**The Story of the Old Testament**

**Lecture #9 – The Book of the Twelve & Conclusion**

***Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi***

**The Continued Progression of Fulfillment: Rebellion, Judgment & Future Fulfillment (Part II)**

1. **Worship**

*Great I Am* by New Life Worship.

1. **Quick Review of the Covenants**

Does anyone remember the **6 covenants**? Let’s review them. You will find me repeating myself over and over again on the main parts of the story because that is the only way that I can learn and, I believe, that anyone can learn (unless you have a photographic memory, and, in that case, I don’t like you very much!). So, here they are:

* **The Adamic Covenant (#1) – Genesis 2**
* **The Noahic Covenant (#2) – Genesis 9**
* **The Abrahamic Covenant (#3) – Genesis 12, 15, 17**
* **The Mosaic Covenant (#4) – Exodus 19-24**
* **The Davidic Covenant (#5) – 2 Samuel 7**
* **The New Covenant (#6) – Hint in Deuteronomy 30:6, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:22-32**

1. **The Book of the Twelve**
   1. **Placement of The Book of the Twelve in the Storyline of the Old Testament**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Pre-Exilic** | **Exilic** | **Post-Exilic** |
| Hosea (I)  Joel  Amos (I)  Obadiah  Jonah (N)  Micah  Nahum  Habakkuk  Zephaniah | None | Haggai  Zechariah  Malachi |

The date that is the marker for the chart above is whether the prophet’s ministry was before, during, or after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. If an “I” is next to the prophets name, then the prophet’s primary audience was the northern kingdom of Israel. Jonah’s primary audience was the people of Nineveh, thus the “N” next to his name.

As we noted at the beginning of our study of the prophets, it is important to note that all of these prophets ministered after the division of the kingdom and during a time of spiritual decline in both the northern kingdom of Israel and southern kingdom of Judah. This was a time where the redemptive promises of the Lord appeared to be in a state of regression rather than progression. The primary role of the prophets in the Old Testament cannon, then, is to make it clear to the Lord’s people that the Lord’s promises remained and to point them to a future time of fulfillment.

* 1. **Unique Message & Role of The Book of the Twelve**

The last twelve books in the Old Testament are called either “The Book of the Twelve” or “The Minor Prophets.” The term “minor” does not denote a relative lack of importance but, rather, refers to the relative total length of the “Major Prophets” to the “Minor Prophets.” It takes about 12 hours to read the “Major Prophets” and about 2 hours to read the “Minor Prophets.”

The Book of the Twelve includes Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. We are not going to walk through each of these books individually but, rather, we are going to follow Schreiner’s lead and study The Book of the Twelve together tracing the common themes that each of the books share and noting significant unique contributions of particular books within the collection.

The major themes we will trace through The Book of the Twelve are the same major themes that we traced through out examination of the Major Prophets: (1) the condition of the Lord’s covenant people, (2) the coming judgment on the Lord’s covenant people because of their condition, and (3) the promise of salvation for the Lord’s covenant people. By tracing these themes, we see how the prophets helped the Lord’s people understand their current experience and point them to a future time of fulfillment.

* + 1. *The Condition of the Lord’s Covenant People*

As in the Major Prophets, the condition of the Lord’s people in The Book of the Twelve is dismal, at best. The book of *Hosea* graphically picks up the theme of spiritual adultery set forth in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Hosea’s marriage to Gomer the prostitute is set forth as a picture for the Lord’s relationship with his people. As Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea, so the Lord’s people have been unfaithful to him and are guilty of “great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.” (Hosea 1:2) The Lord’s people have defiled themselves with their whoredom and “[t]heir deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they know not the Lord.” (Hosea 5:3-4)

As indicated above, the whoredom of the people was facilitated by the absence of the knowledge of the Lord in the land: “There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land.” (Hosea 4:1) This reality is in stark contrast to the picture of the new creation that we saw in the book of Isaiah where “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9) and in the book of Habakkuk were we again read that “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14) The lack of knowledge, led to a lack of spiritual fidelity, which led to outright and blatant depravity: “there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.” (Hosea 4:2) The violations of the people recorded here point back to the Ten Commandments given by Moses in Exodus 20.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In *Amos*, the practical expression of the people’s spiritual adultery took many forms, including the form of basking in their abundance and engaging in religious activities while abandoning justice and exploiting the poor in the land in the book of Amos. The people are described as “those who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and turn aside the way of the afflicted . . . .” (Amos 2:7) The rich women of the people are famously referred to as “cows” that “oppress the poor [and] crush the needy.” (Amos 4:1) More generally, the people are described as those who “have rejected the law of the Lord, and have not kept his statutes, but their lies have led them astray.” (Amos 2:4)

