

Chad Richards

## Summary Project

The Old Testament is the story of God's redemptive plan; throughout which He always remembers His promises, and never forgets His people. The Old Testament ultimately points to the coming of Jesus Christ who would be the fulfillment of the Old Testament. In this paper we will explore these themes by looking at the Law, Prophets, historical books, and writings. This paper will give an adequate account of the Old Testament and how it points to Jesus.

The Old Testament opens with a beautiful creation story, immediately illustrating a picture of God's original plan for mankind with the story of the Garden of Eden. Humanity is created to be in relationship with God, love our neighbor, and take care of the earth.

Unfortunately, Adam and Eve take things into their own hands. Tempted by the serpent to "become God," they are led to disobey God and eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. With this act, they lead mankind into a downward spiral of sin. In Genesis 4-11, you see sin getting worse and worse. For example, by the time you get to chapter 12 you already have Cain murdering his brother Abel, Noah *almost* redeeming the world, and people trying to take over God's job by building a tower to reach the Heavens. At the end of this, you are left asking yourself, "Has God given up on His people?" Finally, with the call of Abraham, you see that God has not forgotten His people, as He makes a covenant and promise with Abraham.

What is the covenant? God promises to make Abraham into a great nation, and all people will be blessed through his family line. This is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, a descendent of Abraham. However, this covenant takes sacrifice. One main way we see that sacrifice is in circumcision—a sign between Abraham and God, that Abraham trusts God. Finally, God's promise comes true and Abraham has a child named Isaac. From Isaac's line, he and his wife

Rebekah have a child named Jacob, whom God renames “Israel.” Eventually, Israel has twelve children from four different women. These children become the twelve tribes of Israel and after Israel’s death the focus shifts to Joseph, son of Rachel. Joseph is led to work for the Pharaoh in Egypt. However, as Joseph climbs the ranks of power in Egypt a great famine ravishes Israel’s descendants, including Joseph’s brothers. Eventually, all of Israel’s people go to Egypt and rely on Egypt for food, which leads to their enslavement (Gen. 47:21). Finally, the story of the Patriarchs ends with a proclamation from Jacob, who says, “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come” (Gen. 49:10). Interestingly, David and Jesus both descend from the line of Judah. God’s redemptive plan shines through the end of Genesis as He always comes back to His promises for his people. However, Genesis ends with the death of Joseph and the Israelites are enslaved. What will happen next? Has God forgotten His people? Exodus reveals that He has not.

The story of Exodus begins with the Israelites flourishing in Egypt. They are multiplying greatly and increasing in number (Ex. 1:7). However, a new king comes into power that does not care for the Israelites the way the previous king did. All in all, things start to go downhill for God’s people. Eventually, Moses enters the story and gets adopted into the king’s family in order to become the temporary redeemer of Israel and lead the Israelites out of Egypt. The question of God’s remembrance of Israel is once again answered. As the Israelites cry out to God, He hears their cry and remembers His covenant (Ex. 2:24). God is still on a redemptive mission and has not forgotten His people. A new promise is made to Moses, who leads the people into a land flowing with milk and honey.

First, Moses is called by God to lead the Israelites through an understanding of who God is. The great “I AM” is the one to lead Moses, but how does God use Moses? In a very dramatic

way, God issues a series of plagues to the current Pharaoh in order to get him to free the enslaved Israelites. The Pharaoh refuses. As a result, the last plague is issued—the plague of the firstborn (Ex. 11). This final plague shows the Lord proclaiming that He will sweep through every household and take their firstborn child. However, God tells the Israelites that if they put the blood of an innocent animal on their doorposts then He will not take their firstborn and instead “Passover” that home. This sacrifice would be the foundation of the future sacrificial system that is developed for the Israelites. In addition, it is this sacrifice that points to the ultimate sacrificial lamb in Jesus whose blood would forgive sins. The Passover would become a celebration for years to come. Eventually, Pharaoh lets the Israelites go.

