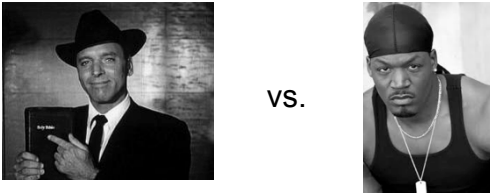


**Introduction:
The Bible as a Grand Story**

Our whole lives
are shaped
by some story.

What's Their Story?



vs.

What's Their Story?



vs.



What's Their Story?



vs.



What's Your Story?

The humor in this cartoon depends on the story



Knowledge comes in story form

Tell me about America.

Tell me about yourself.

Tell me about God.

Shape of a Story

Beginning **B**... **C**... **T**... **X**... **R** End

Beginning (*Characters, Setting, etc*)

Crisis . . . Tension

Climax . . . Resolution

Grand Story

- **Comprehensive:** Account of *whole* creation
- **Normative:** Claim to be *true*

“... a story... is... the best way of talking about *the way the world actually is.*”
(N.T. Wright)

Two Grand Stories

- Biblical Story
- Humanist Story

Shape of a Story

Beginning **B**... **C**... **T**... **X**... **R** End
(Creation) (New Creation)

Beginning = Creation

Crisis = The Fall (Gen 3)

Tension = Gen 3:15 . . .

Climax = Jesus Christ

Resolution = New Creation

“The whole point of Christianity is that it offers a story which is the story of the whole world. It is public truth.”

Humanist Story

Beginning **B**... **C**... **T**... **X**... **R** End
(Big Bang) (Better world)

Beginning = Big Bang

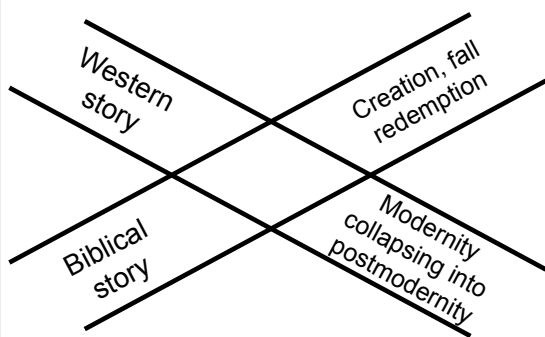
Crisis = Imperfection & Insufficiency

Tension = Survival of the Fittest

Climax = Homo Sapiens

Resolution = Science, Education

Living at the Crossroads



Which Story Am I In?

“I can only answer the question “What am I to do?” if I can answer the prior question

“Of what story do I find myself a part?”

-Alasdair MacIntyre

“The way we understand human life depends on what conception we have of the human story. What is the real story of which my life story is a part?”

-Lesslie Newbigin

The Story Gives Meaning

The Biblical Story: The meaning of history is the establishing of God's kingdom with men.

The Secular Story: The meaning of history is individual progress by science, education, and technology.

The Bible tells
one unfolding story
of redemption.

Scripture is "an immense, sprawling, capacious narrative."

-Eugene Peterson

“... the Bible provides us with an overarching narrative in which all other narratives of the world are nested. The Bible is the story of God. The story of the world is first and foremost the story of God’s activity in creating, sustaining, and redeeming the world to fulfill God’s purposes for it.”

-C. Gerkin

“
history that encompasses all of created reality: past, present, and future... its vision of history extends backward all the way to the beginning of time and forward all the way to the last day... the biblical vision of history spans time from the first creation to the new creation, encompassing all of created reality.”

-S. Greidanus

“As I read the Bible I find in it a quite unique **history**, and therefore, a unique understanding of the human person as a responsible actor in history. You Christian missionaries have talked of the Bible as if it were simply **another book of religion.**”

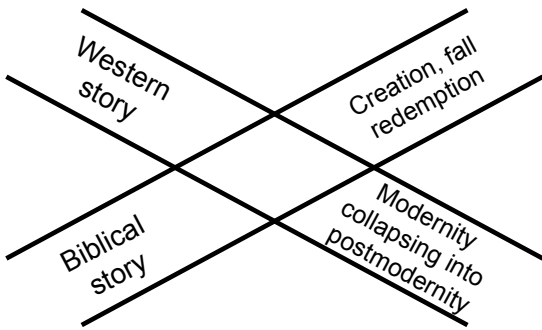
-Badrinath (Hindu scholar)

How Big a Problem is This?

