

Reading the Whole Bible for Mission

LUKE 24:45-47

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The Bible's Grand Narrative

- “The entire Bible traces the journey from the original creation to the new creation, from humanity’s rebellion against the Creator to God’s provision of redemption in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The story of the Bible is therefore also the story of God’s mission to bring sinful humanity back to himself and to restore it to its original state of living in communion with him” (Köstenberger 2015, 2691)

Luke 24:45-27

- ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
- Read the OT Scriptures in the light of
 - Messiah
 - Mission

Missional Significance of the OT

- “In other words, for Jesus, ‘This is what is written’ governed not only the *messianic* meaning of the Scriptures, but also their *missional* significance. The OT tells the story that not only leads up to Jesus but one that also leads on to mission to the nations” (Wright 2010, 38)

God with a Mission

- Creation (Gen 1-2)
- Fall (Gen 3-11)
- Redemption (Gen 12-Rev 20)
- New Creation (Rev 21-22)

God with a Mission

- “He has made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ” (Eph 1:9-10)

OT Israel with a Mission

- The OT vision of God—missional monotheism:
 - “You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other. ³⁶ From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire. ³⁷ Because he loved your ancestors and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength, ³⁸ to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance, as it is today. ³⁹ Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other” (Deut 4:35-39)
 - “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)

OT Israel with a Mission

- The OT vision of God's people and why they exist—missional election
 - The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ²“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen 12:1-3)
 - “Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you” (Gal 3:8)

Israel with a Mission

- The OT vision of God’s people and how they should live—missional ethics
 - “For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him” (Gen 18:19)
 - “you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites” (Ex 19:6)
 - “Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” ⁷ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? ⁸ And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?” (Deut 4:6-8)

Jesus with a Mission

- Simeon's double recognition (Lu 2:29-32)
 - "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."
 - The glory of your people Israel
 - A light to the nations

Jesus with a Mission

- Baptismal identity: Israel and the world
 - “and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (Lu 3:22)
 - “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations” (Isa 42:1)
 - “I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: He said to me, You are my son (Davidic King): today I have become your father (Ps 2:7)

Jesus with a Mission

- "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20)

Church with a Mission

- “You are my witnesses” (Acts 1:8; cf. Isa 43:10)
 - “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8)
 - “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me” (Isa 43:10)

Church with a Mission

- “Servant—light to the nations” (Acts 13:47; Isa 49:6)
 - “For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth”” (Acts 13:47)
 - “He says: ‘It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth’” (Isa 49:6)

Church with a Mission

- God's priesthood among the nations (1 Pt 2:9-12; Ex 19:6; Rom 15:16)
 - "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Pt 2:9-10)
 - "you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites" (Ex 19:6)
 - "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15:16)

Cape Town Commitment

Part 1.10. We love the mission of God

- We are committed to world mission, because it is central to our understanding of God, the Bible, the Church, human history and the ultimate future. The whole Bible reveals the mission of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into unity under Christ, reconciling them through the blood of his cross. In fulfilling his mission, God will transform the creation broken by sin and evil into the new creation in which there is no more sin or curse. God will fulfil his promise to Abraham to bless all nations on the earth, through the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah, the seed of Abraham. God will transform the fractured world of nations that are scattered under the judgment of God into the new humanity that will be redeemed by the blood of Christ from every tribe, nation, people and language, and will be gathered to worship our God and Saviour. God will destroy the reign of death, corruption and violence when Christ returns to establish his eternal reign of life, justice and peace. Then God, Immanuel, will dwell with us, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Defining the Gospel

- “The focus on the gospel presupposes a certain way of reading the Bible. There are those people who treat the Bible as a little narrow piece that gets you into the kingdom. Then come discipleship and training, which are detached from the gospel. In the Bible itself, the gospel is the big thing. The gospel is first and foremost what God has done and is doing in Christ Jesus, supremely through his death, resurrection, ascension, session at the Father’s right-hand, continuing to his return, the restoration of all things, the new heaven and the new earth, all grounded on the cross and the resurrection (1 Cor 15; Gal 3:7-9). This is very massive in its implications and bearings. From this come Christian ethics, Christian worldview, and frames of reference on how the church relates to culture. Focus on the gospel in the comprehensive sense is central to the Bible itself” (D A Carson 2013).

Discussion Questions

- Prior to this talk, how relevant were the OT Scriptures for your understanding of the church's mission? How has your view been impacted by this talk?
- How has this talk changed the way you view the Gospel, especially in its narrative form?