

# Part 4: The Story of Redemption

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Victory Life Church — Sunday, March 26, 2023

## Recap

What qualifies as “news”<sup>1</sup>?

- An **Announcement** of an **event** that has happened
- A larger context (**Backstory**) within which this makes sense
- A sudden unveiling of the **New Future** that lies ahead
- A **Transformation of the Present moment**, sitting between the event that *has* happened and the further event that therefore *will* happen

**Acts 2:36 (ESV)** “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both **Lord** and **Christ**, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

The Gospel<sup>2</sup> is the full Story of Jesus (His life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension): God has vindicated Jesus (of Nazareth) as Israel’s Messianic King by raising Him from the dead<sup>3</sup> and promoted Him to the highest authority in heaven and earth. And because Jesus is King of the world, everyone is called to believe in Him, trust in Him, and follow Him in order to live right now in the reality of the Kingdom of God as He did.

When I choose to submit to, follow, and obey Jesus, the humble, snake-crusher, His story becomes my story. I am connected to him in baptism to his death, burial, and resurrection. His victory becomes my victory.

“The gospel is the good news that God’s kingdom has come near in Jesus Christ, and through his life, death, resurrection, and enthronement, the powers of sin & death no longer have the last word.”<sup>4</sup> ~ Rich Villodas

## Introduction

Stories have enormous power over us, they have a way of shaping our sense of identity, vocation, purpose, and meaning in our lives; they can tell us who we are, why we are here, and what we are to do about it.

For example: what does it mean to be an American? The story of our nation’s origin<sup>5</sup> shapes our cultural values and our sense of identity as Americans. It’s not just names of battles and dates and individuals, it’s the story of freedom, of resistance to tyranny and foreign oppression. The stories of the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party stoked the fires of resistance to the British government and crown, leading to the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War. It’s not just our founding documents, and the minds that wrote them, that have shaped our culture, but the stories those documents embody. Hundreds of years later they are still shaping our identity and culture. Now there are counter stories being told to try and reshape that identity and culture.<sup>6</sup>

This is why I believe it’s important to resist a “de-storified” gospel that is reduced to theories and theology. The Gospel (good news) of Jesus is built on a story, not a philosophy or

theology, our theology and philosophy come from the story. The gospel, according to the writers of the New Testament, and the Apostles, is the Story of Jesus. Not primarily the doctrine or theology Jesus gives us, not even exclusively His atoning death, but the story of His whole life. They assumed telling the story of Jesus was telling the gospel.

But the story of Jesus has a backstory, namely the Story of Israel. The Story of Jesus, as it is presented to us in the Gospels, as well as the book of Acts, is built upon the Story of Israel, the story of the Scriptures that precedes the Gospel narratives. Then what flows from this story, of which Jesus is the climax and fulfillment of, is God's plan of salvation.<sup>7</sup>

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| The Story of Israel<br><b>THE STORY OF JESUS</b><br>Plan of Salvation |
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“The gospel of Jesus Christ resolves or brings to completion the Story of Israel as found in the Scriptures...The Story of Jesus Christ...makes sense only as it follows and completes the Story of Israel.”<sup>8</sup> ~ Scot McKnight

### In Accordance with the Scriptures

One of the earliest summations we have of the Gospel is found in 1 Corinthians 15, where is the one place in the entire New Testament where the writer comes close to defining the word “gospel.” Many scholars believe this is among the “oldest” lines in the entire New Testament, thought to be the oral tradition about the gospel that all the apostles received and passed on; it tells us what everyone believed and what everyone preached.<sup>9</sup> This could be described as “The Apostolic Gospel Tradition.”

**1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (ESV)** “Now I would remind you, brothers, of **the gospel** I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you **as of first importance** what I also received: that **Christ** died for our sins **in accordance with the Scriptures**, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day **in accordance with the Scriptures**, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”

“According to the Scriptures” is an important and repeated statement that is part of the gospel. In context of what our subject is, you could say that the the Story of Israel is the story of the Scriptures, more specifically our Old Testament. Now is not the time to go into breaking down the full story of the Old Testament, I have done this in other places<sup>10</sup>. But there is one key story that is critical to know when thinking about the Gospel, and that is the Story of the Exodus and the Passover. The Story of the Exodus<sup>11</sup> is the primary story of God's salvation that shaped the identity of the people of Israel — and in that story, God establishes Himself as King<sup>12</sup> (Ex. 15:18<sup>13</sup>). The Passover is the primary story that shaped the identity of the Jewish people. Passover<sup>14</sup> speaks powerfully of God rescuing Israel out of slavery in Egypt, God winning the decisive victory over Pharaoh and his hosts, and redeeming His people.

