



Class 14 - Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Old Testament Seminar - Immanuel Church

Introduction

Welcome to the final week of the Old Testament core seminar! As exciting as that is, of course, we are really only halfway to our goal. Our goal is to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and it's in the New Testament where that light shines most brightly. And yet the glory of Christ shines differently in the Old Testament, doesn't it? Perhaps less brightly, but more textured. And this background is critical to fully understanding the New Testament. So today, we'll finish up with Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. And I'll warn you, despite some amazing pictures of God's final restoration in these books, there's some pretty depressing themes as well. As we've been saying, it's clear that while the exiles have returned to the land, nothing much seems to have changed. The spiritual exile continues. Esther asks why some of these people haven't returned... and deals with some of the persecution they faced in exile. Haggai accuses the people of tragically misdirecting priorities. Zechariah describes significant social sins. And Malachi points out corrupt teaching, divorce, hypocrisy, and immorality in both priests and leity. The physical exile has finished, but the real exile continues. So what are we going to do? Let's begin with Esther.

Esther

On to Esther! Same time, different place. It's now in the 480s/470s BC, half a century after the return of the first wave, but before Ezra's return. But we're in Susa, Persia's capital, where some Jews still live in exile.

What's really strange about the book of Esther is that God's never mentioned. And apart from some fasting (4:3, 16) there's not even any religious references. That makes the book's purpose and application less-than-obvious. So contribution does it make to God's unfolding plan of redemption? Well, the story illustrates through narrative the truth that God cares for his people. That he will rescue his people from his enemies, and that God's people can ultimately rest assured that God will protect them – even when we can't see how He's working.

Theme

In fact, that's a good theme statement for Esther:

God protects his people, even if we can't see how he is working.

In a world where God's invisible, the faithful can often wonder if God is really at work. But it's important to remember that God's acts of providence in our world are most commonly done with a hidden hand. His work can be so easily overlooked. And sometimes, it's that subtlety of his actions that makes His deliverance all the more powerful.

Summary

So... Esther. Let me summarize the story. In the first two chapters a young Jewish girl named Esther rises in King Xerxes' favor, such that he makes her his queen. Her cousin, Mordecai overhears a plot to kill Xerxes, and so he informs Esther of this. Esther alerts the king and the plot is stopped. In chapter 3 the Jews face a crisis. A man named Haman is promoted in the king's court, and he's offended when Mordecai won't pay homage to him. To exact his revenge, Haman doesn't go after Mordecai alone, but seeks a decree to have all the Jews in Persia exterminated. Mordecai persuades Esther to help. She petitions the king to spare the Jews, and he takes action on their behalf. Meanwhile, the king unwittingly humiliates Haman by forcing him to publicly honor Mordecai. And, when Haman's plot is thwarted, he's executed.

That's the story; let's touch on a few important themes.

A. God will judge

First, God will bring judgment on the wicked. The villain here is Haman. He's guilty of pride, arrogance, attempted murder, and attempted genocide. Worst of all, he's directed his sin specifically and directly against God's people, which is to say, against God himself. His evil is not random or merely selfish: it is willfully and intentionally directed against the people and purposes of God. Haman is an archetype of the enemies of God.

But we see in the story that in God's providence, all Haman's plans backfire on him. Haman wants to humiliate Mordecai, but the king forces Haman to honor Mordecai publicly. Haman wants to murder Mordecai by impaling him on a pole; but the king executes Haman by hanging

him on that very same pole. Haman wants to eliminate the Jews in a mass, empire-wide genocide. Instead, God uses the occasion to allow the Jews to not only defend themselves, but to triumph over their enemies. We read in 9:2, “The Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could stand against them, for the fear of them had fallen on all peoples.”

God does judge the wicked - sometimes even in this life. And so Christians should have peace about trials in this life, confident that God will bring justice.

B. God works through circumstances

Note how Mordecai persuades Esther to rescue her people from this sentence of death. “who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Mordecai asks in 4:14. Mordecai believes that there is a purpose to Esther’s becoming queen, and that her purpose is made clear by the opportunity presented to help save God’s people. God uses earthly instruments, like people’s actions, to accomplish His plans. In fact, as you look across the Scriptures you’ll notice how rare it is that his miracles take the form of the abrupt disruption of history that you might see, say, in the Exodus. Rather, he uses people, situations, events, all quite naturally, very inconspicuously, towards the end He intends. Mordecai is telling Esther that she should understand herself and her queenship to be the instrument by which God accomplishes his purposes. Doubtless, God does not need any particular person or circumstance to achieve his purposes. But he’s ordained to use people like Esther – and us – to spread his word and redeem his people “It could be you!” Mordecai is saying, “*You* could be that instrument! How exciting!” And to that he says, “Who knows?” Indeed, *who knows?*

There are no accidents or coincidences in life. God guides and directs all of his creation, and that means he guides the circumstances of your life as well. We should carefully examine the situations God puts us in and look for opportunities for to serve our Lord and savior. Who knows what God will do with those little acts of faithfulness?

