

Sermon Brief, Helpful Links, Discussion Questions

April 18, 2021

“Was it not necessary: How the Old Testament prepares us for Jesus - part 2”

Genesis 6-9, 12:1-3

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Sermon Brief:

1. Before I begin a series on Jesus from Luke, I want to do a short series on the Old Testament and how it gets us ready for Him. You might say, this is like a series before the series. Specifically, over the next several weeks, I want to explain four key concepts that will help you summarize the message of the Old Testament.
2. Instead of zooming in and looking at one particular passage, we are taking some time to zoom out and look at the entire Old Testament, because we are trying to get a big picture understanding of what the Old Testament is basically about.
3. For one thing, because a lot of people don't know what the Old Testament is about. And the Old Testament is a BIG part of our Bibles. It is so important, if you don't understand the Old Testament you are not going to understand the New, and if you don't understand the New, you are not going to understand Jesus.
4. You simply can't understand Jesus without understanding the Old Testament because Jesus completes the story the Old Testament tells.
5. Last week we began looking at that story a little more closely.
6. Each Sunday I am giving you one key concept for understanding the Old Testament, and our key concept last Sunday, was the kingdom of God. The theme of the story the Old Testament is telling is the kingdom of God.
7. We find our first picture of the kingdom of God in the introduction to the Bible, Genesis 1 and 2. God's plan was for His people to dwell in His place with the responsibility of ruling over this world on his behalf as they experience His presence and enjoy His blessing.
8. In case we somehow missed that idea in the introduction, we can fast forward all the way to the conclusion of the Bible and find it as well. Someone once said, “The eschatology of the Bible is a whole lot like the protology.” In other words, the way the story ends is a little like how it begins, only better.
9. Which obviously, isn't how it is right now. There's the plan in Genesis 1 and 2 and there's the problem in Genesis 3, and that's where the story really gets going. Because the question is, how is God going to restore what man has broken? And that's what the Old Testament story is really about. You have the plan, the problem and the SOLUTION.
10. The first big thing the Old Testament tells us is that the solution isn't going to be us and something we do. After the fall in Genesis 3, everything just gets worse in Genesis 4-11. We are seriously messed up. And yet in spite of all that sadness we have hope because God makes a promise. In Genesis 3:15 God promises that one of Eve's descendants will rise and defeat Satan through suffering and conflict. From the moment God made that promise on, godly people were looking for that descendant of Eve to come. They have been wanting to know how He was going to come and what He was going to do and part of the purpose of the rest of the Old

Testament is to help you understand exactly who to look for and how God's going to keep the promise He made in Genesis 3 through Him.

11. And one of the primary ways He reveals that is through something we call covenant. **I once heard someone say the story of the Bible is a story of a kingdom through covenants.** If the Old Testament story is like a body, the covenants are the backbone.
12. **So, I want us to begin to explore what this whole idea of covenant is about by looking at the first two covenants in Genesis.**
13. **The first time we find the word covenant is in Genesis 6, the Noahic covenant.** After man's rebellion and after God's judgment, what happens? God starts the world over, making a commitment to the world itself. And that commitment is not so much focused on what the world is supposed to do, but what He is going to do for the world. It's almost like this first covenant sets the stage for the rest, we are going to read about. As someone put it, "Through the Noahic covenant God promises stability of nature as a platform for carrying out His kingdom plans."
14. So, God's committed to His rescue plan. The first covenant reaffirms that. But how? This is where the second covenant in the Bible comes in. **It's called the Abrahamic covenant.** The plan's been laid out. God's going to establish a kingdom. The promise has been made. One of Eve's descendants is going to defeat Satan. And the stage has been set. God's entered into a covenant with the world that in spite of how bad everything gets it is going to remain until He fixes what man has broken. Now he tells Abram that the seed He promised who is going to defeat Satan is going to come through him. This is Genesis 12:1-3. It's a very important passage. God is going about His rescue plan by establishing a nation from Abram with a king and land that is blessed and is the basis for bringing blessings to other nations.
15. And, if you think about it, that really is what much of the Old Testament is about. It is about God keeping His promise to Abram through Israel. Which I know, sometimes, is difficult for us to read, because we are not Israel, and yet, as we are reading the story of Israel, we can't forget, that this story we are reading of Abram's descendants has a purpose that's linked back to God's promise.
16. This is key. God's going to use Abraham's offspring to fix what man's broken. And that means, of course, as we are looking at what God's doing in Israel, we are asking, how? How is God going to use these people, to do all that?
17. To answer that, you'll have come back next time.

Helpful Links:

1. [Defining Covenants](#)
2. [An Overview of the Biblical Covenants](#)
3. [Twelve Points for Understanding the Biblical Covenants](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you summarize the theme of the Old Testament?
2. What are some of the key elements to that theme which are revealed in Genesis 1-2.
3. In what way is the beginning of the Bible and the conclusion to the Bible similar? How does that set us up for understanding what the rest of the Bible is about?

4. What are some of the problems that are created by the fall? (If you were going to try to summarize those problems in categories how would you do that?)
5. What are some ways Genesis 4-11 make it clear that we are not going to be able to establish God's kingdom on earth ourselves?
6. What is the hope we are given in Genesis 3? What are some possible indications God's people were hoping in that "seed" from the beginning?
7. The Old Testament is slowly but surely revealing more and more about how God is going to accomplish His great rescue plan. This Sunday we talked about one of the key ways he reveals that. Do you remember the name for the key concept we talked about?
8. Where is the first place that term is found in the Old Testament?
9. What is the Noahic covenant and what is the significance of this covenant for understanding God's great plan?
10. The Noahic covenant doesn't really tell us how God is going to fix things. It just gives us some assurance that He is going to. Where is the next covenant in Genesis and how does it help us better understand the story of salvation?
11. What three main promises does God make Abraham?
12. How does the Abrahamic covenant help us understand the purpose of Israel?
13. What are some ways you can think Israel might be used by God to bring this great blessing to the nations?