

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

The Development of a Biblical Theology Curriculum for the Congregation of Poplar Bluff First Baptist Church

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

By

Brandon Spain

Lynchburg, Virginia

July 2021

Copyright © 2021 Brandon Spain
All Rights Reserved

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Dr. Gary Waller, Mentor

Dr. Cody Podor, Reader

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

Brandon Spain

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, July 2021

Mentor: Dr. Gary Waller

The purpose of this project is to educate the congregation of First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff how to understand the biblical theology of Scripture. It is the belief that if the people of FBCPB receive proper training in the subject of biblical theology that they will begin to appreciate the grand narrative of the biblical story. It is the researcher's hope that once the people begin to read the Bible through a gospel lens they will become eager to dive deeper into the Word of God. The researcher also has hope that a healthy biblical theology will not only affect one's personal spiritual growth but will have positive ramifications throughout the entire church body. Biblical theology teaches the story of God. In this story, one discovers who God is, how the world came into existence, the purpose of humanity, what has gone wrong in the world, and God's plan of redemption and restoration.

Many churches are lacking in a holistic approach to biblical theology. Thus, many churches and its members have grown to become spiritually anemic. The researcher has utilized an Introduction to Biblical Theology study to help the members of FBCPB. This study introduces the Bible as one grand story. The researcher discussed the major plot movements and the six major covenants that help move the story forward. The researcher used an initial and post survey to track the progress of the study's participants. The post survey results showed vast improvement in the participant's knowledge of biblical theology.

Word Count: 250

Key Words: grand narrative, gospel, redemption, typology, covenant.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Ministry Context	1
A Brief History of Biblical Theology	1
FBCPB	7
FBCPB Mission	10
FBCPB Vision	11
FBCPB Membership	11
FBCPB Core Values	12
Problem Presented	16
Purpose Statement	18
Basic Assumptions	19
Definitions	20
Limitations	22
Delimitations	23
Thesis Statement	24
Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework	25
Literature Review	25
Defining Biblical Theology	25
One Story	26
<i>The Bible's Plot</i>	29
<i>God's Covenants</i>	30
<i>God's Kingdom</i>	33
<i>Typology</i>	35
Salvation	36
Need for Biblical Theology	37
Biblical Theology Versus Systematic Theology	38
Theological Foundations	39

God’s Covenant with Creation through Adam and Noah	39
God’s Covenant with Abraham and His Children	42
God’s Covenant with Israel through Moses.....	44
God’s Covenant with David.....	49
The Voice of the Prophets.....	52
God’s New Covenant in Christ.....	54
The Role of the Church.....	56
Theoretical Foundations.....	56
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	64
Intervention Design.....	64
Participant Recruitment	64
Location	66
Meetings.....	66
Participants.....	67
Resources	68
Evaluation	68
Demographic Questions.....	69
Survey Questions	69
Re-evaluation	69
Content.....	70
<i>Week One</i>	70
<i>Week Two</i>	71
<i>Week Three</i>	73
<i>Week Four</i>	74
Implementation of Intervention Design	77
Data Collection	78
Chapter 4: Results.....	79
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	93

The Importance of Biblical Theology in the Local Church	93
Research Summary	101
Practical Steps to Enhance Biblical Theology in the Local Church	103
Replication	105
Areas of Further Study	105
Impact on First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff.....	106
Summary	107
Appendix A	108
Appendix B	109
Appendix C	113
Appendix D	115
Appendix E	118
Appendix F	123
Appendix G	146
Bibliography	198

Tables

1.1	FBCPB Demographics by Age	9
1.2	FBCPB Demographics by Percentages	9
2.1	Similarities Between Biblical Covenants	51
4.1	How long have you been attending FBCPB?	79
4:2	How often do you attend worship services at FBCPB?	79
4:3	Do you attend Wednesday night Bible study classes at FBCPB?	80
4:4	How long have you been saved?	81
4:5	Do you feel like you understand what you are reading when you read the Bible?	82
4:6	How many major biblical covenants are in Scripture?	84
4:7	With which biblical characters does God personally make a covenant with?	84
4:8	Which book of the Bible tells of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt?	84
4:9	What does it mean that humanity is created in the “image of God?”	85
4:10	What is Abraham’s role in God’s plan of redemption?	85
4:11	What prophet speaks of a new covenant being written on people’s hearts?	86
4:12	What do you think the Old Testament is all about?	86
4:13	How does understanding the original creation of the world help one understand the purpose of salvation, often presented as a new creation?	86
4:14	What significant even in the Old Testament (Exodus) points to Jesus’ sacrificial death?	87
4:15	Where is the first gospel promise given?	87
4:16	What is the significance of the first animal sacrifice?	88
4:17	How does the New Testament help one to understand the Old Testament types?	88
4:18	How does the Old Testament types help us understand the New Testament?	88
4:19	What is Jesus’ relationship with the Old Testament law?	90
4:20	Has anyone ever taught or helped you in understanding the unified storyline of the Bible by way of a book or teaching?	90
4:21	Participant Responses	91

Abbreviations

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
SBC	<i>Southern Baptist Convention</i>
FBCPB	<i>First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff</i>
CLC	<i>Christian Life Center</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

Biblical theology is the study of the grand narrative of Scripture. This study allows an individual to see how all sixty-six books of the Bible communicate one story. The Bible, therefore, is a unified book comprised of several individual books written by multiple persons. However, each author has been inspired by the Holy Spirit to communicate God's story. God is the divine author of Scripture, and the Bible tells of how God will redeem humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Tragically, very few Christians can identify how the plethora of individual stories are connected and help communicate the Bible's whole story. They struggle to read Scripture with a bird's eye view and understand each story in the Bible's overall context. This project seeks to help dissolve this current problem within the congregation of First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff, MO. Within chapter one, the researcher will describe the current ministry context of FBCPB detailing its location, history, and demographics. The researcher will then identify the current problem and present his purpose statement for his project research. The research will include definitions, limitations, and delimitations to help bring clarity to the overall project. At the conclusion of chapter one, the researcher will express his comprehensive thesis statement.

Ministry Context

A Brief History of Biblical Theology

Irenaeus, a second-century apologist and theologian, argued that the Bible should be read with three things in mind. One, the reader should read the Bible with its hypothesis in view. Irenaeus used this term to communicate that there is a central theme that runs throughout

Scripture—the person and work of Jesus Christ. To help his readers understand this term, he employed the analogy of a mosaic—a portrait made of different pieces of stained glass. Only when one had access to the plans would they know how to properly put the pieces together. Irenaeus believed that the mosaic pieces were supposed to be assembled in such a way that they show the readers of Scripture King Jesus. The goal in reading the Bible with the hypothesis in view is to discover how a particular puzzle piece, or scriptural passage, fits into the larger mosaic that shows Christ.¹

Irenaeus also employed the idea of economy, which seeks to understand how a biblical text fits into the structure of the Bible. It was important for him to recognize the shape of the biblical story, a shape that culminates in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Irenaeus would ask how particular texts of Scripture fit into the larger story of the bible, and especially how those texts point forward or backward to Scripture’s climax found in the life and work of Jesus.²

To help himself understand how biblical texts fit into the grand narrative of Scripture, Irenaeus used a hermeneutical tool that he called recapitulation. Irenaeus believed that each story in the Bible finds its culmination in the person and work of Christ, not only in terms of historical progression but also in terms of typology.³

¹ John O’Keefe and R.R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 34–44; Matthew Y. Emerson, *The Story of Scripture* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017), 6.

² Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 7.

³ Ibid.

The church has needed biblical theology since its birth but it is the youngest member in the family of theology.⁴ The Reformers were instrumental in the development of biblical theology. Their study of the Bible, compared to their predecessors, is better defined as critical. George Gilbert states that, “They held that the Scriptures should be heard irrespective of ecclesiastical doctrine; that the Scriptures should not be interpreted by the creeds, but the creeds by the Scriptures.”⁵ The Reformers helped lay the groundwork for biblical theology, however, centuries passed before a beginning was finally birthed.

Johannes P. Gabler, known as the father of biblical theology, saw biblical theology primarily as an historical task and is credited for establishing biblical theology as a separate and significant discipline. This arose from his inaugural address at the University of Altdorf in 1787 when he used the term and called for biblical theology to be an independent discipline of theology. In his address, he made a distinction between biblical theology, inquiry concerned with the historical setting and religious function of particular biblical books and authors, and dogmatic theology, an ecclesial enterprise focused on the impact of the Bible on its contemporary readers.⁶ Gilbert states that biblical theology, “Is a child of the Reformation in spirit; a child of Gabler in form.”⁷

⁴ George H. Gilbert, “Biblical Theology: Its History and Its Mission I,” *The Biblical World* 6, no. 1 (1895): 6.

⁵ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 10.

⁶ Johannes P. Gabler, “An Oration on the Proper Distinction Between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Specific Objectives of Each,” in *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study*, ed. Ben C. Ollenburger (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004).

⁷ Gilbert, “Biblical Theology,” 13.

Geerhardus Vos, who acknowledges Gabler as the father of biblical theology, is another central figure in the development of biblical theology.⁸ Vos' contribution to the study came on the heels of Joseph Addison Alexander and William Henry Green, all of which attended Princeton Theological Seminary.⁹ Peter J. Wallace highlights the work of these three scholars. He writes:

Three main foci appear in the contours of the theological approach to the Old Testament which Alexander, Green, and Vos developed. First was an emphasis on reading the text as it has come down to us. This literary method was articulated in stark contrast to the documentary hypothesis which was gaining prominence in most nineteenth-century biblical scholarship. Second, the canon was seen as the proper context for interpreting Scripture. The Old Testament, and indeed the entire Bible, is a unit. And all biblical interpretation must start from this point. Finally, the chief distinguishing mark of the old Princeton school is the centrality of redemptive history. The Bible shows forth the history of God's salvation – the unfolding of the plan of redemption. Alexander was the first at Princeton to glean theological insights from the structure of Biblical history. Green refined and developed Alexander's insight, but both viewed Christ as the center of both the Old and New Testaments. Vos brought his predecessors' work to new heights; he combined their insights with traditional federal theology to connect the redemptive plan of God with the flow of history in the person and work of Christ.¹⁰

Vos' contribution and development of biblical theology provided a solid foundation for theologians to later build upon.

Vos' model of biblical theology pays attention to the divine authorship of Scripture and assumes a theological unity based on that fact. He sees the two testaments tied together based on the central subject of Scripture, Jesus Christ, and Scripture's storyline, the grand narrative from creation (Genesis 1) to new creation (Revelation 21).¹¹ Scholars have taken Vos's model and

⁸ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (City of publication: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), 9.

⁹ Peter J. Wallace, "The Foundations of Reformed Biblical Theology: The Development of Old Testament Theology at Old Princeton, 1812–1932," *Westminster Theological Journal* 59, no. 1 (1997): 41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹¹ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 4.

continued to develop ways to demonstrate this unity. Though they may differ in development each model shares a recognition that the Bible is ultimately one coherent story, usually described as Creation-Fall-Redemption, that points to and culminates in the person and work of Jesus, the Son.¹²

There are at least three schools of thought that have developed from Vos' model. Each school seeks to demonstrate how the biblical story is cohesive and how individual passages point to Christ. Edward W. Klink and Darian R. Lockett help summarize these three schools:

1. The so-called Dallas school seeks to situate a passage in its historical context and ask what it says to Israel or the church at that moment. While there is a recognition that the passage fits into the larger biblical story, there is reticence in this school to import any later developments of the passage into its original message.
2. The Chicago school also seeks to situate a passage in its historical context, but here there is also a willingness to see how the passage develops and furthers the biblical narrative. So, for instance, in Gen. 3:15, the Chicago school would ask what the passage's original readers would have understood by it, as would the Dallas school. Rather than stopping there, as the Dallas school would, the Chicago school asks how that passage develops and is fulfilled in the rest of the biblical story. There is a willingness to see how the text moves the biblical narrative forward.
3. The Philadelphia school asks not only about the passage's historical context but also its literary context. It wants to know everything the Dallas and Chicago school does, but also (a) how the passage itself points to Christ and (b) how its canonical context informs the interpretation of the passage. In other words, while the Dallas school and Chicago school would be reticent to say that Gen. 3:15 "is about" Jesus, the Philadelphia school would be willing to import the canonical development of the passage back into its message. In any case, each of these three approaches seeks to discern how a passage fits into not only its historical context but also its canonical literary context. In other words, they ask the question, "How does this passage fit into the big story of the whole Bible?" And, in the case of the Philadelphia school, a second question augments the first: "How does this passage point to the culmination of the biblical story, the person and work of Jesus Christ?"¹³

The United States experienced a biblical theology movement between the 1940s and early 1960s. Robert Gnuse writes, "Biblical theology generated by the study of the Hebrew Bible

¹² Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 4.

¹³ Edward W. Klink and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 59–75. Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 4–5.

had a great influence in seminaries, schools, and churches in America for a generation after World War II. The image of a ‘God who acts in history’ predominated in the theology of that age and it inspired a dynamic perception of the materials for many students.”¹⁴ This movement became especially popular among those belonging to the Presbyterian denomination. The movement was birthed to separate from liberal theology and Christian fundamentalism.¹⁵

Throughout the years, many scholars have continued to develop the ideas of Gabler, Alexander, Green, and Vos. Some of these scholars are Gregory Beale, Herman Ridderbos, Graeme Goldsworthy, Vaughn Roberts, James Hamilton, Peter Gentry, and Stephen Wellum. These theologians have sought to educate the church on biblical theology and their works have popularized this understanding and reading of scripture. For instance, G. K. Beale emphasizes the story of the Bible, seeing how each passage fits into that story, intertextuality (how certain texts quote or allude to previous texts), and how a particular passage in the Old Testament may both historically and conceptually progress toward the person and work of Jesus. Beale refers to his method as organic, in that Old Testament texts are like seeds that flower out. As one reads these Old Testament passages, one follows their progression through other, later Old Testament texts that all eventually find their culmination and fulfillment in Jesus Christ.¹⁶

It is this researcher’s observation that many scholars are seeking to encourage church leaders today to be trained in biblical theology and to educate their congregation in this field of study. The reasoning for this encouragement, in this researcher’s opinion, is that there seems to

¹⁴ Robert Gnuse, “New Directions in Biblical Theology: The Impact of Contemporary Scholarship in the Hebrew Bible,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62, no. 3 (1994): 893, accessed July 11, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1465219>.

¹⁵ James H. Moorehead, “Redefining Confessionalism: American Presbyterians in the Twentieth Century,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 79, no. 1 (2001): 74, accessed July 10, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23335389>.

¹⁶ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 8.

have been a shift over the years for preachers to move towards a more applicational driven sermon compared to theological sermons. Thomas Schreiner writes,

There is in fact a famine for the word of God in many evangelical churches today. Sermon series feature in their titles television shows like Gilligan's Island, Bonanza, and Mary Tyler Moore. Preaching often concentrates on steps to a successful marriage or how to raise children in our culture. Sermons on family issues, of course, are fitting and needed, but two problems often surface. First, what the scriptures actually say about these subjects is often neglected. How many sermons on marriage faithfully and urgently set forth what Paul actually says about the roles of men and woman (Eph. 5:22–33)? Or are we embarrassed by what the scriptures say? Second and perhaps more seriously, such sermons are almost always preached on the horizontal level. They become the congregation's staple week-in and week-out, and the theological worldview that permeates God's word and that provides the foundation for all of life is passed over in silence. Our pastors turn into moralists like Dear Abby, giving advice on how to live a happy life week after week.¹⁷

After serving in various Southern Baptist Churches in three states, this researcher has witnessed moralistic preaching at its finest. Tragically, the majority of congregants leave each week with a laundry lists of things to do and not do so that they can become a "better Christian." Rather than gaining a better understanding of whom Christ is and what he has already done on their behalf.

FBCPB

First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention and is located in the boot heel of the "Show-Me State." Poplar Bluff serves as the industry hub for the surrounding areas. The population of Poplar Bluff residents only calculates to a little less than 17,000 people, which has been in decline over the last few years, but the metro population totals to be near 50,000 residents. The majority of the population is predominately white, and the

¹⁷ Thomas Schreiner, "Preaching and Biblical Theology 101," *IX Journal* 3, no. 9 (November/December 2006): 15.

poverty level sits around 26%. The average age of Poplar Bluff residents is people in their mid-thirties, and the majority of the residents have obtained a high school diploma.¹⁸

The church has been in existence for one hundred fifty-three years. God birthed the idea of establishing FBCPB in the hearts and minds of four individuals who drafted the articles of faith and church covenant on May 25, 1867. God began to work in this church plant, and over the years, the membership began to grow. In 1888, the church had grown, and the current members agreed that it was time to call its first full-time pastor. Throughout the years God blessed the ministry of FBCPB and the church's membership continued to climb. In 1911, the church's membership totaled two hundred eleven people, and by 1927 the church added one hundred eighty new members. Ten years later, the records show that the church experienced exponential growth with a membership of seven hundred twenty-two people.

FBCPB has been known throughout its history for its vision. On a couple of different occasions, the church has built buildings and moved locations. In 1947, the church voted to purchase a twenty-acre farm for \$10,000 outside of town and relocate to its present location. After the purchase, the future home became known as "Baptist Hill" to the citizens of Poplar Bluff. The church had a desire to never go into debt and so they established a "pay as you go" contract with the construction company. The new sanctuary and education space were not completed until 1968. In 1992, the church added a Christian Life Center wing. In the early 2000s they remodeled the current sanctuary and dedicated the third floor of the educational space to the children's ministry.

The researcher is the current lead pastor of FBCPB and is the third pastor in the last 50 years. Still to this day, FBCPB is known as the church on the hill. This great church's legacy

¹⁸ World Population Review, "Poplar Bluff, Missouri Population 2020 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs)," accessed August 23, 2020, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/poplar-bluff-mo-population>.

continues; however, many of the church members continue to live in the past. The senior members regularly use phrases like "back when" or "in the past." They like to relive and reminisce about the "glory days" of FBCPB. The senior membership is proud of their church and heritage, but not many are willing to change from what is comfortable. Since the birth of FBCPB, many new churches have moved into the area. Currently, the 16,889 residents of Poplar Bluff have a choice from one hundred eleven places of worship. Whereas FBCPB was once the “main” church in town, it has become just one of many churches. The current membership of FBCPB is comprised of 861 residential members and 71 non-residential members for a total of 932 members. Unfortunately, around half of the church’s membership is currently active.

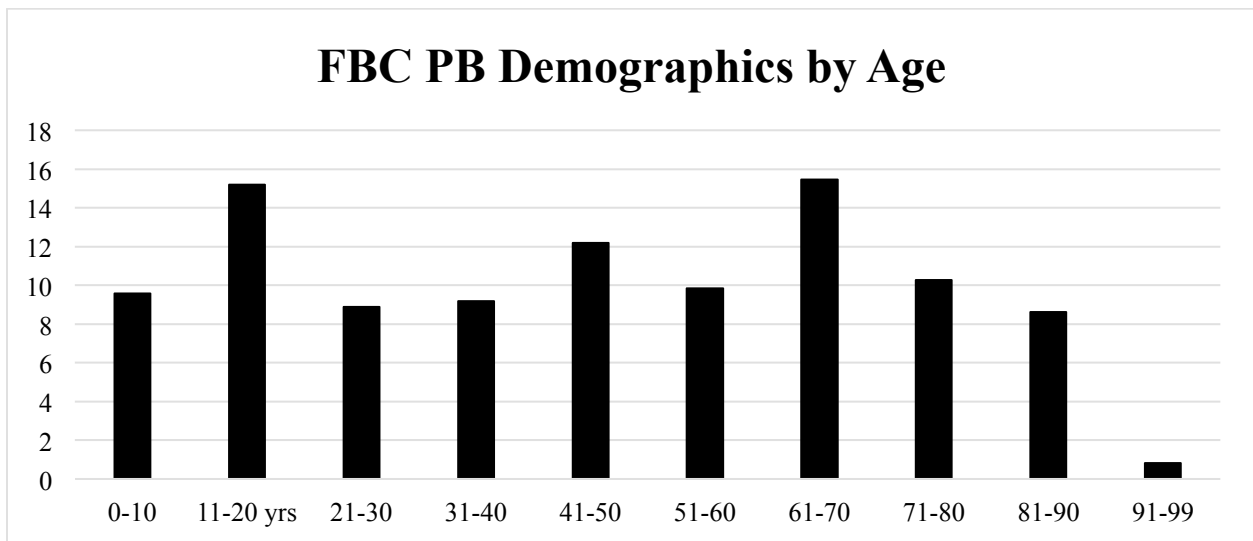


Figure 1.1. *FBCPB Demographics by Age (The X axis represents the different age groups and the Y axis represents the percentage represented by each age group)*

FBCPB Demographics by Percentages

Age	Percent of Total
0–10 yrs.	10%
11–20 yrs.	15%
21–30 yrs.	9%

31–40 yrs.	9%
41–50 yrs.	12%
51–60 yrs.	10%
61–70 yrs.	15%
71–80 yrs.	10%
81–90 yrs.	9%
91–99 yrs.	< 1%

Figure 1.2. *FBCPB Demographics by Percentages*

The vision of the current ministry leadership has added a "Contemporary" service on Sunday morning to appeal to the community's younger families, while still offering a "Classic" service, which consists of a traditional style of worship. The ministry leadership has also begun to establish new life groups for our church members to join so that they can start to grow deeper in their personal relationship with the Lord. The goal is for each participant to connect with God and with others. It is during these meetings that relationships are strengthened, and biblical knowledge is gained.

FBCPB Mission

The mission of FBCPB is to love up and love out because he (Jesus) first loved down. The mission is what the church aspires to do daily. The motive for this mission comes from 1 John 4:19, which says, "We love because he first loved us." One's personal love relationship is first affected by the love that God has shown them. Each person is encouraged to focus on connecting with the Heavenly Father. Jesus said that the first and greatest commandment was to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Mt. 22:36–40). The understanding of this personal intimacy is that the natural outcome of being connected to the Father will result in love being poured out toward others. According to Jesus, this is the second greatest command: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:39). Authentic

love for people is what distinguishes Jesus followers from the world. Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (Jn. 13:35). However, both of these commandments are motivated because of the great love God the Father has shown to his people. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

FBCPB Vision

The vision of FBCPB is to expose people to the love of Jesus and empower them to live one day at a time. The vision of the church is what it aspires to do over decades. In John 4, one reads about Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman. In this story, Jesus exposes the woman's sin and offers her "living water." The Samaritan woman is exposed to an unconditional love that she had never experienced before. Because of this divine encounter, it leads to this woman, who was living in shame, becoming a bold witness to the love of Christ. The Apostle John records, "Many Samaritans from that town believed in him (Jesus) because of the woman's testimony" (Jn. 4:39). The vision of FBCPB is for each member to experience this love and then expose others to the unconditional love of Christ, which empowers them to live as bold witnesses.

FBCPB Membership

When a person expresses a desire for church membership, each individual must participate in the FBCPB new member's class. This class is designed to introduce people to the church's mission and vision, along with its doctrinal beliefs. FBCPB has adopted and aligns doctrinally with the Baptist Faith and Message of 2000.

Another section of the new member's class includes covering the core values of FBCPB. These core values are essential for every person desiring church membership to understand. The

church's leadership has diligently poured over these core values and feels the need to teach these values so that each person understands what the church deems as a necessity.

FBCPB Core Values

The first core value is "Surrender." Every person must come to the point of surrender in their life before they can follow Jesus. "Surrender" is a harsh word for many people to hear. It sounds as though it is a word of defeat. But in the Christian life, surrendering is where life begins. Following Jesus is a daily surrender. They realize that He is God, and they are not. The only way one can follow Jesus faithfully is to surrender every area of their lives to His Lordship. When Jesus called his disciples, he said two words: "Follow Me" (Mt. 4:19). The Bible tells that these men left what they were doing and followed Jesus. Jesus said in Luke 14:26–27, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

The second core value is "Supplication." FBCPB believes in the power of prayer. The church believes that prayer is one's communication line with God the Father. God desires for all of His children to pray about all things. There is nothing too great or small for God. The church wants the people to know and believe that it matters to God if something matters to them because He loves and cares for them. FBCPB believes that the Apostle Paul's instruction on prayer is crucial for every believer to know and believe. Paul says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).

