

But GOD...
Genesis 39-50; Jonah;
Ephesians 2:1-10

“These two words, in and of themselves, in a sense contain the whole of the Gospel.”
-D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Joseph

- **But the LORD** was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. (Genesis 39:21, ESV)

“We know that as the light of the sun is most clearly seen when we are looking from a dark place; so, in the darkness of our miseries, the grace of God shines more brightly when, beyond expectation, He aids us.” -John Calvin

- **And God (but God – NIV)** sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. (Genesis 45:7, ESV)
 - Joseph was put in the worst of positions, forsaken by all, “but God” was directing the whole situation, and Joseph wound up second in command. This gave Joseph a stabilizing perspective on life and allowed him the frame of mind in which he could forgive and reassure his brothers.
- *As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.* (Genesis 50:20, ESV)
 - This is a powerful testimony because the Bible has gone to great lengths to tell us the badness of this situation.
 - Set against this backdrop, God and His work look all the more glorious.
- We see God’s protection and care of Joseph and also His faithfulness.
 - Many times, Joseph probably should have died.
 - Hands of his brothers, Slave traders, Potiphar, while in prison
 - We see God faithful to His promises to Abraham. (Genesis 12:1-3)
- Genesis 48:21; 50:24
- In the story of Joseph, we should pull from “but God” confident hope in the future and knowledge that God is sovereign.

Jonah

- Sent as a prophet to the wicked city of Nineveh (non Jewish people)
- Jonah is an interesting juxtaposition next to Joseph.
 - Joseph was a man of upstanding character, and we see God protecting Joseph from circumstances and situations.
 - In Jonah, we more or less see God protecting Jonah from Jonah!
- **But Jonah** rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. **But the LORD** hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. (Jonah 1:3-4, ESV)

- Jonah thought he was going to thwart God’s plan by disobeying.
 - Jonah did not want the heathen converted.
 - Jonah thought the evil people in Nineveh should be outside God’s grace and mercy.
- The very next verse after Jonah disobeys says “But the Lord” or “But God.”
 - This passage highlights once again God’s sovereignty and also God’s grace and mercy.
- Jonah 1:16-17
- The story of Jonah is one of mercy.
 - Jonah
 - God was merciful to Jonah by first sending the storm and then protecting Jonah from the storm.
 - God sent the fish, allowed Jonah to repent in the fish, and protected Jonah from the fish.
 - Jonah was recommissioned for the original task and restored to his position.
 - Sailors
 - God extended mercy to the sailors by not destroying them in the storm.
 - God also extended mercy to the sailors by using Jonah’s sinful choices to bring the message of the true God to them.
 - Ninevites
 - God gave them great mercy evidenced by the great repentance displayed in Nineveh.
 - God stayed His hand of judgment on them for a time.
 - Probably one of the greatest mass conversions in history
- Jonah illustrates that even when we make sinful choices God still works to accomplish His plan. It is never thwarted. Also, God is a patient and merciful God and uses His power to bring his children back in line.
- How marvelous is this story that it did not end with “But Jonah” but continues on with “But God!”

Acts

- *God (**But God** – NIV) raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. (Acts 2:24, ESV)*
- Acts 3:15; 7:5
- *And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; **but God** was with him and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. (Acts 7:9-10, ESV)*
- *And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, **but God** raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. (Acts 10:39-41, ESV)*
- ***But God** raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. (Acts 13:30-31, ESV)*

Ephesians

- Ephesians 1 shows us salvation from God’s point of view.
 - Father’s work of election, Son’s work of redemption, Spirit’s work of sealing
- Ephesians 2 talks about salvation from the perspective of the individual Christian.
 - These verses give us the past, present, and future of those whom Christ saves.

- **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7, ESV)
- Paul does not leave anyone out – we are ALL dead in sins.
 - There are gradients of sinners, but we are still all fundamentally sinners.
 - Doctrine of Total Depravity
- After telling us the condition of man, Paul is quick to inform us that God has acted.
 - Before telling us the good news, Paul goes to the depths of pessimism about man. He then goes to the heights of optimism about God.
 - Paul describes to us the love of God against the dark background of human sin – it is only against this background that we are able to form a true picture of how great the love of God is.
 - This makes God look glorious!
- ...**but God** shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8, ESV)
- What has God done?
 - Notice in verse 1, we were dead in our sins – in verse 5, God has made us alive
 - In verse 2, we followed the course of this world – in verse 6, God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places
 - In verse 3, we were objects of God’s wrath – in verse 7, we are the objects of the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us
 - Interesting how Paul shows how God has undone and redeemed each of the bad things at the beginning of this chapter.

Theme from Cover-to-Cover

- The overarching theme of the Bible is redemption, and redemption is all about “but God.”
- Genesis 3 – The Fall
- Romans 5:8 - ...**but God** shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (ESV)
- Culminates in Revelation
 - *And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making **all things new**." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."* (Revelation 21:5, ESV)
 - *And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and **they will reign forever and ever**.* (Revelation 22:5, ESV)

Whom have I in heaven but you?
 And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.
 My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
 (Psalm 73:25-26, ESV)

“The only basis for any real and lasting hope – about anything – is that Jesus died for our sins on the Cross, was buried in a tomb, and was raised from the dead on the third day, inaugurating the greatest restoration project imaginable” -Steven Curtis Chapman