

Following the Bible's Storyline as You Study the Bible

Session 4: The Bible's Storyline in the New Testament

What is the New Testament? *Covenant literature* that explains the significance of the person and work of Christ.¹

What is the New Testament about? How God in Christ is *fulfilling* his *promises* made to Israel.²

1. Creation and fall:
2. Call of Abraham:
3. Covenant with Israel:
4. Covenant with David:
5. Exile:
6. Intertestamental period:
7. The New Testament:

In whom are the OT promises being fulfilled? Jesus Christ, the central figure of the NT.

1. Matthew 1–7:
 - a. He is the Messiah who fulfills OT prophecy (1:1–2:23)
 - i. Jesus' genealogy identifies him as the Son of David, justifying his legal claim to the throne of David (1:1–17).
 - ii. Jesus' virgin-birth identifies him as Immanuel (1:18–25 [Isa 7:14])
 - iii. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem identifies him as the ruler of Israel (2:1–12 [Mic 5:2])
 - iv. Jesus' flight to Egypt identifies him as the Son of God (2:13–15 [Hos 11:1])
 - v. Jesus' escape from Herod identifies him as the persecuted one (2:16–18 [Jer 31:15])

¹ Andreas Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2009), 30.

² Thomas Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 24–25.

- vi. Jesus' life in Nazareth identifies him as the humble offspring of Jesse (2:19–23 [Isa 11:1]).
- b. He is the perfect Israel who fulfills all righteousness (3:1–4:11)
 - i. In his baptism, he identifies with sinful Israelites (3:1–17); parallels Israel's crossing the Red Sea (Exod 14:1–13 cf. 1 Cor 10:2).
 - ii. In his temptation, he demonstrates his perfect righteousness (4:1–11); parallels Israel going into the wilderness of Shur (Exod 15:22) and Israel's testing in the wilderness *en route* to Sinai (Exod 15–17).
- c. He is the new Moses who fulfills the OT law (5:1–7:29; see esp. 5:17–20, 21–48).
- 2. Mark: Mark's rapid narration of successive events and teachings leaves you impressed with a powerful figure: Jesus Christ, whose message demands a response. Mark tells us who Jesus is, what he does, and how one should respond to him.
 - a. Who is Jesus?
 - i. The Son of God (1:1, 9–11; 3:11; 15:39; implied in 12:35–37)
 - ii. The Son of Man (2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62); refers to the sovereign ruler of the kingdom of God (Dan 7:13–14 cf. Mark 14:62).
 - b. What does Jesus do?
 - i. Teaches and preaches with authority (1:14–15; 2:18–28; 3:22–28; 4:1–32; 7:1–23; 10:1–31; 12:13–34).
 - ii. Heals and performs miracles (1:21–34, 40–45; 2:1–12; 3:1–6; 4:1–43; 6:30–56; 7:24–36; 8:1–10, 22–26; 9:14–19; 10:46–52)
 - iii. Foretells the future (8:31; 9:30–32; 10:32–34; 13:1–37; 14:17–21, 26–31)
 - iv. Institutes the New Covenant (14:22–25)
 - v. Suffers and dies for sinners (14:43–15:57)
 - vi. Rises again (16:1–20)
 - c. How should one respond to Jesus?
 - i. Reject him (3:20–21; 6:1–6; 8:14–21; 11:27–33)
 - ii. Embrace him (1:16–20; 2:13–17; 3:13–20; 8:27–30)
- 3. All four gospels been described as passion narratives with an extended introduction (the passion narrative accounts for at least one-quarter of each gospel, sometimes more).
- 4. Acts: the growth of the church as the apostles and others proclaimed the crucified and resurrected Lord;³ the outpouring of the Spirit testifies the reality and authority of the risen Christ.
- 5. Hebrews: Jesus as the fulfillment of the ceremonial law.
- 6. Romans and Galatians: Jesus as the one who satisfies the Mosaic law.
- 7. 2 Peter, Jude: warning against those who pervert the gospel of Christ.
- 8. Revelation: the triumph and return of the risen Christ.

³ Lane Dennis, ed., *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1805.

How are the OT promises being fulfilled? The NT describes God's promises as *already* fulfilled in Christ but *not yet* consummated.⁴

- Acts 2:16–21 (citing Isa 2:2–3 and Joel 2:28–32): Last Days Spirit and temple.
- Heb 1:5–13: the Son speaking and reigning in the Last Days.
- Matt 13:1–52: eight parables that illustrate the already-not yet character of Christ's kingdom.

Important topics that flow out of this central story: an overview of the theology behind the story.⁵

1. Jesus' person and work
2. Jesus as the object of saving faith
3. Jesus and the Spirit
4. Jesus and his people
5. Jesus and his return

Summary and conclusion: the story line of Scripture.

- OT storyline: "The Old Testament is the story of God, who progressively reestablishes his eschatological new-creational kingdom out of chaos over a sinful people by his word and Spirit through promise, covenant, and redemption, resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to advance his kingdom and judgment (defeat or exile) for the unfaithful, unto his glory."⁶
- NT storyline: "Jesus's life, trials, death for sinners, and especially resurrection by the Spirit have launched the fulfillment of the eschatological already-not yet new-creational reign, bestowed by grace through faith and resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to advance this new-creational reign and resulting in judgment for the unbelieving, unto the triune God's glory."⁷

⁴ G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Brand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 129–84; Lane Dennis, ed., *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1803–04.

⁵ Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 681–725.

⁶ G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Brand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 162–63, italicized in original.

⁷ G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Brand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 163, italicized in original.

Resources for further study:

Alexander, T. Desmond, and Brian Rosner. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Beale, G. K. *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson, eds. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

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Schreiner, Thomas. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

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Wright, N. T. *Christian Origins and the Question of God*. 4 vols. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992–2013.