



Covenant

— God keeps His promises —

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Introduction

The Bible is a unique collection of 66 books written in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek) by forty different authors representing three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe); almost every walk of life (shepherd, judge, king, prophet, priest, physician, tax collector, et al.) and spanning almost sixteen hundred years (approximately fifty some generations). It also contains an array of literary types (lists, narratives, law codes, poetry, parable, allegory, lament, apocalyptic, etc.) covering the history of the nation of Israel and the beginning of the Christian church.

Despite this massive diversity, the Bible is not a series of disconnected fragments, but has an overall theme about the promises, plan, progress, and purpose of God for the redemption of all people.

Every new promise of God in the Bible is linked to an ongoing stream of announcements in the historic progress from Eve, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and his whole reigning line - ultimately finding it's fulfilment in Jesus Christ. Jesus links the two testaments (another word for covenant) together. The Old Testament anticipates the New and the New fulfills the Old.

The promises of God reveal His character and His heart to save His creation. God is faithful in keeping His promises, and His promises are a testimony to His love and grace towards humanity. As we look back over history and the story of the Bible, we see how God is faithful in keeping His promises to His people. Looking forward, we can have confidence that He will continue to keep His promises to us.

While we wait for the complete restoration of all things, those who are part of the new humanity can live new hope-filled lives, saved by the promised Messiah, empowered by the promised Holy Spirit to announce the new King and kingdom ruled by our promised keeping God. So that all peoples, can hear about and be included in God's universal plan of salvation.

About these studies

At St. Matts, we want everyone to feel confident that they can read, understand, and apply God's word for themselves without the use of external tools like commentaries, devotions, and even study booklets. This is one of the reasons we have introduced SOAP as a model for daily Bible reading.

In our Life Groups, we follow a similar method to help equip everyone in the group to read, understand, and apply God's word for themselves. In this booklet, you will see the SOAP headings of Scripture, Observations, Application, and Prayer, although there are a few little subheadings to flesh out the Observation phrase. The basic elements are:

Scripture: We have a strong belief that Scripture is clear and can be understood. The text in the passage is the only data or "evidence" that we are working with. Everyone comes to the study with the same data, so we all sit under the text to simply look and see what it says.

Observation: As we see what the text says, to better understand the passage we may have *questions*. Using the standard Who? What? When? Where? How? questions on the text can help us go deeper in our understanding. We may have questions that the text doesn't answer. We can ask, but we must not force an answer from the text if an answer simply isn't there. We are letting the text guide us and not our own hang-ups, hobby horses, or even theology.

We also seek to find a *key* to the passage. This is distilling the passage into one main idea. This could be a key verse that the whole passage hangs on, or a concise statement on the timeless principle in the passage.

Application: Since scripture is living and active, with the help from the Spirit it will change us. From our observations and key, we ask what this passage is calling us to believe or how this passage is saying we are to behave. The more specific to your everyday life the better. A focused on God's character, sovereignty and faithfulness in relation to people could be helpful in this series.

Prayer: We mustn't ignore the text or the application when we come to our group prayer time. We should thank God for His word to us and ask for help to live our faith to those around us.

As we move around the Bible from week to week, it would also be worth understanding the context of each passage and where it falls in God's promised plan of salvation. Appendix C and D may help.

Covenant with Adam and Eve – Genesis 1:27-31, 2:15-17

The story so far: God has made everything good, including people in His image.

Scripture

1 ²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day.

2 ¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

Observation

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

How does being made in the image of God shape the way we think God sees us, and how we view ourselves and others in terms of purpose and value?

Hosea 6:7 calls Adam's instructions a covenant. In your own words, do you think a covenant between God and people entails? Was this covenant one of works or of grace? Conditional or unconditional?

How does sin disrupt God's original plan for humanity as described in these passages?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

We thank you, God of all loveliness,
for the beauty of earth and sky and sea;
for the richness of mountains, deserts and rivers;
for the songs of birds and the beauty of flowers.
We praise you for these good gifts,
and pray that we may guard our heritage,
to the honour and glory of your name. **Amen.**

Covenant with Noah – Genesis 6:11-22, 9:7-17

The story so far: Humanity spirals down and away from God, until every inclination of people's hearts was evil.