"Sharing" is the third core value of FBCPB, and it focuses on evangelism. The church believes that people exposed to the love of Jesus will expose other people to that same love.

However, the church understands that most people are nervous when they think about telling someone else about Jesus. They feel inadequate. But, if a person has been saved and changed by Jesus, they have a story to tell. That story includes the time one was exposed to Christ, how they surrendered to Him, and how they received new life in Jesus. Christians have the most excellent news the world has ever heard, and it's merely that Jesus saves. It is this message of hope that a hopeless world is desperate to hear. The Apostle Paul states,

For, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news! (Rom. 10:13–15).

The fourth core value that FBCPB emphasizes is the value of "Strengthening." The Christian life is impossible to live in one's strength. FBCPB believes that the power required for living an empowered life comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God within God's children. It is the presence of God that resides within each believer that becomes the source of strength for them to follow Jesus faithfully. Romans 8:9–11 says,

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

"Strengthening" also emphasizes discipleship. Every person is strongly encouraged to participate in FBCPB Connection classes that meet on Sunday mornings, a life group that meets throughout the week, or discipleship classes that meet on Wednesday nights. FBCPB believes that connecting with other people will help encourage spiritual growth as they are discipled in the spiritual disciplines and bible study. Jesus has instructed the church to "make disciples" (Mt.

28:19–20), and therefore FBCPB strives to fulfill the Great Commission by strengthening its members to live for Jesus.

The Apostle Peter penned these words in his letter, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (1 Pt. 4:10). This verse guides the fifth core value of service. FBCPB believes that it is the responsibility of every member to serve. When Jesus walked the earth, He was always helping and ministering to others. Jesus said of himself in Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." As His follower, one is called to be a servant. Jesus demonstrated what the life of a servant looks like for His people, therefore, His people are to follow in His footsteps. While here on this earth one is called to be the hands and feet of Christ.

The final core value is that God's people are "Sacrificing" people. Every person that has been born is born to live; except one, Jesus was born to die. Jesus came to earth to live a life that no man could live and die a death that every person deserves to die so that people can have eternal life. Jesus came to be the perfect substitute and sacrifice that man needed. The Apostle Peter writes, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Pt. 3:18). In Jesus' coming, God the Father demonstrated what genuine sacrifice looks like by giving everything in His Son. Once a person has been exposed to that incredible sacrificial gift, they become empowered to sacrifice for Jesus. One makes sacrifices because God sacrificed everything for them. Jesus is the motivation for sacrificial giving.

FBCPB has made a significant impact on Poplar Bluff's citizens and has been instrumental in the life of the city throughout its history. Outreach has been a vital part of the church's numerical growth; however, this researcher has become concerned with the spiritual

growth of the membership. Although they would affirm that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God, it appears that the majority of the church lacks a complete understanding and knowledge of how to read the Bible accurately. The researcher believes that the church membership would affirm that the Bible is about Jesus, but they would be unable to make the connections from Genesis to Revelation.

Over the last three years of being the lead pastor, the researcher has observed a lack of biblical theology among the church membership. This discovery has become disheartening due to the faithfulness of many church members. The church members' inability to find Jesus in the text has troubled this researcher because this inability has not just plagued the younger members but is also prevalent in the senior members. Another contributing factor to the researcher's troubled spirit is that biblical theology is also lacking among church leadership. To the best of this researcher's knowledge, there has been no biblical theological training among the leaders, connection group teachers, and small group teachers over the years. The researcher's heart desire is to change this.

One way that the researcher has begun to combat the lack of biblical theology among church members is by instituting a church-wide Bible reading plan. This plan was birthed from church members' responses, who admitted that they did not regularly read their Bible. At the time, only 30% of people read the Bible with daily consistency. The Bible reading plan was developed and implemented in January of 2020.

The researcher did not want to overwhelm the members with a robust reading plan, so the researcher and his ministry team developed a beginner's reading plan that consisted of a five-day week plan. When the church is ready to begin a new book of the Bible, the church staff releases a short video on the FBCPB media pages that introduces the book which allows the members to

gain a background knowledge of the book, including its author, the original audience, and the overall message of the book. At the end of the current year, the church will have read through thirteen books of the Bible along with parts of other Old and New Testament books. The Bible reading plan will become a routine practice in the life of FBCPB (See Appendix B for FBCPB 2020 & 2021 Bible Reading Plan).

The researcher was compelled to organize his preaching calendar to complement the Bible reading plan. He develops his sermon series based on the reading plan to help people grow with a deeper understanding of the text by preaching through a biblical theology lens to help people see the story's overarching narrative and how the current book fits into the grand narrative of the Bible.

Another avenue that the researcher established to help his congregation fall in love with Scripture was a monthly Bible memorization verse. Each month the church publishes the new verse of the month at the beginning of the month. The new verse is incorporated into the worship services and is posted on the church social media pages to help encourage the members to memorize the monthly verse. At the end of the inaugural year for this plan, the church will have read thirteen books of the Bible in their entirety and learned twelve verses/passages of Scripture. The 2020 Monthly Bible Verse Memorization plan is provided in Appendix C.

Problem Presented

The problem this project will address is that the current congregation of First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff in Poplar Bluff, Missouri is lacking a holistic, biblical-theological understanding of Scripture. This conclusion became apparent only a short while after the researcher became the lead pastor of the church. This problem of a deficient biblical-theological

understanding of Scripture is not only found in the pew of the occasional attendee but also throughout the faithful members, even to those who are tasked with leadership roles.

After scouring through numerous literature sources in the field of biblical theology, it seems that this problem is not only true of FBC Poplar Bluff; it is a problem plaguing many congregations. Though much has been written on biblical theology, not many sources currently instruct on how to implement the teaching of biblical theology in a lay person format to help them gain understanding. One of the major factors that has contributed to lay people's deficient biblical theology understanding of the Bible sadly seems to be the lack of biblical theology in the pulpit. Pastors are being called to lead churches while it appears that they themselves suffer from the same anemic biblical theology. The lack of training and education on this much needed topic has negatively impacted the local church.

The lack of biblical theological training has trickled down and affected every generation represented within the FBCPB congregation. The church membership roll is filled with people with different backgrounds, including home life, educational experiences, and careers. However, the lack of hunger for God's Word and the inability to read it as one story has become apparent to this researcher. Questions that arise and statements that have been made over the past from church members have troubled this researcher and have confirmed his suspicions. Biblical theological training has escaped the congregation of FBCPB.

It is possible for one to read a story, find it captivating, and entirely miss the point. Nick Roark and Robert Cline suggest that it is possible for one to focus too much on the wrong things in a story. One might read only certain paragraphs at a time, or skip from one place to another. One possibly might even attempt to develop the plot of the story from a variety of disconnected

sections. If one does any of these things, Roark and Cline believe that it's more than likely that one will misunderstand the story, both its hero and its major themes.¹⁹

When individuals and churches miss the point of the Bible, the tendency to produce false gospels and false churches becomes elevated. Roark and Cline highlight three different kinds of churches that are produced due to misreading the Bible. One of their suggestions, this researcher believes, describes many churches in the SBC including the congregation of FBCPB. It is what Roark and Cline call "The Civil-Gospel Church." The Civil-Gospel church is patriotic. This type of church believes that America is a Christian nation and is God's chosen nation, like Israel. The Civil-Gospel church misapplies passages such as 2 Chronicles 7:14 believing that America will have the same promise as Israel concerning God's blessing.²⁰

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry action research project is to teach the congregation at FBCPB how to understand the biblical theology of Scripture so that they can fully comprehend the grand-narrative of the Bible. This proposed process will take time because biblical theology is a subject that looks at the entire canon of Scripture. When instructing one on the subject of biblical theology, the best place to start is with the gospel. All of Scripture points to the gospel and therefore needs to be read through a gospel lens.

The majority of church attendees are probably familiar with a gospel presentation. Finding the gospel story in the New Testament may even come easy perhaps for the occasional church attendee. But what does one do with the Old Testament? Many Christians shy away from

¹⁹ Nick Roark and Robert Cline, *Biblical Theology: How the Church Faithfully Teaches the Gospel*, ed. Mark Dever and Jonathan Leeman (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 15.

²⁰ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 20.

the Old Testament due to its complexity and what one might call irrelevance for today. Even pastors fear diving into the Old Testament Scriptures due to a lack of understanding of the text as well as the time that must be devoted in studying these ancient writings.

The researcher introduced biblical theology to a group of the church's congregation to evaluate their understanding, or lack thereof, of biblical theology. After the initial survey, he then guided them through key points of biblical theology and how to read the Bible with a gospel understanding. He introduced the group to the subject of biblical theology along with its necessity for every Christian and the Christian church. After the groundwork was laid, the researcher began to introduce the participants to major themes in Scripture that are all connected and help communicate one grand story. Once the participants concluded their biblical theology journey, each participant was re-evaluated by the researcher to determine their growth, both on a personal level and as a group. The end results were calculated and compared to the initial results for growth analysis.

Basic Assumptions

As previously stated, the researcher has served as the lead pastor of FBCPB since January 2017. Through his short tenure, the researcher has noticed a lack of understanding pertaining to biblical theology among the congregation. This assumption is based on previous conversations with church members and church leaders. However, the researcher has not had discussions with every church member and attendee. Therefore, although he believes this assumption to be accurate, he has no concrete evidence that his theory is valid for the entire church body.

Once the evaluation process began with the participants, it was assumed that each participant would submit honest answers and responses. One way the researcher planned on

maintaining honesty among the participants was to practice anonymity. Anonymous surveys should allow each participant to feel the freedom to respond appropriately and truthfully. However, before the classes began, most of the participants expressed no concern in adding their names to the survey.

The researcher assumes that each participant in the study has a desire to gain a better understanding of biblical theology. He thinks that the people participating in the project have an innate desire to read the Bible accurately. The researcher believes that all those who agreed to go on this journey with him will grow spiritually. The outcome will be that every participant has grasped the idea that the Bible tells one unified story. They will be able to discern every passage in its original context and be able to place it in the overall context of the Bible.

Definitions

Action Research – “Action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives. Unlike experimental or quantitative research that looks for generalizable explanations related to a small number of variables, action research seeks to engage the complex dynamics involved in any social context..”²¹ The action research that was used in this project allowed the researcher to gather data to determine the overall health of the congregation of FBCPB with the hopes of finding solutions to help increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the work. The overall goal of the action research for this project is to increase the spiritual growth of the participants.

Biblical Theology – “Biblical theology is the study of the unity of the message of the Bible. It gives the means of dealing with problematic passages in the Bible by relating them to

²¹ Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 1.

the one message of the Bible.”²² Biblical theology enables one to relate any Bible story to the whole message of the Bible, and therefore to ourselves. It shows the relationship of all parts of the Old Testament to the person and work of Jesus Christ and, therefore, to the Christian. Biblical theology is a verbal map of the overall message of the Bible. It assumes some kind of unity to the Bible, and that there is, indeed, one overall message rather than a number of unrelated themes. Biblical theology enables us to map out the unity of the Bible by looking at its message as a whole.

Covenant – Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum²³ along with Thomas R. Schreiner²⁴ define covenant as a chosen relationship between two parties ordered according to specific promises. “Covenant is a biblical concept which refers primarily to God’s commitment to his people, and that Jesus is presented as bringing about a renewal of the covenant of the Old Testament through the gospel event.”²⁵

Typology – “Typology demonstrates a structural unity to the Bible and its story through patterns of smaller stories. These repetitive, smaller stories build up and point to the climax of the one big story of the Bible, the person and work of Jesus.”²⁶ Typological structure of Scripture can be followed from its beginning in Genesis to its end in Christ. This way of seeing the entirety of Scripture as one big book with one big theme allows one to note how a particular text fits into one or more of these major patterns, or types.

²² Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1991), 20–24.

²³ Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 54.

²⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Covenant And God’s Purpose for the World* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 13.

²⁵ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 73.

²⁶ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 12, 83.

Limitations

First Baptist Church Poplar Bluff

The first limitation of this current DMIN project is that it deals specifically with the congregation of First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff of Poplar Bluff, Missouri. The unique setting of this current SBC congregation is the context of this research. This study's efforts focus specifically on the understanding of biblical theology among the membership of FBCPB; however, the findings of this research can be generalized outside of this local body of believers.

Participation

The researcher will be limited to participants for the current study. Although the researcher desires to interact with every member and attendee in the study, he knows that full participation is impossible. The researcher offered the study on Wednesday nights as one of the church campus's discipleship classes. The choice of the night immediately limits the participants due to other responsibilities and conflicting work schedules. The researcher is also aware that absenteeism is a potential problem for the participants, along with study dropouts due to lack of interest or conflicting schedules.

Honesty

The researcher has no control over the honesty of the participants. He desires that each participant be honest during the initial and concluding evaluations to obtain accurate information. The participant's truthfulness on the assessments is crucial for gauging the researcher's assumptions. However, the researcher knows that the concluding evaluation will not present an overall honest evaluation of the entire FBCPB church body.

Delimitations

Location

For this particular study, the location has been established to take place on the campus of FBCPB. SBC churches are located around the United States, but the congregation of FBCPB has been chosen for this specific project.

Topic

Multiple topics could have been chosen to study among the congregation of FBCPB; however, the researcher has developed a particular burden for the lack of biblical theology that is being expressed in the local church. Therefore, the researcher has deemed biblical theology to be the central focus of his DMIN project.

Timing

The researcher chose to conduct his study on Wednesday nights. This weekday night was chosen due to the current on-campus activities. This particular night is set aside for midweek Bible studies and student activities; therefore, conducting this study on Wednesday night will hopefully attract more participants due to it falling on a night that is established for church activities and provided childcare.

Participation

The researcher allowed participants of all ages, excluding the ages of 0 to 17, to be a part of his research project. This project welcomes all individuals who are willing to participate. However, the researcher has deemed the number of participants to be thirty to forty individuals.

Thesis Statement

If the congregation of First Baptist Church Poplar Bluff receives teaching on the biblical theology of Scripture, they may appreciate the whole narrative of Scripture. It is this researcher's hope that once the people begin to read the Bible through a gospel lens they will become eager to dive deeper into the Word of God. It is also the hope of this researcher that a solid biblical theology affects not only the individual's spiritual growth but also the spiritual growth of the entire church body. A proper biblical theology does not just influence how one reads God's Word; it also influences how one views and lives life. Biblical theology helps develop a person's worldview and allows a person to understand their place in God's story.

God calls every one of His followers to be a witness for His glory and to share the gospel story. This is not just a call that is placed on certain individuals who have surrendered to serve in the ministry. The exhortation to evangelize the world is for every Christian. Every Christian has a story to tell about God's redemption and it's a story that the world needs to hear. God has placed His people all over the world in a variety of occupations with different spheres of influence to proclaim the good news of salvation.

A firm grasp of biblical theology enables one to understand their God given call and assignment. God has strategically equipped and positioned His people to carry out His plan of reaching the nations. Biblical theology is a study that encourages an individual and the church to fulfill God's purpose.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

In chapter two, the researcher will offer a literature review of biblical theology. Within this review, he will discuss the themes that appear in the works of the major contributors. Chapter two will also include both theological and theoretical foundations for the topic of biblical theology.

Literature Review

Defining Biblical Theology

Over the years, there have been various attempts to define biblical theology. Though every writer defines it in their own wording, the overall consensus is the same. Graeme Goldsworthy defines biblical theology as the study of the unified story of Scripture.²⁷ The Bible is not a compilation of sixty-six different books with no relevance to the other books. Desmond T. Alexander emphasizes that every book needs all the other books, and should never be isolated from the others, to communicate God's grand story.²⁸ According to Vaughan Roberts, the Bible is one book that tells one story that ultimately is written by one divine author.²⁹ Through the Holy Spirit, God inspired over forty different authors over a span of centuries, the precise words that He wanted them to write down. Not one word written in the Bible is uninspired by God. He chose to operate through human authors to communicate His story to people. At the heart of that story is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

²⁷ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 20.

²⁸ Desmond T. Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2008), 10.

²⁹ Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), 21.

Biblical theology attempts to read the whole story of the Bible and seeks to understand how each part relates to the entire story. Roark and Cline state that, “Biblical theology is a way of reading the Bible as one story by one divine author that culminates in who Jesus Christ is and what he has done, so that every part of Scripture is understood in relation to Him.”³⁰ The practice of biblical theology helps individuals understand the Bible as one book with many books telling one grand story.

The centerpiece of this grand story is the second member of the Trinity, God’s beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate. Therefore, one can say that the unifying theme that runs from Genesis to Revelation is Jesus. Matthew Y. Emerson notes that the subject matter of the entire canon of Scripture is God’s testimony to Christ.³¹ Goldsworthy concurs that biblical theology, then, is the study of how every text in Scripture relates to Jesus and His gospel.³²

One Story

If the Bible is one unified story about Christ, how does God reveal that story through both testaments? People today tend to shy away from the Old Testament due to its difficulty and apparent lack of the gospel. However, the Old Testament is full of the gospel message, and one cannot understand the New Testament message of Jesus without the Old Testament. The New Testament overwhelmingly testifies that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament, which is another way of saying that the Old Testament is about Jesus.³³ Norman Geisler says, “Christ is presented as the tie between the Testaments, the content of the whole canon, and the unifying theme within

³⁰ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 26.

³¹ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 11.

³² Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 40.

³³ Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Son of God and the New Creation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 21–22.

each book of the Bible.”³⁴ Christopher J. H. Wright says, “The Old Testament tells the story which Jesus completes.”³⁵ Jesus himself said that the Old Testament was about Him. David Murray highlights the Emmaus road experience. Murray mentions that after his resurrection, Jesus appears to two travelers on the Emmaus Road (Lk. 24) and interpreted the Old Testament Scriptures in light of Jesus’ identity as the Messiah and His work.³⁶ Wright observes, “If the Old Testament were eliminated from the Bible, it would lose most of the meaning of Jesus himself.”³⁷

Goldsworthy proposes that the best way to grasp the grand story of the Bible is to begin with Jesus and the gospel.³⁸ If Jesus is the key to interpreting the entire Bible, one should start with Him. By beginning in Genesis 1, it would prove to be difficult for most to interpret the Old Testament accurately. However, if one starts with Christ, one can read the Old Testament with a gospel lens to see how those ancient texts point to Jesus.³⁹

The Bible has a narrative arc⁴⁰ that begins at creation (Gen. 1) and rises over all the books of the Bible, and lands at the end of all things (Rev. 22). The Bible’s big story, this overarching narrative, is communicated through smaller stories. The Old Testament stories are arranged to set up a mystery that is resolved in Christ in the New Testament. The Old Testament points forward

³⁴ Norman Geisler quoted in Tony Merida, “Preaching the Forest and the Trees: Integrating Biblical Theology with Expository Preaching,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* vol. 6, no. 2 (2009): 37.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ David Murray, *Jesus on Every Page: 10 Simple Ways to Seek and Find Christ in the Old Testament* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 15.

³⁷ Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1992), 35.

³⁸ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 55.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ James M. Hamilton Jr., *What is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 12.

to Christ and promises His coming in the future. The New Testament proclaims and reveals Jesus to be the one who fulfills all those promises. Roberts states,

The Old Testament on its own is an unfinished story; a promise without a fulfillment. We must read on to the New Testament if we want to know what it really means. And the New Testament constantly looks back to the promise it fulfills. The Bible must be understood and read as one book with one ultimate author, God, and one ultimate subject, God's plan of salvation through His Son Jesus.⁴¹

Genealogies tell God's story of sending His Redeemer through a bloodline. Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus for a reason. Matthew knows that one will not be able to understand the story he is setting out to tell about Jesus unless one sees it in the light of a much longer story that goes back many centuries. Wright mentions that this longer story is the history of the Hebrew Scriptures, or what it is called today, the Old Testament.⁴² It is this Old Testament story with all of its promises, prophecies, shadows, and types that Jesus brings to their climactic fulfillment.

Thus, when one moves from the Old Testament to the New Testament, one discovers a connecting link that is crucial for interpretation. Wright calls it a "central historical interface binding together the two great acts of God's drama of salvation."⁴³ Wright agrees with Roberts that Jesus sheds light backward on the Old Testament story, and it is the Old Testament story that Jesus completes. When one reads the two Testaments together, God's plan of redemption is unfolded.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*, 21.

⁴² Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*, 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

The Bible's Plot

Every story has a central plot, and along the way, subplots may be introduced into the storyline. Hunter and Wellum propose four major plot movements that are in agreement with Emerson and James M. Hamilton Jr. that can be identified in Scripture as creation, fall, redemption, and new creation.⁴⁵ Wellum believes that the Bible is “glued” together by these plot movements.⁴⁶ The Bible's grand story begins with God's creation of the world and its fall into sin through Adam and Eve. The rest of the story reveals God's plan of redemption for humanity and the world.

Scripture's plot begins in Genesis 1 with the making of the world (cosmic temple), which is corrupted and defiled by sin (Gen. 3). After sin plagued the world, God promises restoration (Gen. 3:15). Eventually, God creates a nation (Israel) for himself and gives them a small-scale version (microcosms) of the intended cosmos when He gives them the sacred spaces of the tabernacle and later on the temple. God eventually allows both the tabernacle and the temple to be destroyed, pointing to the future judgment that God will bring on the world (macrocosm). After this cosmic judgment, God will usher in a new and better world (cosmic temple), a new heaven and new earth. At this point of restoration, Hamilton concludes that God will make things better than the original beginning.⁴⁷

A promised bloodline is carefully traced through the Old Testament beginning from Adam and continuing through Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, finally culminating in Jesus, the promised Messiah. Scripture's genealogies carefully preserve this bloodline from

⁴⁵ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 51.

⁴⁶ Stephen Wellum, “From Alpha to Omega: A Biblical-Theological Approach to God the Son Incarnate,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 1 (2020): 80.

⁴⁷ Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology*, 29.

Adam to Jesus. Jesus is the singular seed of the woman that God promised in the Garden of Eden. Jesus' cross is the plot's "great twist"⁴⁸ according to Hamilton. At the cross, the long-awaited Redeemer came, yet was killed. The plot will finally culminate in the return of Christ to judge His enemies and save His people. God's people will join Him in the new creation and be transformed, and at that point, the plot will be resolved.

James M. Hamilton Jr. believes that every plot is made up of events or episodes (subplots). He identifies five episodes in the Bible's plot that are worth mentioning: "The exile from Eden, the exodus from Egypt, the exile from the land, the death of Jesus on the cross, and the promise of his return in glory."⁴⁹ Jesus is seen in all Scripture by recognizing him in the Bible's unfolding plotline and discovering how, in God's eternal plan, all of God's promises and various persons, events, and institutions were intended by God to anticipate, foreshadow, and typify the eternal Son to come.⁵⁰

God's Covenants

What moves the narrative along from creation and fall to redemption and restoration (new creation) are the different covenants God makes with His people to bring restoration to His kingdom.⁵¹ There is a significant debate on how to divide the Bible's plot movements. Wellum argues that the best way to identify the Bible's plot movements is to place them in their proper covenants. Every biblical text should first be viewed in its immediate context. Then, place them

⁴⁸ Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology*, 31.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁵⁰ Wellum, "From Alpha to Omega," 82.

