



The unfolding purposes of God in the whole Bible

Session 5 Exile and Return

Andrew Evans

The story so far – key moments

- Creation (Gen 1-2)
- Rebellion (Gen 3)
- Promise (gen 12:1-3)
- Escape from slavery and a land (Exodus-Joshua)
- Good Kingship (1 & 2 Sam & 1 Kings 1-10)
- Bad Kingship (1 Kings 11-2 Kings)
- Judgment and Exile

In this session we will be looking at the prophetic warnings about the exile of Israel from the land, the exile itself and the return from exile. All this happens within a couple of hundred years from around 600 to around 400BC.

What is the exile?

The time when King Nebuchadnezzar and his armies from Bablyon invaded Judah (southern part of divided kingdom of Israel) and carried its people off to Babylon.

Two phases of exile: 597BC (elite people inc. Daniel and Ezekiel)
587BC (destruction of the temple)

Psalms 137

Isaiah

Circa 700BC.

Isaiah predicts both exile and return (under King Cyrus)

Isaiah 1:21-26 – a tale of two cities...

Jerusalem

Babylon

The problem – Jerusalem has been invaded by Babylon!

The question in Isaiah: how can the sinful city of Jerusalem to be made into the faithful city that it is meant to be?

The answer: through God's servant

Jeremiah

Jeremiah too predicts the exile before it happens.

The CAUSE of the exile

... the graphic illustration of an unfaithful wife (Jeremiah 2:1-3; 2:20-25)

The EFFECT of God's judgment: exile to Babylon

The big issue in Jeremiah: complacency.

Jeremiah 7:1-11.

Is God's promise conditional or unconditional?

Jeremiah also looks forward beyond the exile to something radically new.

Read Jeremiah 29:10-22 and 31:31-34

- What is God's plan to prosper them and not harm them? What is going to happen?

Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel was deported in 597BC with Daniel and his friends. He watches from Babylon and prophesies that the situation is getting worse and worse in Jerusalem.

The coming judgment and the unfaithful wife (again!)

The destruction of the temple (Ezekiel 24).

The great hope...

- Read the following verses. What new thing is God promising in each of them...

36:24-28

37:24-27

47:1-2

The return from exile

The end of Babylon and the beginning of Persia...

So a group of Jews went back to Jerusalem. But, some years later, not all is rosy in the garden...

Read Haggai 1:1-4

- What is the problem that God sees with their return from exile?

The people do respond in obedience to what Haggai, Zerubbabel and Joshua initiate and they are blessed by God.

The new temple...

But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy.

Ezra 3:12

The city walls...

Nehemiah

Read Nehemiah 6:15-16

- What happens? What is the response of God's enemies?

The problem that remains...

What are we still waiting for at the end of the Old Testament?