

## **THE PROGRESS OF REDEMPTION**

### Lesson 14 – Act 2 Begins, Salvation Proclaimed

Intro: Act One has been finished. God, through Abraham, has provided the Salvation that will truly bless all the families of the earth. God said that through Abraham, a great blessing would come and that blessing has surely come.

We emphasized last week that Christ is the fulfillment of the OT expectation. Christ is the climax of the OT. He is the last OT character. Christ is the one who is the “lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.” That phrase has no meaning, unless it is vitally and closely connected to the OT story and OT system. As a matter of fact, nothing makes sense in the life of Christ without the OT background.

I also hinted last week that the Reformed view of things is different than the dominant view of evangelical culture. The dominant view is called, “Dispensationalism.”

All those in evangelical Christianity believe that Jesus’ death and sacrifice is central and completely necessary for our salvation. All those in evangelical Christianity believe that the Word of God is central and inerrant and sufficient for our lives. But the view of most Christians and most Christian leaders in our country, called Dispensationalism, disagrees at some important points from the Reformed view.

We disagree mainly in two areas.

- First, how the Bible is put together. In other words, what is the “story” of the Bible. What is the Bible truly about? What is God doing in the Bible?
- Second, we disagree about the details of what will happen next in the so-called, “End Times”.

Now let me be very clear. If I were living in a city where the strongest and healthiest church was a church pastored by a “dispensationalist”, I would go there and involve my family there. The disagreements I am speaking of are not major in the sense of causing one of these leaders or these churches to teach a different gospel. We believe the same gospel. We are kissing cousins in every sense of the word. We stand, more than any other two groups in Christianity, together to defend the Bible against the critics, the gospel against theological liberalism, and both camps are intimately concerned with honoring God and

glorifying Him.

But our disagreements on the Bible have real consequences for the Christian life. I believe that the Dispensational teaching is in opposition to what you have been taught, and have been excited to learn, in the last 14 weeks. I believe that it determines the goal and scope of your ministry.

Now — to understand, I must define Dispensationalism.

**Dispensationalism is the teaching that the Bible is about two separate people of God, two separate plans of God, and two separate futures for these two peoples of God.**

In other words, the major difference between Dispensationalist and the Reformed Faith is that we see one people of God, one plan of God, and one future for all of God's people. They do not.

Now, you don't know this but this teaching is constantly influencing your whole understanding of the Bible. You all hold beliefs in contrast to what we have been learning here and you hold them without even knowing it. Let me demonstrate.

What have you been taught about Israel? Is Israel different than the Gentile church? (Yes) How?

What about the rebuilding of the temple again? What have you been taught? (That the temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices reinstated).

What have you been taught will be the time when Israel does this? (The church will be raptured and Israel will come to its senses).

Now, in our last weeks of our study, we are going to look closely at the differences in the two systems. But today, I just want you to realize that the leaders that we all love and respect, teach something different about the Bible than what you have been taught.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION I WANT TO COVER THIS WEEK IS THIS ...

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? AND WHAT IS GOD DOING WITH IT?

**ACT II — THE PROCLAMATION OF SALVATION. Here, God takes the salvation he has provided (ACT 1) and transforms the nations.**

## Step One — New Channel of Salvation Promised: The Church

Remember in the OT that God promised Abraham that through him, a great nation would be built? He also said this, "those who bless you will be blessed and those that curse you will be cursed." (Gen. 12:3).

In the OT, one's entry into the program of God came only through Israel. To be a saved person in the OT, you needed to be part of the sacrificial system, and the only way was to become a citizen of Israel. ISRAEL WAS THE CHANNEL OF SALVATION IN THE OT. **In the NT, God changes the channel. No longer is the channel Israel, now it is the church.**

God has promised the coming of something greater in the OT leading up to Messiah. Remember, Israel is only a seed. Look what happens with Jesus.

Matthew 16:13-19 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" [14] They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." [15] "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" [16] Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [17] Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. [18] And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. [19] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Does that statement remind you of anything? Does it remind you of God's promise to Abraham? Look closely at :18 and remember these two phrases ...

I will "build of thee a great nation and all families will be blessed."

I will "build my church and the gates of hell will not stand against it."

He promises the building of something new — and this will not only transform people, in the end, it will overcome the evil empire of Satan.

Matthew 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. [17] When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. [18] Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Christ tells the disciples that something new is about to happen, before He ascends into heaven. He tells them that a NEW AGE IS DAWNING. He is not

going to make a great nation like he did in the OT. This time, He is now going to go to the nations and transform the nations. He is going to build a great church rather than a great nation.

## **ALL THE AUTHORITY OF GOD IS BEHIND THIS EDICT. AND GOD GUARANTEES ITS SUCCESS!**

The nations will be changed.

## **THE TRANSFIGURATION AND BAPTISM OF JESUS**

Remember the transfiguration, that time when Christ's glory was revealed?

Matthew 17:1-6 <sup>ESV</sup> And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. <sup>3</sup> And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup> And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." <sup>5</sup> He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.

