

LESSON 5

THE BIBLE'S METANARRATIVE – THE BIG STORY
THE COVENANTS IN SCRIPTURE
GOD COMES TO MAN – JESUS CHRIST, GOD
INCARNATE, THE 'GOD-MAN'

because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

- Acts 17:31 -

CLASS FIVE:

THE BIBLE'S METANARRATIVE – THE BIG STORY THE COVENANTS IN SCRIPTURE GOD COMES TO MAN – JESUS CHRIST, GOD INCARNATE, THE 'GOD-MAN'

I. THE BIBLE'S SWEEPING STORY LINE – AN OVERVIEW OF SCRIPTURE

When reading and studying the Bible, it is vitally important to keep the entire “sweep,” “storyline” or “big picture” of the Bible in the back of your mind.

Interpreting individual chapters and verses has to be done from within certain confines. One of those confines is the _____. It has well been said that when it comes to reading and interpreting the meaning of the scriptures that “context” is King!

Put another way, it is better to approach scripture from a *long lens* viewpoint, or from a distance...similar to the difference between looking through a telescope at something versus looking at the same object through a microscope.

You may be looking at the same object through the two devices, but what you see will be vastly different. In fact, if all you do is look at an object through a microscope, you could fairly easily get “lost” in the minutia.

Another example would be using an online mapping program, attempting to get directions in an unfamiliar area. If you only look at a map fully zoomed in on the street view level, it won't be long before you get “lost” because you have no point of reference on a larger scale. You will have no idea as to larger landmarks, or even which suburb you may be in, nor how to get into or out of the neighborhood in which the street is located.

So it is with scripture. The more familiar you are with the larger sweep of the Bible's storyline, the easier it will be to keep your bearings when you explore the details.

Doctrines need to be based on the totality of scripture and interpreted properly from context.

Keeping in mind the larger sweep of redemptive and covenant and Kingdom history in the Bible's metanarrative will help every reader of the scriptures *not* to treat the Bible as if it is just a collection of wise sayings – a self-help book writ large, a box of promises that we pull out at the point of our need and attempt to fit to our need.

The Bible is far more than your daily dose from a box of promises!

The Bible's story is a big story. For all its diversity over time - different literary genres, authors from different backgrounds and nations - it is still ONE big story of God's interaction with human beings to bring them back to Himself for His glory.

The Bible sets forth in a continuing, unfolding revelation the story of God's redemptive history and presents a unified story of God's plan of salvation.

It is God's unfolding revelation of Himself to mankind throughout history in creation, covenants, a people (Israel), a Person (Jesus Christ), and a church.

Scholar N.T. Wright says that a worldview typically answers four questions:

- Who are we?

- Where are we?
- What is wrong?
- What is the solution?

The Bible's big story also answers each of these questions.

Jesus expounded on aspects of the Bible's big story as He shared with the disciples on the road to Emmaus all the things in the scriptures concerning **Himself**:

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Luke 24:27

II. THE COVENANTS IN SCRIPTURE - OUTLINING THE BIBLE'S STORY

One way to summarize the Bible's big story as an outline is as follows:

1. _____ and _____
2. _____ **and the Patriarchs**
3. _____ **and the** _____
4. **Christ and the** _____

A large part of the Bible's story line can be easily followed by understanding the covenants of scripture:

Adamic – Covenant of works (called the Adamic administration by some) – this was not “works” on Adam's part to become accepted by God – there was no separation from God here, prior to the fall, so no “grace” was necessary – only Adam's obedience to God.

Edenic – Covenant of grace – as prophesied in Genesis 3:15 in the “protoevangelium” (first proclamation) of the Gospel – that the seed (offspring) of the woman (Christ) would conquer the seed of the serpent (the devil).

Noahic – That God would start a new godly line from Noah's offspring and would not destroy the entire earth in a flood as He had done in response to the overwhelming sin of mankind.

Abrahamic – Perhaps one of the most important covenantal stories in the Bible, the Abrahamic covenant shows the three distinct promises by the LORD to Abraham in *descendants, land, and being a blessing to the nations (through the lineage of Messiah)*.

Genesis chapter 15 describes how the Lord confirms His promises to Abraham by laying out two rows of slain animals and the parties of the covenant walking between the rows. The idea would be that if the parties violated the covenant, they would end up like the dead animals.

THE AMAZING PART is that after Abraham set out the sacrifices to walk between them, the Lord PUT ABRAHAM INTO A DEEP SLEEP, AND THE LORD WALKED ALONE THROUGH THE ANIMALS.

IN OTHER WORDS, GOD HIMSELF AND ALONE MADE THE COVENANT, AND CURSED HIMSELF IF HE DID NOT FULFILL IT!

GOD HIMSELF BROUGHT OUR SALVATION IN CHRIST THROUGH THE SACRIFICE, RATIFIED THE COVENANT AND PROMISED US BLESSINGS, AND CURSED HIMSELF ON THE CROSS THROUGH THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IF HE DID NOT KEEP THE COVENANT!

_____ – the covenant of God in choosing out a people who would be a *kingdom of priests* who would carry His light and name to the entire world, and reflect the glory of God, His nature, the moral law, the sacrificial nature of His ultimate covenant in the King/Priest Jesus Christ and the access and restoration of humanity through it. (Exodus 19:5, 6 with Revelation 1:5, 6)

The heart of the Old Covenant is not just the *MORAL* law. Much more is devoted to the Tabernacle (nearly 50 chapters), the Priesthood, the sacrificial system, and matters of corporate and individual worship.

It is vital to note that because the priestly structure was so foundational to the Old Covenant, it means that a change of priesthood would mean there must be a change of Covenant. Hence, Jesus is from the line of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7, Psalms 110), a “King-Priest.” That being the case means that the Old Mosaic Covenant had to be changed.

The Mosaic covenant teaches a number of important points such as:

- covenant relationship and fellowship with God is *possible*.
- man is unable in his own works of righteousness to attain relationship with God.
- a sacrifice and payment for sins must be made.
- only a high priest properly chosen with the right descent, under proper calling, anointing, order and commission, holy and righteous can offer the blood of the sacrifice.
- God’s presence is holy and cannot be approached haphazardly.
- the blood of the sacrifice has to be from a pure lamb.

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. Galatians 3:24-26

Davidic – the covenant that God made with David that the Messiah would come through his lineage.

_____ **Covenant** – made possible and “ratified” by the blood of Jesus shed for us on the cross, in other words, His death, burial and resurrection.

Covenants are usually outlined as having promise, sign, seal, and fulfillment.

The New Covenant promise is found in scriptures like:

“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. 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. Jeremiah 31: 31, 32

As circumcision was a sign of the Abrahamic covenant, so water baptism is a sign for the New Covenant.

Answers:**Pg. 1 – context****Pg. 2 – Creation, Fall, Abraham, Israel, Law, New Covenant, Abrahamic****Pg. 3 – Mosaic, New**