

Dr. Dave Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 6, General Epistles and Revelation 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 6, General Epistles and Revelation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture series examines the storyline of the Bible through five recurring themes: **covenant, God's people, the temple, the land, and kingship**. The lecturer traces these themes throughout the general epistles of the New Testament, showing how they are either explicitly stated or implicitly assumed. He then demonstrates how these themes culminate in the apocalyptic vision of Revelation, specifically chapters 21 and 22. This final vision depicts the **consummation of God's plan**, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies and showcasing a new heaven and new earth where God dwells with his people. The lecture concludes by highlighting how Revelation provides a comprehensive resolution to the overarching biblical narrative.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 6 – 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 main themes and ideas from the provided lecture excerpts on the Book of Revelation, focusing on the five core themes: covenant, people of God, temple, land, and kingship:

Briefing Document: Dr. Mathewson's Lecture on Revelation

Introduction:

This briefing document summarizes Dr. Dave Mathewson's sixth and final lecture on the storyline of the Bible, focusing on the book of Revelation. Dr. Mathewson traces five core themes throughout the Bible: covenant, people of God, temple, land, and kingship. He argues that these themes, present in both the Old and New Testaments, reach their climax in the final vision of Revelation, particularly chapters 21 and 22. The lecture emphasizes how the "already and not yet" tension is resolved in Revelation, showcasing the consummation of God's plan inaugurated through Jesus.

Key Themes & Concepts:

1. The General Epistles & The Five Themes (Prior to Revelation):

- **Purpose:** Before delving into Revelation, Dr. Mathewson demonstrates that the five main themes continue to be present in the general epistles, illustrating how the authors use or assume them to achieve their purposes.
- **People of God:** 1 Peter 2:9-10 applies Old Testament language about Israel as God's people to the church, portraying the church as the ultimate fulfillment of the promise of the restoration of God's people. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people..."
- **Covenant:** Hebrews uses Jeremiah 31 to show that Jesus' death inaugurates a new covenant, superseding the old one. "...I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God; they shall be my people." The Holy Spirit is also associated with this new covenant.
- **Kingship:** Hebrews 1 draws on Psalms 2 and 110, and 2 Samuel 7, presenting Jesus as the Davidic King, God's son, and vice-regent. The author also connects this kingship with creation through Psalm 8, indicating that Jesus begins to fulfill humanity's role as rulers of creation. "You have crowned them with glory and honor, subjecting all things under their feet."

- **Temple:** 1 Peter 2 depicts the people themselves as the "spiritual house" or temple, where "spiritual sacrifices" of worship and obedience are offered, rather than a physical structure. Hebrews 10 explains how the new covenant gives believers direct access to God, with the church being the temple where God's presence resides.
- **Land/Creation:** 1 Peter 1:3-4 emphasizes the inheritance, which is seen as an ultimate fulfillment of inheriting land, now as a heavenly inheritance. Other passages (1 John 2:17, James 1:18) show the decreation of the present world, replaced by new creation. Hebrews 3 and 4 connect the "rest" to both salvation in Christ and the promised land, while also linking back to the original rest in creation (Genesis). "For we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said."

2. Climax of Themes in Revelation 21-22:

- **Revelation as Climax:** The book of Revelation, particularly chapters 21 and 22, is presented as the climax of the biblical story, where all five themes reach their fullest expression. This is the "finale" of the story.
- **Consummation:** Revelation goes beyond the "already" focus of the general epistles and describes the "not yet," offering the most detailed vision of consummation in the whole of Scripture.

3. Detailed Examination of Themes in Revelation 21-22:

- **People of God:** The consummated people of God are depicted as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev 21:2, 9). This is both Old and New Testament imagery.
- The New Jerusalem is not primarily a physical city but represents the perfected people of God, including both Old Testament Israel (12 tribes on the gates) and the New Testament church (12 apostles on the foundations).
- This people of God becomes a light to the nations, bringing their glory into it (Rev 21:23-24).
- **Covenant:** The covenant is consummated in the new creation, with the explicit statement that "the dwelling of God is among mortals" (Rev 21:3). This echoes the covenant formula from Ezekiel 37:27, "I will be their God, and they will be my people."
- **Land/Creation:** A "new heaven and a new earth" replace the old creation (Rev 21:1).

