



What on earth is God doing?

A Bible overview

30 January 2021



Timetable

9.15–10.15am	Creation and covenants
10.15–10.30am	Coffee break
10.30–11.30am	Sinai to exile
11.30–11.45am	Coffee break
11.45am–12.45pm	New covenant to new creation
12.45–1pm	Question time

Session 1: Creation and covenants

1. Why do a Bible overview?

The Bible is one story

- a. Biblical theology helps you to read the Bible
- b. Has some significant real life applications
- c. Gets us excited about the Bible

2. Ephesians 1: One plan. One story. One author.

Ephesians 1:7–10

It doesn't feel like that! So what has gone wrong? We need to head back to the start...

The beginning

3. Creation: how it began

Genesis 1:1–9

Genesis 1:26–31

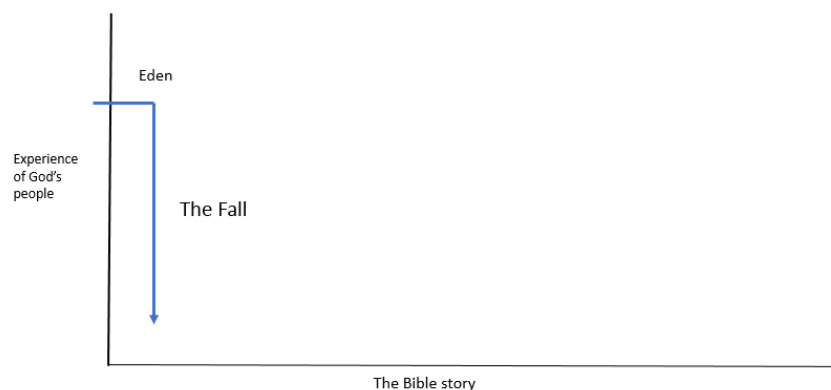
The garden temple

4. Creation to Fall: how it went wrong

Genesis 2:15–17

Genesis 3:1–24

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE – CREATION/FALL



5. The consequences: things we lost in the Fall

Cause and effects
Genesis 3:14–24
Genesis 5:1–31

THINGS WE LOST IN THE FALL

Categories	Fall
Relationship	No more relationship with God (Gen 3:2; Gen 3:24)
Land	Loss of the Garden – Adam and Eve are expelled (Gen 3:24)
Blessing	Curse is everywhere, including creation (Gen 3:17)
Death	Death enters into the world (Gen 3:19)
Cause	Sin (Gen 2:16; 3:6)

6. The flood: washing the world?

Genesis 6:5–7

7. The Abrahamic covenant: how God promises to make it right

Genesis 12:1–3

Genesis 15:1–21 God swears by his own life

Genesis 17:1–8

8. What is promised to Abraham?

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (GEN 12, 15, 17)

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Abraham</u>
Relationship	No more relationship with God (Gen 3:2; Gen 3:24)	Permanent relationship promised: They will be God's people and he will be their God (Gen 17:7)
Land	Loss of the Garden – Adam and Eve are exiled (Gen 3:24)	Promise of the land of Canaan (Gen 12:1;15:18; 17:8)
Blessing	Curse is everywhere, including creation (Gen 3:17)	The descendants of Abraham will be blessed and they will bless the whole world (Gen 12:2-3; Gen 17:6)
Death	Death enters into the world (Gen 3:19)	The promise of descendants mitigates this – but it's still around (Gen 17:4)
Cause dealt with?	Sin (Gen 2:16; 3:6)	Not dealt with in the Abrahamic Covenant

9. Sin and the promise: a glaring omission

There are some questions we are left thinking about by the end of Genesis 17:

- How will God do it?
- How much hope?
- What about Sin?

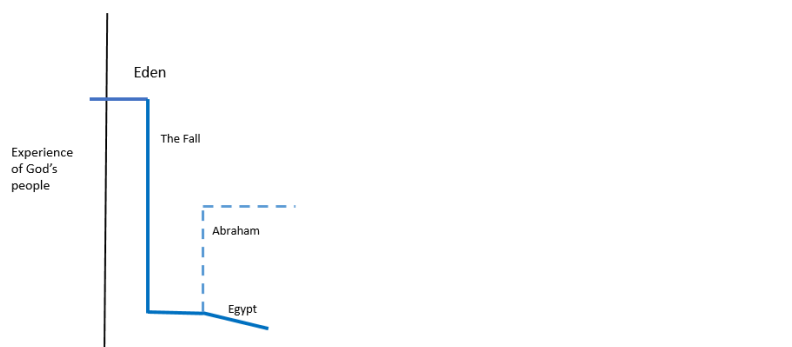
The rest of Genesis gets us a tiny-bit of the way to the Abrahamic promises.

