of theology, but they are the two basic ones. Then a student may wonder how he or she could ever come to any definite conclusion concerning one system of theology. Perhaps we should look at just a couple basic guidelines to follow in developing a system of theology. Just a couple!

First, in the initial stages of your Christian life, do not make the concern for the development of a system of theology the matter of primary importance. You know how skilled man is at putting first things last and last things first. When some become Christians, and maybe even before, they seem to desire a quick easy handle on understanding the Bible and its overall message, especially the prophetic system. Instead of reading the Bible in order to gain an overall impression and understanding of its message, men plunge into the deepest subjects. Instead of reading the Bible to learn its vast and illuminating content, they often begin to read books about the Bible which shape them and could even prejudice them towards the true message of the Bible.

A good rule for the new Christian to follow is this: the first few years of my Christian experience I will make the Bible my primary object of reading and study. And that should be true throughout our whole Christian experience. Human writing should never take the place of Scripture in our lives as our authority, or as our focus of study, but especially in the early stages of our walk with Christ. We need continual input of the Word of God apart from human writings.

So, learn the content of each book of the Bible. Learn the great stories of the Bible. That is why we went through Mears's book, *What the Bible is All About*. Not that you are new Christians, but it is like, most people never get through and they never read the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation. That is why we go through Chuck's series there and

listen to everything. It is important to just get through the Bible and learn the great things of the Bible.

Get acquainted with the great characters of the Bible. Come to know the content location and sections of the Bible. Learn the verses of the Bible, the great ones. Use a Bible with a minimum of notes. It is just the smart thing to do before you begin to try to develop a system of theology. Read key books that deal with the systems of Christian theology. The mistakes so often made by Christians are those who read books covering just one side of an issue. That is the problem. And that is true concerning the major and minor doctrines of Christianity, as well as the systems of Christianity. Obviously, if we read only one side of an issue, we will probably emerge with that viewpoint as our conviction. Read books from both viewpoints. You know, read a covenant theology and read a dispensational theology. Get both viewpoints. Don't just take one side. Look at both.

Then check carefully the definitions of each system. Are they consistent? When they use a term, is it a biblical term and do they use it consistently? And then check the hermeneutics of each system because that is really the issue. It is the hermeneutics because it is your view. The question is not approached by the simplistic notion that one system basically is literal while the other one is figurative. In reality both systems handle some sections figuratively and some sections literally. They both do that. So, you have got to take that into consideration. Check their hermeneutics. And we do not have time to go into all of that.

But I do want to ask you this since there are basically three ways to look at it. That is the one-program view, which is covenant, or the two-program view which is dispensational. But isn't there a possibility for a third view, which is a combination of the two? I think so. And I tend to lean that direction. I look at the covenant view and I look at the dispensational view, and I realize there is a lot of truth in both views. But there are some problems in both views. And I am not smart enough to reconcile all of those problems. What I want to do is just look at it and appreciate the two views and realize that I don't know everything. But I want to understand this guy is a covenant theologian. I want to

understand where he is coming from. And this guy is a dispensationalist. Where is he coming from?

And after I see where they are coming from, then what do I want to do? I just want to get back to the Bible and go, “Lord, I don’t know all of this. So, help me. Smarter men than me, greater men than me, and more spiritual men than me have disagreed on these issues for years. But I do not want to despair because of that. Because I know You have called me and You are walking in me and using me. And I am developing my relationship with You. And I want to have a large view of the Bible so that I do not find myself polarizing to one extreme or the other.” And so I want to read both sides. I do not want to just read covenant theology. And I do not want to just read dispensational theology. I want to read both of them so that I can step back and kind of understand where it is coming from so that I won’t polarize and go to one extreme or the other. But people like to polarize because they like to have all of the answers for everything. And that is a form of pride.