Scripture

6 ¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵ This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. ¹⁶ Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. ¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark – you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰ Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹ You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

²² Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

9 ⁷ As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹ "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰ and with every living creature that was with you – the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you – every living creature on earth. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

¹² And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: ¹³ I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ Whenever I

bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶ Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

¹⁷ So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

Observation

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

What does the account of Noah and the flood reveal about God's justice and mercy? How do we reconciled these two concepts in our own life through Jesus?

What does the symbol of the rainbow serve as a reminder of? Do you still trust God's promises today? What specific promises of God do you hold on to?

How does God's covenant with Noah and all creation relate to the broader story of God's plan for the salvation of humanity?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

God of the new and eternal covenant,
as the forty days of the great flood swept away the world's corruption
and watered new beginnings of righteousness and life:
grant to us, who are washed clean and born again
in the saving flood of baptism, the wellspring of your grace,
that your gift of new life may flourish once again;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Covenant with Abraham – Genesis 11:27-12:7

The story so far: The post-flood world still saw a prideful building project, where God kept His promise and didn't destroy the Earth, instead He scattered the people and they formed nations among themselves.

Scripture

11 ²⁷This is the account of Terah's family line.

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. ²⁹Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milkah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milkah and Iskah. ³⁰Now Sarai was childless because she was not able to conceive.

³¹Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there.

³²Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Harran.

12 The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

²"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.

³I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. ⁵He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Observation

Questions

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Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

What was promised to Abraham?

Why might someone hear these promises to Abraham and think they are impossible? What does this tell us about God?

How does God's covenant with Abraham relate to the broader story of God's plan for the salvation of humanity?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

O God,
you have assured the human family of eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Saviour:
deliver us from the death of sin
and raise us to new life in Him,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Covenant with Israel – Exodus 19:1-9, 24:1-8

The story so far: More than 440 years had passed since Abraham, and His family had grown into a large people group called Israel. They were slaves in Egypt, but God rescued them to lead them back to the land that was promised Abraham.

Scripture

19 On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt – on that very day – they came to the Desert of Sinai. ² After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

³ 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: ⁴ ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ 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, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

24 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, ² but Moses alone is to approach the LORD; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him.”

³ When Moses went and told the people all the LORD’s words and laws, they responded with one voice, “Everything the LORD has said we will do.” ⁴ Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.

He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he splashed against the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, “We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey.”

⁸ Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

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Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

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Extra Questions

What does this passage reveal about God and His character and His relationship with Israel? How well do you think Israel will keep their word?

In what ways might the use of blood in this covenant reveal something about the seriousness and significance of the promises being made, and what might this tell us about the nature of covenant relationships?

How does God's covenant with Israel relate to the broader story of God's plan for the salvation of humanity?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

Almighty god,
you gave the law to guide our lives:
grant that we may never shrink from your commandments,
but, as we are taught by your Spirit,
may fulfil your law in perfect love;
through Christ our Lord and Master,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

Covenant with David – 2 Samuel 7:1-17, 27-29

The story so far: The nation of Israel had settled in the land promised them, there was much fighting with the nations around them. They had set up a monarchy with their first king Saul, failing to follow God. David was the second king of Israel.

Scripture

⁷ After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”

³ Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.”

⁴ But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:

⁵ “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? ⁶ I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. ⁷ Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’”

⁸ “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. ¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning ¹¹ and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with

floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’”

¹⁷ Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

¹⁸ Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said:

...

²⁷ “LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, ‘I will build a house for you.’ So your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. ²⁸ Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. ²⁹ Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.”

Observation

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

What does David have in mind and what does God explain He had done and plan to do?

How does God's promise to establish an everlasting kingdom foreshadow the coming of Jesus?

How does God's covenant with David relate to the broader story of God's plan for the salvation of humanity?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

Almighty God,
whose sovereign purpose none can make void:
give us faith to be steadfast amid the tumults of this world,
knowing that your kingdom shall come
and your will be done,
to your eternal glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

New Covenant with Israel – Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-29

The story so far: The nation of Israel had rebelled against God and divided. ten tribes were scattered and the remaining two were exiled from their land. Despite their failures, God had not forgotten His promises to His people.

Scripture

Jer 31 ³¹ “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Ez 36 ²² “Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

²⁴ “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.