C. God will save his people

The theological point? God zealously protects His people. This is one major theme of the entire Bible, and it’s clearly the point of this little story of Esther. It’s not always clear at the time how God is working or how things will turn out in the end, but God delivers his people and carries

his redemptive plan forward. And note that the way God achieved Israel's deliverance in this situation maximized his own glory and pretty much prevented Mordecai or Esther from taking credit or boasting about anything. In fact, God's purposes and salvation in this book are even deeper and more meaningful than events on the surface might suggest. Do you remember when Saul's kingship failed? It was when he refused to carry out God's command to totally destroy the Amalekites and their king Agag. (1 Sam. 15). Well, we find out in 2:5 that Mordecai is a distant descendant of king Saul and, 9:24, Haman of king Agag. In God's kindness, his rescue of his people results in redemption for the line of Saul, centuries after he disobeyed command. Certainly no accident that these genealogical details are brought to light in this book.

Conclusion

So what do we take away from these three books on living in this "in-between" time? When God is still waiting to finish delivering on his promises? Well, we need to trust that God is at work, even when we can't see it. Like we saw in Esther. Our job, like queen Esther's and the people in the land, is to be faithful with the opportunities we can see. But ultimately, we're dependent on God to secure that obedience, as we see the failure at the end of Nehemiah pointing ahead to God's greater provision in Christ.

Haggai

Context

Does anyone remember the first job of the Jews when they returned from Babylon? [Rebuild the temple] Yes! And two years later, in 536 BC, they began that project. Then, we saw in Ezra, after overcoming some opposition from their neighbors they resumed the project in 520 and finished four years later. But that doesn't tell the whole story¹. What happened in that 16 year gap? Well, that resistance from the surrounding nations really prevented *any* reconstruction anywhere in Jerusalem. So when the problem was solved, and the people could resume reconstruction, they gravitated away from rebuilding the temple to focus on reconstructing their own houses instead. And that's the context for Haggai. Look at **chapter 1, verse 4**.

¹The ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, and why they are needed, are only briefly alluded to in Ezra 5:1-2.

“Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?”

Verse 5 then gives us an insight into the redemptive-historical context.

“Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill.”

The people have a great opportunity to rebuild the temple. Just think of all that that means for their religion and God’s plan of redemption! But they just sort of say, “Eh, that can wait. Our time and money are more importantly spent on our own homes.” And that’s why Yahweh says to them “Consider your ways.” In other words, look at what your actions say about you. The people may have returned from Babylon, but their hearts are still in exile. The oppression of the worldly enemy may have ended. But the oppression of sin and selfishness lingers on.

Theme

With that, we come to the theme of Haggai, and see what Yahweh will do at this moment in redemptive-history:

Yahweh is turning the hearts of His people to seek His glory and to please Him in rebuilding His temple, which serves as a type of the greater glory of the coming end-times temple.

This turning of the people’s hearts is seen in contrast to their former pursuit of their own selfish pleasures in building their own houses. And the type, the prefiguring of Christ, that we see here is in regards to both the changed hearts and the temple. The changed hearts of the people foreshadows the day when all the people of God will have new hearts, just as Jeremiah had also prophesied (cf. 31:31ff). And the temple points ahead to a more perfect dwelling of God with man.

First Oracle

So, let’s get into the book. Haggai overall is divided into four oracles. The first is Haggai’s sermon to the people. Look at **verses 7-8**.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood

and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord.”

Yahweh’s telling them to *think* and then *act*. And notice also that Yahweh says that their motivation ought to be His pleasure and glory. Lately they’d just been pleasing and glorifying themselves. And this applies to us also. Remember Jesus’ command that we are to let our light shine before men that they may see our good deed and glorify, not ourselves, but our Father in Heaven (cf. Matthew 5:16).

