

# God's Sovereign Path to Redemption in The Bible

## **Introduction**

God has revealed Himself to us in creation and in His revelation of Scripture. God revealed Himself so we can increase our grasp of His glory. God's glory is evidenced to us through His love, patience, and compassion, and is demonstrated in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Robert L. Plummer said that Scripture's "overarching purpose is revealing God [His glory] and bringing people into a saving relationship with Him through Jesus Christ." Scripture has many functions, such as, being the ultimate authority in doctrine, convicting us of sin, correction and instruction, etc. Yet, the Bible is knit together with a central thread of redemption. This highly summarized description will help you understand how Scripture reveals a unified and connected plan of redemption.

God, in His sovereignty, established a progressive means of redemption from death, that is the result of sin. God could have used several methods, yet He chose to build up our understanding of His redemptive plan, culminating in His Son as the "once and for all" atonement for sin.

## **God's Redemptive Plan, from eternity past**

Before all of creation, God the Father and God the Son established the means of redemption (John 17:1-5, Eph 1:3-10). This means of redemption is referred to as the "Covenant of Redemption". Significant is the fact that it was established before Adam's sin, not afterwards. As such it is the primary plan, not a "plan B". It is equally important to recognize that this Covenant of Redemption affirms God's Holiness, His omniscience and His unchanging nature.

## **Narrative Thread of Redemption in Scripture**

After Adam sinned, God established the "first gospel" (Gen 3:15). After cursing the serpent, God promised to rescue humanity from sin. Nevertheless, Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, and all of their descendants, without exception, are corrupted by sin and continued to rebel against God. Humanity's evil and violence built until God decided to purge all of creation with a flood. God established a covenant with Noah (Gen 6:18, 9:8-17) to preserve Noah's family and, after the flood, promised to never again destroy the earth with water.

For the next significant stage, God elected Abraham as His choice to begin the narrowing path toward Jesus. God called Abraham and established a covenant (Gen 15) by which Abraham's heir would include the messianic seed (Gen 22). God reaffirmed His "Abrahamic" covenant with Abraham's descendants; Isaac (Gen 26) and Jacob (Gen 28).

God preserved Abraham's heritage through a trek to Egypt and then back to the land of Canaan. Along the way, God moved to the next stage of redemption by His covenant with Israel (Ex 19:5-8). This covenant established that Israel is to be God's treasured possession and a holy nation in which God will dwell in their midst. It should be noted, that this covenant contained blessings for obedience and punishment for disobedience.

Israel's highpoint as a nation came under King David. Moving to the next stage of focus, God established the last covenant of the OT (2 Sam 7). Under this covenant, God promised that David's heirs will remain on the throne of Israel's kingdom forever. God promised to establish His kingdom through the Messiah, the anointed king that will come. Despite God's patience in repeatedly offering the option of repentance and forgiveness, Israel stubbornly refused to worship God as the one and only God. So God applied the punishment for disobedience of the Mosaic law. This resulted in a 70 year exile in Babylon. However, God's grace and compassion caused Him to preserve a remnant of His chosen, thereby honoring His covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David; all of which preserved the seed that will strike satan.

After 400 years of silence, God re-opened His revelation to us, with Israel in the land of Canaan, yet under the rule of the Roman Empire. At that time, God sent His Son to enter creation. Prophesied by Jeremiah 31:31-34, Jesus inaugurated the "New Covenant" (Mt 26:28; Lk 22:20) with His crucifixion (blood sacrifice), resurrection (conquering of death), and ascension (sending of the Holy Spirit). Before the New Covenant, no other covenant had offered complete redemption from our sin condition. God established the last stage in His plan of redemption by securing complete forgiveness of sin for those who, by faith alone, claim Jesus as their only means of redemption. We can not earn our redemption by works.

## **God's Redemptive Plan Completed, to the Glory of God**

Jesus, by way of His supernatural conception, did not have sin and its effects passed on to Him. Jesus was born, to Mary, under the Mosaic Covenant Law which set His requirements for obedience. Jesus satisfied the Mosaic Covenant Law with perfection and therefore was without sin. However, Jesus willingly suffered the punishment of sin (death) in our place; not for His own sin, but our sin.

The Covenant of Redemption established that Jesus would provide the payment for the penalty of sin (death). That payment required a sinless human; for which Jesus actively and obediently satisfied, through His sinless life and crucifixion. The proof of God's acceptance of that payment is the resurrection. At the ascension of Jesus, God gave Jesus the kingship of God's kingdom and sent the Holy Spirit, in Jesus's name, to gather kingdom members.

1 Peter 1:18-21 (ESV)

*<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

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