

Overview of the Bible

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The Old Testament: Promise Made

Genesis: Creation, fall, and promise.

1. Prior to creation Satan rebels and takes 1/3 of the angels with him (Rev 12:4; Isa 14:12; Ezek 28:17ff).
2. Creation: God creates the universe and places man at the center of his creation (Gen 1-2).
3. God places Adam in the garden and has fellowship with him. However Adam disobeys God; thus, God pronounces judgment on him, the woman, and the serpent (Gen 3:13-19).
4. However, through the seed of the woman will come one who will crush Satan (Gen 3:15).
5. Eden is lost, but Eden will be restored one day.
6. God has made a promise that he will fulfill.
7. Abel is killed by Cain, so Adam and Eve have another son Seth (Gen 4:25). The seed successfully continues.
8. The earth becomes very wicked (Gen 6:5-7).
9. God covenants with one man, Noah (Seth's descendant), to continue on the promised seed (Gen 6:8-9:29). The sign of the covenant is the rainbow—God will never destroy the earth with water, but will restore the earth one day. The Noah event points to new creation.
10. Noah disobeys God by getting drunk, but nevertheless God continues to be faithful. Through Shem (name) God continues his promise (Japheth and Ham were Noah's other sons).
11. Again the world becomes wicked (Gen 11:1-9).
12. The Tower of Babel: God scatters the people and this is the birth of the Gentile nations: Egyptian (900BC); Assyrians (900-626 BC); Babylonian (626-539BC); Medo-Persian (539-331BC); Greek (333-31BC); and Roman (31BC-450 AD).
13. God still keeps his promise (this is why genealogies are important: to show the seed from Adam to Christ).
14. God covenants with Abraham (Gen 12:1-15:21). He promises that he will make him a great nation and that through his seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed (cf. Gal 3:16).

15. Abraham believes God and it is reckoned to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). All throughout the OT it is by faith in the promises of God that salvation is given.

16. Abraham has a son named Isaac, who has two sons, Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:22-26). God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham obeys. God intervenes and provides a substitute (ram). God re-affirms his covenant with Abraham that through his seed all the nations will be blessed. Isaac is a type of Christ (Heb 11:19).

17. Jacob is younger, but the chosen seed (Mal 1:2). God reaffirms to Jacob the promise he made to Abraham in a dream (Gen 28:10-22; cf. Gen 35:10-12). Jacob has twelve sons (Gen 29:32-35:18). Various events in Jacob's life are told to reaffirm God's promise and show God bringing about his plan (e.g., Gen 38: Judah and Tamar, cf. Matt 1:3).

18. Through the treachery of Jacob's sons God keeps Israel alive by providing relief through Joseph (Gen 37-50).

19. Jacob and his family journey to Egypt to seek food during a great famine in the land. Joseph reveals himself to his family and he brings Jacob's household to live in Egypt. There they grow into a great nation.

20. Before Jacob dies he pronounces blessings on his sons and to Judah he foretells of the coming of Messiah (Gen 49:1-26, Heb 11:21).

21. Job lives during this time.

Exodus-Deuteronomy: God covenants with Israel.

1. For 430 years the Israelites are in Egypt and are eventually enslaved by a king who did not know of Joseph and he oppresses the Israelites (Exo 1:8).

2. The people cry out to God and he sends them Moses.

3. The Exodus Event: Redemption occurs: Passover takes place and the nation is given the covenant of the law (the Mosaic covenant). All the prescriptions, special days (Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Booths), laws (Levitical Code), rituals (Day of Atonement, various offerings, etc.), and instruments (tabernacle, ark of the covenant, etc.) are given to show the people how to worship God. All the laws of the Pentateuch are meant to show the holiness of God and the need for his people to be like him (Lev 11:44, see the "Holy to the Lord" phrase in Exodus and Leviticus, cf. 1 Pet 1:16). The stone tablets are placed in the ark, along with Aaron's rod that budded (Num 17:1-13), and the manna God gave the people (Heb 9:4). Each represented the rebellion of the people and his continual faithfulness. First, the people disobeyed his commandments, second, they rebelled against his leaders, and third, they complained about his provision; however, he remained faithful in spite of their sin.

