
SESSION #3:

“JESUS ON EVERY PAGE”

DISCOVERING THE OVERARCHING THEMES OF SCRIPTURE

Jesus on Every Page

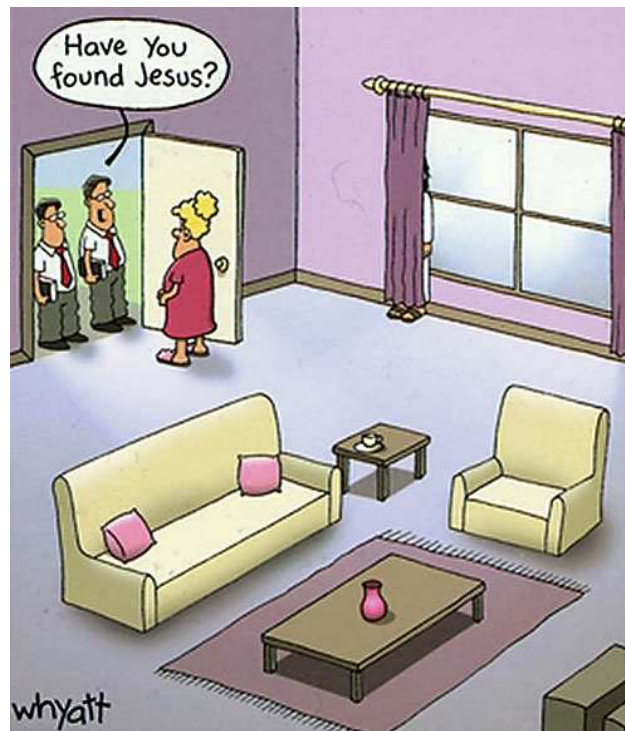
Jesus thought that there was a right and wrong way to read and understand the Bible. Where we read it and fail to see how it points to him, we are not reading it sufficiently. We are not going deep enough. We would be mistaken to think we have to wait until the New Testament to see his face, because in truth, Jesus is on every page in one way or another. Groves wrote: “The individual books of the Old Testament exhibit diverse genres, styles, and individual theologies, but tying them all together is the constant foreshadowing of, and pointing forward to, Christ.”¹

Jesus said It all points to me. Because of this, there is a way we read the Bible as Christians. We’re not just trying to understand the text in its original context (although we must do this! More on this next week), we’re trying to see how this connects to the big story about Jesus. St Augustine said it well: “The new is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed.”

Let’s look at two passages to begin which show Jesus teaching this – Luke 24:13-49 and John 5:39-47.

Luke 24:13-49 The Emmaus Disciples

¹³ Now that same day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ Together they were discussing everything that had taken place. ¹⁵ And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus himself came near and began to walk along with them. ¹⁶ But they were



¹ Groves, J. A. (2001). [Foreword](#). In T. Longman III & J. A. Groves (Eds.), *Immanuel in Our Place: Seeing Christ in Israel’s Worship* (p. viii). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.



prevented from recognizing him. ¹⁷ Then he asked them, “What is this dispute that you’re having with each other as you are walking?” And they stopped walking and looked discouraged.

¹⁸ The one named Cleopas answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ “What things?” he asked them.

So they said to him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ But we were hoping that he was the one who was about to redeem Israel. Besides all this, it’s the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb, ²³ and when they didn’t find his body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn’t see him.”

²⁵ He said to them, **“How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Wasn’t it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.**

²⁸ They came near the village where they were going, and he gave the impression that he was going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, “Stay with us, because it’s almost evening, and now the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ It was as he reclined at the table with them that he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?” ³³ That very hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those with them gathered together, ³⁴ who said, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they began to describe what had happened on the road and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

³⁶ As they were saying these things, he himself stood in their midst. He said to them, “Peace to you!” ³⁷ But they were startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ “Why are you troubled?” he asked them. “And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.” ⁴⁰ Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” ⁴² So they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ He told them, **“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”** ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these

things. ⁴⁹ And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.”

