

Chapter 1: Approaching the Old Testament Study Guide

The Old Testament (OT) contains God's story, in which God reveals himself to humanity

The Old Testament is God's self-revelation to humanity

God's plan has always been to exist in relationship with his people.

The Bible describes this plan in the seven stages of God's presence/ People connected with stage.

1. Eden; Adam/Eve
2. Covenant; Abraham
3. Exodus (Bush/Sinai); Moses
4. Tabernacle/Temple; Solomon/ Priest
5. Incarnation (Immanuel); Jesus
6. Pentecost; Peter/ Disciples
7. New Creation. Each of Us through Jesus Christ

From the beginning, God is revealed in and through his creation, most especially mankind, with whom God initiated a relationship in the Garden of Eden.

However, man's sin disrupted the relationship, and man was driven away from God's presence.

The rest of the Bible records God's initiative to restore the broken relationship.

The narrative of the Tower of Babel shows people attempting to reestablish God's presence in their midst.

The next chapters of Genesis record God initiating his own self-revelation as he establishes a relationship with the family of Abraham, through whom God intended to be revealed to all people. God grows Abraham's family into the nation of Israel and enables the people to maintain his presence in their midst through the conditions of the covenant.

God comes to dwell on earth in their construction of the Tabernacle (and later, the Temple).

The relationship between God and Israel is disrupted by Israel's sin, and God's presence leaves the temple as the people are deported into exile.

Through the incarnation, God again reveals himself to humanity when he comes to earth as the human Jesus and provides a mechanism for permanent relationship.

When Jesus ascends to heaven after the resurrection, he sends his Spirit, who now dwells in the people of God, individually and corporately.