

LESSON 6 - THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE BIBLE

We observed in Lesson #5 that the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation by means of communicating to the human mind the wisdom and expression of the Divine mind -

MATTHEW 22:31,32 ... have ye not READ that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

Clearly Christ was telling people that they must READ the Scriptures (i.e., the Old Testament, which was all they had at that time) to find out about God's purpose and what it involved.

As we begin a study of the great teachings of the Bible, it is **fundamental** that we make the effort to **first** obtain a general concept of the **central theme of its message**. So many have made the sad mistake of opening its pages with preconceived notions about its doctrines, and end up trying to mould and shape its teachings to those preconceptions.

If we simply go to the Bible with an open mind, it will communicate to us the **Divine** conceptions and program.

The basic outline of God's grand purpose with His creation is in fact stated very simply but forcefully in scripture:

1. The ascription of glory and honour to God by His creation **gives God pleasure**, and it was **for this purpose** that all things were created:

REVELATION 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

2. The purpose of God involves that the **earth** is to ultimately be filled with His glory:

NUMBERS 14:21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

3. The way it will be filled with His glory is that it will be full of the knowledge of God and His ways: (notice that **knowledge** and **glory** are used interchangeably in describing what the earth is to be full of)

ISAIAH 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

4. The way to **honor** and **glorify** God, therefore, is **to know and do His will** as a matter of voluntary choice:

PSALM 50:23 He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honors me; to him who orders his way aright I will show the salvation of God.

5. Those who know and voluntarily choose to perform his will become, at first in prospect and finally in wonderful glorious reality, a part of the Divine family and are called His sons and daughters and take on His name -

ISAIAH 43:5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

BibleKEY fact:

“As we begin a study of the great teachings of the Bible, it is **fundamental** that we make the effort to **first** obtain a general concept of the **central theme of its message**”

BibleKEY definition:

"ascription" - giving, assigning, regarding as belonging

BibleKEY fact:

“The way to **honor** and **glorify** God, therefore, is **to know and do His will** as a matter of voluntary choice”

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6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

7 Even every one that is CALLED BY MY NAME: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

This is the simple but clear scriptural teaching of God's purpose; i.e. - **to ultimately fill the earth with people who voluntarily perform his will and glorify his name.** All teachings and interpretations everywhere must be tested against this **grand central theme** of the Bible. Everything else revolves around it. **This is the reason for our very existence - of our free will to give glory and honor to God.** This the only **real** way of achieving true happiness and well being.

As we go through the pages of the Bible from beginning to end, we will find that its message is oriented not only around the how and the why, but also the circumstances under which the great Divine Purpose will be fulfilled. It is our intent that these lessons will serve as a guide to tour us through the Word of God and illustrate these things in sufficient detail to give each a thorough understanding of how these things will come about, and what it means to us.

As we begin this journey, we will begin to see a very consistent and straight-forward message displayed before us - one which declares and expands upon the Divine central theme and motivation of filling the earth with those who glorify His Name through a voluntary obedience and service to His will.

We will see this plan beginning to unfold in the first few chapters of Genesis, the very first book of the Bible. When sin entered the world through the disobedience of the first human pair, we find that with the punishment of mortality and banishment from the Garden of Eden there came also a promise of hope:

God's promise in the Garden of Eden:

GENESIS 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The promise contained in this passage is that of **redemption** from the POWER of sin and death through the SEED of the woman.

God's promises to ABRAHAM:

GENESIS 13:14 ¶ And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine **eyes**, and **look** from the place where thou art **northward**, and **southward**, and **eastward**, and **westward**:

15 For all the **land** which thou **seest**, to **thee** will I give it, and to **thy seed** for ever.

BibleKEY fact:

“...the simple but clear scriptural teaching of God's purpose - to ultimately fill the earth with people who voluntarily perform his will and glorify his name”

BibleKEY fact:

“with the punishment of mortality and banishment from the Garden of Eden there came also a promise of hope”

BibleKEY definitions:

"mortality" - the state of being subject to death

"redemption" - deliverance

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Note the comment of the apostle Paul regarding this promise:

GAL 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ.

