

Living Way Church  
Biblical Studies Program – April 2013  
God’s Unfolding Revelation: An Introduction to Biblical Theology  
Lesson Three

- I. Review
  - A. We began the lesson with an overview of Vaughan Roberts’ division of the Bible into eight main epochs that describe God’s unfolding plan to restore the kingdom
  - B. The outline for this review can be found in Lesson Two, section III. A Bible Overview, pages 2-5
  - C. Lesson three then began with a more detailed examination of each of these main epochs
- II. The Pattern of the Kingdom
  - A. Genesis chapters 1 and 2 show us God’s original, perfect creation
  - B. Roberts highlights four important truths about creation:
    1. God is the author of creation
      - a. God alone is eternal
      - b. God has always existed as a trinity
      - c. God is the creator of all things, visible and invisible
      - d. God made everything in the beginning and He will redeem everything in the end
    2. God is the king of creation
      - a. As creator of all, God is the Lord of all
      - b. He is the rightful king over everything He has made
      - c. God is transcendent, above and beyond all that He has made an distinct from it
      - d. God alone is worthy of worship
      - e. Our duty as His creatures is to submit to Him as our king and give Him the glory that rightfully belongs to Him
    3. Human beings are the pinnacle of creation
      - a. We alone, of all God’s creation, have been made in His image
      - b. We reflects something of God’s nature in a way that nothing else in creation does
      - c. As those who have been made uniquely in God’s image, all human beings have great dignity and have been set by God above the rest of the created order with responsibility for it
      - d. We are God’s stewards, entrusted with the care of His creation
    4. Rest is the goal of creation

- a. Following the creation, we see life as it was designed to be lived
    - b. It is marked by a series of perfect relationships
      - (1) God and human beings – fellowship and blessing
      - (2) Man and woman – complete intimacy
      - (3) Human beings and creation – work in harmony, so the earth brings forth its fruit
  - C. We see in the garden of Eden a pattern for the kingdom of God: God’s people, Adam and Eve, living God’s place, the garden of Eden, under God’s rule; as a result, they enjoy God’s blessing
- III. The Perished Kingdom
- A. God exercised His rule in the garden through His word and that is where Satan directs his attack – the serpent begins by distorting the word and questioning God
  - B. The fall resulted in broken relationships
    - 1. The relationship between men and women
    - 2. The relationship between human beings and creation
    - 3. The relationship between human beings and God
  - C. After Genesis three, there is the spread of sin and death
  - D. Ever since the fall, all human beings have been born in sin – facing the same predicament as Adam and Eve: spiritual and physical death
  - E. Genesis four records the story of Cain and Abel: the first murder
    - 1. Once the vertical relationship with God has been broken, it is inevitable that horizontal relationships with one another will be broken as well
    - 2. Human relationships break down as a direct result of the break in the relationship between God and mankind
    - 3. All human conflict reflects our conflict with God
  - F. Genesis 5 – the genealogy and its record of human mortality
    - 1. Those early humans lived for many years
    - 2. Yet, a refrain runs through the chapter reminding us that they were mortal: “and then he died...”
  - G. The Flood (Gen 6-9)

*“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (6) And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. (7) So the Lord said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.’” (Gen 6:4-7)*

