

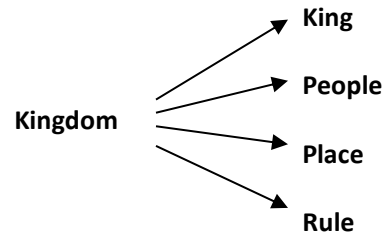
THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

ACT 3: ISRAEL (THE OLD TESTAMENT)

Part 2: Judges to Malachi

ACT 1: CREATION (GENESIS 1-2)
 ACT 2: THE FALL (GENESIS 3)
 ACT 3: ISRAEL (OLD TESTAMENT)
 ACT 4: JESUS
 ACT 5: CHRIST'S CHURCH
 ACT 6: NEW CREATION

The Story of God's Kingdom with Man



GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL (GEN-RUTH/PRE-MONARCHY)	
(King)	Who is the King?
(People)	Who are the people?
(Place)	What is the place(s)?
(Rule)	What's the rule, or way of life, between the King and the people to look like?
(Identity)	What is their identity now or how has it changed?
(Purpose & Mission)	What purpose(s) do they have or are given, and what mission(s) have they been called to engage and fulfill?
(Promises & Privileges)	What promises and privileges are they given by God as his people?
(Threats)	What do you foresee, think, or know will be some of threats—both threats to God's promises being fulfilled and them remaining faithful to God?

Joshua and the Conquest

Joshua follows after Moses and leads Israel across the Jordan into the land of Canaan—the land God had promised to Abraham. Joshua commemorates the crossing of the Jordan as a sign of God’s faithfulness and promise (and covenant) keeping. As the twelve tribes settle into their allotted lands, Israel enters into the rest that comes with dwelling in the land (Joshua 21:4; 22:4; 23:1), anticipating a greater rest for the people of God to come (Heb. 4:8). Under Joshua, Israel served the Lord and would remain faithful (24:31). In his final speech, Joshua calls Israel to remain faithful to God, to forsake any foreign gods, and to “choose this day whom you will serve” (24:15).

Through the conquest of Canaan, God brings judgment upon the idolatrous people in the land, commanding Israel to conquer the land and destroy all inhabitants. This is both judgment upon rebellious people for sin, a cleansing of the land that is to be set apart to God and His people, and also as a protection to keep Israel from intermarrying and being led into idolatry and false worship.

Judges

Judges takes us from the death of Joshua until the time of the prophet Samuel and the rise of the monarchy. It shows us the departure from faithfulness under Joshua after Israel first arrived in the land, and their need for an earthly king under God’s rule who can lead them into righteousness, justice, and wisdom. In Judges, we see the failure of Israel to obey God fully by not driving out all the inhabitants of the land (1:27-36), how they continually did evil in the sight of the Lord and served other gods (2:11), and then how God gives them over to their enemies because of this (2:11-15). The book repeats a cycle of Israel’s sin, the bondage or curse it brings, and God’s merciful deliverance. God raised up judges to lead Israel, but they do not listen to the judges.

The repeated refrain throughout the book is that everyone did what was right in their own eyes (17:6), which God through Moses had warned them against (Dt. 12:8). In fact, the book connects the lack of a king to their rebellious and foolish idolatry. “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) This line becomes the last line of the book: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (21:25). Judges shows us the sinfulness of man, our tendency to follow our heart into destruction, our need for godly leadership, and God’s faithfulness to preserve his covenant and keep His promises despite us.

Tom Schreiner summarizes Judges in this way:

“Upon opening Judges, we might think that paradise is around the corner. Two elements of the promise to Abraham are fulfilled: Israel

- had a large population and
- now inhabited the land of Canaan.

Hundreds of years had passed since the promise was made to Abraham, but Israel now seemed to be on the cusp of blessing.