From this it is clear that the "seed" is Christ; but note what that means for us if we are IN Christ:

GAL 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

We understand, of course, that a promise of living for ever on this earth is not much of a future to look forward to unless there are some major changes made in relation to the current wicked and volatile forms of government, as well as the declining quality of the earth's environment. We will find, however, that these concerns have not been left unanswered as Gods promises continued to be made to righteous people of the "woman's seed". Each promise added, as it were, to the features of the previous one - illustrating a developing revelation to man of the Divine purpose. Note what is contained in the next phase of promises made to David and expounded upon by Isaiah the prophet:

God's promises to DAVID:

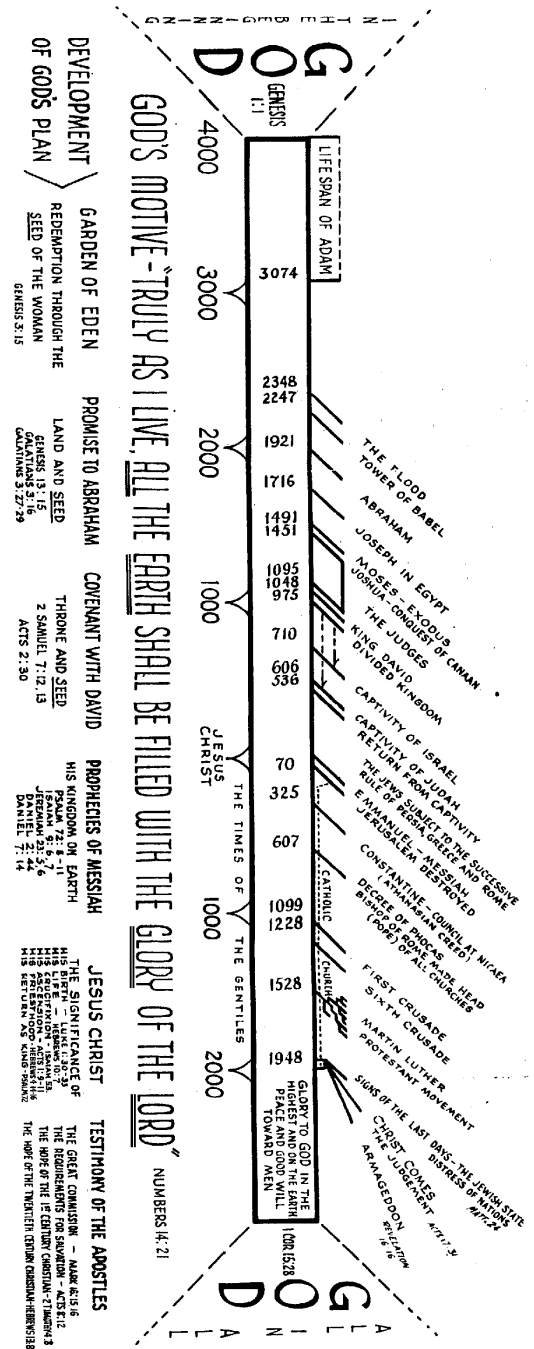
2 SAMUEL 7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom FOR EVER. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee (i.e., in David's presence): thy throne shall be established for ever.

Note that these promises indicated to David three things:

- 1) That David's offspring would be the one to establish and rule over God's kingdom *for ever*;
- 2) That the event promised would take place *after* David's death;
- 3) That David would be literally present and participate in that kingdom; in effect, David would be resurrected from the dead.

The apostle Peter comments upon this promise concerning the "seed" promised to David -

ACTS 2:30 Therefore (David) being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;



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It is truly wonderful how the inspired scripture does not leave us guessing as to who these things refer to! The next key passage that builds upon this theme is -

ISAIAH

*ISAIAH 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and **the government shall be upon his shoulder**: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 **Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.** The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

This passage from the book of Isaiah amplifies the promise made to David; and in doing so makes it very clear that, in addition to the revealed fact that this kingdom is to have no end, **it will be administered by the Son of God who acts as the representative of God, and that it will be accompanied by peace, righteousness, and justice.** A very similar statement was made by the angel who appeared to Mary. It is interesting to note the similarity of wording and meaning, and the continuity of God's message as it applies to Christ -