John 5:39-47

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from people. ⁴² But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. ⁴³ I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.⁴⁴ How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

The Overarching Themes of Scriptures

There are maybe 15-20 key threads that run all the way through the big storyline of the Bible that help us understand it as a cohesive whole. We are going to take a look at 6:

1. **Covenant – A Promise Made**
2. **Kingdom – The Reign of God**
3. **Sacrifice – A Perfect Substitute**
4. **Temple – The Presence of God with Us**
5. **Priesthood – A Representative**
6. **Salvation / Redemption – Jesus Saves**



What we will see, is that each of these 6 themes are different ways the bible articulates the gospel message of God’s salvation for us – culminating in Jesus Christ. They are like individual layers of a beautiful piece of artwork. Each has its own beauty and highlights a different element when analyzed alone, but when viewed together, the beauty of the whole shines all the brighter.

#1 Covenant – A Promise Made

Introduction to the Covenant Theme

A Covenant is a sacred relationship entered into by two parties, ratified by an oath. Today, the closest thing that exists to the ancient covenant is the traditional view of marriage where man and a woman promise themselves to one another for life. It is not just a legal contract, nor is it simply a relational promise, but both of these and more. A contract may confer the exchange of property “this is yours, that is mine”, but a covenant is about the exchange of life (“I am yours, you are mine”).

Through history, God has made covenants with individuals and groups of people – divine promises of relationship and blessing. Cowan writes: “The covenant concept is a central, unifying theme of Scripture,



establishing and defining God's relationship to man in all ages."² Here we will cover the major ones: **Abraham, Moses, David, and the New Covenant made by Jesus.**

#1.1 Abraham – The Father of the Promised Blessing

Key components of the Abrahamic Covenant:

- The father of a great nation
- A blessing to all the families of the earth
- God to you and to your offspring
- Promise of Land (Canaan)

Key Texts:

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **² And I will make of you a great nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, **and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**"

Genesis 17:4-8 ⁴"Behold, my covenant is with you, **and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.** ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you and to your offspring after you.** ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

#1.2 Moses – A Holy Nation

Key components of the Mosaic Covenant:

- I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God
- You will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation
- The Law of the Lord given to the Nation (Ceremonial, Civil & Moral laws)

Key Texts:

Exodus 6:7-8 ⁷ **I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God**, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ I will

² Cowan, S. B. (2003). [Covenant](#). In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 355). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.



bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.”

Exodus 19:5-6 ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**’

#1.3 David – An Eternal Throne

Key components of the Davidic Covenant:

- The line of David will sit on the throne forever
- His offspring will have an eternal kingdom
- I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

Key Texts:

Psalm 89:3

You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one;

I have sworn to David my servant:

⁴ ‘I will establish your offspring forever,
and **build your throne for all generations.**”

2 Samuel 8:11-16 Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.** ¹⁴ **I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.** When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

#1.4 Jeremiah – A New Covenant Promised

Key components of the Promised New Covenant:

- God will write the law on the hearts of his people – internal experience of God not just external conformity
- I will be their God, they shall be my people
- They shall all know me
- I will forgive their sin!

Key Texts:

Jeremiah 31:31-34 ³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make **a new covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. **For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**”

#1.5 Jesus – The New Covenant Established by Blood

Key components of the New Covenant established by Jesus:

- Jesus establishes a new covenant, that fulfills and extends the previous three.
- Jesus fulfils the covenant of Abraham, Moses, and David.
 - Abraham: Jesus is the promised blessing that came through the line of Abraham.
 - Moses: Jesus fulfills the law of Moses and becomes the high priest and sacrifice.
 - David: Jesus is born in the line of David and reigns forever on the throne
- “Jesus is the better Abraham, the blessing to the nations of the earth. Jesus is the better Moses as God’s prophet who fulfilled the law for us, allows God’s wrath to pass over us because of his shed blood, conquered our pharaoh of Satan, redeemed us from sin, and journeys with us home despite or sin and grumbling. And Jesus is a better David who is seated on a throne ruling as the King of kings, and is coming again to establish his eternal and global kingdom of peace and prosperity.”³

Key Texts:

Luke 22:17-20 ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves.¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is **the new covenant in my blood.**”

³ Driscoll and Breshears. 2001. Doctrine. (pg 48).