Observation

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Extra Questions

What is God promising to do for Israel and why?

How does this covenant contrast with the old covenant on Mount Sinai?
What do you think was the problem with the old covenant?

How does God's promise of a new covenant involving a new heart with God's Spirit relate to the broader story of God's plan for the salvation of humanity?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

O God
who in smoke and fire upon Mount Sinai gave the law to Moses,
and who revealed the new covenant in the fire of the Spirit;
grant, we pray,
that, kindled by the same Spirit
which you poured forth upon your apostles,
we may fulfil with joy your commandment of love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

New Covenant through Jesus – Luke 22:7-22

The story so far: Jesus, Son of Adam, from the line of David has come announcing a new kingdom, one ruled by God. He gave people a glimpse of His glory and power to restore people, while also predicting He would die and rise again. During a Jewish festival remembering how God saved the nation of Israel from slavey, Jesus has dinner with His followers in Jerusalem...

Scripture

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

⁹ "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

¹⁰ He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there."

¹³ They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴ When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. ²¹ But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. ²² The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!" ²³ They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

Observation

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

What was the significance of Jesus' words during the Passover meal? What do you think Jesus was referring to in v20?

What is the purpose of the Lord's Supper as instituted by Jesus? How might you explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper to a child?

How does Jesus saying His body and blood is the new covenant relate to the broader story of God's plan for the salvation of humanity?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

O God,
in a wonderful sacrament
you have given us a memorial of the passion of your dear Son:
grant that we may so reverence
the sacred mysteries of his body and blood
that we may ever know within ourselves the fruits of his redemption;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

New Covenant People – Hebrews 8:3-13; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

The story so far: Jesus had fulfilled God's plan of salvation, and the Holy Spirit had been poured on all people as predicted (Joel 2:28-29). The story didn't end here, God's people now live under a new covenant.

Scripture

Heb 8 ³ Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. ⁴ If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. ⁵ They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." ⁶ But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

⁷ For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. ⁸ But God found fault with the people and said:

"The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

⁹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

¹⁰ This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

¹¹ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

¹³ By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

2 Cor 3 ⁷ Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look

steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹ If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹ And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Observation

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

How is Jesus a better priest than the previous ones Israel had?

How does the problem with the old covenant set the stage for the coming of Jesus and the establishment of a new covenant?

Of the covenants we have looked at to Abraham, Noah, Israel, David etc.. which one(s) do you think had the “new” covenant replace? Why do you say that?

What would you say to a non-Christian who claims Christians pick and choose what rules to follow in the Bible?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

God of all the living,
in the resurrection of Christ Jesus
you have given us the promised of live which death itself cannot destroy:
in the strength of this unshakable promised,
give us a new heart to live, even now, as your new creation.
We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Covenant Fulfilment – Revelation 21:1-8, 21:22-22:7

The story so far: Revelation looks at what is ahead, where all of God's promises will be fulfilled. The story arches back to the beginning, where people will be in perfect relationship with God and each other, in a perfect place.

Scripture

21 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

⁶He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

...

²²I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

⁶ The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

⁷ "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."

Observation

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

What is the significance of the Lamb in the new Jerusalem? How do you think our fellowship with God will be different in the new world?

Revelation reminds us that sin really does not go unpunished in the long run. What ramifications does that have for our lives in terms of the evil we see around us and the evil we see inside of us?

Of the promises we have seen fulfilled in our series, what basis of hope do we have that this new heaven and new earth will also be fulfilled? How would you explain this to a non-believer?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action.

Lord of all life and power,
who, through the mighty resurrection of your Son,
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise, honour and thanksgiving, now and for all eternity.

Amen.

Appendix A – Covenants

Covenant is one of the most important concepts in the Bible. It is found in our names for the two parts of Scripture: Old and New Testament ('testament' is another word for covenant) and the word appears frequently (285 times in the OT and 33 in the NT). One writer says: "A covenant is a formally confirmed agreement, between two or more parties that creates, formalizes, or governs a relationship that does not naturally exist" It refers to a solemn commitment. God commits himself to his people by making binding promises. Sometimes they are unilateral (God promises to act unconditionally), but often they are bilateral and conditional: God expects his people to make their own promises to obey him. The covenants are sealed in blood and are given with a sign that is designed to be a reminder of them. The Bible contains a number of covenants:

The Noahic covenant

God makes a unilateral covenant to preserve his creation and never again to destroy it by a flood.

