

Bible Overview

Women's Group - January 24, 2017

Introduction

- 66 books, written by at least 40 different authors from different backgrounds, over a span of 1500 years in 3 languages and written in at least 10 different genres
 - Genre is important because a book's genre determines how you read it
 - This is true in high school English class, and it's true of the Bible
 - So it's important to mention that the Bible is made up of different genres
- But we can't go into detail about genre and how to read them - not the goal of tonight.
- The goal of tonight is to give you a big picture of the Story of the Bible - the one Story that all 66 books tell: the **Story of Redemption**
- it's the story of how God created a dwelling place in which he could fellowship with man, how it was broken and he has worked and is working towards full restoration
- Tonight I'm going to focus on 2 major themes to help us see how this story builds and crescendos throughout the whole of the Bible.
 - **Covenant**
 - **Temple**

Definitions:

- Covenant's a big word we throw around all the time in Christian circles. But what does it mean? Do we understand it?
- The concept of covenant was extremely important in the Ancient World, in particular in the Ancient Near East (ANE) where much of the biblical story takes place.
- In the ANE context your position in your family determined your place in the world and how you related with it.
 - You're the eldest son = you are the future of the family. It is your destiny to protect, judge and care for them.
 - Your rank in the family determines your *responsibility* and *privilege*
- So with cultures so structured around the hierarchy of the family, how does non-family figure out how to relate with one another? How do different families, clans and nations understand their role in the world? Who's on top and who's not? What are the *responsibilities* and *privileges* of each towards each other?
- They did this through covenant.
- **Covenant** = defined by Sandra Richter as "making family out of non-family." E.g. marriage. An agreement enacted by 2 parties in which one or both make promises under oath to perform or refrain from certain actions stipulated in advance
 - different types of covenants but all have these basic features:
 - 2 parties
 - blood - to ratify the covenant (ceremony)
 - promises/blessings and/or curses (warnings to prevent disobedience)
 - involves descendants

- One kind: Suzerain (Great King) - vassal (Petty King). Suzerain imposed stipulations (tribute, sons for war, daughters for household). As long as vassal complied, Suzerain protected vassal and give him some degree of autonomy over his land. But if the vassal broke the covenant, the Suzerain was under no obligation to do what he had originally promised, nor to continue the covenant. Rather, what often happened was that the curse sanctions would be applied to the offending vassal and his people, and that would be the end (Sandra Richter).
- **Temple:** not just a literal building with four walls which people go to to perform sacrifices and prayers and meet with God
 - Temple is important because of what it represents and symbolizes: God dwelling, fellowshiping with man
 - So temple imagery may be found in the Bible, even in parts where there is no reference to a physical building
 - God's desire as set forth in Genesis is to dwell with his people, walking with them in the garden. Sin entered and made this impossible. Humanity rejected this desire of God. And the rest of the Bible is God working, primarily through covenant, to make this fellowship/dwelling possible
 - We're going to start kind of slow, spending a significant amount of time in the first chapters of Genesis because they're so important for establishing these themes. But we'll pick up speed so we can finish off this story tonight.

Genesis 1

- We're familiar with chapter 1 of the story - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters (1:1-2)
- I think in this text there is an implication that something's wrong, something "not good." I'm not saying that God did something wrong or created something not good. It's just that the author is saying that this is the current state: the earth is "formless and empty" (1:2)
- So God speaks and he makes this right.
 - In 6 days he creates - *forming* and *filling* the earth, with the apex of creation being the creation of humanity - made in his image (like him), after his likeness (but not totally like him) (1:26)
- Then on the seventh day he rested:
 - Thus the heavens and the earth were finished... And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation (2:1-3)
- What is happening here? We could get lost in debate about whether or not these are literal days or figurative...I don't want to go there.
- Some people have suggested that we consider what God is doing in light of what kings in the ancient world did (Suzerains)

