

The Story of the Bible

Intro Part 2

RECAP

We are trying to answer some basic questions ...

1. What is the Gospel?

- Not, what do we think it is?
- What do we hope it is?
- What does the protestant world think it is.

But, what did the Jews of Jesus time believe the gospel to be?

2. What is the good news of the Kingdom?

3. Why did Jesus have to die?

4. What on Earth am I here for?

5. Where is all of it going?

What have we learned so far?

- We all have a story that has formed us and shaped us.
- Recap my story slides

And it is the same with the people of the Bible ...

- As well as the message of the bible.

The people of the bible and the message of the bible all form part of a story.

- A plan that God has been unfolding for thousands of years ...
- That is leading somewhere.

Overview of Story ...

- Genesis 1 & 2
- Genesis 3
- Abraham
- Moses
- David
- Exile
- Intertestamental Period

- Jesus comes onto the onramp

Jesus didn't start a new religion.

- He ushered in the next step of God's eternal plan for creation ...
- Through the Jewish people.

This in many ways this is a **very complex story** to figure out ...

- Because although it is a unified story ...
- It was written by 40 different authors from every different walks of life ...
- Over a span of more than 2000 years.

And in the midst of that we need to figure out ...

- Where do the church (onramp) and I fit into all of this?
- And where are we supposed to be taking the story?

In the midst of trying to figure this out ...

- We have another though provoking challenge ...

"The Bible was written FOR us, but not TO us."

Culture and Worldview

It was written with us in mind ...

- But, it was written too people in a very different time ...
- With a very different Culture and World view our own.

The OLD TESTAMENT

In the ancient near east ...

- People had a very different view of the origin and development of the universe ...
- Than we do.

So passages like Genesis 1 ...

- Does not attempt to describe cosmology in modern terms or ...
- Or address modern questions.

They did not know that the sun is a star ...

- They did not know that the earth was spherical and moving through space ...
- They did not know that the sun was much further away than the moon ...
- Or even further than the birds flying in the air.

They believed that **the sky was material** (iow's solid, not vaporous) ...

- Solid enough to support the residence of deity as well as to hold back waters.

In these ways, and many others, they thought about the cosmos ...

- In much the same way that anyone in the ancient world thought ...
- And not at all like anyone thinks today.

And while they held this belief ...

- The never received and "revelation" from God ...
- To update or modify their "scientific" understanding of the cosmos.

If we accept Genesis 1 as ancient cosmology ...

- Then we need to interpret it as ancient cosmology ...
- Rather than translate it into modern cosmology.

If we try to turn it into modern cosmology ...

- We are making the text say something that it never said.

We live in at time where scientist want to know ...

- How the world was created, when it was created ...
- Over what period of time it was created ...
- And then compare it to Genesis 1.

Is the six days of creation referring to six 24 hour days ...

- Are the genealogies historically accurate?

According to the genealogies the earth is +-4,500 years old.

- According to science it is about 4.5 Billion years old.
- And the universe 13.8 billion years.

So, is there now a discrepancy between science and the bible?

- NO, for the people of that time science was not a science.
- And those kinds of questions were simply not in their world view.

And since God did not deem it necessary

- To communicate a different way of imagining the world to Israel ...
- But was content for them to retain the native ancient cosmic geography ...
- We can conclude that it was not God's purpose ...
- To reveal the details of cosmic geography.

The shape of the earth, the nature of the sky, the locations of ...

The sun, moon and stars, are simply not of significance

And God could communicate what he desired regardless of one's cosmic geography.

"Scientist" tries to figure out how there could have been waters above the sky (Gen 1:7),

Whereas this terminology is simply describing cosmic geography in Israelite terms ...

To make a totally different point.

Cosmic geography is culturally descriptive rather than revealed truth.

People in the ancient Near East were concerned about questions like ...

1. What is the level and nature of God's involvement in the world?

2. What is God's relationship to the cosmos?

- Is he manifested within the cosmos or is he controlling it from outside?

3. Is there such a thing as a "natural" world?

4. What is the cosmos?

- A collection of material objects that operate on the basis of laws?

