

Welcome to "Retreat 2010"

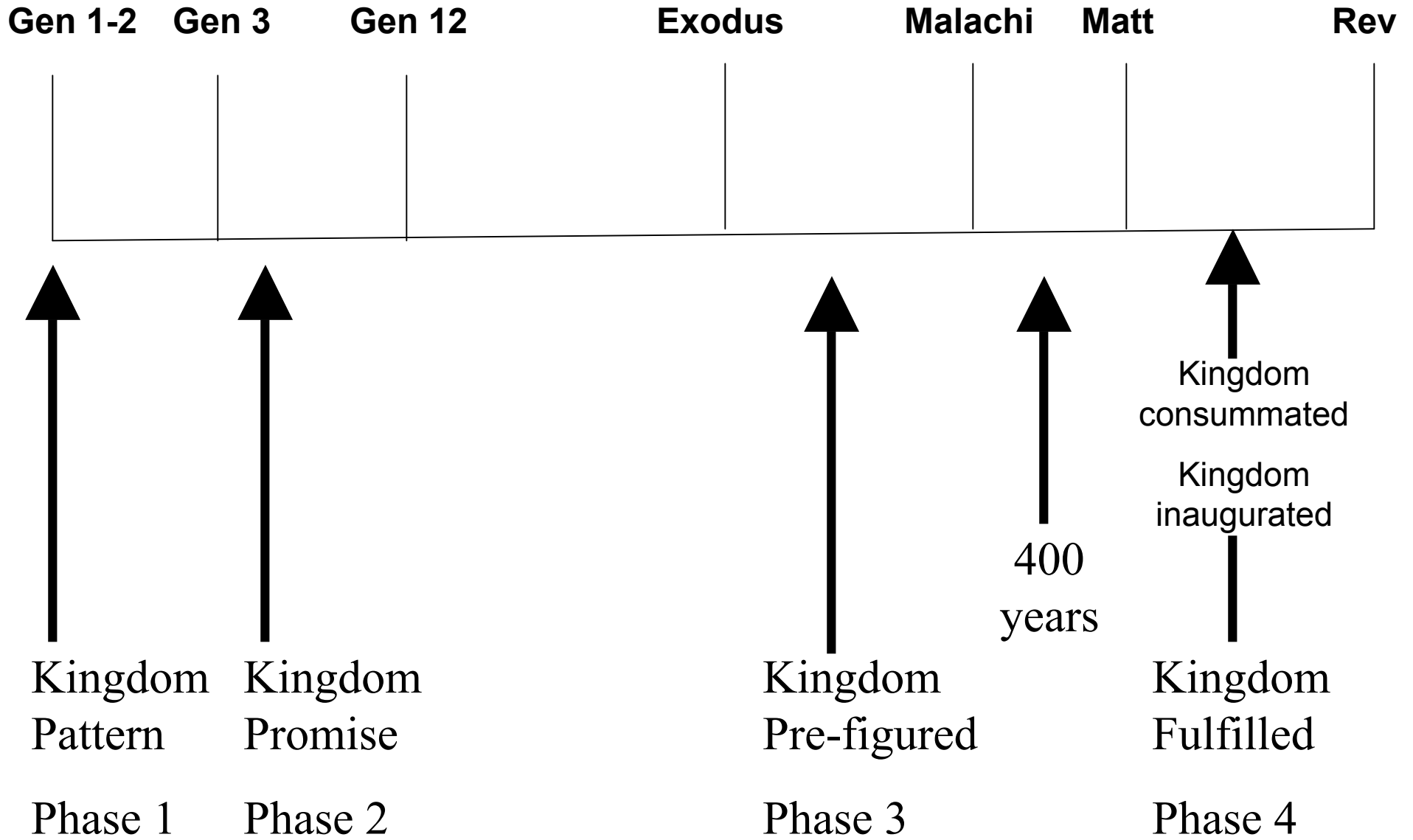


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Session #6

God's unfolding and progressive redemption of mankind



Phase 1 - the kingdom offered (Genesis 1-2)

Phase 2 - the kingdom promised (Genesis 3-50)

