

Seven Words to Life
God is Keeping His Promise
 (Third word: Israel)
 Selected Texts

We are constructing a Christian worldview that explains who we are as individuals, families and a church and why we exist in the world.

Why are you here? The Bible answers that. What should you be doing with your life? The Bible answers that.

Creation – Creation explains what is right with the world. A good and great God created everything and is moving all creation toward Shalom = peace/rest.

We are here to represent his purpose in the world.

Fall – The Fall explains what is wrong with the world. By choices that misrepresented God’s character and will, we threw all creation into anti-Shalom initially and primarily represented by the division of relationships.

“*Let us make man in our image*” reminds us that God is a communal God living in eternal Trinity. “*It was not good for man to be alone*” so he made us “*male and female*,” both in the image of God. Your maleness images God. Your femininity images God.

Our lives are an extension of God’s trinitarian existence. Sin disrupts what is most important to God – relating to him and to one another. Because God exists in community, he wants us to experience that joy. Sin’s first strike is against relationships. The Fall explains the hardship of relationships, be they, friendship, family, school, work, teams, etc.

**We are all vying to be God
 and will harm others to do so.**

- *Adam and Eve
- *God and A&E
- *A&E and nature
- *A&E and their children
- *Cain & Abel
- *People & people

It is always in our best interests to obey God. As the Creator, his omniscience knows ‘best’ and he only commands what is in our best interests.

Last week, we finished God’s story in Genesis 10 with the world in confusion; a personal and global conflict we all experience. Whether it’s an argument at the Thanksgiving table or war in the Europe or the Middle East, sin – acting contrary to God’s character and intent in the world – is harmful to us all.

The Bible is teaching us how to join God’s comprehensive redemptive story.

First Word: Creation
Second Word: Fall
Third Word: Israel

Israel explains how God succeeds in the world while we fail in the world

Let's talk about 3 practical things we learn from Israel. I'm calling them 'gospel principles' because 'gospel' means 'good news.' Here are three points of good news from Israel.

First: Salvation is a Second Start of Grace

Out of the world's chaos and conflict in Genesis 10, God brings the hope of order and Shalom in the selection of a man through whom he will bless the world with his original intent

Genesis 12:1-3 - *Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

God disconnects Abraham from his natural past in order to connect him with his supernatural future. The New Testament calls this person "the new man" (Ro 6:6, 13:14; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:17; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10 & 12-14). – *(These verses in their context, would make a great topical study for you or your CG). What does it mean; what does it look like to 'put on' or 'live out of' the new man?*

Genesis 15:1-6 - *After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ²But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

Of course, the Old and New Testament stories aren't perfect because God is working with imperfect people.

We know what happened. Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands. God promised Abraham and Sarah a child, but an impatient Sarah encouraged Abraham to have a child with Sarah's handmaiden, Hagar.

Genesis 17:18-19 - *And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" ¹⁸God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.*

Gospel Principle: Salvation is a Second Start of Grace

Ephesians 2:1-10 - *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience — ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith.*

And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God won't let you begin the Christian life by works for many reasons but one is that he doesn't want your relationship to Him to be based on what you can't do, won't do, etc. Works can't sustain the Christian life.

IMP: While you are waiting on God, don't do anything contrary to God's character or will..

Second: God Has Purposeful Control of Your Life

Genesis 15:13-16 - *Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."*

This prophecy states that God is doing at least two things:

- a) Growing a nation (Israel)
 - *Suffering was part of God's design.
- b) judging a nation (Amorites)

Just like Abraham, God is inviting us to participate in his redemptive agenda in the world. This doesn't mean that life goes smoothly. If often means that life goes really bad but in that bad God has a purpose.

Let's re-think Israel in Egypt. First, we now know that it was prophesied, and God had a purposeful plan for it.

