

Dr. Dave Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 3, Prophets 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 3, Prophets, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture, the third in a six-part series, examines the role of the prophets in the biblical storyline. **The central theme is God's plan to restore creation**, focusing on five key elements: **God's people, the covenant, the land, the temple, and kingship**. The lecture argues that the prophets' messages anticipate a future restoration of Israel and creation, mirroring the events of Genesis, culminating in a **new covenant and a renewed Eden**. This restoration involves a **rebuilt temple**, a **restored Davidic kingship**, and ultimately, the extension of God's rule throughout the world. The lecture concludes by posing the question of how this prophetic expectation will be fulfilled.

**2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 3 – 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).**



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3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture transcript, including relevant quotes.

Briefing Document: The Prophetic Storyline of the Bible

Overview: This lecture focuses on the role of the Old Testament prophets in the broader storyline of the Bible, specifically how they address and anticipate the restoration of God's original intention for humanity and creation. Dr. Mathewson argues that the prophets address a situation of Israel in exile and paint a picture of restoration that encompasses five key themes: the people of God, covenant, land, temple, and kingship. These themes, introduced in Genesis, are seen to continue through the history of Israel and are central to the prophetic anticipation of future restoration.

Key Themes & Ideas:

1. The Overarching Storyline & God's Original Intent:

- The Bible has an underlying narrative starting in Genesis 1-3: God's creation of humanity, their relationship with Him, and their mandate to spread God's rule throughout creation.
- "God as the sovereign creator of the universe creates humanity, creates his people, a people that he will enter into a relationship with..."
- Humanity's sin in Genesis 3 resulted in exile from the Garden of Eden, disrupting God's intention.
- The rest of the Bible is the story of how God will restore His original intention for humanity and all of creation.
- God chose Israel as the primary means to accomplish this restoration.
- Israel's failure to keep the covenant with God resulted in their exile from the land and God's presence, mirroring Adam and Eve's failure in the Garden.
- The prophets address the situation of Israel in exile and articulate a prospect of restoration to fulfill God's original intention.
- "So the story then still remains without a conclusion and that is how can all of creation become a dwelling place of God with his people?"

1. The People of God (Restoration):

- Prophets anticipate the return of God's scattered people to a relationship with God
- Isaiah 60: "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you...Nations shall come to your light, and kings of the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around. They all gather..."
- Ezekiel 36: "And I will multiply your population, the whole house of Israel, all of it... and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before."
- Restoration of the people is linked to the mandate of Genesis 1-2, to be fruitful and multiply.
- Ezekiel 37: The image of dry bones being brought back to life, symbolizing the recreation of God's people (a new creation), with God's breath giving them life.
- Zechariah 8: "I will save my people from the east country and from the west country. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem. They shall be my people, and I will be their God in faithfulness and in righteousness."
- Restoration involves not only gathering the people but also renewing their relationship with God in a covenant.

1. Covenant (New Covenant):

- Covenant is the primary way God relates to His people.
- The covenant with Moses failed due to the people's disobedience, leading to exile.
- The prophets anticipate a new covenant that will not fail.
- Jeremiah 31: "The days are surely coming...when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah...I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be my people."
- This new covenant involves God writing his law on people's hearts, leading to a true internal transformation.
- Ezekiel 34: God will make a "covenant of peace" with his people

- Ezekiel 36: "A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh... my dwelling place shall be with them...and I will be their God and they shall be my people."
- The new covenant is the means by which God will deal with the sinfulness of his people, restoring them to be his.

1. **Land (Restoration to the Land and New Creation):**

- Return to the land is a key aspect of prophetic expectation.
- The land was part of the promise to Abraham and a place of blessing.
- Exile is seen as a form of "de-creation," a return to chaos like the pre-Genesis 1 state.
- Jeremiah 4: Description of exile echoes the chaos before creation. "I looked on the earth and lo, it was waste and void, and to the heavens and they had no light... the fruitful land was a desert..."
- Restoration of the land is depicted as a new creative act, a return to Eden-like conditions.
- Isaiah 51: "For the Lord will comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord."
- Ezekiel 36: The land will be restored to fruitfulness, the waste places rebuilt, fulfilling the Abrahamic promise and returning to the condition of Eden.
- Ezekiel 36: "The land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden."
- Isaiah 65: Anticipates a new creation – "For I'm about to create new heavens and a new earth...I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight...no more shall there be in it an infant that dies...For like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be."
- The new creation reverses the curse of death and restores fruitfulness, mirroring conditions in Eden.