In *Micah*, we see the people engaged in idolatry (Micah 1:7), coveting (Micah 2:2), stealing (Micah 2:2), and oppressing the poor within the land (Micah 2:8-9). They had forgotten what walking with the Lord looked like: “O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8) The people, however, were marked by just the opposite. They perverted justice, spurned kindness, and walked with a spirit of haughtiness. (Micah 6:11-12, 7:2-3)

*Habakkuk* also paints a dismal picture of the people - they are violent and full of iniquity, destruction, strife, and contention. (Hab. 1:2-3) The people have so turned from the Lord and his ways to such a degree that the “law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous, so justice goes forth perverted.” (Hab. 1:4) *Zephaniah* similarly adds that the people of the Lord “listen to no voice; she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord; she does not draw near to her God.” (Zeph. 3:2)

In *Haggai*, we see the prophet continuing to paint a bleak picture of the spiritual condition of the people even after the return from exile. The people continued to fail to walk in the fear of the Lord. Recall Schreiner’s definition of the fear of the Lord: “The fear of the Lord means that he is supreme in one’s life, that all of life is ordered by one’s relationship with him.”[[2]](#footnote-2) The fact that the Lord did not hold the supreme place on their lives was evidenced by the fact that they were concerned more about building their own homes than the Temple. (Haggai 1:9)

*Malachi* also testifies to the fact that the return from exile did not bring about the change in heart that will be part of the promised restoration of all things. The remnant who returned to the land are characterized by those who fail to honor and fear the Lord. (Malachi 1:6) The lack of honor and fear of the Lord is practically expressed in many ways. One of the most alarming expressions was the practice of offering leftover and defective sacrifices instead of the unblemished animals required by the Mosaic Law. (Malachi 1:8) Because of their casual disregard of the Lord and his requirements, the Lord declares: “I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand.” (Malachi 1:10)

All in all, the Book of The Twelve, both before and after the exile, paints a very negative picture of the spiritual condition of the Lord’s people. Putting together what we have set forth above, the Lord’s people have:

* committed spiritual adultery;
* abandoned the knowledge of the Lord;
* indulged in affluence while oppressing the poor and giving lip service to the Lord;
* rejected the Law of the Lord;
* coveted;
* perverted justice;
* spurned kindness;
* walked with a spirit of haughtiness;
* become violent and full of iniquity, destruction, strife, and contention;
* shut their ears to instruction;
* failed to draw near to the Lord; and
* generally failed to fear and honor the Lord.

The reader to this point of the Old Testament is well aware that judgment in the form of the covenant curses flows from such conduct on the part of the Lord’s people. It is to the description of this judgment that we now turn.

* + 1. *The Coming/Present/Past Judgment Upon the Lord’s Covenant People*

As we have noted several times throughout our study of the Old Testament, Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 made clear covenant curses (judgment) flow from the collective rejection of the Lord and his revealed will through the covenant requirements. So, as readers we are not surprised by the judgment that is frequently pronounced throughout The Book of the Twelve because of the dismal state of the people that we have seen above.

In *Hosea*, the Lord declares that he will expose the true condition of his people, put an end to their empty religious ceremonies, and punish them because they went after their “lovers and forgot me, declares the Lord.” (Hosea 2:11-13) *Hosea* makes it clear that the exile will come upon the Lord’s people because of their rebellion and rejection of him. (Hosea 9:3) An indication is also found in *Hosea* that the judgment of the Lord’s people will not be of a short duration: “For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea 3:4-5)

