

The Theme of Life in the Bible

The theme of life flows throughout the scriptures from beginning to end and is essential in our understanding of God and our experience of him according to his word. God established the importance of man living by and out of God's life. Man tried to live for him without it but were not able to, the prophets foretold of its coming restoration, Jesus spoke much of it and lived it out, his disciples discovered their limitations without it but were later enable by it, the epistles portray the abundance of it, and the bible ends with it in glorious fashion.

The Beginning

After God created the world and everything in it except man

Gen 2:7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. Right from the start, man's life came from God's life.

Gen 2:9b the tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Gen 2:10 ^A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

The serpent tempts Eve

Gen 3:1-3 Now the serpent was craftier than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die."

God miraculously provided his people with manna from heaven and quail to eat

Exodus 17:1-6 All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" 3 But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" 4 So Moses cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." 5 And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink."

Why did God allowed them to get thirsty?

Prophets

God rebukes his people for not valuing his provision for them.

Jeremiah 2:12-13 ¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, ¹³ for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

After thousands of years of man trying to live for God, how did it mainly turn out?

Isaiah 33:20-21 Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken. ²¹ But there the LORD in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams.

The coming day of the Lord

Zechariah 14:7-9

⁷ And there shall be a unique^[a] day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light. ⁸ On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea^[b] and half of them to the western sea.^[c] It shall continue in summer as in winter.

⁹ And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

Why would living waters flowing out of Jerusalem be a major feature in the Lord being king over all the earth?

Jeremiah's appeal to God

Jeremiah 15:15-16: O LORD, you know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance take me not away; know that for your sake I bear reproach. Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts.

Do we just think of God in how he can make our lives better? Or in other ways?

Gospels

Sermon on the Mount

Math 7:13-14 ¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy^[a] that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few

As Jesus sheep, do we find this ironic? Why?

John 1:4 In him was life and the life was the light of men.

How do you understand this? "In him was life."

Samaritan Woman at the well.

John 4:14 ...but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." .

How do you understand this?

Witnesses of Jesus in John the Baptist and Jesus many mighty works

John 5:39-40 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

Can you share how this has been real to you?

Jesus as the Bread of Life

John 6:33,35, 48-57 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." ⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.

How do you see this taking place?

The words of eternal life

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

Many disciples walked away from hearing what he said.

John 6:68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

How can we see more clearly the One we are receiving from?

Jesus as the Good Shepherd

John 10:7-10 ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

What are ways you have been fed by or protected by our Great Shepard?

Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

Some were wondering if Jesus was the Christ:

John 7:37-38 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

Can you imagine anything better?

Jesus High Priestly Prayer

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

When we read passages about life, do we only think of that which we will have in the next life?

Why does understanding Jesus' life matter now? How does it impact us?

Scenario 1

The arrest and betrayal of Jesus

Mark 14:46-50 And they laid hands on him and seized him. 47 But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. 48 And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." 50 And they all left him and fled.

Scenario 2

The fellowship of believers in the early church

Acts 2: 42-47. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

So lets compare these 2 scenarios. From Jesus arrest when the disciples scattered, to the early church where they were all living as one and speaking boldly, what made the difference in the disciples lives which enabled them to live for Jesus as he had taught them?

Epistles

Death in Adam and Life in Christ

Romans 5:17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one-man Jesus Christ.

Dead to sin but alive to God

Romans 6:4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

How often do you find that you need to do this?

Life in the Spirit

Romans 8:6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

The resurrection body

1 Corinthians 15:45, 49 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall¹⁰ also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What does it mean that Jesus became the life-giving spirit?

All Scripture is breathed out by God

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God^[b] may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Please share your experience.

The Word of Life

1 John 1:1-2 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life. the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

How can the experience of God’s life make a difference?

How can we be before God and not be affected? Do we see him for who he is?

How do we presently and practically live by the life God has given us?

Revelation

Jesus speaks to the church in Ephesus

Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Thank the Lord for giving us a foretaste now. (Ephesians 3:16-19 ..that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.) A good summary.

A great multitude from every nation

Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

The new heaven and new earth.

Revelation 21:6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

The River of Life

Genesis 22:1-5 Then the angel^(a) showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life^(b) with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And 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.

Jesus is Coming

Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

How can the promise of our eternal state with God affect how we live now?

Highlights

The tree of life and the river of life were central in the Garden of Eden. Man's access to this was cut off due to his sin of rejecting God from being his ruler and source.

Man tried many things to fill up his thirst which could only be satisfied by God.

The prophets spoke of God as life and as the fountain of living water.

God is life and is the source of life. This was brought near to man through Jesus who invited all to partake of him as life.

The most religious of God's people tried to get life from the scripture apart from God and were rebuked by Christ from missing the main theme of scripture which was himself.

Jesus is the door to the sheepfold wherein his people will have abundant life.

God wants his people to live out of his life and be enabled by his life.

God's people cannot live for him apart from his life.

Believing in Jesus causes rivers of living water to flow out of us.

Knowing God and Jesus is eternal life. (Which we experience now, not just waiting for)

We are to walk in the newness of life and reign in life.

The tree of life and the river of the water of life are main features in the New Jerusalem and what God's people will live by eternally.