



BIBLETRACK 1

TALK 1 BIBLE OVERVIEW (PART 1) DR PETER WALKER

Talk Outline

Introduction

- God makes a covenant with Abraham and his people
- Bible is the story of how covenant was worked out
- Bible is split into Old Testament and New Testament
- Testament could be translated as covenant
- New covenant in Jesus is fulfillment of a promise
- Defining theme of Bible is God's kingdom
- God's kingdom is about God's rule over his world and his people
- Jesus establishes God's kingdom

'From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" ' (Matthew 4.17).

The Pattern of the Kingdom

Creation

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' (Genesis 1:1).

- God's creation is good
- God spoke everything into creation

'And God said' (Genesis 1:3).

- In Hebrew thought God's word was also his Spirit

'Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being' (Genesis 2:7).

- God's word is powerful and creative
- Creation is under God's control and expresses his mind and will
- God is transcendent and creation is separate from him

- Judeo-Christian view is that world is **not** God but is created **by** God and reflects him

'Now the earth was formless and empty' (Genesis 1:2).

- World was initially without form and content

FORM		CONTENT	
Day 1 – Light		Day 4 – The sun	
Day 2 – Sky and sea		Day 5 – Fish and birds	
Day 3 – Land and vegetation		Day 6 – Beasts and human beings	

- Climax of creation is God making human beings in his image

'So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them' (Genesis 1:27).

- Men and women equally made in God's image as pinnacle of God's creation
- Created in God's image with capacity for:
 - Relationship
 - Memory
 - Self-reflection
 - Knowledge of past
 - Dreams for future
- Picture of harmony – perfect relationships between God and people, men and women, humankind and nature

PATTERN OF THE KINGDOM	
God's people	Adam and Eve
God's place	Garden of Eden
God's rule	God's word

'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh'' (Genesis 2:23).

The Perished Kingdom

The fall

- Human beings fall from God's grace: Genesis 3
- God meant us to be dependent on him for our knowledge

'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Psalm 111:10).

- Desire for autonomy and independence
- God's word, integrity and motives are questioned by the serpent
- Adam and Eve abandon trust in God in favour of self-reliance

'They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator' (Romans 1:25).

- Relationships are no longer harmonious but strained

'... Cursed is the ground because of you' (Genesis 3:17).

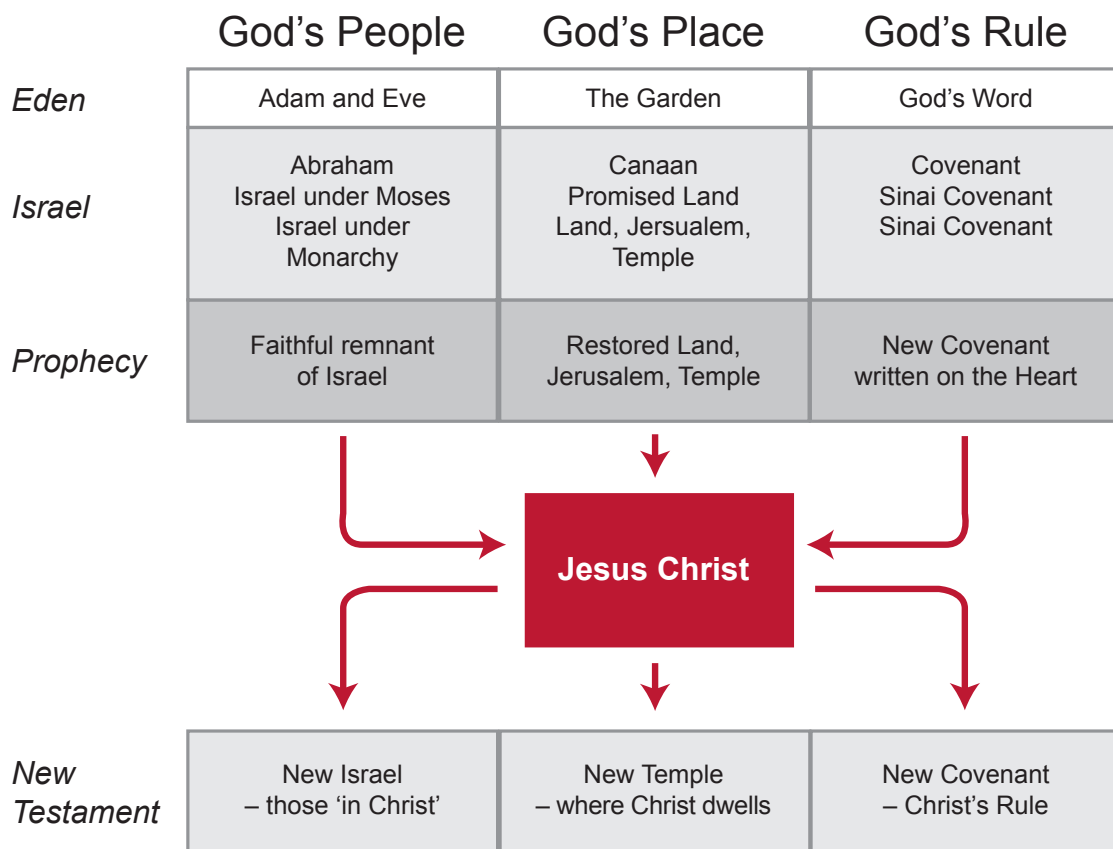
- God's order is re-imposed but with element of strain
- Adam and Eve are banished from the garden and from God's presence
- Rest of the Bible is concerned with redemption
- Genesis 4-11: sin and death spread through humankind

