

A History of the Future

How the Bible fits together

Week 3

CYCLE 3: FROM ABRAHAM TO BABYLON

THE DIVINE PROMISE (will and testament)

A promise to Abraham, from Ur (Babylon).

Gen 12:1-3

Land (Canaan);

Great nation (Israel);

Great name (a great reputation);

Blessing (+ blessing of *all* nations).



GENESIS

Gen 15

The promise of offspring or seed emphasised; as many as the number stars in the sky.

Abraham is reckoned as righteous.

He is the archetypal man of faith.

Gen 17

Abraham = The father of many nations

Unconditional promise...

...kings will come from you



...my covenant as an everlasting covenant

The whole land of Canaan... as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants.

Conditional command...

*... **you must keep my covenant**, you and your descendants after you*

You are to undergo circumcision... the sign of the covenant between me and you.

Any uncircumcised male... will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

Circumcision is therefore a covenant sign.

A 'sacramental' sign.

Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him... my covenant I will establish with Isaac...."

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THE SACRIFICE

A Life Given (Genesis 22)

“Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and ... Sacrifice him there...”



“Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac...”



Basis for promise

“... because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky...”

Crucifixion pre-enacted (Romans 8:32)

A Life Taken (Genesis 37-50).

Joseph Jacob’s favourite son



Jealous brothers plot to kill him. A victim, a virtual murder. Goat’s blood and threw him in a pit.

Sold for 20 pieces of silver.

Population

12 sons of Jacob (=12 tribes of Israel) – a foundational first generation.



Total number of children of Israel = 70 (Exodus 1).

Quick recap: How is the promise to Abraham doing?

- Descendants?**
- Great nation?**
- Land?**
- Blessed?**

THE REDEMPTION

Exodus 1:8-14.

Political Slavery - Israelites oppressed



EXODUS

King of Egypt plots to kill all the Hebrew boys.

Moses saved in a basket, across the waters of the Nile – his own private ark.

Ex 4:21-23

Israel is my firstborn son

Spiritual Slavery: Let my son go, so that he may worship me.

Mt Sinai in the desert.

Pharaoh’s heart is hardened.

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The Ten Plagues: frogs, gnats, flies, locusts, boils, hail, etc.

Ninth plague = darkness over the land for 3 days. (Matthew 27:45)

Tenth Plague = death of the firstborn.

Ex 11

Every firstborn son in Egypt will die,

The LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

All Egypt under God's judgement. NT: '*judgement begins with the household of God* (1 Pet 4:17).

Salvation *from* judgement.

Ex 12 The Passover

Sacrifice a lamb: just enough for each family, v3. No more, no less.



The best of the flock, v5 *without defect*

The blood saves the household (on sides and tops of the door-frames of the houses)

God saves through families.

They must feed on the meat of the lamb, v8.

Then v12-14;

The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. ... This is a day you are to commemorate... a lasting ordinance.

The blood of the lamb is their salvation. The substitute.

Do not break any of the bones. (John 19:33, 36, cf Num 9:12; Ps 34:20)

Ex 14 The Red Sea

... You need only to be still. It's God's battle.

The water divides. Israelites go through the sea on dry ground.

The glory of the LORD through Pharaoh

The entire army of Pharaoh drowned.

Another 'baptism'. Israelites are baptised into Moses.

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.² They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Corinthians 10:1-2)

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The human race: 'in Adam'
 Noah's family: 'in Noah'
 Israel: 'in Moses'

The nation of Israel is born. God's firstborn son.

And the redemption of God's firstborn requires the *death* of the firstborn.



Map courtesy of <http://www.bible-history.com/maps/>

THE LAW (Mt Sinai)

Israel grumble and complain - God provides manna from heaven and water from the rock.

A Covenant with Israel

Ex 19

...if you obey me fully and keep my covenant

... you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

"We will do everything the LORD has said."

Responsibility to his 'firstborn son', Israel - a corporate Adam.

At the centre of God's purposes for the world.



Ex 20

The 10 Commandments

Leviticus and Deuteronomy = the Mosaic Law and Covenant in detail.

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Purpose of Law: to demonstrate their faith (by the ‘obedience of faith’ cf Rom 1:5)

The Covenant with Israel is legal in character.



Deut 28

Blessings for obedience

Deuteronomy

Great nation; Blessings; Numerous descendants; Land (Abrahamic promises)

Curses for disobedience

A lot at stake!

Obedience = gain what God promised Abraham.

Disobedience = lose what God promised Abraham. And worse!

So how can they lose it?

The Promised Inheritance		Gained by	Lost by	In accordance with
The Land of Canaan	Shadow (earthly & temporal)	Law-keeping (works)	Law-breaking (sin)	God’s Law
<i>evidence of</i>		<i>evidence of</i>	<i>evidence of</i>	
The Heavenly City (cf Heb11)	Reality (heavenly and eternal)	Faith	Unbelief	God’s Promise

Categories of the Law

Moral (eg ‘Thou shalt not murder’),

Social (eg the laws about sexual relations, haircuts, slander, compensation for damages...)

