

Genesis 1:26-28

1. These verses are part of beginning story of the Bible and is the climax within the story of how the world began. In this text we see God's speaking to create first human or "adam" in his creation order which gives human a unique and special place. Man and woman, as created in God's image, is to have dominion over all of God's creation on the earth. Humans are God's finest handiwork, and as image bearer of God, are given this special and important task to rule over God's creation.
2. Some of the theological themes found in this text are Creation, order and goodness, Procreation, Image of God, Gender roles, stewardship, and triune God.
 - a. We are to be fruitful and multiply. By creating man first, one can argue that subordination of woman is implied, though the details of their relationship are not explicit in this text. What is clear, however, is that God is the creator of all things. And both man and woman are in a special relationship to God as they are created in God's image, and in his likeness, they are given the task to have dominion over all of God's creation; human are to take a good care of God's garden and all of God's creation.
 - b. God's image is not portrayed as something visible throughout the Old Testament. However, God's attributes and characters are mentioned throughout the Bible for the readers to imagine it. However, in the New Testament, we are told in Colossians 1:15 that Jesus Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation."
 - c. The theme of God's image and stewardship ultimately leads to Jesus. The work to be done after the creation was to be done by God's people, however, what people couldn't "subdue," Jesus as the essence of God, as perfect image of God, functions to fulfill the role of Emmanuel. Through the development of God's attributes in the Scripture, that is ultimately magnified and glorified in Jesus, we become more in tune with God' image.
 - d. The theological significance for the church's ministry today from this text is that we are created in God's image. The implication is that we are distinctive and special in our relationship with God. At the same time, the phrase "in our likeness" also indicates that there is a creator and creature distinction in our relationship with a triune God. As God's image bearer, we have moral, practical, and spiritual responsibility to live our lives as a being that bears God's image. Practical responsibility is being a good God's steward of God's Garden. NIV Biblical Theology study bible comments it this way, "

"Thus, in this context to be made in the image of God means to rule over the life in the three domains that God created. This rulership is a

stewardship. It is illustrated in ch. 2, where the man takes care of the garden (2:15) and names the animals (2:20). In this context God placed humanity on earth to continue his rulership after he finished the work of creation. With the coming of Jesus Christ as the perfect image of God (Col 1:15), Christians are re-created (2 Cor 5:17) and become conformed to Christ as an expression of his image (Rom 8:29), with righteousness, holiness, and knowledge (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).”

Genesis 12:1-3

1. In Genesis 12:1—3, reader encounters God making a covenant offer to Abram in Haran where he and his wife settled. The language indicates clearly that God is speaking to Abram instructing him to leave his home, his father’s household, and people. From Genesis 11:31, we know the circumstance Abram was in, “they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan” We are informed from this texts that Abram would need to fully trust in order to leave the comfort and familiar of his home and his people.
2. In these passage God’s covenant theme is introduced, specifically what we see here is the Abrahamic covenant that includes God’s blessings to Abram.
 - a. According to the text, here are God’s promises to Abram,

“I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.^{1a}
³I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”¹

- b. While many biblical passages relate to these promises given to Abraham, according to the New Dictionary of Biblical Theology,

the two chapters (Gen. 15 and 17) focus on two separate covenants, each of which takes up different aspects of the promissory agenda outlined in Genesis 12:1–3. The two main promissory aspects in this programmatic text are ‘nationhood’ (i.e. descendants and land) and international blessing, and these are also the primary emphases in Genesis 15 and 17 respectively. Thus two distinct covenants were established between God and Abraham.¹

¹ ALEXANDER, T DESMOND; ROSNER, BRIAN S. New Dictionary of Biblical Theology (IVP Reference Collection) (p. 422). IVP. Kindle Edition.

- c. The promise made to Abraham develops and influences Moses and Israel through exodus to the promise land, continues in the book of Joshua and the rest of the Old Testament where God's people are reminded of the covenant promises, relationships, and fulfillments.
- d. To be God's people means that we must trust God when he speaks. The blessing that comes as we obey God's word leads to a relationship with God that comes with material and emotional components. This is very important for the church ministry because our faith in the Lord Christ Jesus requires having our complete trust in God who will do what he says he will do. The theological significance for the church is that we are included in this blessing by our faith in Jesus, who ultimately fulfilled the Abrahamic promise. Spiritually speaking, we have become the co-heirs to Abraham's blessings.

