

Exile and return

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A little bit about me...

- St Stephen's, Shepherds Bush
- M.A in Theology Ministry and Mission @ Trinity College Bristol - *primary focus of M.A thesis was Divine Suffering.*
- Family.

A few things to hold on to as we dive in:

- God is all knowing, all powerful, good, and wise. Everything he does has PURPOSE.
- All God's work are toward an ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP with mankind.
 - Grace creates the opportunity
 - Judgement bring truth.
 - Sacrifice the means (atonement)
 - Mercy is the gift.
 - Glory is the end.

Where and how does Exile fit?

The First Exile: Genesis 3:21-24

“²¹ The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²² And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” ²³ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side_[1] of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”

So what is happening?

- God's grace and provision meets human pride, greed, and failure.

Why would God kick them out of the garden?

A few suggested reasons:

1. God doesn't want us to be immortal (Jealous God).
2. God was angry (Judgemental God)
3. We deserve it (Guilty humans, its our punishment)
4. We deserve it (God enacts Justice. Righteous God)

Let's read it again.

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What does God do?

1. Keeps them alive. (Gracious God).
2. Clothes them. (Compassionate God)
3. In the skin of another creature (Sacrificial God...)
4. Keeps us away from the tree to ensure salvation is possible (Boundaries are for us). The tree will come to us in when the time is right.

We have an opportunity to understand the character of God!

The Next big Exile

The Jewish Museum

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So what is happening?

- God's grace and provision meets human pride, greed, and failure.

Why would God kick them out of the land?

A few suggested reasons:

1. Abundance and/or power without gratitude corrupt.
2. A corrupt heart/mind is idolatrous (including worship of the self).
3. Exile is provision for hearts/minds sliding into idolatry and corruption.
4. It reminds us who we rely on.

A few things in the background.

Zechariah 6:21-24

9 The word of the Lord came to me: 10 “Take silver and gold from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon. Go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. 11 Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jozadak. 12 Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord.

It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' The crown will be given to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the Lord. Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the Lord, and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the Lord your God."

Exile from the garden taught that:

- Work won't save (thorns).
- Can't build your way to heaven (babel)
- Human structure is oppressive (Egypt, Babylon, Rome).
- Provision doesn't mean Heaven.
- Human Prophets, priests, kings aren't enough.
- Only one perfect Human can save.

Before his life, death and resurrection, all roads lead to Jesus.

What about us?

A few reminders

- Exile is a lack of abundance not abandonment.
 - God still gives us breath, and purpose.
- God is present in Exile. We are never alone.
- It is an invitation to a mature friendship. A friendship built on trust (faith), not just the availability of power.
- We have the prophet, priest, and king. Soon we will also have the land!

It is for us to turn to him
For he **will** Return to us!