After freeing the Israelites, Moses heads up Mount Sinai to speak to the Lord. Many times, Moses and the Lord speak face to face on this mountain. A covenant is established with Moses. It takes the form of a suzerain treaty wherein the receiver of the covenant has a huge part to play. The Lord tells Moses, “If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:5-6). He establishes a law, via the form of two stone tablets, and on them Moses writes the Ten Words or Ten Commandments that come from the mouth of the Lord. These commandments will not be their salvation—as their redemption already started when they were led out of Egypt—but this Mosaic covenant is a *reflection* of their salvation. Moreover, they are growing as a nation and need guidelines and regulations. Not only that, but the Mosaic Law demonstrates their loyalty to the Lord. Interestingly, this same law that was supposed to assist them is the one thing they struggle to oblige. During the forty years of wandering in the desert, the Israelites accomplish much. Most important of all is the establishment of the Ark of the Covenant that rests within the Tabernacle.

They would put this Ark within the Tabernacle as a symbol and promise that God is dwelling among the people. In the same way Jesus would come to Tabernacle among his people (John 1:14). Eventually, Exodus ends with Moses outside of the tent of meeting, God's glory entering the temple, and Moses unable to go in. How would anyone ever enter this holy place of the Lord? There *would* be a way. That way is found in Leviticus.

Leviticus is the account of the Lord speaking to Moses in reference to the rules and regulations needed to enter the tent. Essentially, they are regulations for how an Israelite can make him or herself clean and holy. All in which points to Jesus who would be the ultimate cleanse for many. Following the regulations that are mapped out in Leviticus comes Moses' death, and the Israelites getting ready to inherit the Promised Land.

In the book of Numbers the Israelites prepare to enter the Promised Land and take a census to see how many people they have and what they are working with. Would Moses be the one to lead them into the land? Unfortunately, he does not. Because a previous disobedience during the desert wanderings, the Lord tells Moses that Joshua would be the one to succeed him and lead the Israelites. Moses dies in the book of Deuteronomy, which is a series of "sermons" given by Moses. In these sermons, Moses points the Israelites back to the Law and their covenant. God wants to redeem Israel and still remembers them. This is evident in the life of Joshua.

Joshua is the start of the historical books and as well as the man who leads the Israelites to the Promised Land. The core of Joshua's ministry is to "be strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:6). How will he and the Israelites be strong and courageous? By obeying the Mosaic covenant. Again, we find God calling the Israelites back to the covenant, this time through Joshua. God has not forgotten the Israelites; He wants them to obey Him, and wants to redeem His people. Joshua

stays close to the Lord during his ministry. They cross the Jordan, tear down the wall of Jericho, and defeat many enemies. The Israelites and Joshua do not complete all these amazing feats by their own strength, but by God's. As the Israelites are led into the Promised Land, they are commanded to eradicate it of enemies. Joshua ends with the Israelites "serving the Lord throughout the life of Joshua" (Joshua 24:31). However, they did not rid the land of their enemies. All in all, everything looks like it is going in the right direction for the Israelites, until the period of the Judges.

The period of the Judges is a dark time for the Israelites. It is best described as "the interval, when the tribes are learning to live together and meet the problems of living with Canaanite cities in their midst and hostile nations on their borders" (Lasor and Hubbard and Bush 1996, 153). There are still many cities that have not been conquered. During this period God would raise up a judge or military deliverer. The judge was a "charismatic leader, not selected officially by the people but raised up by Yaweh. God's Spirit came to empower the Judge to deal with a particular situation" (155). The story of Judges ends with a sad tone mentioning that, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit" (Judges 21:25). Again, we are left wondering, has God forgotten about Israel? What will happen to God's chosen people.? Is there anyone "good" left?

This question is answered through a small story that links a dark time and a hopeful time. The story of Ruth links Judges to 1 Samuel. In Ruth we find the kinsmen redeemer, Boaz. He is a morally upright man and proof that there is someone good left. Interestingly, through the line of Boaz, David would come. It is almost as if Ruth is placed where it is, to demonstrate that there is still some good in Israel, and there is more good to come. God is still in the redemptive business.

