

Theology for Our Time

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Preacher: Cory Brock

- [0 : 0 0] In John 17, Jesus is praying and he's preparing himself for his death.
- He says this, that the knowledge of God is eternal life. When we talk about doing theology, all we're really saying is that we're trying to get at the knowledge of God.
- We're simply trying to know God better. The knowledge of God doing theology, reading your Bible, and even the Gospel itself, Jesus' death and resurrection, are means to a bigger end.
- That bigger end is life with Jesus. The bigger end is eternal life. The bigger end is sitting down at dinner with the God-man Jesus Christ.
- The bigger end is not only having our spirits resurrected, but our bodies resurrected. The bigger end is being back in the Garden of Eden with our God walking hand in hand.
- [1 : 1 0] That's the big end that Christianity exists for. And theology, which we're going to say is just the attempt to know God better, and the Bible and all these things, they're means to get there.
- And so here's the three reasons that we're doing this, and doing this series. One I've just said is to know God, to know God more, and to have eternal life. I could illustrate it like this, especially if you're married or if you have a boyfriend or girlfriend, you'll know how true this is.
- If I went home every single day to Heather, my wife, and said, I love your blue eyes. They are so beautiful.
- And I doted over her day after day about how amazing her blue eyes are. I would call that love, but what she would do would slap me in the face, because she doesn't have blue eyes.
- And so we can't love something well that we don't know well. And so that's what we're doing when we talk about doing theology, is knowing God better so that we can love Him better.
- [2 : 2 1] The second thing is this, you're already a theologian. If you're here tonight and you believe in Jesus, you are a theologian. To be a Christian is to be a theologian.
- To say Jesus is Lord is to do theology. You are a theologian. And then finally, very simple, life is hard.
- You all know that. Life on this world is tough. The Bible tells us that we are aliens in this world, that our citizenship is in heaven.
- It tells us that we're strangers, that we're wayfarers, that we're in exile, all these different metaphors. But at the same time, you know something else is true, don't you?
- We also belong in this world. And so there's this tension that we live in as Christians, that we don't belong in this world, that there's something alien about who we are as believers being here in this place of sin.
- [3 : 2 2] But yet it's also our home. And so there's this tension. And really what we're talking about today is this third point. We're doing theology today in order to get at this tension.

How does the Bible speak to us about this tension? Being aliens in a foreign land that is this world that we live in, full of sin, full of curse, corrupted, yet at the same time, this is where we were made for.

This is our home. So let me just tell you a bit about the bigger scope of the next five months. We're going to do this for five months, just one time a month, and then we're going to take a break and probably start over again in the fall.

What we're doing this five months is focusing on Paul. We're focusing on themes or motifs or things that you see a lot, recurrent, throughout what Paul wrote in the New Testament, that's Paul's letters.

But today we're going to use the whole Bible to get at it. So we're just trying to identify five themes in Paul that you can take away with you and read the whole Bible better with.

[4 : 30] That's all. That's all we're really doing. And so these are just themes to a bigger end. And one of the smaller bigger ends is reading your Bible better, but the bigger, bigger end is to know God better and thus to have eternal life.

So what we're talking about today is history. History. You might be thinking, what does that have to do with theology or with Paul?

So when I say history, I just mean something like a succession of time, past, present, future, history. What does history have to do with theology and with us?

Well, with us, first of all, we live in a historical moment, don't we? You are all people who live in space and time, as am I, as is this building and all these other things.

We live in a historical moment. Jesus lived in a historical moment. And so one of the questions in theology that we have to get at is what did different moments in history have to do in relationship to other moments?

[5 : 35] What did a man who died 2,000 years ago, what does that have to do with our moment in history? You see? So that's one of the reasons we ask questions about history.

And history is so critical for Christianity. Think about history for a second just from your perspective. If I was to ask you, tell me a bit about your history.

Some of you that are optimist would immediately go to things like birthdays, best birthdays, right? Or you would go to that time you met her, or that time you met him, or how awesome you think your bachelor life is, or whatever.

University, marriage, that first kid being born, all these great moments, these great spaces in your historical time.

Some of you would go to the negative. You'd go to a series of crises. You would go to loss and death. You would go to pain, dilemma, breakups.

[6 : 46] Summer dads, divorce, all these things. But the reality is, is just like the tension that we spoke about earlier, about us being aliens in this world, yet at the same time belonging here, we see that same tension in our own history in that we've got birthdays and we've got death days.

