**Understanding the Bible**

**Part 1**

**“The Plan”**

**Would you agree that if a supernatural being; a self-sufficient, self-reliant, all-powerful, intelligent, always existing, unique, good and moral God who loves His creation were to write a book, that it would be the most amazing book ever written?**

**That’s why I tell you without any doubt in my mind that the bible is that book and you can trust what it says!**

**And in this study I’m going to help you to understand God’s book, the Bible—how to connect the dots from Genesis to Revelation.**

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**We’re going to see that the overarching purpose of Scripture is to point to Christ, and nobody clarified this more than Christ Himself.**

**When Jesus spoke with 2 men on the road to Emmaus following His death and resurrection, He rebuked them for their unbelief and told them in one powerful verse what the Bible is primarily all about:**

**Luke 24: 25-27 “Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in ALL the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”**

**So according to Jesus, how much of the Scriptures speak of Him? ALL!**

**As He neared the end of His talk with them, He repeated the same thing:**

**Luke 24:44-45 “Then He said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’ 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”**

**In light of these two quotes, what did these two men comprehend about the Scriptures after their walk with Jesus? That there is one ultimate purpose, one compelling theme, one burning focus of the Scriptures—the Lord Jesus Christ!**

**The OT anticipates Him, the GOSPELS manifest Him, the Book of Acts proclaims Him, the EPISTLES explain Him, and the REVELATION predicts His return!**

**From cover to cover the Bible is about Jesus!**

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**Now, in the next couple of weeks I want to take a QUICK SWEEP through the high points of the Bible. We’re going to use as our stepping stones 7 covenants God made with His people. A covenant is simply a promise made by God to do a certain thing.**

**The seven covenants God made fall into three categories—conditional, unconditional, and general.**

**Conditional covenants are based on certain obligations and prerequisites; If you do this, I’ll do that. If you don’t do this, I won’t do that. If the requirements are not fulfilled, the covenant is broken.**

**Unconditional covenants are made with no strings attached and will be kept regardless of one’s fidelity or infidelity.**

**General covenants are not specific to one people group and can involve a wide range of people. The New Covenant, ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ, is a general covenant made first to Israel, then to all the world.**

**Some of God’s promises are to all people, and some are limited to Israel. But all of God's promises are based on who He is and what His plan is for the world.**

**The 7 covenants God made are:**

**The Adamic Covenant**

**Noahic Covenant**

**Abrahamic Covenant**

**Palestinian Covenant**

**Mosaic Covenant**

**Davidic Covenant**

**The New Covenant**

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**Now, starting in the first 11 chapters of Genesis we find four gigantic, defining moments in the history of the world—the Creation, the Fall, the Great Flood, and the Tower of Babel.**

**I want to primarily focus on the catastrophic FALL of man into sin. God had warned the first couple:**

**“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17).**

**This was God’s warning of what would happen if they transgressed His Word. They would die. And predictably, this is the warning that Satan refuted when tempting Eve: “Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’” (Gen. 3:4-5).**

**The Bible sadly records that Eve believed the devil and ate:**

**“So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:6).**

**Immediately she found out the hard way that Satan was a liar and God had told her the truth. A few short chapters later, Genesis records the appearance of death on the human race:**

**“And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot *a son* in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. 4 After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. 5 So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died” (Gen. 5:3-5).**

**The rest of chapter 5 contains the phrase “and he died” six more times regarding six other people. Satan lied, man died. Paul the Apostle reiterates this truth in Romans 5:12 “When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned.” (LB)**

**The entire human race came under the curse of death. This was never God’s plan or will. His intent had been to create a paradise on earth, and to enjoy fellowship with the human race. In the beginning we find God “walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (Gen 3:8). That’s how close and familiar He was with the first couple!**

**Not only was mankind affected, but so was the entire creation. First we note that God had created all living mammals and mankind to live off of plants:**

**God says in Genesis 1 at the dawn of creation, “And look! I have given you (mankind) the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. 30 And I’ve given all the grass and plants to the animals and birds for their food” (Gen 1:29-30).**

**Carnivorous activity—one creature turning on another and killing it for food—is the result of the fall, not of God’s original creation.**

**Furthermore, Paul the Apostle tells us, “For [even the whole] creation [all nature] waits eagerly for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration *and* futility, not willingly [because of some intentional fault on its part], but by the will of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will also be freed from its bondage to decay [and gain entrance] into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been moaning together as in the pains of childbirth until now” (Ro. 8:19-22).**

**Everything—man, beast, and creation itself—were adversely affected by the fall and moan, awaiting the return of Christ and the establishment of His millennial reign.**

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**Now, the book of Genesis is a book of firsts—it records the first birth, the first murder, the first sin, the first couple, and it also contains the first blame game! When God comes on the scene and wants Adam to confess his sin, Adam blames Eve:**