4. What does the law do? It points to the holiness of God, but it also points to the coming of Messiah. All the things in the law were merely types of the greater type to come (Gal 3:24-25). God provides for his people, but his people lack faith before entering the Promised Land. Thus, they will wander in the desert for 40 years because of their sin.

5. Moses dies, but before he does he reminds the people of the law and tells of a prophet like him who will come (Deut 18:15-22).

Joshua and Judges: Conquest and disobedience in the land.

1. The people enter the land and conquer it. However, there remain seeds of opposition in the land. God chooses Rahab to help the Israelites (Josh 2:1-24, 6:17-25). Her story is recorded because Messiah will come through her (Matt 1:5).

2. Joshua dies, but before he does he reminds the people of God's faithfulness and their need to obey him (Josh 24:1-28). The land is still littered with paganism and the people eventually forget God's word and the sin cycle of the Judges begins (disobedience-sin-judgment-redemption). God raises up great Judges to deliver Israel despite their sin (Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Sampson, Jephthah, etc.). The people never truly possess the land and find the rest they need. This points to a greater rest to come (Heb 4:1ff), a rest in Christ. Ultimately, all the physical events, places, and things pointed to greater spiritual truth that would be fulfilled in the seed of the woman.

3. Samuel is the last judge and the people demand that he give them a king like the other nations (1 Sam 8:15). The people did not want God as their king.

4. This is the time of Ruth. Ruth is a part of Jesus' genealogy (Matt 1:5).

1-2 Samuel: God's anointed.

1. God gives the people what they want and Saul is their first king (1 Sam 9:15-27, 10:17-27) (1050 BC).

2. The Israelites are about to be destroyed by the Philistines, but God calls a shepherd boy named David. He destroys the giant and stands as God's anointed (1 Sam 16:1-23; 17:1-58).

3. He is to be the new king (1010 BC), thus, begins the war between Saul and David (1 Sam 18:10-2 Sam 1:27). Saul dies and David, as the new king, wants to make a permanent home for God. However, God says that because he is a man of war, David will not do so, but his seed will (1 Chro 28:3-7).

4. God covenants with David (2 Sam 7:1-29) and promises that his son will reign forever. His son is Solomon (970 BC). However, David disobeys God by committing adultery (Bathsheba) and murder (Uriah) (2 Sam 11:1-12:23). David's house is plagued with turmoil and sin (2 Sam 12:2ff).

5. Psalms: Poetic literature is about praising God for his deliverance and faithful covenant promises.

1-2 Kings: God makes Israel a great nation.

1. Solomon builds a temple for the Lord and makes Israel a great nation (1 Kings 4:20-8:66). However, he fails to remain faithful to the Lord (1 Kings 11:1-13).

2. The kingdom is split (1 Kings 12:16-33) (931 BC). To the north is Israel (10 tribes), which has godless kings, and Judah (Judah and Benjamin), to the south, which have a few faithful kings (e.g., Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah).

3. God sends prophets to Israel and Judah to remind them of his coming judgment if they do not repent, but within that judgment is hope—God’s is going to keep his promise.

4. God sends Elijah and Elisha to Israel (1 Kings 17:1-19-21; 2 Kings 2:1ff).

5. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs: Poetry about God’s wisdom and promises.

6. The books of history (1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles) and poetry (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs) record Israel’s sin and God’s continual faithfulness.

The Prophets and Exile: National sin and God’s judgment.

1. God sends Hosea and Amos to Israel. Nahum to pronounce judgment against the Assyrians (Nineveh). Jonah also took God’s salvation to the Assyrians.

2. God sends Joel, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk to Judah. Obadiah prophesied against Edom.

3. Neither nation repents, so God sends the Northern kingdom into assimilation as they are conquered in 722 BC by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:6-41) (thus we get Samaritans) and the Southern kingdom is conquered in 586 BC by the Babylonians (24:10-16; 25:1-21).