In *Joel*, the coming judgment upon the Lord’s covenant people is described as “the day of the Lord” that has come upon the people: “Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.” (Joel 1:15)[[3]](#footnote-3) The phrase “day of the Lord” occurs 12 times in the Book of the Twelve, though the concept of the day of the Lord pervades the Book of the Twelve.[[4]](#footnote-4) It is important to note that the covenant curses experienced by the people of the Lord throughout their history do not constitute the ultimate “day of the Lord.”[[5]](#footnote-5) The judgments experienced by the Lord’s people are incredibly significant, particularly the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. However, the phrase “day of the Lord” ultimately points to the final judgment, which will be a day of judgment for those who have rejected the Lord and a day of salvation (as we will discuss below) for those who have returned to the Lord and sought and found refuge in him.[[6]](#footnote-6)

One of the most significant problems of the Lord’s people during this time of their history was that they incorrectly believed that the day would be one of salvation for them because of their ethnic identity and external religious activities. The prophets attempted to correct this false believe by exposing the people’s true condition and by clearly setting for the judgment that naturally flowed from their condition. If they continued in their spiritual adultery, the day of the Lord would not be a day of salvation for them.

*Amos* continues this theme and reminds the Lord’s people that the day of the Lord will be one of judgment because they have rebelled against him: “Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light. . . “ (Amos 5:18) In other words, the people should not expect salvation from the hand of the Lord if they have rejected him. Rather, they should expect judgment, which is poetically described as the people being taken “away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks.” (Amos 4:2) Schreiner rightly notes: “Unless they repent and obey Yahweh, those who comfort themselves with the thought of being delivered on the day of the Lord are deluded.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

In *Zephaniah*, the day of the Lord is described as “a sacrifice whereby those who do not know and obey Yahweh will be consumed (1:7).”[[8]](#footnote-8) The scope of the day of the Lord in Zephaniah is world-wide for the Lord declares: “I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth . . . I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea . . . .” (Zephaniah 1:2-3) Schreiner notes: “The coming judgment is described in cosmic terms, terms that even exceed the judgment under Noah (1:2-3), for the impending devastation includes not only all human beings but also the fish of the sea and the birds of the air.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

*Haggai* shows the people continuing to experience covenant curses even after their return from exile because of their failure to walk in the fear of the Lord. Because they did not give the Lord the supreme place in their lives, the covenant curses came upon them. The land failed to produce abundance, their hunger was not satisfied, their thirst was not quenched, their clothing failed to provide adequate protection from the elements, their labor failed to adequately provide. (Haggai 1:6-11) Again, the return from the exile did not bring about the promised restoration for curses remained even after the return from the exile because of the people’s continued rebellion.

But, as we saw in our study of the Major Prophets, judgment is not the last word for the Lord’s people. Salvation will triumph over judgment for those who are truly the Lord’s people and it is to that promised salvation that we now turn.

* + 1. *The Promise of Salvation for the Lord’s Covenant People*

Schreiner provides a helpful connection to the theme of salvation found in The Book of the Twelve to that which has come before: “The saving promise that commenced with Genesis 3:15 and is reiterated in the covenants with Abraham and David is also picked upon the Book of the Twelve.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

We have noted above that the theme of the “day of the Lord” plays an important role in The Book of the Twelve. This day will be a day of salvation for those who turn away from their spiritual adultery and return to the Lord and seek and find refuge in him.[[11]](#footnote-11) The people are called upon to return to the Lord 19 times and are called to seek the Lord 10 times in The Book of the Twelve. We see through this repeated call that the Lord’s promised salvation is found in the wake of repentance on the part of his people.

As we have seen through our study of the Old Testament, the people of the Lord failed to return and seek the Lord and were sent into exile as a result. However, the call to return and seek the Lord continues after the return to the Promised Land as the Lord’s ultimate restoration and fulfillment is still yet to come for the Lord’s people as the Old Testament comes to a close.

This promised salvation is beautifully set forth in The Book of the Twelve. *Hosea* points back to the Abrahamic promise of numerous offspring and declares that it will be fulfilled despite the judgment that will come upon the Lord’s people: “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ it shall be said to them ‘Children of the living God.” (Hosea 1:10) The Lord will bring about the future salvation by “alluring” his people and betrothing his people to himself “in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.” (Hosea 2:14, 19-20) The spiritual adultery of the people will be replaced by fidelity when the promised salvation comes.

*Joel* describes the coming salvation in terms of restoration in Joel 2:25-27: “I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten . . . . You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.”

