

# The Pursuit

## Desperate for God's Word: Bible Intake (part 2)

Understanding *and* actively looking for the storyline of the Bible

Luke 24:13-34

A. It's possible to know the stories of the Bible but not the Gospel

*John Stott: "Some people seem to think of the Bible as a trackless jungle, full of contradictions, a tangled undergrowth of unrelated ideas. In fact, it is quite the opposite, for one of the chief glories of the Bible is its coherence. The whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation tells the story of God's sovereign purpose of grace, his master-plan of salvation through Christ."<sup>i</sup>*

*Graeme Goldsworthy: "The question is always: how does this passage relate to the drama of salvation and the manifestation of grace to sinners? To preach about us, our problems, and our way to a better life, and to do so without recourse to the significance of the gospel, is to radically distort the understanding of humanity and the meaning of Scripture."<sup>i</sup>*

B. The Old Testament is more than a collection of stories, it's the history of redemption

*"The Old Testament is a book of hope, of unfulfilled expectation. From beginning to end it looks forward to Christ. . . . Thus Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent's head, the posterity of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed, the star that would come forth out of Jacob and the scepter that would rise out of Israel. Jesus Christ is also the priest after the order of Melchizedek, the king of David's line, the servant of the Lord God who would suffer and die for the sins of the people, the Son of God who would inherit the nations, and the Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven, to whom would be given dominion, glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him forever. **Directly or indirectly Jesus Christ is the grand theme of the Old Testament.**"<sup>ii</sup>*

## 1. Beginning with Moses

Mark Lauterbach<sup>1</sup>: *“Moralism always tempts us, especially when preaching biography. While there are examples to follow in the pages of the Hebrew bible, they must never be taught as a form of self-effort and self-improvement. The Old Testament, properly preached, is a book of grace. Even the Ten Commandments are given in the context of grace, with frequent reminders of the redemption from Egypt and the character of God. God did not give us the earlier portion of the Bible to stir our hope in the ability of mankind to pull themselves up by their moral bootstraps. The narratives, even when they are examples of commendable or condemnable behavior, must always be related to redemption.”*

- a. When we read from Isaiah, “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,” we now know who he is talking about! Consider what Philip said to the Ethiopian Eunuch in **Acts 8:34-35**.
- C. The testimony of the scriptures informed those disciples whom Jesus spoke to on the road to Emmaus and by God’s Spirit opened their eyes to recognize the Redeemer.

Their hearts began to burn when they heard Christ speak. ***This should encourage our faith as we take up the task of understanding and teaching the Word.***

### D. Teaching the Gospel from Genesis to Revelation.

1. The study of all scripture moves us (our hearers or our children or whoever) to faith. (Old Testament included)<sup>iii</sup>

*“God’s great LOVE pours forth from the very beginning of the Bible, from the opening words in Genesis, to the closing words in Revelation. God’s great SALVATION is proclaimed throughout the Scriptures and that is how my heart was turned to Him, by seeing this salvation unveiled in the Old Testament. I discovered that the Bible was not a collection of unrelated short stories and it was seeing this unity of the Scriptures that brought me to faith. I came to a saving knowledge of Christ through the Gospel of Moses and the last shreds of unbelief were ripped from my eyes by the proclamation of John the Baptist. He was the voice calling out in the wilderness who finally reached my heart: “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” I beheld Jesus, because I understood for the first time about the Lamb of God in the writings of Moses. This Messiah had been announced from the beginning. I had not understood what manner of Man He was, because I had not been taught all that had been written beforehand concerning Him.”<sup>iv</sup> (This Testimony of Nancy E. Ganz is taken from a newly published commentary series for children.)*

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<sup>1</sup> Used by permission

## **We should ask the following questions about the Old Testament passages we read:**

The “big” question: How does this passage point me to the gospel?

- What part in God’s plan for redeeming a people does this passage or story play?  
(The Passover demonstrates God’s salvation from death and the work of the blood to appease God reminding us of the ultimate sacrifice of His Son.)

- How are the themes of redemption woven into the passage?  
Salvation, deliverance, mediator, adoption, substitution, forgiveness.

- Is there a direct prophetic element to the passage? (Isaiah 53)

- Is Jesus foreshadowed or pictured in this story?

(The bronze snake on the pole who was lifted up and everyone who looked upon it was healed)

- Are any of the characters a type of Christ?

(Moses mediating on behalf of the people, David reigning as king)

- Do the New Testament scriptures speak of this story?

(The book of Hebrews is filled with references to the Old Testament)

How does this text reveal man’s disposition to require a savior?

How does this text reveal God’s disposition (His nature) to provide a savior?

Mark Lutherbach<sup>2</sup>: “...connect your passage to the story of God’s saving work. This rule is especially important for the Old Testament. In order to do this, ask, 1.) How does this passage teach a message consistent with grace and redemption? 2.) **How do the events or ideas in this passage relate to the larger story of God saving us in Christ?**”

## **We should ask the following questions about New Testament passages we read:**

- How is this passage preparatory for the gospel, illustrate the gospel or flow from the gospel?

In other words, how does this relate to the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord?

Jesus was crucified not stoned so that he would not only be killed but cursed by God as well. It is written, “cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. (Deut. 21:23, Galatians 3:13)

- What Old Testament passage points to this story or event?

(The Old Testament sacrifices, offered for the remission of sins, point to Jesus’ death on the cross for the remission of our sins.)

- What redemptive themes are illustrated in this passage?

(Salvation, deliverance, mediation, adoption, substitution, forgiveness)

- In saving Noah from the flood God was doing more than saving the only living righteous individuals in the earth. God was preserving the race from who would come the redeemer of all men.

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**The ark of Noah not only brought salvation to a family; we were all saved in that ark because through the lineage of Noah, Jesus was born.** Hebrews tells us that Noah “became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.” (**Hebrews 11:7**)

- In Calling Abraham, God was not simply revealing himself to a man; God was building a nation, of whom we, by faith in Christ, are a part.

Every time God preserves a remnant from destruction he is preserving the lineage toward Christ and in turn our salvation through Christ. **Therefore God’s covenant promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:4-8 worked out through the ages is a promise of a coming redeemer every time we see it.**

### **Conclusion:**

We are all on a spiritual journey. We don’t want to be Pharisees who know the word well but don’t understand God’s plan of redemption and how it applies to our lives. When we see the message of the Bible clear and complete from Genesis to Revelation, we will know the great depravity of man, the unfathomable riches of God’s grace and will be positioned to point others to the Christ of Scripture.

### **Recommended reading for understanding the storyline of the Bible**

*According to Plan* by Graeme Goldsworthy

*God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Story-Line of the Bible* by Vaughan Roberts

*The Goldsworthy Trilogy: Gospel and Kingdom, Gospel and Wisdom, The Gospel in Revelation*  
by Graeme Goldsworthy

*Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament* by Christopher Wright

### **For your personal devotions**

*ESV Study Bible* by crossway

*How to Read the Bible Book by Book* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

<sup>i</sup> John Stott, Authentic Christianity, pg. 380, #908.

<sup>ii</sup> John Stott, Authentic Christianity, pg. 110-111, #224

<sup>iii</sup> The main points of this section taken from S. G. De Graff's introduction to Promise and Deliverance.

<sup>iv</sup> Nancy E. Ganz, Genesis a Commentary for Children, pg.xiv.