It also happened at his baptism, much earlier.

Mark 1:9-13 <sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." <sup>12</sup> The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

A voice came from heaven, and what did it say, "You are my Son." Both the baptism passages of Jesus and the Transfiguration passages, quote Psalm 2:7-8.

Psalm 2:7-8 I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. [8] Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

THE PASSAGE GOES ON TO SAY THAT THE NATIONS WILL BE THE INHERITANCE OF THIS CHRIST.

## PROPHECY OF JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

Also remember this prophecy from Psalms.

Psalm 22:18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

In that same Psalm we read another prophecy ...

Psalm 22:27-28 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, [28] for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.

## JESUS' CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

**What was the sin being done that so angered Jesus as to cause him to be violent and cleanse the temple????**

**Mark 11:15-18** <sup>15</sup> And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. <sup>16</sup> And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. <sup>17</sup> And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." <sup>18</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.

The story that we know of the "money changers" doing their business in the temple is only half the story. The issue was not "what" they were doing, which was needed. People had to buy sacrifices for the temple. The issue wasn't in selling sacrifices, the whole idea of a sacrifice is that it is costly. The sin was not WHAT was being done, but WHERE it was being done. It was being done in the COURT OF THE GENTILES, the place allotted for the world to come to God and to pray to him and to offer sacrifices to him.

SO – WE SEE THE CHANNEL CHANGING

- From the OT temple we learned that God was concerned for the salvation of the nations. (the Jews thought God was only interested in Jewish refugees scattered throughout the world)
- From Jesus' cleansing of the temple, we know that God is concerned for salvation of the nations.
- And from the Great Commission, we see that God will indeed do it.

THIS IS THE NEW PROMISE, THAT A NEW SEED HAS BEEN PLANTED, JUST

LIKE THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM. GOD WILL SURELY ACCOMPLISH IT JUST AS HE WAS FAITHFUL TO ACCOMPLISH HIS FIRST PLAN.

## **Step Two — Old Channel Set Aside**

Now, what has happened here is that the nation of Israel has served its purpose. It has provided salvation. It is now time to move on to the next step of growth. Therefore, the old channel must be set aside.

**Much of the book of Acts, the book of Romans, and the Book of Hebrews is about this problem and about this change.**

The Book of Hebrews deals with the change from the Old Covenant to the New, the Old Temple to the Better Temple, the Old Priestly system to the New system in Christ. The Book of Romans, chapters 9-11, deals with this problem too. HAS GOD FORGOTTEN HIS PROMISES TO ISRAEL?

**You see, the nation of Israel has been so central, and the temple and systems of that nation were so dominant for so long, that when God begins Act 2 with building his church, it is a traumatic thing.**

But it is important to realize what happened.

**THE CHURCH DID NOT REPLACE ISRAEL; INSTEAD, TRUE ISRAEL BECAME THE CHURCH.**

You see, after Christ came and died, the first Christian believers were the “true believers” of Israel. **God took those who were true believers of Him in the OT and converted them to Christianity.** This transition took many years.

And much of the NT is written to explain the transition and how Christ has indeed fulfilled all the OT expectations and laws and therefore, it is ok to move forward and to go on.

For example ...

- Issue of Circumcision
  - Acts 15 — Should Gentile believers be forced to be circumcised?
- Issue of Food — Should food be “ceremonially” unclean because of its contact with idols?

Romans 14:14 As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.

1 Cor. 8:4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

- Issues in Book of Hebrews — the physical temple no longer existed, is that a problem? The answer is no.

Now, in all these issues and more, it is important to realize, they indicate that a change and a transition has taken place. **IN EVERY CASE, THE NEW SYSTEM IS FAVORED OVER THE OLD.**

**OLD TESTAMENT JEWISH BELIEVERS MUST CONVERT TO NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS.** God changes the channel of blessing and Israel must change with it.

### **What are the implications of this biblical teaching for MESSIANIC CHURCHES?**

#### **Step Three — Nature of the New Channel**

Three Figures are used to describe the New Channel — the Church.

1. Temple = Eph. 2:11-22; 1 Peter 2:5,6 — we are the temple, not a physical temple. No longer does God reside in a physical temple, he now resides in his people. They are the temple of God.
2. Body = 1 Cor. 12:12 — we are the “church” not some nation or land or building.

No longer is there a sacrificial system where only certain priests can serve the Lord. God’s people are an organized body, working together to accomplish God’s plan and to serve and offer special sacrifices and offerings to the Lord.

3. Flock = Acts 20:28,29 — we are the flock of God, just like in the OT.

In Contrast to the Nation of Israel, the Church is ...

1. International rather than Ethnic
2. Local rather than centralized (Jerusalem)
3. Non-political rather than political (sword or truth; might/power or faith)

Now — why is these three characteristics important for the church?

- International means that the gospel can adapt to any culture and go to any country or nation.
- Local means that it is not geographically hindered. It can grow beyond the boundaries of any nation.
- Non-political is important because, like yeast, it changes from the inside outward.

