



THE JOURNEY

from Creation to New Creation

Part 9 From Solomon to the Coming Saviour

Introduction

These notes give some guidance on how to lead the group through the questions and discussion. *The additional Bible references in the notes give more details that you may find useful. You may like to ask group members to read out a few of these, as appropriate.*

You may want to begin by asking if anything particularly struck people as they watched the video. However, it would be wise to limit this part of the discussion to ten minutes at most.

Read **Genesis 12.1-3, 15.18, 1 Kings 4.20-21, 1 Kings 8.41-43.**

Question 1

How were God's promises to Abraham being fulfilled through Solomon?

At this moment in His people's history, God fulfilled His promises to Abraham in a wonderful new way:

- ▶ He promised them a land – now they are in that land! Solomon's empire (mapped out in 1 Kings 4.21,24-25) stretched from the upper Euphrates to Egypt's border. This was the extent of the land that God promised Abraham (Genesis 15.18).
- ▶ He promised Abraham that he'd father a great nation. Israel is as many as the sand on the seashore (1 Kings 4.20), just as God promised.
- ▶ And He promised Abraham that in him all the families of the Earth would find blessing. Israel, the seed of Abraham, was beginning to be a blessing to the nations around. (1) The Temple that Solomon built was a place foreigners could come and pray to the True God (1 Kings 8.41-43). (2) We also read that "... people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, . . ." (1 Kings 4.34)

One day, of course, those promises to Abraham would be fulfilled in an even greater way, as we shall see later in our journey. But this time in Israel's history was a glorious foretaste of what was to come.

Read **Deuteronomy 17.14-20, 1 Kings 10.14-15,26, 11.1-4**

Question 2

How did Solomon go wrong? What lessons can we ourselves learn from this?

God had told His people what their kings should be like (Deuteronomy 17.14-20).

- ▶ They were not to acquire (1) lots of horses - used primarily for chariots and cavalry; (2) many wives, or (3) great stores of gold. Power, women and wealth - these are a man's three key temptations. Rich and powerful as he was, Solomon was bound to be fearfully tempted in all three ways. He fell for every one.
 - (1) Solomon amassed stupendous quantities of gold till it seems that he really didn't know what to do with it all (1 Kings 10.14-21). God gave Solomon riches (1 Kings 3.13) But the question is not how much wealth we have, *but what we do with it, and what place it occupies in our hearts.* Solomon could have used this wealth to benefit his people and the nations around (compare Deuteronomy 15.6).
 - (2) Solomon had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen (1 Kings 10.26).
 - (3) Solomon married many wives from the idolatrous nations around, whom God had expressly forbidden Israelites to marry (1 Kings 11.1-3). And, in addition, he gathered many concubines (in other words, mistresses), too. In the later part of his reign, Solomon's wives led him into idolatry (1 Kings 11.4-8, Nehemiah 13.26).
- ▶ The king was to *"write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them"* (Deuteronomy 17.18-19). He wasn't to use a manuscript already written with God's Law, or get someone else to write it for him.

He was to write a copy of God's law himself! To do this would impress God's law on his memory. Then he was to read it all the days of his life. And he was to obey God's Law. God's law was to be a foundation for his own character and reign, and for the life and character of the nation.

Solomon's father David commanded him to *"keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn"* (1 Kings 2.3). Solomon may well have written a copy of God's law for himself (we aren't told). But, in his later years, he disobeyed God's law.

Read **Jeremiah 23.7-8, Ezekiel 36.24-28, Luke 9.28-31, Romans 6.6, Colossians 2.13.**

Question 3

The passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel are prophesying about another Exodus that outshines even the Exodus from Egypt. What was this second Exodus?

God rescued His people from Egypt and led them through the sea to the Sinai Peninsula (Exodus 14.1-31). This is called the Exodus. But in the Old Testament prophetic books, we read that there'll be another Exodus (for example Isaiah 11.10-16, 43.14-21 and the passages we have already read).

What was this new Exodus? Was it the return from exile in Babylon? Partly, yes. In the centuries after their return from exile, Israel did experience some degree of renewal as a nation. Israel never committed idolatry on such a scale as it had done before the exile. And the Scriptures were established as the basis for the life of God's people.

But the return from exile didn't really fulfil the glorious new Exodus that the prophets spoke about. When its foundations were laid, the old men who had seen Solomon's Temple wept with disappointment – from which we may infer that it was far less magnificent than Solomon's splendid Temple (Ezra 3.10-13). The Ark of the Covenant – God's Throne – was missing, never to return. The Bible doesn't record God filling the new Temple with His presence (as He did in the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple). Judah was still under Persian control. There was no king of David's line on the throne. And the people were still backsliding (see, for example, Nehemiah 13.15-18). *Their sin had cost them their land, but they don't seem to have learned their lesson.*

The second exodus that the prophets are foretelling is

clearly a much more wonderful and glorious event. So what was this event? The clue is in something Jesus said. At His transfiguration Jesus talked with Moses and Elijah about *"his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem"* (Luke 9.31). The word *"departure"* here translates the Greek word *exodus*. The 'exodus' that Jesus spoke about here was His death and resurrection and ascension. And when someone truly believes in Christ and is born again, they share in Jesus's death, resurrection and ascension! Paul tells us that each true believer:

- ▶ has died with Christ. Their *"old self"*, which was enslaved to sin, has been *"crucified with him"* (Romans 6.6, and compare Colossians 3.9).
- ▶ has risen with Christ into resurrection life (Ephesians 2.6, Colossians 2.12-13). They have new life. Paul writes: *"... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."* (2 Corinthians 5.17).
- ▶ has ascended with Christ. Paul says: *"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus"*. (Ephesians 2.6 (NIV)).

What is the result?

- ▶ The believer is delivered from their past – from what they once were. The first Exodus released Israel from bondage to the Egyptians. Jesus has released every true believer from bondage – not to human slavemasters – but to sin. Their old self – their old character, has died with Christ.
- ▶ The believer enters a new future. At the first Exodus, God's people began a new life. They had a new future. God made a covenant with them, came to live among them, and gave them His law. And He guided them to His Promised Land. The true believer, too, begins a new life in God's kingdom. Jesus said that whoever hears His word and believes in God Who sent Him has *"crossed over from death to life"* (John 5.24 NIV and see 1 John 3.14). The Father *"has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son"* (Colossians 1.13).

The first Exodus was preceded by sacrifice. Before that Exodus, Passover sacrifices were to be offered (Exodus 12.1-14, 21-27, 43-49). The Passover animals (lambs or young goats) died; the Israelites' firstborn sons were spared. *The second exodus was also associated with a sacrifice* – the sacrificial death of Jesus. He is our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5.7). He died in our place.