1. **Temple/Garden (Restoration of God's Dwelling):**

- The Garden of Eden was the original sanctuary where God dwelled with his people.
- The temple is seen as a miniature garden of Eden, a place of God's presence.
- Prophets anticipate a rebuilt or restored temple as a place of God's dwelling with his people in the restored land.
- Ezekiel 40-48: Detailed description of the restored temple.
- Ezekiel 43: God's glory enters through the east gate, which is reminiscent of the east exit of Adam and Eve from the Garden.
- Ezekiel 47: A river flows from the temple, bringing life and fruitfulness, much like the river in Eden, linking the temple with the garden. "'Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live... Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month because the water for them flows from the sanctuary.'"
- The restored temple is the conduit of blessing and life, bringing the creation back to God's intent.

1. **Kingship (Davidic King & God's Universal Rule):**

- God's rule over Israel was to be expressed through the Davidic king, as a vice-regent of God.
- 2 Samuel 7: God promised David an unending throne.
- Prophets anticipate the re-establishment of the Davidic king at the time of restoration.
- Isaiah 55: God will keep his covenant with David.
- Jeremiah 33: "'In those days and at that time, I will cause a righteous branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.'"
- Ezekiel 37: "'My servant David shall be king over them...and my servant David shall be their prince forever.'"
- The Davidic king's rule is to ultimately be universal, spreading God's rule throughout all creation.

- Daniel 7: Vision of the "son of man" receiving universal dominion, echoing the Davidic kingship and Genesis 1-2. "To him, the son of man was given dominion and glory and kingship, and all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away. His kingship is one that shall never be destroyed."
- Zechariah 9: Anticipates a king whose dominion extends to the "ends of the earth."
- Zechariah 14: "The Lord will be king over all the earth."
- The Davidic king represents God's rule, reclaiming the earth from the kingdom of Satan.

Conclusion and Unresolved Question: The prophets anticipated a time of restoration of the people of Israel, a new covenant with them, a restoration of the land, a temple restored as God's dwelling, and the rule of the Davidic King. These events will lead to all nations acknowledging God's sovereignty and his glory. However, this vision remains incomplete as the lecture ends, leaving a question to be answered by the New Testament: How will this restoration be accomplished?

Implications: The prophetic literature, in its anticipation of restoration, provides a vision of a transformed world aligned with God's original intent in Genesis. These five themes are intertwined, highlighting the comprehensive nature of God's plan for the future. The lecture provides the background necessary to understand the New Testament's story and how it addresses the question the prophets have left unanswered.

4. Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 3, Prophets

The Prophets and the Storyline of the Bible: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each:

1. According to Mathewson, what are the five major themes that run through the storyline of the Bible?
2. How does the history of Israel, as described in the Old Testament, mirror the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?
3. What is the significance of the restoration of Israel in relation to God's plans for all of creation?
4. How do the prophets envision the restoration of God's people following their exile? Provide an example from one of the prophetic texts cited in the lecture.
5. What does the concept of a "new covenant" imply in the prophetic books, and how does it contrast with the old covenant?
6. How is the return to the land often depicted in the prophetic books, and what does this have to do with creation?
7. Describe the symbolic importance of the restored temple, drawing a connection to the Garden of Eden.
8. According to Mathewson, what role will the Davidic king play in the restored kingdom, and how does this relate to God's original intention in creation?
9. What is the significance of the "son of man" figure in Daniel 7, and how does it relate to the Davidic king?
10. How does the prophetic literature depict the ultimate outcome when God's kingdom is restored?

Answer Key

1. The five major themes are the **people of God, covenant, land, temple, and kingship**. These themes are introduced in Genesis and continue throughout the Old Testament, including the prophetic books.

