

Dr. Dave Mathewson, Storyline of the Bible,

Session 2, Israel

6-minute Video Overview

Sponsored by Biblicalelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Alright, let's jump right in. Today, we're going to trace this hidden pattern, this echo that repeats all through the Old Testament. It's a story of failure and a second chance.

And I'm telling you, once you see it, it kind of changes how you read the whole thing. So what can Adam and Eve, just two people, possibly have in common with an entire nation? You might think, not much, right? But it's not a coincidence. This is a deliberate, carefully constructed parallel.

And it's the key to unlocking the central conflict and really the ultimate goal of the entire biblical narrative. Okay, so to really get this, we've got to go way back, all the way back to the beginning. Let's look at God's original blueprint for creation, right there in Genesis.

So this original plan, it had these five key pieces. You had a people, that's Adam and Eve, then a place, the Garden of Eden, this land of blessing. There was a pact, a relationship, a covenant, that was all built on obedience.

And crucially, there was God's presence. He was right there, dwelling with them. And finally, they had a purpose.

Their job was to rule as his representatives on earth, kind of like vice regents, and to spread his glory and goodness everywhere. But, well, this whole perfect blueprint gets shattered. The story takes this incredibly tragic turn really fast.

And this sets up the core problem, the one huge issue that the rest of the Bible is trying to solve. And here is the absolute crucial point. Adam and Eve, they broke the deal.

They violated that covenant. And the consequence? It was immediate. It was exile.

They were kicked out of the garden, away from that place of blessing. And this is so important: away from God's presence. Now remember that pattern: disobedience leads to exile.

That right there, that's the key to everything that's coming next. But, you know, the story doesn't just end with this disaster. God sets a new plan in motion to get back to his original intention.

It's almost like he hits a reset button. He calls this guy Abraham, and out of his family, he forges the nation of Israel. And this is, for all intents and purposes, a second chance.

And right away, we see the first parallel just pop. Remember how Adam and Eve were told to be fruitful and multiply? Well, get this. The book of Exodus kicks off by telling us how the people of Israel, even while they're slaves in Egypt, are multiplying like crazy.

They're literally fulfilling that original command from Genesis. And it doesn't stop there. Just like Adam and Eve had the Garden of Eden, God promises Israel a new place of blessing, the Promised Land.

And listen to how it's described. A land flowing with milk and honey. That's language designed to make you think of a new Eden, right? A place of just unbelievable abundance and God's provision.

Okay, so what about God's presence? That gets restored too, but in a totally new way. Eden was this giant, sacred space, right? Now, God gives Israel a sort of portable version, the tabernacle, which later becomes the permanent temple. And you have to understand, these were not just buildings.

They were designed to be like a mini Garden of Eden, a temple garden, the one spot on earth where God's presence would dwell right in the middle of his people. And when you look at the details, it's just stunning. I mean, the temple was loaded with gold, a metal specifically mentioned back in the Eden story.

The walls were covered with carvings of palm trees and flowers. It's all meant to scream garden. And remember the cherubim, the angelic beings who guarded the way back into Eden? Well, now you've got two huge golden cherubim guarding the most sacred part of the temple, the Holy of Holies, the very place where God's presence was.

The purpose gets renewed too. That original job for all humanity to rule as God's representatives is now given specifically to Israel. They're called to be a kingdom of priests.

And over time, that role gets focused down onto one specific person, the king from David's line. He was supposed to be the ultimate vice-regent, the one who had established God's good and perfect rule on earth. So let's recap.

We've got a new people in a new Eden with God's presence back and a renewed purpose. It really looks like the plan is finally back on track, doesn't it? But as the story goes on, you start to get this sinking feeling because history has a really, really tragic way of repeating itself. And here's why.

Just like with Adam and Eve, this whole new setup came with a condition, a big one. The ability to stay in that land, to enjoy all its blessings, to have God's presence there with them, every bit of it depended on one thing: their obedience to the covenant. And well, the theologian Dave Matthewson just puts it so bluntly.

He says Israel does not fare any better than Adam and Eve do. Oof, they fail. They completely fail to keep the covenant.

They chase after idols, they embrace injustice, and the second attempt ends up following the exact same path as the first. At this point, the parallel is just; it's undeniable. For Adam, the condition was obedience.

For Israel, the condition was obedience. For Adam, the failure was disobedience. For Israel, the failure was disobedience.

And so the consequence was exactly the same. Exile. Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden.

Israel was exiled from the promised land, dragged off to Babylon. So this second failure, it's not the end of the book. But what it does is leave the entire Old Testament story hanging.

It's this huge, unresolved, massive cliffhanger. I mean, just think about the weight of that for a second. Plan A, humanity in the garden, failed, ended in exile.

Plan B, the nation of Israel, also failed, ended in exile. God's grand project to restore His beautiful creation, it looks like it's completely stalled out. It's at a dead end.

So this leaves us with this one giant, lingering question that hangs over everything. You've had two attempts, two failures. So how on earth is God's original plan for creation ever going to be restored? And honestly, answering that question- well, that's what the rest of the biblical story is all about.