

4 May 2025_Ransom paid: God's glorious plan of redemption_ OT pt.2_Douglas Humphrey

Welcome back to Ransom Paid, our journey through God's story of redemption. pt.2

If you missed the first sermon, you can watch it on our website—and be sure to grab a copy of the timeline chart. It's a visual tool that helps you follow the story. The red triangles move the narrative forward, while the books above and below the timeline add insight or tell the same story from a different angle—like Kings and Chronicles.

You'll also need your sermon notes handy—we have a lot of ground to cover, and I want you to catch the key moments as we trace God's faithfulness through exile and return.

Let me remind you of where we are in the story of redemption.

Adam and Eve—our first parents—walked with God in intimacy and innocence. But when they disobeyed Him, sin shattered that relationship. They were cast out of God's presence, unable to enjoy Him the way they were created to.

But even then, God didn't walk away. He didn't leave them to fend for themselves. Instead, He made a promise.

God said to the serpent: “*The seed of the woman will crush your head.*” That was the first whisper of the gospel. A Redeemer would come—one who would destroy Satan and bring victory to mankind. Setting us free from the bondage of sin and making us right with God.

And the rest of the Old Testament is the unfolding of that promise.

It moves through Abraham, to whom God says, “*Through your offspring, all nations of the earth will be blessed.*” From Abraham comes Isaac.

From Isaac, Jacob.

And from Jacob, Joseph—who ends up in Egypt and eventually brings his entire family there. That family becomes the twelve tribes of Israel.

But over time, what started as a place of refuge turns into a place of bondage. The Egyptians enslave the Israelites. They cry out, and God raises up Moses to lead them out. After Moses, Joshua brings them into the Promised Land.

And that's where the cycle begins—what the book of Judges captures so clearly: sin, repentance, deliverance... repeat.

Eventually, the people ask for a king. God gives them Saul—who fails. Then comes David, a man after God's own heart. And to David, God makes another incredible promise: “*Your son will reign on your throne forever.*” That Son is none other than Jesus.

After David comes Solomon—wise, wealthy, and the builder of the first temple. But after Solomon dies, his son Rehoboam foolishly increases the burden on his people. That sparks a national split. Ten tribes break away and form the northern kingdom, still called *Israel*, with Samaria as its capital. The remaining two tribes form the southern kingdom, *Judah*, based in Jerusalem.

Here's where it gets tricky. Today, we think of “Israel” as the whole land. But back then, *Israel* and *Judah* were two separate nations—each with its own kings, capitals, and spiritual trajectory.

Some of the prophets warned the northern kingdom to repent, but the majority of them went to Judah. B/c the Messiah was coming through the tribe of Judah.

Nonetheless, both kingdoms rebel. They reject God's Word. They turn to idols. And judgment befalls them.

In 722 BC, Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. The ten tribes were scattered and absorbed into the surrounding nations—eventually becoming known as the “Ten Lost Tribes.”

Judah lasts for about 136 years longer—but they don't learn the lesson. God sends Jeremiah to warn them for 40 years. But like today, they preferred feel-good lies, verses life saving truth.

Unfortunately, the prophets calls to repent fall on death ears. They knew what God had done to their northern cousins and they allowed themselves to think... *“That'll never happen to us.”* But it did.

And in 586 BC, Babylon invades. Judah is conquered. Most of the people are ripped from their homes and forced to live in exile in Babylon. And to make matters worse, Solomon's temple—the place that symbolized God's presence—is completely destroyed.

Any illusion that God wouldn't judge His own people vanished in an instant. They learned the hard way that... **God doesn't play favorites—and He is not to be trifled with.**

And it's from Babylon that we get the book of Daniel. That where the story goes next...

7. Daniel: Living for God in Exile

Daniel was written to remind the exiled Jews that *God is still sovereign*—and to give them a vision of future redemption that would fuel their hope.

But Daniel isn't just a book of prophecy—it's a bold blueprint for how to live for God, in a godless culture. When King Nebuchadnezzar tried to erase his identity, rewrite his values, and reshape his loyalty, Daniel didn't flinch. He didn't blend in—he stood out.