2. Both stories involve a covenant relationship with God, a designated dwelling place, and a mandate. However, **both Adam and Eve and the nation of Israel failed to keep the covenant**, leading to their exile from the land and God's presence.
3. Because Israel was chosen as God's means of restoring all of creation, their restoration becomes the key to understanding how God plans to bring about restoration to the entire world. **Restoring Israel is God's means of restoring all creation.**
4. The prophets envision God gathering his scattered people, renewing their relationship with him, and increasing their numbers. For example, in **Ezekiel 37, God brings dead bones back to life**, symbolizing the restoration of the people.
5. The "new covenant" implies a renewed and internalized relationship with God where God's law will be written on their hearts. Unlike the old covenant, which was frequently broken by the people, **the new covenant will be unbreakable.**
6. The return to the land is often depicted as a **recreation or new creation**, with the land transformed to an Eden-like state, echoing the conditions of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Israel's exile was seen as a return to chaos, so their return is a restoration to a fruitful, blessed place.
7. The restored temple represents **God's dwelling with His people**, similar to how God resided with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The river that flows from the temple brings life to all creation, reflecting the water in the Garden.
8. The Davidic king is seen as **God's representative on earth**, who will rule over Israel and ultimately spread God's sovereignty throughout all of creation. This fulfills God's mandate given in Genesis.
9. The "son of man" figure in Daniel 7 is given universal dominion and kingship, expanding on the Davidic king theme. This figure is **a vice-regent of God with power over all people**, symbolizing the ultimate fulfillment of God's kingdom.
10. When God's kingdom is restored, the **blessings of salvation will flow to all nations**, with Israel becoming a light to the world. Creation will be renewed, the covenant will be restored, the temple will be rebuilt, and the Davidic king will reign, thus fulfilling God's original intentions from Genesis.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the relationship between the themes of land, temple, and covenant in the prophetic books. How do these themes intersect to portray the hope of restoration for Israel and all of creation?
2. Discuss the concept of the "new covenant" as it appears in the prophetic literature. How does the new covenant address the shortcomings of the old covenant, and what does it suggest about the nature of God's relationship with his people?
3. Compare and contrast the prophetic visions of restoration with the original creation account in Genesis 1 and 2. In what ways do the prophetic visions echo, expand upon, or transform the creation narrative?
4. Explore the role of the Davidic king in the prophetic texts. How is the figure of the king portrayed, and what does the expectation of a restored kingship indicate about God's plan for the world?
5. How do the prophets' expectations, as discussed in the lecture, lay the groundwork for the narrative in the New Testament? Discuss how the New Testament addresses the questions left by the prophets.

Glossary

Covenant: A formal, binding agreement between two parties, in the context of the Bible, often between God and his people, defining the terms of their relationship and mutual obligations.

Davidic King: The descendant of King David who, according to prophecy, will rule over God's people and spread God's rule throughout the world. The Davidic line represents the ideal of God-ordained kingship.

Exile: The forced removal of a people from their homeland. In the Old Testament, this refers primarily to the Babylonian exile of the Israelites.

Garden of Eden: The original sanctuary and dwelling place of God with humanity, as depicted in Genesis. It symbolizes a state of perfect harmony and blessing.

Kingship: The concept of ruling authority, particularly God's rule over his creation, and the role of human vice-regents in representing God's rule.

Land: A gracious gift from God, representing a place of blessing and the fulfillment of divine promises. The Promised Land in the Old Testament is a central aspect of the covenant relationship.

New Covenant: A renewed covenant with God, promised by the prophets, that would be unbreakable and would involve internalizing God's law. It would rectify the failure of the old covenant through forgiveness and grace.

People of God: God's chosen people, initially Israel, who are called to reflect God's glory and his rule to the entire creation.

Prophets: Individuals inspired by God to communicate his messages, often including warnings, judgments, and promises of future restoration.

Restoration: The act of returning something to its original or intended state. In the Bible, this often refers to the restoration of Israel and all of creation to their intended state of perfect relationship with God.

Son of Man: A figure in Daniel 7 who is given universal dominion and kingship, often seen as a messianic figure.

Temple: A place of worship and sanctuary, seen as a symbolic representation of God's dwelling place among his people. The temple is also linked to the Garden of Eden as a sacred space where heaven and earth meet.