*Joel*, like Ezekiel, also highlights the role of the Spirit in the coming salvation for the Lord’s people: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Joel 2:28-32) Peter quotes this passage from *Joel* in his sermon recorded in Acts 2 after the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

*Amos* “anticipates the coming of a future Davidic king”[[12]](#footnote-12) that will bring about the coming salvation to the ends of the earth in Amos 9:11-12: “‘In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,’ declares the Lord who does this.” The description of this world-wide reign of the coming Davidic king is in accord with what we have seen before – the “mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them.” (Amos 9:13-15)

*Micah* also highlights the role of the coming Davidic king in the promised salvation in Micah 5:2, 4-5: “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. . . . And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And she shall be their peace.”

Finally, *Micah* highlights the role of the Suffering Servant in the last three verses of the book: “Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.” (Micah 7:18-20)

*Zephaniah* highlights the breadth of the coming salvation beyond the nation of Israel: “For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering.” (Zeph. 3:9-10) Schreiner rightly notes, “Clearly, Zephaniah draws on the Abrahamic promise of blessing for the nations.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

*Jonah* likewise provides a great reminder of the scope of the coming salvation of the Lord. For, the book of Jonah makes clear that the coming salvation is not only for the remnant of Israel but also for those from the Gentile nations that respond to the Lord’s revelation of himself with faith and repentance. As Schreiner notes: “After all, the promise of Abraham was that the nations would be blessed through him. . . .”[[14]](#footnote-14) Jonah did not want the people of Nineveh to repent. But, as Schreiner notes, what Jonah “eventually did see, is that Yahweh’s graciousness to him was no different from his graciousness to Nineveh.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

*Zechariah* speaks directly to the work of the Suffering Servant in bringing about the promised salvation. In *Zechariah 12:10* we read: “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.” John quotes this verse in his gospel in his description of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.[[16]](#footnote-16) It was Jesus who was pierced. We then read in *Zechariah 13:1* that: “On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.” The piercing of Jesus brought about a fountain of cleansing and forgiveness. As Schreiner rightly notes: “For the writers of the NT, the one pierced is Jesus Christ (John 19:34; Rev. 1:7), and through the shedding of his blood full cleansing from sin is now available.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

*Zechariah’s* final contribution to the description of the coming salvation is where we will end our study of The Book of the Twelve. Zechariah makes clear that when the promised restoration and salvation come, that “the Lord will be king over all the earth.” (Zech. 14:9) That is not to say that the Lord is not king over all right now. He is! However, the Lord’s reign is currently set within the context of a battle. It is not a battle of equals, to be sure. But, it is a battle nonetheless. It is a battle with casualties, loss, sadness, and evil. However, the Lord will ultimately crush his enemies and perfectly restore all things that were lost in the Fall. The promise of restoration given in Genesis 3:15, as expounded upon in the Lord’s promises to Abraham and David, will be fulfilled. We see this reality most clearly in the description of the new heaven and new earth in Revelation 21 where the Lord will perfectly dwell with his people and “wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Rev. 21:4)

To sum up what we have said in this section, for those who respond to the Lord’s call of repentance (both a remnant from Israel and some from every nation) by returning to him and seeking him, the ultimate day of the Lord will be a day of salvation. They will experience the restoration of everything that was lost in the Fall. The Spirit will come upon them in a new and powerful way. They will experience the glorious reign of the promised Davidic King and the complete and perfect forgiveness of their sins through the Suffering Servant who will be pierced for their transgressions. The new creation will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and will be the ultimate and true experience of a paradise greater than the created mind can fathom.

* 1. **Unique Way that The Book of the Twelve Points to Jesus**

The Book of the Twelve emphasizes several themes regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ that we saw in the Major Prophets:

* the promised salvation, restoration, and fulfillment of all the Lord’s redemptive promises will come through the promised Davidic King, who is Jesus Christ;
* the promised salvation, restoration, and fulfillment are only possible after the sins of the people are forgiven through the person and work of the Suffering Servant, who is Jesus Christ;
* the promised salvation, restoration, and fulfillment are not just for the faithful within Israel but also the faithful from among the nations who properly respond to the Lord by returning to him and seeking him;
* the new creation becomes a reality only through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

1. **Conclusion**

There are many ways that we could go about concluding this course. I would like to conclude our study by looking back over the learning objectives that we set out to achieve during our first session and see how we did in meeting them.