Ceremonial (eg the laws about sacrificial offerings, skin diseases, mildew laws)

Principialism

All the laws teach something about the holy character of God

Underlying principles eternal (outward expression may change).

‘I have not come to abolish the law but to fulfil it’. (Matt 5:17-20).

Characteristics

Tests faith: Obedience tests the genuineness of faith.

The Law is spiritual.

The Law is has an outward aspect, pointing to a heavenly reality.

Written on stone (but for the heart)

External rituals

National

Provisional

Gracious: the Law is good (says Paul)!

“The one who does these things will live by them” (Lev 18:5; cf Gal 3:12).

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Exodus 32

Golden calf incident: idolatry!

3,000 killed on a single day.

Covenant broken



Question:

How can a holy God go with Israel without destroying them on the way? (Ex 33:3)

THE SANCTUARY

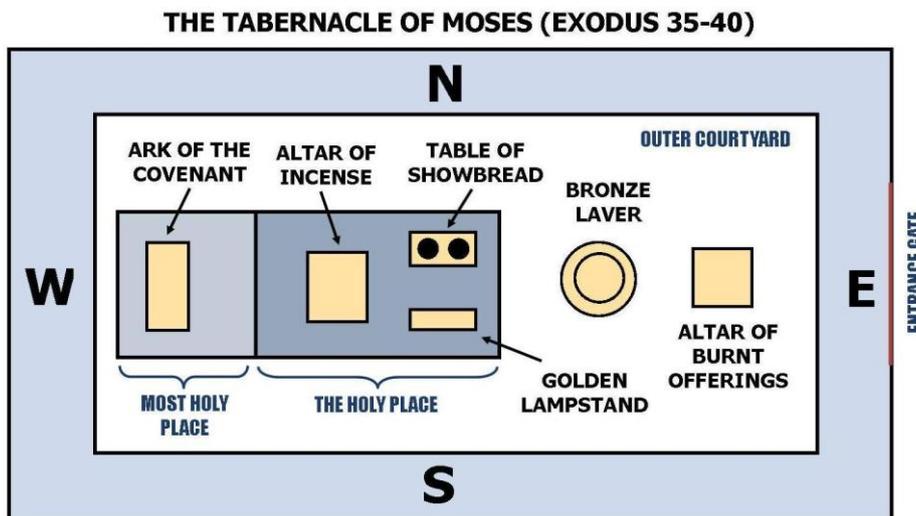


Exodus 34-40 The Tabernacle

Divine dwelling-place: A mobile sanctuary. A tent of badger skin.

Divine presence with Israel, dwelling amongst his people.

Divine provision for sin.



<https://raykliu.wordpress.com/2013/05/24/tabernacle-approach-to-prayer/>

Aaron and his sons appointed as High Priests to carry out the sacrificial work.

The Levites are appointed to assist the Priests: to take care of and guard the sanctuary.

Numbers 13:17-25

Kadesh Barnea

Exploring the land: 40 days



Numbers

Numbers 14:26-35

This generation cannot enter the land *except Caleb and Joshua*

Desert wandering: 40 years



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HOLY WAR

Joshua 1: Entry into the Land

Joshua appointed as new Moses (1:5).

Obedience leads to success (1:7).



Joshua

Joshua 3: Crossing the Jordan River

The priests with the ark of the covenant go first (at a distance).

The whole nation crossed on dry ground. To destroy the nations: Is this genocide? No.

1. Rahab (a Canaanite is saved); Achan (an Israelite is struck down)
2. They get what they deserve (for worshipping false gods).
3. God *normally* delays his judgement, but here simply brings it forward.

The City of Jericho: the gateway to Canaan (Josh 6:2-5)

Rahab the prostitute is saved. She gives birth to Boaz, the great grandfather of King David.

Possession of the land

Joshua describes how Canaan is won. (eg Josh 12)

Areas still need to be taken (Josh 13)

Division and allotment of the land (Josh 14-21:42)



REST...?

The LORD gave them rest on every side (21:43-44).

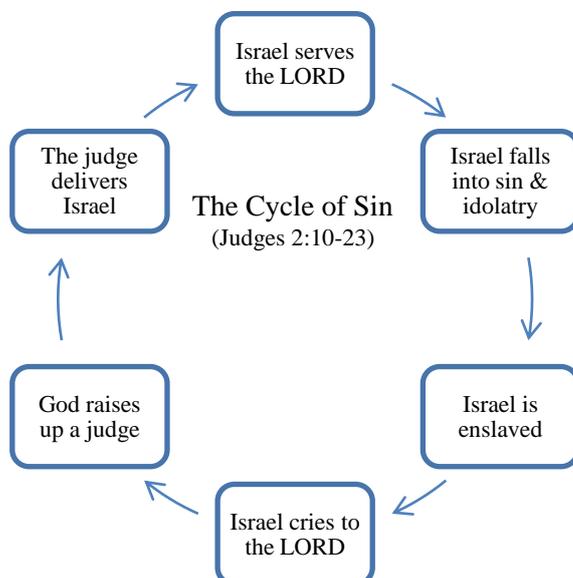
It looks like Sabbath Rest. The war is over. The enemy defeated.

