

Steve Whitacre

SESSION 3 | The Story of Scripture, Parts 3-5

I. Period 3—Promise: The Kingdom Hope (Gen. 12-50)

A. Textual Themes

1. The nature of God's promise to Abraham
 - i. Gracious
 - ii. Based on God's election
 - iii. Eternal: Gen 13:15; 17:7-8, 13, 19
 - iv. Calls for faith

2. The substance of God's promise to Abraham
 - i. People
 - ii. Land
 - iii. Universal Blessing

3. God's promise persists despite human sin and external threats
 - i. God is absolutely faithful to His promises, and is powerful to bring them about

B. Gospel Connections

1. God's salvation is completely by grace
2. God's salvation is completely a matter of His sovereign choice
3. The promises of Abraham are fulfilled in Jesus Christ
4. Salvation in Christ is for all nations
5. The required response to God's saving initiative is faith

II. Period 4—Nation: The Kingdom in Part (Exodus – 2 Chronicles)

A. Textual Themes

1. Deliverance

- Exodus 6:2-8: The connection between God's covenant with Abraham and His deliverance of Israel in the Exodus

i. A Deliverer

- Moses himself is saved from destruction (Ex. 1:22-2:10).
- Moses works miracles that accompany God's saving activity.
- Moses mediates the covenant between God and the people.

ii. Substitution by blood (Passover)

iii. Freedom from bondage (Red Sea)

2. Identity: People of God

i. The people are formed into a nation (Ex. 19:3-6)

- They were delivered by God (v. 4)
- They were set apart for God (v. 5)
- They were representatives of God (v. 6)

"The whole of Israel's experience, including family life, law, politics, economics, and recreation, will reflect God's character and God's original creational intention for human life. Israel's life under God is to testify to the living presence of God within God's people." Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 66.

ii. They are given God's law

- a. The *basis* of the giving of the law was God's deliverance (Ex. 20:2)

- b. The *purpose* of the law was to spell out what it means to be the people of God

 - iii. They are given God's presence (Tabernacle)
 - a. The presence of God becomes a fundamental characteristic of the nation of Israel and its identity.

 - b. The purposes of the tabernacle
 - The place of God's dwelling among the people (25:8)
 - The place of divine revelation (25:22)
 - The place of sacrifice (29:10)

 - c. Upon entering the land, the tabernacle gives way to the temple
 - The Law of Centralization (Deut 12:1-11)

 - iv. They are provided with God's forgiveness (Sacrifice)
 - If God is to dwell in the midst of the people, there *must* be some provision for sin.
3. Inheritance: Land
- i. The inheritance is intended to provide rest (Deut 12)
 - "Rest" involves security from enemies (v. 10)

 - "Rest" involves living out a relationship with God (v. 11)

 - The land is not an end in itself, but is (a) a means of developing the relationship between God and Israel, and (b) a place where God will dwell among his people, and where they will worship God and rejoice in his presence (Deut 11:8-25)

 - Exile: retraction of Israel's inheritance and removal from God's presence

 - ii. The inheritance is forfeited by unbelief (Numbers)

 - iii. The inheritance is gained only by God's power (Joshua)

- iv. The inheritance is maintained by faithfulness to the covenant (Josh 24:19-27)
4. Kingship
- i. The pattern for kingship is God's covenant (Deut. 17:14-20)
 - ii. Israel rejected God's ideal and the result was Saul (1 Sam. 8:4-8)
 - iii. God chooses his own king: David
 - 2 Samuel 7: The Davidic Covenant
 - iv. Solomon both brings to a pinnacle God's promises to Israel, and initiates Israel's decline

B. Gospel Connections

1. All people are in bondage to sin and in need of deliverance
2. We inherit God's promises only through the deliverance provided by Christ.
3. Jesus is our Passover lamb whose death brought our deliverance (I Cor 5:7; cf. Mark, 14:12)
4. We as the church are the people of God in the earth, His special possession, inheritors of the promises of Abraham, and called to represent Him to the nations (1 Peter 2:9; cf. Ex. 19:5-6)
5. God's law has not been merely given to us as a standard, but has been written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:2-3; Rom. 8:3-4; cf. Jer. 31:33)
6. Whereas God dwelt among Israel in the tabernacle, Christ "tabernacled" among us and revealed to us the glory of the ultimate revelation of God (John 1:14)
7. Whereas Israel's priests offered daily sacrifices, Christ offered one, definitive sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:11-13)
8. Because of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, we are no longer shielded from His presence nor in need of human mediators—we each can now enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, drawing near with full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:19-22)

9. Whereas the temple served Israel as the place of sacrifice and God's presence, Jesus has become the true temple where the definitive sacrifice for our sins has been made, and is the true place where man can meet God (John 2:19-22)

10. Jesus is the prophesied son of David, who came to conquer the enemies of God's people, to reign over His people in righteousness, and who will one day rule over all the nations (Matt. 1:1; Mark 12:35-37; Matt. 28:18-30; Rev. 19:11-16)

III. Period 5 – Expectation: The Kingdom Prophesied (Ezra – Malachi)

A. Textual Themes

1. God will move in judgment against those who break His covenant
 - i. God's judgment is rooted in the covenant He made with Israel
 - ii. The nature of the judgment is intensified
 - Judgment is more certain
 - Judgment is more universal ("The Day of the Lord"; cf. Zeph 1:7-18)

2. God will act finally and decisively to bring in His kingdom
 - i. God's own powerful activity will bring about this salvation
 - ii. God's salvation will conform to the pattern of redemption established in Israel's history, but in far more glorious terms.
 - a. God's People
 - New people ("remnant"): Isa. 10:20-22; Zeph. 3:12-13

 - b. God's Place
 - New temple: Ezek. 40-48
 - New creation: Isa. 65:17-21; 11:1-9

 - c. God's Rule

- New covenant: Jer. 31; Ezek. 36
 - New Davidic king: Jer. 33:14-18; Ezek. 34:23-24
- d. God's Deliverance
- New Exodus (Isa. 11:1-12, 15-16)
 - New Servant (Isa 41-53)
3. Post-exilic restorations are expressions of God's faithfulness, but far greater fulfillment of His promises will follow

B. Gospel Connections

1. Jesus, the Son of David (Matt. 1:1; cf. Isa. 9:6-7), has come to shepherd his people (John 10), conquered rulers and authorities on the cross (Col. 2:15), and will one day vanquish all opposition to God's kingdom (1 Cor. 15:24-28; cf. Ps. 8:2).
2. Jesus is the servant of the Lord who bore our sins, who will justify many, and who will sprinkle many nations (Isa. 52:13-53:12; cf. Mark. 10:45).
3. Jesus sealed the new covenant with his own blood (Luke 22:20), which resulted in the Holy Spirit being poured out on all God's people (Acts 2).
4. Because of Christ's work of redemption, Gentiles have been joined to the people of God, and the church is now God's "remnant" (Rom. 9:27, 11:5).
5. Jesus, God's servant, has become a light to the Gentiles and brought God's salvation to the nations (Isa. 49:6; Luke 2:32).
6. God's people have the unspeakable privilege of heralding His salvation to the nations (Acts 13:47).
7. Because of the purifying work of the Holy Spirit for all believers under the new covenant, we have power to walk faithfully before God and thus have hope for change.