We've got gains and losses. There's this tension that comes into this world being our home, yet so full of sin that we can explain things in a way that relates in a very, in a way that's in constant tension.

If you were to think about bigger history scopes, world history, all these things, if you study history, what you do when you study history is you study crises.

You study war, famine, struggle, economic recessions, genocides, scandals. That's how we study and think about history.

But the Christian faith does something different than that. When we do theology, what we are doing is we're searching for a way to think about who we are in this time and space we live in, in a way that doesn't, that explains this tension that gives us a way of hope, a way of joy, a way of life, a way of coping with the 20th century.

[8 : 15] If you think about the 20th century, you need something to cope with, a tool when you think about the genocides of the 20th century. That's what we're doing when we do theology is we're making this so very relevant for our lives today, we're knowing God better and knowing ourselves better in our historical moment in order that we can reach eternal life.

If you've ever thought about theology like this, which I think is very common, when you do too much theology, what ends up happening to you as you become an intellectualist?

You embrace some idea of intellectualism. All you're concerned about is knowing, knowing, knowing. I can explain God to you according to modal logic or something like that.

What I want to say tonight is that theology actually embraces the whole person. Everything about who you are is what theology is trying to get to.

Of course, you are a knowing being. You know things, right? You use your senses, you use your taste in your sight and your touch, and you think and you reason and you use laws of logic to get information and to draw conclusions.

[9 : 35] That's your intellectual faculty. But you do more than that. We might say it like this, one of your other faculties is some faculty that we might call feeling.

You feel things. You have emotions. You have desires. You have a will. All those things, right? But you also have a third faculty and that's the faculty of doing.

You do stuff. You act. You have an ethic that you live by or don't. You serve or you don't serve, right?

And so theology, knowing God better and therefore knowing who you are better is about embracing this holistic picture of knowing, doing, and feeling, all of them working in tandem to complete this process of Christianity, of knowing God into eternal life.

And so that's really what we're doing. Okay, so now we're moving into our section where we actually do it, where we get into the Bible and do it. And so what we're doing today is we're looking at time, a theology for our time, a theology about time and history.

[10 : 47] And this is one of the central themes in Paul and one of the central ways to think about your own life. Okay. All right, so what we're going to do is look at some Old Testament passages, some New Testament passages, and then some Paul passages, all right?

Three, three, three. Maybe skip one or two if we're running out of time. And then we're going to draw some conclusions and that's all we're doing today. So the first thing we're going to look at is Old Testament passages.

Don't worry about flipping to all these because it's like, it's nine or 12, something like that I can't remember. And most of the time they're just one verse. And so don't worry about flipping. Just pay attention to the screen if you can and focus on the highlighted portions especially.

We're looking at one phrase in the Bible today. And that's the phrase in the latter days or in the end of days. You see it down there in the footnote, literally the end of days.

This is Genesis 49. This is Jacob or Israel is about to die. And he's charging his sons. He's giving them his deathbed blessing. And this is what he says.

[11 : 50] Israel or Jacob summoned his sons and said, assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the latter days or in the days to come or in the days that are at the end or something like that.

Jacob is not just talking right here about some end of the days like I'm about to die or you sons when you come close to the end of your days. This section is actually couched in a section where he's talking about the covenant promises that have been given to Abraham.

So he's just gotten done saying, God has promised us we're going to get a land, a people, a place, God's presence, and we're going to live there for all of eternity.

That's what he's been talking about. And then he refers to the latter days, the days that are yet to come, the end of days. Okay. So that's the phrase we're looking at.

All right. So just stick that into your mind. Here it is again in Isaiah chapter two. The word which Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

[12 : 52] Now it will come about that in these last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains. He's not just talking about his own space and time, his own century.

He's talking about something that's clearly in the future where the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established. Okay. So let's look at one more Old Testament example.

Now I have come to give you an understanding. Sorry, I should say this is from Daniel 10. So the book that we're, the book of the Bible we're studying right now on Sunday mornings. This phrase is all over the place in Daniel, right?

We haven't gotten to it. I don't think yet in Daniel with Derek, but he's got his work cut out for him because it's coming. It appears a lot, especially in chapters eight to 10. So Daniel's having these visions and this is what he says.

Now I've come to give you an under, sorry, this is the Lord speaking. I've come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days for the vision pertains to the days yet future.

[13 : 53] Same phrase. When he had spoken to me, according to these words, I turned my face towards the ground and became speechless. Okay. So that's three Old Testament passages that use this phrase about time, about history.