#2 Kingdom – The Reign of God

Introduction to the Kingdom Theme

Kingdom of God—(Matt. 6:33; Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:43) = “kingdom of Christ” (Matt. 13:41; 20:21) = “kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph. 5:5) = “kingdom of David” (Mark 11:10) = “the kingdom” (Matt. 8:12; 13:19) = “kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 13:41), all denote the same thing under different aspects, viz.: (1) Christ’s mediatorial authority, or his rule on the earth; (2) the blessings and advantages of all kinds that flow from this rule; (3) the subjects of this kingdom taken collectively, or the Church.⁴ Simply put, the kingdom of God “refers primarily to God’s kingly power exercised over creation and people.”⁵ WE will step through the theme in 7 steps:

#2.1 Royal Image Bearers

God creates humankind to be his royal vice regents on the earth. He creates us to image Him in his perfect character and reflect his kingship to the world by ruling well over creation.

Genesis 1:26-27 ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

#2.2 Failure to Rule

Humanity however, failed to image God perfectly and in their task to rule over creation. Today we can still see the effects of this failure in humanities lack of concern about the execution of justice, as well as the earth itself.

#2.3 Longing for a King

Much of the Old Testament narrative shows either the longing of the people of God for an earthly king to rule them, or the failures of those kings to rule well and honour God. There is a tangible sense of longing for a good and perfect king who perfectly executes justice.

⁴ Easton, M. G. (1893). In [Easton’s Bible dictionary](#). New York: Harper & Brothers.

⁵ Seal, D. (2016). [Kingdom of God](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

#2.4 The Promise of a King

See – the Davidic Covenant and the promise of the eternal kingdom!

See Zechariah 9:9

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

#2.5 King Jesus: The kingdom Inaugurated

The arrival of Jesus symbolized the arrival of the kingdom of God. John the Baptist is the first to announce this publicly in **Matthew 3:2-3**, although it had already been established in the genealogy that Jesus is in the line of David:

² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’”

This message becomes the central point of the teaching of Jesus, as seen in **Luke 4:43**:

“I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”

Jesus links his ministry to the idea of the kingdom:

Matthew 12:28 ²⁸ But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

And many of his parables are about the kingdom –

“There are numerous parables in Matthew, Mark and Luke, which open with the phrase “the kingdom of God (or the kingdom of heaven) is like ...” (e.g., Matt 13:31–32; Mark 4:26–29; 30–32; Luke 13:18–19, 20–21). Even some parables that do not specifically mention the kingdom of God teach about it. For example, the parable in Matthew 25:1–13 teaches about the kingdom of God. The parable that immediately follows (Matt 25:14–30) does not mention the kingdom, but has similar themes to the first parable. It, too, may be read as a teaching about the kingdom of God.



Many parables say that the kingdom is growing (Mark 4:26–29; 4:30–32; Matt 13:31–32, 33; Luke 13:18–19, 20–21). They teach that upon the discovery of the kingdom, a person experiences joy (Matt 13:44, 45–46). Further, they convey that God’s kingdom reign is a future reality (Matt 25:1–13; Luke 12:35–48; 19:11–27).⁶

The kingdom has been inaugurated, but its not fully here yet. That’s why Jesus tells us to pray:

Matthew 6:9-13

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

#2.6 Christians are co-heirs

Christians are not slaves to God, but children. And if children, then heirs to the king!

Romans 8:16-17 ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and **fellow heirs with Christ**, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

This is also true of the corporate church.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a **royal** priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

#2.7 King Jesus on the Throne – The Kingdom Consummated

Today we live in a weird tension: the kingdom has been inaugurated with the coming of Christ, but it is yet to be consummated. It’s here, but its not fully realized yet. We live in that weird space. But one day, the kingdom will be here in all its fullness. Jesus speaks of that day in **Matthew 19:27-30**

²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” ²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

⁶ Seal, D. (2016). [Kingdom of God](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



#3 Temple – The Presence of God with Us

Introduction to the Temple Theme

The central idea with the temple theme can be summed up as “God’s presence with His people”. Here we need to make the obvious distinction between two ideas: omnipresence and felt presence. God is everywhere by virtue of his divinity. There is no place in all the universe where God isn’t, and in this sense, God is everywhere equally. We refer to this as God’s omnipresence. The theme of temple in the Bible on the other hand is concerned with God’s intimate presence with his people. Consider the analogy of a marriage. In a good marriage, not only are the couple living together in close proximity, there is a relational proximity to one another. They are “with” one another – mind, body and soul. Consider now a bad marriage. Although they are technically with one another in physical space, there is great distance between them relationally. Proximity does not equal intimacy.