**Exodus 6:6-9 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup>Say therefore to the people of Israel, “I am the Lord, and **I will bring you out** from under the burdens<sup>15</sup> of the Egyptians, and **I will deliver you** from slavery to them,

and **I will redeem you with an outstretched arm** and with great acts of judgment. **7I will take you to be my people**, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. **8I will bring you into the land** that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. **I will give it to you for a possession.** I am the Lord.” <sup>9</sup>Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.

Two key words in these verses that frame how we are to understand the Exodus from Egypt. All the statements concerning the actions that will take place are God’s actions on behalf of His people: “I will...” And two key actions God will take will be to “deliver” His people and “redeem” them. To “deliver”<sup>16</sup> something or someone is to “rescue, snatch away,” specifically rescue them from harm or evil. He will also “redeem”<sup>17</sup> them, which means “to buy back.” Israel as a people belong to the Lord God, but are in a state of slavery and oppression. God is promising to “snatch them out” of the evil oppression of slavery in Egypt that He might “buy them back” to be His chosen people. He will do this “with an outstretched arm” and “acts of judgment.”

**The whole idea is this:** God’s people are in a state of bondage and slavery and are wholly incapable of getting themselves out of it. While in this state of oppression under an evil empire, they are unable to fulfill the vocation of being God’s chosen people and being a blessing to the nations.<sup>18</sup> It will take nothing short of a divine act of God’s power to get His people out of that state into a position and place they can once again fulfill their vocation as God’s people.

This is the specific story Jesus picks up on to define his work on the cross. It wasn’t the Feast of Tabernacles, Hanukkah, or even Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement). Jesus selects the Passover as the story that would make his death and subsequent resurrection make sense. Again, the Passover speaks powerfully of God rescuing Israel out of slavery in Egypt, God winning the decisive victory over Pharaoh and his hosts, and redeeming His people.

The symbolism goes over the whole story: the blood of the lamb is painted over the doorposts, and it marks out God’s people, and subsequently delivers anyone “under the blood” from death. Those delivered are then led out through the Red Sea as a final victory and salvation<sup>19</sup> over Pharaoh and his hosts. Then they are led to the foot of Mt. Sinai where God makes a covenant with them to be a “Kingdom of Priests.”<sup>20</sup> They are given the Law, making them the people in whose midst God would reside in the Tabernacle, as a signpost of a His intention to restore creation. God is to become King over heaven and earth, uniting them into a single bond. Rescuing His people from Pharaoh’s power is the necessary salvation, and the Passover is the means toward all of this.

**1 Corinthians 15:3b (ESV) ...Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,**

Passover, however, was not about the forgiveness of sins, since it was not Israel’s sin that put them into slavery in Egypt. But by Jesus’ day, the people of Israel had lived under foreign occupation and rule that stemmed from Israel’s exile in Babylon. Israel’s prophets had insisted consistently<sup>21</sup> that this prolonged exile had been brought on by **the idolatry and wickedness** of the Israelites before the exile.

So what Isaiah had declared is that a second Exodus,<sup>22</sup> a new Passover, would not only liberate God's people from this new slavery, but would do so by somehow dealing with sins and so accomplishing forgiveness.

**Isaiah 52:7-10 (ESV)**<sup>23</sup> How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings **good news**, who publishes peace, who brings **good news** of happiness, who publishes **salvation**, who says to Zion, "**Your God reigns**." The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see **the return of the Lord to Zion**. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has **redeemed** Jerusalem. The Lord has **bared his holy arm** before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the **salvation** of our God.

**Isaiah 52:13-15 (ESV)** Behold, **my servant** shall act wisely; **he shall be high and lifted up**, and shall be exalted. <sup>14</sup>As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind— <sup>15</sup>so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

**Isaiah 53:1-3, 4-6 (ESV)** Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup>Surely **he has borne our griefs** and **carried our sorrows**; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But **he was pierced for our transgressions**; **he was crushed for our iniquities**; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds 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**.

**Isaiah 53:10-11 (ESV)** Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes **an offering for guilt**, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall **the righteous one**, my servant, **make many to be accounted righteous**, and he shall bear their iniquities.