**“The woman You gave to be with me, she gave me of the (forbidden) tree, and I ate” (3:11).**

**Adam is not just blaming Eve, there’s also a veiled jab at God—“the woman YOU gave me!”**

**Then the woman, hearing Adam place the blame on her, decides to blame the devil: “The serpent deceived me, and I ate!” (3:13)**

**The serpent looked around and didn’t really have anybody to blame!**

**Now, notice how God makes every one of the perpetrators own up to their part in the sin. He first judges the man with “work by the sweat of his brow, thorns and thistles springing up in the field of his labor, and that he would return to the dust.**

**To the woman, God says she will experience “pain and sorrow” in bringing forth children (3:16).**

**But when God comes to Satan, He delivers the first prophecy of the Bible, which some have called “the gospel in the Garden!” because it is a prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ. And it is here we find the first covenant—the Adamic Covenant.**

**Found in Genesis 3:15, this covenant is GENERAL in nature as it applies to all of mankind. It is a promise of future provision for man's redemption in the form of what the Bible calls the woman’s “Seed.”**

**God tells the serpent, “And I will put enmity (hostility), between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15).**

**Notice, the seed of the woman is capitalized because the SEED God is talking about that would spell the devil’s demise is Messiah Jesus!**

**God says that Satan would bruise His heel (which happened at the Crucifixion), but He (Jesus) would bruise the devil’s head, which points to a death blow.**

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**Now, pay close attention to this: *The remainder of the entire Bible is the outworking of this prophecy, this first covenant!* It contains God’s plan of salvation. Scripture goes so far as to say that it was literally decreed in heaven before the world was even created:**

**“He chose us in Him (Jesus) before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4).**

**And then in John’s Revelation: “Everyone living on earth will worship it (the beast, antichrist), everyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life. That book belongs to the lamb who was slaughtered before the creation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).**

**God informs us through Isaiah the Prophet that, “Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish“ (46:10 NLT).**

**So before God ever said, “Let there be light,” Jesus’ death on the Cross was already a done deal in heaven!**

**Peter says the same thing: “Christ was chosen even before the world was created, but because of you, he did not come until these last days” (1 Pet. 1:20).**

**So Christ Jesus was slain in the Father's eternal counsels, and it was decreed by the Godhead that God the Son would come to earth via a virgin birth to die for the sins of mankind in order to redeem us from death and eternal destruction.**

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**So let’s recap before moving on. In Genesis 3:15 the “gospel in the garden,” God’s first covenant, reveals 3 things:**

**• Satan would ultimately be crushed.**

**• The Agent of the crushing would come through the Seed of the woman.**

* **And the victory over Satan would only be possible through suffering on the part of the Crusher—Jesus Christ!**

**For centuries, Genesis 3:15 was the only star of hope that God's people had, and they clung to it tightly!**

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**As the Bible unfolds we see that the Genesis 3:15 promise immediately comes under attack by Satan, who tries to destroy the entire human race through worldwide corruption. Genesis records that mankind quickly began to spiral into such evil that God was forced to say in chapter six:**

**“My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” (6:3)**

**This is the announcement that mankind had 120 years to repent before judgment fell in the form of the Great Flood.**

**Then in verses 5-7 we’re told why the human race had come to this dark point: “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”**

**Now, in order to keep His Genesis 3:15 covenantal promise to destroy the serpent and send a Redeemer, God had to have a remnant to perpetuate the human race.**

**He found that remnant in Noah who “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). If He had not called Noah, Genesis 3:15 would have become a broken promise. So God called Noah, told Him of His intent to destroy the inhabited world with a flood, and commanded him to build the ark.**

**You know the rest of this story. After 120 years of warning on Noah’s part, God commands Noah, his wife, his three sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth, and their wives to enter the ark. The rain falls, the flood waters rise, and the entire planet, minus marine life, perished.**

**Yet two of every species of creatures God created survived by being in the ark. After Noah and his family vacate the ark, his 3 sons and their wives repopulate the earth. And it is here we find the second covenant God made—the Noahic covenant.**

**“Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.” 12 Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. 13 I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth” (Gen. 9:11-13 NLT).**

**At this point we see God’s plan of salvation promised in Gen. 3:15 continue to sovereignly unfold. Of Noah’s 3 sons it is Shem’s lineage that God chooses as the line to bring forth the Messiah. Shem’s lineage becomes what the Bible calls the righteous lineage. It is Shem’s lineage of whom it is said in Gen 4:26, “Then men began to call on the name of the Lord.”**

**If you read the genealogy recorded in Luke 3:23-38, you’ll find that it traces the Lord’s descendants straight back to Shem.**

**So the unstoppable promise of Genesis 3:15, like a silver redemptive thread, is sovereignly being woven by God into history. Though Satan tried to stop it, God checkmated him through Noah. God’s next step is taken in the call of Abraham. That’s next time!**

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