4. Before captivity God continues to reiterate his promise (Isaiah 7:10-16; 9:1-7; 40:1-66:24, esp. 53:1-12; Jer 30:1-31:40; Hosea 14:1-9; Joel 2:18-3:21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:1-5:15; Habakkuk 3:1-19; Zeph 3:12-20)

5. Before Judah is taken into captivity God promises that they will be there for only 70 years (Jer 29:10).

6. While in captivity Daniel is given visions about the last days and the coming of Messiah (Dan 7:1-9:27). He remembers that God promised that the people would only be there for 70 years (Dan 9:2).

7. During this time Ezekiel sees visions of Israel's restoration and God's new temple (36:1-37:28, 40:1-48:35). God will keep his promise.

8. This is the time of Esther.

Return from Exile: God restores his people.

1. The Medo-Persian king Cyrus allows the Israelites to go back and build their city and temple.

2. The first return is with Zerubbabel in 538 BC and the temple is started (Ezra 1-6).

3. The temple is completed in 516 BC, but the people are discouraged when they see it, since some had seen the glory of Solomon's temple. God reassures them of his promises and again speaks of the coming Messiah through his prophets (Haggai 2:1-23, Zechariah:2:8-10; 8:1-23; 9:9-10:12; 14:9-21).

4. The second return is with Ezra in 458 BC (Ezra 7-10).

5. The final return is with Nehemiah in 444 BC and the walls are rebuilt (Neh 1-13).

6. God sends one final prophet (Malachi) to remind the people to obey God and to speak of God's forerunner that will be like Elijah (Mal 4:1-6).

7. The Hebrew Canon ends with Chronicles and the people returning to build the temple and city. Chronicles gives overview of Israel's genealogy and history. Written to give hope to the returning exiles. This foreshadows the coming Messiah who will rebuild the fortunes of Jacob and restore God's people.

400 Years of Silence: God will still keep his promise.

1. During this time Alexander the Great conquers the Persians and the whole known world and eventually dies (One common language develops among the nations: Greek). His kingdom is divided among his four generals: Ptolemy (Egypt / North Africa, Arabia and initially Israel proper); Cassander (Macedonia and Greece); Lysimachus (Thrace and Bythinia: Asia Minor); and Antigonus who was taken over by Seleucid (Syria, Babylonia, Central Asia and eventually Israel proper). Antiochus Epiphanies (an ancestor of Seleucid) takes a pig and slaughters it to Zeus in the Jewish temple and this starts a great war between the Jews and the Greeks.

2. During this time the Jewish family Maccabees establishes the Hasmonean dynasty (Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Temple after Antiochus defiled it). This is when the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) and books of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are written.

3. Synagogues begin to be built and four major groups of Jews develop: The Pharisees (very orthodox); Sadducees (very political, denied resurrection of dead, etc.); Zealots (militia who fought with the Romans); and Essences (separatists and ascetic).
4. Rome rises in power and takes over the world (Roman Roads). Herod the Great (The Herod at the birth of Jesus) is appointed to rule over Israel and has three sons: Archelaus, Phillip, and Antipas (the one Jesus has conflict with and the one who beheads John).
5. The time is fulfilled: God is ready to send the promised seed (Roman roads and one common language serve as a vehicle by which the gospel will spread). God is the Lord of history.

New Testament: Promise Kept

The Gospels: The fulfillment of the OT.