Sign: a rainbow

The Abrahamic covenant

God promises to raise up a great nation from Abraham's descendants and give them a land to live in. He will bless them and through them the whole world will be blessed.

Sign: circumcision

The Mosaic covenant

God promises the Israelites that they will be his special people; they, in turn, are commanded to obey his law.

Sign: the Sabbath

The new covenant

The Israelites break their covenant obligations and God has to judge them. But he promises through the prophet Jeremiah a new and better covenant, which leads to a changed heart, universal knowledge of God and complete forgiveness. Jesus' death on the cross inaugurates this new covenant.

Sign: baptism

These covenants are distinct but they are also bound together. They are all part of God's eternal plan to save the world through Jesus.

Appendix B – God keeps His promise

As the creator of everyone, God has always had a concern for all nations, not just Israel.

The promised kingdom. God promised Abraham, ‘ . . . all peoples on earth will be blessed through you’ (Genesis 12:3). He will be a ‘father of many nations’ (17:5).

The partial kingdom. Israel was meant to be a ‘kingdom of priests’ (Exodus 19), acting as a mediator between God and the nations. Some foreigners share in God’s blessing to them: for example, Rahab (Joshua 6), the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10) and Naaman (2 Kings 5).

The prophesied kingdom. God’s servant will be ‘a light for the Gentiles’ and ‘all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God’ (Isaiah 42:6; 52:10).

The present kingdom. Jesus’ earthly ministry was focused on the Jews (Matthew 15:24), but he did bring salvation to Gentiles too (e.g. Matthew 8:5–13; 15:21–28). He taught that Israel’s rejection of him would lead to God’s judgment on her. Then the gospel would be proclaimed to all nations (Matthew 21:43; 24:14).

The proclaimed kingdom. Christian believers have been given the Spirit to equip us to take the gospel to all people. Mission is not an option for the keen few; it is an obligation for us all. Jesus commands us to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’ (Matthew 28:19).

The perfected kingdom. God’s family in heaven will include representatives ‘from every nation, tribe, people and language’ (Revelation 7:9).

