

THE PROGRESS OF REDEMPTION

Lesson 13 – Act 1 Completed, Salvation Provided – THE GOSPEL CLIMAX OF ACT 1

Last week we noted that the OT has no clear climax if you do not include Jesus as part of the OT story.

And the NT confirms it. Look at Matthew 1:1.

Matthew 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

What a great one-sentence genealogy and explanation. This is the record, or the account, of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. The Gospels begin by reminding us of the story we have been following. It shows us both the unity and the progress of God's redeeming activities in Act I.

Christ from **David** from **Abraham** = Unity

We have one continuous story. Christ does not come onto the scene with no history and no past. He comes down the line of the story of redemption that we started with Abraham. God said that he would do something and Christ is directly connected to that story and goal of God.

But there is also this ...

Abraham to **David** to **Christ** = Progress

We have progress. From the seed of Abraham flows a great nation. This great nation is like Abraham, but greater. He is the seed and the nation is a fruit of that seed. And in the same way, Christ is a fruit of David. He is like David. He is a king, he is a righteous ruler, he is a just ruler, he brings victory over the enemies of God's people, but he too is greater.

There is progress and there is unity in God's plan. If you just begin with the NT and don't stop to see this, you will miss much of the exiting story of Act I.

Now — let's look at Matthew 1:17.

Matthew 1:17 Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

We have here an odd symmetrical account.

14 generations from Abraham to David

14 generations from David to Exile

14 generations from the Exile to Christ.

Here is a super-duper question. If anyone can answer it, you will get an A for the course. **How does this verse relate to our course in Progress?**

- 14 generations from Abraham to David — Scene 1 — I will build a Great Nation
- 14 generations from David to Exile — Scene 2 — The Nation Split and into Exile
- 14 generations from the Exile to Christ — Scene 3 — The Partial Remnant Returns

Do you see? Our whole course is in Matthew 1:17. We have not made up these divisions of God's drama. God has made up the parts of His drama.

Therefore, it is important to realize that the Gospels are tied to Scene 3. We are in that period where the partial remnant returns to the land. WE MUST SEE CHRIST AS A PART OF THE THREE BOOKS OF EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER.

Samuel Dodd says this about Scene 3.

"The return was pre-eminently a religious move. Besides the visions of political independence which filled their minds, they felt that a new religious center must be established. The prophets had inspired them to believe that from Jerusalem, now called the Holy City, and from the Temple in Jerusalem would go forth an influence that would bring the world into religious subjection to them."

Reich also notes this ...

"The hopes of the ancient people of God were wrapped up with the appearing of a Person and the exiles expected the Messiah to appear during the life-time of the restored Jerusalem."

Maybe you didn't notice anything strange about the new temple that the returning exiles built, but God's glory never came upon it. That's why, a few weeks ago, we see the older people weeping. They know that this temple is not

as great as the temple before. They probably noted that it wasn't as ornamental, but that wasn't the important part. The Temple did not again hold God. God did not meet with them. They did not have a place where they could go and point and say, "God lives there."

And yet, God had promised a BETTER TEMPLE would be built.

THE EXPECTATION AND MOTIVATION OF BUILDING THE TEMPLE, WAS NOTHING SHORT THAN THAT GOD WOULD AGAIN DWELL AMONG HIS PEOPLE. And that expectation was not fulfilled until a new temple came.

Do you remember this word of Jesus?

John 1:14 ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Greek word for "dwelling", *eskenosen*, here means to 'encamp' or 'live with'. It is the same type of word used in the OT. God "encamped" with Israel in the Tabernacle. What John 1:14 is saying is that God became flesh and encamped as God among us. We have the glory of God living again on the earth. And he is living not in a covering of a tent like the tabernacle, or in the covering of rock and stone as in the temple, but he is living in covering of human flesh.

That's why we read this ...

John 2:19-22 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." [20] The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" [21] But the temple he had spoken of was his body. [22] After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

The people of God think that the "outer" structure is the important part. It is not, it is the inner reality of the presence of God. God came in human flesh. **A greater temple came and walked upon this planet.**

And the people of Israel failed to realize that the Messiah they hoped for, was actually the temple they desired.

THE GOSPELS

Is there anything in the STRUCTURE of the Gospels that tells us something

about the importance of what God is doing here?

Think of this....

God thinks that the climax of His story is so important, that he tells us it four different times.

One writer has said this ...

“So multi-faceted is the glory of Christ’s person and so far-reaching are the ramifications of His finished redemption that one Gospel account could not portray His full-born splendor.”

