

Dr. Dave Mathewson, StoryLine of the Bible, Acts & Paul

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Session 5

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Abstract

Dr. Dave Mathewson examines how the five major biblical themes—People of God, Covenant, Kingship, Temple, and Creation/Land—continue through the Book of Acts and the Pauline epistles. He demonstrates that the Old Testament promises of Israel's restoration and new creation are inaugurated through the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Jesus Christ and extended to the Church. Through the Holy Spirit, the multi-ethnic Church participates in the new covenant, functions as God's spiritual temple, and bears the fruit of the inaugurated new creation. The lecture concludes by noting that while these redemptive themes are already active in Christ and His followers, they await final consummation in the future eschatological renewal.

Outline

I. Introduction to the Storyline in Acts and Paul

- A. Recounting the five interrelated major biblical themes:
 - 1. People of God
 - 2. Covenant
 - 3. Creation and Land
 - 4. Temple
 - 5. Kingship
- B. Transition from the Gospels to the remainder of the New Testament
- C. Crucial hermeneutical distinctions for thematic fulfillment:
 - 1. Christ is the primary key to fulfillment, extending secondarily to His people (the Church)
 - 2. Eschatological tension between inaugurated fulfillment ("already") and consummated fulfillment ("not yet")

II. The Continuation of the Biblical Narrative in the Book of Acts

- A. Programmatic Foundation: Acts 1:8 and Old Testament Allusions
 - 1. Direct resonance with Isaiah's promises of restoration (Isaiah 32:15, 43:10, 49:6)
 - 2. Union of Jerusalem (Southern Kingdom) and Samaria (Northern Kingdom) as restored Israel

3. Mandate to witness to the ends of the earth fulfilling Genesis 1–2 creation purpose

B. Theme Development in Early Acts

1. Selection of the 12th apostle (Matthias) signifying the restoration of the 12 tribes of Israel
2. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the arrival of the New Covenant (Ezekiel 36–37)
3. Indwelling Spirit indicating God's presence coming to reside in His spiritual temple
4. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Pentecost representing the return of the scattered diaspora from exile

C. Growth Summaries and Narrative Progression

1. Growth and expansion notices (e.g., Acts 6:1, 6:7, 9:31) echoing Genesis 1:2 ("be fruitful and multiply")
2. Paul's missionary journeys concluding in Rome (Acts 28) carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth

III. Tracing the Five Major Themes in the Pauline Epistles

A. Theme 1: People of God

1. Church participation in Israel's covenant promises across Jew and Gentile divides (Ephesians 2:11–22)
2. Creation of one new humanity reconciled through the cross and blood of Jesus Christ
3. Membership in God's people defined by faith in Christ rather than ethnic lineage
4. Application of New Exodus themes to the Church (1 Corinthians 5:7, Colossians 1:13–14, Galatians 4:1–7)

B. Theme 2: Covenant (New Covenant)

1. Holy Spirit indwelling and sealing as quintessential New Covenant language (Ezekiel 36–37, Joel 2)
2. Cleansing, forgiveness of sins, and heart transformation provided through Christ
3. Paul's apostolic self-understanding as a minister of the New Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:1–6)

C. Theme 3: Davidic Kingship and Divine Rule

1. Jesus identified as the physical descendant of David (Romans 1:3)
2. Heavenly exaltation to God's right hand fulfilling royal and creation messianic psalms (Psalm 110:1, Psalm 8:6, Ephesians 1:20–23)
3. Jesus as the true image of God and new Adam reversing the Fall (Colossians 1:15–17, Romans 5:12–19)
4. Believers co-resurrected and seated with Christ, participating in His royal reign (Colossians 3:10, Ephesians 2:5–6)

D. Theme 4: Temple and God's Dwelling Place

1. Temple fulfilled in the living community of believers rather than a physical stone structure
2. Infilling of the Holy Spirit in God's people as His temple (Ephesians 5:18)

3. Believers built together upon the apostolic foundation with Christ as cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19–22, 1 Corinthians 3:16)
4. Imperative for ethical and moral purity based on the Church's identity as God's holy temple

E. Theme 5: Creation and Land

1. Old Testament land inheritance redefined as inheriting the Kingdom of God and salvation (Galatians 3:29–4:1)
2. Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) as the moral output of the new creation
3. Present reality of the new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17, Isaiah 65)
4. Believers as God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works (Ephesians 2:8–10)

IV. The Eschatological Outlook and Cosmic Summation

- A. God's ultimate plan to gather and sum up all things in heaven and earth under Christ (Ephesians 1:9–10)
- B. Inaugurated reality serving as the initial guarantee for future eschatological consummation
- C. Trajectory pointing to the final cosmic renewal and dwelling of God in Revelation 21–22