After the story of Ruth, we find ourselves entering a new time for Israel. The period of the Kings. This period starts with the nation of Israel looking to Samuel to appoint a King so they can be like other nations. Samuel tries to appoint his sons as leaders over Israel but his sons disobey the Lord, making the Israelites even more insistent on their request for a king. The Israelites did not understand that by asking for a king, they were implicitly rejecting the true King, Yahweh. In order for Israel to be God's people, God must be acknowledged as their true king. Nonetheless, God could rule through a human king. Saul reigns as that king for a period of time. Eventually Saul is rejected by the Lord and David, the son of Jesse, replaces him. Jesus comes through the line of David as Israel's everlasting king.

David has a number of great accomplishments as king. He takes Jerusalem as his capital, erects great buildings, and wins many battles. The greatest scene in the story of David is known as the Davidic Covenant, found in 2 Samuel 7. God promises that David's son would build and establish God's kingdom. Eventually, this kingdom comes through the building of the Temple by Solomon. Interestingly, as the Davidic Covenant points to the Temple it also points to the establishment of the Kingdom of God that is ushered in by Jesus Christ. While David accomplishes much, he also makes many mistakes as king. The greatest mistake is found in 2 Samuel 11 and it is at this point the story of David takes a dramatic turn. David is rebuked by the prophet Nathan, David's son murders his own brother, and David passes away. However, David would leave a legacy, the greatest of which is the book of Psalms. David is believed to have written the majority of the Psalms. The Psalms include laments, praise, and thanksgiving poems that show the emotion and inner turmoil the author went through during this time as king.

From David, we are led into the story of Solomon, David's son, who would build the great Temple of the Lord. Solomon was known for his riches, wives, and wisdom. He is

acclaimed to have written Songs of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs. Song of Songs is a series of love poetry, which “not only speak of the purity of human love; but, by its very inclusion in the canon, it reminds us of a love that is purer than our own” (519). Ecclesiastes and Proverbs are wisdom literatures that give wise teachings through different avenues. Ecclesiastes teaches through hyperbolic poetry while Proverbs does so through small chunks of wise teachings. Solomon was indeed a pivotal person in the history of the Old Testament. At the end of his reign Solomon falls into idol worship because of his many foreign wives. This idol worship would be the foundation that the next kings build on. This foundation would lead the nation to be torn in two.

The divided kingdom was born out of a rebellion, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Jeroboam would play a large part of leading Israel into the darkest time in their history. Although many prophets tried to speak out to the kings and bring them back to God’s law and covenants, the Kings wanted to worship idols and do things their own way. The proclamations of the prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and all of the other prophets are found in their own Biblical books. These books coincide with the events of the divided kingdom, exile to Babylon, and the return from exile.

The prophets serve as “covenant enforcement mediators” (Fee and Stuart 2003, 184). They never say anything new and God simply enforces His covenant and judgment through these mediators. The prophets always seem to have a call to repentance and a declaration of judgment. However, there is usually a proclamation of hope throughout these books as well. Eventually, the kings and the people fall so deep into their sin that God intervenes, using the Babylonians as His agent to capture and exile the Israelites to Babylon. It is in Babylon the Israelites would serve the Babylonians and God would hear only one prayer, a prayer for Babylon (Jer. 29:7).

Eventually, the remnant of Israel returns to their land, although it is not the same. Yes, they rebuild the temple and restore their nation, but something would always be missing. During the intertestamental period, there are no prophets, no one to speak on God's behalf. Again, we find ourselves asking as we finish the Old Testament scripture, "Has God given up on His people?" Years would go by until that question is answered. Jesus Christ comes as fully man and fully God as the answer. God has not forgotten about his people and the redemption story continues and is fulfilled through Jesus. Now as you look and read the New Testament you can see how much of it points back to the Old Testament. In the same regard, it is impossible to read the Old Testament and not see how it points forward to the ultimate King.

## Bibliography

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