And remember the last thing that I would ever say would be this: “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies” (1 Corinthians 8:1). And so when you find yourself in a place where you are going to be discussing some of these issues of theology, always go back to remember that knowledge will just puff up and produce pride. But if you can bring it back to Jesus Christ—that is why we wanted to read from Genesis to Revelation and realize that it is Christocentric—from that standpoint, I go: “Yeah, I love the covenant view.” Because the covenant people keep bringing it back to the fact that it is all Christ. And that whole new covenant thing, that part of it I love. But then the dispensationalists do that too. They will say that it was Christ during this period and it was Christ during that period. You know, it somehow relates to Him.

And that is the point. Whether you are dispensational or a covenant, we still always need to be going back to Christ because it is all about Him. And if we get back to Christ in a true picture, we will be humble and we won’t be prideful. And we won’t have to draw swords and kill each other from one camp to the next. That’s just the way it is.

For example, I was—I won't mention the name but someone came to me this week and he showed me an article by a renowned Christian. And he said, "What do you think about this?" And I read the article because in the article this guy was saying—for example in Ephesians 2:8-9—this guy was saying it, "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." And this great Christian, who is well known today, wrote that the thing that we were given as a gift, he said was faith. Faith was the gift. So we were looking at it and Joe said, "What do you think about that in terms of the grammar?"

So I looked at it and I went, "Well, grace is feminine and faith is feminine." But the article used here says that we receive this *gift*—which is neuter. So, you can't take a neuter article and refer it back to a feminine word, as a rule. That would be a really extreme exception to the rule. And here is Paul writing and we know Paul was a super educated guy and his writings are so consistent in terms of their form in grammar and syntax. And so, since Paul is writing it, I can't say that faith is the gift. I do not think it is. And I do not think grace is the gift either. Because that is feminine and it does not go back to either one of those. So if it is neuter, what does it refer back to? It refers back to the whole view of salvation. It refers to the whole statement of it.

"For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves" (Ephesians 2:8). What does the *toûto*, the neuter, refer back to? It refers back to the salvation, the process of being saved. It is by grace through faith. So it includes both of them. But what he referring back to is the whole concept of the whole phrase which can be neuter. But when you break it down and grace is feminine and faith is feminine, it cannot refer back to either one of those. It refers to the whole concept, the big thing. But men, in their theologies want to break it down because they are trying to prove their point. You know, they want to prove their little theology.

So, this happens all the time in Christianity. So I just warn you to step back and try to get the big view. But at the same time, don't get so prideful that you can't talk to people. Humble yourself and don't draw swords and kill each other.

All right, questions?

Student question: Which view is older, covenant or dispensational theology?

Well, there's always—which is the older view? I think there have always been the two views. Some people say, well, which was the older view, like in terms of eschatology? Did the early church believe in the Rapture? Did they believe it was pre-Trib or did they believe it was post-Trib? I think they had both views at the same time. I think there have always been the two views. And I hate to relate it to this, so take this with a grain of salt because to turn it over to, in any country, in any place where you have people that get to express their opinions. In America, we have Democrats and Republicans are our two big groups, right? And you see it all the time on television. The Republicans are sitting there going, “Why in the world does this crazy Democrat think like that?” And then it goes counterpoint and the Democrats are sitting there going, “How in the world can this Republican think like that?” And they are both looking at each other going, “What is wrong with you? How could you think this way?”

And that is the whole issue, isn't it? Is the fact that they have two different ways of looking at things. And that is just part of the way human nature is. You know, we just look at things differently. And I think that is what you see here. It has always been there, two views. And it is just the way people look at history. It has always been there, always will be.

And that is why I wanted to bring it up, because though for some of you, you don't really care, but some of you do. You are still going to be faced with these two basic views of Christianity and views of Scripture. They have always been here.

“Questions?”

Student question: “Why do you think God did it this way? There are several ways to look at this and why didn’t He just make it clear? Any idea?”

