

On The Way to Jesus pt 1
CREATION – FALL

Could you explain the truths concerning Jesus by using the scripture that Jesus had...The Old Testament?

My hope is the upcoming series will help us see how it all fits together in our hearts and minds.

Luke 24:25 And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Verse 27 is challenging for us.

The OT narrative as it has come down from Moses to the prophets and preserved by scribes is one long story with many authors.

It was not written to give a detailed historical or scientific account of things – although it is accurate in what it teaches. It uses complex language comprised of narrative, poetry, apocalyptic, and prophetic styles.

There is an overarching story that places God’s dealings with humanity in the context of real human history. While the God of scripture is transcendent, He is also personal, and He is engaged with His creation.

Today I’m starting a 10-week series that will take us on an overview of the Historical-redemptive flow of the entire Bible. I’m following the main themes laid out by Greg Lanier, Assoc Prof of NT at RTS in Orlando.

Several weeks ago, our daughter sent me a bible reading plan to get my opinion. I liked it and thought, “This will preach.” Her idea was to use it as a devotional guide with her daughters in their homeschooling. If a 36 yr old homeschool mom found it helpful, then I dare say it could be meaningful for us as well. (The reading plan will enable you to follow along. It has been posted on our webpage and sent out as a pdf via REALM, along with the breakdown for the 10 week series).

Some of you have or are reading through the Bible and at times you may find it hard to get the overall picture when you’re bogged down in Numbers, Leviticus, Chronicles, Job, or Ezekiel, etc.

I hope this series will help connect the dots, or as Dr. Lanier says, “give you a skeleton which supports all the body parts of scripture.”

Greg Lanier – Reading Plan...

Redemptive history is *the* decisive skeleton, in my mind. It puts Christ at the center for both the OT and NT but is also faithful to the progressive way in which God pursues his people from creation, to fall, to redemption until new creation. It gives a coherent way of understanding the flow of the OT and its complex fulfillment in the NT.

By its very nature, this series will be a fly-over touching on key themes in the Historical – Redemptive flow of scripture. Hopefully it will encourage you to regularly read through the various parts of the Bible.

“All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable...” 2 Tim 3:16

While it may sound like a teaching lecture at times, I want the series to help us get a sense of God grace, love, and presence with His people from Eden to the New Jerusalem. I want us to get a sense of how all of scripture puts us on the way to Jesus. Ultimately the Bible is THE STORY – HIS STORY.

OT prof – “Every page of the OT is full of grace”

What is “Redemptive History”?

The Triune God enacting his purposes *in history* to accomplish redemption/salvation of a covenant people drawn from all nations to be present with them receiving glory and praise forever.

SO WHAT???. Let me tell you a personal true story...

Ex: “Martha Collins” – illness, coma and recovery and she lost her memory and was a different person. She had been a very proper refined southern lady. A respected woman, mother, and wife of a well-respected member of the UGA faculty. When she came out of the coma, she was the opposite – rather unrefined, a bit bawdy and unconcerned with social graces. She would come over to our house, enter without knocking, lounge on the sofa smoking while asking for a drink. Her demeanor and language were more colorful. She didn’t really know our names but referred to us as the “fat lady with all the children.”

The circumstances of her life had altered her character and memory of who she really was.

That is a picture of what happened after the Fall in Gen 3, and it is a picture of what happened to the people of Israel after 400 years in slavery in Egypt. The notable line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was now a band of refugees fleeing Egypt. God went to great lengths to convince them that he was for them. They struggled with remembering who God was and who He was for them.

Albert Baylis...They had passed through the sea without muddying their feet. But had they really become the people of Yahweh in heart and mind?

How do you prepare a people to avoid the degrading tentacles of a deteriorated culture? How do you lay a foundation for a worthwhile life?

The answer is Torah. Torah simply means instruction. The Torah is the name for the first five books of the Bible. As we open the Bible we encounter that instruction—teaching given to prepare the Israelite people for their encounter with pervasive cultural paganism. **We can learn from this TODAY.

Friends, we are not much different from the people of Israel or from Martha Collins when we forget God and all that he has promised to be for us.

WE ARE THE SPIRITUAL DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM so we can take heart as we consider the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises. We don’t have to despair, even in times of trial. God’s promises and blessings extend beyond what we can see and touch in this life.

