

## THE PROGRESS OF REDEMPTION

Lesson 12 – Act 1 Completed, Salvation Provided

**Intro:** We have seen God do some exciting things in the OT. There have definitely been many highlights.

- God dealing with Abraham and promising that through him would come a great nation, and then through him too would come a “blessing” to the whole world. That was definitely a highlight.
- We have seen highlights under Moses. It was an exciting time when he stood up to Pharaoh and called his people out of Egypt. We watched as God set-up the OT system of sacrifice and law under Moses. It too was an OT highlight.
- We have also seen the highlight of David and Solomon. It was a tremendous and exciting time when God dwelt for those 80 years in Jerusalem and in the temple and the people of God shined and there was prosperity and victory and justice and peace.

We have also had times of darkness and confusion as we’ve studied together.

- We’ve seen the darkness of when God wiped off the face of the earth all the Israelites in the wilderness – all 12 tribes – and start again with their orphans and just three who survived from Egypt (Moses, Joshua, and Caleb).
- We’ve seen the darkness of the times under the Judges when the people of God were in great disunity and unconnected to each other. For 400 years nothing seemed to change or advance, but rather, we saw nothing but the rebellion of Israel and God’s longsuffering with them. We saw examples in the Book of Judges of great depravity and sin and it looked like God wasn’t doing anything to advance his plan of redemption, but then he gave us a glimmer of hope in the Book of Ruth, which occurred during the days of the Judges.
- We’ve seen the dark and confusing time when God split the nation of Israel into two nations and destroyed one of them. The temple and all of what God built during the days of David and Solomon were destroyed. We’ve seen the dark and confusing times when Judah was disciplined and led into captivity for 70 years.

And last week we ended with a partial remnant coming back to the land of Israel and rebuilding the wall and the temple. Whereas most of the nation of Judah is scattered over the 127 provinces of Persia, some, a very few, returned to the

land of Israel and put together a shell of what once stood.

If this is a great drama, and we have said that it is, it is missing something. It is missing a climax. **Every great drama has a climax.** Most great dramas have a number of climatic moments, but so far in the program of God we have not seen a GREAT MOMENT OF CLIMAX. The greatest scene so far – is the redemption of Israel from Egypt through the 10 plagues and the defeat of Egypt's religion. GOD'S RESCUE OF ISRAEL IS THE GREATEST REDEMPTIVE ACT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, BUT THAT HAPPENS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY, NOT WHERE WE WOULD EXPECT THE CLIMAX TO A GREAT DRAMA.

If someone were to ask – what is the Old Testament about? Where does the Old Testament find its conclusion? We would have trouble answering such a question. The Old Testament does not “take us anywhere.” The story of the Old Testament ends in confusion. The people of God are scattered over the world. The temple is a shell of its former glory. The curtain falls on the Old Testament, not as a testament of victory, but as a testament of despair. The Old Testament closes with the people of God under foreign domination, enslaved again, as they were in Egypt.

Most of you have been taught, and you think, that there are two sections of God's Word. You call one of them the Old Testament and you call the other the New Testament. You have always separated them in this way. But if you do that, you leave the Old Testament story without a climax and without an ending. The people return to the land of Israel and the story ends in silence. 400 years of silence. 400 years where God was saying and doing nothing.

Writer and Pastor Mark Dever says this ...

The nation of Israel had waxed and waned for almost two millennia until their hopes almost vanished. Even after their release from Babylonian exile, only several hundred years passed before another alien invader crushed them - the mighty Roman Empire. Feelings of disappointment verged on despair. What about all their old hopes? Would their deliverer never come? Would fellowship with God never be restored? Would the world never be put right? God had promised his people all these things. And God delivered on his promises. The New Testament is the story of how all the promises God made in the Old Testament, God kept.

It is important to think of the NT Gospels as a continuation of the story of the OT, for without the Gospels there is no climax to the OT story. It ends not

fulfilling any purpose and not reaching any goal.

