

RESTORATION THROUGH REGENERATION

- A. Introduction: We are talking about the importance of getting to know Jesus through the only fully reliable source of information about Him—the Bible, particularly the New Testament. I have been encouraging you to become a regular, systematic reader of the Bible (especially the New Testament)
1. The New Testament was written by eyewitnesses, men who walked and talked with Jesus, saw Him die and then saw Him alive again. They wrote to tell the world what they saw and heard from Jesus.
 - a. What they witnessed convinced them that Jesus was and is God become man without ceasing to be God. They were so convinced that they were willing to die rather than deny what they saw.
 - b. Our purpose in this study is not only to help you get to know Jesus for the purpose of relationship with Him, but also to help you recognize false christs. Jesus warned that, prior to His second coming, false christs and false prophets will arise and deceive many. Matt 24:4-5; 11; 24
 2. So, we're looking at who Jesus is and why He came into this world according to the men who knew Him. Their eyewitness accounts tell us He came to bring life to the world. We have more to say in this lesson.
- B. To appreciate what it means that Jesus came to bring life to this world, we must understand the big picture or God's overall plan for humanity. God created men and women to become His sons and daughters through faith in Him, and He created the earth to be a home for Himself and His family.
1. Eph 1:4-5—Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure (NLT).
 - a. Both the family and the family home have been damaged by sin. When Adam, the first man, sinned human nature was altered, and men and women became sinners by nature—unfit for God's family. In addition, the earth was infused with a curse of corruption and death. Gen 3:17-19
 - b. Rom 5:12—When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned (TLB).
 2. Death is not part of God's plan for man. Death is present in the world because of Adam's sin. Physical death is the offspring of spiritual death. Spiritual death is separation from God who is life. Humans die physically because the race was cut off from God (or died spiritually) when Adam sinned. Gen 2:17
 - a. The Bible refers to men and women who are guilty of sin as dead, meaning that they are cut off from God who is life. In other words, they are spiritually dead. Eph 2:1; Eph 4:18
 - b. The remedy for this condition is life through Jesus: For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23, NLT).
 1. Eternal life is not live forever life. All humans have live forever life. No one ceases to exist when they die. Eternal life is life as God has it, the uncreated, eternal life in God Himself.
 2. God made human beings with the capacity to receive His life, His Spirit, into our innermost being and become more than creatures He created. We become sons and daughters who partake of His life and nature. The Greek word used for this eternal life of God is *zoe*.
 - c. Jesus came to bring life (*zoe*) to dead men and women. When a person believes on Jesus as Savior and Lord, they receive eternal life, life from God. God imparts something of Himself to our being.
 1. This impartation is referred to as being born again, born of God. We become literal sons and daughters of God by new or second birth. John 1:12-13; John 3:3-5; I John 5:11-12
 2. His life transforms our nature from sinner to holy, righteous son or daughter by birth. The entrance of this life is the beginning of a process of transformation that will eventually restore every part of our being to all that God intends us to be (lessons for another day). I John 3:2
 3. Titus 3:5—Paul referred to what happens when a man or woman is born of God through faith in Christ as regeneration. Regeneration is made up of two Greek words, *palin* (again) and

genesis (birth), born again. To regenerate means to give life to something that is dead.

3. This same Greek word (*palingenesia*) is used one other time in the New Testament. It is used in reference to will happen to the earth when the Lord Jesus returns to this world. The family home will be regenerated. All death and corruption will be banished by life.

a. Matt 19:27-29—A few months before Jesus was crucified, Peter asked the Lord what reward he and the other apostles will receive for having left all to follow Him. In His answer, Jesus used the term regeneration. Two other gospels also mention this incident—Mark 10:29-30; Luke 18:29-30.

1. A quick note: Matthew and Mark's accounts both use the term hundredfold. Hundredfold was an expression that meant over and above. (It had nothing to do with getting a hundredfold return on money given in offerings.)

2. When we put the three gospel accounts together we see that Jesus assured His apostles: You will get back over and above what you gave up, both in this life and the life to come.

A. In this life you'll find new relationships for those you lost and, despite what you've given up, you will have provision. You'll also have persecution. And, in the world to come you will receive eternal life, everlasting life.