Well, praise God, Haggai’s prophecy was met with repentance, and 23 days later (1:15) work on the temple begins.

Haggai’s second oracle come less than a month later, October of 520 BC, when the Feast of Tabernacles was observed. The same feast when Solomon’s temple was dedicated. Now, by this time it would be clear that this temple wouldn’t be anything like Solomon’s. Enter Haggai’s second oracle, chapter 2. And God seems to really rub it in. Verse 3: “Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?”

Why does Yahweh point this out? Skip down to verse six.

For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. *The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former*, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.”

Astounding! As his people look at this pathetic excuse of a temple, God says it will not only measure up but even exceed the temple of Solomon! So characteristic of these last prophets. Reality has proved disappointing, even painful. And yet the promises just get larger more grand. What’s going on? Hold that thought for the fourth oracle.

The third oracle, verse 10-19 of chapter two, begins with a question about the Torah and ends with an encouragement to the people. The point of ruling on the legal question (what actions consecrate and what defile) is that holiness is not contagious. That is, simply working on the temple wouldn’t make the people holy. But uncleanness was contagious. That is, *unholiness* among the people would in fact contaminate the temple. A reminder that their hearts mattered more than their actions. Of course, it’s in Jesus that we see this reversed. When *he* touches

uncleanness – be it leprosy, an evil spirit, or even a dead body – the process reverses and his touch cures, frees, and resurrects. But back to Haggai. This third oracle ends in verse 19 with encouragement that ultimately points to Christ. Though return from exile thus far has been nothing but hardship, from this moment on, now that priorities are right, God will bless.

And that brings us to the last oracle of the book, 2:20-23. When will the temple actually exceed that of Solomon? Skip to verse 23.

“On that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the Lord, and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the Lord of hosts.”

Zerubbabel, you’ll remember, was the Jewish governor of Jerusalem at this time. So the question is, will this great new temple be built during *his* day? Or is he a symbol of something greater in the future. How do we know which Haggai intends? Well, does anyone remember which famous Israelite was Zerubbabel’s ancestor? [David]. Right. So to understand what’s going on here, we need to call to mind Jeremiah 22:24-25. Where God describes Zerubbabel’s ancestor Jehoiachin as the signet ring he will pull off and discard. Ah! So this promise in Haggai isn’t so much about Zerubbabel himself, but about his family line. They are reinstated into God’s promises. All those old prophecies about David’s house and David’s greater Son—they’ll still be fulfilled through David’s line. Zerubbabel’s line. And that greater Son we know is the Lord Jesus Christ. Haggai is saying that this great temple, greater than all prior, will be built in the time of Yahweh’s Chosen Servant, Jesus. And, as we know from the New Testament, the temple Yahweh builds though His Son is not a temple of stone, but a temple of people. Paul says that, “We are the temple of the living God” (2 Corinthians 6:16). Peter says that Christ is the chief cornerstone, and that, “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pe. 2:4-5) Yahweh is the builder, Jesus is the foundation, we are the stones, and our purpose as God’s temple is to bring glory to God.

And so Haggai encourages work on the temple in his present context. But beyond that, he points to the ultimate fulfillment of that work as God builds his new temple – greater than Solomon’s – the church of God through Solomon’s son, Jesus Christ.

[TAKE QUESTIONS]

Zechariah

Context

Zechariah shares the same historical context as Haggai, beginning his preaching only a few months after Haggai does, and continuing to prophesy as the temple's being completed².

That said, the redemptive-historical niche that Zechariah fills is slightly different than Haggai's. Zechariah explains what the events since the return from exile mean for the future, and for the nation's messianic expectations. He takes the current situation and uses it to paint a picture of the future.

Theme

The theme of Zechariah is this:

Yahweh has restored the old ways to prefigure and prophesy new ways in the future: the grand restoration from spiritual exile by the coming Messiah.

Zechariah is full of many visions that can really confuse the reader. But if you understand his context after the exile, and his redemptive-historical context as a time of expectant rebuilding, and if you can see his messianic emphasis, then those strange visions and prophecies will make a more sense.

There's so much that we could look at in Zechariah. But perhaps the best place to go, given our limits on time, is **chapter 6**. Turn there with me. This is his prophecy right after what's know as his "Vision of the Night:" a flying scroll, a woman in a basket, a golden lamp stand, and winged women among others. Some fantastic images. We'll skip the dramatic pictures and jump right to some explanation in chapter 6, verse 9.