LUKE

LUKE 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

It is important to notice that ***not once in the life of Christ as recorded in the gospels can it be said that this promise was ever fulfilled.*** Many times in the life of Christ did he and his disciples preach the same message (or, "gospel" - "good news") of the Kingdom of God. The disciples expected him many times to assume the role of King over the nation of Israel, but much to their disappointment, it never happened. Instead, at the age of 33 years, he was crucified. However, he rose from the dead on the third day after his death, and spent time with his disciples, as recorded in -

ACTS

*ACTS 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and **speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God**:*

We note that although Christ had not assumed role of King, he continued to speak of it. Again, the disciples questioned him as to the TIMING of this event. His reply -

*7 And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons**, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

Then -

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was

BibleKEY fact:

“ From Isa 9:6 it is clear that this kingdom is to have no end, that it will be administered by the Son of God who acts as the representative of God, and that it will be accompanied by peace, righteousness, and justice ”

BibleKEY fact:

“ not once in the life of Christ as recorded in the gospels can it be said that the promise of Luke 1:32 was ever fulfilled ”

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*taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? **this same Jesus**, which is taken up from you into heaven, **SHALL so come IN LIKE MANNER as ye have seen him go into heaven.***

We must never underestimate the significance of this statement as it relates to the purpose of God in the ultimate performance of His will. This event has also never yet been fulfilled, and stands as something we must look forward to with earnest anticipation, preparation and watchfulness. The physical and literal return of Christ to this earth became the basis of the apostles teaching -

*ACTS 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, **when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.** 20 And **he shall send Jesus Christ**, which **before was preached** unto you: 21 **Whom the heaven must receive UNTIL the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.***

Note how this passage demonstrates the **constancy of God's purpose** throughout - **from the beginning** ("since the world began") - and also that **it has been foretold**. We must also recognize that nothing in God's plan happens haphazardly or at random. **God has a "time line"** appointed for the unfolding pattern of Divine events -

*ACTS 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because **HE HATH APPOINTED A DAY, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;** whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, **in that he hath raised him from the dead.***

It is natural to think that nothing will change and that all things will continue as before; but we must recognize the message of scripture that **there is a Divine time factor**, that **God's plan is on course and will happen** as He has planned and foretold.

The Bible contains this message of God's purpose literally from cover to cover. Consider this message and warning from the very last chapter of the last book of the Bible -

REVELATION

*REVELATION 22:12 And, behold, **I come quickly**; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, **Surely I come quickly.** Amen.*

The next series of lessons will explore in some detail the scripture message in relation to the Divine motive and purpose.

NEXT LESSON: THE NATURE OF MANKIND

BibleKEY fact:

“ The event of Christ's return has never yet been fulfilled, and stands as something we must look forward to with earnest anticipation, preparation and watchfulness ”

BibleKEY definition:

"constancy" - adherence to a set pattern; fidelity

BibleKEY fact:

“ we must recognize the message of scripture that **there is a Divine time factor**, that **God's plan is on course and will happen** as He has planned and foretold ”

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Name Mr/Mrs/Miss

Address Postal Code

* You may need an additional sheet for your answers if there is not enough space below. Your answers to the following questions will help you - and us - to determine how much you have discovered about your Bible. Please return this form in the envelope provided even if you are unable to answer all the questions. On receipt of it we will forward a further study, as well as some

1. What is the main purpose for God's creation?
2. According to the Bible, where is this to happen?
3. How will God's purpose be accomplished?
4. Genesis chapter 3 informs us that with the punishment of the first human pair, there came also a promise of hope.
 - a. What was the punishment?
 - b. Why were they punished?
 - c. What was the promise?
5. What is the definition of "redemption"?
6. What was promised to Abraham?
7. What three things are indicated by God's promises to David?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
8. What two additional things are revealed in the book of Isaiah about the promises to David?
 - a.
 - b.
9. a. What was God's promise to Mary concerning Jesus?
 - b. Has it ever been fulfilled?
10. What was the promise of the angels to the disciples at the event of Christ's ascension?
11. What is the message of scripture concerning the course of God's plan?