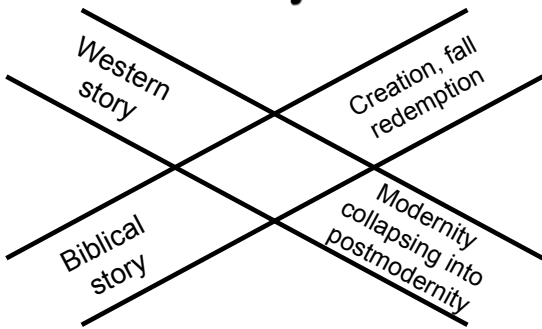
This is *not* a minor matter of misinterpretation...

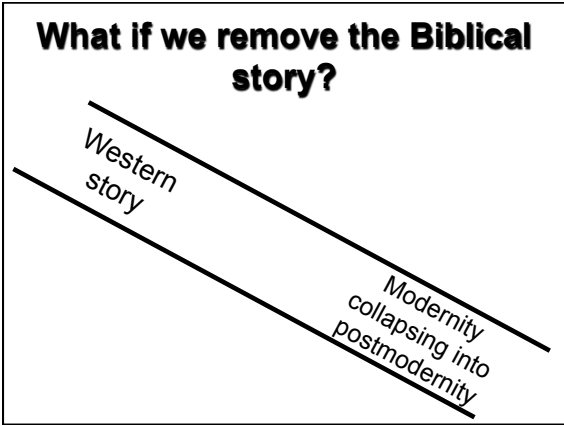
...but a serious matter of which story is shaping our lives!

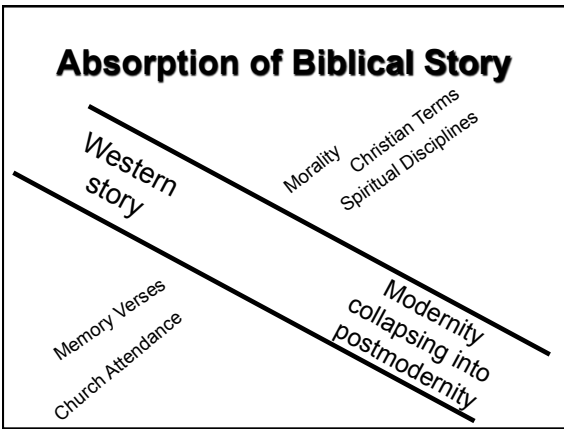
Living at the Crossroads

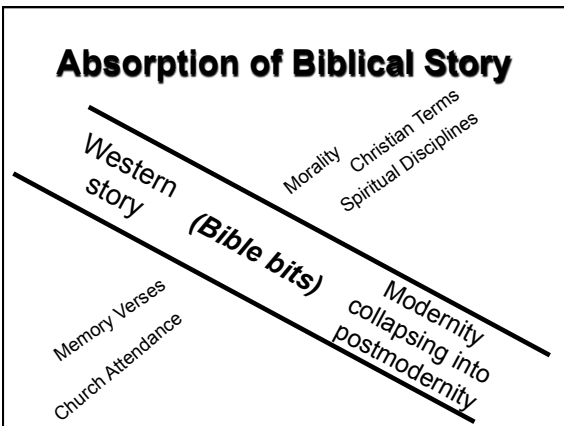


What if we remove the Biblical story?









All of human life is shaped by some story...

If the Bible is fragmented into little bits...

...then it will be unable withstand culture & it will be absorbed into our cultural story.

Our whole lives will be shaped by our idolatrous cultural story rather than the story of scripture! (**Romans 12:1-2**)

Features of the Biblical Story
Acts 28:23-24

- **One story** – Kingdom of God
- **Progressively unfolds** - Christ
- **Rich, diverse, textured** – Law of Moses and the Prophets
- The Bible is a story of kingdom; a story of God's Son; a story of stories

Features of the Biblical Story

The Bible as a Living Being

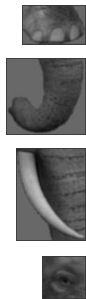
- Like the human body, the God's kingdom gives the Bible **Unity**
- Like the human heart, Jesus Christ is the source of **Life**
- Like muscle and bones, the books, genres, etc give **Structure**

**Is the Bible a Single
Unfolding Story?**

- Diversity of literary genres
- How does each fit in the whole?
- Two illustrations:
 - *Elephant*
 - *Cathedral*

1) *The Blind men and the Elephant*

- Touch different parts
- Draw wrong conclusions about whole
- Miss bigger whole



“And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his opinion,
Exceeding stiff and
strong,
Though each was
partly in the right,
And all were in the
wrong.”

