

## THE PROMISE OF JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (1)

The aim of this session is to introduce the course and provide a chronological overview to the Bible story beginning with Creation to humanity's rebellion from Eden (Genesis 3) to the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11).

### Recommended Reading

Vaughan Roberts. *God's Big Picture*, (IVP, 2003).

Fee, G. and Stuart, D. *How to read the Bible for all its worth*. (Zondervan, 1993)

### One Year Bible reading plans:

<http://www.gnpccb.org/esv/devotions> or

<http://www.navpress.com/Magazines/DJ/BibleReadingPlans.asp>

## INTRODUCTION

### The Bible:

- **Library of books** written over 2000 years.
- **One book** because God is the ultimate author behind all human authors (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- **One story** about God's plan to redeem a fallen world through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:9-11, cf. Luke 24:27, 2 Corinthians 1:20).

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

To better understand the Bible, we need to:

- Understand the main storyline of the Bible
- Understand the literary forms used in the Bible

### Part A: Main Storyline of the Bible in 4 Parts

- Part 1: From Creation to Rebellion
- Part 2: From Nomads to the Nation of Israel
- Part 3: From Kingdom to Exile and Restoration
- Part 4: From Messiah to the New Jerusalem

### Part B: Understanding Major Literary Forms

- New Testament Letters
- Old Testament narratives
- Old Testament prophecies

## **MAIN THEME OF BIBLE STORY: GOD'S COVENANT PROMISE**

- The story-line of Scripture itself unfolds along the lines of God's covenant with his people (cf. Ro. 9:4, Eph. 2:12) e.g. Adam, Noah (Ge. 6:18), Abraham (Ge. 15:18), Moses (Ex. 24:8), David (Ps. 89:3) and Jesus (Lk. 22:20; Heb. 12:24)
- A covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship (Grudem, 1994:515).
- Key elements of a covenant include: (1) Introduction to the two parties involved, (2) Statement of obligations, (3) Role of Mediator, and (4) Declaration of blessings and curses.
- Key covenant promise: 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' (cf. Ge. 17:7-8; Jer. 31:33; 2Co. 6:16; Rev. 21:3)

## **FROM CREATION TO REBELLION (Adam to Abraham)**

### The pattern of God's relationship with Mankind (Genesis 1 to Genesis 2)

- God is sovereign over all creation (Ge. 1-2).
- God makes a covenant with Adam (Ge. 1:28-30, cf. 2:16-17; Hos. 6:7; Ro. 5:12-19).
- Adam was to live in God's place under God's rule.

## **EXERCISE 1**

1. Read Genesis 1:1-2:24. Identify the 4 elements of a covenant outlined earlier. Who are the two parties? What are their mutual obligations? Who is the mediator? What are the consequences of loyalty/disloyalty to the covenantal terms?
2. What do we learn about the covenant relationship between God, creation and humanity in Genesis 1-2? Read in particular Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:15-25. How was Adam supposed to relate to God, to Eve and to the rest of creation?
3. Read Revelation 22:1-5. Identify the parallels with the situation in the Garden of Eden. What does this reveal about God's divine purposes?

### The pattern broken by Adam's sin (Genesis 3)

- Adam, tempted by Satan, broke his covenant with God (cf. Hos. 6:7).
- Adam's sin spoiled everything in creation. All mankind (cf. Ro. 5:12-19) and creation (Ro. 8:19-25) is affected by Adam's disobedience.
- By grace, God initiates a rescue plan against sin and death (Ge. 3:14-15, cf. Gal. 3:16-29).

### **EXERCISE 2**

1. How did Satan tempt Eve in Genesis 3:1-6? Identify the tactics he employed. How do we see him using such tactics today to tempt us into being covenant breakers? How can we overcome them?
2. Read the curses found in Genesis 3:14-19. What is the effect of Adam's broken covenant on Satan, the world and humanity? What does this tell us about sin?
3. What hope is offered to humanity in Genesis 3:15? How does the New Testament (cf. Galatians 3:16-29) understand this hope?
4. How does this understanding of covenant with Adam make sense of Romans 5:12-21? What difference does Christ make as the 'mediator of a new covenant' (Heb. 12:24)?

### The effect of Adam's sin (Genesis 4 to Genesis 5)

- Sin takes root in Adam's family (cf. Cain and Abel, Ge. 4:1-24).
- God's rescue plan begins (Ge. 4:25-26).
- No one escapes God's judgment - 'then he died' (Ge. 5)
- Sin corrupts entire human family and mars creation (Ge. 6:5-7)

God's response to man's sin (Genesis 6 to Genesis 11)

- God sends a flood (Ge. 6-8) as an act of **judgment**.
- *'The Flood shows the ultimate destiny of a world under sin'* (Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*).
- The Flood shows how sin: (1) affects all creation, (2) requires God's judgment, and (3) breeds corruption in the human race.
- God makes a covenant with Noah (Ge. 9:1-17) as an act of **grace**. (Rainbow as sign of covenant, Ge. 9:16-17, cf. Rev. 4:3)
- Through his covenant with Noah, God: (1) preserves the believing 'seed' (Ge. 3:15-16), (2) preserves creation, and (3) reaffirm man's covenantal place within creation.
- Man's problem not solved. Rebellion persists and grows, culminating in Tower of Babel (Ge. 11:1-9).

**EXERCISE 3**

1. Read Genesis 9:1-17. Identify the 4 elements in God's covenant with Noah.
2. What are the similarities and differences with God's earlier covenant with Adam?
3. Read Acts 2:1-13. How does this compare with Genesis 11:1-9? What does this tell us about the effect of the new covenant through Jesus?

What will happen to the now dispersed humanity? What will be their fate and the fate of the world under sin? How can sin, which regroups and resurfaces again and again, be dealt with? What will God do next to rescue his people and his creation from the cancer of sin? **FIND OUT NEXT WEEK!**

**CLOSING HYMN** – Trust and Obey

'This hymn reminds us that the enjoyment of God's blessings depends on our continuing to fulfil the conditions of faith and obedience as stipulated in the New Testament, which is written to record of the provisions of the new covenant that God has made for us' (Grudem, 1994:524).