- There is a nation
- There are more than a few people (just)
- There is a picture of a messiah – but lots of questions

The rescue: Genesis to Exodus

10. Exodus: the most important rescue in the OT

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE – EXODUS I



Fast forward 400 years—things don't look so good

11. The Mosaic covenant: the second of the big covenants.

Deuteronomy 28:1–6

12. What is promised in the Mosaic covenant?

THE MOSAIC COVENANT (EXODUS 19; DEUT 28)

Categories	Fall	Abraham	Moses
Relationship	No more relationship with God (Gen 3:2; Gen 3:24)	Permanent relationship promised: They will be God's people and he will be their God (Gen 17:7)	IF Israel obey , they will be treasured possession (Ex 19:5-6). God will dwell. (Ex 25) IF Israel disobey , they'll serve other gods (Deut 28:64)
Land	Loss of the Garden – Adam and Eve are exiled (Gen 3:24)	Promise of the land of Canaan (Gen 12:1;15:18; 17:8)	IF Israel obey , their land is blessed (Deut 28:8) IF Israel disobey , they will be scattered amongst the nations (Deut 28:63-64)
Blessing	Curse is everywhere, including creation (Gen 3:17)	The descendants of Abraham will be blessed and they will bless the whole world (Gen 12:2-3; Gen 17:6)	IF Israel obey , unbelievable blessings (Deut 28:2) IF Israel disobey , unbelievable curses (Deut 28:15)
Death	Death enters into the world (Gen 3:19)	The promise of descendants mitigates this – but it's still around (Gen 17:4)	IF Israel obey; they will have many descendants to carry on the nation (Deut 28:4,11) If Israel disobey; they will be destroyed (Deut 28:61)
Cause dealt with?	Sin (Gen 2:16; 3:6)	Cause of the fall not dealt with in the Abrahamic Covenant	Israel MUST obey to receive blessing

13. The background of the Abrahamic Covenant

Left with a couple of questions:

- How do the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants relate?
- God has made a covenant with Abraham and with Mosaic
- How same? How different?
- Is Israel going to obey?
- What's going to happen if they don't?
- How does the promise to Abraham fit in if they don't?

Session 2: Sinai to Exile

Discussion question: What would you say is the point of the Old Testament?

1. Recap

Abraham—Genesis 17:4

Moses—Exodus 19:4–6; Exodus 24:3–8

Life under 2 covenants

2. Will Israel obey?

3. Oops—the Golden Calf

Exodus 32:1–6

Exodus 32:7–10

Exodus 32:19

The problem: How can a holy God dwell with an unholy people?

Sin and the sacrificial system

4. Leviticus 16: the day of atonement—a substitute helps

Leviticus 16:15–16

Leviticus 16: 20–22

5. Numbers 14: Kadesh Barnea (a really big tragedy)

Numbers 14: 20–38 (especially v 22)

The Mosaic covenant: why it's there

The Mosaic covenant is not the way which God will bless Israel. It's not the way that God will reverse the fall.

Moving on into the land

6. To what extent does Israel experience Mosaic covenant blessings?

Lots of good signs –

But that's not the whole story though...

Judges

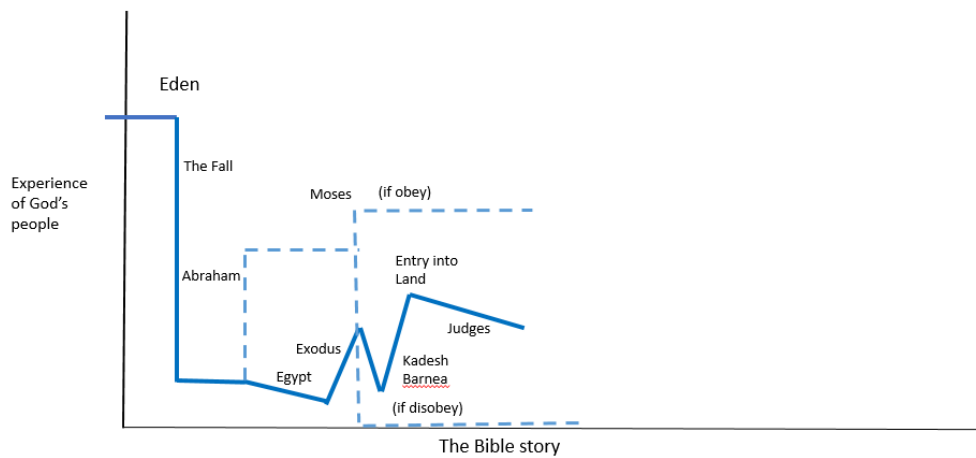
Judges 2:6–19 A new generation

7. A good leader helps!

8. The problem with the judges

Judges 21:25 a King is needed

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE – ENTERING THE LAND



Monarchy

9. Saul: another false start

10. David: the patient, obedient king

David sins: 2 Samuel 11

The Davidic covenant

2 Samuel 7:1–17

2 Samuel 7: 10–16

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT – 2 SAMUEL 7

Categories	Fall	Abraham	Moses	David
Relationship	No more relationship with God (Gen 3:2; Gen 3:24)	Permanent relationship promised: They will be God's people and he will be their God (Gen 17:7)	IF Israel obey , they will be treasured possession (Ex 19:5-6) IF Israel disobey , they'll serve other gods (Deut 28:64)	Descendant will build a house for God; implies God will dwell with his people. (2 Sam 7:13)
Land	Loss of the Garden – Adam and Eve are exiled (Gen 3:24)	Promise of the land of Canaan (Gen 12:1;15:18; 17:8)	IF Israel obey , their land is blessed (Deut 28:8) IF Israel disobey , they will be scattered amongst the nations (Deut 28:63-64)	They will have a place of their own i.e. a land (2 Sam 7:10)
Blessing	Curse is everywhere, including creation (Gen 3:17)	The descendants of Abraham will be blessed and they will bless the whole world (Gen 12:2-3; Gen 17:6)	IF Israel obey , unbelievable blessings (Deut 28:2) IF Israel disobey , unbelievable curses (Deut 28:15)	Blessings of peace and a home (2 Sam 7:10-11)
Death	Death enters into the world (Gen 3:19)	The promise of descendants mitigates this – but it's still around (Gen 17:4)	IF Israel obey ; they will have many descendants to carry on the nation (Deut 28:4,11) IF Israel disobey ; they will be destroyed (Deut 28:61)	Many people implicit in the idea of a kingdom
Cause dealt with?	Sin (Gen 2:16; 3:6)	Cause of the fall not dealt with in the Abrahamic Covenant	Israel MUST obey to receive blessing	No conditions - context implies the king helps Israel obey
King				David's descendant's throne will last forever (2 Sam 7:13)

11. What is Israel's fate under the monarchy?

We have 2 covenants that are unconditional on beneficiaries. But God hasn't said when this will happen. At first sight the Davidic covenant seems to be about **Solomon**.

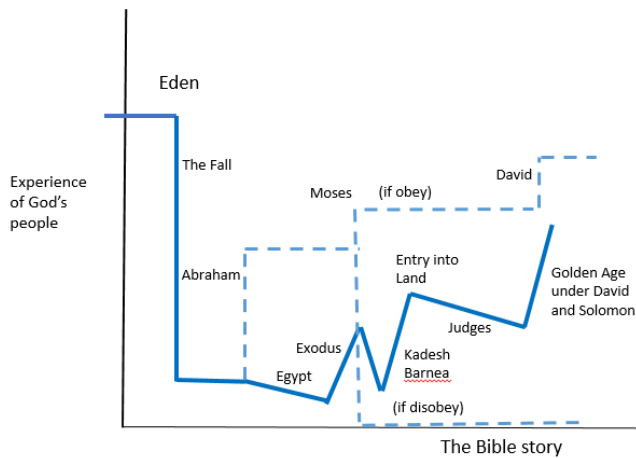
12. Solomon

To what extent does Israel under Solomon experience what was promised?

1 Kings 10:14–21

1 Kings 8:62–66

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE – DAVIDIC COVENANT



However a closer look beneath the surface of 1 Kings 11 and things are not quite as they seem and Israel is not inheriting as much as is promised as first appears

13. What is required?

Total obedience, all of the time from God's King

Kingdom split and Exile

14. 3 great disasters—the darkest period of Israel's history.

- Kingdom split—1 Kings 11:11–13
- Assyria—722 BC—2 Kings 17:6–8
- Babylon—596 and 586 BC—Isaiah 5:1–7

THINGS WE LOST IN THE EXILE(S)

Categories	Fall	Exile
Relationship	No more relationship with God (Gen 3:2; Gen 3:24)	God has left the building (literally)
Land	Loss of the Garden – Adam and Eve are expelled (Gen 3:24)	Land? What land? Israel are expelled.
Blessing	Curse is everywhere, including creation (Gen 3:17)	All the Mosaic curses have befallen them
Death	Death enters into the world (Gen 3:19)	No change here.
Cause	Sin (Gen 2:16; 3:6)	No change here.

The prophets and the new covenant

15. What is promised in the new covenant:

THE NEW COVENANT (ISAIAH, EZEKIEL, JEREMIAH)

Categories	Fall	Abraham	Moses	David	New Covenant
Relationship	No more relationship with God (Gen 3:2; Gen 3:24)	Permanent relationship promised: They will be God's people and he will be their God (Gen 17:7)	<u>IF</u> Israel obey, they will be treasured possession (Ex 19:5-6) <u>IF</u> Israel disobey, they'll serve other gods (Deut 28:64)	Descendant will build a house for God; implies God will dwell with his people. (2 Sam 7:13)	God will dwell with them forever and they shall be his people
Land	Loss of the Garden – Adam and Eve are exiled (Gen 3:24)	Promise of the land of Canaan (Gen 12:1;15:18; 17:8)	<u>IF</u> Israel obey, their land is blessed (Deut 28:8) <u>IF</u> Israel disobey, they will be scattered amongst the nations (Deut 28:63-64)	They will have a place of their own i.e. a land (2 Sam 7:10)	Own land. Glorious new creation.
Blessing	Curse is everywhere, including creation (Gen 3:17)	The descendants of Abraham will be blessed and they will bless the whole world (Gen 12:2-3; Gen 17:6)	<u>IF</u> Israel obey, unbelievable blessings (Deut 28:2) <u>IF</u> Israel disobey, unbelievable curses (Deut 28:15)	Blessings of peace and a home (2 Sam 7:10-11)	Great peace and prosperity Ez 34:25-29
Death	Death enters into the world (Gen 3:19)	The promise of descendants mitigates this – but it's still around (Gen 17:4)	<u>IF</u> Israel obey; they will have many descendants to carry on the nation (Deut 28:4,11) <u>IF</u> Israel disobey; they will be destroyed (Deut 28:61)	Many people implicit in the idea of a kingdom	God will increase numbers and destroy death and resurrection from the death for those who have died Is 25:7-8, 26:19
Cause dealt with?	Sin (Gen 2:16; 3:6)	Cause of the fall not dealt with in the Abrahamic Covenant	Israel MUST obey to receive blessing	No conditions - context implies the king helps Israel obey	God will deal with sin himself so they can obey him and will be through David's line – Ez 26:25-27, Is 53:5-6
King				David's descendant's throne will last forever (2 Sam 7:13)	They will have an everlasting Davidic king* who will be God himself (Ex 37:25, Is 9:6)

Ezekiel 36:33–32

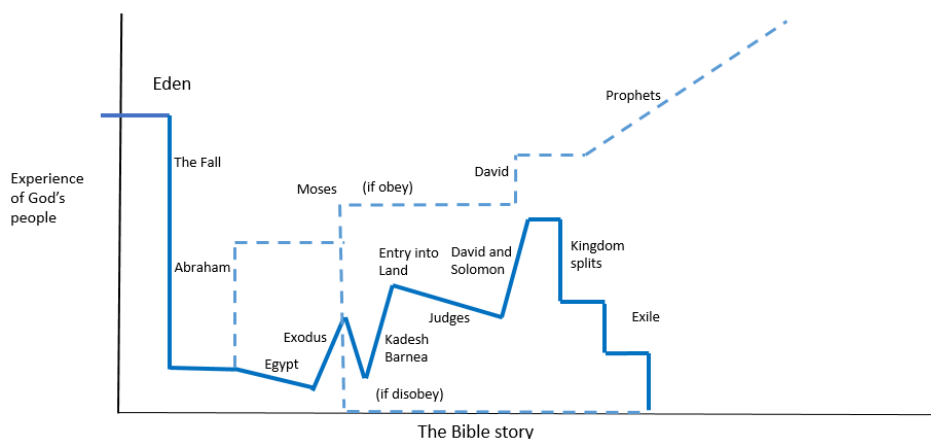
Jeremiah 31:31–34

Isaiah 52:13–53

Isaiah 25:6–9

The new covenant promises are found mostly in the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah (and some others).

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE – NEW COVENANT / EXILE



3 big questions still on the table:

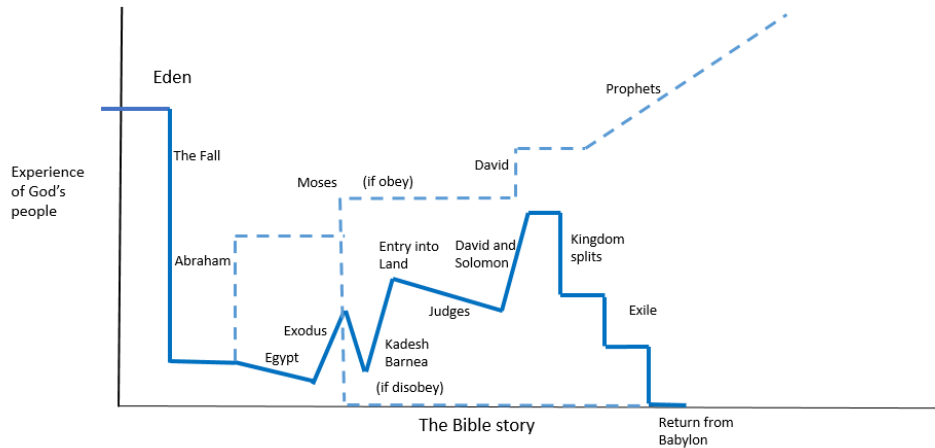
- When will all of this take place?
- How will it all take place?
- Who are God's people—who actually benefits?

Session 3: New covenant to new creation

Discussion question: What do you think Jesus Christ came to accomplish?

1. Recap: Disaster

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE – RECAP



The end of the OT: the return from exile

2. Looks hopeful

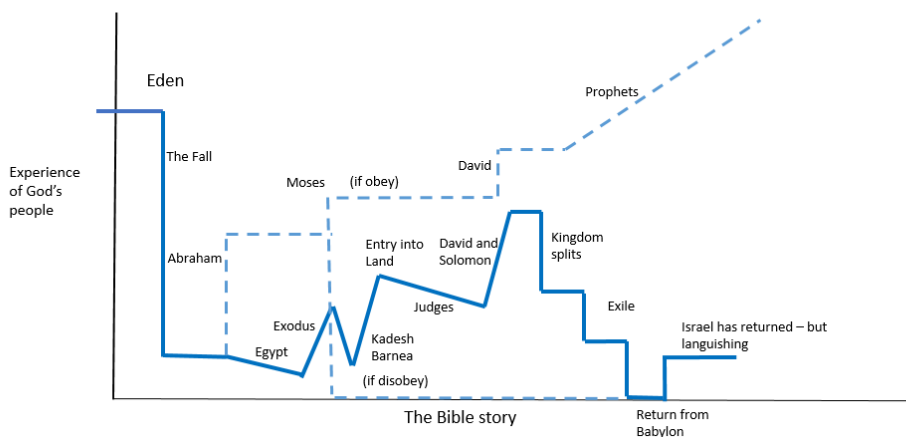
Jeremiah 29:10
Ezra 1:1–5

3. To what extent does God fulfil his promises with the return from Exile?

It's a massive disappointment.

Nehemiah 13
Ezra 9–10

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE – THE RETURN



The teaching point from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is this: the return is expected—but it is not what God has promised.

A hope—then silence

The New Testament: everything changes in 4BC

4. The New Testament opens by saying that Jesus is coming to fulfil the OT.

5. What did Jesus come to accomplish?

Luke 1:67–75

6. This is what faithful Jews should have been expecting.

Luke 2:25–32

7. So in what way is Jesus fulfilling what God has promised?

First coming: 4 key things

a. He is **God's promised Davidic king**

John 1:1

Mark 1:1

b. He inaugurates the **new covenant**

Luke 22:19–20

Hebrews 8:7–10—not just new, better

c. He's **the sacrifice** which fully cleanses us from sin

Hebrews 9:28

Hebrews 10:11–14

d. He gives God's people **the Spirit**

John 15:26

There are other things like:

- A new victory: Colossians 2:13–15
- A new temple: Ephesians 2:19–22

The now and not yet

8. Why do we see so little progress?

"So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." Hebrews 9:28 ESVUK

The not-yet bit

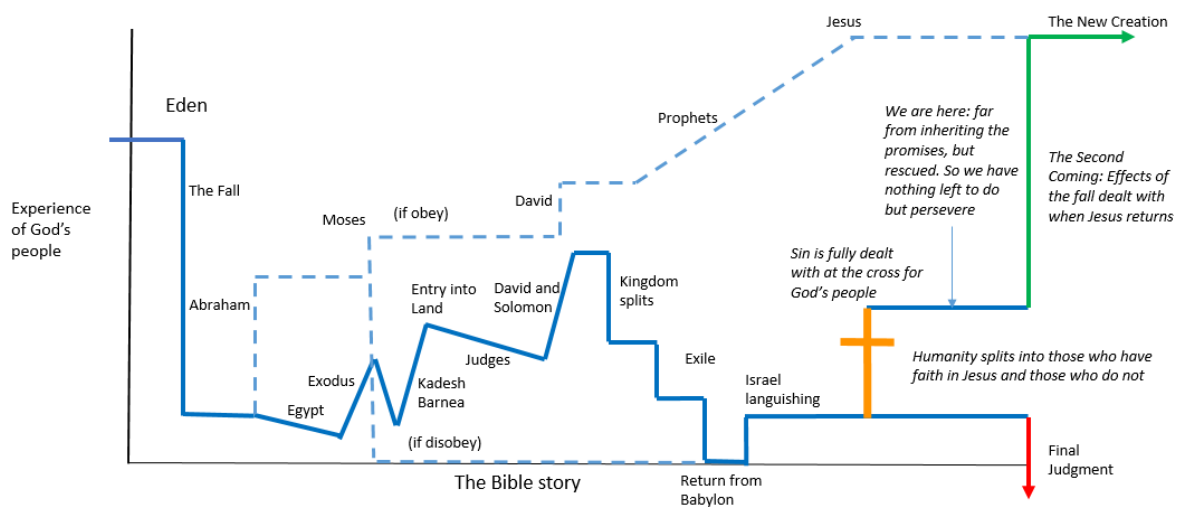
9. Second coming—two other great things to come:

a. God will judge the whole world and punish his enemies.

Revelation 20:11–15

b. New heavens and new earth—see further below

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE – THE NOW AND NOT YET



10. So why is it that we all (myself included) instinctively say Jesus came to forgive sins?

The two components of the fall—cause and effect

What the OT has shown us

Jesus has fully dealt with the problem of sin

11. But surely I still sin?

Romans 8:9–11

12. The Holy Spirit causes our battle with Sin?

Galatians 5:5–6

Why is it important to be clear about Jesus' accomplishments at his first and second comings?

13. Setting the right expectations

14. Our experience in the now and not yet

Who benefits?

15. Faith

To get **into** the covenant—there is a condition—you must keep faith!

The question then is when is he going to fulfil the promises? 2 phases
How? 2 phases

Who? Only Abraham's descendants will inherit all God has promised. In the OT, it looked like the descendants of Abraham were Israel—but who really ARE the descendants?

16. Israel 2.0

Galatians 3: those who have faith are the descendants

Romans 9:6–13: children according to the promise.

Romans 11

17. So—what is the purpose of the nation of Israel 1.0?

- They were the people to whom the revelation was made—trustees of the message.
- A case study to the world
- They are the people through whom the promise are fulfilled.

18. What does it mean to belong to God's people? 5 implications

- God's people will look forward to the new creation because God is taking us there
- God's people will have a relationship with God
- God's people will be a people who love one another
- God's people will seek to be Godly since sin matters to God.
- God's people will work hard at grasping all that he has revealed

19. An aside: where do the Epistles fit in?

When Jesus comes again—the effects of the fall will be fully and finally dealt with

20. Resolution in the New Creation:

Revelation 21:1–22:5

Take two minutes to read that over again.

