

Promises, Promises...

God as
Promise
Giver
&
Promise
Keeper

Session 8 • The Divine Continuum

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I. The Divine Continuum: Covenant.

A. God's plan is to rescue us from the shipwreck of the world.

- Salvation is unfolding in the ongoing covenantal relationship—the continuous narrative is all about God's purposes.

B. St. Paul's references to Adam, Abraham, Moses, the prophets, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms regard the continuous unfolding of salvation history.

1. Paul's theological stance developed as a Jew; Jesus was a Jew; the unfolding of God's plan for the world is within the historical/cultural tradition of Israel.
2. Jerusalem becomes the place of the ultimate revelation, the "cataclysmic irruption," "the heart stopping event" in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

C. YHWH/Elohim/Adonai had a single plan all along, in which he intended to save the world.

1. With a surprising musical chord played loudly in the middle of the symphony, yet something that belongs within the harmony of the score—it belongs within the rhythm of the movement.
2. The very thing for which Israel, during its entire history from Abraham onward, during its entire history under Moses (Torah), had been waiting.

- II. First century Judaism: living within the unfolding narrative as exiles in history.
- A. Jews waited for the end of the destruction, yet disobedience reigned.
 - 1. The prayer of Daniel repeatedly calling for God to act, to keep covenant—*Daniel 9:1-19*.
 - 2. In God’s faithfulness to covenant, God must punish his faithless people (curse/blessing narrative)—*Deuteronomy 27-29*.
 - 3. You are in the right, and we are in the wrong—*Daniel 9:7*.
 - B. The prophet beseeches God, and the angel Gabriel declares where the great redemption would take place (first century Jerusalem)—*Daniel 9:20-27*.
 - 1. The controlling narrative for the Jews was God’s fulfilling of God’s covenantal promises.
 - 2. God is going to do what God has promised.
 - C. Very different from a non-historical understanding of salvation where “me and Jesus” ride off into the heavens.
 - 1. “My” relationship with God in the covenantal unfolding is always “our” relationship with God.
 - 2. Very different from saying “This is what I need to do to go to heaven.” or asking “What are the qualifications for the afterlife?”
 - 3. Tide of hope: Israel’s God acted yet again in **Jesus**.
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III. Mount Zion, Jerusalem: a dwelling place for the Lord—*Psalms 132:1-5*.

[FROM LAST WEEK’S SESSION]

- A. Uniting of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel through David, at Jerusalem, the capital, which would house the Book of the Covenant. (Jerusalem belonged to *neither* Judah *nor* Israel.)
 - 1. Establishing the capital city—*2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10*.
 - 2. The Ark of the Covenant “located” at Jerusalem—*2 Samuel 6:12-16*.
- B. God will establish—in Jerusalem, through David—the holy city, the place of revelation.
 - 1. An everlasting covenant—*Psalms 132:11-12*.
 - 2. From which, like Abram in *Genesis 12:1-3*, nations shall be blessed—*Psalms 72:17-20*.
 - 3. God chooses David’s kingship to extend the covenant to the people with the newly established Jerusalem; Mount Zion is pivotal to the fulfillment of the covenant promise—*Psalms 48:1-3, 9-14; Psalms 50:1-2; Psalms 87:1-3; Psalms 125:1-2*.