All the promises fulfilled! However...



Judges

Judges: "Who will be the first to go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?" (eg 1:21, 28).



The people of this land... will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you. (Jdg 2:3)

Judges like: Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, etc

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Judges 21:24-25

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Not yet the end!

Ruth

Gentiles included in God's family.

Ruth is a Moabitess marries Boaz by Levirate marriage (the son of Rahab).

Ruth and Boaz give birth to Obed = the grandfather of King David.



Ruth

1 Samuel

Shift in government – from Judges to Kings.



Israel demands a king... like the other nations. (1 Sam 8)

“...it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.”



1 & 2 Samuel

2 Samuel

Israel needs a king to fight their battles for them: 'Home affairs' and 'foreign affairs'.

First King Saul: a bad king.

King David: the King of Israel *par excellence*. The benchmark.

A shepherd. Orders, feeds, protects the flock.

Goliath, the famous Philistine giant (1 Sam 17).

REST: Complete victory for Israel. Gives Israel rest from war and from enemies.

Religion and politics centralised in Jerusalem.

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

2 Sam 7

Great name (v9) – *“like the names of the greatest men of the earth.”*

Land (v10) – *“so that they can have a home of their own.”*

Great nation (v11) – *“I will give you rest from all your enemies.”*

A 'house' (v11); a royal dynasty (v12)

A Royal Son/Heir (v12) – *“he will build a house for my Name”*

His house and kingdom shall endure for ever (v16).



1 & 2 Kings
1 & 2 Chronicles

1 Kings 6-8

Solomon builds the temple. Permanent and imperishable.

Solomon brings the Ark of the Covenant into the temple and dedicates it.

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A man-made temple is not the true dwelling place of God

The place to which people must turn (v28ff); eg, when a man wrongs his neighbour (v31); in defeat because of sin (v33); shortage of rain (v35); famine (v37); etc

1 Kings 9:4-7

Israel's future depends on the obedience of the *king*.

1 Kings 10

The Queen of Sheba: God is glorified through Solomon (1-9)

Solomon's splendour (14-29). High point!

1 Kings 11

Solomon's wives

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

Northern Kingdom (called 'Israel')

Southern Kingdom (called 'Judah')

Ie Two royal houses (Israel and Judah)

EXILE

2 Kings 17



Northern Kingdom

'Israel' exiled to Assyria (722BC)

2 Chron 36:15-21

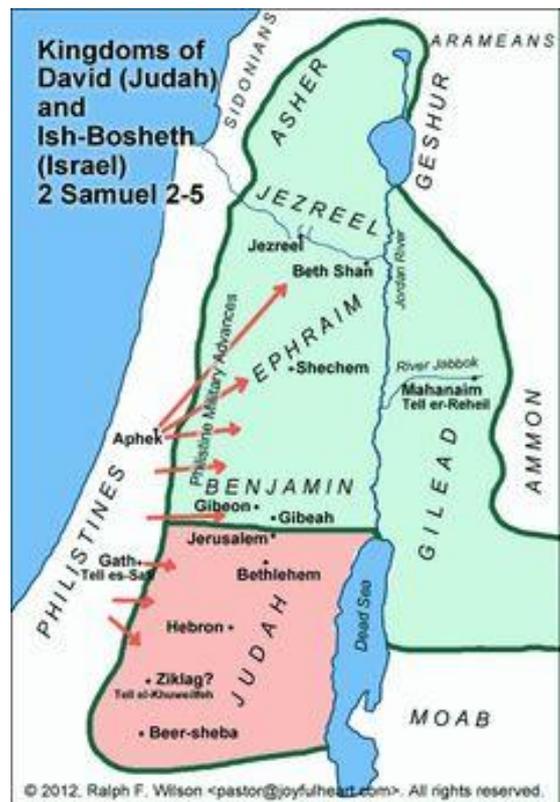
Southern Kingdom

King Zedekiah's reign (cf 2 Kings 25 in detail)

The Fall of Jerusalem (587/6 BC)

Exile in Babylon

70 years of exile as strangers in a foreign land.



RESTORATION

2 Chron 36:22-23

King Cyrus of Persia – Israel's 'messiah'

The Return from Exile (538BC)

Jerusalem temple rebuilt (Ezra and Nehemiah)



HOWEVER... *Neh 13:15, 29.*