⁵¹ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 70.

in terms of the covenants (creation, Noah, Abraham, Israel, David, and the prophetic era that anticipates the new covenant).⁵²

Goldsworthy identifies that a covenant is a biblical concept that refers primarily to how God relates and is committed to His people.⁵³ The word covenant communicates who God is and how He acts. On the subject of the covenant, Hunter and Wellum suggest that a covenant informs one that God enters into relationships, and He chooses to enter into relationships with people.⁵⁴ Alistair I. Wilson and Jamie A. Grant state, “At its most basic, covenant presents God’s desire to enter into relationship with men and women created in his image. This is reflected in the repeated covenant refrain, ‘I will be your God and you will be my people’ (Exodus 6:6–8; Lev. 26:12). Covenant is all about relationship between the Creator and His creation.”⁵⁵ Biblical covenants bring order, direction, and focus to the story of God’s redemption of fallen humanity, and covenants are how the Bible’s story moves along from beginning to end. A covenant is a chosen relationship between two parties ordered according to specific promises. Jeremy M. Kimble and Ched Spellman define biblical covenant as a “relationship in the biblical storyline between God and a group of His created people based on a spoken promise.”⁵⁶ Most scholars identify six covenants in the biblical storyline that God established with His people: Covenant with Adam (Gen. 1–3, esp. 1:26–31; 2:15–17); Covenant with Noah (Gen. 6–9, esp. 8:20–9:17); Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12–22, esp. 12:1–7; 15:1–21); Covenant with Moses and Israel

⁵² Wellum, “From Alpha to Omega,” 78.

⁵³ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 73.

⁵⁴ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 54.

⁵⁵ Alistair I. Wilson and Jamie A. Grant, “Introduction,” in *The God of Covenant: Biblical, Theological, and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Jamie A. Grant and Alistair I. Wilson (Leicester, UK: Apollos, 2005), 12.

⁵⁶ Jeremy M. Kimble and Ched Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology: Exploring the Shape, Storyline, and Themes of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2020), 66.

(Ex. 19–24); Covenant with David (2 Sam. 7, esp. 7:8–17; 1 Chron. 17); The New Covenant in Christ (Deut. 30:6–10; Jer. 31:31–35; Ezek. 36:22–32; Heb. 8–10).⁵⁷

All of Scripture is tied together through the covenants God makes with His people. Hunter and Wellum are in agreement that the one covenant of salvation God makes with His people can be traced throughout the Old Testament and culminates with the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus.⁵⁸ God’s covenants are part of His one plan of salvation and His covenants progress⁵⁹ from one to another. Kimble and Spellman note that the covenant progression is visible as one navigates through the biblical storyline.⁶⁰ Emerson gives the example of David entering into a royal covenant with God in 2 Samuel 7. This covenant expands on the previous covenants made with Abraham and with Israel, promising that a son of David will reign on the throne forever.⁶¹ Walter C. Kaiser Jr. states, “The key biblical-theological point of view in 1 and 2 Samuel is the way God’s earlier promises given to the patriarchs and to Israel are being fulfilled in the appointment and reign of David.”⁶²

Understanding the covenants is key to comprehending God’s unfolding plan of redemption. The theme of covenant draws a line through the Old Testament Scriptures and points to the Old Testament’s fulfillment in the new covenant, inaugurated in the person and work of Christ.⁶³ Kimble, Spellman, and Emerson agree that biblical covenants form the

⁵⁷ Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 66.

⁵⁸ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 14.

⁵⁹ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 60.

⁶⁰ Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 290.

⁶¹ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 46.

⁶² Walter C. Kaiser Jr. *The Promise–Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 113.

⁶³ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 70.

“backbone” of Scripture.⁶⁴ Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum concur that the covenants form the backbone of the Bible’s metanarrative and assert, “it is essential to ‘put them together’ correctly in order to discern accurately the ‘whole counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27).”⁶⁵ Michael Horton captures this idea as he writes that the biblical covenants are “the architectural structure that we believe the Scriptures themselves to yield. . . . It is not simply the concept of the covenant, but the concrete existence of God’s covenantal dealings in our history that provides the context within which we recognize the unity of Scripture amid its remarkable variety.”⁶⁶

God’s Kingdom

The covenants are God’s promises to restore the kingdom of God that was established but lost in the Garden of Eden. When one reaches the New Testament, they discover the theocracy of Israel is replaced by the kingdom of God, which is inaugurated through the coming of Jesus. According to Alexander, the establishment of this kingdom, which is one of the central themes of the Gospels, is intimately connected with who Jesus is and what He does.⁶⁷ The life and work of Jesus is not simply good news because it redeems sinner’s souls. Rather, as Emerson points out, it is good news because it is the good news of the kingdom; the good news that, through Jesus, God has restored His kingdom that was lost in the fall and later prefigured in Israel.⁶⁸

Genesis 1–2 is the perfect picture of what God intended for the earth and humanity. One discovers in the Garden of Eden a pattern of the kingdom of God. God’s people, Adam and Eve,

⁶⁴ Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 290.

⁶⁵ Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 17.

⁶⁶ Michael S. Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 13.

⁶⁷ Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 89.

⁶⁸ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 73.

live in God's place, the Garden of Eden, under God's rule; thus, they enjoy God's blessing.

Roberts notes that ever since the disruption of the fall, God has been working to re-establish His kingdom and to redeem His people.⁶⁹

The four gospel writers referenced the kingdom over one hundred twenty times. With that many references there is little doubt that the kingdom is a major theme in God's story. Mark informs his readers that Jesus began his ministry with the announcement, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk. 1:15, ESV). Goldsworthy observes that Jesus evidently understands Himself to be the bringer of the kingdom that fulfills the expectations of Israel in the Old Testament.⁷⁰ Thus, Roberts is in agreement with a multitude of authors that the kingdom of God was a dominant theme in Jesus' teaching and ministry.⁷¹ Preben Vang and Terry G. Carter state:

Everywhere he went, Jesus preached the message that God's kingdom had come near. For three years he walked and taught. His message was consistent in both word and deed. God's kingdom had come near. Some people were confused, however, because their expectations of the promised Messiah were so different from what they saw in Jesus. Even John the Baptist, who himself had looked forward to God's intervention, became confused and sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one to come. Jesus sent these words back to John the Baptist: "Tell John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and good news is preached to the poor."⁷²

Jesus never verbally defined the kingdom of God. Brian Gleeson observes that He lived it out visually, particularly through His relationships with people, including His relationships with sinners, outcasts, and through His healings and exorcisms. Jesus mostly disclosed what the

⁶⁹ Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*, 33.

⁷⁰ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 50.

⁷¹ Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 22.

⁷² Preben Vang and Terry G. Carter, *Telling God's Story: The Biblical Narrative from Beginning to End*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013), 5.

kingdom of God meant through His parables, metaphors, similes, and images in His teachings.⁷³ Thus, everything Jesus did and said was demonstrating the kingdom of God before human eyes.

There is a tension concerning the kingdom that scholars label the “already not yet.” Jesus has indeed ushered in the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom has not yet been fully consummated. In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, He delivers an interesting contrast between present and future rewards (Mt. 5:2–10). Alexander discusses this contrast and believes that this contrast is significant because it highlights that although God’s kingdom is a present reality, the final consummation of the kingdom awaits in the future.⁷⁴ Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen observe that the kingdom is real in the church’s present life, but the anticipation of its future completion is also the church’s great hope.⁷⁵ Christians eagerly await the restoration of this world (new heaven and new earth). And it is at this restoration that God’s kingdom will be fully restored and culminate the biblical story.

Typology

One of the ways the Bible moves its storyline is by using typology. Tony Merida has defined typology as it relates to Christ’s person and work “as the study of the correspondence between persons, events, and institutions that first appear in the Old Testament and preview, prepare, or more fully express New Testament salvation truths.”⁷⁶ God provides types in the Old Testament to point to a greater future fulfillment. Biblical authors note that in God’s plan, He has

⁷³ Brian Gleeson, “The Mission of the Kingdom of God: Ultimate Source of Meaning, Value and Energy for Jesus,” *The Australian Catholic Record* 93, no. 3 (2016): 329.

⁷⁴ Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 95.

⁷⁵ Craig Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our place in the Biblical Story*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 211.

⁷⁶ Merida, “Preaching the Forest and the Trees,” 37.

established the story and unveiled its significance through various patterns. God is not random, and these patterns serve a purpose to communicate a greater truth about God's plan of redemption. Emerson expresses that, "Jesus is the centerpiece of God's story and fulfills the Old Testament; thus, Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of every biblical type."⁷⁷

Salvation

God's grand story is a story of his plan of redemption and salvation. When humanity fell in the garden, man became in need of salvation. God promised that He would send a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15) to restore humanity. The events that accomplished salvation were events that were orchestrated by the hand of God. Hamilton observes that God sent His Son, Jesus, to accomplish our salvation at the right moment in history and to ensure the biblical plot's resolution.⁷⁸

The God who acts in the Old Testament is the God who becomes flesh in the New Testament in order to achieve the saving work of the world.⁷⁹ In the Old Testament, salvation occurred the same way as it does in the New Testament—by grace. One sees God's grace on display with Noah and the patriarchs. Noah did nothing to earn God's favor; God chose him just like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through this bloodline, God promised that the world would be blessed (Gen. 12:1–3). God narrows His redemptive focus to the one man, one nation, but His ultimate purpose is to bring redemptive blessing to the whole creation. Bartholomew and Goheen believe that God's promise to Abraham is God's answer to sin, which has corrupted the entire creation: God will restore His world.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 64–65.

⁷⁸ Hamilton, Jr., *What is Biblical Theology*, 32.

⁷⁹ Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 6.

⁸⁰ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 53.

Roberts observes that God’s plan of salvation includes everything, spiritual and physical. God made everything in the beginning, and he will redeem everything in the end. In Exodus, one is introduced to the Passover, which is a picture of God’s great act of salvation. The Passover teaches that salvation comes by way of a substitute. Roberts argues that the Passover is only a shadow of the greater deliverance that would come through Jesus’ cross.⁸¹

God’s salvation story always includes a substitute that dies in place of sinners. The Old Testament sacrifices point ahead to the perfect sacrifice offered by Jesus’ death on the cross. God’s plan of salvation is not limited to humanity alone, but it includes all of creation. Roberts says, “The Creator of all things is committed to completely undoing the effects of the fall and renewing the whole world.”⁸²

Need for Biblical Theology

Biblical illiteracy has not only plagued the non-Christian but is also rampant in churches. Although the Bible continues to be the best-selling book yearly, many do not know how to read it. Though some may have their favorite verses or Bible stories, many do not understand how that particular passage or story fits within God’s great plan. Therefore, to read the Bible faithfully, the way God intended for it to be read, one needs the proper tools. Biblical theology is one of those tools. Biblical theology helps clarify the Bible’s main purpose. Biblical theology helps one to understand Scripture’s main purpose by looking at each passage or story in Scripture in light of the whole Bible so that one can see how every part relates to Jesus. Roark and Cline note that biblical theology also helps guard and guide the church. It guards the church against proclaiming a false gospel and guides the church in keeping the gospel’s proclamation at

⁸¹ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*, 66–67.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 104.

the forefront of the church's mission. Biblical theology also helps in evangelism, along with the reading and teaching of Scripture.⁸³ Kimble and Spellman observe the need for biblical theology in their statement, "When one properly reads the Bible, the glory of God is displayed through its pages. Understanding the Bible's plot affects our reading and influences our living. As our knowledge of God increases, so does one's prayer life."⁸⁴ Therefore, biblical theology is vital for the overall health and mission of the church, as well as individual believers.

Many people become frustrated when reading the Bible and give up. But when one gives up, they are missing the most important words ever spoken to man—the very words of God. Yes, the Bible is complex and complicated in some areas, but what if the complexity is meant to introduce us to Jesus? What if all the characters, events, and symbols are the way to know Christ? The better one understands the Bible's story, the better one can fathom God's glory. But if one reads the story inaccurately, they risk misunderstanding who Jesus is and why His work is necessary and unique. Hunter and Wellum agree that getting the Bible's story right is foundational for knowing Christ.⁸⁵ Emerson believes that biblical theology's purpose is to lead one to discover Christ in all of Scripture. He observes that biblical theology's purpose is to help one see the Bible's big picture and how the smaller plots fit together into one story.⁸⁶

Biblical Theology versus Systematic Theology

Biblical theology is a discipline in the field of theology. But, there are scholars who have dedicated their lives to the other disciplines in this family. For instance, one discipline that is not

⁸³ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 17–19.

⁸⁴ Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 420.

⁸⁵ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 20.

⁸⁶ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 85.

observed in this project but is closely related to biblical theology is the study of systematic theology. Systematic theology focuses on particular topics within Christian doctrine. This discipline looks at what the entire Bible says about a particular subject and develops a concise statement of belief. But biblical theology focuses on the biblical storyline of redemption. Roark and Cline state, “Systematic theology begins with key topics (God, man, sin, Christ, salvation, etc.) and then searches the Scriptures to see what they teach about them. On the other hand, biblical theology attempts to read the whole story of the Bible and asks how each part relates to the whole.”⁸⁷ Vos says, “Biblical theology draws a line of development. Systematic theology draws a circle.”⁸⁸

Theological Foundations

One of the best ways to understand the Bible as God’s story is to follow the covenants. The covenants tell of God’s relationship with His people and each covenant points to the future fulfillment of redemption and restoration.

God’s Covenant with Creation through Adam and Noah

God’s Word begins with the creation account of all things in Genesis 1–2. At the pinnacle of God’s creation is the creation of humanity, who was created in God’s image. Genesis 1:26–27 says, “(26) Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ (27) So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (NIV).

⁸⁷ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 26.

⁸⁸ Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 16.

Theologians have long reflected on the meaning and significance of the creation of human beings in God's image.⁸⁹ As God's image-bearers, humanity was designed to represent God to the world, and they were able to have a special relationship with God that the rest of creation could not have. Every human was created with a soul, meaning they have a spiritual life, enabling them to commune with God.⁹⁰ God established a covenant with Adam, and he was to rule the earth as God's supervisor. The "ruling" and "subduing" "over all the earth" expresses Adam's kingship and is plausibly part of a functional definition of the divine image in which Adam was made.

G. K. Beale suggests that, "This functional aspect is likely the focus of what it means that Adam and Eve were created in God's image."⁹¹ Adam's role is clearly established in Genesis 1:28–30 and 2:15–17:

God blessed them and said to them, '(28) Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' (29) Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. (30) And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food.' And it was so. (Gen.1:28–30, NIV)

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (16) And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; (17) but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (Gen. 2:15–17, NIV)

Therefore, God created Adam and Eve to be "fruitful and multiply and fill all the earth with other worshippers and image bearers of Yahweh, to rule over the land he gave them, to cultivate and keep the good land he gave them, and to obey his law he gave to govern them."⁹²

⁸⁹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King In His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 6.

⁹⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary*, Boice Commentary Series, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 91.

⁹¹ G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 30.

Adam became man's representative, the head of humanity, and when Adam disobeyed God's command, his sinful choice affected all humanity and the whole of creation. But God did not give up on mankind. In the midst of one of the world's darkest moments, God gave a glimpse of hope as he spoke about a promised redeemer who would come and reverse the curse. In Genesis 3:15, known as the protoevangelium ("proto-gospel"⁹³), God says to the Serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." The promise in Genesis 3:15 is a promise that one day, God will redeem the world. The remainder of Genesis depicts the search for the promised "seed."

After the Fall of humanity, every human heart became plagued with sin. Eventually, God would judge the world by flood because of man's disobedience. Though the world was immersed in sin, one man found "favor" with God. Genesis 6:8 says, "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (NIV).

The word "favor" can also be translated as "grace" and usually indicates securing approval and provision.⁹⁴ The Bible also describes Noah as a "righteous man" who was "blameless" among the people and who walked with God faithfully (Gen.6:9). The account of Noah is recorded in Genesis 6–9, and it tells of how God saved a remnant of humanity and two of every kind of animal. God chose to show grace toward Noah and his family, and they were spared from God's judgment. Through one man, a people were saved. After the floodwaters had

⁹² Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 22.

⁹³ Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 70.

⁹⁴ Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, vol. 1A, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 345.

resided, Noah exited the ark with his family and built an altar. God then made a covenant with Noah, promising never to destroy the world by flood again. God says,

I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you – the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you – every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. (Gen. 9:9–13, NIV)

Hunter and Wellum accurately acknowledge that Noah’s story bears some similarities to the original creation story, giving one a hint that this is a “restart” on creation.⁹⁵ God instructed Noah, as he did Adam, to fill the earth and rule over it. God’s covenant with Noah is a reaffirmation of the foundational covenant with Adam and creation. The covenant that God established with Noah is an extension of God’s covenant with Adam, but it also points to God’s plan to save the world.⁹⁶

God’s Covenant with Abraham and His Children

The message of Genesis 4–11 depicts a world engrossed in sin, and the only hope of restoration is God’s intervention through the promised seed of Eve. That promised seed comes through Abraham’s line, and it is with this one man that God will establish his covenant and fulfill His promise to redeem and restore the world. Abraham did nothing to merit God’s favor; he was chosen by God and promised to bless him with a great name, land, and offspring to bring salvation to all the nations. One reads in Genesis 12:2–3, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those

⁹⁵ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 56.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

God’s promises to Abraham inform the reader that the promised seed will come from Abraham and his family. Christopher J. H. Wright says, “They will neither be the agent by whom nor the source from which blessing will come, but they will be the means through which God (the true agent and source) will extend his blessing to the universal scope of his promise.”⁹⁷ It is important to note that this verse is not referencing the salvation of all humanity. It does not mean that every individual will ultimately be blessed through Abraham. Rather, it is speaking to the hope that the saving mission of God is extended to the whole world, to all peoples, to all ethnic groups. This is what is envisioned in Revelation 7:9 where God’s blessing includes all kinds of people from all over the world.⁹⁸

God seals these promises with another covenant in Genesis 15, and in Genesis 17. God establishes circumcision as the sign of the covenant. In Genesis 21, one reads that in God’s timing, Abraham and Sarah have their promised son from God and name him Isaac. In chapter 22, God tests Abraham by calling him to sacrifice his beloved son. Abraham obeyed God and believed that God would provide the sacrificial lamb. God indeed provided a ram to be sacrificed in place of Isaac. Abraham had a unique insight on that day into the way that God would be the one to provide a sacrificial lamb for the salvation of His people.⁹⁹ From this point on, the rest of the narrative focuses on Abraham’s family: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s twelve sons. At the end of Genesis, Jacob, also known as Israel, prophesied that in the last days, a “lion king” would come

⁹⁷ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 253.

⁹⁸ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 254.

⁹⁹ Iain M. Duguid, *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality: The Gospel According to Abraham*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2015), 145.

from the line of his son, Judah. He said, “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his” (Gen. 49:10, NIV).¹⁰⁰

The Abrahamic covenant was a unilateral covenant established by God. Iain M. Duguid states, “It is striking that nine out of the thirteen times that this chapter (Gen. 17) uses the word ‘covenant,’ the Lord calls it ‘my covenant.’ Since it is his covenant, he initiates the relationship, and he sets the terms. He even dictates who will be the heir of the covenant in the next generation.”¹⁰¹ This covenant would remain intact regardless of Abraham’s faithfulness. The aim of this covenant was to establish a plan to deal with humanity’s sin based on God’s grace and mercy. People did not deserve redemption, but God would provide it through the seed of Abraham.¹⁰²

One might suspect that Abraham would be the promised seed, and though Abraham is a picture of salvation, he also represents humanity’s sinful state. Abraham, just like Adam and Noah, could not completely obey God. Disobedience will continue to be the problem throughout Israel’s history. These men needed the seed of the woman to come and destroy evil and be obedient for them.

God’s Covenant with Israel through Moses

At the end of Genesis, God’s people have made their home in the land of Egypt to survive the great famine. When the Bible turns the page to the book of Exodus, three and half centuries have passed, and the land of Egypt is populated with Israelites who find themselves in

¹⁰⁰ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 38.

¹⁰¹ Duguid, *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality*, 78.

¹⁰² Vang and Carter, *Telling God’s Story*, 78.

slavery to the Egyptians. God hears their cries and calls Moses (Ex. 3) to return to lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

God displays his glory and dismantles Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods by sending ten plagues of judgment. Before the 10th plague, the killing of the firstborn, God gives specific instructions (Ex. 12) for the Israelites. Every Israelite household was to choose a spotless one-year-old lamb, and at the appropriate time, they were to kill the lamb and smear the lamb's blood on their doorframes (Ex. 12: 3–7). The blood would serve as a sign to the angel of the Lord to pass over those homes and all the people in the home would be spared from God's judgment.¹⁰³

Moses instructed the Israelites,

Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. (Ex. 12: 22–23)

Moses also instructs the people to prepare to flee Egypt and to eat in haste due to their quick departure. This dramatic scene is known as the Passover. Once the final plague strikes the land of Egypt, Pharaoh finally tells the Israelites to leave Egypt, only to quickly change his mind and pursue them to the bank of the Red Sea. Israel appears trapped with nowhere to turn, and Moses instructs Israel, too, “Stand firm and you will see the deliverance of the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still” (Ex. 14: 13–14). God miraculously parts the waters of the Red Sea, and the Israelites pass through on the dry ground, and then God brings the waters crashing down on

¹⁰³ C.F. Keil, *The Pentateuch, Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, ed. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006), 328; Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 156.

the Egyptian army, and Israel is saved. This graphic picture depicts God's salvation and His judgment.¹⁰⁴

The exodus is the dominant picture of salvation in the Old Testament.¹⁰⁵ Emerson writes:

God brings judgment on his enemies through the death of the firstborn son; those who faithfully trust in his word and who, therefore, cover themselves with the lamb's blood are saved from this judgment; God saves his people from their enemies through providing victory over them; and then he brings them through the water safely to the other side. This pattern provides the type for how salvation occurs in the rest of the Old Testament and for how the New Testament authors explain Jesus's work in the New Testament.¹⁰⁶

The exodus gave birth to Israel as God's covenant people and served as a paradigm for all of God's saving acts to follow.¹⁰⁷

God leads the Israelites to Mount Sinai, the mountain where he called Moses. It is at this mountain that God gives the Israelites the law and offers them to enter into a covenant with Him (Ex. 19–24). The Israelites needed to understand what it meant to live in covenant with the God who had delivered them from Egyptian captivity. They needed to understand God's love and expectations. This is the context in which the law was given. It was given to immature believers who had to learn how to respond to God's grace and to live a life pleasing to him.¹⁰⁸ As Mark Strom notes, "The Lord did not give the law to establish his relationship with the Israelites. He

¹⁰⁴ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Exodus" in *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 2, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 389.

¹⁰⁵ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 130–139.

¹⁰⁶ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 36–37.

¹⁰⁷ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 58.

¹⁰⁸ Anthony T. Selvaggio, *From Bondage to Liberty: The Gospel According to Moses* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2014), 116.

gave it because he already had a relationship with his people and he wanted them to now learn how to express this relationship faithfully.”¹⁰⁹

Some scholars argue that this covenant is a covenant of works; however, the stronger argument is that this covenant is a covenant of grace.¹¹⁰ The latter argument’s strength comes from the idea that God has already graciously saved and delivered the Israelites from slavery.¹¹¹

J. A. Motyer states,

It was the God of salvation who imposed his law on his people; the grace that saves preceded the law that demands. The people were given the law not in order that they might become the redeemed, rather it was because they had already been redeemed that they were given the law. The law of God is the way of life he sets before those whom he has saved, and they engage in that way of life as a response of love and gratitude to God their Redeemer. Grace and law belong together, for grace leads to law; saving love leads to and excites grateful love expressed in obedience.¹¹²

Therefore, the Israelites do not keep the law in order to merit the love of God. God has already shown his love for them by delivering them from slavery in Egypt.¹¹³ By reason of having rescued Israel from Egyptian slavery, God had a claim on his chosen people.¹¹⁴ God asserts that he has the right to make these demands of Israelites.¹¹⁵ But, the order is essential for one to follow: salvation then obedience.

¹⁰⁹ Mark Strom, *The Symphony of Scripture: Making Sense of the Bible’s Many Themes* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1990), 51.

¹¹⁰ Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus*, Christ-Centered Exposition, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014), 124.

¹¹¹ J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 213.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Desmond T. Alexander, *Exodus*, Teach the Text Commentary Series, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 104; Selvaggio, *From Bondage to Liberty*, 116.

¹¹⁴ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, vol. 2, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 447.