- A machine? A kingdom? A company? A residence?

These were the kind of questions they were trying to answer.

- And these were the people to whom the book of Genesis was written.

New Testament Culture and Worldview

The NEW TESTAMENT back-ground has its own level of complexity.

- They were living in a Roman period with a Roman culture.
- Not a South-African culture, not a Western Culture, not an African culture.
- They are living in a Roman culture.

What did that mean?

- Imperial Rule and Roman Colonies.

But the Roman culture has its own **backdrop**.

- Which is the **Greek culture**.

In **331 BC Alexander the Great** conquered the Persians.

- And his dream was to not only conquer the whole world ...
- But to Hellenize it – to make it Greek.

He wanted Greek culture to permeate the whole world.

- And one of the biggest things for the Greek were philosophy.

So, during the Greek empire you had people like ...

- **Zeno** – Founder of Stoicism (Acts 17)
- **Socrates, Plato, Aristotle** who is the “father of science ...
- And tutored Alexander the Great
- Seneca the younger (tutor to Nero)
- Cicero, Epicurus (Acts 17)

So, when we make our landing in the **New Testament** ...

- We make a landing in a Roman culture in a Roman time ...
- That is actually Hellenized ...
- And where their thoughts on things like “the afterlife” ...
- Was predominantly influenced by the philosophers ...
- We “land” in the middle of a very interesting story.

The Bible is not a book, but a Compellation of Books

The English word **“Bible”** is from the Greek word **“Byblos”** ...

- And the **Latin “biblia”** and both mean **“books.”**

The story is made up out many **different GENRES** of literature.

You have **Historical Narratives: Genesis, part Exodus & Numbers, Samuel, Kings, Acts etc.**

It is like a video camera on the story.

- You can see what God is doing, how he is doing it ...
- To advance his purposes.

You can see who he is using to do it.

- Sometimes the “righteous.”
- Sometimes to develop someone.

- Sometimes even the ungodly (Cyrus, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar).

People do wicked stuff, but is just left.

Acts 2 – Narrative but not commanded.

The Law: Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy

- Torah = Instructions or Teachings
- The primary goal was to distinguish them as a people holy to God.
- Make them a light to the nations.
- That the world could through them see the creator's intent.

Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

Bubble - Proverbs 22:6 ⁶ Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

If you read it wrong, you might find yourself disappointed.

Poetry: Psalms, Song of Songs, Lamentations

- Complex: Some are old time favorites Psalm 23

Prophecy: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the book of the twelve.

- These are books that I have avoided for years.
- Because they are just so difficult to read.
- It can be hard to even just get through one chapter and make sense of it.

Rare that you say, hey, let me read from Isaiah 1-66 in one shot!

Apocalyptic writings: Daniel, Revelations

- These books have caused much tension over the centuries.
- And there has been some interesting interpretations ...
- Particularly from Revelations.
- With some help you can make some sense of it.

Gospels: Matt, Mark, Luke & John

- It is almost a "genre" in itself, because it is a semi-biography.
- Jesus birth, snap shot age 12, three years.
- Mark 1-8: 9-16

- Different views and lenses.
- Kingdom of Heaven, Kingdom of God, Eternal Life.

Epistles/ Letters: Romans, Corinthians, Timothy, Titus

So, we have these different genres that needs to be read and studied in different ways.

TERMINOLOGY CREATES THEOLOGY

Language

Now, just to add another layer of complexity ...

- The Bible was obviously not originally written in English ...
- But in Hebrew, Greek, some sections of Aramaic [sections of Daniel & Ezra]

So, you cannot do a word study using an English dictionary ...

- And in many ways can't even do it using a Hebrew or Greek Lexicon.
- Because many words and thoughts cannot be directly translated.
- And because of worldview often meant something fairly different to them ...
- Than what it would mean to us today.

Why is language so important?

- Because terminology creates theology.

Their view of words like gospel, soul, believe, faith, salvation or eternal life ...

- Was quite different than ours.

Let me unpack a couple of them.