Phase 3 - the kingdom prefigured (Exodus-Malachi) - Israel

Phase 4 - the kingdom fulfilled (Matthew-Revelation) - Christ

➤ part 1 (Matthew-Jude) the kingdom inaugurated

➤ part 2 (Revelation) the kingdom consummated

Phase 3 and 4 are the fulfillment of the promise in Phase 2

Phase 2 is the promise of Genesis 3:15 that extends out into the covenant promise to Abraham

Israel and the land is a first level fulfillment of the promise that God gave back in Genesis 3:15

What is happening with Christ is the second level fulfillment of the promise that God gave to Abraham

Israel is the type and Christ is the anti-type or the reality

- First level is provisional,
- Second level fulfillment is perfect

- First level is temporary,
- Second level fulfillment is eternal

Moses had glory that was revealed in his face but it was a fading glory like the Old Covenant because this represents the provisional nature of this covenant

A better covenant which is the new covenant can be seen in Hebrews;

- Heb. 7:22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

- Heb. 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. Heb. 8:13 When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

- Heb. 12:24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

God gives to Abraham promises in Genesis 12 in a propositional way but in Genesis 15 this is where God is going to ratify the covenant with Abraham

Genesis 15:1-7 we see that Abraham is still childless but God has promised that he will have many descendants. And Abraham is beginning to wonder how this is going to happen and he proposes his servant Eliezar.

But the LORD says no the heir will be someone who comes from your own body

And then we read Genesis 15:5-6

Gen. 15:5 And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

Gen. 15:6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

But Abraham then says to the LORD, how will I know?

It is at this point that God tells Abraham to bring Him animals for a sacrifice

The animals chosen here are a foreshadowing of what is going to happen later in Leviticus.

The physical act of cutting these animals is where we get the expression to cut a covenant

The birds of prey are representing judgment. When ever someone died and they were not given a proper burial then you will find the birds pluck their flesh and a symbol of a curse. This would be considered a shameful way to die.

These animal carcasses are under the judgment of God which is represented by the birds or prey coming against them. In addition to the verbal confirmation then we have the physical representation of this ratification of the covenant

The flaming torch and the smoking oven

Do you remember how God manifests Himself to the people of Israel and He leads them through the wilderness?

A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night

This is called a theophany because it represents the very presence of God in a physical form

To understand more fully what this means look at the book of Jeremiah 34.

Historical Context

And this is the place where the people of Israel are trying to forestall the judgment of God in which they promise to keep the law as it relates to the releasing of slaves

Jeremiah 34:18-20

Jer. 34:18 ‘I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts—

Jer. 34:19 the officials of Judah and the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers and the priests and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf—

Jer. 34:20 I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.

This is a symbol for us to understand that in Genesis 15 when God passes through the halves of the animals that God Himself is taking on the curse.

The men of Israel (Jeremiah 34) were saying God we are committed to keep this law and may we be accursed like this calf that we have cut into if we fail to keep this covenant

Now God is going to fulfill that oath they made because of their failure to keep it.

But in Genesis 15 it is not Abraham that passes through the animal halves but rather it is God Himself

The term used to describe this event is a self-maledictory oath

You find this frequently in the Bible because it was a common way for someone to take an oath

As the Lord lives and may He do to me ever so severely if I do not do so and so

This even happened in the pagan cultures and we see this same kind of thing playing itself out in the Iliad

Illustration from the church of Scotland

The young single ladies were ending up pregnant and they couldn't find out who was doing it. So they came up with an oath that the single men had to take saying "I swear to the point of being condemned by eternal flames that I did not do this thing." And they found out the one who would not take the oath was the man that was guilty.

So you can see what was happening here was a self maledictory oath

And that would have the person sit on a stool in front of the congregation for about 4-5 Sunday's in a row. When the preacher would talk about sin he would turn and say "sinners like you."

But God is not saying that He is a curse but only if I fail to keep My promise, if I fail to give you this seed and this land

So back to Genesis 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:

We observe in this verse that the seed and the land go together. Abraham can't live forever, and as a matter of fact Abraham died before he ever got the land. The only thing he owned was the burial plot that he bought from the sons of Heth in Genesis 23.