- The language of inheritance shows God's people will inherit the new creation itself (Rev 21:7).
- The imagery of the "river of the water of life" and "tree of life" harkens back to the Garden of Eden (Rev 22:1-2) and also borrows from Ezekiel 47, indicating a return to Edenic conditions.
- The absence of the sea (Rev 21:1) symbolizes the removal of evil, chaos, and all obstacles from God's presence. It also evokes the new exodus theme from Isaiah, where God dried up the sea for his people to enter their inheritance. "Was it not you who dried up the sea...who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over?" (Isaiah 51:9-10)
- **Temple:** While traditional apocalyptic visions envision a restored physical temple, John reports seeing no temple in the New Jerusalem because God and the Lamb are the temple (Rev 21:22). The whole city is seen as infused with God's presence.
- The city, which represents the people, is described using temple imagery - it is measured (as the temple is in Ezekiel), its streets are gold, and it is cube shaped (Rev 21:16,18). All temple imagery points to the reality that the perfected people are God's dwelling place.
- **Kingship:** The throne of God and the Lamb are in the city, signifying the culmination of God's rule (Rev 22:3).
- God's people will reign with him, fulfilling the original mandate of humanity in Genesis to fill the earth with God's glory (Rev 22:5)

4. Theological Significance:

- **Fulfillment of God's Plan:** Revelation provides the final piece of the puzzle, showing how God's intentions from Genesis 1-2 are ultimately fulfilled, despite the setbacks in the Old Testament.
- **Redemption & Restoration:** The vision in Revelation is not just about the end of the world but about the full redemption and restoration of God's people and creation. The story that began in Genesis is concluded in Revelation.
- **Consummated Kingdom:** The themes of covenant, people of God, temple, land, and kingship are all brought together, emphasizing that the kingdom of God is not just a future hope but a present reality that is moving toward its ultimate consummation.

Conclusion:

Dr. Mathewson's lecture demonstrates that the book of Revelation, specifically chapters 21 and 22, is the climax of the biblical narrative. Through the lens of five key themes, Revelation showcases the consummation of God's plan for his people and his creation. It brings together threads from throughout the Bible, resolving the tension between what has already been inaugurated by Christ and what is still to come. It is the culmination of the story begun in Genesis.

This briefing document should provide a thorough overview of the main ideas and themes presented in the lecture excerpts.

4. Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 6, General Epistles and Revelation

New Testament Themes & Revelation Study Guide

Quiz

1. How does 1 Peter 2:9-10 apply Old Testament language about Israel to the church? This passage uses terms like "chosen race," "royal priesthood," and "holy nation," which were originally used to describe Israel, and now applies them to the church, identifying the church as the new, restored people of God. The church is presented as the ultimate fulfillment of the promises given to Israel.
2. According to Hebrews, how does Jesus inaugurate the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah? Hebrews emphasizes that Jesus' death as a sacrifice fulfills the Old Testament sacrificial system, and this action inaugurates the new covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31. Jesus is presented as the new priest in a heavenly temple, ministering under this new covenant.
3. How does Hebrews connect Jesus to both Davidic kingship and creation? Hebrews draws from Psalms to present Jesus as both the Davidic king (vice-regent) who will rule over God's people and the fulfillment of God's original intention for humanity described in Psalm 8. Jesus is seen as the means through which humanity will fulfill their destiny to rule over all of creation.
4. In 1 Peter, how is the concept of the temple reinterpreted in relation to the people? 1 Peter uses temple language to refer to the people themselves rather than a physical structure. The church is presented as a spiritual temple built of living stones, offering spiritual sacrifices through Jesus Christ.
5. What is the significance of the "inheritance" mentioned in 1 Peter 1:3-4? The "inheritance" in 1 Peter 1:3-4 refers to a heavenly inheritance that is imperishable and kept in heaven for believers. This is seen as the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament promise of inheriting the land, now understood as the blessings of salvation and the new creation inaugurated in Jesus Christ.
6. How does Revelation 21-22 depict the consummated people of God? Revelation 21-22 depicts the consummated people of God as a bride, the New Jerusalem, which is not a physical city but represents the perfected people. It incorporates both the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles, signifying a continuity between the Old and New Testament peoples of God.