- After conquering their enemies, establishing their kingdom, they would build a **palace-temple** and enter into their “rest.” 1 Kings talks about Solomon doing this. He has “rest” from all his enemies, so he builds God and himself palace-temples (1 Kings 5:3-5)
- God as King, who like any great king speaks his word and his will is accomplished, although greater than any human king in that it is his Word itself which accomplishes what it sets out to do, and not some servant who does it for him (Isaiah 55:11)
- He takes what Gen 1:1 introduces as *formless* and *empty*, what is essentially “not good” and he conquers it, by *forming* it and *filling* it and in declaring it good
- And what does he say is very good? The sixth day, when he puts man in charge as vice-regent, his image, his representative, to rule the earth under his authority
- He builds his **palace-temple** - the entire cosmos - in which he houses his image, his likeness, and gives them authority to rule and reign his world under his rule and reign

Genesis 2

- Chapter 2 we zoom into the picture a little closer, and get a more intimate picture of this dwelling place
 - Gen 1 is more cosmic in scope, much more heavenly. It’s the prologue to the entire book, introducing the God of Israel as the God of the world.
 - Gen 2 is more earthly - focused on a garden and a man - and a man’s task.
- In chapter 2 man is living in a garden, put there to tend and keep it.
- But the garden isn’t just your average garden - it’s a place where the presence of God is specially manifested
 - 3:8 tells us that in it God walks and talks with his image-bearers, Adam and Eve
 - It’s lush, filled with every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food (2:9)
 - It’s watered by a river that divides into four, which leads to lands filled with gold and precious stones (2:10-14)
 - When the story takes a turn for the worse, God finds it necessary to guard the entrance of the garden with cherubim (3:24)
- All of these things together, when you read them in light of the building of Solomon’s temple in 1Kings 6-7, which had symbols of palm trees and flowers and pomegranates engraved all over, overlaid with gold and precious stones, and the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy place guarded by cherubim, you discover that the garden is described suspiciously similarly. That is because Solomon’s temple is reminding Israel of that day when God dwelt with humanity in unbroken fellowship.
- He’s reminding later generations of Israel of the garden. The garden is a **temple**, where God meets with humanity and fellowships with them

Genesis 3

- Before this chapter begins, all is right with the world
- The one command the King gave his image-bearers: You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16-17)

- You shall not decide what is good and evil for yourself
- You must trust me with that
- You are like me, but you are not me
- You don't see all or know all
- So you must trust me to set the parameters for what is good and evil, and trust that I won't hold out on you...because I won't! (see 2:18-25)
 - Proof: after repeatedly declaring one thing after another good in Gen 1, what does he say is "not good" in Gen 2: Man to be alone. And then does he do something about it? YES! He provides Eve. So he can be trusted.
- This is the **Adamic covenant**
 - It's not explicitly called a covenant in the Scripture, but if we remember that a covenant involves 2 parties, blessings and warnings for disobedience and descendants, this seems to fit the bill.
 - We discover later on in Scripture that what happened with Adam and Eve affected all of humanity. All their descendants (Romans 5:12).
 - Biblical theology will refer to this as the **covenant of works or covenant of life** - God graciously offers Adam, the representative of humanity, the right to remain in the land of bliss as a reward for his obedience (Waltke, Old Testament, 259)
- So the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil:
 - Knowledge of what prospers life and what destroys life
 - knowledge of everything
 - Wisdom to decide what is good and what is evil
 - "In essence Adam and Eve are free to do anything except decide for themselves what is good and what is evil. Yahweh reserves the right (and the responsibility) to name those truths himself" (Richter, 104).
- The Serpent shows up. The Bible doesn't tell us where he comes from or why God allowed him to be in the garden in the first place. But what we do know about him is that he is opposed to the rule of God, and tries to get others to oppose it.
- The Serpent plants seeds of doubt in her mind regarding the trustworthiness of God. Can he *really* be trusted. Is he holding out on me...is he withholding good from me??
- What does it say about Eve in Genesis 3: "Eve saw...decided the tree was good for food and a delight to the eyes...and took" (3:6). She decides for herself that what God said is not good for her, is actually good. Adam too, who was with her.
- And immediately they go from *naked and unashamed* => *covered* with fig leaves
- *Walking with God* in the garden => *hiding* from the sound of his coming
- But their own attempt to deal with the situation isn't good enough. So God covers them more suitably, shedding blood to cover them with skins of animals (3:21)
- However, they are ejected from the **garden-temple**, and a cherubim placed to guard the entrance, no longer able to dwell with the one they were created to dwell with
- But in this sad story, there is hope - and moments after paradise was lost, God promises that though those who follow the serpent's voice will cause great conflict on

the earth - there will come from the woman an offspring who would crush the serpent's head and restore what was lost

