

God's Grand Story pt 7 – Understanding God's Love, Mercy & Judgement

Intro: Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

Church-Wide Prayer: Church Renewal: Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers **61 countries!**

- Sri Lanka – NEW! Pray for the Lord to grant favor and fruit to the disciple makers there!
- CRI is in 61 countries. Pray for the right leaders to be raised up, that will lay foundations in countries God is calling CRI to enter! E.g. India, Chinese ppl world-wide
- Pray for P. Ray & Fran – fortitude, health, wisdom & spiritual protection as they work
- Pray for current directors: Tim U, Josh & Phoebe P, Chris P, John & Lorraine B, Eddy & Cristina D, Paul N, Henry W: Strength! Encouragement! Fruit! Protection!
- Pray for favor & Kingdom fruit as they fulfill the Great Commission!
- PRAY for **teachers**: public, homeschool, private: they are discipling the next generation!
- Pray that God would raise up godly, Spirit filled teachers in each arena. Pray for them to have wisdom in raising the next Gen of Christians to be able to engage culture, make disciples, stand for truth & love those around them
- Pray for SC **members**. For God to raise up disciple makers in our church for our region
Pray for those engaging in, “**each one, reach one**” for wisdom, favor, fruit! Opportunity!

INTRO: What did God command the Israelites to do to those in Canaan? Kill everyone? drive them out? Why does God judge some nations and not others? LAST WEEK raised a lot of great questions!



MISTAKE LAST WEEK: one of my points was that Joshua sent 12 spies! 12? Or 2? It's 2! Moses sent 12, Joshua was one of two that gave a good report. When Joshua was going into the land he sent 2 spies.

- You have anything BUT a perfect pastor! Honestly, from typos, to missing caveats, I make mistakes. I DO LOVE WHEN YOU GUYS CATCH THESE THINGS! Be good Bereans! Acts 17:11

This week & Next: we are going to expand on last weeks final point on the Canaanite Conquest

A. Hermeneutics: Interpreting & Applying God's Word

My short answer: READ the BIBLE & OBEY the BIBLE. This is TRUE!

Caution: “put everyone to the sword” does this mean you can kill anyone who you deem to be your enemy? “Come, out of the boat and walk on water” does this mean you can step out of a boat and walk on water? NO! These verses must be read in CONTEXT.

Jesus, summarized the entire Law into, “LOVE GOD, LOVE PEOPLE”

Much of the Bible is straightforward. We intuitively know when we are reading history, or poetry, or when prophetic language is being used, or when we are receiving general commands or principles that apply to ALL people. The Spirit enables much of this in us! BUT we see but DIMLY!

Rules for Interpreting Scripture:

1. **Scripture interprets Scripture.** When you want to know what Scripture says, **START WITH SCRIPTURE.**
 - a. **Historical Context:** who was it written to? When? Why? Etc.
 - i. Study Bibles, commentaries, etc. Comes alive!
 - b. **Literary Is context:** what genre is the passage? Narrative, law, poetry, prophecy, wisdom, gospel, history, letter, or apocalyptic?
 - i. There are even subgenres to consider like: parables, riddles, and sermons (Duvall & Hayes, 2012; Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 2004)
 - ii. Is it literal, hyperbolic, etc.
 - c. **Canonical:** As Christopher Yuan said when he was here... we must read the Scriptures "canonically". What does that mean? There are 66 books in the Bible!
 - i. Reading the verses/chapter before and after a passage will eliminate 75% of interpretive errors!
 - ii. BUT you can still miss some! Reading canonically means you read the entirety of Scripture. Recognizing that the entire book, all the authors, literary styles, etc. all tell **ONE COHESIVE story – GOD’S GRAND STORY!!**
2. **Science & Reason:** in many cases truth can be observed and tested!
 - a. Biblical worldview: our Christian worldview has the best and most cohesive answers of any world view.
 - b. Romans says, "Creation testifies of a Creator" this is true!
3. **Experience:** personal experience can be a powerful tool!
 - a. My story: I experience God speaking to me! That’s why I gave my life to Jesus! he spoke and I didn’t even know he could do that!
4. **Heart posture:** Remain humble, open to correction, seek to not only know what is true, but to OBEY what is true, walk in step with Spirit!
 - a. Acts 17:11, Gal 5, James 1, 1 Jn 5:3, 1 Cor 2-3

B. WARNING: AVOID INTERPRETIVE & PROGRESSIVE PITFALLS:

Examples: Hell, LGBTQ, creation, cessationism, Salvation, or any other doctrine. When you start from the wrong end you are bound to end in error, or worse.