And the word of the Lord came to me: "Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go the same day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. And say to him, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall

²The prophecies of the last five chapters are not dated. They could have been delivered/written after the temple was completed.

branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’ And the crown shall be in the temple of the Lord as a reminder to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.

“And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the Lord. And you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. And this shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.”

Okay, what does that mean? Let me point out a few things. Notice in verse 11 that a high priest is given a crown. Then, at the end of verse 13, that the high priest sits on a *throne*. Now, what type of person is usually given a *crown* and a *throne*? [A King] But this Joshua’s a priest. The meaning? In the future the high priesthood and the kingship over God’s people will be combined in *one* person! Notice also that this person is called the “Branch,” in verse 12, which is a Messianic title.³ And lastly, in verses 12-13, notice that Zechariah says that this Messianic-Priest-King will be the one building the temple we just heard Haggai speak about. Of course, this is the Lord Jesus Christ. **Hebrews 5:5-6** says “So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’; as he says also in another place, ‘You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.’” But a little while later in **Hebrews 7:14**, the writer points out that David and his descendants are of the tribe of *Judah*, and reminds us that, “For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.” The point of it all is that Jesus’ priesthood is greater than any priesthood ever seen in Israel, and that His kingship is forever.⁴

So these two parallel streams in the Old Testament, kingship and priesthood, converge on the Messiah in the prophecy of Zechariah. On the cross Jesus the Christ sacrificed His own blood in priestly manner, and propitiated the wrath of Almighty God which was stirred up by the sins of His people. Then He rose triumphantly from the grave to sit down on an eternal throne, and invites everyone to come and bow the knee in faith and submission to this great Priest-King.⁵

Now, in case you think that this tidbit in chapter 6 is just pulled at random, it’s worth pointing out that the first eight chapters of Zechariah follow a loose chiastic structure. Just as we saw in the book of Daniel. As you’ll remember, the main point of a chiasm is found in the middle, which

³2 Samuel 23:5; Isaiah 4:2; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5f; 33:14ff; Zechariah 3:8; Hebrews 7:14.

⁴We are also told these things in Psalm 110.

⁵The invitation to all is seen in verse 15 where it says that “those from afar shall come and build the temple.” Those from afar are the gentile nations who now also compose the people of God together with believing Jews.

is the section I just read. So in many ways, this is the explanation of the seemingly confusing visions beforehand. The so-called “Vision of the Night” in chapters 1-6. These chapters contain scenes that all focus on something restored after the exile. They all point forward to this day when the priesthood and kingship are *truly* reestablished, as they’re combined in the One Great High Priest and King forever. So this idea of the priest-king really does summarize the first eight chapters of the book.

But starting in chapter 9, the book changes as it focuses more intently on God’s final redemption of his people. The enemies of God’s people are judged, God’s people cared for – and all this through a messianic figure at the center of these passages. This figure will be humble, riding on a donkey (9:9). He will put an end to wars and proclaim peace (9:10). But, 13:7, he must first be rejected and oppressed. After His oppression, though, He will triumph and avenge Himself on His enemies (14:3). The Lord will be king over all the earth, verse 10. Even his former enemies will come to worship him, verse 16. And all of his people – even their most common cooking pots – will be holy to the Lord, verses 20-21. A look forward, of course, to Christ’s *second* coming.

And this is where Zechariah leaves us, looking forward to a time beyond the exile when the Priest-King will come. And that’s how Matthew opens his gospel, waiting for the exile to finally and completely end with the coming of the forever Priest-King.

[TAKE QUESTIONS]

Malachi

Context

Malachi lived at roughly the same time that Nehemiah did, in the late 5th century BC – roughly a century after Haggai and Zechariah. His main concern is the increasing secularism of God’s people. Their hearts are bent toward this world instead of toward God. Now that they’re back in the land and the temple is rebuilt, there’s laziness and spiritual lethargy.

As you know, Malachi is the last Old Testament book in your English Bible. And historically speaking, Malachi is the last prophet before Yahweh’s 400 years of silence between the Old and New Testament. There won’t be another true prophet until John the Baptist. Interesting enough, Malachi will actually prophesy about the ministry of John the Baptist. It’s almost as though Malachi knows he’s the last. In other words, “the coming of the great and dreadful day of the

LORD” won’t be long now (4:5)!

Theme

Here’s the theme of Malachi:

Yahweh’s people are beginning to drift away again, so Yahweh will need to come visit them soon.