B. Matthew added a detail specific to the apostles. They will receive positions of authority in the regeneration (*palingenesia*). Note these translations of the word regeneration: In the age of the restoration of all things (TPT); in the new world (ESV); when the world is born anew (Rieu); in the new age—the Messianic rebirth of the world (AMP).

b. The apostles knew from the Old Testament prophets what Jesus meant by the regeneration. The prophets wrote that the Lord will one day renew this world and restore it to its pre-sin condition. He will give life to what is dead (regeneration).

1. Isaiah wrote about a new (or renewed) earth: Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth—so wonderful that no one will even think about the old ones anymore. Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation...the sound of weeping and crying will be heard no more (Isaiah

65:17-19, NLT).

2. After Jesus returned to Heaven, Peter would later preach that: (Jesus) must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things as God promised long ago through his prophets (Acts 3:21, NLT).

c. Jesus' answer assured His apostles that they will be rewarded for their commitment to Him. He would take care of them in this life. Any loss or suffering they experience would be temporary, and in the life to come they will get back what they lost—and this time, keep it forever.

4. First century Jews understood that no one ceases to exist when they die. They believed in a state of bliss for the inward man when the physical body dies. They called it Paradise.

a. But they also knew that God will establish His visible, eternal kingdom on earth and His people will have a part in it. Note these statements from the Old Testament prophets.

1. Dan 2:44—The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed; no one will ever conquer it. It will shatter all these (earthly, godless kingdoms) into nothingness, but it will stand forever (NLT).

2. Dan 7:13-14; 27—I saw what looked like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven, and he was presented to the Eternal God. He was crowned king and given power and glory, so that all people of every nation and race would serve him. He will rule forever, and his kingdom is eternal, never to be destroyed (CEV)...The the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven shall be given to the people of the Most High...forever (NLT).

3. Ps 37:11; 29—But the meek [in the end] shall inherit the earth (Amp)...the upright will have the earth for their heritage and will go on living there forever (Basic).

b. They expected to be raised from the dead to unending, everlasting, eternal life on this earth—their

dead bodies regenerated or restored to life. Resurrection is from a word that means to stand up.

1. Job 19:25-26—But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God (NLT).
2. Isa 26:19—Yet we have this assurance: Those who belong to God will live; their bodies will rise again! Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sing for joy! For God’s light of life will fall like dew on his people the place of the dead (NLT).
 - A. They knew that death will be forever banished from both the family and the family home and life will be restored to what God always intended it to be.
 - B. Isa 25:6-8—In Jerusalem, the Lord Almighty will spread a wonderful feast for everyone around the world. It will be a delicious feast of good food, with clear, well-aged wine, and choice beef. In that day he will remove the cloud of gloom, the shadow of death that hangs over the earth. He will swallow up death forever and wipe away all tears (NLT).
5. Matt 4:17—When Jesus began His public ministry with the message “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand” He had people’s attention, not only because they were expecting the kingdom of God to come to earth, but because several prophecies indicated that the coming of the kingdom was near.
 - a. Five hundred years earlier, Daniel was shown that four different Gentile kingdoms would rule Israel prior to the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom. Dan 2:24-45
 1. The historical record confirms this prophecy. The Babylonian Empire controlled Israel at the time the prophet Daniel received the prophecy. They were replaced by the Persian Empire, then the Greek Empire. The Roman Empire took control just before Jesus came into the world.
 2. Based on the prophets, first century Jews were looking for the Messiah. Babylon, Persia, and Greece had come and gone, and Israel was under the control of the fourth empire—Rome.
 - b. Daniel gave another prophecy about when the Messiah would come. In this prophecy Daniel listed historical events that mark out when He will arrive. Dan 9:24-27
 1. When we track these markers in the historical record, they take it down to the week that Jesus was crucified (lessons for another day). Dan 9:24-27
 2. None of the Old Testament prophets saw clearly that there would be two comings of the Lord separated by two thousand years. So Daniel’s prophecy has some as yet unfulfilled predictions that will come to pass at the second coming of Jesus (lessons for another day).
6. The Bible is progressive revelation. God gradually revealed His plan of redemption through the pages of the Scripture until we have the full revelation given in and through Jesus.
 - a. Although there are hints of it in the Old Testament, prior to the Cross no one knew the full extent of God’s plan—that Jesus would open the way to God’s kingdom through His death and resurrection.
 1. They also did not know that God would first establish His kingdom (or reign) in the hearts of men and women by indwelling them. Luke 17:20-21
 2. The Cross so cleanses men and women from the guilt of sin that God can indwell them and regenerate them by imparting His life and Spirit to them. This regeneration will make men and women literal sons and daughters of God. That’s been the plan all along. John 1:12-13
 - b. In the not too distant future, Jesus will return to complete God’s plan for a family. Resurrection of the dead will occur. Resurrection is the reuniting of the inward and outward man that separated at death. The body will be raised from the grave and regenerated. Then, the material creation will be regenerated and delivered from the curse of corruption and death that infused it when Adam sinned.
 1. Rom 8:20-21—Creation was subjected to this bondage not by its own choice, but because of him who made it so; yet there was always hope...the hope is that in the end (it) will be rescued from its slavery to death, its bondage to decay (NEB; J.B. Phillips; Conybeare; Goodspeed).
 2. Rom 8:19-21—The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own (bodies raised from the dead) at the return of Christ. For on that day