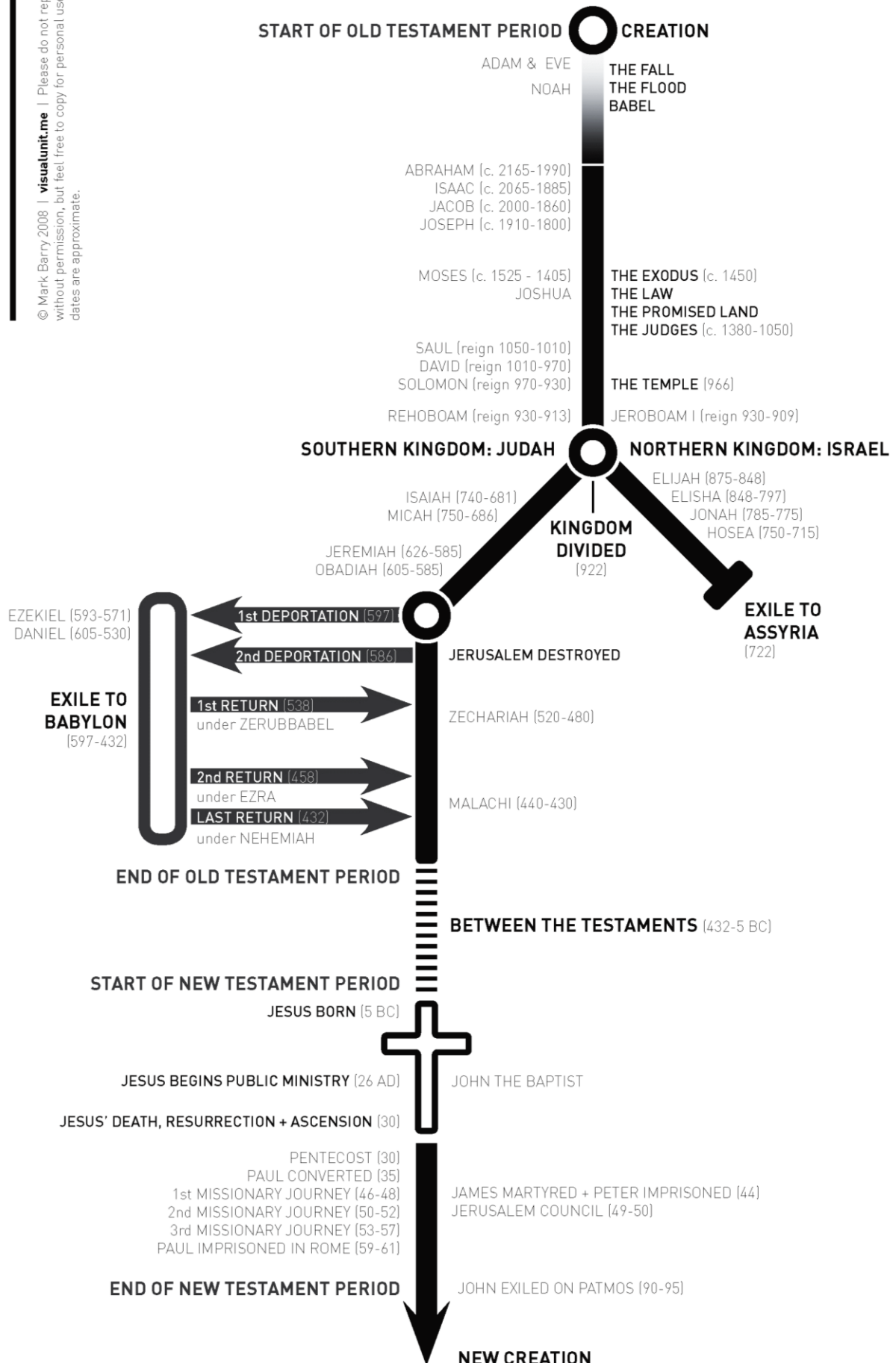
Appendix C – The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God	The pattern of the kingdom	The perished kingdom	The promised kingdom	The partial kingdom	The prophesied kingdom	The present kingdom	The proclaimed kingdom	The perfected kingdom
God's people	Adam & Eve	No-one	Abraham's descendants	The Israelites	Remnant of Israel, inclusion of nations	<i>Jesus Christ:</i> new Adam; new Israel	The new Israel: Jew & Gentile believers in Christ	Multination family of God
God's place	The garden	Banished	Canaan	Canna (Jerusalem & temple)	New temple; new creation	<i>Jesus Christ:</i> true tabernacle; true temple	The individual believer, the church	New creation, new Jerusalem, new temple
God's rule and blessing	God's word; perfect relationships	Disobedience & curse	Blessing to Israel & the nations	The law & the king	New covenant; new king; great blessing	<i>Jesus Christ:</i> new covenant; rest	New covenant Holy Spirit	Throne of God & the Lamb; perfect blessing

Appendix D – Bible Timeline

BIBLE TIMELINE

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References and Resources

The introduction used the following:

- Kaiser, W. C., Jr. (2009). *Recovering the Unity of the Bible*. Zondervan.
- Köstenberger, A. J., & O'Brien, P. T. (2001). *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A biblical theology of mission*. InterVarsity Press.

Appendix A, B, C have been taken from:

- Roberts, V (2002). *God's Big Picture: Tracing the storyline of the Bible*. IVP Books.

Of all the books on this page, this one is most recommended, as it provided a simple overview of the whole Bible.

Appendix D was taken from:

- Visualunit. Bible Timeline retrieved from:
<https://visualunit.me/2010/03/18/bible-timeline/>

Other Resources:

- Goldsworthy, G. (1981). *Gospel and Kingdom*. Paternoster Press.
God's Big Picture leans on and simplifies this book one a lot.
- Moore Theological College (2007). *Introduction to the Bible*.
This is the first course in Moore's Preliminary Theology Certificate. It provides a simple overview of the Bible in 10 weeks.

All the prayers have come from *A Prayer Book for Australia*