

Dr. Dave Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 1, Genesis 1-3 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 1, Genesis 1-3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. David Mathewson introduces his "Storyline of the Bible" series, focusing on Genesis 1-3. He argues that the Bible's diverse books share a unified narrative of God's redemptive plan. Key themes—**God's people, covenant, temple (sacred space), kingship, and land/creation**—are traced from Genesis to Revelation. The lecture explores the creation narrative's establishment of a covenant between God and humanity, highlighting the fall of humanity in Genesis 3 as a pivotal conflict. The subsequent narrative, he posits, depicts God's plan to restore his original intentions.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 1 – Double
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Introduction & Languages → Introductory Series →
Storyline).**



**Mathewson_Storyli
ne_Session01.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided lecture excerpt by Dr. Dave Mathewson:

Briefing Document: Mathewson's "Storyline of the Bible" - Lecture 1 (Genesis 1-3)

Introduction

This document summarizes the key themes and concepts presented by Dr. Dave Mathewson in the first lecture of his "Storyline of the Bible" series, focusing on Genesis chapters 1-3. Mathewson emphasizes that the Bible, despite its diverse books and genres, possesses a unified narrative centered on God's redemptive work throughout history. He frames this story as having a typical plot structure, including a setting, a conflict, and a resolution, with Genesis 1-3 laying the foundation for the entire storyline. He explicitly states that this lecture series is not a survey of every book of the Bible but a tracing of the overarching story, focusing on theological themes rather than historical or scientific details.

Key Concepts and Themes

1. The Setting: Genesis 1-3 as the Foundation

- Genesis 1-3 is presented as the setting for the entire biblical story. Genesis 1, specifically, is seen as a summary of the overarching themes.
- The setting begins with God as the sovereign creator, a concept central to the narrative.
- All of the dominant themes of the Bible are present in these initial chapters.

1. Dominant Themes

- **The People of God:** God creates humanity (Adam and Eve) not just as the first humans, but as the first people with whom He enters into a relationship.
- Quote: *"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."*
- **Image of God & Vice-Regency:** Adam and Eve are created in God's image to function as His representatives, ruling and spreading His glory throughout creation, acting as His "vice-regents."

- Quote: *"As those created in God's image, they are to represent God in creation... They are to spread God's kingship and his glory throughout the entire creation as his representatives."*
- They are to produce image-bearing offspring to continue this.
- This dominion mandate is connected to the command to be fruitful and multiply.
- **Covenant:** Although the word "covenant" is not used in Genesis 1-2, all the elements are present: God as suzerain, electing a people, blessing and cursing within the relationship, and the formula "I will be their God and you will be my people."
- The command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is the covenant stipulation. Obedience = blessing; disobedience = curse.
- **Land/Creation:** God creates an environment suitable for His people to dwell in and where He can dwell with them, a place of blessing.
- Quote: *"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."*
- **Sacred Space (Temple):** The Garden of Eden is presented as sacred space, the dwelling place of God, functioning like a temple, with Adam and Eve as the first "priests" who are to guard and keep it.
- Quote: *"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... their role is similar to the role of the priests later on in the temple."*
- The features of the Garden (light, the tree of life) resonate with the features of the Old Testament temple.
- **Expanding Eden:** The task of Adam and Eve was to expand the Garden of Eden until it encompassed the entire earth, fulfilling God's rule throughout creation.

1. **Conflict: The Fall in Genesis 3**

- The serpent tempts Adam and Eve to sin, violating the covenant by eating from the forbidden tree.
- Sin thwarts God's original intention for humanity, preventing them from acting as God's representatives.

- Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden (the land), a crucial event in the story. This exile is intentional and significant for the rest of the narrative.
- God places cherubim at the east entrance to the Garden, guarding the way to the Tree of Life, a symbolic element Mathewson points out will be revisited later.
- Verse 15 is seen as a hint of God's gracious provision for a solution to this conflict (proto-gospel), a future conflict and resolution that the rest of the Bible will detail.
- Quote: *"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."*

1. The Rest of the Story as Resolution

- The rest of the Old and New Testament are about how God restores his original intention for humanity. The main goal of the story is to see God and humanity back in right relationship in a created space.
- The core intention was God dwelling among his people in his place of blessing, and those people spreading his rule.

1. Transition to Abraham

- Mathewson skips ahead to Genesis 12, where the story of Israel begins as God's primary means of restoring his intention for all of creation.
- God will now use a single person and nation to restore his original intention.
- Genesis 12 begins this new phase of the story, showing the restoration of the themes from Genesis 1-3.
- God promises Abraham land, blessing, and numerous descendants, echoing the initial promises of Genesis.
- Quote: *"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... and in you all the families or all the nations of the earth will be blessed."*

1. Abraham and Israel as Re-establishment of Original Intentions

- God's covenant with Abraham is a re-establishment of the elements in Genesis 1 & 2 and a reversal of the curses in Genesis 3.

