

# **Introduction to Salvation History**

by Marcus Johnson • Lake Region Bible Church, Round Lake, IL • 2018

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## **Some Highlights about Salvation History**

**Salvation**: an overarching biblical concept that includes multiple concepts such as election, conversion, adoption, sanctification & glorification. Salvation (like the gospel message) includes all that our faithful covenant-keeping God does in glorifying Himself thru His Son Jesus Christ & the work of the Holy Spirit, as He redeems what has been lost & ushers in the fullness of His kingdom: fulfilling His promises to Israel & all the nations, as He delivers His people from sin, this fallen world & the evil one; executing His righteous judgment upon Satan, the world, & the unbelieving dead, while by His grace, & according to His love, saving all who believe & adopting them into His family, and making all things new as His people enjoy eternal life with Him in a new heaven & earth, unto His eternal glory.

**Salvation History**: a term used by Christians to refer to the true unfolding storyline of Scripture, which is the divine record of how God has acted in human history to bring about salvation to a lost & rebellious world.

**The Importance of Salvation History** (Among other reasons, salvation history is important because):

- 1) Biblical salvation is based on actual events or acts of God & humans in human history (the Bible is not fictional stories written merely or only to reveal spiritual/theological truth or to inspire us in how to live).
- 2) The gospel is first & foremost the revelation of who God is & what He has done to make salvation possible (not primarily a message about us & what we need to do). Without these acts of God there would be no salvation because the truth we need to believe is based on acts of God in human history, not simply God revealing spiritual truth to us (God not only had to reveal truth to save us, He had to act). Also, without focusing on this unfolding story, we end up with a gospel that talks too much about us & not enough about Him.
- 3) God reveals Himself partially thru narrative: by showing Himself, His truth & His salvation as we read the true story of what He has done. Narrative captivates the reader and is a powerful way to communicate truth. The Bible is not just theological truth: it is truth largely communicated thru a true story (salvation history).
- 4) Understanding salvation history is necessary in order to understand the Bible's message: of each book of and how the different books of the Bible fit together (knowing the NT helps us understand the kinsman-redeemer in Ruth; knowing the OT helps us understand the symbolism & prophetic revelation in Revelation).
- 5) Understanding salvation history is necessary in order to know Jesus Christ & God's glory (to correctly understand Christ as the fulfillment of our faithful covenant-keeping God's promise to Abraham, or the Davidic-King who will reign forever, etc.). Without this understanding of the redemptive flow of the Bible, we end up preaching a gospel that is more about us & our daily lives than it is about Jesus Christ & the glory of God.

## **A Simplified Outline of Salvation History**

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Consummation

“One might summarize salvation history in four words: creation, fall, redemption, consummation. That is the entire story, painted with the broadest brush. Then again, one might add in, after the fall, a number of other turning points: the call of Abraham and the beginning of the Abrahamic covenant, the exodus and the giving of the law, entrance into the promised land, the establishment of the Davidic dynasty, the exile and the end of the exile. Under redemption, one might break down the category into constituent parts: the incarnation, Jesus' atoning death, Jesus' resurrection, and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost.” (by D.A. Carson; a selection taken from “The Bible and Theology” in the NIV Zondervan Study Bible; © 2015).

**A Gospel-centered Outline of the Bible**: *adapted from Robert W. Yarbrough (NT Scholar)*

- The Old Testament is the Foundation of and the Preparation for the Gospel
- The Gospels are the Manifestation of the Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John)
- Acts is the Expansion of the Gospel
- The Epistles are the Explanation of the Gospel (Romans thru Jude)
- Revelation is the Consummation of the Gospel

## **Some Key Revelations & Events in Salvation History**

For some biblical summaries of salvation history, see: Lk 24:25-27,44ff; Ac 7:1ff & 13:13ff; Ro 9-11; Rev 12

