**Slides**

1. Psalm 98:1-9 – leave this slide up until I get to The Wonder of Creation

Wonder...There are big moments of wonder - being present at the birth of my children, when I gazed at the Grand Canyon for the first time; there are common, small daily moments of wonder – morning birdsong, flowers blooming, corn growing in the fields...God in His goodness gives us moments of wonder to remind us of how good He is, how His care for us never fails.

(Slide of Psalm 98 is still up. Read vs1-3) These first three verses are praise to God for delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt; this is indeed a wonder. A bigger wonder is the exodus from sin Jesus accomplished - an exodus that has a far greater liberation reaching the nations on a scale that far exceeds the Israelite exodus.

The story of our exodus from sin is God’s grand story told from the first book of the Bible (Genesis) to the final book (Revelation). I would like to take a few minutes to trace the WONDERFUL story of salvation that Jesus has accomplished for us.

One approach to engaging with Scripture is to see God’s story as a metanarrative – the large story that holds the smaller stories of His work. That is the approach we will take this morning - a birds eye view consisting of five-parts that tell the drama of the salvation story. This is truly a story of Wonder.

**1. The Wonder of Creation and The Promise of Salvation (Genesis 3:15)**

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

From the very beginning God made everything good out of His love for us. It has always been in His heart to love and care for His creation. The repeated pattern of “And God said...let there be...and it was so” reveals His heart to give us everything to enjoy. Disobedience to His word brings havoc, violence, and strife into creation. But...He is not finished with us. Read Genesis 3:15. Immediately after Adam and Eve’s disobedience, God sets in motion a plan to save His creation.

**2. The Wonder of God’s Calling Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4)**

*Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*

God’s election of Abraham. From he and Sarah would come the nation of Israel. He would be the father of a great nation, a people to bless the nations. God redeems Israel from slavery in Egypt, calls them to be a kingdom of priest and a holy nation by giving them the law. This story unfolds in Exodus 19-20. In His faithfulness, God gives Israel the Promised Land and eventually promises David that his dynasty will rule over Israel forever. This story unfolds in 2 Samuel 7. Much of this second act of the salvation story covers the OT.

**3. The Wonder of Jesus Matthew 1:1**

*“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”*

The third act in the story of salvation begins as God brings forth Jesus. In His life he performed wonders, taught the people, gathered people, particularly the poor, into the Kingdom of God – which can be seen as a renewed Israel. This portion of the God’s salvation story is told in four books – the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. His life, teaching and practices stirred up massive amounts of resistance, hate. He surrendered His life to the cross in obedience to the Father’s will, **but** the cross is not the end of the story.

There is the resurrection; the fourth act in this drama of salvation.

**4. The Wonder of the Resurrection Matthew 28:5-6 and Acts 1:8**

*But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who as crucified. 6He is not here, for he has risen,*[*s*](https://www.esv.org/Mt27.63)*as he said. Come, see the place where he*[*1*](https://www.esv.org/Matthew+1/#f1-)*lay.*

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

After the resurrection God sends the Spirit to call Jews and Gentiles into the continuing story of Israel through the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This is the beginning of the church. Remember God’s promise to Abraham to make Israel a blessing to all the nations? In the church He fulfills this promise. The church is called to live according to the faithfulness of Jesus – we are a sign of God’s faithfulness to the world.

**5. The Wonder of All Things Summed Up in Christ Revelation 11:15**

*“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”*

When Jesus returns, God will restore all things through Him.

**Conclusion**

This is the grand story of salvation, the metanarrative (the grand story encompassing all the smaller stories) that tells us of God’s activity to save His creation which includes you and me. It is an **additional wonder** to consider this morning that we, the church, live within this narrative – we occupy the space in the story between the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Christ and the restoration of all creation. The narrative calls forth the church to be a sign - community witnessing to what is to come.