

# **Dr. Dave Mathewson, Storyline of the Bible,**

## **Session 2 - Israel**

### **Podcast Audio Overview**

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Welcome to the Deep Dive. Today, we're going to tackle a question that honestly has intrigued theologians for centuries. Yeah.

How does the story of Israel connect to God's original plan for creation? You know, we've got some pretty fascinating scholarly material you sent our way. Right. And I am so eager just to dive in.

Well, it's a question with some really profound implications. Oh, yeah. The source material really digs deep, exploring themes like covenants, the promised land, temples, and kingship.

Right. All kinds of themes woven together into this unified narrative. It's really amazing how these themes just keep popping up over and over again throughout the Old Testament.

Yeah. And you know, what really stood out to me was this idea of the promised land. Yeah, okay.

As being more than just a physical place. Absolutely. And it's fascinating how the source connects the promised land to the Garden of Eden.

Right. Both depicted as these places overflowing with abundance and life, symbolic of God's favor. And it prompts us to consider, I think, what that symbolism means for our understanding of the covenant.

Yeah. Is it just about inheriting a physical territory or something more? That is a great question. Right.

And speaking of the Garden of Eden. Okay. The source makes this fascinating connection between the cherubim guarding the garden and those depicted in the tabernacle and temple.

Right. Like a visual echo. Yeah.

Reminding us of God's continuing plan for humanity despite our tendency to stray from it. Right. Like those cherubim are these sentinels.

Yeah. Guarding a sacred space that represents God's presence amidst his people. But think about it.

Okay. What does it say about God's nature that he chooses to remain present even when we mess things up? It really makes you think about God's commitment to his creation. Yeah.

Even when we just, you know. Make it hard. Make things difficult for him.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

And speaking of making things difficult. Okay. The source draws a parallel between Adam and Eve's failure in the garden and Israel's struggle to uphold the covenant.

Yes. And this parallel isn't just like a neat literary device. Yeah.

It underscores a crucial point. Both Adam and Eve and later the people of Israel are given this chance to live in harmony with God. Yeah.

But both end up falling short. Right. And the source seems to suggest this tension between obedience and disobedience.

Right. And its consequences are central to understanding God's plan. Yeah.

It's not a straightforward path, is it? Definitely not. And that leads us to another intriguing point the source raises. The significance of the tabernacle and later the temple.

The source describes them as miniature replicas of the Garden of Eden. Right. Serving as this focal point for God's presence among his people.

Yeah. Think of it as a symbolic bridge between heaven and earth. This microcosm of God's intention for all of creation to be his dwelling place.

That's a powerful image. Right. A sort of temple garden.

But if the temple represents that ideal, how do we explain the fact that Israel was ultimately exiled from the land and separated from that sacred space? This is where the story takes this dramatic turn. Yeah. The source doesn't shy away from the consequences of Israel's disobedience.

Exile represents a rupture in the covenant, a separation from God's blessing. It's almost like a reset button. Yeah.

Forcing us to confront a fundamental question. Yeah. How can God's original plan be realized if both humanity and the chosen nation fail? It's like we've hit this major roadblock in the story.

Right. Where do we go from here? That's what we'll unpack next as we dive into the prophetic writings. Okay.

They hold some crucial clues about how God might resolve this dilemma and move towards restoring his creation. So we've established this tension. You know, God desires to dwell with his people.

Right. But their disobedience leads to separation. Yeah.

This is where the prophets come in. They grapple with these questions, offering glimpses of hope and restoration. Right.

It's like they're picking up the pieces after this major setback, you know, trying to figure out how God's going to put everything back together. Exactly. And one of the most striking prophetic visions comes from Ezekiel.

Remember how we talked about the temple as a symbolic temple garden? Yeah. Well, Ezekiel's vision of a restored temple takes that imagery to a whole new level. I'm remembering the source mentioning a river flowing from the temple, flanked by fruit trees.

Right. It's almost like a paradise regained. It certainly evokes those images from Genesis.

Yeah. And it doesn't stop there. Okay.

The source highlights the presence of cherubim in Ezekiel's vision, woven into the very fabric of the temple. Yeah. It's like God is using this recurring symbol to emphasize that his plan hasn't been abandoned.

Yeah. It's still in motion, even if it takes some unexpected detours. So even amidst exile and judgment.

Yeah. There's this glimmer of hope, this promise of something new emerging. Yeah.

It makes me wonder what the source material has to say about the function of this new temple. Okay. Is it just about a return to ritual and sacrifice? That's where it gets really interesting.

The source emphasizes that the glory of God returns to this restored temple. Yeah. Filling it with his radiant presence.

It's not simply about rebuilding a physical structure, but about God himself taking up residence once again among his people. It's like the ultimate homecoming, the culmination of everything we've been talking about. Right.

But if we're talking about God dwelling with his people. Okay. Does this just apply to Israel or is there something bigger at play here? That's a crucial question.

And Ezekiel's vision offers some tantalizing clues. Right. Remember how we discussed Israel's role as a light to the nations? Yeah.

Well, in Ezekiel's vision, the river flowing from the temple doesn't stay confined to Israel. Oh. It extends outward, bringing life and healing to the entire world.

So it's not just about national restoration, but a global transformation. Exactly. It's almost like this ripple effect starting in Jerusalem and spreading outward to encompass all creation.

And that connects beautifully with the idea of the Davidic King. Yeah. God's vice-regent ruling over all nations.

Right. While Ezekiel's vision doesn't explicitly mention the Davidic King, it does imply that God's sovereignty will extend over the entire earth. It's like the pieces of a puzzle are starting to come together.

We've got these covenants pointing towards a future hope. Yeah. The promised land as a symbol of God's blessing.