- Speaking to the serpent (the only one of the 3 who is directly cursed) God says, "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" (3:15)
- Not talking about women being scared of snakes.
- Rather, two types of humanity: Sons of the serpent, who listen to his voice and do his will, and Sons of the Woman - one of which would be ultimately victorious
- The Bible tells the story of how humanity got back access to the **Temple-garden**

Genesis 4-11

- the fall-out of the fall, life outside of the garden, outside of the **palace-temple**
- first fight between brothers, first murder, first man to marry more than one wife
- first cities too, music, livestock, instruments of bronze, iron - civilization is developing but trying to usurp God's domain, determining for themselves what is good (4:17-22)
- earth is so wicked that there is only one righteous man in the entire world: Noah
 - The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that *every* intention of the thoughts of his heart was *only* evil *continually* (6:5)
- So he sends the flood to destroy his creation, the good dwelling place he had made
- But in the context of this story, a second covenant is instituted
 - Adamic: covenant of works/life; condition of obedience (don't eat); broken
 - **Noahic covenant:** condition of obedience: build an ark (6:18)
 - After the flood the covenant is expanded to include all creation and God unconditionally commits to keep it (9:9-17)
 - Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark, it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall there be a food to destroy the earth"
 - sign of the covenant is the bow; God hanging up his weapon of war/judgement
 - Noahic covenant: God's commitment to redemption, not destruction
- At this point it's become increasingly clear - if a bridge between God and man is to be built, if fellowship is going to be restored, it's going to have to be God who does it.
- "for the intention of man's heart is evil from youth" (8:21)
 - in context the command not to eat blood and capital punishment instituted (9:5-6)
 - God knows humanity is sinful (8:21), "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth."
 - this provision is a stop on uncontrollable violence.
 - It also demonstrates that even in his fallen state, humanity reflects the image of God - there is something special about humanity.
 - allowed to eat meat, not blood. Genesis' OR, knows Leviticus, understands why - God explains that blood is for atonement, sacrifice (Lev 17:11)

- Section ends with the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, typifying humanity's refusal to live under the rule of God, desiring instead to make a name for themselves (11:4)

Genesis 12

- The Babel story and humanity's striving towards the domain of God is contrast to the next story - of Abraham. Who God comes down to, calls out of this city, out of this culture (Babel) and promises to make his name great (12:2)
- Gen 3-11 has showed us if any bridge is going to be made between man and God, and we are going to get back access to the **temple**/God's presence, God is going to have to be the one to build it. And so he does.
- And how does he choose to do it?
- He chooses a 75 year old man with a barren wife and makes 3 promises to him,
 - Offspring: "Look up at the stars and see if you can number them...that's how many descendants I'm going to give you." Offspring of the woman who will crush the head of the serpent.
 - Land. "Canaan...I'll give that to you too."
 - Blessing. "Through you, I'm going to bless the nations. The blessing that was lost in Genesis 3 - that's what I'm going to restore." (12:1-3)
- Turning point in the story
 - Genesis 1-11 God speaks 5 blessings and 5 curses
 - Genesis 12:1-3 repeats blessing 5x. God's commitment to blessing/redemption
- 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. (Gen 12:1-4a)
- This is the **Abrahamic Covenant** (these 3 promises are aspects of the covenant)
- Sharpening of the plan of redemption. God is going to do something with this man and his family. And the rest of the OT tells their story.
- covenant passes on to his son Isaac (also childless) and Jacob (a manipulative sneak) and through these stories God keeps showing how committed he is to redemption...and that he is going to be the one to do it.
- There are elements of conditions in this covenant (Abraham has to "go" and offer Isaac). But time and again, Abraham does his little part and then God takes over. And it really is God who takes on responsibility to fulfill the terms of the covenant (Gen 15) and provide the atonement needed (Gen 22).
- Genesis ends with the story of Joseph - which explains how this covenant family end up in Egypt, growing in numbers (fulfillment of promise 1), but nowhere near possession of the land promised to Abraham by God