-John Saxe



2) Cathedral

Unity

- One architect
- One building



Diversity

- Different artisans
- Different parts; different functions
- ***Different points of entry***

Entrance Matters

How might entrance determine understanding?

- *Priest's Chamber* – Minister
- *Library* – Study
- *Sanctuary* – Music or Oration

Entrance Matters

- **Ex 34:6-7** – Systematic theology
- **1 Tim 3:15** – Church manual
- **Matt 7:12** – Personal application
- **John 3:16** – How to get saved
- **Whole Bible** - *Kingdom of Jesus Christ administered through progressive covenants*

The Biblical Drama

- **Act One:** God establishes His Kingdom: Creation
- **Act Two:** Rebellion in the Kingdom: Fall
- **Act Three:** The King Chooses Israel: Redemption Initiated
 - *Scene 1: A people for the King*
 - *Scene 2: A Land for His people*
- **Interlude:** A Kingdom Story Waiting for an Ending: Inter-Testamental Period

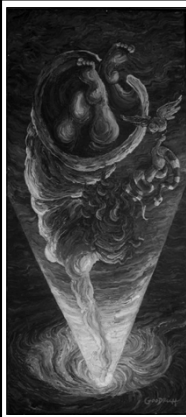
The Biblical Drama (cont...)

- **Act Four:** The Coming of the King: Redemption Accomplished
- **Act Five:** Spreading the News of the King: The Mission of the Church
 - *Scene 1: From Jerusalem to Rome*
 - *Scene 2: And into All the World*
- **Act Six:** The Return of the King: Redemption Completed

Act One: God Establishes His Kingdom – Creation

Introductory Remarks...

- Genesis 1 is not first concerned about how God made the world
- Genesis 1 shows us God's original intention for creation
- Genesis 1 must be understood in original cultural context



In the beginning **GOD**...

Who is this God?

In the Beginning
by David Goodrich

Yahweh Elohim (Gen. 2:4)

- Significance of names
- Elohim: World's Creator
- Yahweh: Israel's Redeemer

Creation Stories in Ancient Near East

- Truth about world expressed in stories
- Similarity and difference between Genesis 1 and other stories
- Negatively: challenge pagan stories
- Positively: teaching about creation

Literary Structure of Genesis One

Stage One: Gen. 1:1-2

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

“The earth was dark, formless, empty.”

Literary Structure of Genesis One

Stage Two: Gen. 1:3-2:3

Forming Commands			Filling Commands		
#	Day	Creation	#	Day	Creation
1 (v3)	1	Light	5 (v14)	4	Sun, moon, stars
2 (v6)	2	Sky	6 (v20)	5	Birds, fish
3 (v9)	3	Land & seas	7 (v24)	6	Animals
4 (v11)		Vegetation	8 (v26)		Humankind
				7	God's rest

The creation story is so rich in meaning that 'it cannot be easily over-interpreted theologically'.

-G. Von Rad

The Separation of Light from the Darkness
by Michelangelo



Moses' concerns were exclusively religious. His intent was to proclaim knowledge of the true God as he manifested himself in his creative works, to proclaim a right understanding of humankind, the world, and history that knowledge of the true God entails—and to proclaim the truth concerning these matters in the face of the false religious notions dominant throughout the world of his day.

Genesis One's Teaching About...