* 1. *Accurately Identify and Summarize the Big-Picture Story of the Old Testament*

It has been the argument of this class that the story of the Old Testament, and the Bible as a whole, is one of the progressive fulfillment of God’s redemptive promises. The following is a rough sketch of how we have traced this progressive fulfillment:

Adam was created in covenant relationship with God, if he obeyed he got to enjoy the continued intimacy of that covenant relationship but he disobeyed and broke the one requirement of the covenant. He ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, he experienced the curses that flowed from his disobedience which are outlined in Genesis 3.

But, in the midst of Genesis 3, a promise is made. We learn in Genesis 3:15 that the offspring of the woman would one day crush the head of the serpent and restore all that was lost in the fall. The rest of the bible records the progressive fulfillment of this great promise of restoration. The Lord’s covenant with Noah made clear that he meant to restore all of creation, not just his relationship with the chief of creation, man and woman. He also made clear that he would not destroy his creation until the promised restoration was brought to fulfillment.

The Lord then entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham and made three promises through which the restoration promised in Genesis 3:15 would ultimately come about. (See Genesis 12, 15, 17) The Lord promised Abraham land, numerous offspring, and worldwide blessing. The promises were handed down from Abraham to Isaac, and from Isaac to Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. Of those twelve tribes, there was something unique about the tribe of Judah. In Genesis 49:10, we learn that “a scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.” In other words, a king would come from the tribe of Judah through whom the restoration promised in Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 12:1-3 would come about.

Abraham’s descendants, the nation of Israel, found themselves in captivity in Egypt. They cried out to the Lord and he delivered them through the sending of plagues and the leadership of Moses. He parted the Red Sea, brought them to the foot of Mt. Sinai and entered into a covenant relationship with them. Through this covenant the Lord told Israel that they would be his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation if they would respond to his revealed will with grateful obedience. That is, the promise of restoration in Genesis 3:15 as expressed through the Lord’s promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 (land, numerous offspring, and worldwide blessing) would be experienced through the nation of Israel if they lived lives of grateful obedience. They would be in the Promised Land, as a numerous people, and mediate the presence (blessing) of the Lord by being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. All three promises fulfilled!

However, Israel was not able to live lives of grateful obedience because their hearts were not circumcised, meaning that their was an internal problem that caused them to rebel against the Lord and forfeit their enjoyment of the fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises through their life as a nation. Even as early as Deuteronomy, we learn of a future day when the Lord would circumcise the hearts of his people (fix the internal problem) so that they could live lives of grateful obedience and experience the fulfillment of the Lord’s restorative promises.

The failure of Israel under the Mosaic Covenant and through their history as a nation pointed to the need of a king who could rule over them and mediate the Lord’s kingship over them so that they would respond to the Lord in obedience. To this end, the Lord enters into a covenant with David and promises to raise up from his line an eternal ruler who would rule over an eternal kingdom through which the promise of Genesis 3:15 as expressed to the covenant promises made to Abraham of land, numerous offspring, and worldwide blessing would be ultimately brought about and experienced.

This eternal king, however, was required to be perfect in his obedience. No king of the Old Testament was able to satisfy the requirement of perfection and the Old Testament concludes with a continued expectation of the coming king. Further, the Old Testament concludes with an expectation of a coming time, described as a time when the Lord would enter into a New Covenant with his people, when the Lord would fix the problem that existed in the hearts of the people of Israel so that the people of the Lord could, through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, love him and obey him with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

* 1. *Accurately Identify and Summarize the Major Covenants Recorded in the Old Testament*

We started each session together reviewing the six (6) major covenants in the Old Testament:

* The Adamic Covenant (Genesis 2)
* The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9)
* The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17)
* The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19-24)
* The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17)
* The New Covenant (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32)

The summary of these covenants is set forth above in the rough sketch of the big-picture story above.

* 1. *Accurately Identify and Summarize How the Major Covenants Recorded in the Old Testament Relate to One Another*

The relationship of these covenants with one another is set forth above in the rough sketch of the big-picture story above.