He lived in the heart of a hostile empire, yet remained fully devoted to the Lord. Instead being reshaped their culture, he points them to God. IOW Daniel has Godly impact on them.

Daniel is more than just ancient history—it's a word for us today.

Brothers and sisters, we are living in Babylon.

No, it doesn't look like Babylon—but make no mistake, the spirit is the same.

Babylon was loud, proud, sensual, and defiant. It celebrated idols, erased boundaries, mocked holiness, and demanded full allegiance to the culture of the day.

Sound familiar?

Today, we don't bow to golden statues— but we bow to popularity, platform, personal freedom, and pleasure.

We're told that truth is fluid, faith is private, and Jesus well..... he's optional.

Our culture doesn't demand that you reject God—it just wants you to blend Him in with everything else. Culture wants you to shrink your convictions. Loosen your standards. Keep your faith quiet. And just go with the flow.

But Daniel didn't go with the flow—he stood firm in the fire of compromise.

Babylon gave him a new name, a new diet, a new education, and a new look—but it couldn't take his identity. Daniel identified as being God's property.

He didn't cave. He didn't conform. He didn't just survive—he thrived in faithfulness.

And so can you. All you have to do is resolve in your heart to go all the way with Jesus and for Jesus.

This world is not our home. Jesus is our King. And no matter how loud Babylon gets—we bow to One Name and one name alone. We bow to Jesus!

After Daniel, the narrative is advanced by Ezra and Nehemiah. Their section heading is...

8. Ezra - Nehemiah: Returning in waves to restore God's people back to worship.

Ezra - Nehemiah diagram slide

As God said in [Jeremiah 25:9–13](#), that Judah would serve Babylon for 70 years. And be allowed to return home. God begins fulfilling his promise through Cyrus, the king of the Persians. By this point, Babylon has become nothing more than a footnote in history, Persia now rules the known world.

Nonetheless, God prompts king Cyrus to issue an edict allowing the Israelites, specifically the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to return to Jerusalem for the purpose of restoring YAWEH worship. ([Ezra 1:1-4](#)).

Thus the return to Jerusalem begins, but it didn't happen all at once. Rather they return in waves.

As you can see on the diagram, each wave of returnees was to accomplish a specific task.

I'll tell you what they are then circle back to discuss them:

First wave - rebuild the temple.

Second wave - restored sound Biblical teaching.

Wave three - Rebuilt wall around the city and the temple.

Leading the first wave was a man named Zerubbabel. God used him to lead the way in rebuilding the temple. Essentially, to recreate a central place for the people of God to meet with Him, to worship God, and atone for their sins.

This wasn't just a construction project—it was a declaration: **God is not done with His people.**

The foundation of the temple became the foundation of their hope. It reminded them that, even after judgment, **God still desired to dwell with them.**

Isn't it striking that the **first** thing God restores is **worship**?

The very thing Israel had corrupted—the very thing that led to their exile—is the first thing God calls them back to.

Why?

Because worship is what we were made for. And when God begins to rebuild a broken people, He always starts with Himself at the center.

Rebuilding the temple wasn't just about brick and stone—it was about reordering priorities.

It was about saying, "God belongs first."

And when we come out of seasons of wandering, rebellion, lose living, or being lost - the first thing God does is to **center your worship on Him.**

Before He rebuilds your platform, He rebuilds your altar—because until He has your worship.

Until he has your heart.

He doesn't truly have you.

About 20 years later, the next wave of exiles return—this time led by Ezra.

Ezra is focused on restoring sound biblical teaching. Just like the Israelites who came out of Egypt, these returnees were spiritually Anemic. Many didn't know God's Law—primarily the "Torah"... the first five books of the Old Testament. Ezra stepped in to teach them what God's Word said and how to live according to it.

First God restores their heart of worship.... Then He restores their minds.

The last to return is Nehemiah, who arguably the most well known of three leaders - Nehemiah.

Nehemiah hears that Jerusalem is vulnerable—its walls are still in ruins, leaving the city exposed and unsafe. So what does he do? He prays. And God moves the heart of King Artaxerxes, who grants Nehemiah permission to return and rebuild the wall.

