

THE GLORY OF GOD

Week 2 – The Eternal Purpose of God

February 4, 2025

A clear understanding of the truth that God's revelation of Himself, of Who He is – provides a clear understanding of the big picture of Scripture – of God's unfolding plan of redemption and restoration from eternity past to eternity future - with the glory of God at the center – the unifying theme of Scripture!

Where does the Christmas account begin?!! Which Scriptures prior to Luke 1&2 and Matthew 2 lead up to Jesus' incarnation in Bethlehem Ephrathah? The book of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus, demonstrating the timeline of generations as Israel anticipated the birth of King David's Son, the Messiah.

Matthew gives particular attention to the fulfillment of OT prophecy. What was mentioned concerning the incarnation, the birth of Jesus, in the Hebrew Scriptures?

The virgin birth (Isa. 7:14). The birth of Jesus (Isa. 9:6). His birth in Bethlehem Ephrathah (Micah 5:2). The massacre of Hebrew male children ordered by Herod (Jer. 31:15) two years and younger. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus' returning from Egypt (implying their flight to Egypt from Bethlehem) (Hosea 11:1). The role of John the baptizer as the forerunner of the Messiah (Isa. 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1).

Simeon (Luke 2:25-32) connects Jesus' incarnation/birth to the Hebrew Scriptures. Simeon was a just and devout Jewish man in Jerusalem waiting for the "Consolation of Israel" (Messianic title [Isa. 40:1]). God the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that he, Simeon, would not see death before he had seen God's anointed/Messiah. NOTE: "Messiah/Moshiach" is Hebrew for anointed; "Christ" is Greek for "anointed."

Luke 2:25-32 – Simeon *came by the Spirit into the Temple* Simeon held Jesus in his arms and blessed God and said, ²⁹ "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation ³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory (praise – as in praise of God's plan for Israel) of Your people Israel." (Isa. 42:6; Isa. 49:6). Simeon clearly understood that the birth of this baby began in the eternal purpose of God – even before the world was created - because God the Holy Spirit had revealed it to him.

While understanding the prophecies of the Messiah in the OT, John's gospel begins, *In the beginning...* placing Jesus before the creation of the world. If we do not understand the "when" of the Christmas account, we can come away thinking that Jesus' incarnation is God's Plan B – something new – thinking that God has come up with a new Plan rather than fulfilling all He had already promised from ETERNITY PAST! Isa. 53:10 speaks of a conversation between God the Father and God the Son: Isa. 53:10 (NASB) - *The Lord was pleased to crush Him (the Suffering Servant, the Messiah), putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering.* When was this decided? In ETERNITY PAST!! The Christmas account was decided upon in the ETERNAL PURPOSE of God.

Before God created the world, God determined to save sinners through the blood of His Son, the anointed One, the Messiah.

The grand one narrative of the Bible points to this essential truth: God determined to bring glory to Himself through the salvation of a people redeemed and purchased by His own Son, the anointed One, the Messiah.

2

Bethlehem and Calvary were essential parts of God's plan from the beginning, before the creation was brought into being.

How does that impact you in your understanding of the Bible – the big picture of Scripture? Jot down OBSERVATIONS re: how the eternal purpose of God speaks to you re: Who God is.

The eternal purpose of God is based on Who God is and on His promises...on His unconditional covenants. God obligated Himself to deliver upon His promises.

God's plan is Plan A. It's always Plan A. God's plan can never be thwarted! How does that look?

When man chose to rebel against God – when man offended God by going against God's command (Gen. 2:16) to NOT eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...GOD pursued Adam & Eve!! God promised the gift of redemption/rescue/deliverance through the Seed of the woman (the Messiah). And God judged Satan (Gen. 3:15 – the Seed of the woman/the Redeemer, would bruise/crush Satan's head).

God banished A&E from the garden of Eden so that they would not eat of the fruit of the tree of life and remain in their fallen condition for eternity. That was God's grace!

Gen. 5:22 – Enoch walked with God. Heb. 11:5-6 – Enoch pleased God through faith which is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9)!

Gen. 6:5 - *Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Gen. 6:9 - *Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations* (Noah's lineage wasn't corrupted by the gross sin that was ongoing in his day). *Noah walked with God.*

The universal flood!! “How could God do such a thing?” Do we think that? What would we be missing if we closed the book after reading about the global flood? We would miss understanding God's holiness, justice, mercy, grace, love, immutability, faithfulness, steadfastness.... God gave the people in Noah's day 120 years to repent! This is our God! And, God rescued 8 people and many animals. “Big deal!” ??? IT IS A BIG DEAL! God's PLAN A continued and His promises will continue to be fulfilled because God is faithful. We see God's plan – Plan A - unfold in Scripture – in history – for HIS GLORY!!! The book of Genesis and the unconditional covenants that God made with the children of Israel look down the corridors of time...from ETERNITY PAST to the book of Revelation – into ETERNITY FUTURE!

Because of God's covenants with Israel – we understand Jesus' First Coming when He fulfilled all the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures re: His First Coming (Micah 5:2; Psalms 22; Isaiah 53; Isaiah 35:5-6; Psalms 16:10....). And, in the OT/in the Prophets, we read of the Messiah's Second

Coming - in the future. Those Second Coming prophecies have not as yet been fulfilled. But they will be as we read of their fulfillment in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Matthew, Acts, Revelation.

