

Moving Forward: God's Intervention

What God Has Done - God has not left us where we are. He has intervened to move us forward

1. Jewish Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel explains that this is what the Bible is all about. He writes, "Most theories of religion start out with defining the religious situation as man's search for God . . . [but, a]ll of human history as described in the Bible may be summarized in one phrase: *God is in search of man* (emphasis his, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*, p. 136).
2. We can view this in a variety of ways: biblically-theologically, categories of needs, Christ's humiliation and exaltation, the order of salvation, or the Trinity. You can think about what God has done in a variety of ways. Perhaps there are others. Think of the Apostle's Creed we just confessed.
3. We are going to look at five of these as we close out this year and begin again next January. The importance is that we learn to *see* it clearly and make it a part of our lives. How we can do this will be the subject of the next section. Today, we will look at this perspective biblically-theologically. This means that we show how the Bible's story teaches us what God does to move us forward in all the activities, words, and people of the Old Testament, which is fulfilled ultimately in Christ.
4. Small Group: What thoughts do the following items evoke in you? which of the items below resonates with you the most & why? Any you might add?

The Story of the Bible

The Promises

1. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel (Gen. 3:15).
2. "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. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:2-3).
3. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (2 Pet. 1:3-4).
4. How often do we find ourselves discouraged with what is happening in our lives together or individually, the promises of God teach us to look to the future with expectation of blessing!

The Exodus

1. "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey . . ." (Ex. 3:7-8).

2. “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13–14). “The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21).
3. How often do we find ourselves stuck in addictions, sins, emotional issues, dead ends, bad relationships, or organizational lethargy? It’s easy to look at these situations and see ourselves as helpless and hopeless. If we could think of God as the God of the Exodus who leads His people out of the bondage, we could have a lot of hope.

The Prophet

1. Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him” (Dt. 18:15). We need someone to teach us, and God sends us a prophet like Moses.
2. “Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. 25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’ 26 When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways” (Acts 3:24–26).
3. How often do we find ourselves perplexed and wondering what to do and how to think? God has given us a great teacher, a prophet, the Christ. We may be perplexed, but we don’t have to be in despair.

The Priest

1. In order to come before the presence of God in the temple, the high priest would make a sacrifice in order that the people could come near. Leviticus 16:32–33: “The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments 33 and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the tent of meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the members of the community.” Hebrews explains the fulfillment in Christ. “For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (Heb. 10:14).
2. The priest would also carry the names of the people on our hearts. In this way, “[w]henever [the high priest] enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the Lord” (Ex. 28:29). “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (Heb. 7:25).
3. How often do we feel the weight of our guilt and shame and fear to come before God and others? In the high priest, it is completely taken away, and we can approach before God with confidence.

The King

1. We might not think much of kings, but in the presidential election, we saw the importance of a leader who will show us the right way, direct us, and defend us. God promises to raise up a King, a leader: “When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (1 Samuel 7:12–13).
2. The idea of the coming of the king is celebrated throughout the Bible. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this (Is. 9:6–7).
3. Jesus is that King who is now reigning over the nations of the earth and over His church in particular: “Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen” (Rev. 1:4–6).
4. How often have we long for a leader who will lead us in the right direction and fearlessly bring us to a better place? That Leader is here!

The Exile & Return

1. God promised that if He sent His people into exile, He would bring them back.
2. This signified a repetition of the exodus and a promise of renewal for the people of God. The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (Jeremiah 31:31–34). This is fulfilled in Christ (see Heb. 8).
3. How often do we feel like we are wandering and need to be gathered in and renewed? This is the promise of the return.