The victory over the powers, the new exodus, is to be accomplished through God dealing with the sins of His people through the sacrifice of His Righteous Servant. It was the idolatry and wickedness of the Israelites that placed them in exile under the powers of darkness, but God's Righteous Servant will sacrifice His own life for that sin on their behalf in order that they may be "delivered" and "redeemed."

### Jesus: The New Exodus

The root of all human sin is idolatry, worshipping something other than the Creator God. What happens when you worship something other than the Creator God is that your image bearing vocation starts to fracture, and the biblical name for that is "sin," missing the mark of genuine

humanness. We were commissioned (Genesis 1 and Psalm 8) to reflect the glory and beauty and love of God into the world. But when we worship idols, we reduce and distort our human vocation. Our sin becomes the chain with which idols we have worshipped use to hold us in their grip. For the idols to be defeated and overthrown, the chain must be broken, the sin must be dealt with.

**Galatians 1:3-4 (ESV)** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who **gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age**, according to the will of our God and Father,

Pharaoh, Egypt, Babylon, and Rome were not the biggest problem or the worst oppressor. The devil and our slavery to him through sin (idolatry) is our biggest problem. To be delivered from the devil's dominion over us, our sin must be dealt with. In Jesus dealing with our sin, he didn't just clear the guilt, he has robbed the dark powers of their enslaving dominion.

**Colossians 1:13-14<sup>24</sup> (ESV)** He has **delivered** us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have **redemption<sup>25</sup>**, the forgiveness of sins.

**The whole idea is this:** Just like the Israelites were in a state of bondage and slavery and are wholly incapable of getting themselves out of it, so we are slaves to sin and idolatry<sup>26</sup> and are wholly unable to get ourselves out. Being under the dominion of dark powers, we are unable to fulfill our vocation of being the humans God intended us to be: His image-bearers. We are "dead" to our vocation and God's blessing.<sup>27</sup> It took nothing short of a divine act of God's power in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus to deliver humanity from death in the domain of darkness and redeem us into a new position and place, the Kingdom of God, in which we can once again fulfill our vocation as God's people.<sup>28</sup>

**Colossians 2:13-15 (ESV)<sup>29</sup>** And you, who were **dead in your trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive together with him**, having **forgiven us all our trespasses**, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, **nailing it to the cross**. He **disarmed the rulers and authorities** and put them to open shame, by **triumphing over them in him**.

Christ is the ultimate victor over not just sin and death, but all the dark powers that have enslaved humanity. Him dying "for our sins" as the Passover Lamb<sup>30</sup> was in order that we might be delivered from the domain of darkness, and transferred into the reality of the Kingdom of God, redeemed as a new humanity who can now fulfill the vocation bearing God's image of goodness and glory.

The gospel isn't just that your guilt can be cleared, it's that you can be set free, delivered from the chains of darkness that keep you in bondage, bought back (redeemed) and restored to God's original design and plan, and now live in a whole new reality of God's Kingdom as Jesus did. That's the good news.

<sup>1</sup> N.T. Wright, *Simply Good News*, pg. 23

<sup>2</sup> The “gospel” (euangelion) was a royal announcement about a king and about a kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> “The early Christians regarded Jesus’ resurrection from the dead as God’s vindication of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.” Chris Kugler, “[Messiah.](#)” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/richvillodas/status/1485631086176649225?lang=en>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Revolution>

<sup>6</sup> This is why stories told from people like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his landmark book “The Gulag Archipelago” are so important today to tell the truth about what tyranny and oppression look like in the modern world.

<sup>7</sup> This is distinguished extensively in Scot McKnight’s book, *The King Jesus Gospel*

<sup>8</sup> Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, pg. 50; the full quote is, “The gospel of Jesus Christ resolves or brings to completion the Story of Israel as found in the Scriptures (our Old Testament)...The Story of Jesus Christ is locked into one people, one history, and one Scripture: it makes sense only as it follows and completes the Story of Israel.” And another way he says this is, “The gospel is the resolution and fulfillment of Israel’s Story and promises.” Pg. 51

<sup>9</sup> Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, pg. 46

<sup>10</sup> Message Series: “The Story that Leads to Jesus” — [youtube.com/playlist](https://www.youtube.com/playlist)

<sup>11</sup> N.T. Wright, *Simply Good News*, pg. 36-42ish

<sup>12</sup> מָלַךְ (mālak). vb. **to reign**. This verb has several meanings related to kingship; it can express the activity of becoming a king or the reign of kings. — Randall Merrill, “[Authority.](#)” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> “After the crossing of the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites sing a victory chant: ‘He is King, Lord forever and ever.’ This is not a reference to some monarchical government, but rather to the exercise of absolute power to protect and guide the chosen people (Micah 2:13, Psalm 74:12); thus Yahweh is King of Israel.” Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 262.