God's Plan A will remain intact.... What God had created and promised in the Garden of Eden will indeed be fulfilled in the future. The restoring of the earth and man to God's original plan will occur in the Millennial Kingdom on earth (recreation). Man does not have dominion now on the earth because of man's sin. BUT GOD promised!!! Man will be given dominion in the

3

Millennial Kingdom on earth when Jesus reigns as King in the Temple in Jerusalem...which will then lead to the new creation of the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21 & 22) in eternity future! This is our God. God must remain true to His promises!

If we only had the New Testament, we would come to the gospels and not know why the Jews were looking for a Messiah (a Redeemer). We would not understand why this Messiah was coming (see Isa. 53), and we would not have been able to identify Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah through the many detailed prophecies that were given concerning Him (His birth place [Micah 5:2]; His manner of death [Psa. 22; Isa. 53]; His resurrection [Psa. 16:10]; and many more details of His ministry.

The Prophet Daniel's prophecies give specific details about the rise and fall of nations. These prophecies are so accurate, in fact, that skeptics choose to believe they were written after the fact – after 164 BC. The Septuagint (Gk translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, written in 250-270 BC, includes the book of Daniel!)

The OT contains many promises that God will yet fulfill for the Jewish nation including Jesus' future 1,000-year reign which will fulfill His promises to the Jews. Which ones?

The Old Testament reveals more about God's character. It shows through repeatedly fulfilled prophecy why the Bible is unique.

To say that it is important for us to try to understand WHO God is – is a HUGE understatement! If we don't understand God from His word, what are we believing about Him? Returning to the gospel of John...John, in his gospel, states outright that Jesus pre-existed – from eternity past... that He was with God...that He is God!

John 1:1 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.* OBSERVATIONS:

In the beginning – This is God's time...God is transcendent...He is above time and space. God doesn't have a beginning! And so *in the beginning* places the one story/one narrative that the Bible is...in eternity past!

WHO is the "Word"? Where in Scripture do we look?

Gen. 1:3 - *Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.*

Psa. 33:6 - *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,*

CROSS REFERENCE from these verses above and find other verses in the OT re: the word!

The Aramaic word for “Word” is *memra*. Jewish people spoke both Hebrew and Aramaic. The Rabbis taught that in the Old Testament the “word” of God, the *memra*, is often personified as an instrument for the execution of God’s will (Psa. 33:6;....). For his Jewish readers, by introducing Jesus as the “Word,” John is pointing them back to the Hebrew Scriptures.

What is John proclaiming about the Word? We understand that the Word is _____

In John 1:1 we understand that there is a distinction within the Godhead. The Word was “with God,” also telling us that there was a unique relationship between the Word and God. (John 3:16; John 17:24).

4

...*the Word was God* – affirming the full deity of God.

God is triune. How do we explain Trinity? The word “Trinity” is NOT in Scripture. However, we understand our Triune God by reading a myriad of Scripture verses/passages...many in the Hebrew Scriptures:

What are the first three words in Genesis 1:1? *Bereshit bara Elohim* – “In beginning created God.” The Hebrew word for God is “Elohim” in Hebrew. Elohim has a plural ending. “Bara” is a verb meaning created and it is singular. That’s not grammatically correct. A plural subject/noun should have a plural verb. BUT our God is a plurality and He is ONE!??

Deut. 6:24 –*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!*

How many times do we read the name of God in Deut. 6:4? _____ “One” is *echad* in Hebrew which means a composite one - made up of more than one part.

Scripture speaks of our one God Who eternally exists as three distinct Persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a fundamental/a foundational aspect of God's nature and identity, not just a role or way of looking at God.

- The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons.
- Each Person is fully God – the whole/entire undivided essence of God belongs EQUALLY to each of the three Persons.
- There is only one God.

Did the Word have a beginning? No – because “The Word” is God and God is eternal. Jewish rabbis often referred to God in terms of His word. They spoke of God Himself as “the word of God.” For example, ancient Hebrew editions of the Old Testament change Ex. 19:17 – *Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God* to *Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet the word of God*. In the mind of the ancient Jews, the phrase “the word of God” could be used to refer to God Himself.

We see the Word being sent on a mission: Psa. 107:19-20; Isa. 55:11.

The Rabbis have taken it one step further. Since God was often perceived as somehow “untouchable,” it was necessary to provide some kind of link between the Lord and His earthly creation. One of the important links in Rabbinic thought was “the Word” called “Memra” in

Aramaic! The Aramaic word for “Word” is *memra*. Rabbis taught that *memra*, the “word” as found in Isa. 55:11 – was the same as God and yet distinct – but gave no explanation.

Consider: In the Hebrew Scriptures, God is pictured as enthroned in heaven (Gen. 19:24; Psa. 2), yet at the same time He manifested Himself in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire – and He dwelled between the cherubim over the ark and He put His Spirit on His prophets.

HOW GRAND IS OUR GOD!

QUESTIONS

What did you learn for the first time? How did that help you understand Who God is?

How did that help you understand Scripture? How might it be transforming you?

What questions do you have? From this lesson, what do you wish to share with someone?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 2 with Bible references.

Continue writing in your Glory of God Journal. Read Week 3’s lesson when you receive it.