GOD HAS DESIGNED THE CHURCH, AS A VERY, VERY SPECIAL ORGANISM — AS THE MAJOR WAY THE WORLD WILL BE CHANGED. IT IS BETTER SUITED TO TRANSFORM THE NATIONS.

In Korea right now, and China, the church is very, very large. In India it is happening too. It is changing the countries from the inside, not the outside. Bryan Chappel story.

#### **Step Four — The New Channel Comes Out of the Old**

- Spirit Comes - Acts 1-2 (Jewish believers wait for new power and the dawning of the new age)
- Jewish Believers are in Temple - Acts 2:46; 3:1; 4:1; and 5:42 — they do not leave where they have been. They are still there, but something is changing.
- Number of Believers Multiply Acts 1:15; 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1,7 — God begins very quickly to change to the new emphasis — which is not nationalism, but the proclamation of the gospel so that others are transformed.
- Christ moves them out to Judea and Samaria - Acts 8:1; 8:31 (He uses persecution to move them. This was difficult, the Jews were used to staying in Jerusalem, and Christ moves them into the world.
- Christ calls Paul as Apostle to Gentiles (Acts 9) and opens door to Gentiles (Acts 10:1-11; 18)

- Christ establishes a Gentile Church at Antioch (Acts 11:19-26) — The church is no longer limited to Israel. They are no longer central and necessary.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT A RADICAL CHANGE THIS ALL WAS TO THE NEW BELIEVERS IN CHRIST? The channel of blessing to the world was changing. For so long, it was centered in a temple in one part of the earth. For so long the nation of Israel oversaw the system. For so long they were in political turmoil. BUT NOW, A NEW DAY HAS DAWNED.

### Peter's Dream

Acts 10:13-48 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." [14] "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." [15] The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." [16] This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. [17] While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. [18] They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. [19] While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. [20] So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." [21] Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" [22] The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." [23] Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. [24] The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. [25] As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. [26] But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." [27] Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. [28] He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. [29] So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" [30] Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me [31] and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. [32] Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' [33] So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." [34] Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism [35] but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. [36] You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. [37] You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- [38] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. [39] "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They

killed him by hanging him on a tree, [40] but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. [41] He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. [42] He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. [43] All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." [44] While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. [45] The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. [46] For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, [47] "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." [48] So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

GOD SHOWS PETER THAT THE SYSTEM HAS CHANGED. ISRAEL AND ITS LAWS ARE NO LONGER CENTRAL — IT IS THE CHURCH THAT IS IMPORTANT. Christ has fulfilled the OT law so completely that its message is no longer needed.

**NOT ONLY HAVE THE TRUE ISRAELITES BECOME THE CHURCH IN ACTS, BUT THE GENTILES HAVE BECOME TRUE ISRAEL!**

Galatians 3:7-9 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. [8] The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." [9] So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Do you see what Paul is saying? He is saying that ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS stands on equal footing with the Israelite. The Gentile, through faith, becomes a child of Abraham, the father of all who have faith. Do you think of yourself as a child of Abraham? God says that you are.

1 Peter 2:7-10 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," [8] and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for. [9] But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

NOT ONLY ARE WE A CHILD OF ABRAHAM, BUT WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE COVENANT OF GOD. We are now, according to Peter, translated into this new existence.

## Step Five — Christ begins to Go to the Nations

Acts 13-28

Read the following and have people notice something ...

Acts 9:20 At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

Acts 13:5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

Acts 13:42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.

Acts 14:1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.

Acts 17:1-2 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. [2] As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

Acts 18:4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

Acts 18:19 They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

Acts 18:26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

Acts 19:8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

An important point ...

### **Where does the church take root?**

The church prospers in the world because there are Jewish believers, true believers, believers who have been prepared by the discipline of God, all over the world. Where are they? In the synagogues. **The dark moment where God scatters the nation of Judah over the world is now the seed of the church.**

THESE ARE NOT ALL THE REFERENCES, BUT THROUGHOUT THE BOOK OF ACTS, THE GOSPEL IS PRESENTED TO THE REMNANT SCATTERED AROUND THE WORLD. THEY ARE INCLUDED IN GOD'S PLANS OF TRANSITION FROM

THE NATION TO THE CHURCH.

**Those who were true believers in the OT system are converted to the NT system.**

JUST LIKE THE OT ACT I, WHERE GOD WAS AT WORK, GOD IS STILL AT WORK TODAY IN ACT II. The Gospel is going to the nations and God is controlling it.

Look how the book of Acts begins and ends.

Acts 1:1-2 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach [2] until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Book of Acts is about what Jesus continued to do and to teach.

Note this ... "The book of Acts relates how the churches were founded; the epistles, all addressed to churches or to their leaders, give a great deal of consideration to the problems of the church; and it is still to the churches that the Spirit of God, in the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation), addresses His final revelations."

Acts 28:28-31 "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" [29] [30] For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. [31] Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

This continues to Our Own Day -- He is Still Building His Church and Transforming the Nations.

Tell Story of all the church planters coming to the church in Boca Roton.