



THE MAIN EVENT

The Promise – From Genesis 3:15 on, God promised to send a special someone to deal with our sin problem and our enemy. The Bible is a story of promised redemption through a promised Messiah – Jesus! The whole Bible could be summarized as a book about “Someone” very Special. The entire Old Testament tells us that “Someone is Coming.” The Gospels tell us “He’s here and it’s Jesus.” The rest of the New Testament writings tell us that He will return and what we need to know to embrace God’s gracious pardon and live as His people.

Jesus of Nazareth

To the Serpent, God promised that a Champion would come from the Woman to bruise his head (Genesis 3:15). A Messianic genealogy unfolded: Eve (Genesis 3:20) & Adam down to Noah (Genesis 5); then Noah’s son, Shem down to Terah (Genesis 11:10-26); Abraham (Genesis 12:3); Isaac (Genesis 26:1-4); and Jacob (Genesis 28:10-14); Judah (Genesis 49:10); and David (2Sam. 7). The genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 are there to show us that Jesus is the Davidic Messiah, both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David.

The prophetic preparation for Messiah is impressive. Daniel 2/7/9 foretold the time of Messiah’s appearance to Israel, while Micah 5:2 identified the place of His birth. Psalm 2 foretold the conspiracy against Him, while Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 foretold His suffering. Jesus and His Apostles summarized the message of all of the prophets as pointing to the first coming of Jesus and what occurred (Acts 3:17-26; 26:22,23; 1Peter 1:10-12).

It is impossible to eliminate the supernatural from the life of Jesus – His conception; miracles performed, resurrection, the miraculous powers given to the Apostles. The very claim of the Gospel is that God visited us in Jesus, so any attempt to eliminate the supernatural from the Gospel will produce an inaccurate portrait that has no power to save anyone and no hope to offer.

The Flow of History

The Bible offers a comprehensive, though sketchy, story of human history. Humans are portrayed as God’s “image creatures” from their first appearance, capable of language, culture, and technology. At the center of history is a Messianic promise and genealogy that stretches from Adam to Jesus. Throughout the centuries, God has been gathering an international body of people – believers who will enter into covenant with Him and hope in His provision of a Promised Messiah. The faithful obey the covenant in force at the time and trust in God’s goodness, mercy, and faithfulness through Christ. This is central to the Biblical story.

However, the Bible acknowledges a flow of rising and falling civilizations, kingdoms and empires, which can be investigated and more will be said about these in future articles. According to God's timetable there will be an "end" to the present universe, with all of humanity resurrected, judged, and separated to one of two eternal states.

The Difference it makes

In the Christian system, God's existence, nature, workings and unfolded plan provide a sound foundation for life and hope. Our thinking must begin with assurance/conviction that God exists and rewards seekers (Hebrews 11:1,6). The "fear of God" (awesome respect that motivates subordination and appropriate responses) is the foundational element of both "knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7) and "wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). Human thought and reasoning will go in very different directions depending on this decision – either *God is* or *God is not* – and the ramifications of that decision are pivotal! The validity of the entire Biblical story depends on the reality of the God it describes.

The foundation for Biblical ethics and moral boundaries is the existence and character of God. He is "holy" and has established moral boundaries in His universe, which He has communicated and will hold us responsible for keeping. For those atheists who claim that a morality/ethical system without God is possible, the weight of human history is decidedly against them – Will Durant concluded that no human society had ever effectively created a lasting, functional ethical system without supernatural foundations!¹

The issue of "hope" must come up here also. A God who creates can also re-create, resurrect, and give "eternal" life. I marvel at how those who think we came from mere cosmic dust and will return to the same can avoid a sense of desperation as they face the death of loved ones and their own. Secularism does not prepare people to face a meaningless existence and hopeless future – it just encourages them to not seriously think about it now! During the Enlightenment, a good number of French skeptics were bold in their materialism and atheism during their healthy youthful years, but quietly drifted back towards the Church as old age approached. Paul faced the realities powerfully – if Christ was not raised, then we are wasting our time and are without hope in the world (1Corinthians 15:12-19). But Jesus WAS raised from the dead and many witnesses saw it (1Corinthians 15:1-8,20).

Upon these things, we rest our hope.

¹ Will Durant, The Lessons of History (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), p. 51.