

“The Story of the King: The King is Coming”

Zechariah 9:9

There is something about a story that gets our attention. We love to hear stories, especially true stories that have an impact on our life in some way. The Bible presents us with the greatest story ever told, a true story, and it is the story of God’s plan to redeem sinful people through His Son.

A story is a narrative, and every narrative is made up of a setting, various characters, and a plot. When we come to the Bible, it is important that we understand this.

The story of Scripture is one overarching story that is made up of several smaller stories, each of which point to the larger story of how God has gone to great lengths to rescue and redeem humanity. In other words, it is crucial that we grasp the overarching story of Scripture, or the big picture.

What we think and how we live is largely determined by the larger story in which we interpret our lives. Some have referred to this as a person’s worldview. All of us have a worldview, whether we realize it or not. Our worldview is the lens through which we view and interpret life.

Since this is so, it is important that we read the Bible and read it well. Yet the evidence shows in the church today that we are simply ***not reading*** the Bible.

George Guthrie - *“For several years I have been conducting brief biblical literacy exams at the beginning of my New Testament Survey course. The questions on the exam are straightforward, multiple choice questions such as: Which of these books is from the New Testament? Whom did Pontius Pilate release during Jesus’ trial? How many temptations did Jesus experience in the wilderness? Where would you look in the Bible to find the Sermon on the Mount? Last fall the average score on the exam was 57 percent. The averages from classes over the past few years have ranged between 50 percent and 70 percent, but most of the time the average is closer to 50 percent. This is not unique to my students but is consistent with what other professors are finding at top*

Christian universities all over the United States. Our students, even those coming out of the church, simply are no longer grounded in the basics of the Bible's story.”¹

Stephen Prothero, author of the book, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know--and Doesn't* - *“The gospel of John instructs Christians to ‘search the scriptures’...,but little searching, and even less finding is being done.”*

He reports that more than 10% believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife, only 50% can name one of the four gospels, and less than half can name the first book of the Bible.

William Cowper penned these lines:

*“And hast thou sworn on every slight, pretence,
Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
Kiss the Book's outside, who ne'er look'd within?”*

J. I. Packer - *“The Bible appears like a symphony orchestra, with the Holy Ghost as its [Composer and Conductor], each instrument has been brought willingly, spontaneously, creatively, to play his notes just as the great conductor desired, though none of them could ever hear the music as a whole...The point of each part only becomes fully clear when seen in relation to all the rest.”*

The Bible is the story of redemption with Jesus Christ as its focus. It is the story of the King and His glory. If we were to use the language of a play or drama, this story unfolds in three acts.

- Act 1 - The King is Coming
- Act 2 - The King is Here
- Act 3 - The King is Coming Again

¹ George H. Guthrie, *Read the Bible for Life*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2011), 6-7.

To begin with, I want us to take a telescopic view of Act 1 - The King is Coming, which serves as the overall message of the Old Testament. To do so, we will look at Zechariah 9:9 which will serve as our basic text.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Zechariah chapters 9-14 is the most frequently cited portion of the Old Testament in the passion narratives. With the exception of Ezekiel, this book has exercised more influence than any other on the author of Revelation.

The message of Zechariah is set against the background of those first generation Jews who returned from the Babylonian exile, and the book finds its date in approximately 520 B.C. In 539 B.C. Cyrus, the king of Persia, had issued the decree which allowed the Jews to return home and begin rebuilding their temple. However, external opposition and a host of other problems delayed the work. The work continued to be delayed until God raised up two prophets--Haggai and Zechariah--who preached and influenced God's people to build. Work resumed the temple was completed in 516.

The message of Zechariah can be divided into two sections:

- Chapters 1-8 involve the PRACTICALITIES of those who have returned from exile
- Chapters 9-14 involve the PROPHECIES of the Messiah and His kingdom

When we read Zechariah as believers, we can't help but notice that the coming kingdom is inaugurated by a messianic King who makes a humble appearance, bring righteousness and salvation to Jerusalem while riding on a donkey. He is the shepherd king, but is a smitten Shepherd who is betrayed and pierced. Yet Scripture says that it is this King who will subdue all the nations and establish His kingdom rule.

From this verse, three important truths about the King's coming must be understood:

1. His coming is PROMISED (9:9a)

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you.”

The message of the Old Testament is bound up in this single verse--“He is coming!”
This is the entire message of the Law and Prophets.

John 5:39 - “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”

The Hebrew Bible is made up of three parts known as the “Tanakh” or TNK:

- The Law (Torah)
- The Prophets (Nevi'im)
- The Writings (Ketuvim)

The Law reveals man's need for a Priest to represent him before God. The Prophets reveal man's need for a prophet to reveal God to him. The Writings reveal man's need to be ruled by a godly King. Thus, the three offices in the Old Testament are the offices of prophet, priest, and king.

Jesus Christ alone fulfills all three of these offices, as Scripture points us to Him.

What are the odds that one man could fulfill the prophecies fulfilled during the earthly life of Jesus? Peter Stoner was a mathematician and college professor who wrote a book, *Science Speaks*, in which he examined the statistical probability of the Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled in just one man. Stoner said that by using the modern science of probability in reference to just eight prophecies, ‘we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power.”

That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000.

In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrated it by supposing that “we take that many silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas.