So what we're starting to do is we're starting to build a bit of an idea of what the Bible says about history. Well, the Bible thinks so far in the Old Testament that there are days coming.

These days are bringing an inheritance, says Jacob, the mountain of the Lord. Right here, the vision. We don't have the rest of it.

But they're days yet future. Sometimes the Old Testament refers to this as one day. So if you guys have read any of the prophets or anything like that, you'll have seen phrases like the day of the Lord, if you remember that.

And usually that's all in capital letters in the English Bible. So sometimes it talks about as being one day. Sometimes it says the days yet future.

[14 : 55] So here's what we can learn from the Old Testament so far. Whatever these days are, they're final. There's a finality about it. It's the day of the Lord.

It's bringing something to a close. They're also collective. And what I mean by that is in the Old Testament, when this reference is used, it's never used to refer to an individual.

It's always a group. It's nations. It's Israel. It's something bigger than just one person. And this final day or days also brings positive and negative aspects about it.

In other words, judgment, cursing, but also blessing. So this is what we learned so far from the Old Testament. Now this phrase appears over 100 times in the Old Testament or a variation of it.

So we've looked at three. And these conclusions I'm drawing here are based on all of them. Not that I looked at all of them in preparation. No, but simply that those who have and then you go and read them, these are the conclusions we can draw from it.

[16:04] Okay. Now we're turning to the New Testament. What does the New Testament then tell us about history? What kind of light does it shed on this phrase? This is Jesus talking in John 6, for I've come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

That's his father. This is the will of him who sent me, that of all that he has given me, I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

Same phrase, same words as the ones we just looked at in the Old Testament. So Jesus is talking about a last day. This day clearly has something to do with resurrection.

This is the will of him who sent me, that all that he has given me, I will not lose them. I will raise them up. And then he says it again at the end, and I myself will raise him up on the last day.

So Jesus is still looking forward to this day. All right? Jesus is talking about this day yet to come. And he refers it somehow to resurrection. All right?

[17:06] Second New Testament passage. First Peter, this is two different verses from the same chapter, and this gives us a bit of a different flavor. Real diverse, protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

So what Peter is saying is that, again, like Jesus said, like the writers of the Old Testament said, that it's yet to be revealed in the last time.

Something is yet to be revealed in the last time. But then, just 15 verses later, look at what he says. For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, Jesus, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.

So what you see what Peter is doing there is he says it's something future, but it's also now. It's in these last times. So we've got this strange combination here, you see, between something that the Old Testament talked about as entirely future, something that Jesus talked about as future, something that Peter talks about as future, but now Peter also says, but you are in these last times.

So we're starting to get a bit of a tension. The tension that I talked about in the introduction about living in this world, yet not being of this world, the tension in our history between sin and blessing.

[18:34] We're starting to get a bit of that tension in terms of history, that there is a last time yet to come, but Peter says we're already in these last times.

So let's keep going and see what this means. This is another one, same thing really. First John, children, it is the last hour. It is the last hour.

This is the end, John's saying. So again, how does this future idea relate to this present idea? Okay, so New Testament things we can learn.

This day is future. Jesus and Peter say that. But this day is also present. Peter and John say this day is here, and that it's more than just a single day.

It's a stretch of time. And then lastly, that this day is tightly woven with resurrection, with the idea of resurrection. Okay. All right, now we'll go to Paul, and this will be the last three Bible passages we'll do, and then we'll move to application.

[19:33] Paul is talking about Jesus and Ephesians 1. When he raised, that's when God the Father or God raised Jesus from the dead and seated Jesus at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

So what Paul's doing here is introducing something new for us. Paul doesn't talk about it necessarily in terms of old days and new days, of past days and future days.

He talks about it in terms of ages, or sometimes he uses the word worlds. So what Paul's doing for us there is giving us this picture that all of history is in two ages, two stages.

That's how he divides all of history. That's how he thinks about everything that's ever happened. And when we combine that idea with what Peter has said about this being the end of times, we can know that we're living, at least probably, in the first stage still.

So we'll see how that plays out here in just a second. Now these things happen to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction. He's talking about Moses and Noah and different things, all the Old Testament stories.

[21 : 03] Upon whom us, the end of the ages has come. So now Paul's saying it too, just like Peter. The end of the age has come on to us. We are living in the final days.

We are in the end of times. And then last one. And in this one all I want you to see is that he also does this with contrast of like first and second or first and last.