7. How does the theme of covenant reach its climax in Revelation 21? In Revelation 21:3, the voice from the throne declares that God's dwelling is with humanity, they will be His people, and God will be with them. This echoes the covenant formula found in the Old Testament, marking the climactic fulfillment of the covenant in the perfected people of God.
8. What is the significance of the new creation in Revelation 21:1, and how does it connect with the Old Testament? Revelation 21:1 depicts a new heaven and a new earth, fulfilling the prophecy from Isaiah 65 and alluding back to the creation narrative of Genesis 1 and 2. This new creation is portrayed as a gift and a blessing for God's people, replacing the old creation.
9. Why does John say there is no sea in the new creation of Revelation? John's removal of the sea in the new creation is symbolic, indicating that all chaos, evil, and trouble opposed to God's purposes and His people have been eliminated. This imagery draws on both Old Testament symbolism of the sea as chaos and the narrative of the Exodus as a new creation.
10. How is the concept of the temple transformed in Revelation 21-22? In Revelation 21-22, John states there is no physical temple because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The entire city, which is the people, becomes the temple infused with God's presence, a completion of the New Testament authors' theme that believers are the temple of God's Holy Spirit.

Essay Questions

1. Trace the development of the "people of God" theme from the Old Testament to its climax in Revelation, focusing on how different New Testament authors contribute to this theme's understanding.
2. Analyze how the concept of "covenant" evolves throughout the New Testament, using examples from Hebrews and Revelation to show the progression from promise to fulfillment.
3. Compare and contrast the use of "temple" imagery in the Pauline epistles, the general epistles (specifically 1 Peter), and Revelation, highlighting the differences in how this theme is applied to the church.
4. Discuss the interconnectedness of the themes of "land" and "creation" throughout the source material, explaining how the New Testament writers connect these themes to the promises given to Israel and to the ultimate consummation of God's purposes.
5. Examine the theme of "kingship" throughout the lecture, noting how Jesus is portrayed as a Davidic king, and how this theme extends to the role of God's people in the new creation.

Glossary of Key Terms

Apocalyptic Vision: A genre of literature characterized by symbolic, prophetic revelations of the end times, often involving visions of heaven, hell, and the final judgment, such as found in the book of Revelation.

Covenant: A sacred agreement between God and humanity, which defines their relationship, often involving promises and responsibilities, such as the new covenant established through Jesus.

Davidic Kingship: The concept of a ruler from the lineage of King David who would establish an everlasting kingdom, fulfilled in Jesus Christ according to the New Testament.

Decreation: The undoing or passing away of the current world as it is, often in anticipation of a new creation.

General Epistles: Letters of the New Testament that are not attributed to Paul, including Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude.

Inaugurated: The beginning or commencement of a process or era, often referring to the already present but not yet fully realized aspects of the kingdom of God in Jesus.

New Creation: The renewal and transformation of all things after the final judgment, resulting in a new heaven and a new earth, often associated with the end times and the establishment of God's eternal kingdom.

People of God: The community chosen by God as his own, encompassing Israel in the Old Testament and the church in the New Testament, which culminates in the consummated people of God in Revelation.

Royal Priesthood: A term applied to the church, indicating their role as both rulers and mediators before God, fulfilling God's intention for a kingdom of priests.

Temple: In the Old Testament, a physical structure where God's presence was believed to dwell; in the New Testament, the concept is reinterpreted to include the church as a living temple indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and ultimately, the city of God in the new creation.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Session 6, General Epistles and Revelation, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What are the five main themes that recur throughout the Bible, and how do they appear in the general epistles (Hebrews through Jude)?**
- The five main themes are: covenant, people of God, temple, land/creation, and kingship. In the general epistles, these themes are either explicitly addressed or assumed by the authors as part of their overall message. For example, 1 Peter uses Old Testament language applied to Israel to describe the Church as the new people of God. Hebrews develops the theme of Jesus inaugurating the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah. Jesus is presented as the Davidic king, fulfilling the promises of a vice-regent who will extend God's rule throughout creation. The church is portrayed as a spiritual temple, where sacrifices are now praise, worship, and obedience. Finally, the concept of land is shifted to an inheritance in the new creation. These themes, though adapted, continue to be vital in the general epistles, serving the purpose and needs of the authors.
- **How is the concept of the "people of God" developed in the New Testament, particularly in the general epistles?**
- In the Old Testament, the people of God were primarily identified with Israel. In the New Testament, and especially in the general epistles, this concept expands to include the church. 1 Peter 2:9-10 explicitly applies language from the Old Testament that was used to describe Israel to the church, portraying them as the restored people of God. This suggests a continuity between the Old Testament and New Testament understanding of God's chosen people, with the church now seen as the ultimate fulfillment of the promise of a restored people of God. The theme is connected to the new covenant which establishes the people as God's own, and their destiny is to be a light to the nations.