But as soon as he starts the work, opposition shows up. Not everyone is for him. So Nehemiah tells his men to stay ready—build with one hand, keep a sword in the other. Nehemiah was determined finish the work of protecting Jerusalem.

And that's where their story ends with: a small temple, a restored commitment to God's Word, a rebuilt wall, a faithful remnant in the land, and three final voices—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—calling the people not to settle, but to stay faithful.

The last section before the NT is called the Intertestamental period and from it we learn to heed the warning & hold onto the promise...

Intertestamental Period: Heed the warning & Hold onto the promise.

The Old Testament closes with a final warning from God through the prophet Malachi. In chapter 4, verse 2, God tells His people to remember and keep the Mosaic Law—or face judgment and a cursed land. That's the warning.

But in verse 5, God gives a promise:

“Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.”

Do you know what He's promising here?

This is yet another allusion to the promised seed of the woman, the Redeemer who would come to restore us back to God. That Redeemer is Jesus Christ.

So the Old Testament ends with both a warning and a promise. And that's significant because after Malachi, God goes silent for 400 years.

No prophets.

No new Word.

No miracles.

Nothing.

It's as if God is saying, “You've heard what I've said. You know what I require. You know the consequences for rejecting me. Now live for My glory. And trust— your Redeemer will come.” IOW wait in hope of His arrival.

And then—silence. At least on a biblical level. According to world history... Persia falls to Greece under Alexander the Great.

Then Greece gives way to Rome.

And that's the world the New Testament opens into—the world Jesus is born into.

We'll pick up there next week.

But for today, let's not just close our Bibles and say that was a great OT survey. Let's ask the question: **What does all this mean for us?** What are we supposed to take from centuries of rebellion, restoration, and waiting?

Let me give you four takeaways—that speak directly to where we live today.

1. God disciplines his children.

From Adam and Eve through the Old Testament, one truth is clear: God doesn't ignore sin. He loves His people—but because He is just, He disciplines them. Israel had every advantage—God's law, His presence, His prophets—yet they repeatedly chased idols and rejected Him.

Ultimately, through exile God brought them to the end of themselves.

And yet—God wasn't done with them. His goal all along was restoration: to build them back into a people that served Him wholeheartedly.

But this isn't just Israel's story. [Hebrews 12:6](#) says, “**The Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every son he receives.**”

God's correction still comes today and that correction can take different forms.

- Sometimes it's relational—God lets friendships break down or a marriage hit the wall to get your attention.
- Sometimes it's financial—He dries up the resources you were trusting in more than Him.
- Sometimes it's public—He exposes what you thought was hidden.
- And it can be spiritual—He removes your sense of peace, joy, or intimacy with Him until you come back.

Like our earthly parents, God knows the type of discipline to administer—the kind that will yield the best results.

But even in His discipline, God's heart is not to destroy us—it's to draw us back.

He may break us down, but it's only to build us up in Him. He may strip things away, but it's only so we'll stop clinging to what can't save and return to the One who can.

Every correction is covered in love, and aimed at restoration, not rejection.

2. Size doesn't matter to God.

Isn't it interesting that of the two kingdoms God judged, it was the smaller one—**Judah**—that He chose to fulfill His promise through? The Redeemer, the seed of the woman, would come through Judah. And compared to the other tribes, Judah was just a sliver—a remnant of what was once a united and powerful nation.

That word “remnant” shows up all throughout the Old Testament. A remnant is what's left after everything else is stripped away. It's the small group, the leftover piece, the part that looks too broken, too small, or too weak to matter.

[Think about a wildfire that tears through a forest. Everything is scorched—except for one small patch of untouched ground. That's the remnant. And from that patch, new life begins to grow.](#)

God often chooses what's left.

What the world sees as insignificant, He sees as a starting point.

He works through the few, the forgotten, the underestimated—because when redemption comes through the remnant, there's no doubt who gets the glory.

This means that we don't need to be big to be used by God. We just need to be faithful.