Exodus

- God's people are enslaved...they become a great nation like God promised Abraham. God is faithful to his covenant, though they are enslaved and persecuted. Repeated idea in chapter 1 is "they multiplied and grew very strong" (1:7, 12, 20). *First promise to Abraham fulfilled!*
- but the only way they're blessing the nations is through their slavery to them...and they are far from the land God promised Abraham
- God miraculously delivers them from slavery (Exodus 1-18)
- And takes them to Mount Sinai: God shows up on the mountain - in lightning and clouds and smoke (Exodus 19:16-18)
 - On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.
- **Mosaic Covenant:** covenant extended to the nation; Israel's constitution (Ex 19-24)
 - Suzerain: Yahweh
 - Vassal: Israel
 - Stipulations: Conditional covenant = Blessing for obedience (summarized in 10 commandments; could be summed up as: worship me alone), curses for disobedience. Ultimate curse would be exile (removal from the Promised Land).
 - Blood: Exodus 24:3-8 Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."
- Then Exodus 25-40, almost half of the book, goes into mind-numbing detail describing the **tabernacle**: the materials, artistry, construction
- Why??
- Because of the symbolic nature of what it describes = in the very centre of this **tabernacle**, in the Holy of Holies....this is the place where God is going to dwell with his people (Exodus 25:17, 20-22)
 - "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold... The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to

another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you.”

- Cherubim defending the presence of the king, like they did in the garden
- The book of Exodus ends with a climax - of God filling the **tabernacle**, his manifest presence visibly in the midst of this people in the form of cloud and fire (Ex 40:34-38)
 - Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night.
- God is once again dwelling with humanity

Leviticus:

- But how can a holy God, who is totally unlike anything else that there is, dwell in the midst of an unholy people?
- Israel had already proven that this would be difficult by immediately worshipping a golden calf and thanking it for delivering them from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 32)
- Leviticus provides a solution: ritual, sacrifices, purity laws and the priesthood would enable God's holy presence to dwell among them. Be holy as I am holy (Lev 19:2)
- At the centre of the book is the Day of Atonement (Lev 16) - the one day a year the high priest was actually able to enter into the holy of holies, where God dwelt.
- Involved a strange ritual with 2 goats:
 - one was sacrificed, its blood poured out on the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, the mercy seat where God promised to meet with his people (16:15-19)
 - the other was “cursed,” sins of the nation laid on it, and it was sent out into the wilderness, away from the community symbolizing the removal of sin (16:21-22)
- catch-all for any sins not dealt with by the other rituals. The day wiped the slate clean
 - For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins. (16:30)
- Only problem was...just one day a year. And how could the blood of goats really deal with sin??? Ultimately the Law was a preparation for Christ and showed the need for a greater atonement that didn't need to be repeated year in and year out.

Numbers

- shows how obstinate this people are. They prove what God said after the flood, “the desires of man are evil from youth”

- God wanted to give them the land he promised Abraham, but because of unbelief they refuse and wander in the wilderness for 40 years (Num 14:26-35)
- Psalms 78:22 describes this generation and their great sin as not believing God: "They did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power"
- This is the great sin of Eve and the great sin of all humanity = not trusting God and his goodness.
- But still, his presence graciously remains among them, as evidenced by the **tabernacle** and the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day
 - On the day that the **tabernacle** was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony. And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night. And whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel camped (Num 9:15-17)
- God living in a tent, like his people