This closeness or intimate “*withness*” is what we’re talking about here. The temple theme is all the ways in which the Bible shows that God is *with* his people.

#3.1 The Garden

The Story begins with God dwelling with humanity in the garden, but Adam and Eve were removed from God’s presence because of their sin.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

#3.2 The Exodus – The Pillar of Fire and Cloud

The symbol of fire is an important one when it comes to the presence of God.

Exodus 13:21-22 ²¹ And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

#3.3 The Tabernacle & Temple

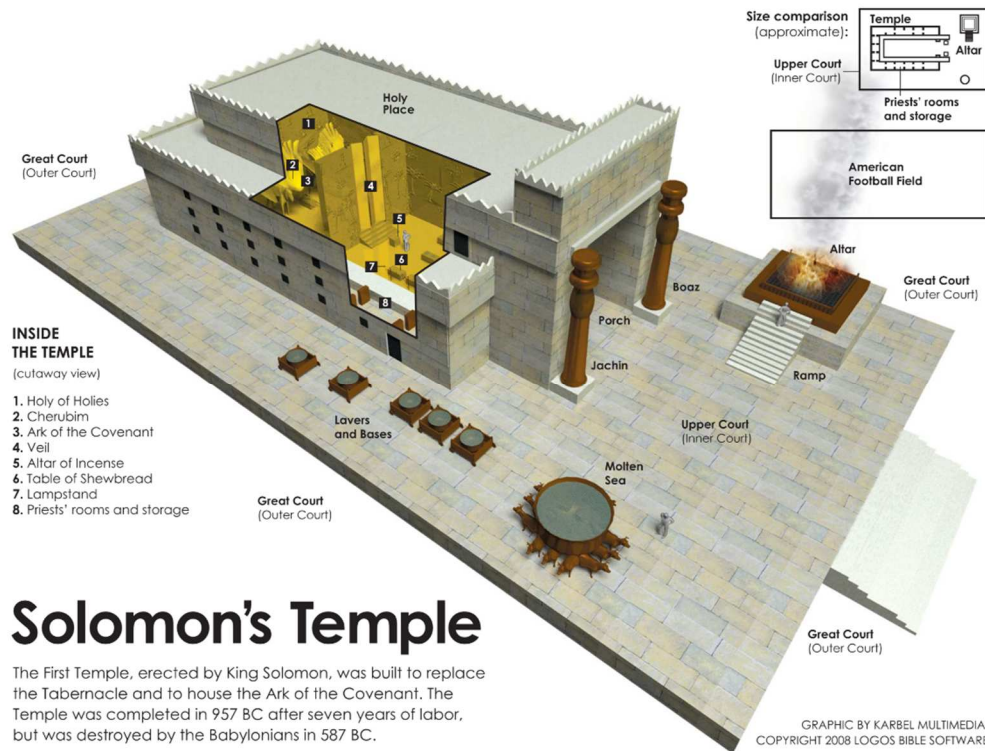
The tabernacle was a mobile temple built as an elaborate tent, which symbolized the very presence of God with His people.

Exodus 25:8 ⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.

Exodus 29:45-46 ⁴⁵ I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. ⁴⁶ And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God.

The tabernacle was replaced by a permanent temple by King Solomon.

1 Kings 6:1 In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord.



Solomon's Temple

The First Temple, erected by King Solomon, was built to replace the Tabernacle and to house the Ark of the Covenant. The Temple was completed in 957 BC after seven years of labor, but was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC.

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#3.4 The Temple Destroyed and Rebuilt

After years of disobedience to God, Israel receive the consequences for their actions and are invaded by the Babylonians, who destroy the temple.

2 Kings 25:8-9 ⁸ In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ⁹ And he burned the house of the Lord and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.

A generation or two later, construction starts on the second temple. This is the temple that is standing when Jesus is born, however the Romans would destroy this temple in 70 A.D.

Ezra 3:8 ⁸ Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to



Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to supervise the work of the house of the Lord.

#3.5 Jesus our Immanuel

Jesus connects the temple to himself:

John 2:18-22 ⁸ So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ²⁰ The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Jesus is the embodiment of “God with us”.

Matthew 1:23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name **Immanuel**” (which means, God with us).

What’s more, in John’s prologue, he uses a very loaded term to describe the life 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.

*In the Greek, dwelt is literally “pitched his tent” among us or “tabernacled” among us, which is a reference to the Exodus where God’s presence with his people was in the tabernacle.