- God
- Humankind
- World

Genesis One's Teaching: *God*

- Eternal
- One
- Distinct from creation
- Sovereign King over creation
- Powerful
- Personal

Genesis One's Teaching: *Humankind*

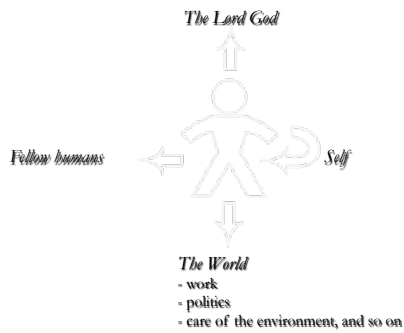
- Creature
- Relationship with God
- Image
 - Similar to God
 - Different from God
- Male and female
- Rule over creation

Just as powerful earthly kings, to indicate their claim to dominion, erect an image of themselves in the provinces of their empire where they do not personally appear, so man is placed upon earth in God's image as God's sovereign emblem. He is really only God's representative, summoned to maintain and enforce God's claim to dominion over the earth.

Human Rule

- Stewards
- Loving rule not tyrannical exploitation
- Development and care (Gen. 2:15)
- Responsibility and accountability (Gen 2:17)

A Biblical Understanding of Humanity



Genesis One's Teaching: *World*

- Good (variety, harmony)
- Ordered by God's word
- Historical
- Kingdom

End of Act One

Act Two: Rebellion in the Kingdom: *Fall*

A catastrophe has occurred.
We are no longer in continuity with our good beginning. We have been separated from it by a disaster.
We are also, of course, separated from our good end. We are, in other words, in the middle of a mess.

-Eugene Peterson

Shalom in Eden (Genesis 2:4-2:25)

- Harmony with God
- Harmony with each other
- Harmony with creation

Adam and Eve enjoyed the privileges of a living covenant with God.

The Fall: Genesis 3:1-6

- Satanic temptation
- Freedom to choose
- Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil



4th c. mosaic from Caesarea

- choose to live by God's word
- or choose to live by Satan's word

The Fall: Genesis 3:1-6

- Doubt (v.1-3)
 - Questioning God's Goodness
 - Asserting God's Unfairness
- Disbelief (v.4-5)
- Disobedience (v. 6)
 - Imagining a world contrary to God's word
 - Wilful disobedience

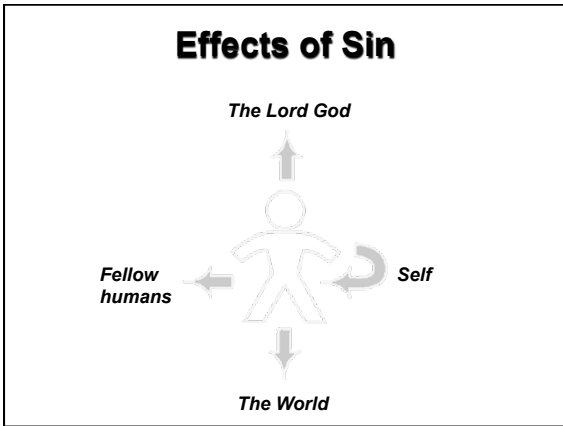
Human Nature Enslaved to Sin

- Autonomy: man decides right/wrong, good/bad, true/false (Rom 1:21-23)
- Covenant rebellion: allegiance to true king is refused (Rom 5:12,19)
- Wickedness & Slavery: Alliance with the enemy of God (Eph 6:19; 8:5-7)

Consequences of Sin

- Alienated from God (3:8,23)
- Damaged relations with each other (v. 12,16)
- Death (v.19)
- Non-human creation cursed (v.17)
- Creational task burdened (v.16-19)

All spheres of life—marriage and family, work and worship, school and state, our play and art—bear the wounds of our rebellion. Sin is present everywhere—in pride of race, in arrogance of nations, in abuse of the weak and helpless, in disregard for water, air, and soil, in destruction of living creatures, in slavery, deceit, terror, and war, in worship of false gods, and frantic escape from reality. We have become victims of our own sin.



Is the Story Over?

- No!
- Clothes Adam and Eve
- Gives promise (*Gen 3:15*)
- *Wife is named Eve*

While justly angry God did not turn his back on a world bent on destruction; he turned his face to it in love. With patience and tender care he set out on the long road of redemption to reclaim the lost as his people and the world as his kingdom. Although Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden and their work was burdened by sin's effects, God held on to them in love. He promised to crush the evil forces they unleashed.