So as it is written, the first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. And then you see it again, first and second man. And he's talking about Jesus there.

He's saying Adam was the first man. Jesus was the second man. Adam was the man of the first age. Jesus is the man of the second age.

So you're starting to see a little bit, it's still foggy probably, but we're going to draw some conclusions and see how it works out in just a second. So here's what Paul's telling us.

[22 : 03] All of history, every single second of history, even the time in which we live right now, is divided into two ages or two worlds.

And so you should think about history according to the Bible. But finality in the first age has come.

Jesus' work has brought about the end, the latter days. We are in the end times. And so what that means is that if you're looking for end times and we're reading our Bible and then reading history and reading the news and reading all these things that are happening and we're looking for these end times to come about, what Paul's actually telling us is they're already here.

They're already here. We are living in the end of the age. There is an age still yet to come, but we are living in the end of the first age.

Okay. All right. So now what I want to do is I want to draw some applications. Now I want to do it in reference to how we defined theology for the whole person earlier.

[23 : 12] We said theology is for you as an intellectual person to know things. It is for knowing things. It's also for feeling things. And it's also for doing things.

And so what we're going to do now is apply these texts, think about these texts in this history idea we've got, and look at what we should know about it, what we should feel about it, and what we should do about it.

So first, what should we know about this? Briefly, the Bible tells us to think history is very important. The Christian religion is a historical religion.

If you take history out of Christianity, you don't have Christianity anymore. Jesus died and rose again in history, and that's the gospel.

And he did it for us. And so connecting the dots between the history that is Jesus' work and the history that is the moment in which we live, that is what we're doing in Christianity.

[24 : 13] All right? So that's the first point. Second, history is a drama of redemption. Another way to say it is a story of redemption.

So the second thing the Bible wants you to know about history is that when you think about history and think about who you are and where you are in 2015, that you should think of all of history as a big story of redemption.

History exists for God, and it's the story of what he's doing to redeem us, to redeem a people. It's a drama of redemption.

And then thirdly, this history, this drama, this story, it's God's history. God is the main character. He's the protagonist of this story.

So those are three quick lessons about which we should know about what the Bible teaches us about history. Now let's talk about the verses we looked at. This is how we could map out the way that when we looked at those Old Testament passages, how the Old Testament authors view history.

[25 : 18] Two ages, just like Paul had, this age, then a Messiah would come, and then there would be a new age, an age to come, a new creation of some sort.

An age in which the Messiah ruled forever. A lot of times the Old Testament authors probably thought of that in a very political fashion, as well as being a blessing, a fulfilling of the Abrahamic promises.

So it's a very simple view of history, isn't it? This age and an age to come, divided by the Messiah coming down in history. But the New Testament complicates things a bit.

So don't freak out when you see this next one. Just be patient for a second, we'll work it out. Okay? All right, so here's the New Testament view. It complicates things a bit.

If you look, it's almost the same as the Old Testament one. You see at the bottom you have this age and an age to come, and then in the middle you have the Messiah coming. That's Jesus, right? We know that happened.

[26 : 16] Jesus has come in history. But if you look across, you'll see a second vertical line that's a second coming. And so the New Testament introduces us to an idea that Jesus is going to come again, doesn't it?

That there's a second coming of Christ. Okay? Now, what Paul is telling us is this, that when Jesus came the first time, with Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension in history, what he did was create a new type of time for us.

And that type of time is characterized by a tension. Okay? The tension is this, we still live in the old age.

Okay? We live in the old age, we live in the age that is cursed. We live in the age that stands under the fall. We still stand under the curses of Genesis 3.

It still hurts to bear children. It still is painful to do work. We still get pricked by thorns. And we still sin, all right?

[27 : 28] So we still, in our place in history, live in the old age. But when Jesus came, what he did was he actually inaugurated the new age into our age in a way that they overlap.

Okay? So think about it like this. You know that we live in an age that is still cursed. Everybody knows that needs no explanation.

But you also know that the Bible promises that there is an age yet to come, an age that's perfect, an age of Revelation 19 to 20 where there's no more tears and no more weeping and you sit down at the dinner table with Christ.

That's an age yet to come. What Paul tells us when he describes his two-age view of history is that the time we live in right now is an overlap of these two ages.

Okay? And what we mean by that is some of what is promised to us in the age yet to come, we already have now, but not in full.

