

Dr. Dave Mathewson, Storyline of the Bible – Israel

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Abstract

This lecture examines how God's original creation mandate in Genesis 1–3 is funneled through the nation of Israel, the Mosaic covenant, and the Davidic covenant. It traces key thematic threads—including sacred space (Tabernacle and Temple as Edenic replicas), land, fruitfulness, covenantal obedience, and kingship (the Davidic monarch as God's vice-regent)—through the Pentateuchal narratives and Old Testament history. Ultimately, Israel's repeated failure to keep the covenant results in exile from the land, echoing Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. This leaves a central narrative tension regarding how God will resolve human sinfulness and restore His original intention for creation through future prophetic and messianic renewal.

Outline

I. Setting and Context: The Biblical Storyline from Genesis to Israel

A. Review of Genesis 1–3

1. Setting of creation and God's original covenantal intention
2. Role of humanity as God's vice-regents to spread His glory
3. The Fall, sin, and exile from the Garden of Eden

B. Calling of Abraham and Election of Israel

1. Promise of offspring, land, and covenant relationship
2. Israel designated as God's vehicle to accomplish creation's restoration

C. Role of the Mosaic Covenant

1. Framework for Israel to fulfill the Abrahamic promise and Edenic ideal

II. Pentateuchal Themes: Israel in Egypt and Deliverance

A. Fruitfulness and Multiplication in Exodus 1

1. Israel multiplying in Egypt as fulfillment of the Genesis 1–2 mandate
2. Egyptian oppression as a threat to God's purpose

B. Deliverance and the Promised Land in Exodus 3 and Deuteronomy 28

1. Divine deliverance grounded in the covenant with Abraham
2. Land described as flowing with milk and honey (Edenic fruitfulness and blessing)

3. Conditional nature of land blessing based on covenant obedience

III. Sacred Space: The Tabernacle and Temple as Eden Replicas

A. Function and Meaning of Tabernacle and Temple

1. Portable Tabernacle and permanent Temple as God's dwelling place
2. Continuation of Eden as sacred space and sanctuary

B. Architectural and Visual Parallels to Eden

1. Prominence of gold (referencing Genesis 2)
2. Carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers symbolizing paradise
3. Lampstand representing the Tree of Life
4. Cherubim guarding the Holy of Holies like Eden's entrance

C. Prophetic Echoes

1. Ezekiel 40–48 vision of temple river and fruit trees recalling Genesis 2

IV. Kingship and Vice-Regency: The Davidic Covenant

A. Israel as a Kingdom of Priests (Exodus 19:6)

1. Israel's collective mandate to represent God's rule

B. The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7)

1. Davidic king established as God's vice-regent
2. Connection to Abrahamic promises (great name, planted in the land, rest)
3. Promise of an enduring throne and father-son covenant relationship

C. Universal Scope of Royal Rule

1. Royal Psalms (Psalm 2) depicting the king ruling all creation for God

V. Disobedience, Exile, and Narrative Tension

A. Conditional Blessing and Cursing

1. Deuteronomy 28 and 1 Kings 9 warnings of destruction and scattering
2. Covenant unfaithfulness leading to loss of the land and Temple

B. Israel's Failure and Exile

1. Israel repeating the pattern of Adam and Eve's Fall
2. Removal from God's presence and destruction of Jerusalem/Temple

C. The Dual Problem and Future Prophetic Hope

1. Necessity of resolving both global human sin and Israel's unfaithfulness
2. Foundation set for Old Testament prophetic restoration (Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zechariah)
3. Ultimate fulfillment anticipated in Jesus Christ and the New Testament