

THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE BIBLE

This lesson is designed to give a brief outline of the Overall Theme of the truth as taught in the Bible. This will provide a 'broad stroke' view of what God intended in declaring the Scriptures.

Our endeavor is:

1. To show that the Bible is the message that God wants us to hear and pay attention to.
2. To demonstrate the structure of the Bible which is outlined in the existence of a Central Theme.
3. To provide an overview of the Divine Purpose. This will help when considering the finer details as we continue our studies.

The Divine Motive:

The creation by God of the heavens and the earth and the placement of mankind over His creation began with the intention to fill the earth with Godly people. From the first day of God's creation, it was established that 'light' be in the world. This light or knowledge of God and reflection of His character is what mankind was supposed to 'populate' the world with...IE the words: "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" were for mankind who was created "in the image and likeness of God". This is confirmed by **Isaiah 45:18** "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and *there is none else.*" This purpose has not changed!

Numbers 14:21 "But *as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.*" This establishes the Divine Purpose or motive of God. It is the fundamental principle behind the creative process that God receives joy from His act of creation. (See Revelation 4:11) Anytime we lose the thread of the message of the Bible, remember this verse! God is looking to fill the earth with Godly people.

The emphasis of the 'earth' as the dwelling place of man is emphasized many times in the Bible.

Psalms 115:15 "Ye *are* blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth. 16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD'S: **but the earth hath he given to the children of men.**" The earth was designed for mankind. He is to live and develop in an environment intended for his good.

God honored man by creating him in His own image and after His likeness, indicating a purpose for man higher in responsibility than all the rest of His creation. These verses bear out this thought in the words "have dominion over." **Genesis 1:26-27** **26** "And God said, Let us make man in our **image**, after our **likeness**: and let them **have dominion over** the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." **27** So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. **Image** relates to the 'looks' while **likeness** refers to the moral capacity to appreciate God.

How were they created: **Genesis 2:7** "And the LORD **God formed man of the dust** of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This refers to the physical make up of man and the motivating force that gave him life. "God breathed" is a reference to His Spirit power by which all things are created.

While everything was created 'very good', the man and woman disobeyed the command of God. This brought consequences whereby they went from being 'very good' to 'mortal' meaning they would die as a result of their sin or disobedience. But God did not leave them without any hope. The words of **Genesis 3:15** demonstrate that God would provide a 'seed', IE one who would crush the head of the serpent (representative of the lie which he spoke). The reason this verse is used as a reference in the Central Theme is to emphasize the key word "seed." The 'seed of the woman' comes to refer to Jesus Christ as a direct descendant of Adam and Eve. The purpose of this promised seed establishes that Jesus

Christ will become the primary character in God's plan of salvation. The significance of this seed will become evident as we move through the following references.

The lesson of the 'seed' continues in **Genesis 12: 1-3** In this passage Abraham is called by God and because of his obedience, he is given the promise of a 'seed' as well. "In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed", again referring to Jesus Christ through whom believers would be given a blessing at the last day. Also, in the following chapter Abraham was further promised an inheritance of the land: **13:14-15** "And the LORD said unto Abram... look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: **15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever**". Abraham and his faithful descendants are to receive the land that he could see and that he walked on as an everlasting inheritance! However, the record also tells us that Abraham died and was buried not having received the promise (see Hebrews 11:13). Fulfillment of the promise is still yet to come.

Later in history, another direct descendant from Adam and Eve and Abraham, is King David of Israel. He too is promised a 'seed' that would sit upon his throne.... Forever!

2 Samuel 7:12 "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I (God) will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He shall build an house for my name, and **I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.**"
(see also **Isaiah 9:6,7**)

1. David is promised a 'seed'. who would sit on his throne.
2. This 'seed' is to rule over the throne of David.
3. David's throne and kingdom is to be established forever by God for the 'seed'.

If we jump ahead in history about 1000 years to the time of the New Testament, the promises about a seed for Abraham and David are connected to the words of the angel that appeared to Mary.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.³² He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: **33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.** These words of the angel tie together all the prophecies of the 'seed'. Note in these verses how closely the angel follows the prophecy in 2 Samuel 7:12,13 in informing Mary of the significance of the son she will bear.

1. Would be called the son of the Highest: IE the son of God.
2. God will give him the throne of his father David.
3. He will reign over the house of Jacob (Israel) forever.
4. His kingdom will have no end.

Jesus never did fully complete the requirements of these prophecies. He never occupied the throne of David. He has not set up the Kingdom of God and his kingdom has not started yet. Scriptures are very clear in detailing that the "Messiah" would have to die first as an offering that would remove sin for all the believers. The faith of men like Abraham and David declares their belief that "in thy seed shall all nations be blessed". The means to this end is to be completed in Jesus Christ. Note his words:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:6 This is also endorsed by the word of the Apostles in **Acts 4:12** "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is **none other name** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is recorded that Messiah had to die to accomplish this., but this is only part of the solution.

After the Apostles had witnessed the resurrection of Jesus after he died on a cross, Jesus stayed with them for a total of 40 days while he taught them. At that time they all went together to the mount of Olives as in Acts 1. It was from here that Jesus was taken from them and ascended to heaven in a cloud. However when this happened and they were confused about what had just happened, two angels appeared to them..

“And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” **Acts 1:10,11**

He had commissioned these men to go into all the world and preach the Gospel (good news). We can put strong emphasis on the angel's statement "this same Jesus will come again in like manner We also note that the "good news" is about Jesus as the 'seed' of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent who represents sin, he will be the 'seed' through whom all nations of the earth would be blessed, and he will be the 'seed' that is to sit upon the throne of David and rule in the Kingdom that God will establish! That is Good News!

The return of Jesus Christ as declared by the angels becomes a key principle of the apostles' teaching.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing **shall come** from the presence of the Lord; 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom the heaven must receive **until** the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

The words "shall come," in verse 19, are important and the word "until" in verse 21 is also significant. This reference demonstrates that God's purpose from creation has been consistent and the restitution of all things through Christ was prophesied by the holy prophets from the beginning.

The outworking of the Divine plan as seen in this overview demonstrates that God had a plan right from the beginning that would unfold in the manner He revealed through His prophets. History is not random. It is by the design of God. There is a specific time frame that has been established. Galatians 4:4 tells us: "But when **the fulness of the time** was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law".

We can also know that this is all according to a time frame that God has established. The 'seed' would come at the appointed time! This is born out in detail in this next passage of the Bible.

Acts 17:31 Because he (God) hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man (Jesus) whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Verses 32-34 goes on to show the attitude of the people who heard Paul's teaching regarding the resurrection. Some mocked, excluding themselves from salvation. Some were impressed but uncertain. others believed unto life eternal. None of these men and women were forced to accept the truth of God's words. Those who accepted the teaching about Jesus Christ were convinced by the proof laid before them. We also have opportunity to hear the word of God. How will we respond: God willing, with conviction and belief.

The final verse of the Bible declares the hope of every one who believes the word of God and the 'good news' of the name of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. Jesus says: "Surely I come quickly", we fervently join John in his response "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." **Revelation 22:12, 20**