It is rather stunning to see where the story goes next. Instead of moving forward, Israel slipped backward. They were in that sense like Adam in paradise. Instead of trusting and obeying the Lord, they turned toward idols so that the Lord unleashed their enemies upon them. Israel repeated a cycle of sin, defeat before enemies, repentance, and deliverance. Judges concludes with a story that echoes what happened to Lot in Sodom (Judges 20; Genesis 19). Israel was in the land, but they were not submitting to Yahweh’s lordship. Instead of blessing the nations, they were being corrupted by the nations.”¹

¹ Justin Taylor quoting Tom Schreiner in “[How Would You Summarize the Old Testament in 2,000 Words.](#)”

Monarchy

The book of 1 Samuel opens with the sins of the priests (2:12-17) contrasted to God's provision through Hannah (1:1-2:11) of the godly man Samuel. He was dedicated to the Lord and God's favor is upon him. God rejects the house of Eli and appoints Samuel as his priest (7:8), prophet (3:19-21), and judge (7:15). Eventually, Israel asks for a king *like the other nations*. Since God has made provisions for a king and predicted a coming king in several passages prior to 1 Samuel, it seems like having a king other than God isn't necessarily the problem (Gen. 17:6, 16; 35:11; 49:10; Num. 23:21; 24:17-19). The problem is wanting a king like the other nations and not wanting God's king who can rule God's way.

"But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, 'No! But there shall be a king over us,
²⁰that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.'" (1 Sam. 8:19-20)

Moses tells the people the kind of king they should have if they are going to have an earthly king. Any future king was to be appointed by God and must govern according to God's Law. They were to be a king who knew God, represented God, and served God's people by leading them into obedience, faithfulness, wisdom, and blessing.

"When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' ¹⁵you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. ¹⁶Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' ¹⁷And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

¹⁸And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. ¹⁹And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, ²⁰that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel." (Deut. 17:14-20)

The people of Israel seem less concerned about having a king who could guide them in God's Law and more concerned about having the same status symbol and earthly representative their neighboring nations had (1 Sam. 17:19-20). Israel is unhappy with God's leadership—whether it's the form it takes or the way he leads them—and they're ready for a human ruler who can bring the success, power, and wealth they see in nations surrounding them. Samuel warns them, be careful what you ask for.² What you think will bring gain, freedom, and power is the very thing that will bring loss, bondage, and pain. They might be crying out for a king today, but soon they will cry out to God because of their king (1 Sam. 17:18). But Israel wants what they want. They refuse the warning of Samuel and demand a king (17:19).

Saul is appointed king, a tall and handsome man—he has the visible, admirable attributes Israel desired—but Saul pursues his own ways rather than trusting and obeying God (1 Sam. 13:13; 15:10). We see Saul's sin in his pursuit of building a monument for himself (15:12) while rejecting God's commands (15:19).

² See "[Ingratitude Leading to Idolatry](#)" at indycrowe.com for a devotional on 1 Psalm 8 related to Israel's ingratitude.

David and the Davidic Covenant

God chooses David to replace Saul. The prophet Samuel anoints him king, though it would take years before he would be enthroned (16:13). God's selection of David is rooted not in David's visible strength and stature but in what God sees in his heart (16:7). David is a man after God's own heart (13:14; Ps. 89:20; Acts 13:22). Our introductory story to David (David vs Goliath) highlights David's concern for God's name—which Goliath defies—and trust in God. The cutting off of Goliath's head alludes to the promise that the son of Eve would come who would crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15).

The story raises the question, "Is David the long-awaited king who will defeat evil and bring rest to Israel in the land to dwell with God and live under His rule?" The answer is no and yes. No, David fails in significant ways and only delivers a foretaste of such victory and rest, but yes, through David a son and eternal king will come who does crush the head of the serpent and usher in God's eternal kingdom.

It's not until 2 Samuel 5:1-5 that David is officially made king, at age thirty. He will rule for the next forty years as king. David captures and takes over Jerusalem—Mt. Zion or the City of David—and makes it the capital city (2 Sam. 5:6-10). He brings the Ark of God up to Jerusalem and restores it to the center of God's people, acting as a sort of priest-king who offers sacrifices to the Lord (6:13-15). Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum explain the importance of this in *Christ from Beginning to End*: "And as the prophets speak of the Messiah, the office of king and priest begin to unite, as we see in passages like Psalm 110."

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and then David. Each figure represents Israel or the world, shifting and shaping the destiny of God's people. With David, Israel not only has a godly king who (largely) rules them according to God's ways, but God makes a covenant with David that his throne will be an eternal throne for all nations. The Davidic covenant develops our understanding of the role for Israel, and ultimately, for the coming King and Messiah who will defeat evil and rule God's people in God's place in perfect accord with God's ways.

Though several texts speak into and help explain the Davidic covenant (1 Chron. 17; Ps. 89; 110; 132:11; 2 Chron. 13:5; Is. 55:3), 2 Samuel 7:4-17 is the key passage.

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹² 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. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever." (2 Sam. 7:8-16)

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ⁴ 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" (Ps. 89:3-4; see also 89:19-37)

"The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: 'One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.'" (Ps. 132:11; see also 132:12-18)

“May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed!” (Ps. 72:17)

Outline of 2 Samuel 7 from Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum in *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants*.

- A. Promises to be realized during David’s lifetime 8–11a
- B. Promises to be realized after David’s death 11b–16
 - 1) The covenant promises—Yahweh’s part 11b–13
 - seed
 - kingdom
 - throne (eternal)
 - 2) The covenant relationship—the king’s part 14–15 (Obedience in a father-son relationship)
 - 3) Summary of the covenant promises 16
 - an eternal seed
 - an eternal kingdom
 - an eternal throne

Like many Old Testament promises, there are immediate partial fulfillments and then future, deeper fulfillments—fulfilled in Christ. For example, when Joshua leads Israel into the land of Canaan, that does fulfill (in part) God’s promises to Abraham to give them land, but as the OT storyline and NT exposition show us, there was a deeper rest for the people of God to be found only in Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:8-10). So also, some of the Davidic covenant is fulfilled in David and his son Solomon, but much of it is pointing to Jesus, a son of David who would reign eternal on David’s throne (Luke 1:32-33).

If the Abrahamic covenant told us the people-group that the seed of the woman would come through—as well as the earthly locale they’d be given and the promise of a multitude of descendants—and if the Mosaic covenant outlined how Israel was to live, then the Davidic covenant helps us know what line a future king will come through and that his throne will be eternal. Many of the promises to Abraham are echoed in the Davidic covenant (making your name great, blessing, seed, etc.). And all of these covenants signify that though the covenant is with Israel, the aim is that it would bring blessing upon the nations or world as God’s means of expanding his kingdom (Ps. 72:17).

“David gets it right: God’s promise entails not only hope for Israel but also hope for the world. God’s promise, begun in Genesis 3:15, narrowed through Abraham’s seed, is narrowed further through David’s line. God’s plan for all of humanity is now wholly tied to David and his sons. It’s through the Davidic king that salvation will come and the horrible effects of Adam’s sin will be reversed!” Trent Hunter & Stephen Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*

To summarize some of what’s going on here. God makes a covenant with David, that an heir of David will come who will take up an eternal throne (the Davidic throne), for Israel but also including the nations, who will defeat evil and God’s enemies, and rule in righteousness and truly reflect God’s rule. This king will be God’s true “image,” a king with a father-son relationship with God who knows and reflects God, and thus can bring God’s kingdom to the world.

“At her deliverance from Egypt, Israel was corporately identified as God’s son (Ex. 4: 22–23). Now David is identified as God’s individual son (2 Sam. 7: 14), and he takes on Israel’s role as her representative. Israel remains God’s corporate son, but in the Davidic covenant, the king assumes Israel’s roles and functions as God’s representative to the world. In his entire life, the king is to act like God—his Father—as a faithful, obedient son, and ultimately bring God’s saving rule to this world. All of God’s promises and purposes are now centered on the Davidic king.” Trent Hunter & Stephen Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*³

³ “Second Samuel 7 must also be read according to the arrangement of the books in the Hebrew Canon. A canonical reading indicates that the Davidic king is inheriting the role of both Adam as son of God and Israel as son of God, according to the instructions of Deuteronomy 17.... Thus it is natural in the plan of God for the king of Israel, as Israel,

The Divided Kingdom, Prophets, and Exile

Though David and Solomon bring a level of peace to the kingdom, and Solomon establishes a temple for the worship of God, after Solomon the kingdom splits between Israel/North and Judah/South. While some of Judah's kings were more faithful (though all broke God's commands), all of Israel's kings were unfaithful. During the divided kingdom, both the "former prophets" (such as Elisha and Elijah) and the "latter prophets" (those with books specific to their names) come onto the scene. These prophets speak on behalf of God to the kings and to the people of God to warn them about their sin and the judgment coming while also calling them to repentance. They are called to account for failure to love God and love neighbor. In *Christ from Beginning to End*, Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum write, "There is tension in the story between the promises of God, the spiritual poverty of the people, and the failure of the Davidic kings. The prophets acknowledge this tension and cry out to the God of sovereign grace for its resolution."

The prophets rebuke the sins of their religious leaders and the hypocrisy of the people—participating in all the religious rituals and paying their dues but having hearts bent on idols rather than the worship of God. Prophets deliver God's Word and instruction to God's people, acting as covenant lawyers or prosecutors who call Israel back to God through faithfulness to the old covenant rather than pursuing sin and idolatry. They represent God by both pointing out Israel's failure to keep the old covenant, but they also represent God in their loving warnings that plead for the people to return to their God.

"God declares his love and his wrath, his affection and his anger. There is tension in the heart of the Lord when his just and holy character collides with his tender love, mercy, and grace. Thankfully, this tension is resolved in the Bible's story. Through the writings of the prophets, it becomes clearer to us how what God promised in Genesis 3: 15 will come about. The tension between God's holiness and justice and his love and grace pervades the Prophets. Much to our amazement and blessing, we learn that the Lord will act to satisfy his own justice, to display his holy love, and to keep his promises to his undeserving people." Trent Hunter & Stephen Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*

Eventually God brings judgment upon both kingdoms through Exile, Israel under Assyria and Judah under Babylon. The exile is a time of devastation for Israel, reaping the covenantal curses for their sin. Even in exile, God preserves his people (as stories like Esther tell). The prophets help explain the devastation but also begin to bring hope of return from exile, both in an immediate sense and a more complete sense. There is a greater return from exile or new Exodus needed to deal with our sin problem. The book of Nehemiah closes with a dismal picture of Israel's continuation in sin and idolatry—despite many returning to Jerusalem and rebuilding it—indicating that the rebuilding of a city and the temple or returning to the land are not the answer. Then Malachi, the last prophet, speaks to Israel's ongoing sin and the coming Messiah and coming Day of the Lord.

"The prophets speak with a hope informed by God's promises to David and all of God's promises given through the biblical covenants. They warn of a future that is worse and better than anyone can imagine. They look forward to the 'Day of the LORD,' when God will act to save and bring about his promises, though they most likely view it as a single event tied to the coming of the Lord. As the prophetic word is later fulfilled, we'll discover that God's promises come to fruition in two stages: first, as they are inaugurated at Jesus' coming, and ultimately, as they are consummated at his return. The prophets

to accomplish for the nation as a whole what the group of individuals have failed to do.... The Davidic covenant narrows the mediator of blessing to the nations from the nation of Israel as whole to the king, who represents and stands for the nation." Peter Gentry & Stephen Wellum, *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants*

"David's son will be the personal embodiment of the people of God and is declared to be God's son... [Footnote 15 adds] It is reasonable to suggest that 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son' [2 Sam. 7:14] is an individualizing of the covenant statement 'I will be your God and you shall be my people. David's line is thus declared to be representative of God's people or, to put it another way, David's son is the true Israel.'" Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*

aren't thinking of God's promises being fulfilled in two stages, as we see them today, but more in terms of one cataclysmic event." Trent Hunter & Stephen Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*

The New Covenant

With the Prophets, we begin to see with greater clarity God's vision for his kingdom through a coming Messiah-King-Servant-Shepherd. Tom Schreiner summarizes this hope in the prophetic writings:

"There will be a new covenant (Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 36:26–27) in which Israel's sins will be finally and fully forgiven. The Lord will write the law on Israel's heart by giving them the Holy Spirit, and so they will desire to do what the Lord says. The Lord will pour out his Spirit on his people, and a new age of salvation will arise (cf. Isa 32:15; 44:3; Joel 2:28). Creation will be renewed, and there will be a new exodus, a new covenant, and a new creation.

The kingdom God promised has not been withdrawn. It will come, and a new David will reign on the throne (Hos 3:5; Mic 5:2–4; Isa 9:1–7; 11:1–10; 55:3; Jer 23:5–6; 30:9; 33:15–17; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Zech 9:9). The new creation, the new exodus, and the new covenant will be fulfilled through a king! The serpent will be defeated, and the kingdom will come."⁴

This king and suffering servant will be despised and rejected by men (Is. 49:7; 53) but will also be a light and salvation to the nations (Is. 49:6). He will be rejected by his own people, but this becomes the means of salvation going to the whole world—just as the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants allude to. The prophetic writings give us many clues about the kind of king God will send—who he is, what he does, and how he will rule—but one of the things we see are two ideas that seem at tension prior to Christ's coming. God alone must save his people and be what no human—or Israel as a whole—can be, and yet it must be an obedient son of Abraham and son of David who saves Israel. It must be God, but it must also be a man. God will save Israel and be faithful to His covenant to Abraham through a Davidic King, but it must be a righteous king who can deal with our sin, defeat our enemies, and live forever.

SALVATION MUST BE OF GOD	SALVATION MUST BE BY A SON OF DAVID
A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'... Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'" (Is. 40:3, 9)	"and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴ Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples." (Is. 55:3-4)
"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Is. 9:6)	"Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore." (Is. 9:7; cf. Is. 11:2 for a Spirit-filled branch from the stump of Jesse)
"I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God." (Ezek. 34:15; see 34:16-24 for repetition of "I will...)	"And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken." (Ezek. 34:23-24)
"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts." (Mal. 3:1)	
"And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a	"I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." (2 Sam. 7:14)

⁴ Justin Taylor quoting Tom Schreiner in "How Would You Summarize the Old Testament in 2,000 Words."

house. ¹² 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.” (2 Sam. 7:11-12)	“He shall cry to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.’ ²⁷ And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.” (Ps. 89:26-27; 89:28-29)
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Main texts related to New Covenant (also called covenant of peace or eternal covenant): Jer. 31:31-34; 32:36-41; 50:2-5; Ezek. 34:20-31; 37:15-28 (cf. 11:18-21; 18:30-32; 36:24-32); Is. 54:1-10; 55:1-5; 61:8-9.

NT texts: Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15ff; 12:18-24; 13:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Luke 22:20.

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34; see wider context of 31:26-40)

- This is a new covenant that remedies the problems with the old covenant. (The “old covenant” is the Mosaic law-covenant made with the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai—and Deuteronomy—with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.)
 “The new covenant therefore brings to fruition God’s promises and purposes in all the other covenants: (1) it brings the numerous seed promised in the Abrahamic covenant, (2) it brings the righteousness between God and humans and among humans aimed at in the Israelite covenant, and (3) it establishes the city of God ruled by the Davidic King. All of this is as certain as the promises to Noah.” Peter Gentry & Stephen Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants*
- In the old covenant, they were a mixed community (regenerate and unregenerate) who had to rely upon their family and leaders to represent them, but the people of the new covenant will all know the Lord personally (and be a true people) and have a covenant-mediator who never fails and never brings judgment upon them.
- The old covenant could be broken by Israel, but the new covenant will be kept.
- The old covenant was only for ethnic Israel, but this covenant includes the nations (see also Joel 2:28-29; Is. 42:6; 49:6; 60:3).
- The old covenant only provided temporary and ceremonially cleansing for sin—with much trouble from priests and sacrifices continually offered up—but the new covenant provides full and final forgiveness and cleansing.
- The old covenant was one of letter, meaning commands external to Israel they were always called to do, but the new covenant is one of writing God’s law on our heart so we obey from the inside out (see also Ezek. 36:26-27).

Similarity of New Cov. to Old Cov.	Dissimilarity of New Cov. to Old Cov.
Basis is the same (the grace of God)	Better mediator (without sin) (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24)
Purpose is the same (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9–10)	Better sacrifice (Heb. 9:6–10:18; Isa. 42:6; 52:13–53:12)
Initiated by blood (Heb. 9:6–10:18)	Better provision (the Spirit of God; Ezek. 36:24–28)
Character of divine instruction is the same (Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5:14)	Better promise (impartation of a new heart) (Ezek. 36:24–28)