1. John is the forerunner to Christ (Matt 3:1-12; John 1:19-34). He is the one who comes in the Spirit of Elijah (Matt 11:1-19).
2. The time has come: the Kingdom of God is at hand (Matt 4:12-17; Mark 1:14-15, Gal 4:4-5). Jesus is the promised seed. He is born of a virgin, God-incarnate, the Son of the Living God. He is descended from Eve and is the heir to David's throne (purpose of genealogies, Matt 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). He is the salvation of Israel and the light among the Gentiles (Luke 2:25-38). He is baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness. Immediately the Spirit descends on him and the Father pronounces his approval of Jesus (Matt 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-22; cf. Matt 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36).
3. He is the true Israel that will not fail (Hos 11:1, Matt 2:15; temptation narratives: Jesus does not disobey in the wilderness, unlike the nation of Israel).
4. He is the true temple and point of contact between man and God (John 1:14-18; 50-51; 3:19-25).
5. He fulfills the prophets of old ("this was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet," John 8:53-59; Luke 24:25-27, 44-49). Jesus also fulfills the three-fold office of Prophet (Matt 21:11; Luke 24:19), Priest (Heb 7:11-8:1; 9:23-10:1), and King (Act 2:33-36, 1 Cor 15:25). He is the true bread from heaven (John 6:1-71); the good Shepherd (John 10:1-40).
6. Jesus chooses 12 disciples to begin his work—the church, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel.
7. Jesus goes to the cross and dies for the sins of his people. He begins a new covenant in accordance with the prophet Jeremiah (Luke 22:20). While many religious leaders deny he is the Messiah, others thought he failed (or didn't understand) since the nation of Israel was not physically restored (Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6).

8. However, history has now taken an “already-not yet” dynamic. The promises to Israel are fulfilled in Christ and given to the church (already). The kingdom of God has come in principle, but is still to come in full consummation (not-yet). The writers of the NT are conscious that they are already living in the last days (Acts 2, 1 Cor 10:11; Heb 9:26, 2 Tim 3:1ff). As a result, the NT restructures the OT perspective into a two-age construction: the present age and the age to come. Jesus ushers in the age to come, while overlapping the old age. This does not mean that all of God’s promises have been completely fulfilled, but many have been, and some in a two-fold fulfillment manner.

9. Jesus is the promised Messiah and fulfills the Old Testament. Thus, the promises of the Old Testament are given through the person of Christ. Many things that were promised in the OT have now come to fulfillment, which include: the Spirit, knowing God, adoption, new heart, gospel spreading to all the nations, God with his people, the mystery—the Church, blessing, new covenant, first-fruits, victory over death, rest, new temple, bread of life, good shepherd, etc.

10. Jesus rises from the dead. Satan has been defeated (Matt 12:22ff; Luke 10:18, John 12::31, Rev 20).

11. Jesus teaches his disciples about the kingdom for 40 days (Acts 1:3).

12. In the NT we see the OT themes heightened or transposed due to the coming of Jesus. Why? Because the NT is the time of fulfillment. The NT announces the salvation of God in the last days as already come in Christ and his kingdom (Matt 4:17; Mark 1:14-15). But it also announces that it has not yet been fully realized in Christ (This idea was not fully understood by his disciples until after Christ’s resurrection). In light of the coming of Christ some things have slightly (and dramatically) changed as a result (e.g., kingdom, the people of God, etc.).

Acts and the rest of the New Testament: The explanation of the OT and the gospels.

1. Jesus ascends into heaven and will return in like manner (Act 1:11).

2. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit as promised in the OT (John 14:16-31; 6:5-22). The key indication of the already nature of the kingdom of God is the giving of the Spirit (Joel 2: 28-32; Acts 2:16-36). In the OT the Messiah is pictured as having the Spirit in full measure and that the coming of the Spirit in power marks the beginning of God’s fulfillment of his promise of old and the beginning of the new covenant (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:17-19).

3. Joel 2:28-32 is fulfilled at Pentecost with the birth of the church. Babel is reversed and God is spreading the good news to the nations (Acts 15:13-18; Rom 15:8-13; Gal 4:27). He is making one new nation, a holy nation, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people for God’s own possession (1 Pet 2:9-10). In the NT the Spirit is the mark that the last days have dawned and that the kingdom has arrived, even though it is still yet to be fully realized. Thus, the Spirit is the representative in our lives of that future reality (sonship, fellow heirs, firstfruits, guarantee, seal, resurrection of the body, see him as he is and be like him).