¹¹⁵ Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2014), 473.

As the narrative unfolds, it becomes apparent that Israel cannot obey and keep their end of the covenant. The covenant of law that God established at Sinai, according to O. Palmer Robertson, “offered the outline for the type of life expected for God’s holy people.”¹¹⁶ God’s desire was for His people to reflect His holiness. This covenant, however, was not the final covenant that God had in mind. This covenant points beyond itself to a greater covenant that would eventually be established. The Sinai covenant was insufficient because it only was a shadow of what was necessary for salvation.

Understanding the entire narrative of Scripture enables one to read God’s covenants and know how they continue to build on God’s original promise to redeem the world. The Sinai covenant points beyond itself to the coming of Christ and the new covenant. The prophet Jeremiah speaks about this great day in Jeremiah 31:

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (Jer. 31: 31–34)

In God’s plan, the covenant with Israel was intended to be temporary as part of God’s unfolding plan through the covenants. Hunter and Wellum explain, “It graciously allowed God to dwell in Israel’s midst as their Covenant Lord, but it also revealed the need for a greater covenant tied to a greater mediator and sacrifice.”¹¹⁷ The covenant with Israel pointed to the promised seed of Adam and the true son of Abraham, Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:19–4:7).

¹¹⁶ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, Co., 1980), 188.

¹¹⁷ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 58.

God's Covenant with David

The books of Samuel recount a key turning point in redemptive history. After Moses led Israel out of bondage in Egypt and Joshua led the nation into Canaan, the long era of the judges saw God's people falling into idolatry and under foreign domination. First Samuel began in the chaotic time of the judges, but 2 Samuel concludes with Israel settled in peace under the reign of King David. The books of Samuel tell how God brought peace and stability under David's kingdom, pointing forward to the saving reign of his descendant, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.¹¹⁸

It has been said that 2 Samuel 7 is “the dramatic and theological center of the entire Samuel corpus as well as one of the most crucial texts in the Old Testament for evangelical faith.”¹¹⁹

Israel establishes itself in the promised land, but they long to have a physical king like the surrounding nations. God gives the Israelites their wish and places Saul to lead them. Saul directly ignores God's word, and God moves from Saul to David from the tribe of Judah. David serves as a foreshadowing of Israel's future redeemer: the One who will crush God's enemies and deliver humanity.

David anointed, as God's king, was God's choice to rule his people. David was a descendant of Judah, the promised bloodline (Gen. 49:8–12). Second Samuel 7 depicts God's covenant with David,

The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom

¹¹⁸ Richard D. Phillips, *2 Samuel*, Reformed Expository Commentary, ed. Richard D. Phillips and Philip Graham Ryken (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2018), 132.

¹¹⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 253; A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 11, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glen W. Baker (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 112.

forever. . . Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever. (2 Sam. 7: 11–13; 16, NIV)

In the promise God makes to David of a “son,” one hears echoes of God’s commitment to providing a man who will come to redeem all of creation (Gen. 3:15). The promise “seed/son” will come from David’s bloodline and fulfill all of God’s promises.

David desired to build a house for the Lord, but the Lord promised that he would establish a house (dynasty) for David. The Lord promised to raise up one of David’s offspring to succeed him on the throne.¹²⁰ This verse is viewed as proof that Jesus was indeed the Messiah; God did indeed “raise up” Jesus, thus legitimizing him as the messianic son of David. According to the prophecy, the royal successor would be one “who will come from your body.” The emphasis on an offspring/seed who would come from David’s body links this covenant with the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15:4).¹²¹ The narrative of the Bible shifts to focus on David’s dynasty. The Davidic covenant expands on the covenants established with Abraham and Israel.¹²²

¹²⁰ C. F. Keil, “1–2 Samuel” in *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel*, Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 2, ed. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 595.

¹²¹ Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, vol. 7, ed. Ray E. Clendenen (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1996), 339–340; John L. Mackay, “1–2 Samuel” in *1 Samuel–2 Chronicles*, ESV Expository Commentary, vol. III, ed. Iain Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 332–337; Ronald R. Youngblood, “1 & 2 Samuel” in *Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, vol. 3, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 889–890.

¹²² Mark J. Boda, *After God’s Own Heart: The Gospel According to David* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2007), 17–20; Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 46.

Figure 2.1 *Similarities between Biblical Covenants*¹²³

Abrahamic Covenant	Davidic Covenant
Great name (Gen. 12:2)	Name (2 Sam. 7:9)
Children (Gen. 12:2–3)	Dynastic succession (2 Sam. 7:12)
Land (Gen. 15:7)	Land (2 Sam. 7:10)
Curse on enemies (Gen. 12:3)	Rest from enemies (2 Sam. 7:10–11)
Israelite Covenant	Davidic Covenant
God’s “firstborn son” (Exod. 4:22)	King is God’s son (2 Sam. 7:14)
Royal and holy nation (Exod. 19:4–6)	Priest-king (Ps. 110:2, 4)
Stipulations to follow (Exod. 20: 2–17)	Stipulations to follow (Deut. 17:14–20)
Divine promises (Exod. 23:20–33)	Divine promises (2 Sam. 7:8–20)

God’s covenant with David continues the story of God’s redemption. It is through this covenant that God promises to establish his reign forever. In fact, the Davidic covenant is God’s way in which he will achieve his kingdom among all nations.¹²⁴ The Davidic covenant was established by God to continue his royal reign on the earth. The Lord knew that the earthly kings would fail, but the promise itself, sustained by God’s loyal love (*hesed*), would not be nullified.¹²⁵ Tension arises between the covenant’s unconditional and conditional dimensions. However, this tension is resolved through Jesus, the ideal Davidic king, who is fully obedient

¹²³ Heath Thomas and J. D. Greear, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*, Christ-Centered Exposition, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2016), 195.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹²⁵ Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *1 & 2 Samuel*, Teach the Text Commentary Series, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 219.

and will bring about the complete and lasting realization of the promise. Robert B. Chisholm Jr. notes, “In the end, God’s sovereign choice of David and his faithful commitment to his promise override the sins of imperfect Davidic rulers, whose failures delay realization of the promise but do not invalidate it.”¹²⁶

God made promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:11–16 that would shape the future of salvation history. But, before he gave those promises, the Lord first pointed out three great blessings that he had designed for David and his people, and that would affirm the all-important message of salvation by grace alone. These promises and blessings were not unique to David. These were the same promises made centuries earlier to Abraham, the covenant father of God’s people. In this way, God revealed that the salvation blessings once promised to Abraham would be fulfilled through God’s work in David, especially in the person and work of David’s great descendant, Jesus Christ.¹²⁷

The Voice of the Prophets

God’s people continued to live in rebellion, and after much heartache and exile, God continued to deliver a message of hope through the prophets. The prophets continuously reminded Israel of God’s promises to the patriarchs and David. They kept their eyes looking ahead in faith to the promised work of God in the future. It was this promise that brought them hope and joy in the Lord.

¹²⁶ Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *1 & 2 Samuel*, 225.

¹²⁷ Phillips, *2 Samuel*, 140.

The prophets found comfort in looking for the arrival of the promised Messiah and King. They longed for the new covenant that Jeremiah spoke of in Jeremiah 31:33–34.¹²⁸ This new covenant involved a regathering of God’s people through a new Exodus (Ezek. 36:26–28)¹²⁹ and a pouring out of His Spirit in a fresh way, such that all the people of God will be given new hearts to trust and obey their King (Joel 2:28–29).¹³⁰ The prophets are even filled with hope as they look toward a new creation, a new heaven, and a new earth in which all the people from all nations will worship before the Lord (Isa. 65:17; 66: 22–23).¹³¹

God’s plan to bless the world and fulfill the promise given to Abraham was connected to this future Davidic king. The prophets looked forward to his coming and longed for the arrival of his forever kingdom (Isa. 9: 6–7).¹³² At the arrival of this king, he would bring salvation to his people. The prophet Isaiah writes, “and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God” (NIV). One might wonder how this king will bring salvation. According to the prophets, the promised king will be crushed and killed for the sins of humanity. Isaiah says, “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isa. 53:5, NIV).¹³³

¹²⁸ Steven Smith, *Exalting Jesus in Jeremiah and Lamentations*, Christ-Centered Exposition, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2019), 200–201.

¹²⁹ Landon Dowden, *Exalting Jesus in Ezekiel*, Christ-Centered Exposition, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2015), 183–184.

¹³⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *Hosea–Jonah: The Minor Prophets An Expositional Commentary*, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 145–146.

¹³¹ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 52–53.

¹³² Andrew M. Davis, *Exalting Jesus in Isaiah*, Christ-Centered Exposition, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2017), 63–66.

¹³³ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 53–54.

God's New Covenant in Christ

When the New Testament pages open on Matthew 1, one reads, “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham...” (Mt. 1:1, NIV). The opening verse of the New Testament announces that Jesus Christ is the promised redeemer, the one that had been promised in the Garden of Eden and the one that all the Old Testament prophets hoped to see. In this one verse, one understands that God has kept His promises and covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David.

With the coming of Jesus of Nazareth—who is revealed to be God’s eternal Son, born into history as a descendant of Adam, Abraham, and David—all of God’s promises are now a yes, and their covenants reach their fulfillment (2 Cor. 1:20).¹³⁴ Jesus is God’s beloved Son, the one in whom the Father is well pleased (Lk. 3:22). Unlike Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and Israel, Jesus succeeded and demonstrated that He is God’s true and faithful Son (Lk. 4: 1–13). After the inauguration of Jesus’ ministry, He began proclaiming, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mk. 1:15, ESV). It is important to note that Jesus uses the term “kingdom” with the same meaning it has in the Old Testament. It is not referring to a piece of land, rather, it is referring to the rule of a king. Sigurd Grindheim says that, “When Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God, it would be better translated as “the kingly rule of God.”¹³⁵ Grindheim also says, “When Jesus proclaims the presence of God’s kingly rule, he announces that the dreams of the prophets have come to fulfillment. God himself has come down from heaven and stepped onto the face of the earth . . . God’s rule has been established on earth.

¹³⁴ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 59–60.

¹³⁵ Sigurd Grindhem, *Living in the Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology for the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 24.

God has come to the world as king.”¹³⁶ As Jesus walks the earth, He gathers His followers and begins to teach them about His kingdom (Mt. 13). Throughout Jesus’s earthly ministry, God’s rule and reign are displayed powerfully.¹³⁷

Jesus’ kingdom was not of this world, and His path did not lead straight for a throne but to a cross. Just as the prophets had said, the Messiah must suffer first to bring salvation. Genesis 3:15 promised that the woman’s seed would one day crush the head of the Serpent, but His heel would be bruised. At the cross, Jesus took on the sins of the world and became the final substitute. Through His blood, the new covenant was established (Lk. 22:20).

The sacrificial system pointed to and found its fulfillment in the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). All of the gospel writers believe that Jesus is the true spotless Passover Lamb, slain to cover the sins of his people and to rescue them from judgment by enacting a new and better exodus (Lk. 9:31; Jn. 19:36). Emerson writes:

In His atoning death, Jesus takes the punishment for humanity’s sin. He is the sacrificial Lamb not just for Israel but all of God’s people, those who believe from every tribe, tongue, and nation. He is the Suffering Servant, promised by Isaiah, the one through whom Israel’s sins are forgiven. Jesus is the High Priest for those who believe, offering Himself as a perfect sacrifice on the cross for their atonement so that they, too have access to God’s throne room. In His resurrection He puts death to death, the final blow in its devastating defeat at the hands of Christ. In his death and resurrection, Jesus pays the penalty for sin and defeats sin, death, and the serpent. He is the promised seed of woman, the One who would restore what Adam and Eve lost in the fall.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Sigurd Grindhem, *Living in the Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology for the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 24.

¹³⁷ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 60.

¹³⁸ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 56.

The Role of the Church

One needs to understand the relationship between the kingdom of God and the church. The church is called to build or extend the kingdom of God. When the church grows, the kingdom grows. However, the church is not the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the active rule of God in the world and the presence of his gift of salvation. The church is a community of believers who belong to the kingdom of God.¹³⁹ The church represents the kingly rule of God. It shows what his reign looks like and serves as a living testimony to God's rule.¹⁴⁰

After Jesus' resurrection, He commissions His followers to "make disciples." He says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19–20, ESV). Jesus has now given the church the same responsibility that God gave to Israel. The church is now to be a light to the world, represent God to the nations, and bring people to the Lord.

The Holy Spirit, the presence of God, now dwells within the believer. The believer is called to live the Spirit filled life (Eph. 5:18) and bear gospel fruit (Gal. 5:22). The church is tasked to be Christ followers and bear his name well before a lost world.

Theoretical Foundations

Biblical theology enables one to grasp the overarching story of the Bible. Goldsworthy says that "Biblical theology is concerned with God's saving acts and his word as these occur within the history of the people of God. It follows the progress of revelation from the first of God to man through to the unveiling of the full glory of Christ. Biblical theology asks: By what

¹³⁹ Grindhem, *Living in the Kingdom of God*, 81.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

process has God revealed himself to mankind? Its results: The relating of the whole Bible to our Christian life now.”¹⁴¹ Wellum adds to the discussion of defining biblical theology by stating, “Biblical theology is the exegetical and theological discipline that attempts to read Scripture and ‘put together’ the entire canon in terms of its redemptive historical progression.”¹⁴²

Many authors have written on biblical theology, but not much has been composed on practicing biblical theology. One of the keys to practicing biblical theology is understanding the context. Every passage should be read within the context of its setting, book, and the whole of Scripture. Reading the Bible in context is vital to developing a healthy biblical theology. Another crucial element of a vibrant biblical theology is identifying the major themes that appear throughout the pages of Scripture.

Emerson (*The Story of Scripture*, 2017) identifies two major themes, covenant and kingdom, to help one’s reading of the Bible. These two themes help the reader identify their “bearings” and help them to know where they are going. Emerson calls these two major themes the “structural backbones.”¹⁴³

The researcher desires to evaluate these two structural backbones of covenant and kingdom according to Emerson’s understanding. The first primary theme he addresses is “Covenant.” Emerson points out that what moves the narrative of Scripture along are the different covenants God makes with His people to restore His kingdom. The story of Scripture moves in many ways along covenantal lines. God promises to redeem the world through Eve’s seed, and this seed’s coming is traced through those with whom God makes His covenants. These covenants that God makes are intended to reverse the curse of Adam. God’s original

¹⁴¹ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 32.

¹⁴² Wellum, “From Alpha to Omega,” 74.

¹⁴³ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 69.

purposes for Adam are what God intends to restore through keeping His covenants, and what He does restore through the new covenant inaugurated by Israel's Messiah, Jesus. According to Emerson, the covenant theme, therefore, draws a line through the Old Testament material and points to the Old Testament's fulfillment in the new covenant, inaugurated in the person and work of Jesus. Covenants, thus, form the backbone of the biblical story.¹⁴⁴

The second central theme that Emerson identifies is the theme of the "Kingdom." This theme is compatible with the theme of "covenant" because the covenants are God's promises to restore the kingdom that was established and lost in the garden. The reader needs to be clear on the idea of what is meant by the phrase "restore what Adam lost." This phrase is not referring only to Adam and Eve's individual relationship with God. What was lost was the kingdom that God had established through Adam and Eve and which He commanded them to expand. So, when God makes promises to Noah, Abraham, and David to restore what Adam lost, He is promising to restore His kingdom.

Both of these structural backbones need to inform how one understands what Jesus is doing in the Gospels. Jesus's life and work is not just good news because it restores individual sinners' souls to God. It is good news because it is the good news of the kingdom, the good news that, through Jesus, God has restored His kingdom that was lost in the fall and prefigured in Israel. Thus, covenant and kingdom should be understood together because they are about restoring what Adam and Eve lost, and they are fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus.¹⁴⁵

There is a multitude of themes that run throughout Scripture. However, smaller themes still help tell God's story. Emerson emphasizes the importance of identifying these themes and how to view them in the whole Bible context. He notes that as one "moves from 'smaller themes'

¹⁴⁴ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 70.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 73–74.

to ‘backbone themes’ to ‘overarching story’ then, what we are seeing is how each of these smaller layers is the means by which the next layer up is accomplished.”¹⁴⁶ The Bible needs to be read as a whole to understand how the different parts fit together. Identifying the themes and how they interconnect helps the reader to do just that.

As previously noted, to understand a Biblical text appropriately, the reader must understand its context. Biblical theology helps locate the passage not only in its immediate context but also in its canonical context. Biblical theology enables the reader to make the connection between the immediate text and how it is connected to the canonical context; thus, leading one to understand the text’s contribution to the biblical story. In essence, biblical theology helps one arrive at the cross of Christ from a particular passage. The two main tools that Emerson suggests that help the reader in strengthening their biblical theology are typology and intertextuality (the relationship between texts).¹⁴⁷

According to Emerson, a robust biblical theology helps shape the Christian life. One of the common obstacles in the average Christian’s life is their devotional life. Many people struggle to read the Bible because they don’t understand what they are reading, which leads to discouragement. Biblical theology helps here because its overall purpose is to help one see the big picture and how all the smaller stories fit into the one main story. Knowing that Jesus is at the center of the story allows the reader to make the appropriate connections.

Being able to discover Jesus in the text helps transform the life of the reader in Christ-likeness. The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:17–18, one is made to be more like Jesus by His Spirit when they see Jesus in the text. Biblical theology gives the reader the framework to

¹⁴⁶ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 79.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 82–83.

know God by seeing Christ in His Spirit-inspired Word, which is used by the Spirit to make them more like Jesus.¹⁴⁸

Biblical theology also sets people on the path of being on mission for God. Being on mission is the purpose of the Church and Christian life. When the reader sees the theme of mission running throughout the Bible, they cannot miss how it culminates with Jesus calling His followers to carry out the mission until He returns. The mission to be fruitful and multiply the earth with God worshippers was established initially in the garden and is still the church's mission today. Biblical theology helps one to see their purpose and how they now fit into God's story.¹⁴⁹

Hunter and Wellum (*Christ from Beginning to End*, 2018) compare biblical theology with a puzzle. A puzzle is comprised of many pieces, but they all come together to make one picture. One cannot misplace one piece in the puzzle, or it distorts the entire picture. The Bible has many pieces. It contains mysteries, characters, books, letters, and stories, but they all fit together to communicate one story. God has revealed His truth for people to know, and His word reveals a person for people to know.¹⁵⁰

Putting the pieces together accurately is essential for proper biblical theology. Hunter and Wellum also agree that reading the Bible in context is vital for accurate interpretation. They acknowledge and suggest for people to read the Bible in light of three contexts that are connected. The close context is understanding the words in their immediate context. This context considers the immediate setting and authorship. The continuing context considers where the words are in relation to what has come before them in the unfolding story. The Bible is a

¹⁴⁸ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 86.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 86–87.

¹⁵⁰ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 28.

progressive revelation, and therefore it needs to be read according to the Bible's unfolding drama. The third context is what they call the complete or canonical context. The complete context considers the whole narrative of the Bible's message centered in Christ and brought to bear on people's lives. The canonical context makes the reader look ahead in the story so that one will read it in light of the whole of Scripture.¹⁵¹

If one reads the Bible inaccurately, they risk misunderstanding who Jesus is and why His work is necessary, incomparable, and unique. Getting the Bible's story right is foundational for knowing Christ, and Scripture stresses the importance of getting it right. Hunter and Wellum give four examples of the importance of reading the story accurately.

Reading the Scriptures accurately enables the reader to see how the entire story comes together in Jesus. Take into account the well-known verse John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (ESV). The foundational truths recorded in this verse concerning salvation can only be fully understood if they are read in light of the Bible's entire story. All the verses in Scripture that address Jesus's death must be seen in light of how they fit into the rest of the Bible.

A second reason one needs the whole Bible's story relates to one's spiritual growth. The grace of God that is revealed in Scripture propels Christian maturity. The more faithfully one understands the whole Bible, the better equipped they are to follow Christ. As one immerses into the Scriptures and accurately reads the pages, they begin to grasp who they are "apart" from Christ and now who they are "in" Christ. Knowing one's identity "in" Christ is vitally essential for Christian growth.

A third reason that reading Scripture through a biblical theology lens is that it allows one to guard and defend the gospel's truth. Many want to add to or take away from the gospel

¹⁵¹ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 42–43.

message today, but if one has a firm grasp of the biblical narrative, they can identify these false claims. When the Bible is properly read, one sees that God's salvation plan is clearly outlined: in Christ alone, by grace alone, and through faith alone.

The Bible demonstrates the importance of getting the biblical story straight. The Apostle Paul stressed the dangers of misreading the Bible when he had to correct different churches for their mishandling of the Scriptures. The Bible teaches that one must know the Bible's story if one wants to know Christ and defend the gospel.

The final example of the importance of knowing the Bible's story is found in the idea of evangelism. When the Apostle Paul was in Athens, he found himself among people who did not know the Scriptures. Paul had to establish a broader framework from Scripture to help his audience grasp who Jesus is, giving them a larger context by summarizing the Scriptures' storyline. Paul outlines the big picture of the scriptural worldview so that his proclamation of who Jesus is will make sense on Scripture's own terms and within its own understanding. Only after Paul constructs the Bible's 'big picture' does he proclaim Jesus as the man whom God raised from the dead to judge the world.

Paul's example teaches that understanding the complete narrative of Scripture is vital in evangelism. There are times that one must begin with the broader context of the Bible to help his audience see the truth. Getting the story straight is of the utmost importance.¹⁵²

The biblical theological outlines presented in these above mentioned works give great insight into instructing individuals on the subject of biblical theology. The researcher used these ideas of kingdom and covenant when constructing his thesis project. He is in agreement with the authors that kingdom and covenant are the structural backbones identified in Scripture and

¹⁵² Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 21–27.

reading God's story with these understandings will enable the individual to grasp the overarching narrative of the Bible.

The two works that have been discussed in this section are excellent sources in introducing people to the discipline of biblical theology. Both works are strong in the area of helping one see the grand narrative of the biblical story. Hunter and Wellum's, *Christ from Beginning to End*, goes into more depth compared to Emerson's, *The Story of Scripture*. However, the researcher highly recommends that all Christians should utilize both of these works.

One weakness that the researcher has identified is that neither of these works allows the reader to practice biblical theology. The researcher believes that each work would be strengthened if the authors would have included a section of questions for the reader to think through and bible passages to work through. This addition would enable the reader to become more involved and actually practice what was being taught in the book.

Another observation that the researcher has made is that outside of books, there are no practical studies of instruction on how to do biblical theology. It is the researcher's opinion that an instructional video series combined with an instructional manual would be beneficial to individuals and the local church. The researcher believes that if the above works included an instructional video series along with a teaching guide that each of them would become stronger resources.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This project seeks to understand the overall spiritual health of the congregation of FBCPB as it relates to their knowledge of biblical theology. The desired outcome is to understand better where the current congregation is to provide solutions to help church members grow in their understanding and appreciation of the gospel and Scripture. The long-term goal is to develop a curriculum to help enhance FBCPB members and leaders in biblical theology. The research demonstrates that training FBCPB members and regular attenders are vital to correct the current problem.

In chapter three, the researcher will discuss his intervention design and the implementation of the intervention design. This chapter will discuss participant recruitment, the meetings' location, the structure of the sessions, the participants, the resources used during the meetings, the evaluation and re-evaluation of the participants, and the content covered in the sessions.

Intervention Design

The problem addressed in this project is the lacking of a holistic biblical-theological understanding of Scripture among the church membership of FBCPB. The researcher has been burdened over this deficiency and seeks to enhance and strengthen the current state of the church's biblical theology.

Participant Recruitment

The researcher addressed this problem by offering a course on biblical theology to the FBCPB church members. The invitation to participate was given from the platform during

Sunday morning services by the researcher. It was extended for two weeks before the start date.