He hasn’t told me. I am shocked! He should tell me. I don’t know. You know, it is sort of like—somebody was asking a question yesterday about Hebrews 6, and if they have tasted of the heavenly gift and da, da, da, da. And they fall away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. And you know, on and on and on. I do not understand why the Holy Spirit, when He wrote the first five chapters of Hebrews, why He wrote those in the indicative mode. And then when He gets to chapter 6, He just jumps over into the subjunctive mode of hesitating affirmation and the mode of hypothetical statements and gives us this. And then as soon as He finishes, He jumps right back into the indicative mode again. And I go, “what is up with that?” I mean, because the subjunctive mode would be the mode that if you want to be ambiguous about something and not be clear, that is the mode you would jump into. And I go, “well, how come the Holy Spirit jumps into that mode? Right where we want Him to be clear, He jumps into a mode of more ambiguity. And you go, “why did You do that? Now we are going to sit around and argue over this forever!” And it is almost like He goes, “Yeah, I know. That’s good.” But you know what I mean? You go, “what is up with this? You are speaking in the indicative mode. Why didn’t You continue in the indicative mode and make it more clear to us? Why did You have to make it just a little more darkly—that see through a glass darkly thing—couldn’t You have just brought a little more light to it so that we wouldn’t be arguing over whether they were saved and then lost it, or whether they never were saved to begin with? How come You left it so ambiguous on that point?”

And I do not know the answer to that either. I just know that that is what He did. And when I step back and look at it, I know that when something goes into the subjunctive mode, like Hebrews 6, I need to be real careful about what I do with that. If it had been in the indicative mode I would have been more likely to be dogmatic. But since it is subjunctive, I have to go, “Hmm. He purposely wanted to be a bit ambiguous here. I need to chill.” That is what it tells me. And that is what I do. Okay.

Student question: “When you gave the meaning of the dispensational view, you said that it was against God’s nature to judge, and I was just wondering, isn’t He just? Wouldn’t that be according to His nature to judge, in order to be just?”

Yes, but I think you have to read it in the context. What they were explaining was that it is not normal. It is God’s strange work. Yes, He is just and He does judge, but it is not His normal nature to do that. You know what I mean? He has been very gracious and He does not want to judge. But He does because it is His strange work. But it is not what He wants to do.

And even through the Old Testament, you notice how God dealt with His children. I am not saying this is the way you should deal with your children. Because some people that read books like *Raising Kids God’s Way* would not agree with it at all. But when you look at the history of the Old Testament, how did God deal with His children? We saw it when we went through, didn’t we? He went to His kids and He said, “Don’t do that.” Right? Remember? And then what did the kids do? They did it. And then what did God do? He sent a prophet or somebody and said, “I thought I said don’t do that. Isn’t that what I said?” And what did they do? They kept doing it. And then what did God do? God sent another prophet and said, “Didn’t I tell you not to do that? If you keep doing that, do you know what is going to happen if you keep doing this? You are going to get judged.” And then what did they do? They kept doing it. And then God sent another prophet and said, “I thought I said I was—you guys are getting close!” You know what I mean? And then finally what did God do? Bam! Finally He judged. And what I see all through the Old Testament, God is dealing with His own kids. God was patient and He warned them and He warned them and He warned them. But boy, when the day came, He beat the mess out of them. I mean, He just—He didn’t just go, “Sorry, I told you...[slap, slap].” I mean, He beat them. He judged them. It hurt! You know what I mean? And they remembered it for a long time. But then, after a while, you forget. And you go back to it again.

That is the way I see God dealing all through. As I step back and I look at it, I see God dealing that way. And I know there are some things they say today, you tell a child once. You say, “no,” and that is it. If he does not obey you—Bam! You know, and then he learns quicker. And I am not saying you shouldn’t do that, necessarily. I am just saying that when I look at the way God did it, He was pretty patient. And He reminded people over and over and over again before He finally judged. But then He did deal with it and it was for rebellion because normally when God judged, it was always for rebellion. I mean, when somebody spills their milk, God doesn’t care. Okay, you spilled your milk. So what? Big deal! But it is rebellion if God kept telling them, “Don’t push the glass over” and you push it over. Because He said: “don’t push it over” and you push it over anyway that is rebellion. That is the spirit of rebellion. And He kept dealing with that. And when they finally got to the point where He said, “These guys are just rebellious.” Then He said, “I am going to whip them so that they can remember it.” And He did.