1. **Experience:** My experience did not line up with Scripture. Scripture must not be true.
2. **Science & reason:** Neutral – but can be used to confirm bias over discover truth.
 - a. E.g. I was born gay. SCIENCE: I was made gay. SCRIPTURE: God must be ok with me being gay as long as I am a good person and bear fruit. **MATTHEW VINES made this argument with Sean McDowell.**
3. **Scripture:** reinterpret Scripture to fit personal, or other peoples, experience
 - a. **The FULL Gospel is what is need for our broken world! Not a truncated version to suit our feelings & desires!**

C. Understanding God’s Love, Mercy & Judgement

I think it is important to establish why God judges, how he works with nations and the difference between GOD doing something and US doing it!

Many Christians and people believe that God’s love & wrath are at odds. They are NOT! God is ONE.

1. God LOVES all people – his heart is to reconcile ALL nations!

Genesis 12:2-3 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Romans 3:23-25 or all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

Romans 3:29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

Creation → Fall → Redemption → Restoration we see God's desire for ALL people. He LOVES all people whom he made in his IMAGE.

2. God gives ALL people a chance to know Him

What about those who have not heard of the Gospel? Or, the Nations who were just following the example of their culture?

The charge. God is not just to judge those who didn't know better.

Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Acts 10:3-5 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.” And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter.

Acts 8:26-31 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. And he rose and went. ... And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

- Ethiopian Eunuch is seeking truth. God sends Philip. Then it says, “transports” Philip away after he leads him to Jesus and baptizes him!

Joshua 2:9 and said to the men, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.

James 2:25 And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

- Rahab – prostitute, Canaanite, raised in an entirely different culture. RESPONDS BY FAITH AND IS SAVED.

Extra Biblical examples: we continue to read and hear of Muslims around the world, raised in Islam, only to have dreams of Jesus who reveals he is the Son of God to them and they give their lives to Him!

Extra Biblical examples: Randy Alcorn shares about tribes who have heard of Jesus through angelic visitation. Chief cried out to God who created the earth... he had a vision... and a truncated gospel was shared... they began following God... and later missionaries discovered this tribe and were amazed they already knew of Jesus! they now disciplined them.

Romans 2:14-15 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them

Acts 17:26-31 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, .. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Romans 5:8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

When we read Canonically, we cannot escape the picture of a God who loves us so much he will do whatever it takes to save us without violating the ability, given us as Image Bearers, to choose.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Conclusion: Scripture teaches us that God has revealed Himself to people through Creation, their conscience (law on ❤️), angelic visits, dreams, visions & through other people!

IMPORTANT NOTE: notice in the stories God sends PEOPLE to share the Gospel! You are supposed to be the answer to someone’s prayer! “each one, reach one” **who is God calling YOU to reach?**

We have no biblical support for someone not being given a chance to repent & know God!

3. God judges Nations & people to STOP evil from going too far & turn their hearts to Him

Before making this point I want to add: God is God. We are not. We are told NOT to kill. NOT to judge someone’s heart. God is not like us. He does not sin. He is love. He is holy. He is just. He makes NO MISTAKES. **It makes us want to know what type of God he is???** **GOOD! READ THE GRAND STORY.**

Genesis 15:16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

Leviticus 18:3-30 You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you... Sins listed: incest, adultery, homosexuality,

bestiality & child sacrifice! ...and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations... lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean

God allows human beings to reject him, or choose him. But he has limits which he allows Nations to go before he steps in and stops them now.

Ezekiel 22:32 paints a picture of God judging between the Nations. Israel, Ammon, Moab, Seir, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Egypt – ALL of them WARNED, DISCIPLINED, then JUDGED.

Ezekiel 23:35-39 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have forgotten me and cast me behind your back, you yourself must bear the consequences of your lewdness and whoring”.. For when they had slaughtered their children in sacrifice to their idols, on the same day they came into my sanctuary to profane it. And behold, this is what they did in my house.

- Consider Rahab being saved AND Achen who was judged in the very next battle!
- Jonah sent to Ninevah! **God warns, disciplines, then judges.**

Why does God judge? He wants ALL people to Know Him! (+50x in Ezekiel!) BUT human beings apart from God ALWAYS destroy each other.

2 Peter 3:9 ...not wishing that any should perish, but that ALL should reach repentance.

Ezekiel 18:21-23 “But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; ... Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?

Ezekiel 21:3 and say to the land of Israel, Thus says the Lord: Behold, I am against you and will draw my sword from its sheath and will cut off from you both righteous and wicked.

TENSION: Ezekiel 21 – when God judges nations the wicked & righteous SUFFER! REMEMBER: Righteous people – those who are saved only suffer for a moment!

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our HOPE for he who promises us is FAITHFUL

D. What can we learn from this today?

1. **Confess:** Is there sin in your life that you need to confess & turn from?
2. **Receive:** Do you know Jesus as your Lord & Savior? Give Him your, “YES”!
3. **Praise God:** for being a righteous & good Judge! For being patient with us in our sins! For not allowing evil to go too far!
4. **Commit:** to be the answer to someone's prayer to “KNOW GOD for themselves” Each one, reach one!

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is ...patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER → MARANATHA!

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Israel & Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal**: Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers