

Theme: What is the central message of the Bible? The central message of the Bible is that God is bringing glory to Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ as He creates and redeems a people in whom He lives by His Spirit so that they will glorify and enjoy Him forever.

I. Intro - What Is the Plot?

- A. Linda and I watched Monty Python *Holy Grail*
- B. She is frustrated - "What is the plot?"
- C. Bible reading can be frustrating if we don't get the plot
- D. Q3: What is the central message of the Bible? (Theme)
 - 1. Trinitarian - Father, Son, Spirit (Question 6)
 - 2. Refers back to Questions 1 and 2

II. Glory to God

- A. Glory to God the Father - key theme in John 17
After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, **that your Son may glorify you...** ⁴ **I have brought you glory** on earth by completing the work you gave me to do... ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with **the glory I had with you before the world began.** John 17:1, 4-5
 - 1. The Son's death will glorify the Father
 - 2. The Son's life and work brought glory to the Father
 - 3. Trinitarian glory before creation even existed
 - 4. The glory of God was central before creation, it is the central goal of all creation, and it is therefore central in the message of Scripture.
The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Psalm 19:1

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:14

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. Revelation 21:23

- a. Creation's very existence declares the glory of God
 - b. Jesus' coming brought glory to God
 - c. The new creation will radiate with the glory of God
- B. The glory of God is the central message of Scripture, and if we do not read it through that lens we will badly distort its message
 - 1. We are not at the center of Scripture - God is
 - 2. Our need is not the central focus of Scripture - the glory of God is

III. Through the Person and Work of Christ

- A. Glory through the work of Christ - key theme in John 17
After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. John 17:1-4
 - 1. God glorifies Christ in His redemptive work (v1)
 - 2. Son has authority over all people to give eternal life (v2)
 - 3. Eternal life is knowing God through Christ (v3)

4. Glory came to God through Jesus' Person & work (v4)

5. God has chosen to channel all glory through the Person and work of the Son, so He is the central character of all Scripture.

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, John 5:39

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself...⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Luke 24:27, 44

- a. The whole Bible is centered on the Person and work of Jesus Christ
- b. These verses are speaking of the Old Testament! To read any part of the Bible without the Person and work of Jesus being the central message is to grossly misread the text.

The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. Genesis 12:7

1. The Pharisees said Genesis 12:7 was about Isaac, Jacob, and the physical sons of Israel
2. Many evangelicals read this verse like the Pharisees
The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. Galatians 3:16

1. Paul says this Genesis 12:7 is about Jesus! (Note that the word "seed" and "offspring" are the same word in both Greek and Hebrew, and are singular)

2. He is the inheritor of all of God's Promises!

3. Don't read the Bible like a Pharisee - read it like Paul

B. God brings glory to Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ and if we approach Scripture through any other lens we will badly distort its message

1. There is only one hero in Scripture - Jesus! Everyone else is simply pointers to Him and our need for Him.
2. Every promise, every command, every character, every passage of Scripture needs to be read through the lens of Jesus Christ

IV. A Redeemed People Who Glorify and Enjoy God

A. The people of God - central in John 17

For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him...⁶ "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word...⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours...¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. John 17:1-2, 6, 9-10

1. A core purpose in Jesus' coming is creating and redeeming a people for God
2. Notice all the emphasis on the people of God in these verses - given by the Father to the Son (v2, 6, 9); prayed for by Jesus (v9); they bring glory to God (v10)

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. John 17:14–19

3. The entire central part of the prayer is dominated by Jesus' desire and concern for the people He came to redeem
4. God's desire for a people who will know, love, glorify, and enjoy Him is a major theme in Scripture
What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." 2 Corinthians 6:16 (Lev. 26:12)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

Revelation 21:3

- a. The story of redemption is the story of God glorifying Himself as He works to create and redeem a people to be His very own.
 - b. At the consummation there is a wedding as God's people, His bride the Church is joined to Him forever.
5. God's people are His Temple, in Whom He dwells by His Spirit so that they will walk with Him, glorify Him, and enjoy Him - forever!

- a. In 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Revelation 21:3, God's desire is to dwell with His people
- b. This is why the Spirit dwells in us - to make us the Temple of God, a people Who glorify and enjoy Him forever!
- c. This is why Jesus spoke so much about the Spirit in John 14-16. The Spirit was coming to dwell in us, fulfilling God's covenant purposes for His people.

B. God is bringing glory to Himself as the Spirit dwells in the people of God, working in them so that they glorify and enjoy God.

1. The Spirit is given to us as a downpayment and foretaste of the glory and joy we will experience for all eternity.
2. The work that God began in Abram, continued in the people of Israel, is now finding fulfillment in the Church - the one people of God, comprised of Jew and Gentile, who inherit all of God's covenant promises through Jesus and who are being prepared as God's One True Bride who will glorify and enjoy Him for eternity!

V. Applying the Word

- A. Do I understand the central message (plot) of Scripture?
 1. If we do not understand the plot of the storyline of Scripture, we will misunderstand the individual stories and pieces that make it up.
 2. Do I see that the central focus of Scripture is God, not me?
 3. Do I see that the central character in Scripture is Jesus, not any other person, institution, or nation?

4. Do I understand that the focus on Jesus' Person and work is the Church, not just me as an individual?
5. Many modern books, teachings, ideas in the evangelical church focus on man rather than God, on things other than Jesus, and on me as an individual in isolation from the church.
6. If we read the Scripture with the wrong plot-line in view, we will misunderstand it and will be hampered in our desire to glorify and enjoy God.
7. Does this plot shape my life, so that it is focused on God's glory, centered on Christ and His work, and oriented towards the Church as the people of God?

B. The Communion Table

1. This Table is a regular reinforcement of this central message
2. Here we remember and celebrate the Person and work of Jesus Christ in redeeming us to be the people of God
3. Here we come to commune with God AND one another
4. As the people of God, come and give thanks

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen. Hebrews 13:20–21

The Central Message of the Bible

John 17

July 21, 2019

Communion

Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: Catechism, Word of God; Jesus; law and Gospel; hermeneutics; Trinity

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

⁶ “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you.⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one.¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³ “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” John 17:1–26