Our thesis throughout our course has been that the Bible is an account of what GOD HAS BEEN DOING AND SAYING ON THIS EARTH. God has been involved, intimately, in the affairs of men and He has been active in bringing his goal to completion.

- GOD called Abraham and made certain promises to Him.
- GOD called Moses and empowered him to rescue the people of God from Egypt.
- GOD choose David and empowered him to become a mighty theocratic king.

And even in the dark and confusing times God has been directly at work.

- GOD was active in the days of the Judges arranging the marriage of a woman named Ruth.
- GOD was active in the days of the Exile saving the people of God from extinction by a woman named Esther.
- GOD was active, even with pagan kings like Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, causing them to do exactly what God desired.

The Bible is a history of what GOD is doing and what God is saying.

With that in mind, you might be excited to read these verses.

Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

Acts 2:22-24 "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. [23] This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and

foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. [24] But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

2 Cor. 5:19 ... God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

You see, the life of Jesus Christ is the GREATEST ACT OF GOD upon this world. We have traced many events of God through history. BUT THE EVENT OF THE LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS IS THE GREATEST EVENT THAT GOD HAS EVER DONE.

One writer has said this ...

"The shadow of Christ extends backwards to the remotest horizon of history, and His influence, power and glory move onward to the culmination of all time and history."

Remember this...

EVERYTHING THAT GOD HAS EVER DONE, OR EVER WILL DO, INCLUDING THE FINAL GOAL, STANDS ON THIS: THE LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

Two other writers have said this ...

"His cross of shame is His everlasting pedestal of glory."

"The crucifixion of the Son of God marked the high-water mark of man's sin and iniquity. It involved the crime of the ages, and yet, by the sovereign grace of God, it was made the channel and means of the greatest blessing to the human race."

Does that sound familiar to you students of Progress? Does it remind you of this

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"And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

You see, there is a new age that was promised in the OT. Let's read of that time.

Jeremiah 31:31-33 "The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. [32] It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. [33] "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

From John Piper "How Christ Fulfilled and Ended the Old Testament Regime"

1. All the Scriptures bear witness to Christ. Moses wrote about Christ.

John 5:39, 46: You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. . . . If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

2. All the Scriptures are about Jesus Christ, even where there is no explicit prediction. That is, there is a fullness of implication in all Scriptures that points to Christ and is satisfied only when he has come and done his work. "The meaning of all the Scriptures is unlocked by the death and resurrection of Jesus." (Graeme Goldsworthy, Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture, p. 54)

Luke 24:27: And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

3. Jesus came to fulfill all that was written in the Law and the Prophets. All of it was pointing to him even where it is not explicitly prophetic. He accomplishes what the Law required.

Matthew 5:17-18: Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

4. All the promises of God in the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. That is, when you have Christ, sooner or later you will have both Christ himself and all else that God promised through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:20: For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

5. The law was kept perfectly by Christ. And all its penalties against God's sinful people were poured out on Christ. Therefore, the law is now manifestly not the path to righteousness, Christ is. The ultimate goal of the law is that we would look to Christ, not law-keeping, for our righteousness.

Romans 10:4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Therefore with the coming of Christ virtually everything has changed:

1. The blood sacrifices ceased because Christ fulfilled all that they were pointing toward. He was the final, unrepeatable sacrifice for sins. Hebrews 9:12: "He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."

2. The priesthood that stood between worshipper and God has ceased. Hebrews 7:23-24: "The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever."
3. The physical temple has ceased to be the geographic center of worship. Now Christ himself is the center of worship. He is the "place," the "tent," and the "temple" where we meet God. Therefore Christianity has not geographic center, no Mecca, no Jerusalem. John 4:21-23: "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.'" John 2:19-21: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . He was speaking about the temple of his body." Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."
4. The food laws that set Israel apart from the nations have been fulfilled and ended in Christ. Mark 7:18-19: "[Jesus] said to them, 'Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him . . . (Thus he declared all foods clean).'"
5. The establishment of civil law on the basis of an ethnically rooted people, who are ruled directly by God, has ceased. The people of God are no longer a unified political body or an ethnic group or a nation-state, but are exiles and sojourners among all ethnic groups and all states. Therefore, God's will for states is not taken directly from the Old Testament theocratic order, but should now be reestablished from place to place and from time to time by means that correspond to God's sovereign rule over all peoples, and that correspond to the fact that genuine obedience, rooted as it is in faith in Christ, cannot be coerced by law. The state is therefore grounded in God, but not expressive of God's immediate rule. Romans 13:1, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting."