

Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 14, People of God (NT), Part 2 Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Mathewson, NT Theology, Session 14, People of God (NT), Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mathewson's lecture explores the concept of the "People of God" as it develops throughout the New Testament, building upon Old Testament foundations. He analyzes passages from 1 Peter, Hebrews, Ephesians, and Revelation, noting both **continuity and discontinuity** between Old Testament Israel and the church. **Continuity exists in the fulfillment of restoration promises and the establishment of a new covenant, while discontinuity is seen in the creation of a new humanity and the reconciliation of both Jews and Gentiles to God.** Mathewson also touches on various theological perspectives, such as dispensationalism and replacement theology, ultimately advocating for a balanced view that recognizes the church as both a continuation and a renewal of Israel. He concludes by discussing the implications of this understanding for individualism, mission, and the modern state of Israel.

2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathewson, NT Theology, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → NT Introduction → NT Theology).



**Mathewson_NTThe
ology_Session14.mp**

3. Briefing Document: Mathewson, NT Theology, Session 14, People of God (NT), Part 2

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. David Mathewson's lecture on "The People of God in the New Testament, Part 2."

Briefing Document: The People of God in the New Testament

Source: Excerpts from "Mathewson_NTTTheo_EN_Session14.pdf" (Dr. David L. Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 14)

Main Themes:

- **Continuity and Discontinuity:** The central argument revolves around understanding the relationship between the Old Testament people of God (Israel) and the New Testament people of God (the Church) as exhibiting both continuity *and* discontinuity. The Church does not simply *replace* Israel, but represents a renewed, reconstituted, and expanded Israel.
- **Fulfillment in Christ:** Jesus Christ is presented as the embodiment of true Israel and the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. Membership in the Church, through faith in Christ, makes believers part of this renewed people of God.
- **Corporate Identity vs. Individualism:** The lecture emphasizes the corporate nature of God's people, contrasting this with the individualistic tendencies prevalent in contemporary culture. Being part of the Church, the community of God's people, is an essential aspect of experiencing salvation.
- **Motivation for Mission:** Understanding the Church as God's people, drawn from every tribe, language, and nation, provides a strong motivation for engaging in mission work to bring about this transcultural community.
- **The Modern State of Israel:** Mathewson expresses a nuanced view, suggesting that while the modern state of Israel may be a testament to God's faithfulness and love for his people, it is *not* necessarily the direct fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Fulfillment is primarily found in Christ and the new people of God created through Him.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **1 Peter 2:9 & Exodus 19:6:** Peter applies the language used to describe Israel in Exodus 19:6 ("a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession") to the Gentile Christians in the early church. This highlights the continuity between the Old and New Testament people of God. "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his wonderful light."
- **Hebrews 3 & 4:** The warning passage in Hebrews about entering God's rest assumes a continuity between the Israelites who failed to enter the Promised Land and the New Testament believers who are called to diligently enter God's rest.
- **Ephesians 2:11-22:** Paul describes the Church as the unification of Jew and Gentile into "one new humanity" through Christ. This passage highlights both continuity (references to the citizenship of Israel, allusions to Isaiah) and discontinuity (the "new humanity," the removal of the dividing wall of hostility). "His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace."
- **Revelation 1:6:** John refers to the churches in Asia Minor as "a kingdom of priests," drawing on Exodus 19:6 and indicating that the Church is fulfilling God's intention for Israel. "...and has made us to be a kingdom of priests, to serve his God and Father..."
- **Revelation 7:** The 144,000 are interpreted not as literal, ethnic Israel, but as symbolic of the new people of God, the Church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles. The "great multitude that could not be numbered" is linked to the promises made to Abraham about his numerous descendants, fulfilled in the transcultural Church.
- **Revelation 21:** The New Jerusalem is symbolic of the people of God, the bride of the Lamb. The gates with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel and the foundations with the names of the 12 apostles symbolize the continuity and discontinuity between Israel and the Church in the consummated kingdom. "The dwelling places, God's dwelling is among people. He will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them."

- **Charles Scobie's Perspective:** Mathewson quotes Charles Scobie who argues that, "the church is the new people of God because it has been brought into existence by God's unique and decisive act in the Christ event...But it is also in continuity with the Israel of Old Testament times...It is Israel insofar as it stands in continuity with the Old Testament people of God, but it is new insofar as it is the eschatological community." This encapsulates the core theme of continuity and discontinuity.
- **Critique of Dispensationalism and Replacement Theology:** Mathewson positions his argument in contrast to both dispensationalism (which emphasizes discontinuity) and replacement theology (which suggests the Church completely replaces Israel). He advocates for a balanced view recognizing both aspects.
- **Church as a corrective:** Mathewson argues that the Theology of the people of God, "should provide a corrective to especially our American individualism or any culture that surprises and stresses the individual."
- **Humility:** Dr. Mathewson argues that, "a biblical understanding of the church should engender humility."

Implications:

- Understanding the Church as God's people should counteract individualism and promote a stronger sense of community and belonging.
- The vision of a transcultural, international Church should fuel a passion for mission work.
- The relationship between the Church and the modern state of Israel should be viewed with nuance, recognizing God's faithfulness while maintaining that ultimate fulfillment is found in Christ and the new people of God.

This briefing document should provide a comprehensive overview of the key points made in Dr. Mathewson's lecture excerpt.

4. Study Guide: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 14, People of God (NT), Part 2

The People of God in the New Testament: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does Peter in 1 Peter 2 apply Old Testament language about Israel to the church?
2. What warning does the author of Hebrews give in chapters 3 and 4 regarding "rest"?
3. According to Charles Scobie, how is the church both continuous and discontinuous with Old Testament Israel?
4. In Ephesians 2, how does Paul describe the inclusion of Gentiles into the people of God?
5. What is significant about the phrase "one new humanity" in Ephesians 2?
6. How does the author of Revelation describe the church in Revelation 1:6?
7. Explain the symbolism of the 144,000 in Revelation 7.
8. What is the significance of the "great multitude" in Revelation 7?
9. How is the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 connected to both the Old Testament and the New Testament?
10. According to the lecture, how should an understanding of the church as the people of God impact our understanding of individualism?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Peter applies titles and descriptions originally used for Israel, such as "chosen people," "royal priesthood," and "holy nation," to the Gentile Christians in Asia Minor. This suggests the church is a continuation and fulfillment of Old Testament Israel, inheriting its identity and purpose.
2. The author warns against repeating the mistake of their ancestors who failed to enter the promised land and experience God's rest due to disobedience and

unbelief. He emphasizes the importance of diligence in pursuing God's promises and entering into His rest.

3. Scobie states the church is the new people of God because it was brought into existence by the death and resurrection of Christ, making it a unique and decisive act of God. However, it's also in continuity with the Israel of Old Testament times, inheriting its promises and prerogatives.
4. Paul describes the inclusion of Gentiles as being brought near to God through Jesus Christ, having been previously separated from the promises and covenants of Israel. They are now united with Jewish believers into one new humanity, sharing in Israel's blessings and citizenship.
5. "One new humanity" signifies more than just adding Gentiles to Israel; it represents a new creation where both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God through Christ. This emphasizes a transformative change and a shared identity as the eschatological community of God.
6. The author of Revelation describes the churches in Asia as having been made "a kingdom of priests" through Jesus Christ. This echoes Exodus 19:6 and indicates the church now fulfills Israel's intended role of mediating God's presence to the world.
7. The 144,000 probably symbolizes the new people of God, the church, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. The number 12 is symbolic of the people of God based on the 12 tribes and 12 apostles, and 12x12x1000 means the complete fulfillment of God's intention for Israel.
8. The great multitude, being from every nation, tribe, and language, symbolizes the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would be too numerous to count. It also emphasizes that this promise is fulfilled not just in ethnic Israel but in a diverse group united in Christ.
9. The New Jerusalem includes the names of the 12 tribes of Israel on its gates, symbolizing continuity with the Old Testament people of God, and the names of the 12 apostles on its foundations, representing the church. This shows the consummated people of God consisting of Jews and Gentiles.
10. It provides a corrective to individualism because God's plan has always been for a corporate identity. God's intention is never for someone to live life as an individual, but to experience salvation and the blessings of the new covenant by belonging to the new people of God.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the concepts of continuity and discontinuity between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church, providing specific examples from the assigned reading.
2. Analyze the use of Old Testament imagery and language in the book of Revelation to describe the people of God, focusing on Revelation chapters 1, 7, and 21.
3. Compare and contrast the dispensational and covenantal perspectives on the relationship between Israel and the church, as presented in the lecture.
4. Explain how an understanding of the church as the "people of God" should shape a Christian's understanding of mission and evangelism.
5. Critically evaluate the lecture's perspective on the modern-day state of Israel in light of biblical prophecy and the New Testament's understanding of the people of God.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **People of God:** A community chosen by God to be in covenant relationship with Him, marked by faithfulness, obedience, and a shared identity and purpose.
- **Continuity:** The aspects of the relationship between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church that demonstrate unbroken connections, shared promises, and fulfillment.
- **Discontinuity:** The aspects of the relationship between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church that demonstrate newness, transformation, and unique characteristics of the church distinct from Israel.
- **Royal Priesthood:** A description of the people of God, both in the Old Testament (Israel) and the New Testament (the church), indicating their role in mediating God's presence and blessings to the world.
- **New Covenant:** The covenant established through Jesus Christ, fulfilling and superseding the Old Covenant, characterized by inward transformation, forgiveness of sins, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

