

The rejection of life in the land

The Story of Life- session 5

The story so far...

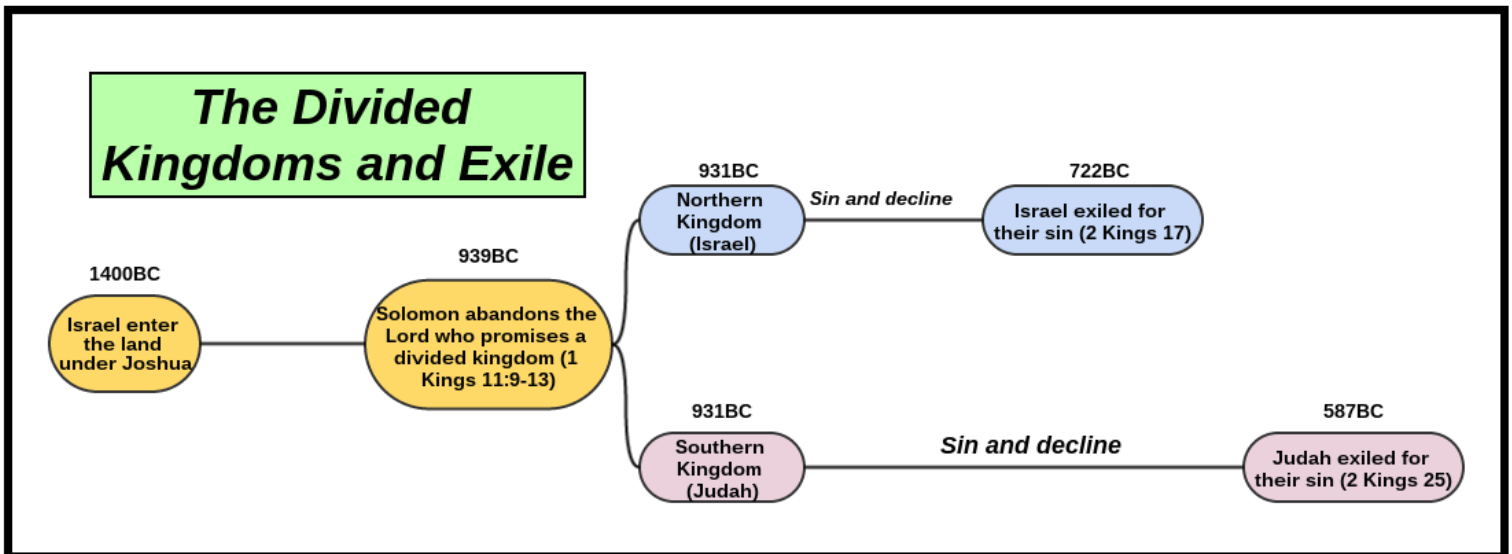
1	God made people for LIFE.	<i>Submitting to God's Rule Experiencing God's Blessing Enjoying God's Presence</i>
2	People rebelled and chose death	<i>Rejecting God's Rule Experiencing God's Judgment Banished from God's presence</i>
3	God promises restoration to Abraham and rescues his people from slavery	<i>Rule restored: God's law is given; Blessing restored: God provides manna for his people; Presence restored: God dwells with his people through the tabernacle</i>
4	God brings his people into the promised land	<i>Rule restored: Kings are appointed to rule under God; Blessing restored: The land is 'flowing with milk and honey' Presence restored: God dwells with his people through the temple</i>

Introduction- Has God lost the plot?

"When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you... your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall be established for ever" 2 Samuel 7:12-16

1. Exile- God's promised judgement comes to pass

"Although God had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command." 1 Kings 11:10



a. The people reject God's rule

- *The Northern Kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 17:5-17, p. 388)*

"Do not rejoice, O Israel; do not be jubilant like other nations. For you have been unfaithful to your God... the days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this." **Hosea 9:1**

"You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine. For I know how many are your offences and how great your sins."

Amos 5:11-12

- *The Southern Kingdom of Judah (2 Chronicles 36:15-16, p. 471)*

Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: 'I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its master, the donkey its owners manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not know. **Isaiah 1:2-3**

Should you not fear me?" declares the Lord, "Should you not tremble in my presence?.. But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts; they have turned aside and gone away.

