

Mathewson Storyline Of The Bible Lecture 1 - Gen1-3

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Dr. David Mathewson taught New Testament topics and Greek at Gordon College for eight years before returning in the fall of 2011 to Denver Seminary. Before getting into academics, he was involved in pastoral ministry in Montana for six and a half years and a number of years teaching at Oak Hills Christian College in Bemidji, Minnesota. Dave received his doctorate from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

His dissertation was published by the University of Sheffield called A New Heaven and a New Earth, the Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1-22.5, and more recently, Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation, published in 2010 by E.J. Brill. Dave will be introducing us to the storyline of the Bible where he will trace the following five major themes from Genesis to Revelation. They are the people of God, the covenant, the temple, kingship, and the land or creation.

Here is Dr. Dave Mathewson with lecture number one, beginning the storyline of the Bible in Genesis one through three. All right. What I want to do in this series of lectures is go through what I have entitled the storyline of the Bible.

And what that means is although the Bible consists of a diversity of books, historically, and literarily, as far as the literary genre of the books, although the Bible is comprised of a diversity of types of books, at the same time, underlying diversity is, in my opinion, a unified story or unified narrative that attests to God's redemptive dealing with his people in history. In fact, this story, as we'll see it unfold and develop throughout the pages of the Old and New Testament, this story has all the features of stories that we're familiar with. It has a typical plot.

For example, we'll look at the setting of the story, which we'll spend most of this first lecture doing. We'll examine the setting, who are the major characters, and what are the dominant themes and movements of the story. And then the setting only sets the stage for a conflict.

Most good stories have a conflict or a crisis that emerges in the story itself that has to be resolved. And the biblical story is no different. We'll look at the crisis that is precipitated in the biblical story or narrative or storyline, and we'll see how that story gets resolved, how the crisis or conflict begins to unravel and finds its resolution primarily in the New Testament in light of fulfillment in Christ, but also his people as well.

And so, what I want to do at the outset is perhaps just say a couple of things about what this series of lectures is not. This series of lectures is not a survey of the whole Bible. So, there are large sections of the Old and New Testament, entire books that I will skip over because this is not a survey of the main content and structure and themes and background setting of every major book.

I'm simply tracing the story, and we'll be spending time looking at more prominent texts found in the Old Testament and how they contribute to the story, but this is not a survey of the entire Old or New Testament. Nor in this series of lectures am I going to answer a number of questions that you might be interested in, for example, in Genesis that we'll look at as we examine the setting today. In the early chapter of Genesis, I will not answer nor am I perhaps equipped or qualified to answer questions like, where did Cain and Abel get their wives? Or was the cosmos created in seven literal days or ages? I'm not going to answer those questions.

Again, I'm going to focus mainly on the theological themes or the theological storyline as it weaves its way through the Old and New Testaments. So that's kind of

where we're headed. Again, I'll spend time looking at representative texts from the Old and New Testament, and we'll spend a little bit of time on Genesis 1 through 3, which kind of sets the stage and is the setting of the story.

So, let's look at that now. The starting point or setting is Genesis chapters 1 through 3, which chapter 1, which in a sense provides the overarching setting or summary of the rest of the section, is, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was formless and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep. What this suggests about the setting is that Genesis 1 through 3 begins with the existence of God, who is the sovereign creator of all things that exist.

He is the sovereign ruler over his creation, and it's in this account of God's creative activity that all the elements of the story are to be found. All the dominant themes that will weave their way through the rest of the Bible as part of the Bible's storyline are found. And I want to simply touch on those dominant themes.

The first one, and I'm not going to present them necessarily in order, and also at times it's very difficult to separate or bifurcate between some of these themes, because they're integrally related as part of the storyline. So sometimes I'll touch on one theme and be talking about some of the others as well. But the first theme is the theme of the people of God.

In Genesis chapters 1 and 2, as the creator, the sovereign creator over his universe, God creates a people with whom he will enter into a relationship with. So Adam and Eve are not just meant to be the first human beings, but they are the very beginning of, or the first people of God, the first people that God will enter into a covenant relationship with. And that term covenant raises another theme, but Adam and Eve are to be seen as the first people of God whom God, as the sovereign ruler of creation, will now create and establish a covenant relationship with.

In fact, the mandate for Adam and Eve, or their primary function within this narrative and within creation that God is the sovereign ruler over, is stipulated in a text like Genesis chapter 1 and verses 26 and 27. Where at the climax of his created work, God says, then God said, let us make human beings, or humankind, in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created humankind in his image.

