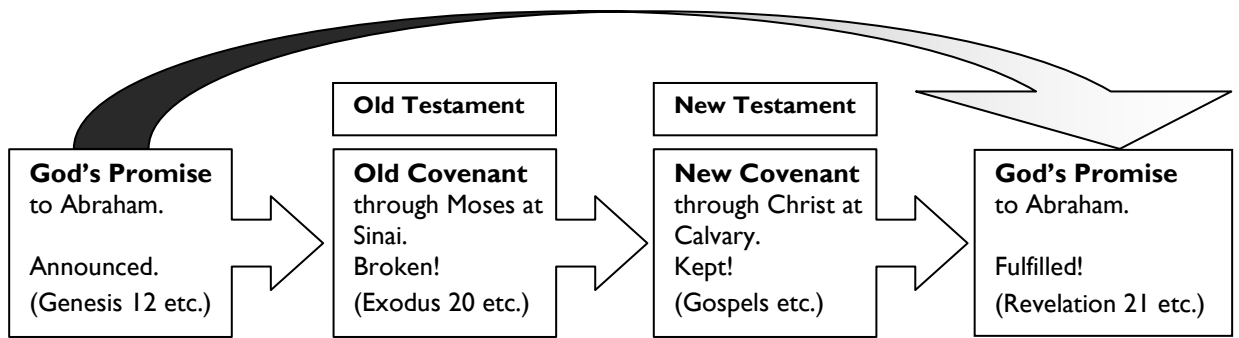


Part 3: Big Themes I

COVENANTS OLD AND NEW

We've already looked at the three main covenants in the Bible, so this is really a reminder. You'll need to see the previous two handouts if you've missed them.

Here's the diagram from week one which shows the overarching framework. Remember that the covenant with Abraham is made in order to regain what was lost at the fall (and more!), so even though this appears to start in Genesis 12, its roots go back to the beginning.



KINGDOMS AND KINGS

There are two aspects to this theme: the rule of God and kingship among mankind. The first is always absolutely good; the second has examples of both good and bad as kings wither follow or reject God's kingship. These two aspects can be laid out in parallel lines.

God's Rule	Rulers Among Mankind
In Creation, God rules through his word: 'let there be ... and there was'.	Adam and Eve were to rule as God's vice-regents in the garden.
God's rule is rejected in the fall, but remains seen in judgement – God expels Adam and Eve.	Adam and Eve took sovereignty into their own hands but behind this was Satan's attempt to usurp God's rule. They made right a royal mess.
With Abraham, God rules through his promises accepted by faith.	Abraham ruled his family, but imperfectly. The usurper tries to start a dynasty of disbelief.
In Israel, God rules through his king and through his prophetic word; he promises that he will come and rule.	Israel rejected God's direct rule yet God granted a king: a succession of good and bad kings became increasingly wicked. Israel is at odds with the usurper's kingdoms.
Jesus is the promised King who rules with grace and truth.	The true King disarms the usurper.
In these days God rules through his saving Gospel and 'the Spirit within'.	We gladly submit to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Also, we are royal children.
In the end, God's rule will be seen in final judgement and in the freedom from sin in heaven	All God's people are 'kings and priests'; we lay down our crowns; the usurper is destroyed.

Part 3: Big Themes I

TONIGHTS BIG THEMES

- Creation and New Creation
- Covenants Old and New
- Kingdoms and Kings

WHAT'S IT'S ALL ABOUT?

The Bible has a number of major themes that start at or near the beginning and run right through to the end or very near it. They form the plot-line of the whole Bible and give us the links between all the smaller parts.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

- Simply because they are there!
- Without the big themes we tend to misunderstand the smaller details.
- They help us to see how the whole Bible works as one book even though there are so many different elements.
- They connect the Old and New Testaments.
- They show the vastness of the glory of God's purposes and power.

CREATION AND NEW CREATION

This theme starts with a close understanding of what was going on in the early chapters of Genesis and traces those themes through to what things will be like by the end of Revelation. The move from creation to new creation is made in Christ, the 'Last Adam'.

Here's a framework in which to put more detail this evening:

Creation in Genesis	The Fall in Genesis	Israel and God I	Israel and God II	Jesus	New Creation
A perfect place for those whom God made.	The place suffers and Adam and Eve are expelled.	A land is promised for those people whom God promises to childless Abraham.	The people disobey and are removed from the land into exile.	Obeys the Father perfectly as one of us – the perfect 'proper man'.	A perfect place is promised for those who are re-made in Christ. A new heaven and a new earth.
Humanity in fellowship with God accepting his rule.	Humanity alienated from God and trying to take his place.	A means of approaching God is given and his rule is made explicit.	The temple is abandoned by God and his word is not heard.	In perfect fellowship with the Father and the Spirit.	Humanity in Christ can have perfect fellowship with God and rejoices in his rule.
All creation working together.	Creation is at odds with creation.	God provides for the people through the land and the people can dwell long in it.	The land does not yield its fruit. Human relations are war-like.	He is the prince of peace and all in him are brothers and sisters before the Father.	The lion will lie down with the lamb. Swords will be turned into ploughs.