CONTEXT OF THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES:

The historical narrative of Genesis, the first book of Moses, was not recorded at the time of the events.

There was a gap of ~2600 years~ from Adam to the Wilderness wanderings 4000BC to 1450 BC. The lengthy period from Eden to the return to Canaan is given by Moses in Genesis. Obviously, it is an edited version of all that happened. The focus is on the Historical-Redemptive narrative of God’s dealings with His Covenant people.

- It’s a context of a people who were in bondage for 400 years. The Torah was not written for students doing anthropology, biology, botany, astronomy, or Astro physics. It was written for those coming out of generations of suffering.

They have been treated as if they have no value and can be mistreated or killed at any time with no consequence.

“Only Pharaoh has divine dignity and value, not Hebrew slaves.”

This divine Word of instruction is God coming alongside telling them who they are. The gods of the culture were characterized by sensuality and violence. Since we become like the gods we worship, it was important for God through Moses to give his newly delivered people THE TRUE story about THE TRUE God.

So, he started at the very beginning, ...a very good place to start.

Moses doesn’t start at the beginning because he is obsessed with time and sequence. Genesis starts at creation because it lays the foundation for who we are in relation to God and who He is in relation to us.

Ps 100 “know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.”

Forgetting or denying that truth leads to all sorts of personal and relational dysfunction. **How we view God's relationship to the world controls our entire worldview.** It was true for Israel, and it is true today for believers and non-believers!

** We can't go a single day without some headline telling us of the exploits of men and women trying to live without God and they are demanding that we do the same. A clearer understanding of the flow of God's saving work will re-enforce the foundation of our own souls as we live in this present age.

There are Seven Themes that Untie the OT AND NT (G. Lanier)

Creation

Fall/Curse

People

Place

King

Nations

Promise – this has a familiar refrain: **“I will be their God; they will be my people and I will dwell in their midst.”**

The 16 various topics in the Reading Plan will fit under one of these Seven themes.

#1-2 KEY THEMES of CREATION AND FALL

Genesis 1:1 **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**

Genesis 1:27 **(KIDS YOU KNOW THIS VERSE) 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

Taken together these verses show us that the creation narrative is going somewhere. The days of creation are marked out, but the peak of the story is the creation of male and female in God's image.

God Is Sovereign –Gen 1; Ps 19; Job 38

Creation out of nothing – It all came about by the divine word of a personal communicating God.

Word-creation stresses more than method. This Divine Word emphasizes that creation was in accordance with God's knowledge as embodied in his word. His purposeful design and the predetermined function of all things was underscored, since he often named what he created. Thus, the essence and purpose of his creation was outlined from its inception. And if he named these things, he then owned them, for one only names what one owns or is given jurisdiction over. (Kaiser p. 42)

We are not our own. We don't define ourselves. The failure to acknowledge the Creator and give Him thanks is the first step on the path toward idolatry (Roman 1:18-25)

*** Ancient idolatries reemerge when we forget the Creator:

Astrology – horoscopes

Earth worship

Sensual and violent rituals

Materialism – thinking our lives consist of what we have. “He who dies with the most toys wins.”

Autonomy

God Extends His Blessings (Kaiser p.40ff)

The theology of the whole book of Genesis is centered around the goodness of God in extending the “blessings” of His promise-plan so generously all the way from creation to the choice of Abraham's line to be the means by which God would bless the nations of the world with his gift of the good news.

Creation takes place in context of Wisdom and Delight

Job 38:4, 7 4 Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?... 7 When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Prov 8 – Wisdom personified and is there with God in creation v. 22-31

Edwards – God did not create out of sense of need, but out of a profound overflowing delight that he had experienced in Himself as the Trinity.

Triune participation

“Few things are more foundational to Christianity than the doctrine of the special creation of all things by the triune God, with the Father, Son, and Spirit all at work in the unified act of creation.” (Greg Lanier)

Gen 1 God and Spirit

Jn 1 Col 1 Jesus

Dwelling place for God and man – Beale

Eden was the dwelling place of God with his people. As such, it was His temple and Adam and Eve were the servants in the temple.

IMAGE BEARERS – This deserves an entire sermon....one day.

Gen 1:26

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;

I can’t leave this out but will return to it in more detail with a short series on the first part of Genesis.

We are to reflect what the reign and rule of god looks like.