4. Peter, John and the disciples preach Christ as the fulfillment of the OT (Acts 3:11-26; 4:8-12, 23-31). Stephen is charged with speaking against the holy place and the law, but really what he is doing is speaking of Jesus as he fulfills those things. Stephen preaches and calls Israel to repent and he is killed (Acts 7:1-60). He reminds Israel of God's faithfulness and their disobedience in failing to recognize and accept God's messengers. Now they have ultimately failed in rejecting Jesus Christ.

5. Paul gives approval to Stephen's death, but God is about to raise him up to go to the Gentiles (Acts 9:1-19). Paul is converted and begins to preach Christ (9:20-31). During this time Phillip goes to Samaria to preach the gospel. He encounters an Ethiopian eunuch and preaches Christ from Isaiah 53 and he believes. The gospel begins to spread.

6. Peter realizes that God is spreading the gospel to the Gentiles (his vision of the great sheet) and preaches to the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-11:30). The early church recognizes that the message of salvation is for Jews and Gentiles in accordance with the prophets: God's new work—the church (Acts 15:1-35). The early church preaches the purposes' of God fulfilled in Christ (Acts 7, 13:16-43, 18:23-26; 26:1-27; 28:23-28; etc.).

7. The letters of the NT explain and give the theology of God's new work: Israel and the church, the relationship between law and gospel, and the fulfillment of God's promises (Rom 1:2-4, 4:1-5:21; 6:1-8:30; 9:1-11:36; 15:1-22; 1 Cor 5:7; 10:1-33; 15:1-9, 22-27; 2 Cor 3:1-18; Gal 3:1-4:7, 21-31; Eph 2:11-3:12; Phil 2:5-11; Col 2:1-23; Hebrews 1:1-13:25; 1 Pet 1:1-2:12; 2 Pet 1:16-21; 1 John 1:1-4). Again, the writers of the NT are conscious that they are already living in the last days (Acts 2, 1 Cor 10:11; Heb 9:26, 2 Tim 3:1ff). Many of the themes in the OT and Gospels are developed further in the epistles (already/not-yet, God's people, cross, election, sin, etc.). The NT writers understand that the OT points to and finds its fulfillment in Christ. Furthermore, they understand that the Bible is to be read chronologically, historically, and redemptively (see the sermons in Acts). Hebrews especially lays out the redemptive nature of history and the promise-fulfillment motif. Especially read Hebrews 11 and see the faith of those in the Old Testament in regard to the promises of God (Abraham looks to a better country, Joseph has his bones carried out of Egypt, Moses regards disgrace for the sake of Christ better than the riches of Egypt, etc).

8. God gives John a vision of what is to come to comfort his church (Rev 1:1-3). As the OT writers look to the fulfillment of God's promises, so do the NT writers despite living in the already framework (or last days). In fact the NT writers sharpen the vision of the not-yet in light of the coming of Christ. Many themes and ideas in the book of Revelation are shrouded in symbolism, which allows the reality and truth of the book to span many ages and find significance despite who is reading it or when they are reading it. Thus, Revelation is characterized by OT themes and symbols to make the message relevant to all believers living at all times. It is God's ultimate fulfillment of his promises. The themes and symbols are meant to convey an already/not-yet motif, which demands that we understand the book not as something to take place in the future (though that is true), but also something taking place now (Rev 1:19). In the book we find that everything surrounds the victory of the Lamb of God and the destruction

of Satan. Through progressive-parallelism we see seven portraits of God and his people waging war against the forces of darkness, and we see that each vision provides a little more insight into the future, while summing up all that has already and still is taking place (chapters 1-3, 4-7, 8-11, 12-14, 15-16, 17-19, 20-22). The book of Revelation is truly Christocentric and focuses on God's sovereign rule over history and the final victory of the saints.

9. Christ returns and judges both the living and the dead—either unto everlasting life or everlasting death (Rev 20:11-15).

10. God redeems creation, his presence with his people is permanent, and Eden is restored (cf. Rom 8:22; 2 Pet 3:1-14; 1 Kings 6:20, Ezek 40-48; Rev 21:1-22:9).

11. Come Lord Jesus, Amen (Rev 22:10-21).