Deuteronomy

- His gracious commitment to this people is affirmed in Deuteronomy
- The structure of the book is of an Ancient Covenant document
- It is a **Covenant renewal** (renewal of the Mosaic covenant, which he didn't have to do because the first generation broke it). In it God takes the next generation (the one that their fathers thought would get eaten alive by the Canaanites - Deut 1:39) and he promises to give them the land
- This book is a reiteration of the Law and through it we discover that God is trying to create a different-looking people with a different-sort of worship, so that the nations see that God gets the credit for blessing them
- Canaan's significance because of its location, between 2 major civilizations
 - trade/war had to pass through Canaan = world stage
 - God sets up his people here because of what does he wants to do - to bless the nations (*remember his 3rd promise to Abraham*)
- We don't have the time to get into it, but this is also the context for understanding the command to destroy the Canaanites
 - Who were not innocents but were wicked idolators (Gen 15:16, Lev 18:24-25, Lev 20:23, Deut 9:4-5, Deut 18:12, Deut 20:18)
 - They would lead Israel astray to idolatry (Deut 7:4)
 - God putting his people on the world stage so all nations will give him and him alone credit for what he does with this nation and not some other foreign god (Deut 4:6-8, 28:10, 29:24-28)
- Worship me alone is the main command of Deuteronomy, 10 commandments repeated. But lots more specific laws that are an expansion of what was already said in Exodus.

- In Deuteronomy the command for centralized worship is emphasized. Deut 12-26 specific commands of how to “worship God alone” in daily command. First specific command of how to do this: destroy the places of worship and go to the place God will choose:
 - “You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place. You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way. But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes...your offerings (Deuteronomy 12:2-6)
- *why is centralized worship important?*
 - Because God is ONE - and as soon as you start worshipping in whichever location you want, you start worshipping God in whatever way that you want
 - And the nations won’t know the one true God or receive the blessing he has for them (Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*).
 - Unfortunately, Israel really didn’t set up one centre for worship for hundreds of years

Joshua

- Israel takes the land, *fulfilling God’s second promise to Abraham*
- Pretty faithful generation (comparatively). Though they don’t really obey and destroy all the pagan places of worship, the places to meet other “gods”

Judges

- Tells us what happens with the very next generation
- Starts with a sad intro:
 - And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. (Judges 2:7-10)
- Repeated phrase sums up Judges - “everyone did what was right in their own eyes” (17:6, 21:25), going after other gods and repeatedly breaking the covenant
- Sounds like Eve...deciding what is good for herself.
- once they had the land, they kept the **ark of the covenant** in Shiloh, but it wasn’t until Solomon came along that a permanent dwelling place was made for God
- Ruth is set in this time: bright spot; great grandmother of the greatest king of Israel

1 and 2 Samuel

- tells the story of how David became king of Israel
- Remember God wanted to do something different with Israel. He didn't want them to be like the nations. He was their Suzerain, he was their king. Who would lead them into battle. The nation at this time is referred to as a **theocracy**: God as king of Israel
- They had judges who did some form of governing, but they weren't King. God was.
- But Israel wanted to be like the nations, with a man as King (**monarchy**). So when they ask for a king, Samuel, their last judge feels rejected. God says to him, "Don't feel rejected. This isn't about you. It's about me. They don't want me to be their king" (1 Sam 8:4-9)
- Saul is first, and he is a king like the other nations. Saul seems like just the man to lead them victorious in battle, head and shoulders above the rest (1 Sam 9:2)
- But God doesn't see as man sees, and through Saul God demonstrates that he is more interested in obedience than in sacrifice (a theme he reiterates in the prophets) (1 Sam 13, 15).
- The sacrificial system is set up so that sinful man can have sins atoned for and approach God. But they didn't really deal with the situation. They didn't deal with the hardened hearts. Which is why God was more interested in a broken and a contrite spirit than in the blood of bulls and goats.
- That's what sets David apart. He's not sinless. He's not perfect. But this is what he knows. And he knows that when he messes up God is more interested in confession and brokenness than in sacrifice (Psalm 51 written after adultery with Bathsheba)
- Also, he is a man after God's heart because he *never* worshipped other gods.
- One of the desires of his heart was to build a **temple** for God, a place for centralized worship. But through the prophet Nathan, God says no (2 Samuel 7:1-17)
 - "Go and tell my servant David, 'Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.... And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not

depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

- You think you're gonna build me a house...no I'm going to give you a house, a dynasty that will last forever
- **Davidic covenant:** a future son and an everlasting kingdom
- But God also says: your son is going to build me a house

1 and 2 Kings (and 1 and 2 Chronicles)