*** If you want to know WHO God has MADE YOU TO BE then Look up to Him and His design in the created order, not a design that we imagine in our own minds.

FALL- ORIGINAL SIN – JUDGMENT

Gen 3??

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” 4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

“What distinguishes the Judeo-Christian worldview is the doctrine of the original fall of Adam into sin. It is the ‘problem’ for which the rest of Scripture provides the ‘solution.’” (Greg Lanier)

SIN arrives in Gen 3 and by Gen 6 we see that the intentions of man’s heart is evil continually, and it grieved the heart of God.

WE KNOW how sin happened and why sin has become such a problem, but we don’t hear any discussion of it among the characters in the narrative of Genesis. Job delves into it, but that is a different sermon series.

We read the narrative of Genesis and see the evil that is done, but we have the insight of Gen 3. The characters in Gen didn’t have that book. I wonder, what if anything, did Adam and Eve tell their kids about Eden and how paradise was lost.

At some point in his spare time Moses writes the narrative of Genesis which resonates with what people are going through.

Nothing explains the lived experience of humanity like Gen 3.

Ex: Even Jordan Peterson was befuddled trying to explain the layers of complexity of the biblical narrative.

Our life experience pushes us to ask this question...

Are things the way they're supposed to be?

Was that a question that sons of Jacob pondered as they were plotting to sell Joseph? They may not have known the answer, but they knew the reality. They were plotting evil, and they knew it, but didn't care.

Are things the way they're supposed to be?

The biblical narrative establishes that creation "was good" and then something went wrong. Creation was degraded and distorted. Something happened.

While it is IMPORTANT to understand the true story of God and creation, it is ALSO IMPORTANT to understand that things are not as they once were. We now live "East of Eden." Life will be hopelessly frustrating and confusing if we don't come to grips with that. Paradise is Lost.

EX: relationships, marriage, parenting, church life will be frustrating if we don't understand the mess that we are in and why. i.e. We are BIGGER SINNERS THAN WE DARE ADMIT...

The result of the Fall is that sin with its lies and deceptive power entered the world and left its mark on all of us.

Sin begins with deception and calling into question the very Word of God and the character of God.

The results of sin are quickly manifested:

Adam and Eve lost the innocence and original righteousness they had at creation. They felt shame and covered themselves.

They started blame-shifting. Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed God – "that woman YOU gave me."

They were exiled from the Garden, and thus begins the human longing to get back to Paradise.

Murder comes in with chapter 4 – Cain kills Abel

By ch 6 "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This resulted in the judgment of the Flood.

One result we can all identify with is when we veer from living for God's kingdom and pursue our own agenda. Satan is still at work tempting, deceiving and accusing. He wants to blind us to God's truth.

Ps 51 explains that we are born in sin.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

Jer 17:9-10 The heart is more deceitful than all else

And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

The NT adds to our understanding of the Fall, especially the book of Romans

Ch 1 We see the downward spiral of sin because of unbelief:

v. 18 we suppress the truth in unrighteousness

v. 21 we know God but don't acknowledge Him as God or give thanks

v. 22 professing to be wise we become fools

v. 21 we exchange the glory of God for an image of man and creatures

v. 25 we exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship the creature rather than the Creator.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT GOD DID NOT LEAVE US IN OUR CONDITION – He sent CHRIST

6: 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the midst of the gloom and rebuke FROM SIN came God's surprising word of Promise.(Kaiser p. 47)

The first word of Promise in God's plan came in Gen 3:15 – The Seed of the woman

(God to the serpent)...

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman,

And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head,

And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

We will be frustrated in life if we don't understand the Promise of Good News...Satan will be crushed and,
IN CHRIST we are more loved and forgiven than we dare imagine.

God through Moses gave His people the Torah to remind them of and form them according to His values.
He instituted rituals and celebrations as reminders that He saved them as a people for His own possession.
We are His. It is He that has made us and not we ourselves

EX: EV Hill – mother sending him to college – “Remember whose boy you are”

God has done the same for the church...THE TABLE

These elements tell us, “Remember whose beloved child you are.”

It is a love that cost Jesus His life so that we might have life.

RESOURCES:

Walter Kaiser – The Promise Plan of God

Albert Baylis – On the Way to Jesus

Horatius Bonar – Earth's Morning, or Thoughts on Genesis

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