

Dr. Dave Mathewson, Storyline of the Bible, Session 6, General Epistles and Revelation 6-minute Video Overview

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You know, have you ever stopped to wonder if the Bible, with all its different books written across thousands of years, is actually telling one single story? I mean, it's this huge collection of history, poetry, and letters. It can feel all over the place. But what if all of it, all 66 books, are building to one single, breathtaking conclusion? Let's try to trace the threads and see what we find.

So that's the big question, right? Is there a grand narrative here? A story that kicks off in Genesis and finds its ultimate, final resolution in that last, and let's be honest, kind of confusing book of Revelation? Well, it turns out, a lot of people who've studied this would say yes, absolutely. And the key is knowing what clues to follow. So how do we see this big story? Well, according to biblical scholar Dr. Dave Mathewson, the trick is to trace five core themes, or what he calls narrative threads, that are just woven through the entire Bible from start to finish.

You can think of these as the main plot lines of this massive, epic story. And here they are. First, the story of God forming a special people for himself.

Second, the binding agreement, or covenant, that he makes with them. Then there's the theme of kingship, both of God and humanity. Fourth is the idea of the temple, the place where God dwells.

And finally, number five, the promise of land and a renewed creation. These five ideas, they're like the DNA of the entire biblical story. Okay, now, to really get how this story unfolds, we need to wrap our minds around this one crucial idea.

It's often called the already-not-yet principle. The New Testament writers basically argue that with Jesus, all five of these promises have already been set in motion; they've been launched, but they have not yet reached their final, complete form. This creates this incredible narrative tension that just pulls the whole story forward toward its grand finale.

So, with that in mind, how did the writers of the New Testament letters, you know, the epistles, pick up on these ancient threads? It's fascinating to see how they reinterpreted these core themes now, in light of who Jesus was and what he did. Let's start with that first thread, the people of God. Here in the letter of 1 Peter, the author uses this language that, for centuries, was used only for the nation of Israel.

He's calling this diverse group of new believers a chosen race, a holy nation. This is a huge development in the story. The whole concept of who God's people are is expanding right before our eyes.

It's not about your family tree anymore. It's about faith in Christ. This is just a pivotal moment in the plot, widening the whole scope of the story to include people from everywhere.

Okay, what about that second thread, the covenant? Well, the author of the book of Hebrews makes this really bold statement. He's basically arguing that something so new and so profound has happened that it's made the original covenant, the one from Mount Sinai, obsolete. Now, the crucial point here isn't just about throwing out the old story.

It's about turning the page to the next chapter. The writer of Hebrews sees Jesus' death as kicking off that new covenant that the prophet Jeremiah had promised centuries earlier. It's the ultimate fulfillment that the old system was always pointing toward.

Now let's look at kingship. This is really cool. The author of Hebrews grabs this verse from Psalm 8, which is all about God's original dream for humanity to rule over creation.

But then he applies it in this really fascinating way. He argues that Jesus, as the perfect human, is the one who finally fulfills this royal job description. And the big insight here is that through Jesus, this original purpose, this kingship over creation, is given back not just to one person, but it's restored for all of humanity.

Okay, so we've seen these threads develop through the Old Testament and then get reinterpreted in the epistles, but they've all been building towards something, right? Where does it all lead? Well, this brings us to the Bible's grand finale, the book of Revelation. This is where all five of those threads come crashing together in the most dramatic way possible. The final vision of the Bible kicks off with this absolutely thunderous declaration.

And notice, it's not about escaping the world to go somewhere else. It's about the total renewal of this world. This line sets the stage for the final payoff of every single narrative thread we've been following.

And here it is. In this final vision, every single thread finds its ultimate fulfillment. The people of God are finally united.

The covenant is complete because God himself literally comes to dwell with them. The land becomes a stunning new creation. The temple is no longer needed because God's presence is everywhere.

And humanity's kingship is finally restored. They will reign forever. This is the ultimate payoff to the entire biblical story.

It all lands right here. Let's just pause on that temple idea for a second, because it's really profound. The whole point of the original temple was that it was a special, sacred place set apart because the rest of the world was broken and impacted by sin.

But in this final vision, sin and evil are gone. So the need for a separate, special building just vanishes. God's presence isn't contained in a box anymore.

It fills the entire new creation. So when you put it all together, the Bible story comes full circle. It ends right back where it began.

God dwelling perfectly with his people in a renewed creation, with humanity finally doing the job they were always made for. The entire epic, from Genesis to Revelation, is this incredible story of loss, and then at the very end, glorious restoration. And that leaves us with a final, massive question to think about.

If the grand story of the Bible is actually about the renewal and restoration of all things, not about their destruction, what does that mean for how we see our purpose and our world, right now? It's a thought that kind of reframes everything, doesn't it?