- God (He eternally is; one God in 3 persons; Lord of all): Gen 1; Ex 3:13ff; Isa 46:8ff; Col 1:15ff; Jn 1; Rev 4
- Election (God chooses a people before creating the universe): Eph 1:3ff; Ro 8:29ff; Rev 13:8
- Creation (humans created in His image; all are accountable to God) Ge 1-2; Jn 1; Ac 17:22ff; Ro 1:18ff
- The Fall (sin, judgment, & death enters human race thru Adam's & Eve's rebellion): Gen 3; Ro 1-3; 5
- The Flood (God's judgment & grace revealed amidst man's wickedness); Gen 6-9; Lk 17:26ff; 2Pe 3:1ff
- The Tower of Babel (God spreads mankind out; confuses our languages): Gen 11; Ac 2:1ff; Rev 7:9; 21:1ff
- God's Covenant with Abraham (thru which comes Israel, the Christ, & salvation for all nations): Gen 12-21
- God's Testing of Abraham (Abraham offers Isaac on the altar; God provides the lamb): Gen 22; Isa 53
- Jacob & his 12 Sons (from which would come the 12 tribes of Israel & eventually the Christ): Gen 27-50
- Joseph/Jacob's Journey to Egypt: Gen 37-50
- Israel lives 400yrs in Egyptian Slavery: Ex 1-15
- The Passover & The Exodus (God delivers Israel from slavery just as He will save people from sin): Ex 3-15
- Israel in the Wilderness (just as Christ & the church would be): Ex 16; Nu 14; Mt 4; Ac 7:38; Heb 3; Rev 12
- The Law, the Tabernacle, & the Priesthood (reveals God's holiness, our sin & points to Christ): Ex 19-31; Lev
- The Holy Feasts & the Year of Jubilee (foreshadows the victory of the cross, Pentecost, etc.): Lev 23 & 25
- The Promise Land (foreshadows our Sabbath rest in the new heaven/earth): Jos 6; Isa 65-66; Heb 4; Rev 21
- The Judges Rule (wicked sin; God's covenantal-kindness shown to/thru Naomi, Ruth & Boaz): Judges; Ruth
- Israel as a Kingdom: 1 Samuel thru 2 Chronicles
- King David (man after God's own heart) & King Solomon (the wisest man): 1Sa 16; 2Sa 7; 1Ki 1
- Solomon Builds the Temple but then Forsakes the Lord: 1Ki 6-11
- The Kingdom is Divided (because of sin: Israel/northern 10 tribes & Judah/southern 2 tribes): 1Ki 12
- The Prophets: (call God's people to repentance; prophecy about Israel, the nations, the Christ): Isa – Mal
- Israel is Conquered (722 b.c., by the Assyrians due to her persistent idolatry/rebellion): 1Ki 14:14-16; 2Ki 17
- Judah into Exile (c.605 b.c., goes into Babylonian captivity for 70yrs; Temple is destroyed): 2Ki 25; 2Ch 36
- The Promise of the Spirit/the New Covenant: Ezk 36:22ff; Jer 31:31ff; Joel 2:28ff
- Daniel's Prophecies (the rise/fall of Babylon; Medo-Persia, Alexander the Great; Rome): Dan 2:36ff; 7:1ff
- Return from Captivity: (rebuilding the temple & the Jerusalem wall): Ezra, Nehemiah, the Prophets
- 400 years of Prophetic Silence: between the end of the OT & beginning of the NT
  - Abomination of Desolation (Antiochus IV Epiphanes persecutes Jews/desecrates the Temple): Dan 11:21ff
  - Maccabean Revolt: Jews take back the Temple; c.163 b.c. (celebrated at Hannukah)
  - Rome's conquers Israel: c.63 B.C. (cf. Dan 7:7); Herod the Great appointed king of Israel (by Rome)
- The Birth of John the Baptist (the Elijah who was to come): Lk 1
- The Birth of Jesus Christ (Israel's Messiah; the Jewish virgin Mary conceives & gives birth): Mt 1-2; Lk 1-2
- The Ministry of John the Baptist (preparing the way of the Lord; calling Israel to repentance): Mk 1; Mt 3
- The Baptism & Temptation of Jesus Christ: Mt 3-4
- The Ministry of Jesus Christ (preaching, healing, disciples, appointing apostles, transfiguration): Mt 4-25
- The Suffering, Death, & Burial of Christ: Mk 14 & 15; Mt 26-27
- The Resurrection & Ascension of Christ: Mt 28; Lk 24; Jn 20-21
- The Baptism of the Holy Spirit/the Birth of the NT Church (at Pentecost): Ac 2
- The Ministry/Preaching of the Apostles (the spread of the Gospel & growth of the NT Church): Ac 2 thru 28
- The Revelation/Preaching of the Gospel (to the Jews & the Gentiles): Acts; Ro 9-11
- The Revelation & Growth of the Body of Christ: Mt 18; Acts; Eph 1-6; Col 1:15ff; Rom 12; 1Co 12; 1Pe 2:9ff
- The Fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70; ordained/foretold by Christ): Mt 24:1ff
- The Revelation of Jesus Christ (God's revelation thru Christ to John for the 7 churches): Revelation
- The Last Days/the Church Age (we are living in the last days): Ac 2:17ff; 1Jn 2:18; Heb 1:1ff; Revelation
  - the Kingdom has come but is not yet fulfilled: Mt 4:17; Rev 11:15
  - many antichrists have come; the final antichrist will come: 1Jn 2:18; 4:3; 2Th 2; Mk 13; Rev 13 & 17
  - we are in tribulation now & this age will end with a great tribulation: Rev 1:9; Mt 24; Mk 13; Rev 11-18
  - great persecution of Christians; oppression of the poor; God's wrath poured out on the world/fall of Babylon
- The Second Coming of Jesus Christ: Rev 19-20; 1Co 15; 1Th 4 & 5; 2Th 2; Mt 24-25; Mk 13
  - believers are raptured/caught up in the air to meet Christ upon His return; receive resurrected bodies
  - final anti-christ/beast of the sea & false prophet/beast of the earth cast into hell
  - Satan bound for a thousand years; then released to deceive the nations/attacks the Holy city; cast into hell
  - The Final Judgment: all unbelievers throughout history are cast into the eternal fire/hell
- The New Heaven & Earth (God makes all things new; fully redeems His people/creation): Rev 21-22
  - God dwells with His people (no more sin, pain, mourning, death) in the new heaven & earth for His glory