In the image of God, he created them, male and female, he created them. The idea behind image, I'm convinced, although there have been a variety of suggestions, culturally or theologically and functionally, or ontologically, of what image might entail, at the very least, I think the idea of image suggests that Adam and Eve are to function as God's representatives. As those created in God's image, they are to represent God in creation.

And primarily that is worked out by them having dominion over all of creation. So, remember, God is the sovereign ruler of creation, and now he creates human beings in his image as his representatives. They are to represent God's rule over his creation.

They are to spread God's kingship and his glory throughout the entire creation as his representatives. I take it that primarily that's what it means when it says that Adam and Eve are created in God's image. They are his representatives to spread his rule and his glory throughout all of creation.

This introduces the next dominant theme, and that is this is related to, as we just said, the notion of God's image. That is, Adam and Eve, as created in God's image,

are primarily to function as God's vice-regents in his creation. So again, they are to represent God's rule over all creation.

They are to establish and spread God's rule and his glory throughout the entire created universe. They are God's vice regents. And as God's vice-regents, this is probably also how we are to understand the mandate given to them.

I just read verses 26 and 27 of Genesis 1. But verse 28, In other words, I think what this is suggesting, and notice the mandate to be fruitful and multiply, is once again connected with the idea of dominion or ruling over all creation as God's representatives. What I think God is saying is the way they are to fulfill their mandate to be God's image bearers and to represent God's rule over creation is by producing image-bearing offspring who will therefore fill the earth, and by that means establish and spread God's rule and glory throughout the entire creation. So again, putting this together, Adam and Eve are created in God's image as representatives of God's rule.

God is the sovereign ruler over creation, but he created Adam and Eve in his image to represent his rule throughout creation, and they likewise are to bear, are to produce image-bearing offspring by being fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth. And it's through other image-bearing offspring that God's rule and his glory will eventually spread throughout the entire creation. Now that brings us to another theme, and that is the theme of covenant.

Again, this goes along with people, but although the word covenant is not mentioned in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, all the elements of a covenant are there. That is, God is depicted as a suzerain, a ruler over all creation, and now he will create and elect a people that he will bless and enter into a relationship with, and this covenant will also include blessing and cursing. God will bless them, and notice back in verse 28 of chapter 1, that God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful, multiply.

So, creation is a place of blessing for the people of God, yet we'll see later that also there are curses that will be fulfilled if they refuse to live up to their side of the covenant. The main heart of the covenant is the formula, I will be their God and you will be my people, which you find repeated throughout the Old Testament. Again, the formula itself is not here, the term covenant is not here, but clearly God as the suzerain ruler over creation now intends to enter into a covenant relationship with his people by creating a people and blessing them if they obey their side of the covenant stipulation, and the stipulation is found in God's command to them in chapter 2 that they are not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And again, I'm not interested at this point in explaining what that might be, but simply to raise the issue of this is the stipulation, that if they are to fulfill their mandate to be fruitful and multiply and represent God's rule over all creation, in part of this covenant relationship, they will obey God by not touching of this tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Conversely, to disobey that command will bring about cursing, much like the theme of blessing and cursing that you find with the Mosaic covenant later on in the Old Testament. So, God establishes a covenant relationship, he will be the God of Adam and Eve, his newly created people, and they will be his people, and they will fulfill their mandate, and they are to keep their end of the covenant, and if they do, God will bless them.

If they disobey, God will curse them and expel them from the garden, from the land that he has given them. This brings us to the next theme, and that is the theme of land. Genesis 1 and 2, and this rather detailed account of the seven days of creation, again, I'm not interested in how we understand those, whether it's a literal 24-hour day or a longer period of time, is not my point right now.

The point is, what theologically, what that contributes to the setting and the beginning of the story. What I think is going on in chapters 1 and 2 is not just the origin of the earth, although it does that, it does talk about the beginnings of the earth and creation, but this is not so much anywhere close to a scientific explanation of how the earth, the origin of the earth, and this account certainly doesn't rule out scientific explanations at all. But what is going on, more important than that, is that this is not about the origin of the earth, but this is about God creating a land or an environment that is suitable for his people.

God is creating an environment that is inhabitable by his people and an environment in which he can take up residence and dwell with his people. So, the land in chapters 1 and 2 is a place of blessing, a place of fruitfulness, that God's creation, his humanity, his new people, Adam and Eve, can enjoy, again, if they will keep their end of the covenant. If not, they will be expelled from this land.

So, the land, what's going on in chapters 1 and 2 is this is the land that God is providing as a gracious gift to his people, to Adam and Eve. It's a place of blessing where God will dwell with and take up residence with his people. Now, connected with the theme of land and creation, and actually I want you to pay attention to chapter 1 and verse 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

We'll see later on in one of the lectures where this concept crops up again and is important. But in connection with this theme of the creation of a land, that is producing a land as a place of blessing and a gracious gift to the people, an environment that is suitable for his people to live in and for God to dwell in their midst, is that notice the mention in chapters 1 and 2, especially the mention in chapter 2 of a garden. So in chapter 2 in verses 8 and 9, we'll read more of this later, but it begins, And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The Tree of Life also is in the midst of the garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which later on Adam and Eve, as part of the covenant stipulation, is told that they are not permitted to touch. But what I want to say about the garden is primarily what is going on here, and I owe this observation to Old Testament Professor John Walton and a couple of others as well, but what is going on here, I think, is the garden of Eden is being portrayed, and in some respects, the rest of creation, but especially the garden of Eden, I'm convinced, is being portrayed as sacred space.

The Garden of Eden is the place where God will dwell with his people, Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve's role is to guard it and keep it. Notice chapter 2 and verse 15. It says, The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Now that phrase, to till it and keep it, I'm convinced is not so much portraying Adam and Eve as the first gardeners, or the first landscapers of the first creation, but instead, their sole role is to guard the sacred space. Their role is similar to the role of the priests later on in the temple, so that Adam and Eve, in a sense, function as the first priests of the garden of Eden. Now, later Jewish literature, especially what we'll see later on in the Old Testament, the Old Testament, I think, clearly indicates that the temple, the Old Testament temple, was basically meant to be a miniature Garden of Eden because that's where God first dwelled.

That was the first sacred space where God dwelled with his people. But the Old Testament does much Jewish literature, especially some of the apocalyptic literature, portrays the Garden of Eden as a temple, and Adam as the first priest who functioned in the temple. For example, one book titled Third Enoch portrays Eden as

a place where the brilliance of God's Shekinah glory flashed from one end of the garden to the other, and there are other references.

So clearly, the Garden of Eden is to be seen as a sacred space where God will dwell with his people as he did in the temple. And Adam and Eve are there to guard it, and to keep it, not as the first landscapers, but as, in a sense, the first priests who are to guard this sacred space, and to take care of this sacred space where God dwells with his people. Just initially, we'll return to this later on in another lecture when we talk more specifically about the temple, but just initially, notice a number of features, other features that clearly connect this with the temple, is, even going back to chapters 1 and 2, the mention of luminaries and lights, recall the light produced by the lampstand within the temple.

The very lampstand itself that was located in the Old Testament temple probably recalls the tree. The lampstand was meant to resemble the tree, probably the tree of life that existed in the Garden of Eden. Interestingly, another observation, again, that I owe to John Walton, is that the very fact that God rests on the seventh day is not just only a sign of God's recreation, or obviously not a sign of the fact that he was exhausted and needed to stop from this rigorous activity of creating, but even the notion of God resting seems to resonate with temple imagery.

Later on in the Old Testament, in several places, in Chronicles, in Isaiah chapter 66, there are mentions of the temple as the resting place of God, as the resting place of God's presence. God's presence came to rest in the temple itself. So when God rests at the conclusion of his creation, it's signifying that this is now sacred space.

This is God's temple that he now rests or takes up residence in as he dwells in the midst of his people. And again, we'll see that when we return later on to the theme of temple. Now, geographically, just let me make a comment geographically on

what's going on in chapters 1 and 2 and 3, especially with this account of the Garden of Eden.

Notice how 8 begins, and the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east. And the question is, geographically, how are we to envision this? Is the Garden of Eden coextensive with chapters 1 and 2, so that the Garden of Eden encompasses the entire creation? Is Eden, and may perhaps the garden within it, a separate location within creation? The kind of the cosmology or even the geography depicted in Genesis 1 through 3 is a little bit difficult. But perhaps, and I owe this observation to Gregory Beal, he suggests that perhaps the garden of Eden is a place within creation, the place where God's presence dwells.

And Adam and Eve's main task as God's image bearers and representatives of his ruin glory, and by producing image-bearing offspring, who are also to spread God's rule and glory throughout creation, is that the main mandate of Adam and Eve then is to expand the Eden to eventually encompass the entire earth and the entire world, so that Eden, the garden of Eden, becomes eventually coextensive with the entirety of creation. So, the stage then is set. The setting is now in place.

Man and women are created as God's people, and are created to enter into a covenant relationship with God. God has given them the gracious gift of the land that he has created for them, and as his image bearers and representatives, they are to represent the rule and the kingship of the sovereign, the suzerain, the sovereign ruler over all creation. They are to represent and spread his rule and glory throughout the entirety of creation.

And they are to be fruitful and fill the earth in doing this, presumably with other image-bearing offspring. And they are to care for and guard the sacred space that

God has given them. And the climax of all this is God now takes up residence and lives with his people in the creation that he has so graciously given them.

Now, Genesis 3 then raises the conflict or the complication that in a sense provides the main division in the rest of the Old and New Testament. You could actually, at chapter 3, after chapter 3, you could put a main division between Genesis 1 through 3 and the rest of the Old and New Testament. The rest of the Old and New Testament will be the resolution to the complication that emerges in Genesis chapter 3. So, the complication in chapter 3 is that the serpent tempts Adam and Eve to sin, and he does so by getting them to violate the covenant stipulation, the covenant relationship with God.

Adam and Eve were told that they were not to touch the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and Satan tempted them to do that. So now sin enters God's creation, and sin now thwarts God's original intention for humanity to be God's image bearers, to reflect his rule, to spread his rule and glory throughout all creation, with God dwelling in their midst. Now sin enters the scene and thwarts that intention, so that now, interestingly, Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden.

And I use that term exile intentionally, and you'll see why as the story continues on. You'll see why I use that term. But Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden.

And interestingly, in chapter 3, we also read that not only are they expelled from the Garden, but then in verse 24, it says, I'll back up and read verse 23 of chapter 3, Genesis 3. Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the Garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a sword, flaming and turning to guard the way of the Tree of Life. So, you get this picture of Adam and Eve expelled from or exiled from the land, the place of blessing that God had given them, where they were

to function as God's image-bearing representatives, to spread God's glory and rule throughout all creation.

Instead, now they are, because of sin and disobedience, because they've broken the covenant relationship, they are expelled from the Garden and from the sacred space that they were meant to keep. And now God places two cherubim, two angelic beings, at the east entrance to guard it. I want you to pay attention to those two things that we'll return to later on.

The fact that there are two angelic beings guarding the entrance to the Garden, and the fact that the creation narrative makes a point of identifying it as the place the east of the Garden of Eden, the directional notion of it being in the east. So that's the complication that arises. But verse 15, although again, I don't want to elaborate on this.

Verse 15, is often seen as kind of the initial stages of the gospel or the gospel in news. But at the very least, verses 15 and 16, but especially verse 15, seem to indicate God's gracious provision of a solution to the complication that has now arisen. And verse 15 says, And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers.

He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel. Now again, nothing more is said than that, except that this is the beginning of a conflict that will eventually find a resolution. Although the narrative at this point does not tell us exactly what that will look like.

But the rest of the Bible, in my opinion, the rest of Genesis, all the way through into the New Testament, is the story of how God is going to restore his original intention for humanity and for his entire creation. That is, God's creation of men and women in

a covenant relationship with him in the land that God has graciously provided for his people, and with God dwelling in their midst. And humanity functions as God's image bearers, God's representatives who are responsible for spreading God's rule and his glory throughout the entire creation.

And the rest of the Old and New Testament will narrate how this complication that has been introduced in chapter 3, how that complication gets resolved. How will God restore his original intention for humanity? So that brings us to the end of the setting and the complication that has been introduced. Now, what I want to do, again, is I'll skip over rather large swaths of material, particularly in the Old Testament.

And again, I will only touch down on major themes, major texts, and major movements in the story of the outworking of God's purposes to restore his original intention for humanity and creation as articulated in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. And I want to skip all the way ahead to Genesis chapter 12, where the story of Israel becomes God's primary means of establishing or restoring God's intention for all of creation. So again, Genesis 1 and 2 are kind of on the macro level of God's dealing with all creation. Now, through a narrowing effect, God will now focus on one person, but also one nation, as the means by which God will establish his intention to restore creation to its original function.

