

The Gospel Concealed: The Old Testament

Week 4: God Blesses – The People of God

The new is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed. -St. Augustine

The People of God – Who are they and why do they matter?

- Casey's Definition: *God, as an act of love and mercy, chooses a people for himself (Covenant) and sends them out to be a blessing to all (Kingdom).*
- Where do we see the people of God in the biblical story?
 - **Creation**: “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28) – all humanity was God’s people
 - **Fall**: Banishment, murder, idolatry, dispersion (Gen. 1-11) – God’s people no longer
 - **Redemption**:
 - Promised: “And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing” (Gen. 12:2) – God will make a people of blessing
 - Accomplished: “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Gal. 3:29; Acts 2) – God redeems a people for himself through the work of Jesus Christ.
 - **Consummation**: “...by your blood you ransomed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.” (Rev. 5:9c) – All God’s people (from everywhere) worship Christ in a perfected (consummated) creation.

Burning Questions Remain...

1. What about Israel?
2. How does the church related/interact with Israel?

Two Stories Compared – Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology

- Dispensationalism – “Biblical history develops with discontinuity through different administrative periods. While these periods do progress, they also do not dissolve from one into the next. The older are not absorbed into the newer.” (Mickey)
 - Israel is seen as an ethnic/national people, with specific promises applying only to them.
 - Strength: Romans 11 & 1948
 - Weakness: Church history
- Covenant Theology – “Biblical history develops continuously through different administrative periods [continuity]. Not only do these periods progress, but they do so in an ever-developing way; the former completing and building upon the other, especially from the old covenant to the new covenant. The newer absorbs the older” (Mickey)
 - Israel is seen as a spiritual people (the church “replaces or fulfills” Israel and its promises).
 - The promised land: OT (Old Covenant) → a specific land, Canaan | NT (New Covenant) → all of creation, Eden expanded and eventually redeemed
 - Strength: Whole Bible framework + Church history
 - Weakness: Ethnic texts?
- Passages for further study:
 - Galatians 3:21-29; 6:11-18, 1 Peter 2:1-11, Romans 9-11, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Amos 9:11-15

¹¹ “In that day I will raise up
the booth of David that is fallen
and repair its breaches,
and raise up its ruins
and rebuild it as in the days of old,
¹² that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations who are called by my
name,”
declares the LORD who does this.
¹³ “Behold, the days are coming,” declares
the LORD,
“when the plowman shall overtake the
reaper
and the treader of grapes him who sows the
seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and all the hills shall flow with it.
¹⁴ I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,
and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and
inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens and eat their
fruit.
¹⁵ I will plant them on their land,
and they shall never again be uprooted
out of the land that I have given them,”
says the LORD your God.

Acts 15:1,12-17

¹ But some men came down from Judea and
were teaching the brothers, “Unless you
are circumcised according to the custom of
Moses, you cannot be saved.”
[...]
¹² And all the assembly fell silent, and they
listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related
what signs and wonders God had done
through them among the Gentiles. ¹³ After they
finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers,
listen to me. ¹⁴ Simeon has related how God
first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a
people for his name. ¹⁵ And with this the words
of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

¹⁶ “After this I will return,
and I will rebuild the tent of David that has
fallen;
I will rebuild its ruins,
and I will restore it,
¹⁷ that the remnant of mankind may seek the
Lord,
and all the Gentiles who are called by my
name,
says the Lord, who makes these
things ¹⁸ known from of old.”

The Interpretive Question

- When is the booth of David restored?
 - Dispensational answer → the Millennium (future)
 - McArthur Study Bible notes on Amos 9:11: “A reference to the dynasty of David. God will ‘raise up’ and ‘rebuild’ this tabernacle on earth for Christ to rule in his millennial kingdom.”
 - Covenant Theology answer → Jesus restores the Davidic Kingdom (present and future)
 - John Calvin: “This is a remarkable prediction and deserves to be carefully weighed by us. It is certain that the Prophet here refers to the advent of Christ; and there is no dispute; [...] for Christ at length appeared, on whose head rests the true diadem or crown, and who has been elected by God, and is the legitimate king, and who, having risen from the dead, reigns, and now sits at the Father’s right hand, and his throne shall not fail to the end of the world.”

Discussion

- Why do you think this theological topic matters?
- What questions do you still have about Israel?