Right. The temple as a dwelling place for God's presence. And the Davidic King is the one who will ultimately rule over all creation.

Right. But the Old Testament leaves us hanging, doesn't it? Yeah. We're left wondering who will usher in this era of restoration. Right.

Who will be the Davidic King to fulfill God's promises? That's the question that lingers as the Old Testament draws to a close. And it's a question that the New Testament sets out to answer. So while the Old Testament paints a picture of longing and anticipation... Yeah.

...the New Testament seems to offer a solution. Right. A person who embodies all these themes and promises.

Exactly. That's where I'm really curious to hear what the source material has to say. Well, the source makes a bold claim.

Okay. Jesus Christ is that person. Wow.

Now that's a statement that's sure to generate some discussion. Yeah. How does Jesus connect to the covenants, the promised land, the temple, and kingship? That's what we need to unpack next.

Indeed. We need to explore how Jesus fulfills the hopes and expectations laid out in the Old Testament. Okay.

Offering a resolution to the dilemmas we've been grappling with. This is where it gets really exciting. We've been on this journey through the Old Testament.

Yeah. And now we need to see how it all culminates in the person of Jesus Christ. And that's precisely what we'll delve into in the final part of our deep dive.

Right. We'll examine how Jesus embodies those core themes and brings about the ultimate restoration that God intended from the very beginning. All right.

So we've laid out this incredible tapestry of themes from the Old Testament. Yeah. Covenants, the promised land, the temple, kingship.

Right. Now the big question. Okay.

Where does Jesus fit into all of this? That's the million-dollar question, isn't it? And the source we're looking at today makes a pretty bold claim. Okay. That Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of all these Old Testament hopes and expectations.

Okay. I'm intrigued, but honestly, I'm struggling a bit to see how those pieces connect to Jesus. Right.

Let's start with the covenants. Okay. We talked about the covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David.

Right. All pointing towards a future restoration. Yeah.

How does Jesus fit in there? The source suggests that Jesus establishes a new covenant. Okay. One that moves beyond the limitations of the old.

Okay. Think about it. The previous covenants were conditional based on obedience to the law.

Right. But this new covenant, it's rooted in grace. So it's not about following a set of rules to earn God's favor.

Exactly. The source emphasizes that it's about a relationship with God based on his unconditional love and forgiveness. Okay.

Made possible through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross. It's a radical shift in perspective, wouldn't you say? It definitely reframes the whole idea of a covenant, that's for sure. Yeah.

But what about the promised land? Okay. We talked about it representing this ideal place of blessing and God's presence. Right.

How does Jesus connect to that? Well, the source suggests that Jesus himself becomes the embodiment of the promised land. Okay. In him, God's presence dwells fully, and his blessings are available to all who believe.

So it's not about a physical location anymore. Right. But about a person.

Yeah. Jesus himself. That's right.

Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the promised land. Okay. A place of peace, joy, and eternal life found in a relationship with him.

That makes a lot of sense. Yeah. Now what about the temple? Okay.

We talked about the temple as a representation of God's dwelling place among his people. Right. How does Jesus relate to that? The New Testament proclaims that Jesus is the new temple.

Okay. His body becomes the dwelling place of God. And through him, we have direct access to the Father.

So the physical temple in Jerusalem is no longer the focal point. That's right. The source highlights how Jesus's death and resurrection signify a shift.

Okay. From a physical temple to a spiritual one. Right.

God's presence is no longer confined to a building. Yeah. But is accessible through Jesus Christ.

Wow. That completely changes our understanding of worship and how we connect with God. Absolutely.

It breaks down all those barriers and makes a relationship with God possible for anyone. Yeah. Regardless of background or ethnicity.

Okay. That leaves us with kingship. Right.

We discussed the Davidic covenant and the anticipation of a king who would rule over all creation. Yeah. Where does Jesus fit into that? The New Testament unequivocally declares that Jesus is the ultimate king.

Okay. The true heir to David's throne. So he's not just a spiritual figure, but a ruler.

Right. A sovereign over all creation. Precisely. The source points to numerous passages in the New Testament.

Okay. That portrays Jesus as the king of kings and lord of lords. Yeah.

With authority over everything. That ties back to something we talked about earlier. Yeah.

God's original intention was for humanity to rule over creation as his representatives. So is Jesus fulfilling that original mandate? But in a way that goes beyond what we could ever imagine. You got it.

But Jesus's kingship isn't about power or domination. Right. The source emphasizes that it's about love, service, and sacrifice.

He reigns by offering himself as a ransom for many. Yeah. Ultimately defeating sin and death.

So we've come full circle. Yeah. From Adam and Eve's failure to represent God's rule to the Davidic covenant's anticipation of a king.

Right. It all culminates in Jesus Christ. He's the perfect king who restores God's original vision for humanity and creation.

Beautifully put, in Jesus, we see the resolution to the dilemmas we've been exploring. He bridges the gap between humanity and God, fulfilling the covenants, embodying the promised land and the temple. Right.

And establishing a kingdom of love and righteousness. What a journey this has been. Tracing the story of Israel through the Old and New Testaments, seeing how it connects to God's grand plan for creation.

It really highlights how God remains faithful to his promises even when we stray from him. Right. He's constantly working to bring about his ultimate purpose, the redemption of humanity and the restoration of all things.

It leaves me with a sense of awe at God's intricate plan and the lengths he went to reconcile us to himself. Yeah. It also makes me think about my own role in this grand narrative.

That's the question we're all left with, isn't it? Yeah. How will we respond to this incredible story of redemption and restoration? Right. How will we live in light of what God has done through Jesus Christ? Those are definitely questions worth pondering.

So to all our listeners out there, keep diving deep into these ideas and discover for yourself how this ancient story connects to your life today. We'll catch you on the next episode.