End of Act Two

Act Three:
The King Chooses Israel
Redemption Initiated
Scene One: A People for the King

Genesis: Prologue to Israel's Story

- **Universal period (Gen 3-11)**
 - Creation (2:4-4:26); Adam (5:1-6:8); Noah (6:9-9:29); Noah's sons (10:1-11:9); Shem (11:10-26)
- **Patriarchal period (Gen 12-50)**
 - Terah (11:27-25:11); Ishmael (25:12-18); Isaac (25:19-35:29); Esau (36:1-37:1); Jacob (37:2-50:26)

Genesis 3-11

- Theme?
- Man's Sin: Origin, Effects, Spread
- God's Response: Grace & Judgment

Two Seeds: Cain & Seth (Gen. 4-5)

Line of Cain

- Goodness of creation enjoyed: family, cultural development – *Common Grace*
- All polluted by sin: murder, misdirection of cultural activity

Two Seeds: Cain & Seth (Gen. 4-5)

Line of Seth

- Blood sacrifice pleases God (4:4-5) and call on God's name (4:26) – *Saving grace*
- Faithful men still die
 - 'And he died' (8x)
 - *Enoch is a harbinger of hope*

God's Response: Grace & Judgment

Judgment

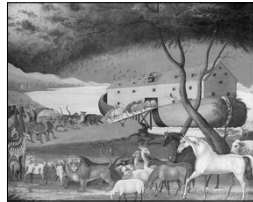
- Evil strangling human life
- Catastrophic flood

Grace

- Godly line holding promise (Gen. 3:15)

God's Response: Faithfulness to Promise

- Noah and ark
- Noahic covenant
 - New start with Noah and creation
 - God's purpose remains constant



Noah's Ark by Edward Hicks

Noahic Covenant

A Covenant Defined

- A bond . . . in blood . . . sovereignly administered . . . with human stipulations
 - 'I establish a covenant' (Genesis 6:18; 9:8-17, 7x)
 - A Covenant with Adam & Creation (Hosea 6:7; Rom 5:12-21)

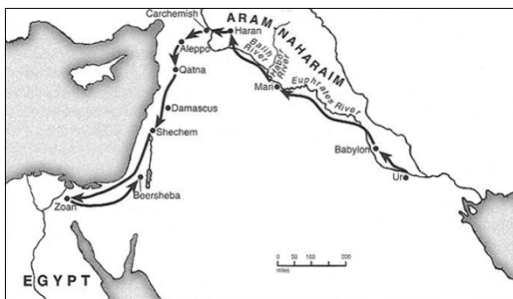
Nations and Rebellion

- Spread of nations (Gen 10)
- Communal attempt at autonomy (Gen 11)
- God's judgment

Abrahamic Covenant: Blessed to Be a Blessing

- Universal to particular:
From all nations to one man
- Blessing on one man, one nation
- Channel of blessing to all world –
= 1 Noah . . . 70 Nations; 1 Abraham . . . Israel
(70 children); 1 Jesus . . . All nations

Abrahamic Covenant: Blessed to Be a Blessing



Theological Blueprint (Gen 12:1-3)

- Bless Abraham: “*I will make you a great nation.*”
- Bless all nations on earth

‘What we are being offered in these few verses is a theological blueprint for the redemptive history of the world.’

- W. Dumbrell

Curse and Blessing

- 5-fold curse of Gen. 3-11
- 5-fold blessing of Gen. 12:2-3
 - Thru Abraham God will reverse the curse of sin
 - Whereas Babel sought to earn a name for themselves (11:4), God gave Abraham a name (12:2) → David (2 Sam 7:9) . . . Jesus (Phil 2:9-11) . . . you & me (Rev 2:17; cf. Eph

Abrahamic Covenant

- Gen 12: Promise
 - (1) Land, (2) People, (3) Blessing
- Gen 15: Covenant established (Land)
- Gen 17: Covenant confirmed (Seed)
- Gen 22: Covenant Oath sealed with blood
 - Gospel foreshadowed (Gal 3:8)

Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

- Promises of covenant repeated to each patriarch
 - Genesis 26:3-5; 28:10-22; 35:9-15; 49:1ff
- God's work in sinful family
- *El Shaddai* remains f

Joseph Overseer of the Pharaoh's Granaries
by Lawrence Alma-Tadema



Exodus: Formation of a People

- Redemption thru Exodus (1-18)
- Marriage Covenant (19-24)
- God comes to dwell with Israel (25-40)
- **Exodus Typology:** *Salvation* [Deliverer, Passover, Waters of Judgment], *Covenant, Temple*