God has always worked through remnants—small, faithful groups willing to trust Him. He did it through Judah. He did it through the disciples. And He's done it through countless others.

We don't have to be impressive. Just faithful.

Be God's holy remnant in the world.

3. Take God's Warnings Seriously.

When Malachi speaks, he's not addressing the world "out there"—he's talking to the people who claim to know and follow God.

People who go to the temple.

People who give offerings.

People who sing the right songs but live the wrong lives.

God's message through Malachi is simple: *I see your rituals, but I want your heart. I see your religion, but I desire your righteousness.*

God warns them, but that warning comes with a deadline. The land will be cursed. Judgment will come. And the same is true today. God is patient, but He will not ignore rebellion forever.

Don't mistake His patience for permission.

Don't confuse His mercy with approval.

If you know you're off course, repent now. Don't wait until God decides to discipline you.

DH big mac spanking... mom asked dad to relent... go easy... but who is there to say to God enough is enough? No one.

Therefore humble yourself and heed God's warning before he moves to discipline you.

4. Trust God's Promises Even in the Silence.

After Malachi, God doesn't speak again for 400 years.

But the silence wasn't abandonment—it was preparation.

During those 400 years, God was setting the stage for Jesus. He was moving kingdoms, aligning nations, and orchestrating history so that when Christ came, everything would be ready.

And that's a word for us. Because sometimes it feels like God has gone quiet on us.

Prayers seem unanswered.

The Word feels dry.

Worship feels pointless.

God seems closed off like He's forgotten you.

Ever been there?

But just because He's silent doesn't mean He's absent.

He's still in control.

Still working.

Still faithful.

God does some of His best work without you knowing about it.

Just like a seed growing underground or a baby that forms in the womb - seemingly out of sight. God often does His deepest work when it feels like nothing is happening.

Silence doesn't mean you're forgotten—it may mean you're being prepared. So be faithful and trust Him with your future.

God is doing a work in your favor.

And in due season he will give you what he has for you. But between now and then, our job is to fulfill our current duties and obligation to Him.

After surveying the OT, all I can say is...

Glory be to God, our ransom has been paid, through God's glorious plan of redemption. God is good and we are unworthy of his grace, but we thank him nonetheless.

Would you join me in prayer....

Baptism...

This morning we have the privilege of witnessing the baptisms of **Miranda Turner, Joshua Davidson, and Paige Davidson**.

Jesus commanded His followers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ([Matt. 28:19–20](#)). And that is exactly what the disciples did after Jesus's ascension.

The book of Acts records multiple instances of people coming to faith and being baptized. Faith, repentance, and baptism were bound tightly together—each a visible step in responding to the gospel.

Summary explanation....

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward transformation. It points to the internal reality that, by the grace of God, these believers have been made new in Christ. As [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) says, *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and the new has come."* Their sins have been removed—as far as the east is from the west ([Psalm 103:12](#)). And the love of Christ has been poured into their hearts through the Holy Spirit, who now testifies with their spirit that they are children of God ([Romans 8:16](#)).

Each of those being baptized today has given testimony of saving faith in Christ and has been cared for and affirmed by the leadership of this church. Now, we stand together with joy, supporting them as they take this step of obedience.

This is a moment of celebration—a public declaration of God's redeeming grace. So let us remain prayerful and joyful as we witness our spiritual siblings follow Christ in being baptized.

Prayer

Father, today we bring before you these your children who have trusted in Christ alone for their salvation. By your grace, they've received the gift of eternal life. You've raised them up and seated them with Christ in the heavenly places, just as your Word says in [Ephesians 2:6](#).

Now they stand here, ready to declare through baptism what you've already done in their hearts. Lord, as they step into the water, remind them that they've died with Christ and have been raised to walk in newness of life.

And would you remind all of us today—this is no small thing. The death and resurrection of Jesus is the greatest act in all of history, and it changes everything.

We pray this with grateful hearts, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Baptize...

Miranda, Joshua, Paige

Song..

Closing

Question/prayer, CC, Door to door invites, LGLP

Page . Exported from [Logos Bible Study](#), 7:56 AM May 4, 2025.