They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man.”

Stoner considers 48 prophecies and says, we find the chance that any one man fulfilled all 48 prophecies to be 1 in 10 to the 157th power, or 1 followed by 157 zeros.

The truth is, Jesus didn't just fulfill 8 prophecies, nor did He just fulfill 48 prophecies. There are over **300 prophecies** fulfilled to the letter in Jesus Christ, just during His first coming. Wow!

The eight prophetic passages from the Old Testament that Peter Stoner considered in his study included:

Micah 5:2 - “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”

The Old Testament prophets foretold the place where the King would be born. Isaiah 7:14 even said that He would enter this world through the womb of a virgin. What mere man ever decided where he would be born and how he would be born?

Malachi 3:1 - “Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says the Lord of hosts.”

The King would have a herald who announced His entry, and this was fulfilled in the ministry of John.

Zechariah 9:9 - “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

How would the inhabitants of Jerusalem recognize the King? He would come to them meek and lowly, riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Matthew 21:1-9 show how Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem in this very way as the people proclaimed, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Zechariah 11:12 - “So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.”

The King would be betrayed into the hands of wicked men, and the price for His betrayal would be a mere 30 pieces of silver.

Zechariah 11:13 - “And the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the house of the Lord for the potter.”

The silver that became blood money would be used to purchase a field that belonged to a potter, which was fulfilled to the last detail in Matthew 27:3-10.

Zechariah 13:6 - “And if one asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your back?’ He will say, ‘The wounds I received in the house of my friends.’”

The King would be beaten and scourged.

Isaiah 53:1-12 - “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”

Though the King was innocent, He would bear in His own body the sins of His people. Stripes would be laid upon His back, and not one word would come from His lips as He stood to be condemned at the hands of sinful men.

Psalm 22:16-18 - “The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.”

With vivid detail, this passage describes the crucifixion scene. Spikes were driven into the King’s hands and feet. Roman soldiers gambled and cast lots for the King’s robe. Not one bone of the King was broken.

2. His coming is PURPOSEFUL (9:9b)

“Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He.”

The prophetic message of the Old Testament is that the King is coming, but it is purposeful in that He is coming to bring righteousness and salvation. He is righteous, and He has salvation. He has salvation because He alone is righteous.

Like an acorn that grows into a mighty oak tree, the narrative of salvation begins in a single verse:

Genesis 3:15 - “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

Thus the conflict in the story begins! God is protagonist in this story, while Satan is the antagonist. The triune God and Satan are locked in a cosmic war contending for dominion over the universe. Satan and his seed are at war with God and His children. Human beings belong to either the Seed of the woman or the seed of the serpent.

There is line of descent that is carefully woven throughout the Old Testament:

- Adam

- Seth
- Noah
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

This line continues through Jacob's son Judah, of whom it was foretold:

Genesis 49:10 - "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people."

The King would come through lineage of Judah. Judah's grandson was Hezron. Hezron's grandson was Amminadab. Amminadab's grandson was Salmon. Salmon's grandson was Obed, who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

2 Samuel 7:12 - "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son."

Jesus is the Seed of the woman. He is the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And Jesus is the Seed of David.

Psalms 2:6-8 - "I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession."

Psalms 110:1 - "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

The purpose of the King's coming is what the plot of Scripture is all about. The plot of the Bible can be summed up in four words:

- Creation

- Fall
- Redemption
- Restoration

God created the universe, the world, and the crowning point of His creation was man whom He made in His image. God's good creation was defiled by sin that resulted from Adam's sin brought about through the serpent's temptation, who turns out to be the archenemy seeking to usurp God's throne.

All through Scripture, it seems like the enemy always has the upper hand on God's people.

James Hamilton - *"God responded to Satan's pride with the humility of Jesus. God answered the rebellion of Satan with the obedience of Jesus. All the misery and rage of Satan is overwhelmed by the grace and love of Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross."*²

The cross is the plot twist! Every story has a hero and a villain. Our Heavenly Hero came, yet He was rejected and killed by the very ones He came to save. The cross was not His defeat, but His victory. At the cross, God judged sin, condemned it to the death, and Christ is the One who paid the price and received the penalty. At the cross, the demands of God's justice were satisfied, while at the same time, the riches of His grace were made available.

Then, on top of it all, hope rose with the dawn! The King rose victoriously over death, and He now lives to impart His life to those who repent and trust Him in faith.

3. His coming is PERSONAL (9:9c)

"Behold, your King is coming to you..."

² James M. Hamilton, Jr., *What is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2014).

The message of the Law and the Prophets is that the King is coming for you. When He comes, He'll be coming for you. When He died, He died for you! When He rose from the grave, He rose for you! And when He comes again one of these days, He will be coming for you so that you may be where He is.

This is where we fit in to this story.

James Hamilton - *“Isn't it a relief that the world's plot is not limited to the brief span of our lives? We make sense of our days in light of this overarching narrative. The big plot of the Bible, with its guarantee of resurrection and new creation, gives confidence even in the face of death. The Bible's big story opens the windows on stale, stuffy rooms of deadlines and due dates, deaths and disappointments, and fresh winds of the creation-to-new-creation breezes blow through.”*

Are you viewing life through your own filter, the filter of the culture, or are you viewing it through the Story of the King?