

Biblical Theology: Session VI

Review Homework:

- Questions from the reading? [Goldsworthy, chapters 26-27]
- Genesis 15 & 17, Romans 4. How do they fit together?

REVIEW:

- Biblical theology is a way of reading the Bible as one story about one person. The Apostle Paul told us that God's ultimate purpose is to "unite all things in Christ". To make everything about Jesus. This is why the mission statement of our church is to "Proclaim the excellencies of Christ until Christ is all." We exist to make much of Jesus because, well...that's what God is about.
- This commitment must inform the way we understand the Bible. The Bible is a revelation of the glory of God in Jesus Christ. Agree? To read or preach the Bible as "the handbook for life," rather than as the revelation of Christ, is to turn the Bible into an entirely different book. Does the Bible tell us how to live? Yes. But it does so in a unique way. By revealing the character and nature of God.
- When I was a teenager, I was looking to the Bible to answer questions for me. I was frustrated because the Bible was not answering the questions I was asking. As a 16 year old, I wanted to know God's will for my life. As in God's will for my career, as in a college, as in a girlfriend. And I found the Bible frustratingly silent on these points.
- One day, I was reading 1Thessalonians and I came across this phrase: "**for this is the will of God**" and I thought, "Great! Finally!" I found out what God wants from my life. Should I go to law school? Should I be a pastor? Should I marry Sara Meyers? Should I play in the NBA?
- 1Thessalonians 4:3, "**for this is the will of God...your sanctification**". Foiled again. If God had a career path for me, He wasn't telling me about it. At least not in the Bible. And this is because I was reading the Bible wrongly. I was reading the Bible like it was a handbook for life. Like it was a self-help book. I wanted the Bible to be about me. But *doggonit*, the Bible was and continues to be stubbornly not about me...but all about Jesus.
- Tonight, we are going to put everything we've learned in this class together. We are going to do biblical theology. We are going to "follow the river" of a handful of texts to the ocean of God's glory in Christ Jesus. Instead of me explaining it, we are going to work through the text together.
- Before we jump right in, I've got a couple things I want to do first. There are several approaches to Biblical theology. We're going to look at three of them. I'll explain them briefly. And then we'll turn to the text. The three approaches we will look at tonight are: (1) The "Redemptive-Historical Method", the (2) "Promise-Fulfillment Method", and (3) the "Typological Method".



- If you'll forgive me for stretching the river analogy, several streams converge into the river on its way to the ocean of Jesus. In northcentral Montana, the Great Plains seem to break away from the Missouri River. It's an area called the Missouri Breaks. The landscape allows a bunch of tributaries to feed into the Missouri. It's some of the richest and most diverse habitat in the US. Someday I'd love to go elk hunting there.
- Biblical theology works like this. So, you may take a text like Isaiah 53 or Psalm 22 and use multiple methods of Biblical Theology to find your way to Jesus Christ. So we'll take the next few minutes and look at these three approaches and apply them to some Bible passages.
- The first method we will consider is called the Redemptive Historical Method.

The Redemptive Historical Method

- The redemptive historical method seeks to trace God's plan of salvation, His plan of redemption across the Bible. It is longitudinal in a sense. How does this text fit into the great big plan of God to save sinners from judgment by His Son? What is the trajectory of this text, and how does it find its climax in Christ? This is the redemptive historical method.
- The big idea behind this is that unless we understand how each passage fits into the the big story, we will never truly understand the passage. I've quoted this verse before. Jesus said in John 5, **"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."** (39-40)
- Jesus is saying that the entire Scriptures are about Him. Unless we come to Him, unless we understand Jesus, we cannot hope to understand the Scriptures. He tells the Jews of His day. You are looking for the life from the Scriptures, but I am Life. If you do not trace the Scriptures up to Me, you will not find life.
- So I could describe an acorn to you. I could describe its color and its shape and even its taste. But if I have never explained how this acorn can become a giant oak tree, then I haven't really explained the most important part about the acorn, have I? I can teach the entire history of King David, the man, his rule, his exploits, his failures. But if I do not show how he fits into and points forward to the redemptive plan of God in Jesus Christ, I haven't really explained King David, have I?
- That's what the redemptive historical model is meant to do. It is meant to show how a person, a story finds its greatest purpose in revealing Christ. It seeks to place every text within the framework of God's plan of salvation.
- We look for plot-tension that can only be resolved by Jesus. So God gives Israel a promise of blessing that is conditioned upon their obedience. So how can that same God reveal Himself as a God of grace? How can He be all grace and yet have conditions? Tension. Answer...somehow...Jesus.
- God promised His people a redeemed humanity on a renewed earth. They turned away from Him and fell under His judgment. Is God a liar? Have His promises failed? Tension. Answer...somehow...Jesus.
- In an earlier session we talked about the major biblical themes of creation, fall, redemption, and consumption throughout the Bible. When we employ the redemptive-historical model, we are looking for those themes. God