All the other boundaries that God mentions in these verses are still in the hands of the Canaanites who lived in the land

Abraham was just a sojourner, that is a person who moves from where they grew up in their father land, to a new country in which they have limited rights, they can't marry the daughters of people who live there, they are just a temporary resident alien.

Abraham was a temporary resident alien in a country that did not belong to him.

So how is it going to be possible for Abraham to inherit this land?
Answer-he is going to inherit it through his seed or descendants
The best way to see the terms correctly is to turn seed into heir and land into inheritance

Whenever you get over into the NT and read Paul in Romans and Galatians talking about the heirs and inheritance, then you make the connection between being a seed of Abraham means that you get to inherit.

If Abraham doesn't have a seed then he won't have an heir and without an heir God's promise for him to inherit the land will not come true.

The promise that God makes with Abraham becomes the foundation for God to fulfill these promises in these two subsequent phases, one with Israel and one with Christ. At the beginning of God's fulfilling the promise to Israel is a reference to the promise God made to Abraham and at the beginning of the gospels in the life of Christ is a reference to this promise with Abraham

The first one we can see in the book of Exodus Exodus 2 (the context is the Israelites become a numerous people in the land of Egypt but Pharaoh is feeling threatened and he decrees that all the male children under two must be killed.

Ex. 2:23 ¶ *Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.*

Ex. 2:24 *So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

The word remembered is important here, it doesn't mean that God forgot and then said "oh yeah I need to do this thing that I promised to Abraham." Instead it means that God acted or that God took action based on His covenant with Abraham.

The same language that God made with Noah
And in Exodus there are multiple reference to God's covenant with Abraham.

Exodus 3:15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

And then God repeats the terms of the promise that He made to Abraham back in Genesis 15 in Exodus 3:17 So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.””

Turn to Again in Exodus Chapter 6:2-6, 8

And now God is going to create this nation in seed form that is plural and He is going to give them the land

Also after God gives the people the law at Mount Sinai and it seems to introduce this principle that is contradictory to His grace in giving them the land. Because now God is saying that I gave you the land based on My grace but you only get to stay in the land and maintain it based on your keeping of My laws.

Remember the incident when the people say we don't know what happened to this guy Moses, he has been on the top of the mountain for 40 days.

Aaron says I have a great idea, women get all your earrings and lets melt them down, by throwing them into a fire and then shaping a calf from these materials and this is what we will worship.

Now this was a violation primarily of the second commandment, and they said this golden calf is Yahweh that brought you up out of the land.

So here we see them breaking the covenant and now Moses is coming down the mountain...

He hears the people as he is descending really having a big party in their pagan revelry and Moses takes the tablets of stone and throws them on the ground to shatter them.

This is to show that the covenant itself had been broken.
God then says to Moses I have had it with these people and I will take you into the land

So Moses takes on this intercessory role as a type of Christ and he intercedes on the basis of the people of Israel
And did you notice the basis for his intercession?

We read about this in Exodus 32:11-14. It was the covenant with Abraham that Moses appeals to and the Scriptures tell us that God changed His mind.

When God comes and gives the people of Israel the law that they are going to have to keep, it should not survive more than a second. Because this has been given to sinners, they break it, game over lets go home.

But it doesn't happen that way because of this underlying red line that we are considering the covenant of grace
Again and again we see the people of Israel rebelling and continuing on in sin, so why doesn't God just wipe them out?

It is because of the prior covenant that He made with Abraham. The land that Israel occupies is given to them by the grace of God. However in order to retain and stay in the land God implements the law which they must keep. The consequences will either be blessing or cursing depending on how they keep the law of God. Deuteronomy Chapter 9:4-5 - the people of Israel did not get the land because they were righteous. And then we see the basis of them entering the land is because of the oath made to Abraham. At the beginning of this first level of fulfillment we are told that God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The feast of Passover was a sacramental sign that God had acted to fulfill the Abrahamic promise.