- 1. The flood shows that God’s judgment continued to be expressed

- 2. after the first sentence of death and banishment from the Eden
- 2. Judgments in biblical history foreshadow final judgment, and show the situation from which God saves us
- 3. God's commitment to creation is seen in the preservation of mankind, and the establishment of a line of people which is the object of God's special redeeming love
  - a. The godly, though still sinful line of Seth
  - b. There is a direct link from Adam through Seth to Noah
- 4. Two important words used for the first time: *grace* (favor) and *covenant* (God's commitment to save Noah)
  - a. Gen 6:8 - "*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord*"
  - b. Gen 6:18 - "*But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.*"
- 5. God's commitment to creation
- 6. The restoration of the human race is foreshadowed in the rescue of Noah and his family
- 7. This leads to the promise that the earth will also be preserved (Gen 9:8-17)
- H. After the flood
  - 1. Gen 9:25-27 - God's covenant distinguishes between those who are chosen as the objects of blessing, those who will somehow share this blessing, and those who are under judgment
  - 2. The two lines of the human race
    - a. Genesis 4-11 show the division of mankind into at least two main groups that have quite different relationships to God
    - b. These first chapters of the Bible establish the fact that God's plan for the rescue of mankind involves an ongoing distinction between those rescued by grace and those lost as a judgment on their sin
  - 3. Genesis 11 - The Tower of Babel is a vivid symbol of man's sinful desire to exalt himself and create his own kingdom independently of God - human beings are now divided not just from God but from one another
- I. The pattern of the kingdom has been destroyed by sin
  - 1. We are no longer God's people by nature, for we have turned away from him
  - 2. We no longer live in His place; we have been banished from the garden
  - 3. God continues to reign, but He reigns in judgment
- J. A perfect world has been destroyed by human rebellion

- K. Yet, God is a gracious God, who is determined to put things right again and restore His kingdom on earth
- IV. The Promised Kingdom
- A. God has determined from eternity to call the people to Himself through His Son Jesus and to restore everything under Him (Eph 1:10)
  - B. God is in control, and this gives us a certain hope that one day the awful consequences of our rebellion against God will be undone
  - C. From before the creation, God has had a plan to put the world right by reestablishing His kingdom through His Son, the Lord Jesus, so that once more He is glorified
  - D. In the first chapters of Genesis we see the theme of sin and judgment, but there is a third theme too: grace
    - 1. Gen 3:15 – a son of Eve, a human being, will destroy the evil one
    - 2. Seth (Gen 4:26)
    - 3. Enoch (Gen 5:24) – we are given hope that, even in a fallen world, it is possible to know God and escape the penalty of death
    - 4. Noah (Gen 6:8; 18)
      - a. This is the first reference to *covenant* a word that will become a key biblical word used to express the relationship between God and His people
      - b. The first reference to covenant involves God’s commitment to save Noah and his family from destruction
      - c. We are justified in referring to the first covenant statement as a covenant of salvation, even though the fuller meaning of salvation has yet to be revealed
      - d. The second reference to covenant is God’s commitment never to repeat the flood (Gen 9:8-17)
      - e. The plain meaning of the text is that Noah and his family alone survived the flood, and all the nations of the earth descended from them
    - 5. Gen 9:25-27 – The mingling of sovereign grace with national election involves three types of people
      - a. The chosen covenant people as a nation
      - b. Others from nonelective nations who surprisingly are included in the national covenant blessings
      - c. Those nations which remain outside the covenant
    - 6. Babel
      - a. The confusion of languages and divisions of the nations will characterize sinful humanity until the redemptive power of God unites in Christ a people drawn from all nations tribes and languages (Rev 7:9)

- b. The two lines of the human race: those under grace and those under the curse
  - E. Out of the mass of humanity under judgment, one man is singled out, Abram, who is the chosen head of the family through which the redemptive plan of God will be effected
    - 1. His election by God is seen to be absolutely unconditional
    - 2. The reason God chooses one and not another lies in God alone, for no rebel against the sovereign Lord God deserves to be chosen or can ever do anything that would move God to choose Him
  - F. God's covenant is shown to have its outworking in a plan of redemption
    - 1. This involves the election of representative individuals through whom the plan of God will be effected
    - 2. Election is based on nothing in those who are elect
  - G. Genesis 12:1-3 – *“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. (2) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*
    - 1. Abraham's descendants will become a great nation that will be God's own people
    - 2. Abraham is commanded to leave his homeland and to go to another land that God will show him
    - 3. Abraham's descendants will be blessed and through them all peoples on the earth will be blessed
  - H. The covenant with Abraham is a promise of the kingdom of God: God's people (Abraham's descendants) in God's place (the promised land) under God's rule and therefore enjoying His blessing
- V. The Partial Kingdom
- A. There are four main elements to the promise of the kingdom of God
    - 1. People
    - 2. Land
    - 3. Blessing
    - 4. The fourth element (how introduced) is the promise of a king
  - B. Using these four elements, Roberts divides Israel's history into four main sections:
    - 1. God's people – Genesis 12 through Exodus 18
    - 2. God's rule and blessing – Exodus 19 through the book of Leviticus
    - 3. God's place/land - Numbers through Joshua
    - 4. God's king – Judges through 2 Chronicles
  - C. Looking at each element in more detail
  - D. **God's people** (Genesis 12-Exodus 18)
    - 1. The promise (Gen 12:2; Ex 6:7)