Exodus 19:1-6

1. Most likely author is Moses. The event takes place shortly after God frees Israel from Egypt. Thus, Israel has witness awesome and might power of God's deliverance. What we are witnessing is initial phase of God and Israel's special relationship that continues to play a role in the redemptive narrative for humanity in the Bible. It here at Mount Sinai God invites Israel to become God's special people. In some sense, it is an offer that Israel can't refuse, but if you deeply think about it, this covenant requires Israel to obey God in a specific and exclusive manner.
2. The theological themes in purview in Exodus 19:1-6 are Mosaic Covenant which promises Israel a holy priesthood, and holy nation.
 - a. This passage is very significant because it is at this point God invites the people of Israel to become his special group of people among all nations. God's invitation however comes with costs. They are to obey God's word and keep it, and if Israel does this, they will receive royal priesthood status, and Israel become a holy nation. There is conditional element to these promises. God will not automatically make Israel a holy nation and give them the status of royal priests. They are to enter a covenant relationship with God in which they need to obey and keep God's word.
 - b. Biblical scholars points out that "the calling to be 'a royal priesthood' (1 Pet. 2:9) has passed to the church of Christ where the concept of 'the priesthood of all believers' has assumed a richer significance."²
 - c. God's invitation to Israel enter the covenant to be people of royal priesthood are first offered to the Israelites. However, this invitation to be God's holy

2

ALEXANDER, T DESMOND; ROSNER, BRIAN S. New Dictionary of Biblical Theology (IVP Reference Collection) (pp. 407-408). IVP. Kindle Edition.

people, to worship Yahweh and represent God to the world as His ambassador are extended to all believers of Jesus Christ who is the ultimate royal priest. It is arguable that Abraham's covenant was more so on the personal level that took place between God and Abraham, while Mosaic covenant seems to embark on a larger covenantal relationship that stipulates between Israel and God.

- d. I think it is important to remember that God will always keep his promises. The failure to keep the promise is our brokenness and desire to go against God's plan for us. While there are elements that we need to respond in light of God's saving grace, the takeaway is that it is God who rescues, intervenes, and protects. As God's chosen people, Church needs to respond to God's grace by carrying out Jesus' mission to proclaim and teach and make disciples of all nations by adhering and reflecting royal priesthood of all believers.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

1. Biblical scholars often refer to this passage as the "gospel in the OT" or the "gospel of Isiah." Isiah is prophesying to Israel, that despite all their sinful acts, God has a plan to save his people. While the immediate audience is Israel, canonically speaking, the scope of audience is not limited to Israel, as suffering servant suffered for both Jews and Gentiles. Israel's continue failure to keep their end of covenant promises to obey and be faithful to God graciously and ironically results in God's grace to work things out himself for his people by the Servant Messiah. The restoration and reconciliation of relationship that is broken by Israel will be completely renewed by the suffering and by blood of Christ on the cross.
2. What is discussed in this passage is "The Messiah," the suffering servant, perfect royal priest, and redemptive work of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In short, the biggest theme in this passage is Christ's gospel message and his redemptive work for mankind.
 - a. The passage indicates that the suffering servant will be exalted. Yahweh will restore his people his suffering servant. The servant "has the arm of the Lord." This must indicate and represent that the servant has the power of God. However, he will experience pain for mankind even though they despised and rejected him, and pierced to death for their transgressions.
 - b. Is observed that "Through the servant, priesthood will apply to many nations. Through the work of Christ, Jewish and Gentile believers have become a priesthood (1Pe 2:9; Rev 1:6). The blood of Christ has sprinkled the nations (1Pe 1:2). Matthew 8:17, Acts 8:30-35; Rom 10:15 references this passage in the Isaiah to confirm that what is stated in the Isiah describe the ministry of Jesus who took and bore the sins of God's people.

- c. This message of deliverance through self-sacrifice and suffering by God's servant are quoted in the New Testament to testify Jesus's fulfilment of the OT prophecy like what we see in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Acts and Luke, "both volumes are concerned to show that Jesus' rejection and *suffering was no accident of history but part of the plan of God, as revealed in specific passages such as Isaiah 53 (cf. Luke 22:37; Acts 8:26-35), and in the OT more generally (cf. Acts 2:23; 3:18; 17:3; 26:22-23).
- d. It is Jesus who paid it all for our sins. The theological significance for church today is that prophecy about the coming Messiah is fulfilled by the suffering servant Jesus. That it was Jesus' work on the cross that redeems believers, that it is he who suffered so that our sins will be forgiven once for all, and it is Jesus who paid the ransom to free us from the bondage of our sins. All of this means that we are in a new covenant relationship in and through Jesus Christ who brought us in a right standing before the Father. As the biblical scholar put it,

He is called 'the righteous (one)' (3:18; Is. 53:11); as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 (Is. 53:9, 7, 4 and 12, and 6a are echoed in 1 Pet. 2:22-25) he 'committed no sin' (2:22). He inaugurates the new covenant through the sprinkling of his blood (1:2; cf. Exod. 24:3-8), and just as the paschal lamb was a ransom paid for the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (1:18-19; Exod. 12:5-7), so his sacrifice redeems believers. He became a sin offering who bears the sins of the people (2:24; Heb. 9:28; Lev. 16:15-16).³

ALEXANDER, T DESMOND; ROSNER, BRIAN S. New Dictionary of Biblical Theology (IVP Reference Collection) (p. 348). IVP. Kindle Edition.

³ ALEXANDER, T DESMOND; ROSNER, BRIAN S. New Dictionary of Biblical Theology (IVP Reference Collection) (p. 348). IVP. Kindle Edition.