[28 : 32] So there's a tension in this age between curse and blessing. And we have both of those things. And so we live right now inside of that box, inside of that square between the first coming of the Messiah and the second coming of the Messiah.

And in that box we have realized, Jesus has realized for us the blessings in part but not in full. Okay?

So there's a tension between these two ages and an overlap. All right? Now this will help to explain it a little bit better. Think about it like this. Our history, where we live right now, we could think of it as the already and the not yet.

We already on the left side, yeah, same for you, resurrected, we already are resurrected in spirit. If you've been justified by faith, you have been resurrected with Christ in spirit.

We're already resurrected from our guilt. We're already getting glimpses of eternal life. Paul talks about the community that is the church being a picture of eternal life.

[29 : 39] When you come to church on Sundays, it's supposed to be something of what eternal life with the community, the nation of the church will be forever with God.

It's a glimpse. We're already experiencing blessings and cursings. You know what it is to have joy in Christ, but you also know what it is to feel the pain of curse.

But there's a huge line there in the middle and there's a not yet. We're not yet resurrected in body. We're not yet redeemed into perfection. We still sin.

We don't have eternal life with the God man yet. We're not completely blessed as in free of the curses that were given us because of sin.

So we think about our place in history as this already not yet, this tension. If we go back to what we were talking about at the very beginning, living in this tension of our own histories, positive and negative aspects or living in the tension that is being an alien in this land, getting up every morning and going to work, doing the hard things in life, burying your parents or burying your grandparents or burying your spouse or burying your children, all these things are aspects of what it is to still not be in the not yet, to still not be in the age that is yet to come, but we are a people, even as aliens, who when we have to bury our children can do it with a glimmer of hope because of what has become already in Jesus for us.

[31 : 20] Okay? Here's a better way to even think about it. If you think about all of history as a big drama of redemption, a drama has four great parts to it, a story, an introduction, a conflict, a resolution and a conclusion.

I just want to say, like the idea of story, of writing stories and writing novels is just a gift given us by God that reflects exactly what he's doing in the world.

The introduction was creation. The conflict is sin. The resolution is redemption in Christ and the conclusion is new creation, but you still see we still have that box left.

Right now we're standing in that box in attention between redemption and new creation. We're experiencing something of both in our lives.

We could look at it like this as the last picture chart thing I have. If you look at these pictures, some of you have seen this before, but if you imagine them to stand for the view of redemptive history that we just laid out.

[32 : 32] If you look at the very first picture, there are birds, there's singing, we'll say. There's an apple, right? There's fruit being born from the tree. It's a blue sky.

It's a picture of Eden, so to speak. It's a garden. It's without curse. Then you look at the next picture and it represents loss. When Adam and Eve fell in Genesis 3, this is what happened.

You lost stark contrast. Then in the third, you have the coming of Christ, the redemption aspect, the coming of the Messiah, the resolution of the conflict.

You see the cross there in that tree. In the final one, you have a picture of new creation. That's the end into which we are going. That's what Christianity is for, is to move us into that last segment, into that last picture where you see an abundance of fruit, an abundance of birds, more color.

It's to represent that it's like the first picture. It's like the Garden of Eden, but it's even better. That's the movement that we're progressing. Here's how you can think of history.

[33 : 38] Here's how the Bible is asking you to picture your history and Christ's history and everything God's doing in the world is this. Two ages and four stages.

Two ages, the age that is and the ages that is yet to come in the new creation. And then in four stages, the drama of redemption from creation to new creation.

It's often our tendency when we think about Christianity to only describe Christianity as the two middle pictures. If you were to ask someone, what is Christianity?

It's that Jesus died for my sin. That is very true. But it fails to include the whole picture. And that's Christianity is Jesus died for my sin because creation is fallen and I need new creation to be with God again.

So we've got to include the whole picture when we think about the Christian religion. What should we feel? And this is just really quick because we've got just a couple minutes.

[34 : 43] What should we feel? I just want to look at this verse again. This is the verse that we looked at just a moment ago, but just with one extra verse added to it from Ephesians one. What should we feel about this in light of this history?

This is what Paul says in focus, especially on the text that's highlighted. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.

That you will know and by know Paul means what we mean by feel here. That you will know or feel or desire what is the hope of his calling.

To move down to the next highlight portion, that you'll know what is the greatness of his past, sorry, that you'll know the glory of his inheritance. Now the glory of his inheritance is a completely new creation idea.