Jesus is God with us, the Word become flesh, who tabernacled with us.

#3.6 Jesus Dies – The Curtain Splits in Two

In Jesus death, the barrier between god and the world is symbolically removed when the temple curtain which divided the inner sanctuary from the rest of the temple is split in two.

Matthew 27:50-51 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

#3.7 Pentecost – The Spirit Comes

Some 50 days after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Jewish festival of Pentecost arrives. And it is on this day, recorded in Acts 2, that the Holy Spirit is first poured out on God’s people, fulfilling OT prophecies like Joel 2:28-32.

Acts 2:1-4 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of



them.⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

#3.8 The Christian as a Walking Temple

Believers are defined as being those who are filled with the Spirit of God. IF you have placed your faith in Christ, you are a walking temple because God dwells in you.

1 Cor. 3:16-17 ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

#3.9 The New Creation is a Temple

God is forever with His people in the New Heavens and the New Earth. This is pictured in two ways in Revelation. Firstly, there is no need for a temple anymore because He is our temple (21:22-23). And secondly, the new city is a cube (21:16), fulfilling the prophecy of other cube in the Bible – the Holy of Holies in the temple.

Revelation 21:22-23 ²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Revelation 21:16 ⁶ The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal.

#4 Sacrifice – A Perfect Substitute

Introduction to the Sacrifice Theme

The third meta-theme of the bible is that of Sacrifice. There are a couple of ideas that are wrapped up in this idea, but the key ones are that of *penalty* and that of *substitution*.

The idea of penalty is that evil requires a just response from God, and that unpunished sin is a grievous wrong. The idea of substitution is the idea that one may take our place on our behalf if they are a fitting substitute for us. Put these two things together and we get the theme of sacrifice – that God will accept a substitution paying the price for our sin so that we might go free. In a nutshell: (1) God is holy, (2) people are sinful, (3) we need a saviour.

Let's have a look at how this theme develops through the Bible.

#4.1 Adam and Eve Clothed in Skins

In response to the sin of Adam and Eve, they are removed permanently from the garden. But before they go, God does an amazing thing:

Genesis 3:21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife **garments of skins and clothed them.**

This covering symbolizes the first sacrifice: that God uses the life of another to clothe the nakedness of Adam and Eve.

#4.2 Abraham and Isaac – a Substitute Provided by God

The story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22 is deeply disturbing by any account. But when we read it in light of this theme, we see the beauty it is conveying.

Genesis 22:11-14 ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ **And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram,** caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

It should be obvious that God never intended Isaac to die – elsewhere he condemns the practice of child sacrifice in the strongest terms. He was setting up an emotional and dramatic living parable of the gospel. The Lord *provided* the ram to be killed in Isaac's place.

#4.3 Passover in Egypt

The final plague in God's redemption plan to bring Israel out of Egypt was to be the death of the firstborn in each house. There would be, however, an exception – a house that painted the blood of a lamb on the door post would be spared (or passed over).

Exodus 12:5-13 ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. ⁷“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ ... ¹¹In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. **And when I see the blood, I will pass over you,** and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

#4.4 Levitical Sacrifice

The ritual law of Moses established in the Mosaic covenant demanded atoning sacrifices for sin. For example:

Leviticus 16:15 “Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.

#4.5 Jesus as the “Lamb of God”

The Bible will not let us miss this connection – that the sacrifices in the OT (namely 3.1 to 3.4 just explored) are about Jesus. They are laying some foundations so that we might recognize and understand what Jesus is doing on the cross. Jesus is our animal slaughtered to cloth us, our lamb in the thicket on the mountain, our Passover lamb whose blood rescues us, our scapegoat and our lamb of atonement which give us access to God. Jesus is the sacrifice which who cleanses us from sin.

John 1:29 “Behold, **the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!

Hebrews 9:11-15 ¹¹But when Christ appeared as a **high priest** of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹²he 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. ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more will the **blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ¹⁵Therefore he is the **mediator** of a **new covenant**, so that those who are called may receive the



promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

#4.6 New Covenant Established at Passover meal

It is incredibly significant that it is the night before Jesus is crucified that he takes the cup and the bread and establishes the new covenant in his blood. It makes it unmistakable that Jesus sees his death as doing exactly what the lamb did on Passover: that God's wrath will pass over all who shelter underneath the blood of the lamb

Luke 22:17-20 ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves.¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is **the new covenant in my blood.**"

#5 Priesthood – A Representative

Introduction to the Priesthood Theme

The theme of priesthood in the Bible can be summarized as this: we need someone to represent us to God on our behalf as our sin excludes us from doing so ourselves. We are unable in ourselves to stand before God, we are in need of an intercessor. This is the role of the priest.