THE NEW CREATION – ISAIAH, REVELATION

Categories	Fall	Abraham	Moses	David	New Covenant	The New Creation
Relationship	No more relationship with God (Gen 3:2; Gen 3:24)	Permanent relationship promised: They will be God's people and he will be their God (Gen 17:7)	IF Israel obey , they will be treasured possession (Ex 19:5-6) IF Israel disobey , they'll serve other gods (Deut 28:64)	Descendant will build a house for God; implies God will dwell with his people. (2 Sam 7:13)	God will dwell with them forever and they shall be his people	God is always accessible – no need for a temple – married to them
Land	Loss of the Garden – Adam and Eve are exiled (Gen 3:24)	Promise of the land of Canaan (Gen 12:1;15:18; 17:8)	IF Israel obey , their land is blessed (Deut 28:8) IF Israel disobey , they will be scattered amongst the nations (Deut 28:63-64)	They will have a place of their own i.e. a land (2 Sam 7:10)	Own land. Glorious new creation.	New creation and are there because Jesus has brought his people there.
Blessing	Curse is everywhere, including creation (Gen 3:17)	The descendants of Abraham will be blessed and they will bless the whole world (Gen 12:2-3; Gen 17:6)	IF Israel obey , unbelievable blessings (Deut 28:2) IF Israel disobey , unbelievable curses (Deut 28:15)	Blessings of peace and a home (2 Sam 7:10-11)	Great peace and prosperity Ez 34:25-29	People are blessed forever
Death	Death enters into the world (Gen 3:19)	The promise of descendants mitigates this – but it's still around (Gen 17:4)	IF Israel obey ; they will have many descendants to carry on the nation (Deut 28:4,11) IF Israel disobey ; they will be destroyed (Deut 28:61)	Many people implicit in the idea of a kingdom	God will increase numbers and destroy death and resurrection from the death for those who have died is 25:7-8, 26:19	No death and no tree of knowledge
Cause dealt with?	Sin (Gen 2:16; 3:6)	Cause of the fall not dealt with in the Abrahamic Covenant	Israel MUST obey to receive blessing	No conditions - context implies the king helps Israel obey	God will deal with sin himself so they can obey him and will be through David's line – Ez 26:25-27, Is 53:5-6	No sin – Holy Spirit has finished making us sinless
King				David's descendant's throne will last forever (2 Sam 7:13)	They will have an everlasting Davidic king* who will be God himself (Ex 37:25, Is 9:6)	Jesus is on the throne and his people are his bride and ruling gloriously

21. The effects of the fall are reversed irreversibly—but the new creation is even better than the first Eden.

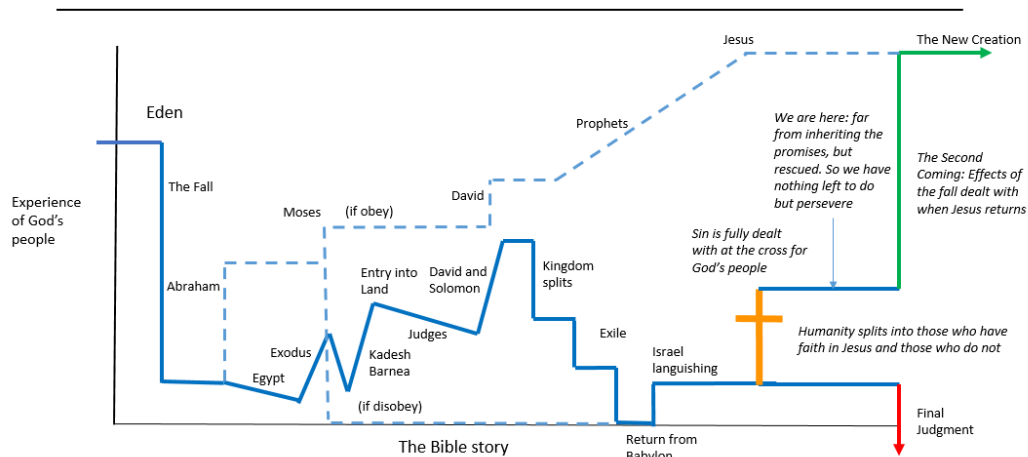
CREATION (POST-FALL) VS NEW CREATION

Genesis	Revelation
Death	No Death
Sin	No Sin
Garden	City
Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil	Tree of Life
Man banished	Man with God
Serpent	No Serpent
Cherubim to guard the way to the tree of life	No gate – the tree of life is for the healing of the nations.
God's people – 2 persons	Multitude from every tribe

The end of the story: Revelation 21–22

The End

GOD'S BIG PICTURE



* I am grateful to Dr Michael You, Oliver Hallett and to Vaughan Roberts whose material I have borrowed extensively for this Bible Overview.