A sample of the announcement invitation is provided below:

Good morning church family,
Have you ever read a passage of Scripture and wondered why it was there? Do you ever read a Bible story and find yourself confused? Do you find yourself enjoying reading the Bible, or do you see yourself neglecting to read it because it doesn't make sense? Over the last several years, God has birthed a passion inside my heart to help people understand the Bible's whole story. The Bible is not a book comprised of several unconnected stories, but it is a book that tells one story. Every story is connected and points to the central theme of the Bible: Jesus. If you want to enhance your understanding of God's Word, I invite you to join me on Wednesday nights in the Fellowship Hall as we begin exploring the subject of biblical theology. If you are interested in participating in this course, please sign up at the signup table outside the Worship Center or call the church office.

After each service, the researcher stood at the registration table to answer any questions and hand out the information packet, including the consent form. The information packet can be viewed in Appendix D. Some participants chose to sign the document immediately, while others dropped it off at the church office before the start date, and some brought it back the night of the first class. A small percentage of participants called or visited the researcher at the church office to find out more details about the course and pick up the information packet.

The researcher also teaches a weekly Bible study on Wednesday night on the campus of FBCPB. Before starting his Introduction to Biblical Theology class, he invited those who usually attend his weekly Bible study to consider participating in the research. The researcher provided each individual the opportunity to ask questions and sign up to join the class. Every prospective participant received an information packet along with the consent form to be signed.

Upon registration, each participant received a consent form and was asked to sign the consent to participate in the research. The information included in the consent form ensured the participants received all the necessary information to make an informed decision on participating

in the study. The majority of the class attendance participated in the research; however, a select group of individuals decided not to participate in the study but attended the class each week.

Location

Hopefully, the course offered will be the starting point for a renewed zeal and passion for reading the Bible accurately. The Introduction to Biblical Theology course met in the Fellowship Hall on the campus of FBCPB. The Fellowship Hall is on the church building's first floor and is located in the Christian Life Center wing. The fellowship hall is easily accessible from multiple entrances. One can access the fellowship hall through the CLC main entrance and take the stairs or elevator to the appropriate floor. Or, one can park in the back parking lot and gain access directly into the fellowship hall through the fellowship hall doors. The room was set up with round tables and chairs for people to spread out and promote a relaxed environment.

Meetings

The researcher deemed Wednesday nights to be the night that the participants will gather for study and instruction. Each session began at 6 P.M. and lasted 60 to 90 minutes long, and was designed to include lectures and some discussion primarily. The length of the course was four weeks.

Wednesday nights were selected to be the night of the meeting because this weekday night is already established as a Bible study night on the church campus. On this weekday night, multiple activities are taking place, including childcare, which enables the young parents of FBCPB to participate without paying for a babysitter.

As the participants arrived, the researcher had set up a welcome table with documents for the participant to pick up each week. Upon arrival each week, the researcher asked that every person in attendance sign in at the welcome table. The researcher, along with his wife, stood at the entrance to greet people as they arrived. The researcher's wife oversaw the sign-in process and ensured that every participant received the provided information and listener's guide for the week.

Participants

The participants varied in their age ranges. The youngest participant was 18–24 years old, with several participants falling into the seventy-five and older age range. The majority were FBCPB church members, although some were faithful attenders who had not joined the local body of FBCPB. Many of the participants were involved with a Sunday morning connection group, while several just attended Sunday morning worship. Of those participating, some had been attending the church for less than a year. In contrast, many had been attending for ten years or more.

The participants varied in their church involvement levels. It has already been noted that some only attend on Sunday mornings for worship while others are involved in a Sunday morning Connection Group. Out of the participants, a slight majority of them would describe themselves as faithful on Wednesday nights. However, most of them attend Sunday morning worship three times or more a month. The class consisted of church leaders who serve in leadership roles such as deacons, trustees, committee members, Connection group teachers, choir members, and Wednesday night children's leaders.

The makeup of the class consisted of people with various backgrounds. Some were college students, stay-at-home moms, factory workers, business professionals, and medical professionals. At the same time, several participants had previously retired.

Resources

Each week the researcher provided a listener guide for the participants to follow along during the discussion (see Appendix F). The researcher included blanks for the participant to fill in, and important Scriptures and meaningful quotes to note with each guide. The guides are provided in the appendices of this project. The researcher also made writing pens available for those who needed a writing utensil to take notes and follow along.

Each week the researcher utilized projectors and screens to present a PowerPoint presentation. Each presentation was designed to help the participant fill in the blanks on their listener's guide and emphasize specific passages of Scripture that were not provided on the guide. In weeks two, three, and four, the researcher utilized a video to help introduce the concept of the meta-narrative of Scripture and emphasize that all of Scripture is God's story of redeeming his people and creation through his son Jesus.

Evaluation

Once the participant had given their consent, they were asked to complete a survey on the first night of the meeting to collect basic demographic information and collect data that currently tested their knowledge pertaining to a healthy biblical theology. The Pre-Course test can be viewed in Appendix E.

Demographic Questions

The survey included demographic questions with their respective controlled responses—these questions aimed to understand the different ages represented in the study and their church involvement.

The demographic questions are constructed to give the researcher better insight concerning the participants and the range of ages and church faithfulness. The researcher was curious if there is a gap or significant difference between those who are faithfully involved and those who are not faithfully engaged in the church concerning their biblical theology. He was also curious if there is a divide in the church's age ranges pertaining to one's biblical theology.

Survey Questions

The remaining survey questions had the purpose of collecting information regarding each participant's knowledge of biblical theology and personal spiritual life. These questions are multiple-choice questions and short answer questions. If the participant did not know an answer, they were encouraged to leave the question blank.

After each participant had completed the initial survey, the results were calculated to determine the measurement baseline. Once the baseline had been established, the researcher gained a more accurate picture of the overall group's knowledge.

Re-Evaluation

At the end of the course, each participant was asked to retake the initial survey before the course began. Once all the surveys were completed, the researcher compared the surveys to determine if there was an increase in the group's biblical knowledge. The post-survey contained

one difference from the initial survey. The final question from the initial survey was omitted and replaced with an opportunity for the participant to leave any feedback or comments about their likes/dislike of the course and identify any personal growth. The researcher has provided the exact wording of the final question: "Has this class helped you to better understand and read the story of the Bible? Has it helped you develop a greater appreciation for God's salvation? Please leave any comments below in how this class has benefited or impacted you."

Content

Week One

The content implemented into this course introduced the participants to what biblical theology is and why it is essential. The first session was spent getting to know the topic and served as an introductory night. In week one, the researcher introduced and defined biblical theology for the participants. Many of them were unfamiliar with biblical theology and could not define it on their own. According to the surveys used to test the participant's knowledge pertaining to biblical theology, it became apparent that most of them were unfamiliar with viewing Scripture as one story of redemption.

The researcher emphasized the importance of reading the Bible as one story. Many participants acknowledged that they never saw all the different Bible stories adding to and moving along the grand story of Scripture. The researcher also identified four major plots that one finds in the Bible: creation, fall, redemption, and new creation.

The promised bloodline that one finds in the biblical narrative was introduced in week one, along with the importance of tracing that bloodline from Genesis to Christ. By tracing this

bloodline, the researcher was able to show God's promise of redemption and how it found its fulfillment in Jesus.

Covenants are important in the Bible story because they teach how God enters into a relationship with His people. The researcher introduced six major covenants that God establishes and shows how they help move the story along.

Another topic that the researcher discussed was typology. The subject of typology intrigued many in the class. The majority of the participants admitted that they had never heard of the subject. And after it was introduced, many of them sought to learn more on this subject.

The researcher also spent time emphasizing the importance of getting the story straight. He noted that one could view the Bible as a puzzle. It has many pieces, but all the pieces come together to create one picture. The one picture found in Scripture is Jesus. Just like a puzzle, if one part is in the wrong spot, the picture becomes distorted. Getting all the Biblical story pieces in the right place is crucial because it allows one to avoid distortion and destruction.

One way the researcher encouraged the participants to read the Bible is through a Gospel lens. Reading the grand narrative of Scripture this way allows one to better understand the Old Testament stories and promises and how they all point to Jesus. The researcher has added his teaching manuscripts for review in Appendix F.

Week Two

In the second week, the first plot of creation was introduced. The researcher used Genesis 1–2 to introduce the participants to God as the eternal creator of all things. God's creation was perfect and at the pinnacle of His creation was humanity. The researcher uncovered that most participants were unaware of what it meant that humanity was created in the "image of God." He

spent a portion of their time explaining that being made in the "image of God" meant that humankind was created to be in a relationship with God and that they are to represent Him in the world.

Week two also consisted of introducing "The Fall," which is the second plot presented in Scripture. "The Fall" is recorded in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve disobey God, and all of creation becomes corrupt. The researcher believed that the class needed to understand what went wrong in the Garden of Eden and how it affected not just man but also creation. The story of redemption cannot be fully understood if Genesis 3 is omitted.

Though Genesis 3 is a dark chapter in human history, one also is introduced to the third plot of "Redemption." The researcher emphasized the protoevangelium, which is the first mention of the gospel recorded in Genesis 3:15. Here, God gives hope amid the darkness that He would send a Redeemer to reverse the curse and restore all that was lost in the Garden.

Another verse that the researcher thought necessary to discuss was Genesis 3:21. After Adam and Eve sinned, they felt shame for the first time. In His grace and mercy, God shed the innocent blood of an animal and took its skin to cover Adam and Eve. This death is significant as it points to God's plan of redemption. The rest of the story points to a greater sacrifice that was to come and cover the sin and shame of humanity.

The researcher allotted time to be spent discussing the idea of the First and Last Adam. He pointed out that Adam served as humanity's covenant head and representative. Genesis 3 describes Adam's disobedience, and therefore, all of humanity is born with Adam's sinful genes. Adam failed God, and thus humanity needed a new and better representative. Jesus is that representative and is referred to as the Last Adam in Scripture, and this is the true and better Adam.

Week Three

The story of Noah and the covenant God made with him was discussed in week three. There are many things that one can learn from the covenant that God made with Noah. The researcher began by establishing three facts that must be understood about God's covenants. One, all the covenants that God enters into with man are established by God. Man never establishes the covenants. Two, since all the covenants are established by God, all of God's covenants are eternal. The third fact is that all of the covenants God establishes with man are established by God's grace. No human deserved any of the promises that God gave them.

The researcher also identified the different types that could be seen in Noah's story. He noted that Noah served as another Adam and highlighted their similarities. The covenant established with Noah is not a new covenant but is a renewal of the covenant that God established with Adam. Not only does Noah serve as a type of Adam but also a type of Christ.

The flood and ark also serve as pictures or types. The flood is a picture of God's righteous judgment that one day will fall on all those outside of His salvation. The ark serves as a type of God's merciful salvation. Therefore, all those who are "in Christ" will be spared the judgment and wrath of God.

The researcher highlighted the bloodline for the participants to see the fulfillment of God's promise to send a redeemer through the "seed of the woman." This promised bloodline that began with Adam flows through his son Seth and leads to Noah and eventually to Abram (Abraham). In Genesis 12, God calls Abram and promises people, land, and blessing. The researcher noted that Genesis 12:3b serves as the second messianic prophecy because God promised that "all peoples will be blessed" through Abram.

Genesis 17 is where one reads about the covenant that God establishes with Abraham, but for one to fully grasp the Bible's plotline, one must understand Genesis 15. Genesis 15 is the heart of the story as God is found walking alone through a valley of death. This picture is significant because it shows that God is taking full responsibility for fulfilling the covenant, regardless of Abraham's and his descendant's faithfulness.

Genesis 21–22 served an excellent purpose for the researcher. He showed the participants how God remained faithful to his promise to give Abraham a son who was chosen to carry the promised bloodline that finds its fulfillment in Christ. Isaac's story is a beautiful picture of God's plan of redemption in providing a substitute for salvation.

Week Four

In the final week, the researcher discussed the last three of the six covenants. God's covenant with Israel through Moses is found in the book of Exodus. Abraham's descendants are being held captive in the land of Egypt and had been there for four hundred years. At the appropriate time, God calls Moses to return to Egypt to lead God's people out of captivity.

God sends ten devastating plagues that humiliate the Egyptian gods and proves that He alone is the one true God. The tenth and final plague is the killing of the firstborn, but once again, just like with Noah, God tells Moses how he and the Israelites can be spared from the judgment of God. God instructs Moses that every Israelite is to take the blood of an innocent lamb and to apply it to the doorframes of their home. When the death angel comes through the land, he will pass over every home that is under the blood, and all those in the house will be saved from the wrath of God. This event became significant in the nation of Israel as well as the story of God.

God leads his people out of Egypt, known as the Exodus, to Mount Sinai, where he enters into covenant with them. The researcher emphasized that the covenant God established with Israel was a covenant of grace once again. He showed this to the participants by highlighting that God's salvation of the people came before the requirement of obedience. God's purpose in giving the Israelites His law was so that they might live in such a way to reflect His holiness and represent Him in the world.

The fifth covenant that was studied was the covenant that God established with David. The researcher led the participants to the books of Samuel, mainly 2 Samuel 7, where God's covenant with David is depicted. The researcher showed the participants that the promise of a "son" that God makes with David is how God will continue the promised bloodline to send one to come and redeem all of creation (Gen. 3:15). The promised "seed/son" will come from David's lineage and fulfill all of God's promises. The researcher wanted the participants to realize that God's covenant with David continues the story of God's redemption. Through this covenant, God will achieve His kingdom among all nations.

The books of Samuel recount a crucial turning point in redemptive history. When one studies David's life, one can see that David serves as a foreshadowing of Israel's future redeemer.

As the researcher made his way to the sixth and final covenant, he noted how the voice of the prophets played a significant role in God's story. God's people continued to live in rebellion, and yet God would continue to be faithful to his promise. The prophets maintained hope for the coming Messiah and prophetically spoke on behalf of God.

The researcher brought to light the message of Jeremiah 31 that speaks to the new covenant that God will write on the people's hearts. This chapter is significant in pointing to a

day where no longer circumcision of the skin would serve as a sign of God's people but rather circumcision of the heart will be evidence that one belongs to God.

The final covenant is God's new covenant in Christ. The researcher emphasized that Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises. He is the promised redeemer of Genesis 3:15. Jesus is the true and better Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David. All of these men served as types that pointed to Christ, the God-Man, but all of them failed where Jesus would not.

The researcher continued to show how Jesus came to fulfill all of God's promises and every type found in the Old Testament. Jesus is the promised substitute and the Passover Lamb who came to take away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29).

The covenants are God's promises to restore God's kingdom that was established but lost in the Garden of Eden. The researcher noted that ever since "The Fall," God has been working to re-establish His perfect kingdom and to redeem His people.

When Jesus's public ministry began at the age of thirty, he began preaching that the kingdom of God had come. Jesus' message was that he was ushering in the kingdom of God. Every miracle that Jesus performed showed what the kingdom of God was like because every miracle reversed the curse and the effects of sin.

The researcher highlighted that the kingdom of God could presently be experienced today but not in its fullest sense. The full consummation of God's kingdom is the future hope for all of God's children. The kingdom consummation will occur at the end of time, which is the final plot of Scripture, the "New Creation."

In the final section of the last week, the researcher spoke about the role of the church. The researcher thought it to be vital for the participants to understand their role in God's story because it would allow them to know their purpose. The church is called to build or extend the

kingdom of God. The church is called to represent the kingly rule of God on earth for all to see. Jesus has now given the church the same responsibility that God gave to Israel. The church is now to be a light to the world, represent God to the nations, and bring people to the Lord.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

This study was implemented through the offering of a four-week Introduction to Biblical Theology course at FBCPB. To better understand the current situation of the participant's knowledge of biblical theology, each participant was asked to complete a twenty-five-question survey. The study type was submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board (See Appendix A for IRB approval). This course's data was obtained through an in-person survey that was submitted on the first night of the meeting.

There was no monetary compensation for the participants, and the study was unfunded. The risk was considered minimal for each participant. This study did not involve personal interviews or photographs to be eligible for participation. The purpose of the study was to gain insight into the overall understanding of biblical theology among the membership of FBCPB.

The average class size was forty-three individuals, while only thirty-three participated in the survey. The study's recruitment was done via public invitation from the platform on Sunday mornings during the FBCPB worship service. An invitation was also extended to the researcher's Wednesday night Bible study class. Participation in this survey took the individual approximately thirty minutes to complete. Each participant was encouraged to answer all the questions to the best of their knowledge, but they could leave them blank if they did not know the answer. The consent form was handed out to the participant at the moment of registration and was signed and turned in before they took the initial survey. All the participants were at least eighteen years of age.

Data Collection

The data was collected through surveys, and there were no other types of data collection. All data was collected on the first and last night of the course. All data was received by hardcopy surveys that the researcher distributed to each participant. The information in the surveys was compiled and analyzed. The research methodology that was used for the study is quantitative research. Two surveys were administered to collect data. Both surveys were identical except for the last question.

The first survey was used to assess the individual's current knowledge pertaining to the subject of biblical theology. These surveys were used to establish a baseline for the researcher. Each survey contained a demographic portion to see if there was any relation between the participant's age and church involvement, and their knowledge of biblical theology. At the end of the first survey, the researcher posed the question, "Has anyone ever taught or helped you in understanding the unified storyline of the Bible by way of a book or teaching?" The second survey was used to see if there was any improvement in the participant's knowledge of biblical theology at the end of the four-week course. The final question of the second survey stated, "Has this class helped you better understand and read the story of the Bible? Has it helped you develop a greater appreciation for God's salvation?"

Information received in the surveys was compiled and studied to determine any growth among the participating group. This study's focal point is finding data to aid the development of the FBCPB membership and insights into implementing resources and courses to help the membership grow in their understanding of the story of Scripture.

Chapter 4

Results

Survey results reveal the current understanding of biblical theology among the congregation of FBCPB. The researcher used the same survey to collect data at the beginning and the end of the course. This method was used so that he would be able to establish a baseline of current understanding and compare it to the ending survey to measure growth. The researcher also used the survey to identify any gaps in participants' knowledge compared to the participants' church faithfulness and involvement.

Table 4:1: *How long have you been attending FBCPB?*

	Number of Participants	Percentage
0–1 years	3	9%
2–5 years	5	15%
6–10 years	1	3%
11 or more years	24	73%
Total	33	100%

Table 4:2: *How often do you attend worship services at FBCPB?*

	Number of Participants	Percentage
Once a month	0	0%
Twice a month	2	6%
Three times a month	5	15%
Four times a month	26	79%
Total	33	100%

As table 1 and 2 indicate, the majority of the participants have been attending FBCPB for eleven years or more and consider themselves to be faithful in their attendance. This did not come as a surprise to the researcher. Even though the researcher has served a short tenure at FBCPB, he has come to know many of the members on a personal level. His knowledge of the lengthy attendance of most of the current congregation and their lack of biblical theology is the cause of his burden for the people.

FBCPB has two worship services on Sunday mornings with Connection Groups that meet in between the services. The church also offers Wednesday night bible studies year round. Of the participants, 88% (twenty-nine participants) of them claim to belong to a Sunday morning Connection Group. Out of the twenty-nine participants who attend a Connection Group, twenty-three (70%) of them claim to attend faithfully. The staggering number comes from the percentage found among those who consider themselves faithful church members and the low attendance for Wednesday night Bible study. The initial survey reveals that the majority of the class participants (eighteen) do not attend Wednesday night services at FBCPB. However, the post survey reveals an increase in attendance among the participants.

Table 4:3: *Do you attend Wednesday night Bible study classes at FBCPB?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Yes	15	45%	26	79%
No	18	55%	7	21%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

According to the post survey, the researcher saw a 34% increase in Wednesday night attendance. However, the researcher is aware that the influx in the numbers is due to the offering

of the Biblical Theology course. His hopes are that the numbers will remain and continue to grow. If the numbers do not remain or decrease drastically, the researcher has gained valuable insight into what type of studies should be offered at FBCPB on Wednesday nights.

The course was offered to the entire congregation of FBCPB. However, the majority (82%) of the class participants were forty-five years old and older. The researcher had hoped to see more young people participate in the study so that he could gain a better insight into the understanding of biblical theology between the older and younger congregants. Unfortunately, only 6 participants were between the ages of eighteen and forty-four years old.

One question that the researcher deemed to be valuable was how long each participant had been saved. An overwhelming 82% of the participants said that they had been saved for twenty-one years or more.

Table 4:4: *How long have you been saved?*

	Number of Participants	Percentage
0–5 years	0	0%
6–10 years	4	12%
11–15 years	1	3%
15–20 years	1	3%
21 years or more	27	82%
Total	33	100%

This information was valuable to the researcher because he thought it was necessary to be able to identify how long each participant had been saved, and, how much he or she understood of the overall storyline of the Bible.

Since the majority of the participants claimed that they were faithful members of FBCPB and had been saved for more than twenty-one years, the researcher saw that it was important to evaluate their faithfulness to spending time in God’s Word. In both the initial and post surveys, thirty participants (91%) declared that they read the Bible faithfully or regularly. The researcher did see an improvement in the fact that one participant originally claimed to have never read the Bible. In the post survey every participant claimed to at least read the Bible occasionally or more. Although, this is a small victory, the researcher is delighted to see the minute improvement because his desire is to see people fall in love with the author of Scripture and His word.

The researcher understands the complexity of Scripture. Thus, many find themselves not understanding what they are reading. This has caused many people to give up on reading the Bible over the years. However, many may still feel as though they understand what they are reading. The initial survey showed that seventeen participants (52%) claimed to understand what they are reading in the Bible. Interestingly, that number decreased to twelve (36%) on the post survey.

Table 4:5: *Do you feel like you understand what you are reading when you read the Bible?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Yes	17	52%	12	36%
No	2	6%	0	0%
Sometimes	14	42%	21	64%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

The researcher was curious about the shift in numbers between the two surveys. Therefore, two weeks after the post survey, the researcher sat down with twelve participants to

glean insight from the course. One take away from that conversation was that after the course had ended that several of the participants realized that there was much more to the overall story of Scripture than what they had previously thought. After completing the course, they realized that the stories they had learned from childhood had a deeper and more significant place in God's story of redemption. Participant seven admitted that through the years he never saw the overall storyline of the Bible. He saw each story as individual stories and he had always jumped from story to story reading the ones he liked. Participant twenty-seven has served faithfully over the years, teaching Connection group classes, and admitted to jumping from story to story, never realizing the connections between the stories. After the course, participant twenty-seven confessed that one of the major things they gleaned from the course was that the "Bible is way more than just a compilation of individual stories." They noted that they had never studied the covenants prior to the course and they learned many things that they had never heard. Participant thirty-two also shared with the researcher the same sentiment as participants seven and twenty-seven. They said that, "having the big picture explained to them now helps them understand the whole story."

The researcher's assumption that the vast majority of the congregation at FBCPB was lacking in biblical theology proved to be accurate after the initial survey had been compiled. The initial survey showed that the participants, although many of them are faithful members, bible readers, and have been saved for many years, were lacking in their knowledge of the Bible's overall storyline.

However, after four weeks of classes, the researcher saw vast improvement in the participant's knowledge of biblical theology. The data shows that after the researcher took the time to highlight the biblical plots and covenants that the participants gained understanding of

the grand-narrative of Scripture. The researcher is delighted to show the overall growth on each question.

Table 4:6: *How many major biblical covenants are in Scripture?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	13	39%	33	100%
Incorrect	16	49%	0	0%
Blank	4	12%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:7: *With which biblical characters does God not personally make a covenant with?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	24	73%	32	97%
Incorrect	7	21%	1	3%
Blank	2	6%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:8: *Which book of the Bible tells of Israel's deliverance from Egypt?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	32	97%	33	100%
Incorrect	1	3%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:9: *What does it mean that humanity is created in the “image of God?”*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	7	21%	31	94%
Incorrect	18	55%	2	6%
Blank	8	8%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

The researcher has always been amazed at the lack of understanding among Christians on what it means that humanity is created in God’s image. For instance, participant twenty-one, who has been attending FBCPB for more than 11 years, attends a Sunday morning connection group, has been saved for more than twenty-one years, and reads the Bible regularly stated on the initial survey that their understanding of this question is related to physical appearance. Their answer to this question was, “I sometimes wonder if my nose looks like God’s?” Tragically, this answer is common among believers.