Again, with God's people living in the land, the gift of God's land that he's given them, with God dwelling in their midst, and God's people spreading God's glory and God's rule throughout the entire creation. The story then starts in Genesis chapter 12. And Genesis 12 begins, Now the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country, your kindred, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses

you I will curse. And in you, all the families or all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

So, this is the beginning of God's intent to restore Genesis 1 and 2 and the conditions that were true in his original intention for creation. Now, why do I say that? Well, notice how, again, all the dominant themes from Genesis 1, 2, and 3 crop up again in God's selection and choice of Abraham and the nation of Israel and the story of Israel as his means of solving the conflict and the dilemma introduced in chapter 3 of Genesis. First of all, notice the clear reference to God giving Israel the land or God giving Abraham the land.

So, in verse 1, when it says, Go to your country and your kindred and to your father's house or go from your country and to the land that I will show you. In other words, this is the initial stage of the restoration of God's intention to give the land to the people from Genesis 1 and 2. Remember in Genesis 1 and 2, God created the land as a suitable environment for his people. It was the gracious gift he gave to his people as a place of blessing, the place where God would dwell with his people.

But Adam and Eve were exiled from that because of sin. Now God chooses Abraham and the people of Israel to bring them back to the land as the place of God's blessing and the place where God will once again dwell with his people. This is the land.

The land is the gracious gift of God to his people in fulfillment of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So taking Abraham to the land and the nation of Israel that will come from him is the reestablishment of the conditions of God's original intention for his creation and for humanity in Adam and Eve, his people in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Notice also the theme of covenant. God is clearly portrayed in this chapter and in subsequent chapters of Genesis as a suzerain, as the ruler over creation, who now will choose, elect, and call Abraham and choose to bless him. Notice too the

language already of blessing and cursing in chapter 12 verses 2 and 3. But in subsequent sections of the Abraham story, it's clear that God enters into a relationship with Abraham.

So here we see the theme of covenant as the way God will enter into a relationship with and bless his people found already in Genesis 1 and 2 now becomes the dominant way that God will enter into a relationship with his people, restore them to the land and bless them as was his original intention for creation back in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So for example, God enters into a covenant relationship then with Abraham, but also with the rest of his offspring. Notice chapters 15 and 18, which is clearly chapter 15. All of chapter 15 clearly relates a covenant ceremony where God enters into a covenant relationship with Abraham.

And notice how verse 18 ends. It says, On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, To your descendants, I give this land. Notice the connection of the land, the gift of the land with the covenant that God makes with Abraham and with his descendants as well.

Furthermore, the intention, notice the intention to bless Abraham, clearly back in chapter 12, but repeated throughout the Abraham narrative. The intention to bless Abraham is clearly a reversal of the curse that happens back in Genesis chapter 3. As a result of the sin of Adam and Eve, the end of chapter 3 ends with God cursing. The serpent ends with God cursing creation.

And now as a reversal of that, Abraham is promised blessing and the return to the land, a place of blessing, again, in fulfillment of God's intention for his people in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Notice the theme also of the people of God, that the intention for God choosing Abraham and entering into a covenant relationship with him is ultimately that out of Abraham will arise a people, a nation, through whom

God, or with whom God will enter into a covenant relationship. We already mentioned that this covenant that God established with Abraham is ultimately for his descendants as well. But out of Abraham will arise this people who will be God's people and God will be their God so that Israel now is going to be God's means for restoring his original intention for creation from Genesis 1 and 2. So what Adam and Eve failed to do because of sin and got them exiled from the land, now God intends to take Israel back to the land to as a place of blessing, to give them rest in the land to enter into a covenant relationship so that ultimately God's glory and his rule will be established throughout the entire earth.

So, Israel now is God's intention to restore God's original purpose for creation from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Notice too, the emphasis on Abraham's seed and descendants, which over and over again you get this picture in Genesis that Abraham's seed is eventually to be more numerous than the stars of the sky or the sands of the sea. God uses different metaphors, but several times he tells Abraham that this offspring, that at the end of... Remember even back in chapter 12, he told him a great nation would come from him. In chapter 15, he said this covenant with Abraham was so that his descendants would possess the land.

Over and over again, God promises Abraham that his descendants and seed will be more numerous than even the stars of the sky or the sands of the sea. Notice chapter 22 and verses 17 through 18. Starting with verse 17, Genesis 22, God speaks to Abraham, I will indeed bless you and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.

And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies and by your offspring shall the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves because you have obeyed my voice. Now, what I want you to notice is this mention of the numerous offspring that come from Abraham is most likely intended to be a reflection of the mandate given

to Adam and Eve back in Genesis chapter 1. Or remember, where you remember God tells Adam and Eve, you are to be fruitful and multiply and fill the entire earth and subdue it. Now, Abraham is told that he will have offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand of the seashore.