#5.1 Moses as the intercessor for the people

Moses acts as an intercessor between God and the people, declaring God's word to the people and pleading before God on the people's behalf.

Exodus 32:30-32 ³⁰The next day Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." ³¹So Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold.³² **But now, if you will forgive their sin**—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written."

#5.2 Levitical Priesthood

The Old Testament priesthood – called the Levitical priesthood as it is made up from men from the tribe of Levi – were to perform the role of intercession between God and the people. They were to go in before God on behalf of the people and offer sacrifices.

Hebrews 5:1-4 **For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men** in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. ³ Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. ⁴ And no one takes this honour for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

#5.3 Recurrent Theme in OT Narrative

The concept of a person interceding for another on their behalf is a common occurrence in Old Testament narrative: Joseph before Pharaoh, Esther before the King, Nehemiah before the King etc.

#5.4 Jesus our Great High Priest

The New Testament picks up this theme and applies it to Jesus. Hebrews in particular is concerned with showing us that Jesus is the great high priest. He is the only one who can truly represent us before God. There are two important reasons for this. Firstly, he can represent us because he became one of us. His full



and genuine humanity means he is able to “sympathize with our weakness” (Heb 4:15) and so truly represent all of humanity. Secondly, he is perfectly without sin.

Hebrews 4:14-16 ¹⁴ Since then **we have a great high priest** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to **sympathize with our weaknesses**, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 2:17-18 ¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become **a merciful and faithful high priest** in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 9:11-15 ¹¹ But when **Christ appeared as a high priest** of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 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. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ¹⁵ **Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant**, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

#5.5 Christians are Priests in the World

There is one final movement in this theme – the fact that God makes all followers of Jesus priests in the world. That is, we are given the privilege of interceding for people on their behalf before God, and ministering to them God’s grace of the gospel.

Rev 1:5-6 To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, **priests to his God and Father**, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 2:9 ⁹ But you are a chosen race, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.



#6 Salvation – Jesus Saves

Introduction to the Salvation Theme

God's rescuing of His people is another unmissable theme in the story of Scripture. It's not a stretch to suggest that the biblical narrative reveals God's desire to be known and glorified as the Saviour of His people. We're confronted with this reality at the beginning of the New Testament, when the angel tells Joseph to name Mary's son **Jesus** - "for he will save his people from their sins." The name given to the Messiah – "Jesus" – is itself a declaration about the God revealed in the Old Testament. "Jesus" means "Yahweh saves." Every time we speak the name of our Lord, we are confessing that the God of Israel is our Saviour! Let's have a look at how this theme of Yahweh as Saviour unfolds throughout Scripture.

#6.1 Foreshadowed in Genesis: Noah's Ark

Genesis 6-9 tells the story of God rescuing one family (Noah's) from the destruction of humanity *via* the cataclysmic flood. While Genesis doesn't describe this explicitly as God's salvation of His people, it serves as the foundational picture of God rescuing a people from judgement and even death.

The New Testament is clear that this was a great salvation event:

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. (see also 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 2:5)

#6.2 Established in Exodus: Yahweh saves Israel from Egypt

YHWH reveals Himself to be the Saviour of His people in Exodus when He promises Moses that He will rescue the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Exodus 6:6 Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgement. ⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

YHWH is praised as Saviour by Moses and the Israelites after the crossing of the Red Sea, in the first song to be recorded in the Bible – the *Song of Moses*.

Exodus 15:1 Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying, "I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. ² The LORD is my strength and my song, and **he has become my salvation**; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

15:11 "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? ¹² You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them. ¹³ "You have led in your steadfast love **the people whom you have redeemed**; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.

