

G O D ' S B I G P I C T U R E

Aim:

Using Vaughan Robert's 'God's Big Picture' (GBP) as our guide, we are aiming to get an overview of the whole Bible story. It can be summarised by the unifying theme:

The Kingdom of God: God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing

(read GBP pp 20-25 for a fuller explanation)

STUDY 3: The Promised Kingdom Genesis 17:1-8; Galatians 3:6-14

Key things to teach:

- God's plan for this world predates the creation (let alone the fall): he makes promises about what he will do.
- Whether God's plan actually happens or not depends completely on him and his promise.

Study Outline:

(see GBP pp 56-57)

Launching Question:

What are some of the reasons why 'people'/we find it hard to believe that God will achieve all he's promised? (eg 'no such thing as a free lunch', I'm good enough to contribute something, we're used to promises being broken, ... etc)

Although Study 2 was called 'the perished kingdom', God's plans have not perished for he's still following the intention he has always had since before the world began.

In Genesis 3:15, what is God promising to do, given that the world is now in such a mess? how is he doing that?

Remember that we're summarising God's plan as: God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing

READ Genesis 17:1-8

God is repeating the promises he's already made to Abraham (in 12:1-3 and 15:1-18). What does he promise about:

- people?
- land?
- blessing?

Go back through these three elements of God's promise: how does each promise reverse the situation of Gen 3?

How do you think Abraham would have reacted to such promises (ie he's old, barren wife, nomadic, rootless, etc)?

What does this story teach us about how God will reverse the effects of the Fall and bring blessing instead of curse?

At the following moments in OT history, which bits of the promises would the nation of Israel think were being fulfilled: ... the exodus; entry into the land; life in the land under David/Solomon; the exile; the return from exile.

READ Galatians 3:6-14

(There's a brief summary of the situation in Galatia in GBP p 56)

Why are those who have faith in Christ the true descendants of Abraham?

What does it mean to 'rely on observing the law' (10)? How might we do that today?

Why is it futile?

How is it possible for us to receive God's blessing instead of the curse of his judgement?

Who are the people to whom the promises of Genesis 17 refer (according to Galatians 3)?

List some reasons why it's important for us to see that God was thinking of us as long ago as Genesis 17.

Application

This is such an important moment in our overview of the Bible. As God promises to bring blessing to the world instead of curse, the claim is that he was intending that blessing personally for you and me (cf Ephesians 1:3-6).

OPTIONAL EXTRA: Read Eph 1:3-10

When did God's plan begin, what is it, and when will it be completed?

How does this fact of God's from-before-eternity plan affect our view of God?

How should it affect the way we think about ourselves (ie as Christians)?

How might this 'big picture' affect our view of our friends and neighbours who aren't Christians?