Jeremiah 5:23

b. The people experience God's judgement (Deut. 28:15-68, p. 205)

c. **The people are banished from God's presence** (2 Kings 17:18-19, p. 388)

- The exile reveals our sinful human hearts
- The exile reveals God's grace and patience
- The exile reveals God's faithfulness to his word

2. Hope- God promises a great restoration

a. **God's rule will be established** (Isaiah 9:6-7, p. 693)

"I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh" Ezekiel 11:19 (cf. Ez. 36:27)

b. **God's blessings will be restored** (Jeremiah 31:31-34, p. 792))

- Restored to the land (Isaiah 40:1-5, Ez. 11:16-17)
- A new covenant will be established (Jer. 31:31-14)
- Forgiveness of sins will be available (Jer. 31:34, Isaiah 1:18, 53:4-6)

c. **God's presence will be personally known**

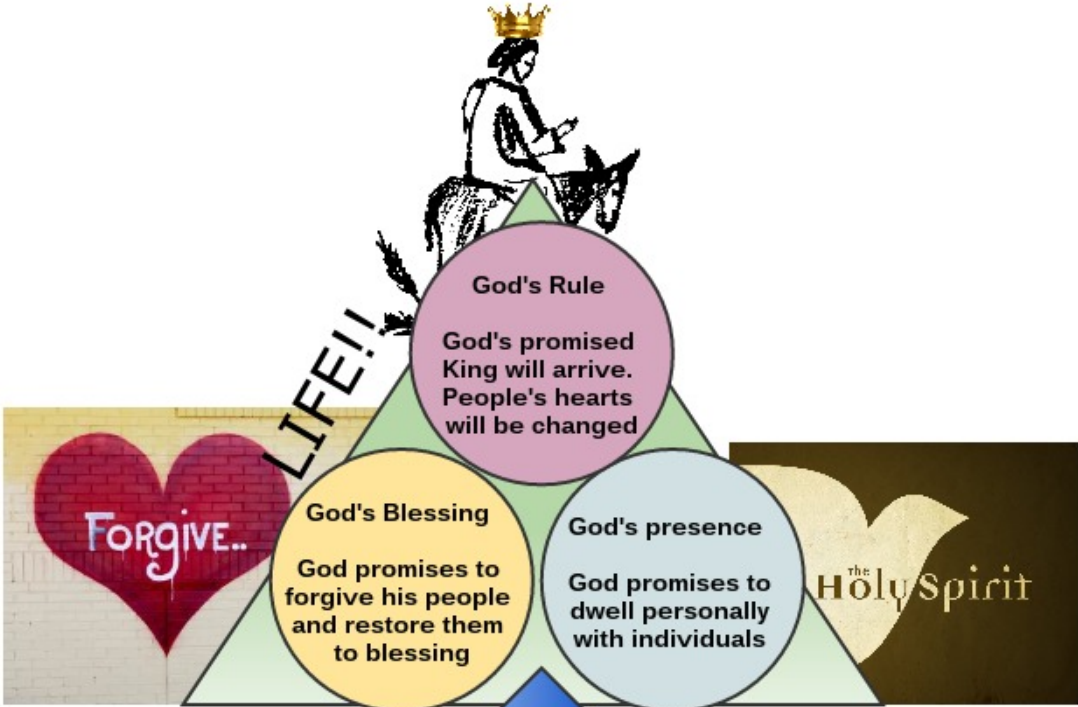
- All will know God (Jer 31:34)
- God's Spirit will be poured out on all people (Joel 2, Isaiah 59:20-21, Ez. 36:24-32)
- Forgiveness of sins will be available (Jer. 31:34, Isaiah 1:18, 53:4-6)

3. Return- The promised restoration is still awaited

a. **The prophets' hope is partially fulfilled** (Ezra 1:1-4, p. 473)

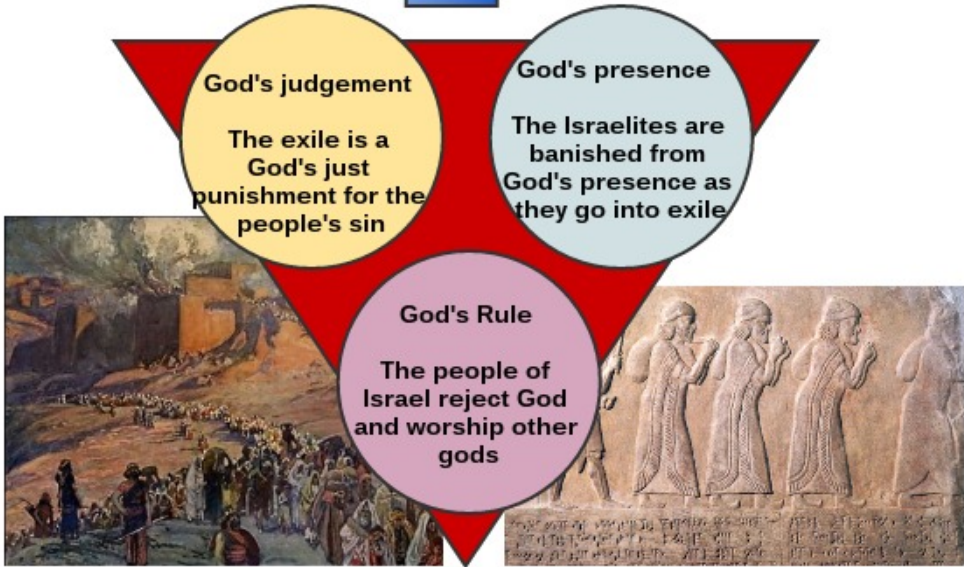
b. **But most of the promises have not yet been fulfilled**