Israel Formed by a Mighty Act of Redemption

- Growth of nation of Israel (Exod 1:7)
- Bondage (Exod 2)
- God raises up mediator (Exod 3)
- Reveals himself as YHWH (Exod 3:14)
 - The God of Promise (Abraham) is the God of Law (Moses) – *Galatians 3:14-29*

Redemption

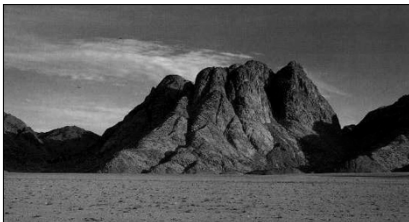
- By mighty acts of judgment
 - Against Egyptian gods (Ex. 12:12)
 - Against Pharaoh (Exod 14)
- By blood of lamb (Passover)
- Celebration of redemption (Ex. 15)

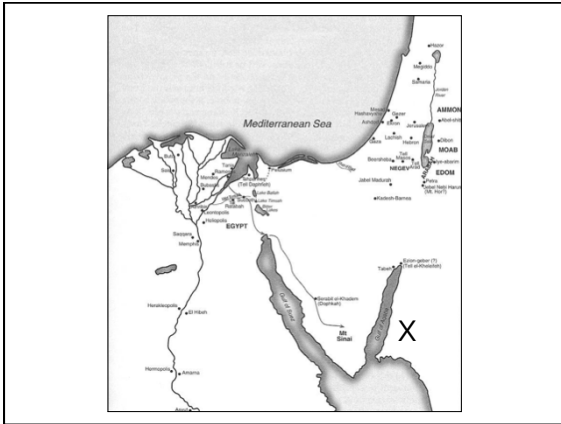
Israel is Bound to God in Covenant

- To Mount Sinai
- Call of covenant
- Ancient Near Eastern background for covenant
- Covenant ceremony

Israel is Bound to God in Covenant

- To Mount Sinai – *Where is it?*





Call of Covenant
Exodus 19:5-6

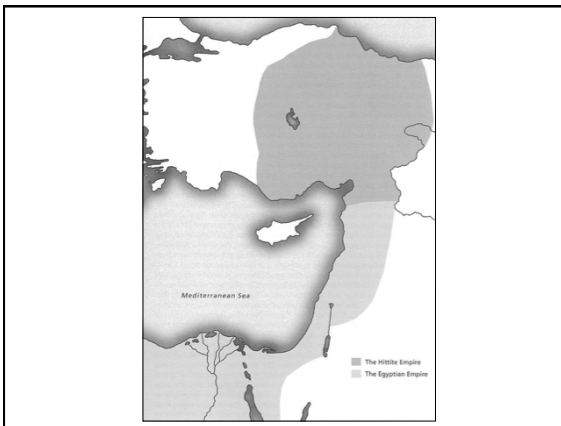
- Treasured possession, priestly kingdom, holy nation
- Election to privilege and service
- Display, showcase people
- For the sake of the nations

'The history of Israel from this point on is in reality merely a commentary upon the degree of fidelity with which Israel adhered to this Sinai-given vocation.'

-W. Dumbrell

Ancient Near Eastern Background

- Ex. 19-24: Form of Covenant document
- Ancient Near Eastern covenants in Hittite and Egyptian empires



ANE Covenant Structure

Suzerain-Vassal Treaty

- God is Great King (Suzerain)
- Israel is the subject people (Vassal)
- All of Israel's life subject to God's rule
- Law

Details of Law

- Ex. 20: Ten Commandments
 - Redemption precedes law (Exod 20:1)
 - General stipulations
 - Israel's relation to God (1-4)
 - Israel's relation to each other (6-10)
- Ex. 20-22: Detailed stipulations

God Prepares to Indwell Israel

- Instructions for Tabernacle (25-31)
- Israel unworthy of God's presence (32-34)
- God indwells Israel on basis of love (35-40)
- Typology
 - Tabernacle, furniture, sacrifices, and priestly office (cf. Heb 8-10)