gives a command to Adam, “Don’t eat from the fruit of the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.” Adam gives in to temptation. Jesus overcomes temptation. Dies for Adam’s sin. Raises from the dead. Brings fallen humanity into heaven. Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation.

- You’ll see this often in the Bible. God commands. Man sins. Jesus redeems. Secures Heaven. God gives the Law, do this. Man can’t keep God’s Law. Jesus comes and keeps God’s law perfectly. Man trusts Jesus and through Jesus the consumption comes, new heaven, new earth. Jesus is always central.
- The Redemptive-Historical Model helps us see these themes. The next one we will look at is called the Promise-Fulfillment Method. It’s pretty self-explanatory.

The Promise Fulfillment Method

- Another way of doing biblical theology is to see how God’s promises are fulfilled in Christ. Paul told the Corinthians **“For all the promises of God find their Yes in [Jesus]. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.”** (2Cor 1:20)
- In the Bible, God makes promises. Some of those promises are fulfilled *in* the Bible. God promises Abraham a son through Sarah. Isaac is born. Promise fulfilled. Abraham saw it. Other promises God made to Abraham weren’t fulfilled in his lifetime. Remember that God also promised Abraham that **“In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”** (Gen 12:3) He never saw the fulfillment of that promise.
- The Lord also promised David a son whose kingdom would never end. David died. So did all David’s sons. The Davidic kingdom is no more. Has God’s promise failed? The Promise-Fulfillment Method seeks to find the fulfillment of God’s promises in Jesus. All the promises of God find their yes in Him.
- You remember, we opened last session in Luke 4. After the temptation in the wilderness, Jesus goes to the synagogue in Nazareth, reads from Isaiah 61, sits down and says, **“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”** Promise. The Anointed One will come and preach the good news to the poor. He will proclaim liberty to the captives. He will heal the blind. He will set the oppressed free. He will proclaim the favor of God.
- Promise given. And Who was that Anointed One? No one in Isaiah’s day. Fulfillment? Jesus says, Me. In our LSDG we’re studying Acts. Last time we read Acts 2. The Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost and Peter preached a sermon, quoting from the prophet Joel, saying, what Joel foretold is happening now.
- Paul opens his letter to the Romans, **“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures...”** The Biblical authors viewed Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises of God in the Old Testament.
- One more thing to note about the Promise-Fulfillment model. There are some things that Jesus fulfilled in His ministry on earth. There are some things that He is fulfilling in His ministry now in heaven. And there are other things that will finally be fulfilled during His Second Coming. Different views of end-times will determine which is which, in some part, but there are some things that you’ll struggle to find fulfilled, but we know will ultimately be fulfilled in the end.



The Typological Method [analogy/contrast]

- The typological method finds types of Christ in the Old Testament. These are foreshadowings, even analogies, of Jesus in the text. Matthew's gospel uses OT allusions and parallels. We've already mentioned some of them in this class. Jesus went down to Egypt and came out again. He came through the waters of the Jordan river. He was tested in the wilderness for 40 days; Israel was tested for 40 years. There are others. He preaches God's law from the mount. He chooses 12 disciples, there are 12 tribes. In Matthew He performs ten miracles. He feeds a multitude with bread like God feeds Israel with Manna.
- Many have noted how Joseph was a type of Christ. He was rejected by His brothers, sent away, by his obedience to God, he became the savior of his brothers. Jesus was rejected by His own, by His obedience in death, He became the Savior of the whole world.
- David was a type of Christ. He was a shepherd. Jesus is the good Shepherd. David was Anointed King of Israel. Jesus is the King of Kings. David slew the giant Goliath. Jesus slew the giant Death.
- Jesus Himself used the types. He says in Matthew 12:40, "**For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**" Jonah was a type of Christ. In that same passage He says, "**something greater than Solomon is here.**" Solomon pointed to Christ. He saw the manna in the wilderness as a type of Himself.
- John 6:32-33, "**Jesus then said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'**" He says unequivocally two verses later, "**I am the bread of life.**"
- In Paul's writings, he refers to Jesus as the Passover Lamb (1Cor 5). He says that Christ was the Rock that Israel drank from in the wilderness (1Cor 10). Hebrews is packed full of symbols and types of Christ. More than any other book, Hebrews shows how Jesus is the fulfillment of the High Priestly ministry. There is the interesting case study of Melchizedek, the Priest King to Whom Abraham gave a tenth.
- There are antithetical types, too. In Paul's writings, Adam is a type of Christ. He calls Jesus the last Adam in 1Corinthians 15.
- We could go on. But let's get to work. We'll take a passage and read it together. We'll see which of the three (there may be more than one) of the methods of biblical theology we can employ to understand how the text points us to Jesus. Let's start in Numbers 21.