It's an idea that you will inherit something and that's the new creation along with Jesus when he comes again, that you'll be truly a son or daughter of God. But what is Paul saying?

[35 : 46] That in light of this two-aged picture, in light of this tension between the ages, in light of the final age coming into our present age, you can know this now. You see? He's saying that I want you to know what it is to glory in the inheritance that you're promised in the future now.

What it is to hope in the calling you have in the future now. You know what it means to be in Christ with Christ in the future now.

You see that he's referring to these two ages in the very last verse because he says in this age but also in the one to come. Lastly, what should we do?

One more verse and then we'll have just a brief conclusion. The what should we feel portion is primarily this, so I could somewhat open a sentence. In light of this view of drama of redemption, in light of this view of history, you should have hope.

You should feel great hope. That's what Paul says. What should we do? Look at the highlighted portions again. Sorry, what we're doing here is just, I'm just kind of giving you a glimpse of taking this theme of how Paul reads history and then reading a text with the theme in mind.

[36 : 57] Then you can kind of see what's important. The grace of God has appeared past tense, but it is instructing us present tense to deny ungodliness, to live sensibly, to live righteously, to live godly in this present age.

You see, he's telling you to do in light of these two ages is live as if you were already in the second one. That's what he's saying. What should we do?

The last thing that we should do, and I'm just rushing through this because of Tom, is this. This is the purpose of getting better at Bible reading for all of us.

We need to interpret the whole Bible through this lens of the drama of redemption. When you read the Bible, you're thinking of this picture of history, this four stage picture of history I've given you.

You can ask three questions. What is the author trying to say to his audience in his age? If we're talking about Moses writing Genesis, what's Moses trying to say to Israel in 1400 BC or whatever?

[38 : 06] It would be closer than that in 1400, but whatever. What is he trying to say in his age? Secondly, then we have to ask, what is God trying to say to us in light of redemption in light of the fact that Jesus has already come in light of the fact that there is a new age?

Then the last thing we have to ask is where or how is Jesus present or pointed toward in this passage? In other words, when we're reading the Bible and especially the Old Testament, what Paul is pointing to us with this history is that we've got to read the Old Testament in light of Jesus.

I'm just going to give you one example and then I'm going to pray. Genesis chapter 18, you remember this story, Sodom is about to be destroyed.

Lot lives there. That's Abraham's cousin. God comes to Abraham and tells him, I'm going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Your cousin's there and you better go get him.

You remember what Abraham does? He pleads to God and says, wait, Lord, if there are 50 in Sodom that are righteous, will you spare it?

[39 : 22] What does God say? He says, yes, I'll spare it. He said, but if there are 40, if I can find 40, will you spare it? He says, yes.

If I can find 30, if I can find 20, if I can find 10, Lord, will you spare Sodom from destruction? What's going on there in that passage?

How do we read that passage in light of this drama of redemption? We look there and we see something really peculiar and that's that Abraham is acting in such a way that he's mediating between that city and God.

God's coming with judgment and Abraham is standing in between them in a position of mediation, isn't he? And he's saying, look, if I can find 50, will you not? And God's saying, yes, yes.

If there are righteous people in that city, I will allow them to be mediators for the whole city. I will allow 10 people, 10 righteous people to stand as substitutes for all the wicked people in that city.

[40 : 32] And what are we left wanting Abraham to say at the end? He stops at 10. What do you want him to say? You want him to say, what about just saying one?

Lord, if I can find one man, one woman in this city, will you spare it? And that's what we're left asking, just one.

The point is this, that when we read that in light of Christ, what we see is that there's mediation happening, that this is a story about Christ, that one man can stand in the place of a wicked city.

And that one man, Jesus, did stand in the place of a wicked nation, his people, his church, us. All right? So you can see there, when we work through those questions, that's the kind of way that we want to approach the Old Testament and approach the rest of Scripture in light of this big view of history.

Okay? All right. That's a lot. That's like drinking from a fire hydrant. You just get, I mean, you just get pelted in the face with information.

[41 : 43] So there is a couple minutes for questions. If you don't have any questions, that's fine. I know that's kind of a weird venue for that. I'll just pray and then we'll do that. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank You, God, that You've given us a witness to all of history and that the Bible for us is revelation that tells us how we should view everything.

And we ask, Father, that You would give us eyes that have scales removed that are illuminated so that we can see what Your Bible teaches better. And we ask for that so that we may reach the new creation, that our alien status will become completely home.

And we ask for that in Jesus' name. Amen.