- looks like that son will be Solomon
- Aside: **Wisdom literature** written/compiled during the time of Solomon (and David)
 - Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Job, Ecclesiastes
 - Message: Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord and obedience to covenant. Keeping covenant brings blessing. However, real life is not cookie cutter. And God is not a vending machine. How to live in the fear of the Lord, even when life doesn't make sense.
- Solomon literally does build God a **house**, fulfilling the promise to David
- here God's dwelling place moves from a tent to a **temple**
- a beautiful, elaborate temple that took 7 years to build (1Kings 6:38)
- engravings of cherubim and palm trees and flowers that make it look very much like a garden... (1 Kings 6:14-38)
- At the dedication of the **temple** Solomon asks the Lord to condescend himself to make his name dwell in this place:
 - “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built. Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, ‘My name shall be there.’” (1 Kings 8:27-29)
- And God says, “Yeah, okay” and a glory cloud fills the place, similar to the way it filled the tabernacle at the end of Exodus:
 - And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord (1Kings 8:10-11)
- But God says, “Just so you know...there's nothing particularly special about this place except for the fact that I am *choosing* to dwell here. If you break my covenant, I will cast off this dwelling place and make it a heap of ruins” (1 Kings 9:6-9)
- God did just that
- In Kings and Chronicles we are told the story of Israel's constant unfaithfulness and idolatry, often led by their kings.
- Unfortunately this unfaithfulness was immediate.
- Solomon - the builder of God's house, became an idol worshipper (1 Kings 11:1-8)

- In judgement Israel was split into 2 nations - 10 northern tribes = Israel, 2 southern tribes = Judah (1 Kings 12)
- but God kept his covenant with David, and over Judah there was always a son of David on the throne (even though they were often wicked)
- though Kings and Chronicles essentially tell the same history (from different perspectives), Chronicles focuses exclusively on the kings of Judah, the sons of David, and is specifically concerned with their treatment of the **temple**.

Prophets

- God kept his promise to the Davidic covenant, always keeping a son on the throne, but he also showed extraordinary grace concerning the Mosaic covenant
- Remember: blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience (with exile being the ultimate curse). Once broken God under no obligation to keep the covenant terms.
- But in an extraordinary demonstration of mercy, he sends prophets to call people back to the covenant
- Important to know about the prophets:
 - The prophetic books are set in the time of Kings and Chronicles. They show God's heart and God's response to the unfaithfulness of the kings and the people
 - Their message is nothing new. Essentially they are repeating the terms of the covenant over and over again, urging that the people return to the covenant in order to experience blessing (message of Deuteronomy)
 - But also foretell a great day of restoration, when God will raise up a greater Son of David, and establish his kingdom on earth.
- Each prophet has a unique facet of this message. Some were sent to the northern tribes (Israel), but most were to the southern tribes (Judah). Why is that significant?
 - Where **temple** was (God's dwelling), in Jerusalem
 - Davidic covenant with these kings, line of Judah
- One of the important messages of the prophets (Jeremiah and Ezekiel especially) is to quit looking at the fact that they had the temple, the *symbol* of God's presence among them, as evidence that they would be okay
 - Jeremiah's day (lead up to exile) looked at **temple** like a magic symbol, "This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord" (Jer 7:4).
 - In Ezekiel God sends a vision of his presence leaving the temple:
 - Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth before my eyes as they went out, with the wheels beside them. And they stood at the entrance of the east gate of the house of the LORD, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them (Ezek 10:18-19)
 - Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city. (Ezek 11:22-23)

- Remember what God had warned Solomon in 1 Kings 9??? He'd leave this place he'd condescended to dwell if they failed to obey the covenant.
- They were shocked when in 586BC, Babylon defeated Judah and their **temple** was actually destroyed and they and their Davidic king were taken to Babylon in exile
- The house of God left a heap of ruins 2 Kings 25:13-15
 - And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces and carried the bronze to Babylon. And they took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the dishes for incense and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service, the fire pans also and the bowls.
- Lamentations written in response to this devastation, and the book ends with the cry: Restore us oh Lord, bring us back to you! Unless you have rejected us forever... (5:21-22). Was God done with them? Had his mercy finally come to an end?