The Serpent in the Wilderness:

- Numbers 21:4-9.
- First question. **What this is saying?** Don't tell me what it means. Tell me what is going on. What do you see?
- Second question. Where does this fit within the **immediate context** of the Old Testament?



- Next question. How would the **original audience** have understood this? What is the meaning to them?
- Now. How do we **get to Christ** from here? Which model might we use? [John 3:15-16]
 - RHM — Creation: God is your Provider. Fall: Did not trust God to provide. Redemption: Christ trusted and was lifted up. All who look on Him will be saved. Consummation: God is Your Eternal Provider in heaven.
 - Promise-Fulfillment — Not really...
 - Typological — Like the serpent, Jesus. Look to Jesus and saved....

The Sabbath

- Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-10
- First question. **What this is saying?** Don't tell me what it means. Tell me what is going on. What do you see?
- Second question. Where does this fit within the **immediate context** of the Old Testament?
- Next question. How would the **original audience** have understood this? What is the meaning to them? SIGN.
- Now. How do we **get to Christ** from here? Which model might we use?
 - RHM — Creation: God set apart the seventh day as holy and made it a day of rest. Why? Fall: Did God's people keep the Sabbath? Redemption: How did Jesus redeem the Sabbath? How is Jesus our Sabbath? Consummation: heaven is our eternal rest...our eternal sabbath...
 - PF — Not much...
 - T — Hebrews 3 & 4 work this out for you. Early church started worshipping on Sunday, Xian sabbath. Why? In law, worked and were rewarded with rest. But in the kingdom of God, we start with rest in X, from there we do the work. With?

The Passover Lamb

- Exodus 12:3-13
- First question. **What this is saying?** Don't tell me what it means. Tell me what is going on. What do you see?
- Second question. Where does this fit within the **immediate context** of the Old Testament?
- Next question. How would the **original audience** have understood this? What is the meaning to them? SIGN.
- Now. How do we **get to Christ** from here? Which model might we use?
 - RHM —
 - PF —
 - T —

The Psalms

- Psalm 22; Mt 27:46



- First question. **What this is saying?** Don't tell me what it means. Tell me what is going on. What do you see?
 - Lament vv1-21...major shift in middle...
- Second question. Where does this fit within the **immediate context** of the Old Testament?
- Next question. How would the **original audience** have understood this? What is the meaning to them? SIGN.
- Now. How do we **get to Christ** from here? Which model might we use?
 - RHM — Creation: no suffering; Fall: because of sin, anguish, abandonment, danger; Redemption: why has the Psalmist shifted? Not told. Know. Jesus was abandoned so that the Psalmist would not be. Consummation: because Jesus was abandoned on the cross, all those who trust in Him will be with God forever. Last verse in Psalm. He has done it!
 - PF — What promises are in this Psalm? (26-31) How has/will Jesus fulfilled this?
 - T — The Psalmist a type of Christ?

Idolatry

- Exodus 20:3-6. Romans 1:21-23 [Ex 32]
- First question. **What this is saying?** Don't tell me what it means. Tell me what is going on. What do you see?
- Second question. Where does this fit within the **immediate context** of the Old Testament?
- Next question. How would the **original audience** have understood this? What is the meaning to them? SIGN.
- Now. How do we **get to Christ** from here? Which model might we use?
 - RHM — Creation: Worship only God. Fall: Worship idols. Redemption: Jesus worshipped God perfectly and his death restores right worship of God. Consummation: Heaven is where right worship is fully restored.
 - PF —
 - T

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