## **Jesus Christ, the Old Testament, & Salvation History**

### **Introduction:**

**Luke 24:** <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"<sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself . . . <sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,<sup>46</sup> and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,<sup>47</sup> and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (ESV)

"Because the Bible's basic plotline is the tension between God's justice and his grace and because it is all resolved in the person and work of Jesus Christ, Jesus could tell his followers after the resurrection that the OT—"the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44)-is really all about him (Luke 24:27,45). Paul says that all God's promises throughout the Scripture find their fulfillment only in Christ (2 Cor 1:20). So everything in the Bible-all its themes and patterns, main images and major figures-points to Jesus." (by Tim Keller, taken from "The Story of the Bible: How the Good News About Jesus Is Central" in the NIV Zondervan Study Bible; © 2015).

Below are examples of how to know Jesus Christ in light of OT & NT history, prophecy & revelation. This includes ways in which God has revealed Himself and brought salvation to this lost world. This understanding is based on reading the OT in light of the revelation of the NT (& vice versa) and in light of the overarching message of the Bible: the gospel. In other words, we could not "see" Christ in the OT without the revelation of the NT, and the gospel message of the NT does not make sense without the foundation & revelation of the OT.

Some of these OT examples are specific prophecies about Christ, others are ways we see the LORD (Yahweh) working in the OT, which will foreshadow who Christ is and what He would do in the NT, including things He is doing now & when He returns. Christ is present & at work in creation; He is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham & David; His lordship & ministry is foreshadowed in God giving manna (bread) to His people or in God's presence dwelling in the temple; His coming is His prophesied by the prophets, and so forth.

### **Knowing Christ in light of the OT, the NT & Gospel Revelation** (some examples; not an exhaustive list):

- **Christ is God (the Son) thru whom God the Father created all things:** Gen 1:26 (let "us" make); Col 1:15ff
- **Christ is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam/Last Adam:** Ge 1-3; Mt 4:1-11; Lk 3:38; 1Co 15:22, 45, 47; Ro 5:12ff
- **Christ is the Woman's offspring** (who will crush the serpent's head): Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4; Rev 12; Col 2:15
- **Christ is Abraham's Seed** (He fulfills the Abrahamic covenant): Gen 12; Gal 3:16
- **Christ is the Lamb/Our Passover Lamb** (delivers us from slavery/sin): Gen 22:8; Ex 12:11; 1Co 5:7; Rev 5
- **Christ is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah** (Judah offers to bear the blame): Gen 43:9; Rev 5:5
- **Christ is Lord – the I am** (equivalent to the LORD/Yahweh of the OT): Ex 3; Jn 8:58; Php 2:5ff; Rev 19
- **Christ is the Bread of Life** (the manna from heaven): Ex 16; Jn 6:30ff
- **Christ is the Rock** (the Lord who provides spiritual/water of life): Ex 17:6ff; Dt 32; 1Co 10; Jn 7:38; Rev 21-22
- **Christ is the Temple/Tabernacle** (God dwelling on earth with us): Ex 25-27; 1Ki 8:10f; Jn 1:14-18; Rev 21-22
- **Christ is the Greater Moses** (He fulfills the Law of Moses): Dt 18:15; Heb 3:1ff; 2Co 3; Mt 5:17; Gal 3:19ff
- **Christ is Our Kinsman-Redeemer** (redeems His helpless brothers/sisters): Ru 3:9ff; Mt 12:50; Heb 2:16ff
- **Christ is the Davidic-King/Root of David** (David's heir who reigns forever): 2Sa 7; Isa 11:1; Mt 1-2; Rev 5:5
- **Christ is the Warrior-King** (who will rescue His people/reign in righteousness): Isa 9; 42; Zec 14; Rev 19:11ff
- **Christ is Israel's Messiah** (the anointed one the Jews were waiting for): Isa 11; Zec 9-14; Mt 1-2; Mk 8:27ff
- **Christ is the True Israel** (the true Cornerstone, Son of God): Isa 28:16; Hos 11:1; Mt 2:15; 4:1-11; Ro 9:30ff
- **Christ is the Suffering-Servant:** Isa 52-53; Mt 2:23; Mk 14-15
- **Christ is the Wisdom of God:** Pv 1:22ff; 8:22ff; Mt 12:42; 1Co 1:30; Col 2:1ff
- **Christ is the Great Shepherd:** Ezk 34; Jn 10:1ff; Heb 13:20
- **Christ is the Son of Man** (will rule over all nations for eternity): Dan 7:13ff; Mt 25:31ff; Lk 9:22; Rev 1:13
- **Christ is Prophet, Priest, & King:** Dt 18:15-18/Ac 3:22-24; Ex 28/Heb 10:19-22; 2Sa 7:10ff/Mt 2:2/Rev 19:16