

CHILD OF THE PROMISE, THE STORY UNFOLDS PART 1

Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

When God speaks, He fulfills what He says. This is a statement you hear a lot at Element, so much so that we almost take it for granted and almost always over look the very simple and yet extraordinary thought: THAT GOD ACTUALLY DOES SPEAK.

When we talk about the authority of the Bible, it’s really kind of shorthand for talking about the authority of God. If there is a God, obviously, all authority belongs to him. The authority of the Old Testament is recognized by the people of Israel, the Prophets, Jesus, and the New Testament Apostles. The Scriptures carry the authority they do because they have been uniquely inspired, breathed out, by God.

- The Bible is not primarily a book of commands to do,
- The Bible is not primarily a book of doctrines to believe.
- The Bible is not an “owner’s manual.”

The Bible *has* commands, it *has* materials that will be involved for doctrine, but it’s not mostly that; it is basically a story. It is a narrative. It has an arc to it.

NT Wright says the Bible is like a play, and that it has five acts. You have to know what the acts are, and you have to know where you are in the story.

- **Act 1 is creation.** *Genesis 1-2. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* That’s why stuff is here, and that’s why stuff is so good.
- **Act 2 is the fall.** oppression, and violence, and injustice enter the world, and everything gets messed up.
- **Act 3 begins with Abraham**...and the promise to a people who would become Israel. In Genesis 21 he gets his promised son that eventually leads to Jesus.

Genesis 21:1 picks up a central line of narrative from 18:10: “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.” Up to this point more attention was paid to the *announcement* of the birth of the son in chapter 18 than here, in the report, of the *accomplished fact*.

If we look for an answer to this question in the clues that come out of the text, we may find it in the emphasis given in the narrative to the Lord’s faithfulness to his word. The birth of Isaac came about “as [the LORD] had said,” a fact stressed three times within the first two verses. The plan not only came about, but, more importantly, it happened as it was announced. Thus the narrative calls attention to God’s faithfulness to his word and to his careful attention to the details of His plan.

The importance of the announcement of Isaac’s birth can be seen in the choice of the verb *paqad* (“visited”; the NIV actually uses the words, “was gracious”). This verb is used in contexts where the focus is on God’s attentive care and concern.

From Isaac, God eventually makes them into a nation and makes a covenant with ALL of them, “I’ll be your God.” He gives them a law that will structure worship (because the world doesn’t know God), He will give them an identity, and will give them a way of life.

We must understand that in and through all of the Old Testament scriptures God is expressing Himself and His heart. The Old Testament law was written in what was called *paradigmatic*. It’s a technical term that means “it offered examples, or paradigms, of an obedient heart.”

The point is the Law was never about narrow, legalistic, mechanical rule keeping. It was always about the heart. It was about God revealing himself and pointing to His son: Jesus.

- **Act 4 is Jesus.** Everything, the whole story, creation, fall, Israel, now makes sense, because it had all been leading up to Jesus.

Our story is not about us, it is about Him. If we ever hope for things in our life to make any sense, our lives must be connected to Him.

eMoms Day Off

Sunday, September 23 12-3pm
<http://goo.gl/cnvdp>