Peter Gentry & Stephen Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants*

Summary of Israel's Story

"Israel's story throughout the Old Testament is not one of success. Israel was called through the Mosaic covenant to be a devoted son in relationship to God and to provide a priestly service, bringing divine blessing to the nations, showing them how to treat one another in genuinely human ways and how to be good stewards of the earth. Yet instead of displaying faithful, loyal love to God and others and dealing in social justice (justice and righteousness), she is completely riddled by corruption and social violence. Jeremiah notes that the hearts of the people are like an incurable wound: they do not have a circumcised heart—one of complete devotion to the covenant Lord (Jer. 17:9). Like an incurable wound, their hearts are constantly unfaithful. The covenant with David appears to be a way out of the problem. The king of Israel represents the nation and will do for the nation as a whole what they have completely failed to do in bringing blessing to the nations. Isaiah 7 is a critical moment in the history of the Davidic monarchy. The king should go out and fight the battles for the nation, but the real enemy is within—the incurable wound of the uncircumcised heart. In the end, the Davidic house as represented by Ahaz completely fails to administer the Mosaic covenant and refuses to trust Yahweh. So the kingdom of David, compared to a stately tree like all the ancient kingdoms, becomes a tree cut down. Isaiah sees a shoot coming out of the stump in Isaiah 11. Jeremiah 23:5 affirms that only God can bring new growth out of the dead stump. We must wait until the New Testament, where we have a king from the line of David who is pictured as a new David. In his atoning death he meets the real enemies—sin, death, and Satan—and clobbers them. This not only allows Israel to be rescued from her self-destructive path; it opens a fountain of blessings for all the nations. In this way the new covenant brings to fulfillment the divine intentions in the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants." Peter Gentry & Stephen Wellum, *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Judges reveals that Israel needs a king to keep them from doing what's right in their own eyes.
 - a. What might this reveal to us about the danger/limits of human independence or autonomy, trusting our heart, and our need for godly leadership or influence?
 - b. Could Israel have found what they needed in God alone as king rather than having to have an earthly king? Why or why not?
 - c. God had already made provisions for an earthly king—so a king isn't inherently bad—so what is wrong about Israel's desire for a king?
2. David's great concern that leads him to go fight Goliath (despite his age, inexperience, size, and position) is God's name being defiled. The glory of God's name is also why David doesn't kill Saul, why he fights nations, and why David wants to build a house/temple for God. How does David's great concern for God's name and glory stand in contrast to Israel's concerns before David? How might we apply this in our own lives and share a similar passion as David?
3. What are some reasons from the OT that Israel had to be grateful to God? Why do you think they didn't experience as much gratitude then (and live as grateful people)? How might this remind us of the need to not ignore or overlook reasons we have to be thankful and respond gratefully to God?
4. The Old Testament's key figures are men and women who are faithful to God and yet also fall in significant ways or display great weakness? Why should this encourage us?
5. Would you describe the OT as discouraging and dismal or encouraging and hopeful? Why?
6. What are some of the most common sins of Israel in the OT (example: grumbling, entitlement, failure to trust God, etc.)?
7. What are 1-2 of your favorite stories, lessons, or sections from the OT? Why?
8. The prophets speak God's Word to God's people, communicating things like the seriousness of sin, God's desire for us to repent and return to Him, impending consequences when we choose sin, and the need for real righteousness—loving God and neighbor—not just religious formality. How might we take some of these key “prophetic messages” and take them to heart in our own life today?
9. Based on what we've seen from the OT—but also things we didn't get to talk about that you know of—how would you explain to a Jewish person why Jesus is the hope and fulfillment to the OT?
10. One of the messages throughout the OT is that our sin problem is so bad and pervasive that we are absolutely dependent on God alone to save us, change us, strengthen us, and work through us? How does this lead the story to the NT and Christ's coming? Why is this this message about our brokenness and dependence on God important to remember, both for our salvation but also for our sanctification (maturity) and daily living as believers?

RESOURCES

- Old Testament timeline chart <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-study-bible/chart-ot-timeline/>
- “Covenants: the Backbone of the Bible” by Whitney Woolard at bibleproject.com <https://bibleproject.com/blog/covenants-the-backbone-bible/>
- Justin Taylor quoting Tom Schreiner in “How Would You Summarize the Old Testament in 2,000 Words” at thegospelcoalition.org

HOMEWORK

- **Read Hebrews.** What is picked up from the OT? How is it fulfilled in Jesus? Does Hebrews help you understand anything from the OT in a new way in light of Christ's coming?
- Read “Progressive Covenantalism and New Covenant Theology” by Stephen Wellum <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/progressive-covenantalism-and-new-covenant-theology/>