Some of you have experienced that, I can tell. Some of you never have been spanked.

All right, any other questions about it?

Student question: “Do you think it is good to study both views?”

I look at both and try to appreciate both.

Student question: “And can you give us some authors or titles to read?”

Well, I certainly lean—I have to admit—I lean more towards dispensational theology. And I am not sure if that is because that is the way I was raised. You know what I mean? That is what I have heard most of my life. But when I went off to Bible college, the original founder of the Bible college that I went to was Presbyterian. The original founder and he was a covenant theologian. But it is mainly a missionary school. And that is what always cracked me up. It is the whole thing about the Calvinism, Arminianism thing. You know, people say, Calvinists aren’t missionary. You know, that is not true. They are

some of the most missionary people that have ever existed, Calvinists. You can't say that and it is the same way with covenant. You can't say that because some of the covenant theologians I have met are some of the most missionary minded people in the world.

But when I went to Columbia Bible College at that time, what I appreciated about them was that they taught both. They taught the dispensational view and the covenant view side by side. They wanted us to understand both views. And I was raised in churches that were mostly dispensational. So, I was influenced by that. But what I have tried to do is I have tried to read Hodge, you know, and get a whole covenant view of theology. At the same time, I want to read Lewis Sperry Shaffer and find out the other side. I want to be able to know what these guys are thinking and believing because I am still working on my understanding of the whole view of Scripture and how the two fit together.

I just know where it breaks down is over here, you know. And this is where, I tend to, when I get to this point, I tend to go, well, I lean more this way. But there really is this Romans 9–11 thing going on, that there will be a kingdom. It is promised to Israel. Do I understand all of it? No. I don't understand it. I just step back and I see it and I go, "you know what, I think there is going to be one." Can I answer all the questions about how it is going to happen? No! I don't know how to answer those questions. Does that bother me? No. It doesn't bother me. It bothers some people. And it probably bothers some people that it does not bother me. And I hope that bothers them.

So don't feel pressured. But just keep looking at it and appreciating it for what it is. And always bring Christ into the middle of it because both of them see Christ. It is just that their view is just a little different. But yeah, I tend to lean a little bit to the dispensational side. But I am certainly not like extreme. I'm more in the middle and so I can have fellowship. I have got good friends that are covenant theologians.

Student question: "If the covenant theology says historically that there is no Millennium and the Bible clearly talks about a thousand year reign, how can they support that view?"

Well, because their view is that this is spiritual. That is their hermeneutic system. Their hermeneutic says, “we read that passage that you read, but our hermeneutics tells us that is spiritual and figurative.” You read it and you go, “oh, my hermeneutics tells me that is literal.” That is the difference. You see it as a literal thousand year reign and they see it as, “no—that is not literal.”

Student question: “Does Calvary Chapel interpret it literally?”

Calvary Chapel teaches a literal thousand year reign. Yeah, absolutely! In that point, Calvary Chapel is definitely dispensational. Exactly! Sure you are. Yeah. And almost every—I don’t know any Calvary Chapel teachers that hold the covenant viewpoint when it comes down to this point at all. They know it and they appreciate it. And so that is why I say you have got to appreciate the two systems that are out there. You know what I mean? And if you understand where people are coming from then it is easier for you to have a relationship with them and even to talk to them.

And you get to a certain point, where you realize what? You have to get to certain points where you agree to disagree, don’t you? And so if I understand their system—when I am talking to somebody that is a covenant theologian and I get down to these two last points—I know when I get to that point I have to do what? I just kind of go, “I can stand here and I can beat my head against a wall and try to beat their head against a wall and we can argue about this forever or we can quickly go: “Okay, we already know we are going to disagree on this interpretation. So let’s just agree to disagree and let’s move on.” Instead of standing around fighting with each other and the world is looking on going: “What are they fighting about now?” I would rather not do that.