thorns and thistles, sin, death, and decay...will (also) disappear (TLB).

C. Conclusion: To fully appreciate who Jesus is and why He came to earth we must understand the big picture. God is working out a plan to recover His family and the family home through regeneration.

1. This plan affects more people than those of us who are alive right now. It includes all who throughout human history have put faith in the revelation of Jesus given to their generation.

a. Multitudes of people going back to the time of Adam and Eve are currently in Heaven (in the invisible realm) awaiting the completion of the plan, when they will return with the Lord Jesus to be reunited with their dead bodies raised from the grave and live on earth again—this time, forever.

1. Gal 1:4—Jesus didn't come to make this life the highlight of existence for anyone. He came to deliver all who put faith in Him from this present world. The Greek word translated world means age, or a period of time marked by spiritual or moral characteristics.

2. We (and everyone else born since Adam and Eve) live in the age when things are not as they are supposed to be, not as God created or intended them to be. Death permeates everything.

b. Not only is the earth infused with a curse of corruption and death, there's a system in place contrary to God. It's presided over by the devil (a created being, the prince of the power of the air) and is populated with children of the devil (remember last week's lesson). Eph 2:2; John 12:31; II Cor 4:4

1. Human effort can't fix this condition (in humankind or in the world) because the root problem is spiritual (non-material). All people are sinners by nature who live by the dictates of that fallen nature and are subject to the authority of the kingdom of darkness present in the world.

2. Although the wickedness in humans can be restrained somewhat through upbringing, cultural influences, education, and laws, only God can produce a genuine, lasting change in human nature by His power through regeneration.

c. Christianity is not a social organization aimed at making this world a better place. We are only passing through this world as it is. We are not here to make this world a better place. We are here to represent a supernatural kingdom that can transform human nature—the kingdom of God.

2. I realize that lessons like these don't see practical because we all have issues and we need help. God does have help and provision for us in this life (lessons for another day). But understanding the big picture changes your perspective which makes this difficult life easier to handle.

a. II Cor 4:17-18—A big picture perspective gives you hope. Everything we see is temporary and subject to change by God's power, either in this life or the life to come. The losses and pains of this life will be reversed. There is recompense, reward, and reunion in the life to come.

b. Matt 6:19-21—This perspective helps you set priorities. Jesus talked about storing up treasure in Heaven. His point is that you put your focus on and give attention to what you value. When you see the big picture, you realize that eternal things are more important than temporary things.

1. You recognize that, because you are born of God through regeneration, you're no longer part of this fallen system. If you don't see the true condition of humanity and the world system, it's easy to be too comfortable with it. Note what John, one of Jesus' eyewitness's wrote.

2. Note what John, one of the eyewitnesses wrote: Don't set the affections of your heart on this world or in loving the things of the world. The love of the Father and the love of the world are incompatible. For all that the world can offer us—gratification of our flesh, the allurements of the things of the world, and the obsession with status and importance—none of these things comes from the Father but from the world. This world and its desires are in the process of passing away, but those who love to do the will of God live forever (I John 2:15-17, TPT).

3. I can't tell you what that looks like for you. But I can tell you that regular Bible reading will help you figure it out—how to be in this world but not part of it, how to live with the awareness that you are part of another kingdom that will one day fully transform this world through regeneration. More next week!