The Prophetic Hope



God will act at some point in the future to restore his people

God's gracious rescue



The Exile

Small Groups: Ezekiel 34, 36:24-32

Ezekiel was one of the exiles who had been taken to Babylon. His prophecies, recorded in our Bible book, were given in Babylon to the exiles. Much of his book looks back to the exile, and explains why it has come about. From chapter 34 he also begins to look forward with hope to the restoration that God has promised to bring.

A leadership problem (v1-10)

1. The 'shepherds of Israel' refer to Israel's leadership. What is God's appraisal of them? Why?
2. In v6-10, how does God emphasise who this flock belongs to? How does this shed light on God's response to the shepherds?
3. What is God's ultimate response to their mismanagement? (v10)

A promised solution! (v11-16)

4. God has said that the leaders of Israel will be removed. How will they be replaced?
5. Perhaps in pairs, do a quick compare/contrast of God's abilities as a Shepherd with the leaders of Israel.

The perfect leader (v17-24)

6. How else will this Shepherd ensure the flock is well looked after?
7. God's words in v23-24 were spoken hundreds of years after David had been around. So who do you think these verses refer to? (Remember the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7)
8. Read John 10:11-19. How are Jesus' words a fulfilment of all the Ezekiel spoke of?

A new covenant (v25-31)

9. What different commitments does God make in his 'covenant of peace'?
10. As we read these wonderful promises in Ezekiel 34, what underlying problem which led to the Exile, still hasn't been addressed?
11. Read Ezekiel 36:24-32. How do these verse address that underlying issue?

In Ezekiel's day, the people were still looking forward to these events- as they faced the hardships of exile, they were eagerly anticipated! Only when Jesus came 400 years later were they finally fulfilled. Christians don't have to wait, but can live out the reality!

Paul tells us in Galatians 5 to 'keep in step with the Spirit'. How can we be doing that this week?

Getting ahead for Small Groups next week

John 20

Next time we finally get to grand climax as Jesus arrives- the promised King we've been waiting for.

A perplexing discovery (v1-8)

1. There is a lot of running in these verses! Why is that? What does it tell us about the events? About the disciples?
2. In v8-9, what does this disciple believe, but what have they still not understood?

Mary meets Jesus (v9-18)

3. What do Mary's tears show about her understanding of what's happened?
4. What change does realising she's talking to the risen Jesus make to Mary?

The Disciples' meet Jesus (v19-23)

5. What picture are we painted of the disciples before Jesus appears to them?
6. What do you think is the significance of the first thing Jesus *says* and the first thing he *does*, when he appears?
7. In v21-23, what job does Jesus give his disciples?

Thomas meets Jesus (v24-31)

8. If you were Thomas, how would you have felt when all the others said they had seen Jesus?
9. On both occasions, the doors were locked, yet Jesus stood among them. What does this tell us about the nature of Jesus' resurrection body?!
10. What does Jesus' conversation with Thomas (v27-29) show us-
 - about Jesus' presence with the disciples in v25?
 - about how reasonable his disbelief had been?
 - about the right response to Jesus' resurrection?
11. v31 is the climax of John's gospel. What was the big purpose of Jesus' coming? What was the big purpose of John writing his gospel?

Tracing **God's Spirit** through the Bible

God's Spirit only gets poured after Jesus has died and risen, but he is present throughout the Bible. Trace through his involvement in God's plans of salvation

- **Genesis 1:2** Where do we see God's Spirit right at the beginning?
- **1 Samuel 16:13**- In the OT the Spirit isn't available for all, but equips and empowers particular individuals. Who is being equipped here, and for what?
- **Joel 2:28-32**. What promise did God make about the Spirit through the prophet Joel?
- **Luke 3:16**. What does John the baptist say Jesus will do?
- **Acts 1:4-5**. What does Jesus instruct his disciples?
- **Acts 2:1-4**. When are the promises of the OT fulfilled?

For the book-worms

<i>God's Big Picture</i>	Vaughan Roberts	A book tracing out the big story-line of the Bible.
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Prayer points