That is why I say, I lean definitely toward the dispensational viewpoint, just not extreme. I am not like Dallas. Some people are. That is okay for them.

All right. One more and then we have got to pray.

Student question: For an objective approach to Scripture in terms of hermeneutics, what would you recommend?

Do you mean in terms of a book maybe to read or something? Well, hermeneutics is simply your system, your understanding of how the Bible interprets itself. That is what hermeneutics is. It is you finding within the Bible principles that are found within the Bible about how the Bible interprets itself. But the problem is, I go to the Bible, you go to the Bible. We are looking at the Bible, reading the Bible. And I have some preconceived ideas and you have some preconceived ideas, and those are going to affect what we find in the Bible. You know what I mean, in terms of the way that you come to your conclusion? You know what I mean?

So, you know, like sometime it would be good for you to read something like Milton Terry's book on hermeneutics. That is a good classic book on hermeneutics. And it deals with these systems, because that is all hermeneutics is the track by which you come to meaning. You know, it is just like a railroad track. And you have got this railroad track and you have got this place you are going. Let's say this is meaning. That is where you are headed and you are on this train. And that is interpretation, but meaning is what you want. You don't want interpretation, do you? You want meaning. Where is meaning? Where do you find meaning? Meaning is in the mind of the speaker. Meaning is in the mind of the communicator. Who was the communicator? God. But the way you interpret things, the track you get on to find meaning, is your system of interpretation. And so this track would be called hermeneutics. That is hermeneutics. It is the track that you are on. It is not interpretation. It affects your interpretation because you are following certain laws to come to that. That is why I said there are laws of the Spirit and there are laws of human language. If you stay on the track of the laws of the Spirit and the laws of human language, while you are interpreting and keep adjusting, you will finally get to meaning. If you follow the laws of the Spirit and the laws of human language because the Bible is a linguistic incarnate. It is a God-man thing. Then you will find it eventually because the Lord will lead you into all truth.

It is like what you are saying, what is hard to get, is how can I be a born again Christian and I got my brother and sister over here and they are born again Christians; and when we read the Bible we come up with these two different views. But there is evidence that we both have a relationship with Jesus Christ and our lives have changed and we are not what we used to be. Well, I will tell you how, it is because that is what is going on. Our view and the way we are approaching it is different.

So, what do you do? “Knowledge puffs up; love edifies.” Love them. That is what you do. You might disagree but you have got to love them.

Student question: “When there are different views or interpretations of Scripture, doesn’t that open the door for the cults to come in and give their point of view too? And then cults start by taking partial truths and it just gets so far out there.

Yes. Obviously, that is the whole point. In other words you have got covenant theology and you’ve got dispensational theology. And they are different. It seems like these people that are in here, they can seem to get along and love each other and have relationship. The people out here, you know what I mean, never shall these two meet. They will kill each other. And the cults are out here too. You see what I am saying? They are out here too. But what we are saying is there is something in here; although, I tend to lean on this side.

Well, let’s pray.

Lord, we thank You for this time. We pray that again—because I know I am still learning—we pray that You would lead us into all truth by Your Spirit. We know You will. I do not have any doubt on that. But we’re are going to have this kind of thing going on all the time in the body of Christ. So Lord, help us in our relationships as well.

And thank You for Calvary Chapel that has been kind of—I mean, I know we have got our distinct position on the rapture of the church and it clearly defines us as dispensational there. But also there has been an openness; there has been just an acceptance of fellowship with other members of the body of Christ. At least historically, that has been the case. Let us be fully convinced in our own mind. We have got to be. At the same time, Lord, give us Your love and Your grace. We have just got principles to follow in our relationships in the body of Christ. So help us to keep those principles before us while we are being more of a Berean and more fully searching Your Scripture and being convinced about things. Lord, let us still never forget love and edification of the body as a whole, while we stand for what we believe is the truth. For Your glory, we pray in Jesus name, amen.

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