Table 4:10: *What is Abraham’s role in God’s plan of redemption?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	15	46%	28	85%
Incorrect	8	24%	5	15%
Blank	10	30%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:11: *What prophet speaks of a new covenant being written on people's hearts?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	6	18%	23	70%
Incorrect	17	52%	8	24%
Blank	10	30%	2	6%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:12: *What do you think the Old Testament is all about?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	17	52%	32	97%
Incorrect	14	42%	1	3%
Blank	2	6%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:13: *How does understanding the original creation of the world help one understand the purpose of salvation, often presented as a new creation?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	2	6%	29	88%
Incorrect	13	39%	2	6%
Blank	18	55%	2	6%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

The researcher was pleased to see the improvement on this question. One of the major significant shifts in these numbers can be seen in the percentage growth in correct responses.

However, the researcher was pleased to see the decrease in the area of participant's leaving the question blank. Realizing that the majority of the participants growing in their understanding of this question brings joy to the researcher.

Table 4:14: *What significant event in the Old Testament (Exodus) points to Jesus' sacrificial death?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	11	33%	32	97%
Incorrect	9	27%	0	0%
Blank	13	40%	1	3%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:15: *Where is the first gospel promise given?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	10	30%	29	88%
Incorrect	4	12%	4	12%
Blank	19	58%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

The above question was posed to see how many of the participants knew that the gospel can be found in the Old Testament. Many people believe that the Old Testament is not relevant today. They want to spend their time studying the New Testament because the New Testament has the message of the gospel and Jesus. However, the researcher emphasized in the class that the gospel is first mentioned in the Old Testament, and the story of redemption saturates the

pages of the Old Testament. In fact, without the message of the Old Testament, the story of the New Testament doesn't make sense to the reader.

Table 4:16: *What is the significance of the first animal sacrifice?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	10	30%	33	100%
Incorrect	11	33%	0	0%
Blank	12	37%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:17: *How does the New Testament help one to understand the Old Testament types? (Types: A person, event, or institution that has significant meaning for the future.)*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	11	33%	32	97%
Incorrect	7	21%	0	0%
Blank	15	15%	1	3%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:18: *How does the Old Testament types help us understand the New Testament?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	8	24%	32	97%
Incorrect	6	18%	0	0%
Blank	19	58%	1	3%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

The researcher observed that many participants were unfamiliar with the study of typology. As the course progressed, the researcher received emails and had conversations with participants that expressed interest in learning more about typology. After the first session, three different individuals, approached the researcher and exclaimed that they had never heard or understood about the First and Last Adam in Scripture. All three of these individuals claimed to be faithful attenders and regular Bible readers. Their statement, proved what the researcher already believed to be true. That is, the faithful congregation is no different than those who are less faithful when it comes to their understanding of biblical theology.

The researcher sought every opportunity each week to highlight different types that are found in the bible story. He emphasized that Jesus is the antitype (the one who fulfills the earlier patterns of the Old Testament). All of the Old Testament patterns (types) contribute to God's progressive revelation in Scripture. The basic idea is that there are types that pattern something that a later, greater antitype will correspond to and supersede. For example, Adam serves as a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14), the tabernacle serves as a type of heaven (Heb. 8:5), and Noah's passage through the flood serves as a type of Christian baptism (1 Pt. 3:20–21). All of these examples allow one to discern how the biblical writers understand historical types and prepare the way for later antitypes. These are just three of the many patterns (types) that can be identified in the biblical story. All Old Testament types, ultimately, point to Jesus. The researcher expressed that types help move the story forward and reveal God's plan of redemption.

Table 4:19: *What is Jesus’ relationship with the Old Testament law?*

	Pre-Test	Percentage	Post-Test	Percentage
Correct	13	40%	28	85%
Incorrect	10	30%	5	15%
Blank	10	30%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	33	100%

Table 4:20: *Has anyone ever taught or helped you in understanding the unified storyline of the Bible by way of a book or teaching?*

	Number of Participants	Percentage
Yes	10	30%
No	18	55%
Blank	5	15%
Total	33	100%

The above chart shows that the majority of the participants had never experienced any biblical theology training. This revelation did not surprise the researcher. He had believed that due to the lack of understanding of the bible story that most participants had never had any formal training or explanation.

Summary

It is apparent, based on the data that the majority of the FBCPB membership is lacking in an appropriate understanding of the Biblical narrative. This was the estimation of the researcher that drove his desire to evaluate the current status of the congregation pertaining to a healthy biblical theology. The researcher’s desire was to educate people on the subject of biblical

theology, demonstrate that the Bible is one story with one central focus on God’s plan of redemption through Christ, and create a hunger within the participants to learn more.

The researcher feels as though the class has been a success based on the data that has been presented. There was a vast improvement in the participant’s answers, which shows that the researcher’s hypothesis was accurate.

Not only does the data speak for itself, but the researcher also kept notes of conversations and emails of participant’s feedback throughout the course. The various participants responses have served as an encouragement for the researcher and has helped in solidifying his quest.

Table 4:21 *Participant Responses*

Participant	Comment
2	“This class has helped me to look at Scripture in a new way.”
3	“The class was a huge help in understanding Scripture and how it all relates to the coming of Jesus and the role of the church. Please teach us more.”
6	“It is always good to review the concepts presented in the class. I have heard some new insights and I now have a greater appreciation for the glorious gospel. Every church should occasionally offer a class like this. . . Thank you for the class. I think this type of thing is crucially needed in every local church. I’ll be filing the notes for future reference on how to truncate the meta narrative of biblical theology.”
7	“This class has helped me develop a much better understanding of how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament.”
8	“The biggest idea that came out of this study is that the Old Testament should always be viewed through the lens of the gospel. This has changed everything for me.”
10	“I am beginning to see a clearer connection of Christ as the Promised Messiah throughout the Old and New Testaments. This study has helped me have a greater understanding of the Biblical story. Keep feeding us.”
11	“This study has been eye opening and has served as an appetizer leading me to want more.”
17	“This class has been beneficial for my growth and understanding of the Bible. Until now, I had never known anything about types or different Adams.”
18	“I have loved this class and would love to have another class like this one. I want to go even deeper in the next study.”
19	This class has brought me much excitement. I love getting beyond the Sunday school basics.”

21	“I love in-depth Bible studies and this was one of the best.”
22	“This class has given me more desire to study the Bible.”
25	“I have learned things that I’ve never heard before. I want to keep learning and gaining more insight.”
26	“Since we started this class, I’ve been reading the Bible differently now. This week’s Sunday school lesson was on the prodigal son and before this class, I just thought it was another story. But now I’m seeing it differently. I’m understanding the role of the characters in the story in a gospel light. I see myself in the story and God’s grace.”
27	“I am learning so much, I thought I knew a lot but I have learned so much and I’m so thankful that you are doing this class. I understand more now about the purpose of the Old Testament. And it all pointed to Jesus. I find myself pulling out my notes and reviewing them.”
30	“This class has helped me to better understand and read the Bible as one story and not a lot of different stories.”
33	“This study brought a deeper understanding of biblical truths and how the whole Bible speaks and teaches salvation.”

The above comments serve as proof that the local church is in desperate need of biblical theology. Once people get a glimpse into the grand story of the Bible and how God communicates his plan of redemption from Genesis to Revelation, a longing for more is created within. This study reveals an effective way for churches to begin teaching their congregants to follow the beautiful gospel story from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This study aims to teach the congregation of FBCPB how to understand the biblical theology of Scripture. This study had a goal of demonstrating the deficiency of biblical theology among church members who have been members for many years. This study sought to educate the study's participants on biblical theology and how to read the Bible as one story.

This project reiterates a significant problem in the church. At this point, it is well documented that many faithful church members are suffering from a deficiency of biblical theology. Although the majority of the participants claimed to have been saved for more than twenty years and have been attending FBCPB for eleven years or more, the data shows that they are unable to identify the overall biblical narrative from Genesis to Revelation.

For many years programs and numbers drove the church. This drive brought people into the building, but it failed to disciple those who were present. The church became more of a place of entertainment rather than a place of discipleship and spiritual growth. Due to this mindset, the church is suffering today. The program-driven era has negatively influenced people of all ages. Thus, the results show shallow Christians who are content with their spiritual walk and have a distorted understanding of the grand narrative of Scripture.

The Importance of Biblical Theology in the Local Church

Pastors have an enormous responsibility to teach Christ from the whole counsel of God's Word. Biblical theology aids the pastor in declaring Jesus as the main point in all of Scripture. One comes to this conclusion from the words of Jesus found in Luke 24:44-49,

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms

must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are my witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Jesus explains two things in this passage of Scripture. First, he makes the bold declaration that all of the Old Testament was written about him. In essence, Jesus identifies himself as the promised Messiah. Second, Jesus says that his disciples will be witnesses to all nations, that is, to all peoples in all places. One will not understand the story of the Bible unless they see that it's all about Jesus.

Jesus himself is the one who holds everything in the world together, including the grand story of the Bible. The Old Testament points forward and prepares the way for the coming of the promised Messiah and King. The New Testament proclaims the arrival of the promised Messiah and King and his mission to all nations. But for one to read the Scriptures faithfully and accurately, they need the proper tools. The discipline of biblical theology is one of those helpful tools. Biblical theology is a way of reading the whole Bible as the story of God's promised Messiah and his beautiful plan to rescue and redeem a people for himself.

Pastors should seek to have a healthy understanding of the biblical story and a firm grasp of biblical theology to educate their congregation on the complete story of the Bible. Through the pastor's preaching and teaching, the church body should begin to identify Jesus throughout the biblical narrative.

Every church should seek to train its members on the subject of biblical theology. One way is through the faithful preaching of the Bible from the pastor. Another way is from the training of all church leaders and teachers. A third way is by offering biblical theology classes. These are just three ways that the researcher has implemented in his context.

The researcher's objective in this project was to show the dire need for biblical theology within the local church body of FBCPB. The researcher believes that with a healthy diet of biblical theology, the church will experience a healthy spiritual growth of discipleship. Biblical theology helps one read, understand, and teach the Bible the way that Jesus intends that one should. In the Emmaus road encounter recorded in Luke 24, Jesus says that he is the key to interpreting Scripture. So if one fails to read and understand Scripture in a way that points to Jesus, they will miss the point of the Bible, and as a result, they will teach others to commit the same error. The tragedy that comes from ignoring the significance of the Biblical story is false gospels, false churches, and shallow Christians. Therefore, one needs a framework for understanding the whole counsel of the Bible. Biblical theology provides that framework because it guides one's reading of the Bible and therefore guards against wrongful interpretation. Biblical theology allows one to read the whole story of the Bible and focus on the central piece of Scripture: Jesus.¹⁵³

Another reason that the local church needs biblical theology is that it helps clarify the Bible's primary purpose. As stated previously, the Bible is not a compilation of 66 different books that tell different stories. The Bible tells one story through an anthology of multiple stories. If people approach the Bible as a collection of individual stories, they will fail to see the central purpose of Scripture. Within the Bible pages, God explains who he is and what he is like, and how he's at work throughout history by the Holy Spirit and his Son. Biblical theology helps one grasp the main purpose by looking at each passage of the Bible in light of the entire canon of Scripture to understand how every part of Scripture is connected to Jesus.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 17, 19.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 17–18.

As one makes their way through the pages of the Bible, one thing is sure, Jesus is the central figure from the beginning to the end. That means that one won't understand who Jesus is unless they understand the grand narrative that is all about him. If Jesus is the key to interpreting the whole counsel of the Bible, then one will identify him in the beginning, middle, and end of this beautiful story. The Bible is the grand story of God, and it is centered on his plan to redeem the world in the person and work of Christ.

Biblical theology not only strengthens one's understanding of the biblical storyline but also helps aid the church's evangelistic efforts and mission. The world today is filled with biblically illiterate people. The church's evangelistic strategy must educate people on how to start from the beginning, with God and creation, so that people can understand what has gone wrong in the world. From that point, one can show how God has been at work throughout history to redeem the world, which leads to Jesus and why that is important for people today. One must understand the grand story of the Bible in its proper context so that they will be equipped to uncover what God has done in the past, what he is doing in the present, and what he will do in the future.¹⁵⁵

A proper understanding of biblical theology also allows the church to know its role in God's plan of redemption. The church has been designated by God to represent him in the world and to serve as his ambassadors. Biblical theology teaches this from God's desire for Adam, the Israelites, and now the church. The role of the church is to point people to Jesus.

Reading the Bible accurately means knowing where each book fits into its overarching narrative. Thus, knowing the overarching narrative helps one to read and understand accurately each event, character, or lesson that's been given as part of God's progressively revealed Word.

¹⁵⁵ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 19.

Roark and Cline note, “Understanding the whole story of the Bible clarifies who Jesus is and what his gospel is. God has promised to rescue a people from every tribe and nation and tongue for his own glory through his Son and by his Spirit. These redeemed people are members of Christ’s body, the church.”¹⁵⁶

Therefore, biblical theology defines the identity and mission of the church. Jesus told the two disciples on the Emmaus Road that the Scriptures teach that "repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Jesus also says before his ascension in the Great Commission, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19–20). Therefore, the promotion of Christ should be at the heart of the mission of the church to disciple the nations. As Roark and Cline express, "In this way, biblical theology guards the church from the deadly error of proclaiming a false gospel and guides the church toward keeping the proclamation of the true gospel as the centerpiece of its mission to the world for the praise of God's glory."¹⁵⁷

Lawrence discusses the difference between being missional and mission-minded. He notes that they are not the same. Being missional is a way of thinking about the church and how it relates to the world. He says, “A missional church understands that the church doesn’t go on mission, or send people out to do missions. Rather, the church is the mission of God into the world, in order to heal the world and reconcile people to God.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 18.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 205.

The Bible shows that God is a missional God who desires intimacy with his people. In the Garden of Eden, he walked with Adam and Eve, he was in the tabernacle amid the Israelite camp, and Jesus came to dwell with humanity. Throughout Scripture, the missional character of God is on display. Therefore, the church is sent as God sent Christ—sent into the world to make his redeeming presence known. Lawrence observes, "Here is the paradigm for the missional church. As Christ was sent, so the body of Christ is likewise sent. As Christ incarnated the saving presence of God, so we incarnate the redeeming presence of Christ. We sacrifice ourselves through service, through engaging the culture around us with mercy and good deeds."¹⁵⁹ Therefore, the church is to witness for Jesus. It proclaims his message. It makes disciples. And it displays within itself the life of the kingdom. Like Jesus, the church is sent into the world to proclaim this life-giving, kingdom-inaugurating message.¹⁶⁰

Biblical theology is not just an interesting topic; it teaches the church about God, their identity, and how the church is to live in the world. In essence, the Bible's story and symbolism teach the church to understand who it is, what it faces, and how it should live as it waits for the coming of the Lord.

As one reads the story of the Bible, they will read that God's people are referred to as sheep. Being God's sheep is part of the church's identity. But just like sheep need a shepherd, so does the church. Jesus is the shepherd. The Bible refers to him as the Good Shepherd who protects his sheep, even to the point of death (John 10:11; 14).

The church is also referred to as the Bride of Christ. Ephesians 5:22–33 teaches that the sacrificial love of Christ for his people is to be reflected in a husband's love for his wife. The

¹⁵⁹ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 206.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

church's submission to Jesus is to be reflected in a wife's submission to her husband. The wait between the identification of the people of Jesus and their final salvation is like the wait between the engagement period and the grand celebration of the wedding day. Paul states in Ephesians 5 that the mystery of marriage is about Christ and the church. Hamilton says, "This metaphor of the church as a bride is meant to build our identity. We are to think of ourselves in bridal terms. We are not to commit spiritual adultery against the Lord Jesus. We are to save ourselves for the Bridegroom, as a bride saves herself for her husband."¹⁶¹

The Apostle Paul also identifies the church as the body of Christ. This idea is tied to the marriage union. Just as the husband is the head of the home, Christ is the head of the body. The head directs the body, determining what the body will do, and the body puts in action what the head has decided. The body metaphor also communicates the unity of the church.

God adopts, chooses, and brings his children into his family. He gives them his name and all the blessings and benefits of being his child. This adoption formerly belonged to Israel (Rom. 9:4), whereby God identified Israel as his firstborn Son (Ex. 4:22). In God's eternal plan, it is now the church that is adopted (Eph. 1:5).¹⁶²

The church is also identified in the New Testament as the temple of the Holy Spirit. The idea that the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit is directly connected to the church's setting in the grand story of the Bible.

The setting still concerns the entire world. When God put Adam in the garden of Eden, Adam's responsibility was to expand its borders so that God's glory would cover the drylands as the waters cover the sea. Adam was cast out of the garden. When God put Israel in the land, the

¹⁶¹ Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 100–101.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 103.

nation's responsibility was to expand its borders so that God's glory would cover the drylands as the waters cover the sea.

On the way to the promised land, God gave Israel a symbol of the story's setting when he instructed the people to build the tabernacle as a representation of the world. The temple later replaced this tabernacle. God's presence in the tabernacle and the temple required that everything in it be holy and everything around it clean. The church is now the temple of the Holy Spirit, and this speaks to God's presence in the church and the need for holiness.

These realities mean that the church is to be a preview of what the world will become. The church is a picture of the new temple. The redeemed are those who are in God's presence, who know him, enjoy him, serve him, and live for him—this is how the whole world will be in the coming age.

Hamilton rightly states,

Just as God put Adam in the garden to extend its borders so that Yahweh's glory would cover the drylands as the waters cover the sea, God put Israel in the land to take up that same task, giving them a preview of what it would look like when he filled the tabernacle and temple with his glory. Jesus sent his disciples on the same errand to all nations: as disciples are made, the temple grows, the place of God's presence expands and God's glory spreads over the dry land. In the age to come, these realities will be fully realized. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the glory of God.¹⁶³

When one thinks about the setting of the grand story, it alludes to another aspect of the church's identity. The church is no longer in bondage, but she is not yet home. The church is like the Israelites. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt until God redeemed them, and then they were wanderers, making their way to the Promise Land. The church has been liberated from bondage to sin, and she is now a wanderer. The church experienced exile from Eden, but she has heard the call to come out of Babylon, and she is now returning from exile. Her destination is the holy city,

¹⁶³ Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 106.

the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:10). The church will dwell in the new and better Eden, the fulfillment of the Promised Land, the new heaven, and new earth.¹⁶⁴

Research Summary

Considering the results from the study's participants, it seems to conclude that the majority of the FBCPB membership lacks a holistic understanding of biblical theology. Though many of the participants consider themselves faithful church members, who attend worship services three times a month or more (94%), it is evident that a firm grasp of biblical theology has eluded them. Many of the participants began the study assuming that they had a healthy understanding of the biblical narrative, but the evidence shows otherwise.

After the initial survey, the researcher identified multiple areas of weakness among the participants. For instance, 57% of the thirty-three participants could not identify how many major covenants are found in Scripture between God and his people. Covenants are how God enters into a relationship with people, and they also serve to move the biblical story forward. Not understanding the role of covenants hinders the reader in adequately interpreting Scripture.

However, the post-survey shows vast improvement among the participants as 100% of them were able to identify the six major biblical covenants. This improvement demonstrates that church members can grasp biblical theology if someone takes the time to train and show them how to read the Bible the way that God intended.

Another area that the initial survey showed weakness amongst the participants was their inability to identify what it means to be created in the image of God. Only seven participants

¹⁶⁴ Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 107.

(21%) answered correctly on the first survey. This number is disheartening because understanding one's identity is crucial in fulfilling what God has called his people to accomplish. If one fails in knowing what it means to be created in the image of God, then one will live with a distorted view of their identity and role in this world.

Research showed, according to the post-survey, that after the offered class on biblical theology that thirty-one of the thirty-three participants had a firm understanding of what it meant for them to be created in the image of God. That's a 73% improvement from the beginning of the class to the end.

Table 12 of chapter four shows that most of the participants had an understanding of what the Old Testament is about. However, this was a slight majority (52%). But the post-survey reveals that 97% of the study's participants understood the purpose of the Old Testament.

Understanding the Old Testament is crucial to a proper biblical theology and reading of God's Word. If one fails to understand the Old Testament, then they have misunderstood the role and purpose of Christ. The Old Testament reveals who God is and how the world became separated from him. It also gives the first promise of God's plan of redemption in the first book of the Bible. Every story after this looks ahead to the fulfillment of that promise. Throughout the Old Testament pages, with a healthy biblical theology, one can identify the different people, events, and institutions that point to God's redeemer, Jesus Christ.

The researcher was pleased with the improvement and was encouraged by the comments that people made. People began to read their favorite Old Testament stories with a new perspective. They no longer saw them as an individual story but now as a story that helps move the grand story to its completion.

Participant eight's comments after the class brought much excitement to the researcher. He noted, "The biggest idea that came out of this study is that the Old Testament should always be viewed through the lens of the gospel. This has changed everything for me." Reading the Bible through a gospel lens is the key to reading the Bible accurately. People on this side of the cross and resurrection of Jesus have an advantage today that the people during the Old Testament did not have. Today, one can read the Bible through the lens of the gospel and discover Jesus throughout the Old Testament. Doing this allows the Bible to come into a new light as one finds the story of redemption beginning in Genesis and running to Revelation.

It is evident from the study's results and participants' comments that there is a need for biblical theology in the local church. This study proved to show the lack of understanding of the biblical narrative and people's desire to learn more once they discover the Bible with a new healthy perspective. This study sought to create a hunger for God's Word and its author, and the researcher feels as though he accomplished his task. However, there is much more work to be done in the future.

Practical Steps to Enhance Biblical Theology in the Local Church

The researcher has identified three practical ways to help train the congregation in the area of biblical theology. Those ways include the preaching and teaching of God's Word in large gatherings, training of Connection Group and small group leaders, and strategically offering biblical theology courses for the church.

The researcher serves as the lead pastor of FBCPB and understands the enormous responsibility of preaching God's Word faithfully. Though preaching with a biblical theology lens has been his practice, it is more evident today how much this is needed. Even the faithful

members lack a proper understanding of the grand narrative of Scripture. The researcher realizes that the chances of the sporadic and unfaithful members are even higher if the faithful struggle with reading and understanding the Bible accurately. Thus, there is a great need for biblical theology in the pulpit.

FBCPB's Connection group and small group leaders must also be trained in biblical theology. Many of them have been in this vital leadership role for years but have failed to interpret the biblical story accurately. Their lack of biblical theology is no fault to them but falls on the leadership of the church. It is the responsibility of the church leadership to ensure that every leader who teaches people understands how to read and teach the Bible the way that God has intended. Biblical theology is one of those tools that should be utilized daily. As the group leaders study and prepare for their lessons, they should study with the lens of biblical theology. Studying this way will enhance their understanding and allow them to train those sitting under their leadership on how to interpret the Bible. These leaders play a crucial role in helping elevate the overall health of the church.

Another avenue that the researcher has identified as a way to promote spiritual growth and a proper way to read the Bible is by offering courses on biblical theology. This current study proved to be effective in the understanding and health of the participants—the course created in them a desire to learn more.

These three practical steps aim to help fulfill the Great Commission given to the church by Jesus himself. By using biblical theology, people are exposed to the gospel and their role as members of the church. The church is called to promote Christ in the world and to disciple others. Tragically, discipleship has failed in many churches, including FBCPB. Biblical theology can be used to help reverse the current trend and put the church on the biblical path of

discipleship, which is God's people investing in the lives of other people and seeking to make more disciples.

Replication

The burden for biblical theology in the local church was birthed inside the researcher years ago. The researcher has severed five local churches in three different states. Throughout his ministry, he has noticed the trend of church members unable to understand the grand narrative of Scripture. Their lack of understanding is primarily due to the lack of biblical theology. It was at his current position that the researcher decided to see if his assumptions were accurate. The research proves that his beliefs were correct and that people can do biblical theology with proper training.

