

New Testament Rearview



Last week, we looked through the rearview mirror at our journey down Route 66, the first part of our journey, what we call the Old Testament, and we did a summary of the first 39 exits. What we discovered is that the OT message is basically this; he is coming. Who is coming? The seed of David who is going to crush the head of the serpent take his seat on David's throne forever, establish an eternal kingdom and build God's house is coming. What a journey we took through the OT on Route 66. This morning it saddens me a little bit to know that our journey after today on Route 66 is going to be over. We're going to continue to study the Bible but not in the format that we have been studying it. We are going to look through the rearview mirror and we're going to look back at the second part of our journey on Route 66, what we call the NT and we're going to look at exits 40-66 and just do a summation so that down the road, if we run into people who question us about what we learned on Route 66, what is the big story of the Bible? You and I briefly will be able to give them that picture. We have chosen four scriptures to read this morning that in our mind just capture the big story of the NT. Let's begin with Matthew, because remember, we are looking for a seed of David who is coming.

Scripture

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as

your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

***“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”***

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Ephesians 4:11-16

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held

together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Revelation 19:11-16

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Geographical Sections

I don't know if you remember, but when we introduced Route 66 to you, Jesus basically told us that we could find Him in every section of the Bible. His Bible, at that time, was the OT. We divided the OT into four geographical areas and we went through them last week: The Law Books, the Historical Books, the Wisdom Books, and the Prophetic Books. Before Route 66 started, we introduced what we were going to look ahead and see, and we also talked about the four geographical areas of the NT. This morning, instead of doing a book by book summary, we just want to remember those four geographical areas that we studied in the NT, and just clarify in our minds what we saw during each one of those exits in that particular area of the NT. If you'll remember we divided the NT into the following four geographical areas:

1. The Gospels. The Gospels are consisted of four books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

2. The Historical Books. Once we exited out of the Gospels, we went into the historical life of the first church. Unlike the OT where there were 12 historical books that covered hundreds of years as God dealt with his OT covenant people in Israel, in the NT we only have one book that pictures for us life in the early church and that's the NT book of Acts. We're going to remind ourselves of what we saw in that book.
3. The Wisdom Books – The Epistles. The Epistles consist of 21 books; 13 written by Paul and then 8 other books written by Apolos, James, Peter, John, and Jude. We learned some interesting things during that section of the NT.
4. The Prophetic Book. We closed out our study of the NT with the last geographical section; just one book, but what a book it was! A book that covers the entire picture of the church age - the book of Revelation. We ended with a prophetic book called the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Gospels

Adjust your rearview mirror, and let's review what we learned in the Gospels. When we went from exit 39 to exit 40, four hundred years of time had passed and we're waiting for God to fulfill a promise to His covenant people. The promise that there will be a seed of a woman from Abraham from the nation of Israel from a particular tribe called Judah. Within that tribe, from a particular family, a seed would be born and he would crush the head of the serpent while the serpent bruised his heel. And that he would take his seat on the throne of David and reign over his kingdom forever and he would build God's house.

Our first book in the NT is the Gospel of Matthew. It basically said: *He is here!* Who is here? The seed of David is here; he who is going to crush the head of the serpent. He is going to take his seat on his father David's throne. He's going to begin to reign over his kingdom and he's going to build God's house...He is here. We then saw four beautiful

portraits of Jesus Christ as the seed of David. And I think you remember this, when we ended those four exits here's what we knew about the seed: no man had ever lived like this man lived. And, no man ever died like this man died. What did we see? We saw him die for the penalty of our sins. We saw God judge him in our place and take God's wrath and be separated from him so that we would not be separated from him, because there was a penalty to our sin. And because of the life he lived, he could go to that cross and die the death he died in our place. Then we saw him not only die for the penalty of our sins, we understand at the same time that he was dying for our sins, because of the penalty, he was also dying to the power of sin. So that we would not be merely forgiven of our sins, but so that we could be set free from our sins. So in the Gospels, here's what we discovered; He lived a life we couldn't live in order to go to a cross and die a death we should have died. And when those Gospels ended, we didn't see Him on a cross dying, nor did we see Him in a tomb dead, but we saw Him resurrected. We saw Him alive from the dead and we saw Him standing on a mountain with His first church and He gave them a mission. He gave them a *commission*; He told us to make disciples of all nations as we go, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and then he promised us that as we taught all things, whatsoever he commanded us, he would be with us always even until the church age. When we exited the Gospels, the seed who was coming came. Now, He's getting ready to ascend back to His Father's right hand side.

