Read Deuteronomy 28:58-68.

What did the people have to do to stay in the land?

What will happen to them if they did not obey God?

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12.

How has Jesus changed our relationship with God?

According to this passage, in what way are Christians exiles in this world?

Read Revelation 22:1-5.

When will God's people return from exile and what will it be like?

Relevance

What implications does it have for us to be aliens in this world, in other words having to live in this world as Christians but yearning for God's kingdom?

How does this affect our lifestyle, our relationships, our work, and our behaviour?

Summary

The exile was a very sad time for the kingdom of Judah and the Israelites as a whole. It was sad because they had sinned beyond the point of forgiveness. For many years God had sent many prophets to warn the people of sin and idolatry. But these warnings were ignored. They continued to sin and commit idolatry. The people had a knowledge of God but not the relationship. So God punished them.

But God's punishment was only a way to bring his people back to him. It was not the final act because God is faithful, He remembers the promises He made to Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses and King David. There is hope amongst the despair and pain.

Bible Study
Study 8 — The Exile

The story so far

So far in the story of the Old Testament, we've read about God's relationship with humans. It has been a rollercoaster ride, from lows of rebellion and sin to highs of obedience and blessings. We have also seen how the roles of Kings, Priests and Prophets point us to Jesus and his role as the perfect mediator between God and humans.

We continue our study of the OT overview by looking at another tragic event in Israel's history. The Exile is another big event starting with the letter "E". It is not to be confused with the "Exodus". The Exodus is a rescue, whereas the Exile is a punishment event thousands of years later. By the time the Exile occurred the nation of Israel had already split into the North and the South. The North had been taken over by the Assyrians for many hundreds of years. (You can about this in 2 Kings 17.) The major books in the Bible during the Exile are Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel.

Discuss

Explore the meaning of being in exile.

How is the experience of being a refugee different from being an international student?

Read 2 Kings 24:8–25:30 (how the Exile happened).

What reasons were given for the fall of Judah? (24:18-20)

How extensive was the destruction of Judah? What was destroyed and taken?

How does God use the enemies of Judah to carry out his punishment?

How does it make you feel about God's judgment?

a) God's judgement is too severe.
b) God's judgement is not severe enough.
c) God should be more patient and forgiving.
d) I don't understand why God sometimes forgives and other times punishes.
e) I don't understand why God uses his enemies to punish his own people. Shouldn't it be the other way around? ie God uses his people to punish his enemies?
f) Others?

During the Exile

Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel were the main prophets during the Exile. Jeremiah remained in Judah while Daniel and Ezekiel were exiled in Babylon. In the book of Jeremiah, God explained why he punished Judah. In light of the Babylonian threat, the people of Judah fled to Egypt for safety and there they committed idolatry. (Read Jeremiah 44:1-6.)

Read Lamentations 1.

Lamentations is another book about the Exile. It describes the feelings the people had about their kingdom and their relationship with God.

Activity

Vocabulary exercise: Find as many words as you can to describe the feeling or mood that people had. Make a list of these words.

On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate the optimism or pessimism of the people? (1 = most pessimistic, 10 = most optimistic)

What do you think happened to God's promises to bless Abraham and his descendants?

a) God has changed his mind about blessing his people.
b) The people have forfeited their inheritance by sinning against God.
c) God is waiting for people to repent and turn back to Him.
d) God is just postponing the blessing to a later time.
e) God will keep his promise to Abraham because his is faithful.

Read Ezekiel 37:1–14.

During the Exile God gives Ezekiel a vision. The vision speaks of God's restoring his people to their homeland.

Apart from bringing the people back home, what is God going to do to the people? (v12-14)

What does it mean for God to "put my spirit in you and you will live"? Explain what this phrase means.

How does the NT link the OT idea of Exile?

Read Genesis 3:21-24.

How did Adam and Eve experience exile?

Read Deuteronomy 6:10-15.

How did God return people from "exile" from the garden?