The researcher feels that his assumptions plague many church congregations. He thinks that if the church leaders take the time to educate and train themselves in biblical theology, it will positively impact the spiritual growth of their congregation. He would advise churches to utilize the three steps that he has taken to help advance the overall spiritual health of the people.

Areas for Further Study

The research revealed a shallow understanding of biblical theology among the membership of FBCPB. The researcher would be curious about how a healthy biblical theology has impacted other SBC congregations. For instance, has a healthy biblical theology affected the church's prayer life or evangelism strategy? If biblical theology affects multiple areas of the church, which the researcher believes, how has it affected those areas?

The researcher would also be curious if other churches have experienced the same problem that FBCPB has and if it has been identified. If so, what steps are those churches taking to help overcome the biblical theology deficiency that has been exposed?

Proper biblical theology is not just something that can be learned as an adult. All ages should be educated and trained in biblical theology. The children's and youth ministries would be areas that the researcher would like to spend more time investigating. It would be interesting to see how biblical theology affects a child's spiritual growth and development as they age through their teenage years into adulthood. The researcher believes that the impact would be significant and help steer the future church in the right direction.

Impact on First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff

This study revealed many deficiencies among the FBCPB membership pertaining to the study of biblical theology. However, the researcher has identified potential areas of improvement. Long tenure as a church member should not imply a firm understanding of the grand story of the Bible. Many members know the stories but are unable to identify how the stories are connected. And tragically, most are incapable of determining how the stories point to Christ.

The preaching ministry has served as a vital tool to help the FBCPB congregation understand the overall Bible story. This growth has been demonstrated over the short tenure of the pastor. Also, the Introduction to Biblical Theology course that was offered has strengthened the participant's knowledge of how to read and interpret the Bible accurately. However, much more can be done to help increase the church's spiritual growth through biblical theology. The

researcher has identified three ways in which he plans to execute a biblical theology strategy for FBCPB.

Summary

The information collected in this study is encouraging to the researcher. This study shows that FBCPB members have a desire to learn how to use biblical theology. It is easy to criticize churches for failing in this area. However, the researcher believes that most churches are anemic when it comes to biblical theology. Although some pastors may be well equipped in biblical theology, they are not training the church members on how to use biblical theology.

Biblical theology is needed in the church. It should be utilized from the pulpit, the classrooms, and small group settings. Every age group should be taught through the lens of biblical theology and shown how the text fits into the grand narrative of the Bible. Local churches are suffering due to a lack of a healthy diet of biblical theology. When biblical theology is present the church is healthier because it understands its purpose and how it fits into God's plan of redemption.

Appendix A

January 20, 2021

Brandon Spain
Gary Waller

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY20-21-385 The Development of a Biblical Theology Curriculum for the Congregation of Poplar Bluff First Baptist Church

Dear Brandon Spain and Gary Waller,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

(1) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word research with the word project throughout both documents.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

2020 BIBLE READING PLAN

JANUARY

- 6 – 1John 1
- 7 – 1John 2:1-17
- 8 – 1John 2:18-29
- 9 – 1John 3:1-10
- 10 – 1John 3:11-24

- 13 – 1John 4
- 14 – 1John 5
- 15 – 2John
- 16 – 3John
- 17 – Jude

- 20 – James 1
- 21 – James 2
- 22 – James 3
- 23 – James 4
- 24 – James 5

- 27 – Philip. 1:1-17
- 28 – Philip. 1:18-30
- 29 – Philip. 2
- 30 – Philip. 3
- 31 – Philip. 4

FEBRUARY

- 3 – 1Cor.1
- 4 – 1Cor.2-3
- 5 – 1Cor.4
- 6 – 1Cor.5-6
- 7 – 1Cor.7

- 10 – 1Cor.8-9
- 11 – 1Cor.10
- 12 – 1Cor.11
- 13 – 1Cor.12
- 14 – 1Cor.13

- 17 – 1Cor.14:1-19
- 18 – 1Cor.14:20-40
- 19 – 1Cor.15:1-34
- 20 – 1Cor.15:35-58
- 21 – 1Cor. 16

- 24 – Malachi 1
- 25 – Malachi 2:1-9
- 26 – Malachi 2:10-17
- 27 – Malachi 3
- 28 – Malachi 4

MARCH

- 2 – Mark 1:1-15
- 3 – Mark 1:16-45
- 4 – Mark 2:1-17
- 5 – Mark 2:18-28
- 6 – Mark 3

- 9 – Mark 4:1-20
- 10 – Mark 4:21-41
- 11 – Mark 5:1-20
- 12 – Mark 5:21-43
- 13 – Mark 6:1-29

- 16 – Mark 6:30-56
- 17 – Mark 7:1-23
- 18 – Mark 7:24-37
- 19 – Mark 8:1-21
- 20 – Mark 8:22-38

- 23 – Mark 9:1-29
- 24 – Mark 9:30-49
- 25 – Mark 10:1-31
- 26 – Mark 10:32-52
- 27 – Mark 11

- 30 – Mark 12:1-12
- 31 – Mark 12:13-34

APRIL

- 1 – Mark 12:35-44
- 2 – Mark 13:1-23
- 3 – Mark 13:24-37

- 6 – Mark 14:1-31
- 7 – Mark 14:32-52
- 8 – Mark 14:53-72
- 9 – Mark 15
- 10 – Mark 16

- 13 – Genesis 1
- 14 – Genesis 2
- 15 – Genesis 3
- 16 – Genesis 4
- 17 – Genesis 5

- 20 – Genesis 6
- 21 – Genesis 7
- 22 – Genesis 8
- 23 – Genesis 9
- 24 – Genesis 10

- 27 – Genesis 11,12
- 28 – Genesis 13,14
- 29 – Genesis 15,16
- 30 – Genesis 17

MAY

- 1 – Genesis 18

- 4 – Genesis 19
- 5 – Genesis 20
- 6 – Genesis 21
- 7 – Genesis 22
- 8 – Genesis 23

- 11 – Genesis 24
- 12 – Genesis 25
- 13 – Genesis 26
- 14 – Genesis 27
- 15 – Genesis 28

- 18 – Genesis 29
- 19 – Genesis 30
- 20 – Genesis 31
- 21 – Genesis 32
- 22 – Genesis 33,34

- 25 – Genesis 35
- 26 – Genesis 36,37
- 27 – Genesis 38
- 28 – Genesis 39
- 29 – Genesis 40

JUNE

- 1 – Genesis 41
- 2 – Genesis 42
- 3 – Genesis 43
- 4 – Genesis 44
- 5 – Genesis 45

- 8 – Genesis 46
- 9 – Genesis 47
- 10 – Genesis 48
- 11 – Genesis 49
- 12 – Genesis 50

- 15 – Exodus 1
- 16 – Exodus 2
- 17 – Exodus 3
- 18 – Exodus 4:1-17
- 19 – Exodus 4:18-31

- 22 – Exodus 5
- 23 – Exodus 6
- 24 – Exodus 7
- 25 – Exodus 8
- 26 – Exodus 9

- 29 – Exodus 10
- 30 – Exodus 11,12

JULY

- 1 – Exodus 13
- 2 – Exodus 14,15
- 3 – Exodus 16

- 6 – Exodus 17
- 7 – Exodus 18
- 8 – Exodus 19
- 9 – Exodus 20
- 10 – Deuteronomy 5

- 13 – Deuteronomy 6
- 14 – Deuteronomy 7
- 15 – Deuteronomy 8
- 16 – Deuteronomy 9
- 17 – Deuteronomy 34

- 20 – Joshua 1
- 21 – Joshua 2
- 22 – Joshua 3
- 23 – Joshua 4
- 24 – Joshua 5

- 27 – Joshua 6
- 28 – Joshua 7
- 29 – Joshua 8
- 30 – Joshua 9
- 31 – Joshua 10

AUGUST

- 3 – Joshua 11
- 4 – Joshua 12
- 5 – Joshua 13:1-7
- 6 – Joshua 23
- 7 – Joshua 24

- 10 – Psalm 1
- 11 – Psalm 2
- 12 – Psalm 3
- 13 – Psalm 4
- 14 – Psalm 5

- 17 – Psalm 6-7
- 18 – Psalm 8-9
- 19 – Psalm 10-11
- 20 – Psalm 12-13
- 21 – Psalm 14-15

- 24 – Psalm 16-17
- 25 – Psalm 18
- 26 – Psalm 19
- 27 – Psalm 20-21
- 28 – Psalm 22

- 31 – Psalm 23

SEPTEMBER

- 1 – Psalm 30
- 2 – Psalm 37
- 3 – Psalm 49
- 4 – Psalm 51

- 7 – Psalm 53
- 8 – Psalm 63
- 9 – Psalm 65
- 10 – Psalm 84
- 11 – Psalm 98

- 14 – Psalm 118
- 15 – Psalm 121
- 16 – Psalm 124
- 17 – Psalm 138
- 18 – Psalm 139

- 21 – Daniel 1
- 22 – Daniel 2
- 23 – Daniel 3-4
- 24 – Daniel 5
- 25 – Daniel 6-7

- 28 – Daniel 8-9
- 29 – Daniel 10
- 30 – Daniel 11-12

OCTOBER

- 1 – Acts 1
- 2 – Acts 2

- 5 – Acts 3
- 6 – Acts 4
- 7 – Acts 5
- 8 – Acts 6
- 9 – Acts 7

- 12 – Acts 8
- 13 – Acts 9
- 14 – Acts 10
- 15 – Acts 11
- 16 – Acts 12

- 19 – Acts 13
- 20 – Acts 14
- 21 – Acts 15
- 22 – Acts 16
- 23 – Acts 17

- 26 – Acts 18
- 27 – Acts 19
- 28 – Acts 20
- 29 – Acts 21
- 30 – Acts 22

NOVEMBER

- 2 – Acts 23
- 3 – Acts 24
- 4 – Acts 25
- 5 – Acts 26
- 6 – Acts 27-28

- 9 – Romans 1
- 10 – Romans 2
- 11 – Romans 3
- 12 – Romans 4
- 13 – Romans 5

- 16 – Romans 6
- 17 – Romans 7
- 18 – Romans 8
- 19 – Romans 9
- 20 – Romans 10

- 23 – Romans 11
- 24 – Romans 12
- 25 – Romans 13
- 26 – Romans 14
- 27 – Romans 15

- 30 – Romans 16

DECEMBER

- 1 – Galatians 1
- 2 – Galatians 2
- 3 – Galatians 3
- 4 – Galatians 4

- 7 – Galatians 5
- 8 – Galatians 6
- 9 – Ephesians 1
- 10 – Ephesians 2
- 11 – Ephesians 3

- 14 – Ephesians 4
- 15 – Ephesians 5
- 16 – Ephesians 6
- 17 – Isaiah 7:10-14;11
- 18 – Isaiah 9:1-7

- 21 – Matthew 1:18-25
- 22 – Luke 1
- 23 – Luke 2:1-20
- 24 – John 1:1-13
- 25 – John 1:14

2021 BIBLE READING PLAN

JANUARY

- 4 – Job 1
- 5 – Job 2
- 6 – Job 3
- 7 – Job 4
- 8 – Job 5

- 11 – Job 6
- 12 – Job 7
- 13 – Job 8
- 14 – Job 9
- 15 – Job 10

- 18 – Job 11
- 19 – Job 12
- 20 – Job 13
- 21 – Job 14
- 22 – Job 15

- 25 – Job 16
- 26 – Job 17
- 27 – Job 18
- 28 – Job 19
- 29 – Job 20

FEBRUARY

- 1 – Job 21
- 2 – Job 22
- 3 – Job 23
- 4 – Job 24
- 5 – Job 25

- 8 – Job 26
- 9 – Job 27
- 10 – Job 28
- 11 – Job 29
- 12 – Job 30

- 15 – Job 31
- 16 – Job 32
- 17 – Job 33
- 18 – Job 34
- 19 – Job 35

- 22 – Job 36
- 23 – Job 37
- 24 – Job 38
- 25 – Job 39
- 26 – Job 40

MARCH

- 1 – Job 41
- 2 – Job 42
- 3 – Habakkuk 1
- 4 – Habakkuk 2
- 5 – Habakkuk 3

- 8 – John 1
- 9 – John 2
- 10 – John 3
- 11 – John 4
- 12 – John 5

- 15 – John 6
- 16 – John 7
- 17 – John 8
- 18 – John 9
- 19 – John 10

- 22 – John 11
- 23 – John 12
- 24 – John 13
- 25 – John 14
- 26 – John 15

- 29 – John 16
- 30 – John 17
- 31 – John 18

APRIL

- 1 – John 19
- 2 – John 20, 21

- 5 – Colossians 1
- 6 – Colossians 2
- 7 – Colossians 3
- 8 – Colossians 4
- 9 – Philemon

- 12 – Hebrews 1
- 13 – Hebrews 2
- 14 – Hebrews 3
- 15 – Hebrews 4
- 16 – Hebrews 5

- 19 – Hebrews 6
- 20 – Hebrews 7
- 21 – Hebrews 8
- 22 – Hebrews 9
- 23 – Hebrews 10

- 26 – Hebrews 11
- 27 – Hebrews 12
- 28 – Hebrews 13
- 29 – 1 Peter 1
- 30 – 1 Peter 2

MAY

- 3 – 1 Peter 3
- 4 – 1 Peter 4
- 5 – 1 Peter 5
- 6 – 2 Peter 1
- 7 – 2 Peter 2, 3

- 10 – Revelation 1
- 11 – Revelation 2
- 12 – Revelation 3
- 13 – Revelation 4
- 14 – Revelation 5, 6

- 17 – Revelation 7
- 18 – Revelation 8
- 19 – Revelation 9
- 20 – Revelation 10
- 21 – Revelation 11

- 24 – Revelation 12
- 25 – Revelation 13
- 26 – Revelation 14
- 27 – Revelation 15, 16
- 28 – Revelation 17

- 31 – Revelation 18

JUNE

- 1 – Revelation 19
- 2 – Revelation 20
- 3 – Revelation 21
- 4 – Revelation 22

- 7 – 1 Samuel 1
- 8 – 1 Samuel 2
- 9 – 1 Samuel 3
- 10 – 1 Samuel 4
- 11 – 1 Samuel 5

- 14 – 1 Samuel 6
- 15 – 1 Samuel 7
- 16 – 1 Samuel 8
- 17 – 1 Samuel 9
- 18 – 1 Samuel 10

- 21 – 1 Samuel 11
- 22 – 1 Samuel 12
- 23 – 1 Samuel 13
- 24 – 1 Samuel 14
- 25 – 1 Samuel 15

- 28 – 1 Samuel 16
- 29 – 1 Samuel 17
- 30 – 1 Samuel 18

JULY

- 1 – 1 Samuel 19
- 2 – 1 Samuel 20

- 5 – 1 Samuel 21
- 6 – 1 Samuel 22
- 7 – 1 Samuel 23
- 8 – 1 Samuel 24
- 9 – 1 Samuel 25

- 12 – 1 Samuel 26
- 13 – 1 Samuel 27
- 14 – 1 Samuel 28
- 15 – 1 Samuel 29
- 16 – 1 Samuel 30

- 19 – 1 Samuel 31
- 20 – 2 Samuel 1
- 21 – 2 Samuel 2
- 22 – 2 Samuel 3
- 23 – 2 Samuel 4

- 26 – 2 Samuel 5
- 27 – 2 Samuel 6
- 28 – 2 Samuel 7
- 29 – 2 Samuel 8
- 30 – 2 Samuel 9

AUGUST

- 2 – 2 Samuel 10
- 3 – 2 Samuel 11
- 4 – 2 Samuel 12
- 5 – 2 Samuel 13
- 6 – 2 Samuel 14

- 9 – 2 Samuel 15
- 10 – 2 Samuel 16
- 11 – 2 Samuel 17
- 12 – 2 Samuel 18
- 13 – 2 Samuel 19

- 16 – 2 Samuel 20
- 17 – 2 Samuel 21
- 18 – 2 Samuel 22
- 19 – 2 Samuel 23
- 20 – 2 Samuel 24

- 23 – Nehemiah 1
- 24 – Nehemiah 2
- 25 – Nehemiah 3
- 26 – Nehemiah 4
- 27 – Nehemiah 5

- 30 – Nehemiah 6
- 31 – Nehemiah 7

SEPTEMBER

- 1 – Nehemiah 8
- 2 – Nehemiah 9
- 3 – Nehemiah 10

- 6 – Nehemiah 11
- 7 – Nehemiah 12
- 8 – Nehemiah 13
- 9 – Esther 1
- 10 – Esther 2

- 13 – Esther 3
- 14 – Esther 4
- 15 – Esther 5
- 16 – Esther 6
- 17 – Esther 7

- 20 – Esther 8
- 21 – Esther 9, 10
- 22 – Proverbs 1
- 23 – Proverbs 2
- 24 – Proverbs 3

- 27 – Proverbs 4
- 28 – Proverbs 5
- 29 – Proverbs 6
- 30 – Proverbs 7

OCTOBER

- 1 – Proverbs 8

- 4 – Proverbs 9
- 5 – Proverbs 10
- 6 – Proverbs 11
- 7 – Proverbs 12
- 8 – Proverbs 13

- 11 – Proverbs 14
- 12 – Proverbs 15
- 13 – Proverbs 16
- 14 – Proverbs 17
- 15 – Proverbs 18

- 18 – Proverbs 19
- 19 – Proverbs 20
- 20 – Proverbs 21
- 21 – Proverbs 22
- 22 – Proverbs 23

- 25 – Proverbs 24
- 26 – Proverbs 25
- 27 – Proverbs 26
- 28 – Proverbs 27
- 29 – Proverbs 28

NOVEMBER

- 1 – Proverbs 29
- 2 – Proverbs 30
- 3 – Proverbs 31
- 4 – 2 Corinthians 1
- 5 – 2 Corinthians 2

- 8 – 2 Corinthians 3
- 9 – 2 Corinthians 4
- 10 – 2 Corinthians 5
- 11 – 2 Corinthians 6
- 12 – 2 Corinthians 7

- 15 – 2 Corinthians 8
- 16 – 2 Corinthians 9
- 17 – 2 Corinthians 10
- 18 – 2 Corinthians 11
- 19 – 2 Corinthians 12, 13

- 22 – 1 Thessalonians 1, 2
- 23 – 1 Thessalonians 3
- 24 – 1 Thessalonians 4
- 25 – 1 Thessalonians 5
- 26 – 2 Thessalonians 1

- 29 – 2 Thessalonians 2
- 30 – 2 Thessalonians 3

DECEMBER

- 1 – 1 Timothy 1
- 2 – 1 Timothy 2
- 3 – 1 Timothy 3

- 6 – 1 Timothy 4
- 7 – 1 Timothy 5
- 8 – 1 Timothy 6
- 9 – 2 Timothy 1
- 10 – 2 Timothy 2

- 13 – 2 Timothy 3
- 14 – 2 Timothy 4
- 15 – Titus 1
- 16 – Titus 2
- 17 – Titus 3

- 20 – Isaiah 9:1-7
- 21 – Matthew 1
- 22 – Matthew 2
- 23 – Luke 1
- 24 – Luke 2

Appendix C

2020 Monthly Bible Memory Verse

January

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:9–11

February

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

1 Corinthians 13:4–6

March

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

April

“that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”

2 Corinthians 5:19

May

“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Genesis 12:2–3

June

““Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Then he said, “I am God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.”

Exodus 3:5–6

July

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”

Deuteronomy 5:6–7

August

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

September

“I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

Psalms 121:1–2

October

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

November

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

December

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

Appendix D

Dear Church Member:

As a student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of this research is to determine the overall health of the current congregation of FBCPB concerning biblical theology. The study seeks to identify individual's weaknesses and educate the participants on how to read and study the Bible through a biblical-theological lens by introducing them to biblical theology, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an in-person survey at the beginning of the class and at the end of the class. Each survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participation will be confidential, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

In order to participate, please visit the desk outside the worship center and sign up. You may also call the church office [REDACTED] to sign up. Each participant will be asked to complete an in-person survey on week one.

A consent document is provided in this registration packet. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please sign and date the consent form and return to Pastor Brandon.

Sincerely,

Brandon Spain

Lead Pastor
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Consent

Title of the Project: The Development of a Biblical Theology Curriculum for the Congregation of Poplar Bluff First Baptist Church

Principal Investigator: Brandon Spain, a doctoral candidate, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this research is to determine the overall health of the current congregation of FBCPB concerning biblical theology. The study seeks to identify individual's weaknesses and educate the participants on how to read and study the Bible through a biblical-theological lens by introducing them to biblical theology.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Plan to attend all sessions on Wednesday nights in the Fellowship Hall. Each session will last 60 to 90 minutes
2. If you are absent, please get the notes from the researcher from the session that you missed.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are biblical teaching and instruction on how to begin to read the Scriptures through a biblical-theological lens.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be confidential.

- Data will be stored in sealed envelope and locked in the researcher’s desk and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all records will be destroyed.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation, and do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Brandon Spain. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Dr. Gary Waller, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature and Date

Appendix E

Biblical Theology Pre-Test

Name: _____

Survey Instructions: Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. If you do not know the answer to a particular question, please feel free to leave it blank. After answering the questions, please submit the completed survey.

1. How long have you been attending FBCPB?
0 – 1 year
2 – 5 years
6 – 10 years
11 or more
2. How often do you attend worship services at FBCPB?
once a month
twice a month
three times a month
four times a month
3. Do you attend a Sunday morning Connection Group?
Yes
No
4. If the answer to question 4 is, “Yes,” How would you describe your attendance to your Sunday morning Connection Group?
faithfully
occasionally
sporadically

unfaithfully

5. Do you attend Wednesday night Bible study classes at FBCPB?

Yes

No

6. What is your age?

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 64

65 to 74

75 or older

Survey Questions

7. How long have you been saved?

0 – 5 years

6 – 10 years

11 – 15 years

15 – 20 years

21 years or more

8. How often do you read the Bible?
- Daily
 - Regularly
 - Occasionally
 - Never
9. Do you feel like you understand what you are reading when you read the Bible?
- Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
10. Do you feel that you understand God's purpose for your life on this earth?
- Yes
 - No
11. How many major biblical covenants are in Scripture?
- 1
 - 2
 - 4
 - 6
12. With which biblical character does God not personally make a covenant with?
- Abraham
 - Noah
 - David
 - Jonah

13. Which book of the Bible tells of Israel's deliverance from Egypt?
- Genesis
- Exodus
- Joshua
- 1 Samuel
14. What does it mean that humanity is created in the "image of God"?
15. What is Abraham's role in God's plan of redemption?
16. What prophet speaks of a new covenant being written on people's hearts?
- Daniel
- Hosea
- Jeremiah
- Isaiah
17. What do you think the Old Testament is all about?
18. How does understanding the original creation of the world help one understand the purpose of salvation, often presented as a new creation?

19. What significant event in the Old Testament (Exodus) points to Jesus' sacrificial death?
20. Where is the first gospel promise given?
21. What is the significance of the first animal sacrifice in Genesis 4?
22. How does the New Testament help one understand the Old Testament types? (**Types**: A person, event, or institution that has significant meaning for the future.)
23. How does the Old Testament types help us understand the New Testament?
24. What is Jesus' relationship with the Old Testament law?
25. Has anyone ever taught or helped you in understanding the unified storyline of the Bible by way of a book or teaching?

Appendix F

Introduction to Biblical Theology

Listener Guide

Week 1

What is Biblical Theology?

“Biblical theology is the study of the _____ of Scripture.”

“Biblical theology is a way of reading the Bible as one story by one divine author that culminates in who Jesus Christ is and what he has done, so that every part of Scripture is understood in relation to Him.”

- Nick Roark and Robert Cline

The _____ that runs from Genesis to Revelation is Jesus.

3 Things that are true about the Bible:

1. The Bible is a book about _____.
2. The Bible is a _____ story.
3. Through the Bible’s story, we come to know _____ in all his _____.