- The land is again a place of blessing, and God promises to be their God and they will be his people, a theme repeated through the Abrahamic narrative.
- The concept of numerous descendants is connected to the mandate to fill the earth.
- Abraham and Israel are not just about God saving *them*, but about God restoring *all* of creation. The promises to Abraham are a first step in this larger restoration.
- The purpose is to see his people living in the land, in covenant relationship, with God in their midst, and spreading his glory throughout the earth.

1. **Moses and the Mosaic Covenant**

- The story continues with Moses and the Exodus. God calls Moses to rescue His people from Egypt and bring them to the land promised to Abraham.
- The Mosaic covenant and the law are the way that God will keep and fulfill the promises made to Abraham, a legal means to enforce and fulfill the promises.
- The Mosaic covenant is integrally connected to the creation narrative, fulfilling the same original purposes God had from the beginning.
- Israel is the means by which God restores his intentions from Genesis 1-2, filling the role that Adam and Eve had failed at.

Key Takeaways

- The Bible has a unified story, not just a collection of stories.
- Genesis 1-3 sets the stage for the entire biblical narrative.
- Key themes (people of God, covenant, land, kingship, sacred space) weave throughout the Bible.
- The Fall in Genesis 3 introduces the central conflict.
- God's redemptive work is about restoring his original intentions, not just individual salvation.
- Israel is a key player in this restoration, as a "new Adam" who would be obedient and keep the covenant.
- The rest of the Old Testament, and into the New, will show how this restoration comes about.

This briefing document provides a structured overview of the key themes and ideas presented in Mathewson's first lecture. It highlights the interconnectedness of the various biblical narratives and sets the stage for his future explorations of the storyline of the Bible.

4. Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 1, Genesis 1-3

Biblical Storyline Study Guide: Genesis 1-3

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Mathewson, what is the underlying theme of the diverse books within the Bible?
2. What are the five major themes Mathewson will trace from Genesis to Revelation?
3. What does Mathewson say is the primary function of Adam and Eve as image-bearers of God?
4. Explain the concept of God as the suzerain and how it relates to the idea of covenant.
5. How does Mathewson describe the land in the context of Genesis 1 and 2, and what is its purpose?
6. What does Mathewson say is the significance of the Garden of Eden?
7. What does the phrase "to till it and keep it" in Genesis 2:15 suggest about Adam's role?
8. What complication arises in Genesis 3 that thwarts God's original intention for humanity?
9. In Genesis 3:15, what does the conflict introduced between the serpent and the woman represent in the larger biblical narrative?
10. How does the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 relate back to the creation account in Genesis 1-2?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Mathewson argues that despite the Bible's diversity of books and literary genres, there is an underlying unified story or narrative of God's redemptive dealings with his people in history. This storyline contains elements of a typical plot, including setting, conflict, and resolution.

2. The five major themes Mathewson will trace are the people of God, the covenant, the temple, kingship, and the land or creation. These themes are interwoven and central to understanding the biblical narrative.
3. Mathewson contends that Adam and Eve, as created in God's image, are primarily meant to function as God's representatives on earth, spreading his rule and glory throughout creation. They are God's vice-regents with dominion over all the earth.
4. God is depicted as the suzerain, the sovereign ruler over all creation. In this role, God creates and enters into a covenant relationship with his people, where He will be their God, and they will be his people; this covenant entails both blessing and cursing depending on obedience.
5. Mathewson explains that the land is not merely a physical place but an environment created by God as a gracious gift to His people, a place of blessing and fruitfulness. It is also an environment in which He intends to dwell with His people.
6. Mathewson asserts that the Garden of Eden is portrayed as a sacred space, a temple-like location where God dwells with His people. It is a place that needs to be guarded and kept, similar to the role of priests in the temple later on.
7. The phrase "to till it and keep it" suggests that Adam's role is not primarily agricultural but rather priestly; he is to guard the sacred space where God dwells, much like a priest in the temple would guard it.
8. The complication in Genesis 3 is the entry of sin into God's creation when Adam and Eve disobey God by eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which thwarts God's original intention for humanity to represent him.
9. The conflict represents God's gracious provision of a solution to the complication introduced in Genesis 3, a conflict that will eventually find resolution and restore God's original intention for humanity and creation.
10. The call of Abraham in Genesis 12 is the beginning of God's restoration project, picking up the major themes from Genesis 1-2. God promises Abraham land, nation, and blessings, mirroring God's original intentions for humanity.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the "image of God" in Genesis 1:26-27, as interpreted by Mathewson, and how it relates to the themes of kingship and dominion.
2. Analyze the concept of covenant in Genesis 1-3 and how it establishes the relationship between God and humanity. Explore the consequences of breaking the covenant in Genesis 3 and its implications for the rest of the biblical narrative.
3. Explain Mathewson's perspective on the Garden of Eden as a sacred space and how it functions as a template for later understandings of the temple in the Old Testament.
4. Trace the theme of the land from Genesis 1-3 to the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, discussing its significance in the biblical narrative as a place of blessing, promise, and God's presence.
5. How does Mathewson view the story of Israel, beginning with Abraham, as a means to restore God's original intentions for creation and humanity, as presented in Genesis 1 and 2?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Storyline of the Bible:** Mathewson's concept of a unified narrative underlying the diversity of biblical books, highlighting God's redemptive actions throughout history.
- **People of God:** Refers to those whom God has chosen and entered into a relationship with, starting with Adam and Eve, and continuing through Abraham and Israel, ultimately extending to the followers of Christ.
- **Covenant:** A sacred agreement or relationship between God and His people, often involving promises, obligations, and blessings or curses depending on obedience.
- **Suzerain:** A sovereign ruler or overlord in a covenant relationship, often used in reference to God as the sovereign ruler over creation.
- **Vice-Regent:** A person who acts as a ruler or representative of a higher authority, like Adam and Eve as God's representatives in creation.
- **Temple:** A sacred space where God dwells with His people, reflecting the Garden of Eden in its function as a place of worship and connection with God.
- **Land:** In this context, not just physical geography but a place of blessing, a gift from God, where He dwells with His people, the primary goal of the covenant relationship.
- **Image of God:** The concept that humans are created to represent God on Earth, reflecting his character and rule; according to Mathewson, they are to be God's vice-regents.
- **Dominion:** The authority and responsibility given to humanity to rule over and care for creation as God's representatives.
- **Sacred Space:** A place set apart for a holy or divine purpose, often used in reference to the Garden of Eden and the temple.
- **Shekinah Glory:** The visible manifestation of God's presence, which, according to Jewish tradition, resided in the Garden of Eden and later in the temple.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 1, Genesis 1-3, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Storyline of the Bible (Genesis 1-3)