* 1. *Accurately Identify and Summarize How the Major Covenants Recorded in the Old Testament Ultimately Find Their Fulfillment in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ*

**Play Timothy Keller video – True & Better Sermon Jam**

As we have noted throughout our study, Jesus fulfills all of the promises and covenants set forth in the Old Testament. The wait for fulfillment ends to a large extent upon the birth of Jesus Christ who is described in the first verse of the New Testament as “the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (Matt. 1:1)

Jesus:

* Is the promised offspring of Genesis 3:15 who crushes the head of the serpent and brings about the restoration of all things lost and disordered by the Fall;
* Brings about the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Promises. We will experience the Abrahamic promise of *land* in the new heavens and earth of Revelation that becomes our reality through the person and work of Jesus Christ. We will experience the Abrahamic promise of *numerous offspring* as we worship among the countless multitudes around the throne of the Lord who are Abraham’s descendants through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. And, we will experience the Abrahamic promise of *worldwide blessing* as we look around this countless multitude around the throne and see people from every tribe, every tongue and every nation singing his praise!
* Fulfills the perfect requirements of the Mosaic Covenant and is the Lord’s treasured possession who becomes the perfect high priest mediating the Lord’s presence and blessing to all the nations;
* Through his life of perfect obedience, proved that he was the promised son of David and eternal king over the eternal kingdom through which the promise of restoration in Genesis 3:15 as expressed through the promises in Genesis 12:1-3 would come about.
* Is the Suffering Servant of the Lord who bears the sins of the people and brings about the promised New Exodus and New Creation;
* Brings about the New Covenant between the Lord and his people by bearing the sins of the people and making a way for the Holy Spirit to indwell the Lord’s people and write the Law on the hearts of the people so that they can love him with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength;
* Is the Good Shepherd who will seek the lost, heal the wounded, help the weak, and gather the scattered; and
* Is the Son of Man of Daniel 7 who will reign forever and ever
  1. *Accurately Identify and Summarize How Knowing the Major Covenants and How They Are Fulfilled in Jesus Christ Helps Us Property Understand and Apply the Old Testament to Our Lives*

Upon the cross, Jesus bore the full wrath of God for all those who by grace and through repentance and faith place their hope fully in him and his work on their behalf. By bearing the full wrath of God for those who repent and believe, he paid the infinite debt that arose because of their rebellion against an infinitely holy God. But he not only bore the full wrath of God and paid the infinite debt that was owed by those who place their faith in him, he also credited to their accounts his perfect righteousness.

Because of this, the believer is reconciled to the Lord and enjoys intimate fellowship with him through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who circumcises their hearts and allows them to love the Lord with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave inaugurated the eternal kingdom that was promised through the Davidic Covenant and made a reality in the New Covenant through the work of Jesus Christ. The return of Christ will bring about the consummation of the promised eternal kingdom and it is then that we will experience the fullness of the promised restoration promised in Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 12:1-3.

We currently live in a time between the inauguration of the eternal kingdom through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave and the consummation of the eternal kingdom through the return of Jesus Christ. We now know the identity of the eternal king – Jesus Christ. We now are partakers of the New Covenant as we place our faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and enjoy the blessing of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who circumcises our hearts so that we can love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We, like people under the Mosaic Covenant, are called to be a “royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9) We, as a royal priesthood and holy nation, are called to bring about the expansion and furtherance of the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ by “making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:19)

It is with these realities in mind that we approach any passage of the Old Testament. We read each passage in the Old Testament with a proper understanding of where it is located in the story of the Old Testament (which covenant was governing at the time of the writing) and through the lens of Christ’s fulfillment of each covenant! That is, each passage ultimately points to the person and work of Jesus Christ and we properly understand it in that light. This is not always a simple endeavor and it requires a good deal of thought and hard work. But, it is the only way to read the Old Testament rightly and the hard work is more than worth it!

1. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 398. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 282. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The concept of the “day of the Lord” is also present in Isaiah (13:6, 9; 58:13), Jeremiah (46:10), and Ezekiel (13:5; 30:3). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14, Amos 5:18, 20, Obadiah 1:15, Zephaniah 1:7, 8, 14, Malachi 4:5. “The term should not be limited to the formal expression ‘day of the Lord,’ for sometimes the same notion is present with just the word ‘day.’” Schreiner, the King in His Beauty, 402-03. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 405. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 403. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 404. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 404. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 404. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 409. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 405 (“Zephaniah also uses ‘the day’ to refer to God’s saving work, showing that the day of the Lord is one of judgment and salvation.”) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 411. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 414. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 408. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 408. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. John 19:37. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 418. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)