The Promised Kingdom

- Genesis 12: God's response to the problem of the fall

'The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you"' (Genesis 12:1-3).

- Beginning of God's covenant promises made to one individual
- 'Abraham' means father of many nations



Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of The Old Testament* (Paternoster Press: New Edition, 1994)

'The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land" ' (Genesis 12:7).

- God calls an individual, promises the land of Canaan and sets up a new covenant pattern to exercise his rule
- Same pattern as with Adam and Eve is being re-established
- In response to problem of sin, God rebuilds his world through one individual and his descendants
- God's response to human sin through Adam leads to the calling of Abraham
- Universal promises of God are realised through Jesus

'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit' (Galatians 3:13-14).

- God's blessing is given through Abraham and eventually to the world
- Genesis 12 sets up the Bible's plot line

The Partial Kingdom

i. God's people and nation (Genesis 12 – Exodus 18)

- Genesis is story of how God preserves this one nation
- Miraculous birth of Isaac
- Genesis 22: threat to the family line
- Esau and Jacob
- Genesis 37-50: famine in Canaan

'Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" ' (Genesis 50:24).

- Blessings came out of Joseph's sufferings
- Points towards suffering of Jesus

'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives' (Genesis 50:20).

- God desires to save: Jesus (Yeshua) means 'God saves'
- Deep biblical principle that God brings good out of evil
- Exodus: 400 years later and people of God are large minority within Egypt

'... The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them' (Exodus 2:23-25).

- Book of Exodus: story of God redeeming and rescuing his people

'Why has God not fulfilled the promises that he made to Abraham at this stage? Israel was brought to Egypt because God intended to reveal the way into his kingdom. It is a way of involving miraculous redemption from a bondage that holds us and keeps us out of the kingdom. Only a miracle of God can bring us back to the kingdom. The exodus will remain the key model for the understanding of redemption in the life of Israel. And the people of God will be made to recall it as the basis of their response to a God who saves.' (Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*)

- Israel's rescue from slavery and journey into the promised land sets pattern for God's redemption

God's redemption:

- God provides a deliverer
- Confrontation with oppressor
- Death and substitution
- Exodus 12: Passover narrative
- Passover imagery is foundational in life of Israel
- Passover meal before Good Friday was biblical picture of Jesus' sacrifice

ii. God's rule (Exodus 19 – Leviticus)

- Giving of the Ten Commandments: Exodus 19–20
- People of God rescued from Egypt and now alone with God in the desert

'Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites" ' (Exodus 19:3–6).

- God of relationship
- Israel to be established as a holy nation and to keep God's covenant
- Israel to reflect God's glory to the nations so people can see nature and character of God
- Jesus to come from the nation of Israel
- In Hebrew: the Ten Words
- First commandments focus on worship of God and last commandments on treatment of each other
- Commandments given to people who have already been redeemed and rescued

' "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me" ' (Exodus 20:2–3).

- Biblical commands are to be obeyed as an expression of our redemption by God
- Therefore grace precedes law
- God's commandments give life

iii. God's Law

- God's presence through the tabernacle
- Instructions on how to build tabernacle: Exodus 25
- Instruction and construction chapters to show God's presence at centre of community

'Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them' (Exodus 29:45–46).

- Redemption leads to relationship
- 'Tent of Encounter': Moses and Aaron encounter God
- 'Shekinah' glory: guided Israelites by night and rests in the temple in Jerusalem
- Sacrifice of atonement for covering of sins to enter presence of God
- 'Atonement': covering of sins

'For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life' (Leviticus 17:11).

- Atonement is offered to us by the blood sacrificed on the altar
- Confirmed in New Testament through Jesus' sacrifice
- We can only approach God on the basis of the atonement he has provided

Acknowledgments

Kingdom of God and Gospel diagram adapted from Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Paternoster Press: New edition, 1994)

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