1. **What is the "storyline of the Bible" that Dr. Mathewson is discussing, and what is its overall focus?** The "storyline of the Bible," according to Dr. Mathewson, is a unified narrative of God's redemptive dealings with his people, tracing a single, cohesive story throughout the diverse books of the Old and New Testaments. It's not a survey of each book, but an exploration of major themes and how they connect, focusing on the creation, fall, and redemption of humanity and all creation, with a special emphasis on how God intends to restore his original intention. This includes a typical plot structure: setting, conflict, and resolution.
2. **What are the five major themes that Dr. Mathewson identifies in the storyline of the Bible?** The five major themes are the people of God, the covenant, the temple (or sacred space), kingship, and the land or creation. These themes are all interconnected and are introduced in Genesis 1-3, then further developed and traced through the rest of the Bible. They contribute to the overarching story of God's relationship with humanity and his creation.
3. **How does Genesis 1-3 function as the setting for the entire biblical story?** Genesis 1-3 sets the stage by introducing God as the sovereign creator and ruler of all things. It establishes humanity's role as God's image bearers, responsible for representing God's rule and glory throughout creation and establishes the original covenant between God and humanity. It also introduces the conflict of sin and disobedience and the expulsion from the Garden, which provides the main tension that the rest of the Bible aims to resolve. This includes the promise of restoration, even in the midst of the fall.
4. **What does it mean that humans are created in God's image, according to this interpretation?** Being created in God's image means that humans, specifically Adam and Eve, are meant to function as God's representatives in creation, acting as his vice-regents. They are to spread God's rule and glory throughout the earth by filling it with image-bearing offspring. This dominion is not just about control but about reflecting God's just and righteous rule and carrying on his creative purposes in the world.

5. **What is the significance of the Garden of Eden? Is it just a literal garden, or does it represent something else?** The Garden of Eden is presented as more than just a literal garden. It's a sacred space, a kind of temple where God dwells with his people. Adam and Eve's role in the garden is to "till it and keep it," which Dr. Mathewson interprets as guarding this sacred space, similar to how priests later functioned in the temple. The garden, in this sense, is a model for God's presence and his intention for his people to dwell with him.
6. **How does the concept of covenant play out in the narrative of Genesis 1-3, and what does it mean for the relationship between God and humanity?** While the term "covenant" is not explicitly used in Genesis 1-2, the elements of a covenant relationship are present. God, as the sovereign ruler, creates a people (Adam and Eve) with whom he enters into a relationship, promising blessing for obedience and threatening curses for disobedience (eating from the tree). The heart of the covenant is for God to be their God and for them to be his people. This is the foundation for how God relates with humanity moving forward.
7. **What is the crisis or conflict that emerges in Genesis 3, and how does it affect God's original intentions?** The crisis in Genesis 3 is the introduction of sin through the temptation of the serpent, leading Adam and Eve to disobey God's command about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This act of disobedience disrupts the covenant relationship, thwarts God's original intention for humanity, and results in their expulsion (exile) from the Garden of Eden. Their expulsion also means that the divine purpose for creation is also impacted.
8. **How does the story of Abraham in Genesis 12 relate to God's original intentions for humanity and creation as established in Genesis 1-3?** Genesis 12 begins a restoration of God's original intentions by focusing on Abraham. God's promise to give Abraham the land, to make of him a great nation, and to bless all the families of the earth is a direct response to the issues raised in Genesis 3. Through Abraham and his descendants (Israel), God intends to reverse the curse of sin and restore the original conditions of creation: a people in covenant with God, dwelling in the land, and spreading God's glory and rule throughout the entire earth. The story of Abraham begins the long process of redemption that seeks to undo the consequences of the fall.