

The Unity Of The Bible: Biblical Themes

“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:25–27)

Among the things that show that the Bible is intended to be taken as a whole are the themes of the Bible. Far from being a book of many differing books, as the modernists and neo-evangelicals would have us believe, the Bible is united from the beginning to the end by the very themes, or motifs, that run from Genesis through the Revelation. There are five motifs that are in the first three chapters of Genesis that run throughout the whole of Scripture: this is what we shall consider in this article.

Genesis chapters one through three present to us the following themes:

Creation- Genesis 1-2, where we see that God created all things.

Sin- Genesis 3, where we see that man fell into sin.

Judgment- Genesis 3:14-24, where we see God’s pronouncement of judgment upon mankind, and the curse that also came upon the earth.

The seed- Genesis 3:15, in which we see that God promises that the seed of the woman will conquer the serpent and his seed.

Redemption-Genesis 3:15-24, wherein we see the shedding of the blood of an innocent to cover man’s shame, and to symbolically hide his sin from God’s sight.

These themes are not separated throughout the Scriptures, but are often found conjoined, as our text shows us that Jesus taught from the Old Testament Scriptures about Himself.

After the fall of man, the hope of the promised seed, who would redeem mankind was alive in Adam and Eve; and Eve seems to have thought that Cain was that seed, as she said, *“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.” (Genesis 4:1)* Later, when Noah was born, the same hope alive in his parents. *“And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.” (Genesis 5:28–29)* Then we find that God renews His promise to Abram: *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1–3)* Not only do we see the seed theme, but also we see the theme of creation is here, as God said He would create a great nation of Abram. We shall see that this continues throughout the rest of the Scripture, with Abram’s descendants being given more and more specific promises concerning the seed, who would be redeemer and king.

The theme of the seed continues in Genesis chapter twenty-two, when the LORD told Abraham, *“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Genesis 22:18)* It is this verse that Paul quotes to tell us that He spoke of Jesus: *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Galatians 3:16)* Not only so, but we see the theme of redemption through sacrifice and bloodshed, as there was a lamb/ram offered in the place of Isaac on Mount Moriah. Later we see Jesus proclaimed to be God’s lamb: *“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)* In the days of the patriarchs, the theme of the promised seed continues as we see that God chooses Isaac, then Jacob, and then tells us through Jacob, *“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” (Genesis 49:10)*

It seems that, for a while, the hope dimmed and almost died in Israel; but God sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan, thus continuing to fulfill His promises to us all. It is then that Moses told Israel that the promised seed will come, and he said, *“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”* (Deuteronomy 18:15–19) Then there was a man whose name foreshadowed the One who was to come- Joshua. Joshua, the LORD saves, means the same as Jesus: *“thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”* (Matthew 1:21) And so we see that the theme of the redeeming seed continues.

In the days of the Judges, it looked very bleak in many ways; but the period of the Judges presents us with a continuation of the themes of sin, judgment, and redemption, as we read of the various failure of Israel, and how that God would raise up a judge to rescue them. Furthermore, it is in the days of the Judges that we read the book of Ruth and see God continuing His work of bringing the promised seed into the world. The book of Ruth is not the sweet love story that many think that it is: it is the story of God’s providential working in Israel, and in the tribe of Judah to bring the seed of the woman into the world. In the end of the book, we see that Ruth bears a son, and that son was the grandfather of David, who we shall see foreshadows the coming king and promised seed.

When God began to narrow things down from the tribe of Judah to a particular family through whom His promised seed would come, He used the times of the Judges and the sad failure of king Saul to show us that a king was needed. He told Saul, *“And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.”* (1 Samuel 13:13–14) Notice how Paul uses this theme in preaching, and shows that God was keeping His promises. *“And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:”* (Acts 13:21–23) The theme of the seed who would be the sin-conquering king continues to be seen in the Scriptures, thus tying all of the Scriptures together in a coherent whole.

When David wanted to build a temple for the LORD, God promised to build David a house. This house was not a literal house, but a household, or a family. The promise was that there would be an eternal kingdom and king who would be of the seed of David. *“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.”* (2 Samuel 7:12–17) (See also Acts 15:13–18.) This promise of the seed and theme of the seed continues. The histories of Israel and Judah during the days of the

divided kingdom all present to us God's working to bring His promised seed into the world. This is why we read Isaiah saying, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."* (Isaiah 9:6-7) It is this theme that appears in the words of the angel to Mary, when he told her that she was going to be the mother of the Christ. *"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."* (Luke 1:30-33) The theme of the king and the seed find their fulfillment in Jesus.

The New Testament writers build upon these things and show us both the fulfillment of the promises and the continuation of the Old Testament themes as they find their perfection in Christ. Paul shows us both the seed and redemption: *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* (Galatians 4:4-5) We again see the seed and redemption themes fulfilled in Christ's sufferings and resurrection: *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* (Hebrews 2:14-15) The eternal Son of God was made flesh as the seed of the woman, and He crushed the serpent under his heel, being bruised in the process, in order to redeem His people. (See also Colossians 2:13-15.) This motif has a future fulfillment, in that *"the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."* (Romans 16:20) We also read that He will make His enemies His footstool, and will reign over all things (1 Corinthians 15:26-28; Hebrews 10:11-14).

We see the creation theme here as well, because in Christ we are born again (John 3:1-16), and become new creatures. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17) We also know that He promises to bring in a new heaven and a new earth filled with righteousness (2 Peter 3:10-14), which shows the issue of sin being dealt with and conquered, as well as redemption purchases, accomplished, and applied.

These motifs find their fulfillment in the end, as the Revelation shows us. Christ, the atoning and redeeming lamb is also the conquering lion of Judah (Revelation 5:1-14). He is the seed of the woman, as seen in Revelation chapter twelve. Then we see Him as the conquering seed: *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."* (Revelation 20:1-3) *"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were*

written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:7–15) Sin is conquered! The seed of the woman has crushed the serpent under His feet! And finally, we read of the great creation in which He says, “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” (Revelation 21:5–6) Is it any wonder that the apostle would tell us that God says, “yes and amen” to His promises in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20)? He fulfills them all! The great themes of the Bible find in Him their perfection and fulfillment, as the Scriptures are given to point us to Him (John 5:39).

These are a few of the great themes of the Scripture, which show us the unity of the Bible from the beginning to the end. While skeptics scorn, modernists delete verses, and some neo-evangelicals split the Bible into varying and contradicting parts, God’s Word stands boldly declaring its unity, because it is God’s Word about His Son, and it is perfect. Let us then rest assured that our Bibles are indeed true, infallible, and inerrant: how could they not be? God created the Bible to be the message of His glory and grace in Christ; and His Word shall not return unto Him void, and the Scriptures cannot be broken (Isaiah 55:10-11; John 10:35).