BELIEVE – Pisteuō – [pie-stê-ro]

1. To be “convinced of” or “confident about” something or someone.
2. To entrust oneself to something or someone in complete confidence.
 - With the implication of an absolute (allegiance) to the one who is being trusted.

FAITH – Pistis – [Pie-sties]

1. The state of being someone in whom confidence can be placed...
 - In other words, you are “showing yourself” to be ...
 - Faithful, reliable, loyal, trustworthy and committed.

2. A Pledge

- A Solemn promise or an oath to “be faithful” and loyal.

Context – Ptolemy became hostile to the Jews and plotted to kill them.

3 Maccabees 3:10 And already some of their neighbors and friends and business associates had taken some of them aside privately and were **pledging** ^[Pistis] to protect them and to exert more earnest efforts for their assistance.

3. A proof or a pledge.

- A token “offered” as a “guarantee” of something promised...

Acts 17:31 For he set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given **proof** ^[Pistis] of this to everyone by raising him from the dead”

SALVATOIN – Sõtēria (saw-tea-ree-a)

For many contemporary Christians, “salvation” either refers to ...

- Going to heaven when you die ...
- Which is simply not what the Bible means by this term ...

Or is a synonym for what theological tradition has called “justification,” ...

- Being made right with God through the forgiveness of sins.

This latter use of “salvation” is not wrong, but it leaves out a great deal.

- It focuses on the beginning of a right relationship with God ...
- Through deliverance from the penalty of sin ...
- (Anticipating that we will stand with confidence before God in the final judgment).

Although this certainly is an important part of salvation ...

- It is limited by both its individual focus ...
- And its fixation on the notion of deliverance.

Salvation is much wider than that ...

- It cannot be limited to forgiveness of sins or escaping judgment.

In the Bible, salvation is a comprehensive reality ...

- Both future and present, and affects every aspect of existence.

The most fundamental meaning of salvation in Scripture is twofold ...

1. It is God's *deliverance* of those in a situation of need ...
 - From that which impedes their well-being, resulting in ...
2. Their *restoration* to wholeness.
 - Wholeness or well-being is God's original intent for creation, and that which impedes wholeness—sin, evil, and death in all their forms—is fundamentally anti-creational.
 - Both the deliverance of the needy and their full restoration to well-being (in relationship with God, others, and the world) are crucial to salvation, and the term may be used for either or for both together.

Eternal Life – Zōē Aiōnios [a-yo-nie-jos]

There was the **PRESENT AGE** that was marked by ...

- Poverty,
- Oppression,
- Suffering,
- Injustice
- Miserly

And there was the **AGE TO COME** or God's New Age [Olam Haba – The World to Come.]

- Where God would put everything right by ...
 1. Judging evil.
 2. Rescuing his people from those who have enslaved them.
 3. Restoring his temple
 4. Returning to it.
 5. And bringing about a new world of peace and justice.
 6. Resurrecting the righteous of old into it.
 7. Establishing his Promised family → light to the world.

Besides the different language you also had DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS.

- Had Hebrew Old Testament – Masoretic Text
- Greek Old Testament called the Septuagint [LXX] ...
- That was a Greek Translation of the Hebrew Bible ...
- That was translated between the 3rd and 2nd century.

Septuagint

In the 3rd century BC seventy-two Jewish scholars were asked ...

- By the Greek King of Egypt Ptolemy II (Philadelphus)
- To translate the Torah from Biblical Hebrew into Greek ...
- For inclusion in the Library of Alexandria.

You have the Aramaic Targum's that was compiled from 1st-7th century AD ...

- Which were a paraphrase of the Hebrew Bible?
- Almost like The Message "Bible" today.

So, we have all of that which is then "penned" down ...

- In 1,189 chapters, consisting out of 31,173 verses
- With more or less 807,370 words ...
- Over about 1,200 pages.

And we need to somehow try and make sense of it all?

So, what I want to do over the couple of weeks.

- Is to try and unpack some of this story line.
- In order to answer some of the questions I posed in the beginning.

1. What is the Gospel?
2. What is the good news of the Kingdom?
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