- **New Humanity:** The unified body of believers, both Jewish and Gentile, created in Christ, representing a new creation and reconciliation with God and with one another.
- **Eschatological Community:** The community of believers living in the "end times," experiencing the initial fulfillment of God's promises and awaiting their ultimate consummation.
- **Dispensationalism:** A theological system that emphasizes the distinct administrations or dispensations in God's dealings with humanity, often stressing discontinuity between Israel and the church.
- **Covenant Theology:** A theological system that emphasizes the unity of God's covenantal relationship with humanity throughout history, stressing continuity between Israel and the church.
- **Replacement Theology (Supersessionism):** The belief that the church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people, inheriting all of Israel's promises and forfeiting its blessings due to disobedience.
- **Restoration of Israel:** The prophetic promise of God restoring Israel to its land and to a right relationship with Him, interpreted differently within various theological frameworks.
- **New Jerusalem:** The symbolic representation of the consummated people of God in the new creation, described in Revelation 21-22, embodying God's dwelling with His people.

5. FAQs on Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 14, People of God (NT), Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: The People of God in the New Testament

1. How does the New Testament concept of the "people of God" relate to the Old Testament nation of Israel?

The New Testament presents the "people of God" with both continuity and discontinuity with Old Testament Israel. Continuity is seen in the fulfillment of Old Testament promises, such as restoration and the new covenant, in the New Testament community, the Church. Discontinuity arises because the Church comprises both Jews and Gentiles, forming a new humanity reconciled to God through Christ. This is not simply a continuation of ethnic Israel but a renewed and reconstituted community centered on faith in Jesus.

2. What is the significance of 1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6 in understanding the "people of God"?

Both passages draw on Exodus 19:6, where God calls Israel "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter applies this language to Gentile Christians, indicating they are now a "chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession." Revelation 1:6 similarly describes the Church as "a kingdom of priests." These passages show the Church embodies and fulfills God's intention for Israel: mediating God's presence to the world and worshiping Him, but it is also expanded to include Gentiles.

3. How do Hebrews 3 and 4 contribute to the understanding of the "people of God"?

Hebrews 3 and 4 draw a parallel between the Israelites who failed to enter God's rest in the Promised Land and the New Testament believers. The author warns his readers not to repeat the same mistake. This passage assumes a continuity between the Old and New Testament "people of God," highlighting that God's rest, both physical and spiritual, is still available to believers who remain obedient and faithful.

4. In Ephesians 2:11-22, how does Paul describe the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers within the "people of God"?

Paul emphasizes that through Christ, the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles has been broken down. Gentiles, who were once "separated from the promises of God," have been brought near through Christ and incorporated into the "citizenship of Israel." This results in the creation of "one new humanity" out of the two groups. This unity fulfills the restoration promises of Isaiah, emphasizing both the continuity with Israel and the newness of the unified body in Christ.

5. What is the significance of the numbers 144,000 and the "great multitude" in Revelation 7 in relation to the people of God?

The 144,000, drawn from the twelve tribes of Israel, are likely symbolic of the complete and restored people of God. This imagery echoes the restoration promises of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The "great multitude that could not be numbered," composed of people from every nation, tribe, language, and tongue, represents the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would be innumerable. Together, they symbolize the true people of God, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, worshiping before God's throne.

6. How does Revelation 21 describe the consummation of the "people of God" in the New Jerusalem?

Revelation 21 depicts the New Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God among people, fulfilling the new covenant promise that God will dwell with them and they will be His people. The gates of the city bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, while the foundations bear the names of the twelve apostles, symbolizing the union of Israel and the Church in the consummated people of God. This imagery emphasizes the continuity with Israel and the fulfillment of God's covenant promises in a transcultural and international community.

7. How does understanding the church as the "people of God" challenge individualism and motivate mission?

Seeing the church as God's people corrects the overemphasis on individualism by highlighting God's intention for a corporate identity and community. Salvation includes belonging to the new people of God, fostering fellowship and mutual support. Furthermore, understanding that God is creating a people from every tribe, language, and nation motivates mission. This is not only about saving individuals but also about participating in God's plan to create a unified, transcultural people in covenant relationship with Him.

8. What are the implications of the "people of God" theme for understanding the modern-day state of Israel?

The modern-day state of Israel is not necessarily a direct fulfillment of biblical prophecy. The fulfillment of restoration promises primarily takes place in Jesus Christ and the creation of a new people of God, the Church. However, the existence of modern-day Israel testifies to God's faithfulness and love for His people. Any future for national or ethnic Israel will ultimately be realized through faith in Jesus Christ, incorporating them into the true people of God and allowing them to experience the blessings of the new covenant.