Ezra and Nehemiah (Esther)

- these books demonstrate the answer: a resounding NO!
- after 70 years in exile, prophesied by Jeremiah, God allows his people to return back to their land; Ezra and Nehemiah tells this story. Esther is slightly different, telling a story about what happened to some Jews who stayed in Persia.
- Persia takes over and they have a foreign policy allowing this (Ezra 1:1-11). But they're still under foreign kings. David's son prophesied not yet restored to the throne.
- First on the agenda of the returning Jews in Ezra: rebuilding the temple (Ezra 3)
- Should have been happy occasion - going home, rebuilding, God restoring them
- But at the **temple** re-building we see that there is joy (returning and rebuilding) and sorrow (because the temple that they were building was nowhere near as glorious as the one that Babylon destroyed):
 - And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD... they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away. (Ezra 3:10-13)
- Further: there is no OT record of God's glory actually filling this second **temple**...like it records the glory cloud at the tabernacle and in Solomon's temple.
- 2 last prophets, Malachi and Haggai, prophesied the glory's return to the temple
 - Haggai: the latter glory of the temple would be greater than the former (2:1-11)
 - Malachi: God would return again to his temple (3:1)
- So for 400 years, they hung on to hope

- But God was strangely silent. No prophets sent during this time.
- Lots of upheaval in world politics. Babylon => Persia => Greece => Rome.
- End of OT, no King in sight. No evidence of God's presence with his people.

Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)

- when Rome was in power, a little baby was born
- in a manger, to a poor mother and father, in a backwater town called Bethlehem
- Thing was: God had prophesied that that the Great King, the Son of David who would inherit an everlasting throne, would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
- John writes about this baby this way "And the Word became flesh and **dwelt** (tabernacled) among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14)
- Somehow...the very glory and manifest presence of God **dwelt** in this baby. And for 30 years he dwelt among humanity. Doing good, teaching, healing all who were oppressed of the devil.
- Jesus demonstrates this claim, of manifesting God's presence, when upon clearing the temple he challenges the religious establishment: "Destroy this **temple** and in 3 days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). They take him literally and declare it impossible
 - But he wasn't talking about a physical temple of brick and stone
 - He was talking about himself
 - He, in his being, was the **Temple**. Not just a symbol of the presence of God (like Solomon's or the tabernacle).
- Colossians says: "for in him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (1:19, 2:9)
- Israel expected their Davidic king that the prophets spoke about to be political...rid them of their slavery to Rome. Put them on top on the world stage.
- But this King had a bigger idea, wanted to fight a bigger enemy, crushing the head of the serpent of Genesis 3 and freeing them from a greater slavery...to sin.
- So many people missed what this servant-king came to do
- the fact that he was killed by an alliance of Roman government and Jewish religious leadership seemed to set the matter at rest
- death looked like the ultimate loss...but it was actually the ultimate victory (video from Passion showing Jesus crush the head of the serpent from Gen 3:15)
- The gospel of John describes the hour of the cross as the hour when the glory of God in the person of Christ was most fully on display. Not the resurrection (although that demonstrates his glory too). The cross as the Hour of Glory:
 - atonement for sin
 - defeat of the serpent
 - defeats death, which reigned over man since Adam (Rom 5:14)
- It is Christ's death which makes possible the **new covenant**, promised in the old.
 - "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring

them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke... For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer 31:31-34)

- Remember the words of Christ at the Last Supper: And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the **new covenant** in my blood. (Luke 22:19-20)
- Christ's inauguration of the new covenant is what everything in the old covenant is pointing to. It's fulfilled and surpassed in the work of Christ.
 - A covenant between God and man
 - Ratified by blood (Christ's precious)
 - with blessings that are ours, namely life now and life forever (also Ephesians 1); the perfect fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham to bless the world.
 - And curses that are irrelevant because of One who perfectly fulfilled the demands of the covenant.
 - How do we receive the benefits? By being in Christ. How? By faith. From Day 1 this is what God has wanted from his people - faith. Trust. In him and his goodness. And that he won't hold out on us.
- Not only is it a new covenant...it's a better one! So clearly explained in Hebrews. Hebrews 9:11-14, unlike the priests of the old covenant who had to enter the Most Holy Place once a year to continually offer sacrifices for atonement - Christ entered once and with the precious offering of his blood secured an eternal atonement
- And not only that - his broken flesh ripped open the curtain that separated man and God, enabling humanity to boldly enter into God's presence (Hebrews 10:19-22)
- His resurrection vindicates that this has actually happened.