I think in fulfillment of God's original intention for Adam and Eve to produce image-bearing offspring to be fruitful and multiply and eventually fill the entire earth. So that mandate is now beginning to be fulfilled with God's choice of Abraham who will produce numerous offspring, who will be fruitful and multiply, who will possess the land, repossess, be restored to the land, the gracious gift of God's provision, the place of blessing that he intended for Adam and Eve to live in with God living in their midst and Adam and Eve representing God's rule and spreading His glory throughout all creation. So Abraham then is seen as the first step or the first stages of God restoring His original intention for creation and for humanity.

Remember, God is not just restoring His people and saving His people, although that's perhaps the most significant element, but eventually God must restore all of creation. But Abraham is the first step for God restoring the conditions of Genesis 1 and 2 that were ruined by sin and ruined by the fall in Genesis chapter 3. And again, that is that God will create and choose a people, He will be their God, and they will be His people in a covenant relationship with them, He will graciously give them the land as the place of blessing, as the place of His presence, and they will spread His rule and His glory as His image bearers, they will spread His rule and His glory as His representatives throughout all of creation and fill the earth with God's glory and His sovereign rule. So again, this is just one major stage in the story and how the story begins to unravel, how the story begins to develop.

And as I said, I'm skipping over large swaths of material. If you go back and look at the flood narrative, the flood narrative in Genesis 6-9 has all kinds of resonances with

Genesis chapters 1 and 2. God is reaffirming His intent to restore creation, restore humanity, though now Genesis chapter 12 is more specific in how God begins to do that. Let me also say that I don't want to necessarily suggest that every single detail of the Old New Testament can be forced into or fit into this storyline as well.

But again, my main intent is to trace the dominant threads of the biblical story of God's redemptive dealing with His people, of God's intent to restore His original intention that is reflected in His initial creative act as the sovereign creator of the universe with His people as the climax, how God now is acting in history to restore that to its original intention from Genesis chapter 1 and 2. All right, the next stopping point is God's dealing with His people through Moses and the covenant that God made with Moses. The story starts in Exodus. Again, we skipped over a lot of material, but the next stage of the story starts in the book of Exodus where God calls Moses to rescue His people out of the land of Egypt and again to take them to the land that God promised to Abraham and that we said was part of God's intention to restore His intention for humanity to live in the land as God's gracious gift from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So, the story of Abraham continues with the covenant that God makes through Moses with the people of Israel, His rescuing them from Egypt and His intention to restore them to the land.

Now, this is very important. We'll see how this begins to work out in the rest of the Old Testament and even into the New Testament. Israel, the nation of Israel then, we've already seen this in Genesis chapter 12, but through the covenant that God establishes ultimately with Abraham, the nation of Israel is going to be God's means by which He will restore His intention for all creation and for His people from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So, what I want to emphasize is that hopefully many of you listening to this don't have to be reminded of, but for some of you, you may, that this is not simply a new twist in the story or a new phase of God's dealing with His people.

What God is going to do with the nation of Israel through Moses is integrally and inextricably connected back to the creation narrative in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Again, Israel, the election of Israel as the people of God is to be seen as the means by which God will restore His intention for creation from Genesis 1 and 2. Remember, Adam and Eve failed. They sinned and therefore were exiled from the garden, from the land, the place of blessing, the place where God resided with His people, the sacred space. And now Israel is called as a nation that, again, God intends to rescue them from Egypt and bring them to the land where now they will be God's means of fulfilling God's original intention for creation from Genesis 1 and 2. And so, the Mosaic covenant and the giving of the law is actually the means by which God will keep and fulfill the promise He made to Abraham.

Again, through Abraham, He's promised a great nation. He's going to bring them to the land. Now, the Mosaic covenant is the way that that will take place.

The covenant that God made with Moses in the giving of the law is kind of the legal means and the way that the covenant made with Abraham will now be enforced and will now get worked out. So, what I want to do next then is look at a little bit more detail at the story of Israel and how it fulfills and continues not only the story and covenant made with Abraham, but goes all the way back to creation, how the story of Israel is the ultimate, is not the ultimate, but is the fulfillment of and the means of God keeping and fulfilling His original intention for Adam and Eve and for all creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

That was Dave Mathewson, lecture number one of the Storyline of the Bible.