But before he comes, he will send his messenger to prepare his people for the day of his coming.

Malachi is a fascinating book to work through, in part because it’s structured in a unique style that we haven’t seen yet. The book takes the form of six disputes between Yahweh and His people – almost court room style as the people first drag God into court to accuse him of breach of contract (1:2, “How have you loved us?”). But God turns the tables on them and soon they’re facing down a withering stream of accusations from Almighty God. To see where each of these disputes begins and ends, look at the outline on the back of your handout. Let’s look at a few of these discourses now.

Start 1:10-14.

Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. But you profane it when you say that the Lord’s table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord. Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

Such powerful words of warning. The people *thought* they could bring the lame from their flocks for their offerings. They thought that going through the motions of religious duty was all that mattered. But God says, “Don’t you know that I am a *great king*?” God’s people have no appreciation for the Holy One of Israel, just unenthusiastic and apathetic religious drudgery. How many of us are also rebuked and challenged by Yahweh’s words here?

Well, God's people haven't only failed him through empty religiosity. They've broken covenant both with him – 2:11, by worshiping other Gods – and with each other, through broken marriages.

The people accuse God of injustice, 2:17 (“where is the God of justice?”). And God replies that justice will come, indeed. “But,” 3:2, “who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?” Be careful of calls for justice, for our lives all cry out for judgment.

God's people have robbed him – 3:9 – by not bringing the whole tithe to him. Sharp words for those of us who don't take giving seriously. Incidentally, do you see that reference in verse 8 to “tithes *and* contributions?” What God demands isn't simply 10%. It is everything they people were commanded to give – which went far beyond 10%.

And the people speak harsh words against Yahweh, 3:13, saying that since God doesn't give them what they want there is no point to serving him.

And God's response? Chapter 4, verse 1:

For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.

So here we are at the end of the Old Testament, and God's wrath burns brightly. Yet his promise to his people is held high. And we're as confused as ever as to how these two can ever be reconciled. God says that his people will “go out leaping like calves from the stall.” But his people seem incapable of doing anything but skewering him in the eye and spitting in his face.

Of course, we've seen plenty of hints as to where the solution will lie. Both with us – the new hearts of Jeremiah and pure lips of Zephaniah. And with the One who will do these things: the suffering servant of Isaiah, the priest-king of Zechariah, the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven in Daniel 7. Plenty of hints. But still no progress. We've seen the sinfulness of man traced and worked out from the fall in Genesis three. We've seen God's promises begin small – to crush the serpent's head – but crescendo to amazing pictures of the future. Which stands out sharply against ever-more depressing reality as we move toward the end of the Old Testament. God's people are sinking into immorality, idolatry, and political obscurity. Essentially disappearing off any map – spiritual or political.

And through it all, we've seen God's patience. His incredible patience, as he continues to hold

out his perfect plan in the face of a people who deserve anything but.

The physical exile is completed – the seventy years are done. But the spiritual exile continues, and Daniel’s seventy weeks have only just begun. So where does Malachi, this last prophet, leave us?

Look at chapter 4, verses 4.

Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

A command to be faithful. Remember the principle of immediate retribution from Chronicles. God will continue to hold each generation accountable for their actions, even in this holding pattern we’re left in at the end of the Old Testament.

And verse 5:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

Those last words should send chills down your spine. Where does the Old Testament end? With a threat of “utter destruction.” Un-creation. Complete judgment. What is our fate apart from God’s mercy? With the curses of Genesis 3 come to their final fruition.

And yet that sign of continued hope. A new Elijah – coming to turn our hearts. The messenger of chapter 3, verse 1, preparing the way before Yahweh comes on that great and dreadful day.

And so where do we pick up the story in the first words of the book of Mark? Quoting from Malachi and then from Isaiah. Mark 1:3,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,
the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

The Old Testament finishes exactly where Genesis 3 leaves us. The people are no better than Adam and Eve. No more able to follow God into blessing and life. Yet we’ve learned so much along the way. God’s vision of redemption has become so clear; it’s just waiting to take hold.

And so when a man named John begins to preach and baptize in Mark 1:4 – this new Elijah – we know that God’s time has come and salvation is at hand. Praise God for his faithfulness to his promises.

[Questions]

This material is adapted from a course with the same name developed by Capitol Hill Baptist Church. It has been modified for our purposes and has been condensed to fit our time schedule. The original version is available on their website at <https://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/resources/core-seminars/series/old-testament-overview/>