Acts

- The story that began in the Gospels continues in Acts...and Jesus says to his disciples, "Remember the promise to Abraham...that his family was going to be a blessing to the nations. Well I want you to go do that. Go throughout Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, proclaiming the good news of the gospel - of reconciliation between God and man" (Acts 1:8)
- But first, he commanded them to wait in Jerusalem for God was going to send His very Spirit to dwell inside them – and it was God's very Spirit who was going to enable them to fulfill the task he had called them to.

- The first believers waited, and what happened - tongues of fire appeared on their heads (2:1-4) and they became empowered witnesses of Christ's life, death and resurrection in the face of persecution (Acts 4:23-31).
- Tongues of fire = symbol of God's presence (like at Sinai or in wilderness)
- Remember that promise to David that a future son would build a house and receive an everlasting kingdom? Solomon did that...on a small scale. But Jesus is the greater son of David who builds a **house**, who builds a **church** in which God's Spirit can dwell. And establishes a kingdom that can never be destroyed.
- Believers have now become the **temple** that God chooses to dwell (1 Cor 3:16).
- Acts demonstrates that the resolution introduced in the first few pages of Genesis is both "now" and "not yet." Christ accomplished everything needed to bring about freedom from sin and reconciliation with God, but we still live in a fallen world and all of creation has not yet been restored to the perfection it was intended to be.
- It's inaugurated and we await consummation
- So Acts tells the story of the gospel is going forth, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and nothing can stop it, it is in the context of suffering and persecution.
- What is the response believers:
 - pray for boldness to continue to preach the good news and for God to confirm his word with signs: "And now Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:29-31)
- This is the age of tension – the age in which we currently live in anticipation of the new creation promised with Christ's Second Coming

Epistles (Two categories: Pauline and Non-Pauline)

- The rest of the NT is made up of various letters and writings by a number of different authors how to live in this age of tension.
 - 13 of them are written by Paul, at least one is anonymous, 1 by James, brother of Jesus, 2 by Peter, 4 by apostle John (including Revelation), 1 by Jude, Jesus' brother
- Letters written to various churches, helping them to live in this age of tension
- Consistent testimony: The very Spirit that raised Christ from the dead (Romans 8:9-11) empowers believers to live godly lives (Gal 5:16-25) and endure suffering (Romans 8). This indwelling of God's presence and empowering of the Spirit to live holy lives was prophesied in the Old Covenant: "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ezek 36:27).
- The church is the new **temple** (1 Cor 3) able to walk in ways that are pleasing to Him because His very Spirit empowers them to do so.

- First century world was a crazy world. Mad emperors, polytheism, Roman power, etc. NT not just theology, but practical theology. How to live in this crazy world.
- This is where we are at now in the story. These letters are so helpful to us now!
- But the Bible doesn't end there...with us waiting and not sure what we're waiting for

Revelation

- concludes the NT, telling of a time when fellowship with God will be completely restored and sin and death will be completely conquered.
- Our adversary the devil, the Ancient Serpent, overthrown, never to rise (Rev 12:9)
- People avoid this book, because of its crazy imagery and the controversy. But considering its genre helps to clear up *some* of the craziness.
 - Apocalyptic: genre that uses symbols and cosmic images to communicate truths.
 - Genre written during times of persecution to encourage righteous sufferers. Revelation's message to them: Hold on...Jesus wins.
- The final fulfillment of all of God's promises is described: "Behold, the **dwelling place** of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God" (Rev 21:3)
- And once again, we have God and man dwelling in a city that looks like a **garden**...in which there is no **temple**, because God is our **temple**
 - And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev 21:22-22:5)
- This is Eden. God's original intent. Which is also his final intent (Sandra Richter).
- unrestricted access, communion, beauty, work, rest, fruitfulness, reigning.
- This is the story of the Bible
 - of how God has and is working to reconcile mankind to himself.
 - of his desire to restore fellowship and dwell with man
 - of the intentionality of our gracious God in going about to make that happen

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