Leviticus: Living with a Holy God

Living in Covenant with God

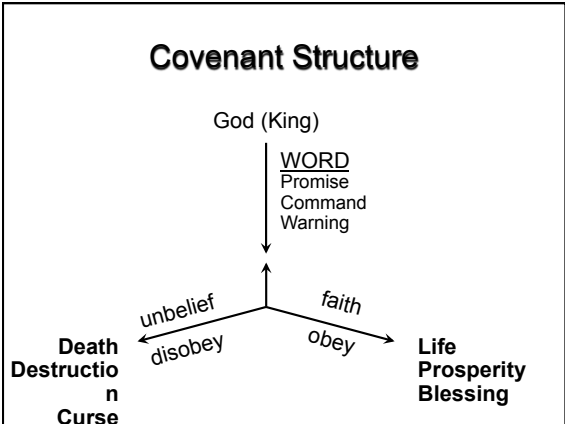
- Sacrifices and offerings (Lev 1-7, 16)
- Ceremonial law (11-15)
- Feasts (Lev 23)
- Blessing & Curses (26-27)

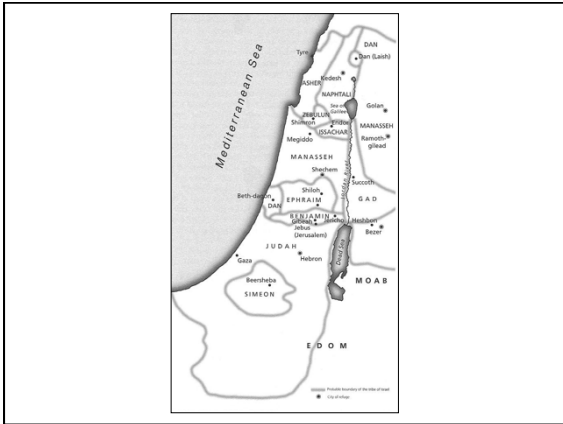
Numbers: Journeying to the Land

- Signs of emerging greatness
- God's testing
 - Provision
 - Leadership
 - Protection
- Israel's disobedience and unbelief
- God's judgment and faithfulness

Deuteronomy: On the Borders of the Land

- Sermon 1: God's faithfulness (ch. 1-4)
- Sermon 2: God's covenant law (ch. 4-28)
- Sermon 3: Options for future (ch. 29-30)
- Covenant structure:
 - Prologue & History of God with Israel
 - Stipulations – Exposition of the *Decalogue*

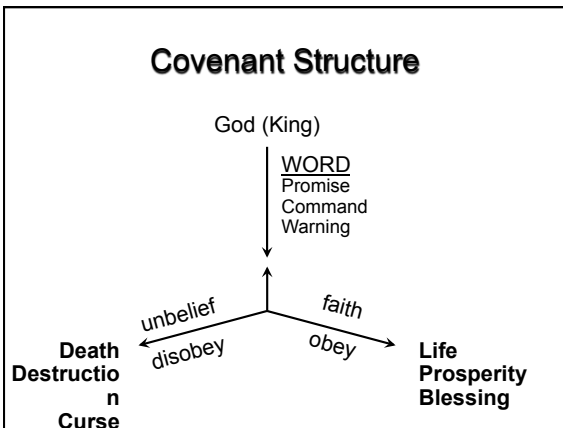




The Land: The Lord's Gift (Josh. 21:43-45)

What God commands, he does

- The Lord leads Israel into the land (3-4)
- The Lord comes as commander (5:13-15)
- The Lord brings down Jericho (6)
- The Lord judges his people (7)
- The Lord gives victory (9-12)



Covenant Options on Land

- Jericho: Blessing on faith/obedience
- Ai: Curse on unbelief/disobedience
- Mt. Ebal (Josh. 8:30-35)
- Shechem (24)

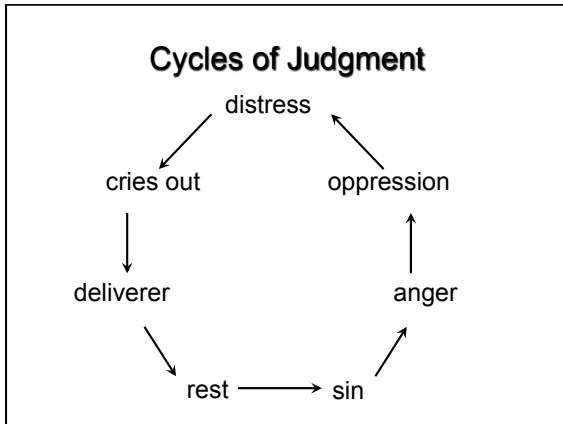
'Holy War'

Why complete destruction?

