

THE PROMISE OF JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (3)

The aim of this session is to provide a chronological overview to the Bible story from the united kingdom of Israel under King David to the Babylonian exile and subsequent restoration of a remnant to the Promised Land.

Summary of 'The Promise' (2)

- So far, Gen. 3 – curse, Gen. 6 – Flood, Gen. 11 – Babel. **How will God respond** to fulfil his plan to restore creation and reconcile mankind to himself? **God makes a covenant** with Abraham (Gen. 12)
- By choosing Abraham, God shows he is not turning his back on the world. Through Abraham, God will build a nation to represent him in the world.
- The story of the patriarchs (Gen. 12-50) shows the constant threat to the fulfilment of God's promise. Abraham's descendants grow in numbers but were enslaved in Egypt.
- *How will God respond now? He remembers his covenant* with Abraham and extends it to the nation of Israel through Moses (cf. Ex. 2:23-25; 6:6-8).
- God's act of judgment and deliverance taught Israel an important principle i.e. God saves by substitution (Ex. 12:1-28, cf. John 1:29, 1Co. 5:7).
- God gives Israel the Law (cf. Ex. 19-24). The Law is a function of the covenant. The Law does not create a relationship (cf. Ex. 19:4-5, 20:1-2) but shows how the people are to relate to God, to one another and to the world as God's covenant people.
- The people were disobedient. Most of the Exodus generation did not enter the Promised Land (cf. Num. 14:26-38). Joshua succeeded Moses. But God didn't let Joshua conquer the entire land because he wanted to test his people (Judg. 2:20-22).
- By the end of the Judges period, the nation of Israel itself is divided and slips into idolatry. *How will God respond now* to fulfil his redemption plan?

FROM THE NATION OF ISRAEL TO EXILE

God makes a covenant with his chosen king (David)

- The Ruth narrative shows God's continual grace on his people despite their disobedience. God initiates a plan for his chosen king to unite the people and fulfil his covenant promise (cf. Judg. 21:25; Ruth 4:18-21).
- The people come up with their own plan viz. living with constant military threats. Israel asks for a human king (1 Sam. 8-12), rejecting God as their King (Ex. 15:18). How does God respond?
- By grace, God takes up Israel's demand into his sovereign purposes. God makes a covenant with David (2 Sam. 7; Ps. 89:3-4, 132:11-12).

The kings' response to God's covenant (1 Kings – 2 Kings)

- Israel's kings are now God's covenant mediators i.e. the king, as the national head, represents the people. So his obedience or disobedience will have enormous consequences to the life of God's chosen people.
- David's kingdom marks a partial fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. Israel has a secure presence in the world and experienced in part God's blessings of peace, prosperity and presence through his chosen king (cf. 2Ki. 4:20-21).
- After Solomon's death, civil war breaks out and the kingdom splits into two - 10 tribes in the North i.e. 'Israel' with Samaria as capital city, 2 tribes in the South i.e. 'Judah' with Jerusalem as capital city.
- While some of Judah's kings were faithful (cf. 1Ki. 15:11; 20:31), the vast majority of kings after David disobeyed God and 'did evil in the eyes of the LORD' (e.g. 1Ki. 15:3, 26, 34; 16:25, 30).
- Israel and Judah fall into idolatry and face serious military threats from the surrounding nations. The kings failed to rule on God's behalf and reflect his glory.

What will God do next to fulfil his promises to Abraham and David? How can God rule through a chosen king, if his kings fail to keep the covenant?

God sends his prophets to enforce his covenant

- As the monarchy falls into increasing apostasy, God speaks his word of warning and judgment to the kings through his prophets.
- The prophets are God's 'covenant enforcers' i.e. through the prophets God reminds the people about their covenant obligations and the consequences that follow obedience or disobedience.

Table 1: Prophets of the Old Testament

	To North Kingdom (Israel)	To South Kingdom (Judah)	To other Nations	To Post-exile community
Pre-Exile	Amos Hosea	Isaiah Micah Joel Zephaniah Habakkuk Jeremiah	Obadiah Jonah Nahum	
Exile		Ezekiel Daniel		
Post-Exile				Haggai Zechariah Malachi

- The messages of the pre-exilic prophets (Amos, Hosea to Israel; Isaiah, Micah, Joel, Zephaniah, Jeremiah to Judah) are full of warnings for the people to change their ways before it is too late (cf. Lev. 26:14-39; Deut. 4:15-28, 28:15-32).
- At the same time, the prophets also anticipate the coming of an ideal King who will fulfil the Davidic promise (cf. Isa. 9:2-7, 11:1-9; Jer. 23:1-8; Ezek. 34:1-31).
- The people don't take the warnings seriously. Assyria destroys the Northern kingdom in 722 BC. The Northern kingdom never recovers. Babylon crushed the Southern kingdom in 597 BC and 586 BC and the people of Judah go into exile.
- Despite widespread rebellion from his chosen people, God by his grace promises to preserve a 'remnant' of believers who will be the object of his special love. This remnant is the true Israel of God (cf. Isa. 10:20-22; 28:5; 37:31-32; Mic. 5:7-8; 7:18; Zeph. 3:12-13; Zech. 8:11-12).

What will God do next to fulfil his covenant promises? How can God rule through his chosen king, if the people are exiled and nation destroyed?

God promises a new covenant

- Judah's exile experience in Babylon is similar to Israel's earlier slavery experience in Egypt. God initiates his plan for a new exodus (cf. Jer. 16:14-15) and a new covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34).
- What is new about this new covenant is not the covenant partner but the quality of the covenant relationship between God and his chosen people.
- Instead of God's laws written onto tablets of stone (e.g. 10 Commandments), God's law will be written 'on their hearts.' The problem of sin will be dealt with and God's presence will be with his people in a special way (cf. Ezek. 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-32).

EXERCISES

1. Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17. How do the promises to David in 2 Samuel 7 echo the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3? What features are the same and what features are new?
2. What does God promise concerning the future Davidic king (2 Sam. 7:12-16, cf. Isa. 9:2-7; Jer. 23:1-8)?
3. Read Matthew 1:1, Mark 12:35-37, and Romans 1:1-4. How is God's covenant with David related to Jesus? How does this help us better understand who Jesus is and what he did?
4. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. What are the 'new' features of this covenant? Why was it necessary? How does this help us understand what Jesus says in Luke 22:20?

FROM THE EXILE TO RESTORATION

God restores a remnant after the exile (Ezra to Nehemiah)

- After 70 years, a new superpower comes onto the scene and God stirred Cyrus, the Persian king, to issue an edict to allow the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple (cf. 2 Chron. 36:22-23).
- Only a small number, however, make the journey back to Jerusalem. The people faced intense opposition in Jerusalem. They were also disillusioned by the fact that this return to the land did not result in the glorious restoration that was promised.
- Eventually under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah and the post-exilic prophets (i.e. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi), the promised future restoration was partially fulfilled. But the problems of idolatry, social injustice and religious ritualism rampant before the exile remained.
- The prophets made clear that this was only a partial renewal. A more glorious and complete restoration of the people and fulfilment of the new covenant still remained part of the future.

*What will God do next to fulfil his promise of a new covenant? Where is God's Davidic king who will usher in a new era of God's rule on earth? How will God restore his people and all creation to himself? **FIND OUT NEXT WEEK!***