- **What does the New Testament mean by the "new covenant," and how is it linked to Jesus Christ?**
- The "new covenant" is a concept introduced by the prophet Jeremiah, where God promises to establish a different covenant than the one made with Israel at Sinai. Hebrews references Jeremiah 31, where God states He will put His laws in people's minds and hearts, He will be their God and they will be His people, and their sins will be forgiven. The book of Hebrews particularly highlights that Jesus' death inaugurates this new covenant. His sacrifice is the basis of the new covenant, replacing the old covenant. The Holy Spirit is associated with the new covenant, as a gift associated with the establishment of God's covenant. Through Christ, people are now able to enter into this new covenant with God.
- **How is Jesus portrayed as the Davidic king, and what implications does this have for the believers?**
- Jesus is consistently portrayed as the fulfillment of the promises made to David of a king who would reign forever. Hebrews 1 connects Jesus to Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7, linking Jesus with the Davidic covenant formula. He is depicted as the Son of David who will extend God's rule throughout the creation. Jesus' kingship is associated with his suffering, death, and resurrection that now brings about our salvation. Moreover, as believers, followers of Christ are considered a "royal priesthood," reflecting the kingdom aspect of Jesus' rule. Believers participate in this rule, fulfilling God's original intention for humanity to spread His rule throughout creation.
- **What is the significance of temple language in the New Testament, and how does it relate to the church?**

Temple language is used metaphorically in the New Testament, with the emphasis shifting from a physical structure to the people of God themselves. 1 Peter 2 emphasizes that believers are "living stones" being built into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices. Hebrews further presents Jesus as a high priest ministering in a heavenly temple. The focus of the temple moves from a physical place to the people of God where God now resides through the Holy Spirit. The temple imagery also emphasizes believers' access to God through Jesus.

- **How does the theme of "land" or "creation" develop in the New Testament, particularly in relation to the promised land and the new creation?**
- In the Old Testament, the land given to Israel was a place of blessing and God's presence. The New Testament reinterprets this concept, emphasizing the inaugurated new creation. 1 Peter refers to an imperishable, undefiled inheritance kept in heaven that is connected to the new creation that started with the resurrection of Jesus. The present world is seen as passing away in anticipation of the new creation. The rest promised to Israel in the land now finds its ultimate fulfillment in resting in Christ, and in the final state in the new creation. The promise of land is expanded to encompass the entirety of the new creation, with believers inheriting the new heavens and new earth.
- **How do the themes of the Bible find their climax in the book of Revelation, particularly chapters 21 and 22?**
- Revelation 21 and 22 present the climax of the biblical story. All the major themes, covenant, people of God, temple, kingship and land/creation, reach their consummation. The people of God are depicted as the bride of the Lamb and the New Jerusalem, the city that represents God's people, combining both Old and New Testament peoples. The new covenant is expressed by the dwelling of God among his people. A new heaven and a new earth is described, fulfilling the theme of the land, and is seen as a return to Eden. God Himself and the Lamb are the temple, with the city itself taking on temple characteristics. Finally, the theme of kingship is fulfilled, with God's people reigning forever in the new creation. The removal of the sea symbolizes the removal of chaos and evil, that is consistent with God's new creation.
- **What is the significance of the absence of a physical temple in the New Jerusalem described in Revelation, and what does the city represent instead?**
- In Revelation 21:22, John explicitly states that he saw no temple in the New Jerusalem, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. This absence is highly significant, as it departs from Old Testament prophetic visions. The city itself represents God's perfected and consummated people. With the removal of sin and evil, a separate physical temple is no longer needed. The entire city is infused with God's presence, taking on temple-like characteristics such as being shaped like a cube, and being made of gold. In this way, the New Jerusalem represents the culmination of God's intention to dwell among His people, where the people are the temple of God.