- Judgment on wicked nations (Gen. 15:16)
- Danger of idolatry
- God's redemptive beachhead
- Typology – Foreshadows the worse reality of hell for those who are God's enemies

Judges: Failure to be Display People

- Israel fails to take land (ch. 1)
- Israel forgets their God –Fathers fail to teach their children (ch. 2)
- Judgment pronounced: Cycles (ch. 2-23)




Judges: Failure to be Display People

- Israel fails to take land (ch. 1)
- Israel forgets their God –Fathers fail to teach their children (ch. 2)
- Judgment pronounced: Cycles (ch. 2-23)
 - Cycles elaborated historically (3-16) – *Each judge is worse than the last*
 - Corruption illustrated (17-21)
 - Conclusion: Israel needs a king

Samuel: Israel Transformed into a Kingdom

- The need for a king
- God's kind of king
- Saul rules unfaithfully
- David rules faithfully



A Faithful King...

- Establishes temple life of Israel
- Defeats Israel's enemies
- Enforces obedience of law

Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7)

- Kingship grafted on to Abrahamic covenant
- David's failure
- Hope for a future descendant of David

Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7)

And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly . . . When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son (v. 9-10, 12-14a).

Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7)

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Kings: Covenant Failure

- Solomon begins his rule wisely
- Solomon establishes the temple in Zion
 - His kingdom prefigures the greater kingdom of Christ (1 Kings 4:29-34; 10:1-29)
- Sin and pride rend the kingdom in two



Kings: Covenant Failure

- Solomon begins his rule wisely
- Solomon establishes the temple in Zion
- Sin and pride rend the kingdom in two
- Elijah and Elisha confront an unfaithful Israel
- Israel's slide into disaster and exile

Why Did This Happen?

- Covenant rebellion and God's judgment
- Led by unfaithful kings
I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you (2 Sam 7:14-15)
- God sent prophets (Jer 7:25); Israel rejected

God's Judgment

- Israel deported by Assyria (722 BC)
- Judah exiled by Babylon (586 BC)
- The End? Note of hope:
 - Jehoiachin released (2 Kings 25:27-30)
 - A temple to be rebuilt (2 Chron 36:22-23)

Prophetic Hope for Future

- God's purpose will prevail (Daniel)
- Kingdom through covenant (Isa 53-55; Jer 31; Ezek 36-37)
- Messianic Hope (Zech 3)
- Israel gathered and purified (Amos 9)
- Nations drawn to Israel (Isaiah 2)

Major Prophets

Salvation through Judgment

- Isaiah: New King (7:14; 9:5-6; 11:1-10), New Exodus (40-55), New Creation (65-66)
- Jeremiah: New Covenant (31:31-34)
- Ezekiel: New Hearts (36:26-27); New Life (37); New Temple (40-48)

Minor Prophets

- Hosea: Divine Mercy & Covenant Faithfulness
- Joel: The Day of the Lord; Spirit's Outpouring
- Amos: God's justice
- Obadiah: God's vengeance on his enemies

Minor Prophets

- **Nahum:** Judge of all
- **Habakkuk:** Comfort in God
- **Zephaniah:** Coming judgment; God's singing
- **Haggai:** Unshakable temple
- **Zechariah:** Night visions, pierced savior
- **Malachi:** A forerunner is promised

Ezra and Nehemiah: Israel Returns to the Land

- 539 BC: Cyrus allows Israel to return
- Zerubbabel rebuilds temple
- Ezra reforms people
- Nehemiah rebuilds city walls
- God saves his people and defeats his enemies in Esther

Eschatological Hope

How does the Old Testament conclude?

- 2 Chronicles 36:22–23
- Malachi 4:4–6

In the dark silence, Israel awaits their Messiah

Evidence of Hope – Matthew 1:12–16

Simeon & Anna – Luke 1:25, 38

End of Act Three