The Historical Books

It didn't take us but a week as we left the Gospels and entered into the second geographical region of the NT. The history of the early church opened with the ascension of Jesus Christ. It doesn't get any better than that! The Gospels ended with the resurrected savior starting on a mountain commissioning His church, and now Acts opens with Him ascending back to his father's right hand side and here's what we see; the seed who is coming to crush the head of the serpent via his

resurrection ascension is now, according to Peter, in fulfillment with OT prophecy, sitting on David's throne at the right hand of God, reigning over his kingdom. Scripture tells us that the church was empowered by the HS. When the HS fell on the early church, 3000 souls repented, put their faith in Jesus, were baptized and added to the church! We see that church in Jerusalem begin to take the gospel literally to the ends of the earth and under the anointing of God's HS, empowering the church to do what God called the church to do. We saw Acts end with the messenger of the church, Paul, in chains but the message of the church, the Gospel, freed!

The Wisdom Books - Epistles

Then we entered into the third geographical region of the NT called the Epistles. The Epistles consist of thirteen books written by probably our favorite Christian, Paul. But then there were eight others called the General Epistles; one written by Apolos (Hebrews), one written by James, two by Peter, three by John, and one by Jude. And in the Epistles, we saw the seed of David who came to crush the head of the serpent and secure our salvation in the process. Acts tells us is He sitting on David's throne reigning over his kingdom, and in the Epistles we see him doing what God sent him to do; build God's house. All of a sudden, we were shocked to discover ourselves part of the NT covenant people of God. If you remember, we quickly learned something; you don't get into God's covenant people because of a physical birth, you only get into God's covenant community because of a spiritual birth. All of a sudden, it didn't matter who our daddy or granddaddy was, or who our mom is, it didn't matter which side of the tracks we came from...all of a sudden, under the full disclosure of God, did we begin to understand that we are all in the same boat. We're all sinners. We have all fallen short of the glory of God. We discovered that you can't get into God's covenant people because of our physical birth; you can only get into God's covenant family by a spiritual birth. What we discovered is you and I are part of God's covenant people because of

God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. What we thought was our choice; we discovered later that it was actually because of His choice. God humbled us with this truth: yes, we chose him, but before we chose him he had already chosen us in Christ. See, why did we have to have a spiritual birth? Why could we not get in because of our physical birth? Because when we were born physically, we were born all wrong. We were born sinners. Why? Because when we were born physically from Adam, we received a nature that was dead to God and alive to sin. And therefore as a sinner, we followed our unredeemed flesh. And by nature, we were sinners. But the spirit of God along with the word of God converged on us and birthed us to a new life. When we were born again, we received a new nature, not a nature where we were dead to God and alive to sin, but we received a new nature where we are now alive to God and dead to sin. And therefore, as a new covenant people of God we don't walk according to our unredeemed flesh, but we walk according to the spirit of God. We learned something exciting! God transformed us from a sinner to a saint of God. When God uses an adjective to describe us, when he picks a noun to describe us he calls us *the set apart ones, the holy ones*, the ones on the planet who have been set apart, separated from the world of sin to live a life in fellowship with him where we've been called out of sin unto salvation and service of him. We are saints of God. We've not only been forgiven of sin, not only have we been made right with God because of his grace through faith where he declares us righteous and then makes us fully right with him because of what was wrong with us has now been made right in the death of his son. He's freed us. Not just forgiven us of sin, but freed us from the power of sin so that we can now live a life that brings honor and glory to him as a covenant person of God. We've not only been justified, but at this very moment we are in the process of being sanctified. God is releasing us from sin's grip on us and moving us away from behavior that is so like Adam and moving us more and more into behavior into the image of his son, Jesus Christ. We learned that was the plan the whole time. When God chose us before the foundation of