Exodus 1:6-11 - *Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them. Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens.*

- a) Abraham lived in Canaan and God promised him the land
- b) Isaac lived in Canaan
- c) Jacob lived in Canaan
- d) His 12 sons sold Joseph into Egyptian captivity
- e) A famine hit Canaan
- f) Jacob and his 12 sons moved to Egypt with Joseph
- g) Israel lived there for 430 years and grew from 70 to 2 million
- h) God raised up a Pharaoh "who did not know Joseph and mistreated Israel
- i) Israel cried out to God for release
- j) God saved Israel from Egypt
- k) Israel moved through the Sinai to Canaan and God fulfilled his promise

Egypt was not a prison but a womb. God placed Israel in the safest place on earth and birthed a nation. Then he sent Egypt into labor and Israel was born out into the world.

What you and I experience as pain is God's purposeful direction.

Gospel principle: God has purposeful control of your life

Romans 8:18-30 - *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Third: The Bible is the Encouraging Record of God's Faithfulness

The first promise about Jesus was made in the Garden of Adam and Eve's failure

Genesis 3:15 – God said to Satan, “*he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*”

But as demonstrated with Ishmael and Isaac, only God can do what needs be done. Righteousness is cooperating with God in his redemptive purposes in the world to bring about Shalom. But we cannot be discouraged by our failures. Rather, we should be encouraged by his faithfulness.

God created Israel to image him; to represent him in the midst of 7 heathen nations.

Deuteronomy 4:5-8 - *I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ‘Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding*

people.' *For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?*

We have all read of Israel's unfaithfulness. Instead of reflecting God, they became like the nations around them. Why? They are Adam's children. In like manner, we are Adam's children. But life is not hopeless because our ultimate hope is not in us but God.

**Life is only hopeless if you hope in you.
Life is hopeful if you hope in God.**

Does this mean we shouldn't do anything? No, we should do everything we can to work with God in creating Shalom. We have a responsibility to rightly represent God in the world and God is perfect. This means we should strive for perfection with the knowledge that it is God's perfection and not ours that wins everything to himself.

Gospel Principle: The Bible is the encouraging record of God's faithfulness in our unfaithfulness

2 Corinthians 4:1-18 - *Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

Conclusion:

(Band returns)

In this series, we're not just seeing how the Bible fits together but how our lives fit together. We're not just gaining an overview of the Bible and the history of the world but of our own lives. What God is doing in the world, he is doing in us. And all of it is written to give us hope.

God is demonstrating to the world that he is keeping his promise to create a people for himself. He is moving toward the new Eden in spite of humanity's constant failures. In fact, our failures serve to highlight God's

- a) Grace. He saved us by grace.
- b) Love. He loves us because of who he unchangingly is.
- c) Power. He is constantly remaking us and everything.

The Bible is all about him because life is all about him. And that's why we sing "He is worthy!"

Community Groups:

- 1 – What are the first 3 of the 7 words to life?
- 2 – How does creation explain what is right with the world?
- 3 – How does the Fall explain what is wrong with the world?
- 4 – How does Israel explain how God succeeds in the world even though we fail?
- 5 – How do we harm others by trying to be God?
- 6 – How does Abraham demonstrate a second start of grace?
- 7 – What was the point of Abraham leaving his family as a prerequisite to inheriting God's promises?
- 8 – Think about Eph 2:1-10.
 - Why is grace necessary?
 - What is the motive of grace?
 - Whom does grace honor?
- 9 – Read Genesis 15:13-16. How does Israel's time in Egypt illustrate God's purposeful control?
- 10 – Think about Romans 8:18-30
 - Who subjected creation to futility?
 - What does hope do for us?
 - What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit?
 - What 'takeaway' is in Romans 8:28?
 - How does knowing we are already glorified encourage us?
 - What can separate us from Christ's love?
- 11 – Why did God plant Israel in the midst of 7 heathen nations?
- 12 – How did Israel fail God in the Promised Land?
- 13 – Think about 2 Corinthians 4:1-18.
 - Why is the gospel (good news) about Jesus and not us?
 - Why do we not lose heart in the midst of a fallen world?
 - How does Jesus's resurrection give us hope?
 - What does affliction do for us eternally?
 - What do we need to look at in order to maintain hope?

14 – How is God’s work in Israel a demonstration of God’s work in us? What do we learn about God from his faithfulness to Israel?