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

FAQ: Key Themes of the Old Testament Prophets

1. **What are the five major themes that the prophets address, and how do these themes relate to the broader storyline of the Bible?**
2. The prophets focus on five interconnected themes: God's people, the covenant, the land (and creation), the temple (or God's dwelling place), and kingship. These themes trace back to the creation narrative in Genesis 1-2, where God established a relationship with humanity in a blessed environment. They continue through the history of Israel, and into the prophets who anticipate their restoration. The prophets believe these themes will be fulfilled when Israel is restored from exile, echoing the original divine intention for creation. The failure of Adam and Eve, and Israel, to keep their relationship with God causes the need for restoration. The prophets believe this restoration will restore the original intention for a blessed humanity.
3. **How did Israel's actions mirror the failure of Adam and Eve, and what was the consequence?**
4. Just as Adam and Eve broke their covenant with God in the Garden of Eden, Israel failed to keep their covenant through idolatry and sin. This resulted in their exile from the promised land and from God's presence. The prophets see this as a parallel to Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden, emphasizing how humanity's sin disrupts God's original plan for creation, and further driving the narrative need for restoration. This means that God has to restore both Israel and Creation.
5. **What is the primary message of the prophets regarding the restoration of God's people?**
6. The prophets consistently envision a time when God will gather His scattered people back together, restoring them to a right relationship with Himself. This restoration involves a new creation, akin to God breathing life into lifeless bodies (Ezekiel 37), and a renewal of their identity as His chosen people in covenant. They will be fruitful and multiply, as was originally intended in the creation narrative in Genesis 1.

7. **How do the prophets describe the "new covenant" that God promises?**
8. The prophets promise a new covenant that will supersede the failed Mosaic covenant. This new covenant will not be broken, and will be characterized by God's law being written on the hearts of His people (Jeremiah 31), and a complete forgiveness of their sins. This is designed to resolve Israel's sin problem, and restore their relationship with God to full strength. This covenant of peace will secure God's presence with his people.
9. **What significance does the restoration of the land hold in the prophetic vision, and how does it relate to the Garden of Eden?**

The return to the land is not just about reclaiming territory; it signifies a restoration to Eden-like conditions of fruitfulness, blessing, and God's presence. The land is seen as God's gracious gift, and is tied into both the promise made to Abraham, and to God's intention to have his people dwell in a place of blessing. The prophets connect Israel's exile to a state of "de-creation" or chaos, so their return is viewed as a new creative act, with a renewed, fruitful, and habitable land that is reminiscent of the Garden of Eden (Isaiah 51). This restoration of the land also suggests the means by which the cosmos will be restored.

1. **How do the prophets envision the restored temple, and what is its connection to the Garden of Eden?**
2. The prophets foresee a rebuilt temple that will be the place of God's dwelling and presence with His people. The temple is not just a building, but is a restoration of the original design of the Garden of Eden as a place where God and humanity can reside together. The description of the restored temple often includes imagery of water flowing from the temple to give life, and flourishing trees, reflecting the fertile and life-giving characteristics of Eden. God's presence enters the temple from the east, which is where Adam and Eve were expelled.
3. **What is the role of the Davidic king in the prophetic vision of restoration?**
4. The Davidic king is central to the prophetic expectation of restoration. The prophets believe that God will restore his promise to David, that his descendants will have a continual throne. The Davidic king represents God's rule and sovereignty over Israel, which they believe will ultimately extend throughout all of creation. The King's rule was meant to fulfill God's initial intention for humanity from Genesis 1 and 2. The prophets envision this king not just ruling Israel, but having universal dominion over all nations, as God's vice-regent.

5. **How do the prophets anticipate the restoration of Israel impacting the rest of the nations and the entire world?**
6. The prophets envision that the restoration of Israel—their return to the land, covenant with God, reign of the Davidic king, and presence of God in the temple—will be the means by which salvation and blessing will flow to all nations. Once God's people are restored in fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham and Creation, the nations will recognize God's sovereignty. The entire creation will be renewed, fulfilling God's original intentions for His people and His creation. Thus the restoration of Israel is the means by which the world is ultimately restored. This is all connected to the overall story line that the entire cosmos is meant to be a place of God's dwelling.