2. Abraham and Isaac
    - a. Sarah's barrenness
    - b. The command to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22)
  3. Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:32; Rom 9:12)
  4. Joseph (Gen 50:19-20)
  5. In Egypt, the people grow into a nation
    - a. Cry for deliverance (Ex 2:23-25)
    - b. Moses
  6. The Exodus
    - a. Salvation by substitution (The Passover): the great act of God's salvation in the Old Testament taught an important principle: God saves by substitution
    - b. Salvation by conquest (the crossing of the Red Sea)
      - (1) God saves his people by defeating their oppressor
      - (2) He reveals Himself to be the sovereign God, more powerful than the forces of mankind and nature
  7. Mount Sinai (Ex 19:4)
    - a. God is not just a God who delivers; He is also a God who demands and who draws near
    - b. He wants to bless His people
- E. **God's rule and blessing** (Exodus 19-Leviticus)
1. The promise ("I will bless you" [Gen 12:2])
  2. The partial fulfillment
    - a. The giving of His law
    - b. The construction of the Tabernacle
      - (1) How can the holy God live among a sinful people without destroying them?
      - (2) Lev 17:11
  3. Throughout the Bible God saves through providing a substitute to die in the place of others
    - a. A sacrifice for a family: the Passover lamb
    - b. A sacrifice for a nation: the Day of Atonement
    - c. Hey sacrifice for the world: the death of Jesus Christ
- F. **God's place** (Numbers-Joshua)
1. The promise ("to your offspring I will give this land" [Gen 12:7])
  2. Once the law had been given and the Tabernacle establish, the Israelites were God's people under God's rule, enjoying the blessing that came from His presence with them
  3. But they were a people without a land
  4. They set out on their journey to Canaan at the beginning of the book of Numbers
    - a. Num 13:27-28

- (1) Unbelief and disobedience
  - (2) The resulting judgment of God (forty years of wandering)
  - b. Deuteronomy – law given to the new generation of Israelites
  - c. Joshua: the conquest
    - (1) Josh 21:43-45
    - (2) A warning – Josh 23:12-13
- G. **God’s king** (Judges through 2 Chronicles)
1. The promise – “He will crush your head” (Gen 3:15) and Gen 49:10 – “The scepter will not depart from Judah” (also Deut 17:14-20)
  2. The King would rule under God, submitting to Him and to His law – a subset of the promise of God’s rule and blessing
  3. Judges – *“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”* (Judg 21:25)
  4. First Samuel: a false start (Saul was disobedient)
  5. Second Samuel: the reign of David (2 Sam 7:12-16)
  6. 1 Kings 1-11 – Solomon and the Golden age
    - a. They are God’s people (4:20)
    - b. They are in God’s place (4:21)
    - c. They enjoy God’s rule and blessing (4:25)
  7. However, 1 Kings 12 through 2 Kings 25 records Israel’s disobedience, division, and decline
    - a. Fall of northern kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 17:7) – 722 B.C.
    - b. Fall of southern kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 23:26) – 586 B.C.
  8. Psalm 137

*“By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept,  
when we remembered Zion.*

*(2) On the willows there  
we hung up our lyres.*

*(3) For there our captors  
required of us songs,  
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,*

*‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’  
(4) How shall we sing the Lord's song  
in a foreign land*

*(5) If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand forget its skill!*

*(6) Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth,  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not set Jerusalem  
above my highest joy!”*