<sup>14</sup> The story of the Passover is found in Exodus 12, with the wider context and final victory being chapters 11-15.

<sup>15</sup> “Burden” — דַבְלוֹת (Hebrew) seḇā·lōt — burden bearing, compulsory labor; work done under harsh conditions for little or no pay; toil; pain; lordship; oppression; slavery; a synonym could be “yoke”

<sup>16</sup> נָצַל (nāṣal) vb. **to deliver, rescue, snatch away**. The basic meaning of this verb is “to snatch away (from danger).” This verb basically denotes snatching away or removing someone from harm or evil, i.e., rescuing them (e.g., Exod 2:17; Judg 6:9). In Psalm 51:16, it is used of rescuing from transgressions and bloodguilt. — Joel T. Hamme, “[Salvation.](#)” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> גָאַל (gā’al). vb. **to redeem, to buy back, act as next of kin**. The core idea of this verb has to do with a kinsman’s redemption of his kin from difficulty. This verb relates to carrying out the role of a kinsman or owner of something or someone...This is a key verb for the act of redeeming or ransoming by an owner, kin, or God. It can refer to legal possession by laying claim to someone or something, buying back, releasing from debt slavery, or reclaiming property (Exod 15:13)...*gā’al* emphasizes the act by a close relative exercising his duty or privilege to redeem. Kenneth D. Litwak, “[Redemption.](#)” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> Refer back to God’s covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and 22:17-18.

<sup>19</sup> See Exodus 14:13 and 15:2; this is the primary way we are to understand the word “salvation.” — יְשׁוּעָה (yěšū’ā). n. fem. salvation, deliverance, victory, help. *Refers to salvation from danger.* — Joel T. Hamme, “[Salvation.](#)” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>20</sup> See Exodus 19:1-6, the larger context is Exodus 19-24.

- <sup>21</sup> Isaiah 5:1-30, 22:1-18; Jeremiah 9:12-16, 15:11-14, 16:10-13, 25:1-14; Ezekiel 4-7; Moses had warned Israel there their consistent rebellion would lead to exile as the consequences in Deuteronomy 28:36-44 (see also Leviticus 26:27-39). The prophets are picking up on Moses' warnings.
- <sup>22</sup> The context (Isaiah 52:1-6) of the poem of Isaiah 52:7-10 is reference to Israel's original slavery in Egypt and subsequent Exodus, and how their current conditions are similar, and God will deliver them once more. Cross reference Isaiah 52:2 with Exodus 6:6 and Isaiah 52:5-6 with Exodus 6:7.
- <sup>23</sup> Isaiah 52:7-10 prophecies God's return to Israel in a powerful act of salvation and establishing Himself as King ("Your God reigns"), which frames and establishes the context for chapter 53 and the "Suffering Servant."
- <sup>24</sup> Cross-reference Colossians 1:13-14 with Exodus 6:6-7, as well as Psalm 107 (look for the keywords "delivered" and "redeemed") in reference to God redeeming His people back from Exile.
- <sup>25</sup> "Redemption" — ἀπολύτρωσις (apolytrōsis). n. fem. **redemption, release, deliverance.** The act of freeing or the state of being freed from bondage, such as that of a prisoner or slave, by payment of a ransom. Kenneth D. Litwak, "[Redemption](#)," ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).
- <sup>26</sup> Jesus makes the connection between slavery and sin in John 8:31-38, specifically verse 34.
- <sup>27</sup> Cross reference the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18 and Christ's redemption in Galatians 3:13-14.
- <sup>28</sup> The very next verses in Colossians 1 is 15-20, the Christ Poem, that connects redemption to being image-bearers, with the vocation of bringing New Creation.
- <sup>29</sup> Cross-reference these verses with Ephesians 2:1-10.
- <sup>30</sup> The Apostle Paul makes a direct correlation with Jesus and the Passover Lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:7