Turn to Exodus 13:3-5

Why bring up the Passover at this point? Because when we have the second level of fulfillment then we will have the same thing happen

We have the Lord's Supper which is based upon the Passover

At the beginning of the second level of fulfillment we have the same language of remembering the covenant as well

Luke 1:54-55

Both Mary and Zechariah are reflecting on the birth of the Messiah and they bring in the covenant that God swore to Abraham

Just as the remembering of God in the first covenant is ratified by the covenant of the Passover so at the beginning of God remembering this covenant we have the institution of the Lord's Supper

This time we don't have the provisional fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant but instead we have the reality itself. This is why at the Lord's Supper we have the language of the new covenant that now appears

Just as the Passover was the inauguration of the Old Covenant, so the Lord's Supper is the inauguration of the New Covenant
Promise - Fulfillment is a good way to see the Bible as a whole

But if one gets more specific it will be as follows;
Promise - 1st level of fulfillment and then 2nd level of fulfillment

You could say that phases 2 and 3 are all promise and then phase 4 is the fulfillment

Because the 1st level of fulfillment of Israel since it is only a type and only the provisional fulfillment on an earthly level in the land of Canaan then that provisional fulfillment itself becomes a new promise

When these pious Jews in Luke look back in their history they see the exile of the Jews brought the entire provisional fulfillment to an end.

The temple is desecrated, the people are expelled from the land and the people of Israel are only a remnant.

So they are looking forward to the time when God is going to bring it back.

They don't understand that God is going to bring it back in a way that is over and above what they expected. It is going to be a return to a heavenly reality and not a specific land with a temple.

All that has been fulfilled in Christ.

The prophets are using language of land and temple to talk about a heavenly reality. And so the earthly fulfillment then begins an expectation of a greater earthly fulfillment that is yet to come.

The prophets also contain language to indicate that the heavenly reality is going to be so much greater

Isaiah talking in Chapter 65 about the person who at age 100 will look like they are cursed. Now back in OT times the long life of a person would be an indicator of a blessed life. But the point of Isaiah is when the new kingdom arrives it will be so great that a person whose only lives to 100 will look like they are cursed.

Ezekiel describes another temple but he doesn't just use the example of Solomon's temple but one so huge that it will take up the entire land of Canaan. He is given language to show a heavenly reality that is so much greater than anything on earth.

However this ignores the teaching in the NT that says this first level of fulfillment was only a type or a shadow of what was to come.

When God promises to Abraham in the way of I will give to your see this land. That is Seed with a capital S and Land with a capital L which means a heavenly land not an earthly land. He was talking about Christ and the new creation itself

Turn to 1 Peter 1:3-4

The NT shows us that these categories have been eschatologically fulfilled

Sorry but Palestine just doesn't live up to those adjectives used by Peter

Because we know that Palestine is perishable, and it is defiled and it will fade away

The inheritance that we have in Christ is reserved in heaven for us
Galatians 3:16

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

The seed of Abraham is Christ by union with Christ, we inherit the promises that God made to Abraham

We are able to inherit heaven that Christ has merited for His people

Once the substance appears and the reality has made it onto the scene then you don't have to go back to the shadow

2 Corinthians 1:20

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Colossians 2:17 - things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

We need to think more about the covenant with Abraham more when we read the New Testament.

When you see terms like heir, inheritance, promise, and oath
Jesus and his debate with the Pharisees over what it meant to be a son of Abraham

39"Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would[d] do the things Abraham did. 40As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41You are doing the things your own father does."

Question and Answers now start

Joshua was a foreshadow of the second coming of Christ. And how the whole earth is going to be rid of all evilness and wickedness and only the righteous will survive.

But now we live in an age of grace in which there is a delay of God's wrath. Therefore we do not go into the neighborhood and kill all the non-believers.

We preach the gospel in order that people will switch their loyalties from the devil to Christ. And so when the greater Joshua comes or the Messianic avenger then they will be saved and not judged by being cast into hell.

The land is an everlasting possession in the sense that the new creation will go on for an eternity when Christ returns
The law is permanent in the fact it has been fulfilled in Christ