#6.3 Yahweh's Calling Card

Following the Exodus from Egypt, this becomes a key way of God "introducing Himself" when speaking to the nation of Israel. Over and over again in the Old Testament we find Him saying:

Exodus 20:2 "I am YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

This is also reflected in how God's people respond to Him in praise. The psalms and other parts of the Old Testament are replete with references to Yahweh as the "God of my/our salvation" (e.g. 1 Chron 16:35; Ps 18:46; 25:5; 27:9; 51:14; 65:5; 68:20; 79:9; 85:4; 88:1; 89:26, Mic 7:7, Hab 3:18). It is clear that God intends for His people to relate to Him as the One who saved them from Egypt and who continues to deliver them from their enemies and trials.

#6.4 God delights to show that He alone is Saviour

There are key moments in the biblical story when Yahweh's power to save is directly challenged. What emerges very clearly is that our God always takes the opportunity to demonstrate to His people (and their enemies!) that He alone is the God who saves. We see this in the exchange between the commander of the Assyrian army and the men of Judah under King Hezekiah in 2 Kings:

2 Kings 18:30, 33-35 ³⁰Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria...³³ Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? ³⁵Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

The Assyrian challenge is clear – no other deity has ever saved their people from defeat by this army. But Yahweh seizes the opportunity to show that He is a Saviour unlike the gods of the nations.

2 Kings 19:32-34 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³³By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. ³⁴For **I will defend this city to save it**, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."

Later, when the people of Judah were facing more threats from foreign powers, Yahweh made several declarations through the prophet Isaiah, that He was the only Saviour.

Isaiah 43:11, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no saviour.

Isaiah 43:21b And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. ²²"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.



#6.5 God recognized as Saviour by Israel and the Nations

In Israel's praise book, the Psalms, we see plenty of worship offered to God as Saviour of His people:

Ps 68:19-20 Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. *Selah*

²⁰ Our God is a God of salvation, and to God, the Lord, belong deliverances from death.

But significantly, there are key junctions in Scripture where non-Israelites recognise that God saves His people. One of the most striking examples is when Darius, the ruler of the Persian Empire says:

Daniel 6:26 I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring for ever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

#6.6 Jesus' Calling Card/Purpose/Mission

We've already seen that the New Testament starts with a declaration that Yahweh is Saviour (i.e. the name Jesus!). But just like Yahweh in the Old Testament had his "calling card," the NT writers leave little doubt as to Jesus' purpose and mission as Saviour of the World.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a **Saviour**, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to **save** the lost."

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be **saved** through him.

John 12:47b I did not come to judge the world but to **save** the world.

1 Timothy 1:15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to **save** sinners...

1 John 4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world.

"God/Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18)

#6.7 Christ's work of salvation

We can appreciate how the redemptive work of Christ fits into the biblical story by noting the various ways in which He secures salvation for us. Consider the following:

Jesus' death was for our salvation

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

Jesus' resurrection was for our salvation



Romans 5:9-10 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Jesus' exultation is for our salvation

Hebrews 7:25-26 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

Jesus will return for our salvation

Hebrews 9:28 [S]o Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

#6.8 Jesus is the Only Saviour

Just as Yahweh made it clear in the OT that He was the only Saviour among the 'gods' of the nations, so too the NT writers affirm the unique place of Jesus as the only Saviour for humankind.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

#6.9 God glorified by saving Jews and Gentiles through Jesus

We saw in the OT how both Israel and people from other nations acknowledged God as Saviour. In the NT, God makes it clear that His intention is to be glorified as the Saviour of both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) through the good news of Jesus Christ. We see this in the beginning and towards the end of Paul's letter to the church at Rome.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Rom 15:8-9⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."

Jesus therefore comes to Israel as the Deliverer God promised long ago, but also as a Saviour for men, women and children from every nation, tribe and tongue on earth (Rev 5:9). This grand theme of Scripture provides the impetus for the church's mission of taking the good news of Jesus to every nation.



In conclusion

God makes a new covenant with a new people (the church) in Christ. He rescues us from sin, death and judgement through our High Priest's atoning sacrifice: so that we can live in His presence, under His rule forever.

Big Takeaway: How does this change how I read the Bible?

Each week, we will conclude with this question: how does this change the way I read the Bible for myself?

Homework

There will be two levels of homework each week, depending on how much time you'd like to dedicate. Level 1 is for everyone to do, but if you want to dive a bit deeper, I'd definitely encourage you to do level 2 as well.

Level #1

- Ephesians 3

Level 2

- 1 Samuel 17; Psalm 23; Isaiah 60; John 10; 1 Peter 1