the world, he had already predetermined, blueprinted, that one day we were going to be just like his son, Jesus Christ. So that he, Jesus Christ, would be the firstborn among many brothers. In other words, when we sit down in heaven at the family table, we're not going to talk about what we've done, all the glory is going to go to he who sits at the head of the table, and that's Jesus Christ. All of a sudden, we learned on Route 66 that our salvation is really not about us, it's about him and we do not live this life for us, we live our life for him to bring ultimate glory to him. We were shocked to hear again what we really knew to be true; that as the NT people of God, he didn't put us under the law, he actually abolished the law. He did away with the law. We're now living under grace. Don't get the wrong idea...grace isn't permission, it's power. Do you understand what God did when he put us under grace? He didn't give us an excuse to sin; he gave us the reason not to sin. It's because the first time God's covenant people have him and the person of HS living within us and we have God's ability. We have God's enabling power living inside of us! The law of God has been written on our mind and our heart. We did not live according to the flesh but we live according to the spirit of God and oh what a change in my life to not just glory in being forgiven of my past mistakes and not only rejoice to know that if I blow it in the future, I'm forgiven already, but to know that I can actually live a different life in the future because of what God has enabled me to do through the person of His HS. Then, do you remember learning that we not only have the gift of the spirit but we have been gifted by the spirit. All of a sudden I began to understand that as a Christian, God didn't save me just for me, he saved me to make me a part of something bigger than me. I'm a covenant person among a covenant people. That's what the house is; it was never about a physical building that was going to stand on a mountain in Israel. That was just a shadow to tell me about a sacrifice that was going to be made and that sacrifice has been made on that mountain and in the person of his son. God actually sent his son to build his house and his house isn't a building made of stones and mortar, but it's a people. A

people who have the HS of God living inside them and we are the temple of God's spirit. I not only have the gift of the spirit, I have been gifted by him. I'm a part of the body of Christ. I am a member of the people who manifest God's presence to the world around us. And without me, my particular body can't be what God's called it to be. Through these 21 letters, I understand how important I am to the body of Christ. If I'm going to be a part, I'm going to do my part so that our church can do and be what God's called us to be.

The Prophetic Book

When we exited those 21 letters, we only had one book left; the Revelation of Jesus. You know, in those first geographical areas we saw that the seed is here and he crushed the head of the serpent. Then we saw him sitting on David's throne reigning over his kingdom. Then, we saw him building the house of God. He made a promise that if we would make disciples of all nations, he would be with us to the end of the church age in that last book of the Bible, through an apostle named John, who saw the prophecy of the church in the world. If he's going to be with us, we didn't really expect this to happen. Just to make sure we understood what was going to happen, he gave us a look, seven different pictures about the church age. We discovered things aren't always going to go the way we think they are supposed to go. We are in a battle. We're not battling our neighbor; we are battling Satan in a spiritual war. We did not realize that when Jesus Christ conquered Satan and crushed him, Satan followed him into heaven and got kicked out. Heaven threw a party but they looked down on us with pity. They said, whoa to them on the earth because the accuser of the brother has been cast down, and all of a sudden we now understand why Jesus Christ is walking with us during the church age. He knows his enemy is here among us, walking to and fro on the earth seeking to devour. He wants to distract us from doing what God has called us to do; take the Gospel to the end of the world. Why would Satan want to distract us? Because the book of Revelation taught us that Satan can deceive the

nations no longer during the church age. He cannot prevent people from knowing the truth. But they can't know the truth until we who know the truth take the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. When our Bible ends again, it tells us after showing us the end of the church age and a new heaven and a new earth that he's prepared for us, is not how it ends. It ends with the same message the OT ends with. *He is coming*. This time it says, *He's coming again!* We believe that he is coming again. The question is; are we going to be ready?

Conclusion

I just found out this week that Sophia put her faith in trust in Jesus Christ last Sunday night. She is ready for the return of Christ. Are you ready? I did not realize that Nick got saved years ago after a baptism he had as a child. I had forgotten that he had never stepped out in believer's baptism. He's going to this morning. He's going to be ready! Are you ready to meet Jesus? Are you doing your part as a member of the body of Christ? Are you living a life that reveals to those around you that you have been transformed from a sinner to a saint? Honestly, are you ready? He's coming!