Bible Scholar Meryl Unger says this,

"It is necessary to realize that the period described (in the Gospels) is culminative of the OT age, preparatory to and predictive of the new age, but not the new age itself."

What Unger is saying is that the Gospels are a part of the Old Testament story, not the New Testament story!

This is important to realize. Jesus was an OT character.

- He was born as a Jew.
- He was raised under Jewish historical circumstances.
- His birth happened under the domination of Rome where his parents were required to go to their birthplace for a census. This follows how the scene is left in the OT when the people return to the land of Israel. They were slaves then, they are slaves when Jesus is born.
- He is raised under Jewish laws and customs.
- He is taken to the Temple to be circumcised and redeemed at the age of 8 days old.
- During his life-time, he was under God's Old Testament system of sacrifices. As a matter of fact, we know that doves were sacrificed at his circumcision.
- He celebrated the OT feasts.
- He was under obligation to fulfill all the laws of God spoken in the OT.

**JESUS WAS AN OLD TESTAMENT FIGURE IN EVERY RESPECT.** He brought in the new age, but he did not live in it. He was under obligation to the Old Covenant and the Old Age, not the new. **The new comes because of him, it did not come before him.**

Act II has not yet begun, we are still in Act 1. We pick up the Bible and turn to the Gospels and we think that we are turning to the beginning of a story. We are not. The new story does not begin in the gospels. The new story, the new age, ACT II, begins later.

Unger is saying that this is the climax of the OT story and the OT age. The NT story and the NT age has not yet begun. As a matter of fact, the OT makes it very clear that there is a climax coming to the OT story.

Jeremiah 33:14-22 <sup>14</sup> "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup> In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

Notice what Jeremiah promises.

- There is coming a time when the “gracious promise” God made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah will be fulfilled.
- A “Righteous Branch” will arise, will SPROUT from David’s line. Out of this root, a new thing, a “righteous branch” will sprout.
- He will do what is “just and right” in the land.
- Judah will be saved and He will be called, “the Lord is OUR Righteousness.”

<sup>17</sup> "For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, <sup>18</sup> and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever." <sup>19</sup> The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>20</sup> "Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, <sup>21</sup> then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. <sup>22</sup> As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me."

Notice what else Jeremiah promises.

- David will never lack a man to sit on the throne ... (the Davidic covenant will come true in Christ)
- And the Levitical priests will never lack a man “in my presence” to “offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.” (the Mosaic covenant will be fulfilled by the Christ, and the people of God will never know a time again where there is no temple and no sacrifice and no salvation.
- This covenant, according to Jeremiah, this promise, is GUARANTEED. It is NOT conditional. God has made a covenant with the day and with the night, so that they each come at the appropriate time. And God will never break that covenant, and nor will he break the covenant promise to do these things.
- AND NOTICE THE LAST PROMISE. Its seen in :22, “As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my service, and the Levitical priests who minster to me.” He is saying – JUST AS THE ANGELS CANNOT BE NUMBERED, AND JUST AS THE SANDS IN THE SEA CANNOT BE NUMBERED, SO THE PEOPLE WHO WILL BECOME THE OFFSPRING, THE CHILDREN, THE DESCENDANTS OF THIS DAVID, WILL NOT BE NUMBERED.

What is Jeremiah promising?

He is promising that there will be a PEOPLE, filling the earth, who know God and who glorify God. He is promising a world filled with the glory of God. He is promising, what we have said is the theme of the Bible.

**Habakkuk 2:14** <sup>14</sup> For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

He is promising, what he promised to Abraham ...

**Genesis 22:15-18** <sup>15</sup> And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven <sup>16</sup> and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, <sup>18</sup> and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Have you ever seen that before? God promises in the OT that the climax of the OT will be the coming of Messiah. It is through this Messiah, that all of the promises made to Israel will be kept.

Next week, we will look at the Climax of the Story – Act 1 – The Provision of Salvation