Importance of Getting the Story Straight:

1. It helps us to _____ Christ.
2. It helps us _____ against false teachings and it _____ the Church’s mission.
3. It helps us realize the _____ to share with others.

One Story

“The Old Testament on its own is an unfinished story; a promise without a fulfillment. We must read on to the New Testament if we want to know what it really means. And the New Testament constantly looks back to the promise it fulfills. The Bible must be understood and read as one book with one ultimate author, God, and one ultimate subject, God’s plan of salvation through His Son Jesus.”

- Vaughn Roberts

4 Major Biblical Plot Movements

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

God’s Covenants

What is a Covenant?

A covenant is a biblical concept that refers primarily to how God _____ and is committed to His people.

6 Biblical Covenants

1. Covenant with _____ (Gen.1-3; especially 1:26-31; 2:15-17)
2. Covenant with _____ (Gen. 6-9, especially 8:20-9:17)
3. Covenant with _____ (Gen.12-22, especially 12:1-7; 15:1-21)

4. Covenant with _____ (Exodus 19-24)
5. Covenant with _____ (2 Sam.7; especially 7:8-17; 1 Chron. 17)
6. The New Covenant in _____ (Dt. 30:6-10; Jer.31:31-35; Ezek.36:22-32; Heb.8-10)

Characteristics of Biblical Covenants

1. God's covenants are part of God's one plan of _____.
2. God's covenants _____ from one to another.
3. God's covenants are _____ and _____.
4. God's covenants are _____; they reveal who God is and his plan.

Typology

What is typology?

It is the study of the correspondence between persons, events, and institutions that first appear in the Old Testament and preview, prepare, or more fully express New Testament salvation truths. (Tony Merida)

Jesus _____ the Old Testament and is the ultimate _____ of every biblical type.

3 Biblical Types:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Characteristics of Biblical Types

1. Types are patterns _____ in history.
2. Types are _____ by God.
3. Types involve progression toward _____ in Christ.

Introduction to Biblical Theology

Participant Guide

Week 2

Plot 1 – Creation

God is Revealed as _____

_____ is the most important person in the story.

“*Creatio ex nihilo*” means Creation out of _____.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

Psalms 19:1

“Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world.”

Psalms 90:2

“He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. . .”

Psalms 146:6

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Revelation 4:11

*“For he chose us in him, **before the foundation of the world**, to be holy and blameless in his sight.”*

Ephesians 1:4

*“ . . .the Lamb slain **from the foundation of the world.**”*

Revelation 13:8

*“He (Jesus) was foreknown **before the foundation of the world** but was revealed in these last times for you.”*

1 Peter 1:20

When God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit created the world,
_____ was in view.

God’s _____

The pinnacle of God’s creation was _____. (Gen.1:26–31)

Created in the Image of God

What does that mean?

It’s central meaning is that we were created to be like God and to
_____ him in the world.

“Bearing the image of God means that they uniquely demonstrate to the world who God is and what he is like.”

- Matthew Emerson

It means that we have been created to have a _____ relationship with God.

“Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.”

Genesis 2:7

Tasks in the Garden

1. Be fruitful and _____.
2. _____ the earth.
3. Cultivate and _____ the garden.
4. _____ God's Law.

"In Adam"

Adam serves as our _____ head and _____.

Trajectories for the Storyline

1. **Creation _____ God's Relationship with His People as
Covenantal.**

_____ Mediate God's Word

_____ Mediate God's Presence

_____ Mediate God's Rule

2. **Creation Defines _____ as Foundational for the Story
Ahead.**

"This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church."

Ephesians 5:32

3. Creation Defines _____ as the Goal of Creation.

“Come to me, all you are who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

- Jesus (Matt. 11:28–30)

Plot 2 – The Fall

The Conception of Sin (Genesis 3)

Fourfold Effects of Sin

1. _____ - they experienced alienation and condemnation from God.
2. _____ - they experienced alienation from each other.
3. _____ - they experienced alienation within themselves.
4. _____ - they experienced alienation in the world they were created to rule.

The Cover Up of Our Sin (Genesis 3)

The Consequences of Our Sin (Genesis 3)

1. Adam is a _____ Prophet, Priest, and King.
2. The first marriage is _____.

3. Rest is _____.

“As we walk through the rest of the biblical story, it is of utmost importance that we remember what God made human beings to do—dwell with him and glorify him as his image bearers, rule, obey, multiply, and cultivate—and that each of those functions has been distorted by the fall.”

- Matthew Emerson

Plot 3 - Redemption

_____ - making things right between us and God.

_____ - clearing our account of guilt.

The _____ for Our Sin (Genesis 3)

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Genesis 3:15

Protoevangelium – The First _____

“The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.”

Genesis 3:21

“Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.”

Hebrews 9:22

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

2 Corinthians 5:21

First Adam versus the Last Adam

(Romans 5:12–21)

“Paul’s primary teaching in these two verses (18 & 19) is that the essence of Adam’s one transgression (v.18a) was disobedience (v.19a), whereas the essence of Christ’s one act of righteousness (v.18b) was obedience (v.19b). When God commanded Adam not to eat of the forbidden fruit, Adam disobeyed and brought death. When God sent His only begotten Son into the world to suffer and die, the Son obeyed and brought life.”

- John MacArthur

“The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

1 Corinthians 15:45

Jesus is the _____ and _____ Adam!

Introduction to Biblical Theology

Participant Guide

Week 3

3/17/21

Noah

(Genesis 6–9)

“The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time . . . But Noah found favor/grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

Genesis 6:5–8

*“I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. **But** I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.”*

Genesis 6:17–18.

God’s Covenant with Noah

“But I will establish my covenant with you. . .” (6:18)

A covenant is “*a bond in blood sovereignly administered.*”

- O. Palmer Robertson

3 Things you need to know when God makes a Covenant:

1. Covenants established by God are established by God and not _____.
2. God’s covenants are _____.
3. God’s covenants are established by _____.

Typology in the Story of Noah

Noah as Another Adam

Similarities between Adam and Noah

God blessed them and said them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.” (Gen. 1:28)	Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1)
“Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground . . . And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground – everything that has breath of life in it” (Gen. 1:28, 30).	“The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you” (Gen. 9:2–3).
“I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food . . . I give every green plant for food” (Gen. 1:29–30)	“Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything” (Gen. 9:3)

Important: God is _____ making a new covenant with Noah.

The *cutting of a covenant* **represented a new covenant**, but the *establishing of a covenant* **represented the renewal of a covenant already in place**. So the covenant with Noah is an **extension of the covenant that was originally cut with Adam**.

God’s covenant sign with Noah is the _____.

Noah serves as a type of Christ but is not the promised seed of Genesis 3:15.

The Flood and Ark

The flood was a picture/type of God’s righteous _____ and the ark was a picture/type of God’s merciful _____.

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the

day Noah entered the are; and they knew nothing about what would happen until flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:37–39

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

2 Peter 3:10

Tracing the Bloodline

Adam – Seth – Noah – Shem – Abram (Abraham)

Abraham

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Genesis 12:1–3

Promises to Abraham

1. Make you into a great _____.
2. I will _____ you.
3. Make your _____ great.
4. You will be a _____.
5. _____ those who bless you.
6. _____ those who curse you.

God's Promise to Abraham involves:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

“and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” = 2nd _____

“Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”

Galatians 3:8

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.

Galatians 3:16

Testing of Abraham

Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love – Isaac – and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.” . . . “When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

Genesis 22:2, 9–14

Lessons Learned from Abraham's Story

1. We are saved by _____.
2. We receive righteousness through _____.
3. God Provides a _____.
4. _____ of the heart.
5. God's _____ purpose.
6. Longing for a _____ place.

Tracing the Bloodline

Adam – Seth – Shem – Noah – Abraham – Jacob – Judah

Jesus is the True and Better Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Judah!

Introduction to Biblical Theology

Participant Guide

Week 4

God's Covenant with Israel through Moses

“But the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.”

Exodus 1:7

Passover

“Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.”

Exodus 12:22–23

Why the blood?

The blood represented both the _____ of a lamb in the place of the firstborn and the _____ of those who marked their homes, trusting God's promise.

The exodus is the dominant picture of _____ in the Old Testament.

“God brings judgment on his enemies through the death of the firstborn son; those who faithfully trust in his word and who, therefore, cover themselves with the lamb's blood are saved from this judgment; God saves his people from their enemies through providing victory over them; and then he brings them through the water safely to the other side. This pattern provides the type for how salvation occurs in the rest of the Old Testament and for how the New Testament authors explain Jesus's work in the New Testament.”

- Matthew Emerson

God enters into covenant with the Israelites at _____ (Ex.19–24).

“The Lord did not give the law to establish his relationship with the Israelites. He gave it because he already had a relationship with his people and he wanted them to now learn how to express this relationship faithfully.”

- Mark Strom

God’s covenant with the Israelites is a Covenant of _____.

“It was the God of salvation who imposed his law on his people; the grace that saves preceded the law that demands. The people were given the law not in order that they might become the redeemed, rather it was because they had already been redeemed that they were given the law. The law of God is the way of life he sets before those whom he has saved, and they engage in that way of life as a response of love and gratitude to God their Redeemer. Grace and law belong together, for grace leads to law; saving love leads to and excites grateful love expressed in obedience.”

- J. A. Motyer

The Order

_____ then obedience.

God’s desire for His people was to _____ His holiness.

The Sinai covenant points beyond itself to the coming of Christ and the new covenant.

God’s Covenant with David

The books of _____ tell how God brought peace and stability under David’s kingdom, pointing forward to the saving reign of his descendant, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Walter Brueggemann said that 2 Samuel 7 is the “dramatic and theological center of the entire Samuel corpus as well as one of the most crucial texts in the Old Testament for evangelical faith.”¹⁶⁵

David serves as a _____ of Israel’s future redeemer.

“The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. . . .Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever”

2 Samuel 7: 11–13, 16, NIV

Similarities between Covenants

Abrahamic Covenant	Davidic Covenant
Great name (Gen. 12:2)	Name (2 Sam. 7:9)
Children (Gen. 12:2–3)	Dynastic succession (2 Sam. 7:12)
Land (Gen. 15:7)	Land (2 Sam. 7:10)
Curse on enemies (Gen. 12:3)	Rest from enemies (2 Sam. 7:10–11)
Israelite Covenant	Davidic Covenant
God’s “firstborn son” (Exod. 4:22)	King is God’s son (2 Sam. 7:14)
Royal and holy nation (Exod. 19:4–6)	Priest-king (Ps. 110:2, 4)
Stipulations to follow (Exod. 20: 2–17)	Stipulations to follow (Deut. 17:14–20)
Divine promises (Exod. 23:20–33)	Divine promises (2 Sam. 7:8–20)

God’s covenant with David _____ the story of God’s redemption.

The Voice of the Prophets

God delivered a message of _____ through the prophets.

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Jeremiah 31: 33–34

¹⁶⁵ Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 253; Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 112.

God's New Covenant in Christ

The opening verse of the New Testament announces that Jesus Christ is the promised redeemer, the one that had been promised in the Garden of Eden and the one that all the Old Testament prophets hoped to see.

Unlike Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and Israel, Jesus _____ and demonstrated that He is God's true and faithful Son. (Lk. 4:1-13)

“When Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God, it would be better translated as the kingly rule of God . . . When Jesus proclaims the presence of God's kingly rule, he announces that the dreams of the prophets have come to fulfillment. God himself has come down from heaven and stepped onto the face of the earth . . . God's rule has been established on earth. God has come to the world as king.”

- Sigurd Grindheim

All the gospel writers believe that Jesus is the true spotless Passover _____, slain to cover the sins of his people and to rescue them from judgment by enacting a new and better exodus.

(Lk. 9:31; Jn. 19:36)

“In His atoning death, Jesus takes the punishment for humanity's sin. He is the sacrificial Lamb not just for Israel but all of God's people, those who believe from every tribe, tongue, and nation. He is the Suffering Servant, promised by Isaiah, the one through whom Israel's sins are forgiven. Jesus is the High Priest for those who believe, offering Himself as a perfect sacrifice on the cross for their atonement so that they, too have access to God's throne room. In His resurrection He puts death to death, the final blow in its devastating defeat at the hands of Christ. In his death and resurrection, Jesus pays the penalty for sin and defeats sin, death, and the serpent. He is the promised seed of woman, the One who would restore what Adam and Eve lost in the fall.”

- Matthew Emerson

God's Kingdom

The _____ are God's promises to restore the kingdom of God that was established but lost in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 1 and 2 is the perfect _____ of what God intended for the earth and humanity.

Garden of Eden = pattern of the Kingdom of God

God's people, Adam and Eve, live in God's place, the Garden of Eden, under God's rule; thus, they enjoy God's blessing.

The kingdom of God was a _____ theme in Jesus' teaching and ministry.

Everywhere he went, Jesus preached the message that God's kingdom had come near. For three years he walked and taught. His message was consistent in both word and deed. God's kingdom had come near. Some people were confused, however, because their expectations of the promised Messiah were so different from what they saw in Jesus. Even John the Baptist, who himself had looked forward to God's intervention, became confused and sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one to come. Jesus sent these words back to John the Baptist: 'Tell John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and good news is preached to the poor.'

- Preban Vang and Terry G. Carter

Jesus mostly disclosed what the kingdom of God meant through His parables, metaphors, similes, and images in His teachings.

The Role of the Church

The church is called to _____ or extend the Kingdom of God.

When the _____ grows, the Kingdom grows.

The Kingdom of God is the active rule of God in the world and the presence of his gift of salvation.

The church represents the kingly _____ of God. It shows what his reign looks like and serves as living testimony to God's rule.

Jesus has now given the church the same responsibility that God gave to Israel. The church is now to be a light to the world, represent God to the nations, and bring people to the Lord.

Jesus in Every Book of the Bible

(The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread by Dr. Richard Booker)

Jesus in the Law

Genesis – The Seed of Woman

Exodus – The Passover Lamb

Leviticus – The Perfect Sacrifice

Numbers – The Lifted-Up One

Deuteronomy – The Prophet Greater than Moses

Jesus in the Books of History

Joshua – The Captain of our Salvation

Judges – The Deliverer

Ruth – The Near Kinsman

Samuel – The Judge

Kings and Chronicles – The King

Ezra – The Faithful Scribe

Nehemiah – The Restorer of Our Soul

Esther – The Advocate

Jesus in the Books of Poetry

Job – The Ever-Living Redeemer

Psalms – The New Song

Proverbs – The Wisdom of God

Ecclesiastes – The Goal of Life

Song of Solomon – Lover of Our Soul

Jesus is the Major Prophets

Isaiah – The Suffering Servant

Jeremiah – Righteous Branch of David

Lamentation – The Weeping Prophet

Ezekiel – The Glory of God

Daniel – The Smiting Stone

Jesus in the Minor Prophets

Hosea – The Forgiving Bridegroom

Joel – The Giver of the Holy Spirit

Amos – The Builder of the City of God

Obadiah – The Savior

Jonah – The First-Born from the Dead

Micah – The Ruler of all Ages

Nahum – The Avenger

Habakkuk – The God of Our Salvation

Zephaniah – the One in Our Midst

Haggai – The Restorer of the Kingdom

Zechariah – The Priest on the Throne

Malachi – The Sun of Righteousness with Healing in His wings

Jesus in the Gospels

Matthew – The King of the Jews

Mark – The Servant

Luke – The Son of Man

John – the Son of God

Jesus in the Formation of the Church

Acts – The Giver of the Holy Spirit

Jesus in Paul's Letters

Romans – The Justifier of Sinners

Corinthians – The Giver of Gifts

Galatians – The Liberator of our Soul

Ephesians – The Exalted One

Philippians – Our Joy

Colossians – The Head of all Things

Thessalonians – The Hope of Mankind

Timothy and Titus – Pastor and Shepherd

Philemon – Our Covenant Friend

Jesus in the General Letters

Hebrews – The Messenger of the New Covenant

James – The Great Physician

Peter – The Cornerstone

1, 2, 3 John – Love, Light, and Truth

Jude – The One Who is Able to Keep Us

Jesus in Revelation

Revelation – The King of Kings and Lord of Lords

Appendix G

Introduction to Biblical Theology

Week 1

Teaching Manuscript

Note: PP = PowerPoint slide

Introduction:

- Have you ever read a story in the Bible and thought how does that fit? Many people read bible stories and they don't fully understand the meaning. The Bible must be read through the lens of biblical theology.

So what is biblical theology?

- Biblical theology is the study of the grand narrative of Scripture (PP). This study allows an individual to see how all sixty-six books of the Bible communicate one story. The Bible, therefore, is a unified book comprised of several individual books written by multiple persons. However, each author has been inspired by the Holy Spirit to communicate God's story. God is the divine author of Scripture, and the Bible tells of how God will redeem humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Biblical theology attempts to read the whole story of the Bible and seeks to understand how each part relates to the entire story. Nick Roark and Robert Cline state that, (PP) *“Biblical theology is a way of reading the Bible as one story by one divine author that culminates in who Jesus Christ is and what he has done, so that every part of Scripture is understood in relation to Him.”*¹⁶⁶ The practice of biblical theology helps individuals understand the Bible as one book with many books telling one grand story.
- Roark and Cline also say that:
 - *Biblical theology provides the framework because it guides our reading of the Bible and therefore guards against bad interpretation. Biblical theology is an approach to reading the whole story of the Bible while keeping our focus on the main point of Scripture, Jesus Christ. In other words, biblical theology is the scriptural road map that leads to Jesus.*¹⁶⁷
- Therefore, one can say that the unifying theme (PP) that runs from Genesis to Revelation is Jesus. Matthew Y. Emerson notes that the *subject matter of the entire canon of Scripture is God's testimony to Christ.*¹⁶⁸ Graeme Goldsworthy concurs that biblical

¹⁶⁶ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 26.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁶⁸ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 11.

theology, then, is the study of how every text in Scripture relates to Jesus and His gospel.¹⁶⁹

- The complexity of the Bible sometimes scares people and so they give up on reading it. But, when they give up, they miss out on the very words of God and what he wants us to know!
- So, what if we didn't see the complexity as hurdles to jump but a beautiful scenic trail to explore.
- What if we saw the Bible characters, events, and places as a way for us to know Jesus better?

So let me share with you 3 things that I believe to be true about the Bible: (PP)

- The Bible is a book about Jesus Christ.
 - The Bible is a unified story.
 - Through the Bible's story, we come to know Jesus in all his glory.¹⁷⁰
- Getting the Bible's story right is foundational for knowing Christ. If we read the story inaccurately, we risk misunderstanding who Jesus is and why his work is necessary and unique.

So why is getting the story straight so important? (PP)

1. It helps us to know Christ. (PP)

- In Luke 24 we read about the Emmaus Road encounter between the Resurrected Jesus and 2 of his followers.
- These 2 guys were traveling and the wind had been sucked out of their sails. They couldn't believe that Jesus was dead. In their minds, he wasn't supposed to die. He was going to deliver them. They did not see the cross as good news.
- Then Jesus shows up and they didn't recognize him. And what does Jesus do? He takes them to the Scriptures. He broke the Scriptures down and helped them see it correctly as a story about him. Jesus even rebuked them for not reading the Scriptures correctly. If they had, they would have discerned that his death and resurrection weren't discouraging news but Good News!¹⁷¹
- Jesus says in Luke 24:25-27:
 - How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And

¹⁶⁹ Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, 40.

¹⁷⁰ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 20.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

- For the first time, these 2 men accurately understood the Old Testament and saw how the Scriptures fit together and how all Scripture is fulfilled in Christ.
- The entire story of the Bible allows us to see why Christ had to suffer for our sins, why blood shed was necessary for reconciliation, and what redemption is.
- The entire story of Scripture helps us to know Christ for all that he is.
- *Biblical theology helps us to grasp the main purpose of the Bible by looking at each passage of Scripture in light of the whole Bible so that we understand how every part of Scripture is related to Jesus.*¹⁷²

2. It helps us Guard against false teachings and it Guides the Church's Mission¹⁷³ (PP)

- By reading Scripture correctly, we guard and defend the truth of the gospel.
- On a couple different occasions, Paul had to write letters to churches because they were misreading the Scriptures and allowing themselves to be influenced by false teachings.
- For instance the church of Galatia had some people that were forgetting the heart of the gospel so Paul reminded them:
 - We know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. (2:16)
- If you get the story wrong, you are in danger of missing salvation.
- So Paul counters their mistake by retelling the gospel story properly to demonstrate the centrality of salvation by grace through faith.
- He says in Gal. 3:6-9:
 - “So also Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”
- The church at Corinth was vulnerable to the false teachings that the resurrection did not happen.
- Paul refers them back to the story. He argues that Christ died, was buried, and was raised, all “according to the Scriptures” – that is, the Old Testament. (1Cor.15:3-4)
- It is so important that we know the story so that we can guard it and defend the gospel!
- Biblical theology guides the church because rightly understanding the Bible allows people to see the Mission of God's people, which is Gospel proclamation.¹⁷⁴

That leads me to a third reason which is...

3. It helps realize the importance to share with others. (PP)

¹⁷² Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 18.

¹⁷³ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 24–25.

¹⁷⁴ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 18.

- You and I are a part of God’s story and he wants to use us today to share His story with others.
- We know that one day Jesus is coming back and so there should be a sense of urgency within us to share the good news of salvation to those who don’t know Jesus.
- But we live in a world that is unfamiliar with the teachings of Scripture and requires more explaining than using something like the Romans Road. People first need to grasp that the Christian worldview accompanies a total transformation of mind-set. In our evangelism, we must start with God and creation to see what’s gone wrong. From there, we’re able to follow what God has been doing throughout history, which will help us discover why he sent Jesus and why that matters today. Not until we rightly understand these past events in their proper contexts will we be equipped to uncover what God is doing right now and what he will do in the future.
- If you have ever done any work with puzzles then you know that for the picture to come together accurately, all the pieces have to be in the right spot. If all the pieces are not in the right spot, then you have a distorted picture. Scripture can be viewed as a puzzle but it all comes together in a beautiful picture of Jesus. But if you get any of the pieces in the wrong places, it distorts it and can be tragic.
- Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum says,
 - *Like a puzzle, the pieces of the Bible – the various books, letter, characters, and stories – do fit together. The Bible contains mysteries, but its meaning is not intended to be mysterious or hidden from us, especially in its central teaching. God does not try to hide truth from us; he reveals it. The Bible reveals more than a picture for us to enjoy. It reveals a person for us to know... Jesus is that person!*¹⁷⁵

One Story

- If the Bible is one unified story about Christ, how does God reveal that story through both testaments? People today tend to shy away from the Old Testament due to its difficulty and apparent lack of the gospel. However, the Old Testament is full of the gospel message, and one cannot understand the New Testament message of Jesus without the Old Testament. The New Testament overwhelmingly testifies that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament, which is another way of saying that the Old Testament is about Jesus.¹⁷⁶
- Goldsworthy proposes that the best way to grasp the grand story of the Bible is to begin with Jesus and the gospel.¹⁷⁷ If Jesus is the key to interpreting the entire Bible, one should start with Him. Old Testament interpretation is difficult without understanding the full story and without understanding who Jesus is. However, if one starts with Christ, one can read the Old Testament with a gospel lens to see how those ancient texts point to Jesus.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 28.

¹⁷⁶ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 53.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

- For example, when we were going through the book of Job on Sunday mornings and we saw Job asking for a Mediator in Job 9, as soon as I read that passage my mind went to Jesus. Why? Because I know that Jesus is referred to as the Mediator in the New Testament (2 Tim. 2:5-6). But if I didn't start with Jesus and read the Bible with a Gospel lens then I would have read over that and I would have just passed right over it without giving it a second thought.
- The Old Testament stories are arranged to set up a mystery that is resolved in Christ in the New Testament. The Old Testament points forward to Christ and promises His coming in the future. The New Testament proclaims and reveals Jesus to be the one who fulfills all those promises.
- Vaughan Roberts states, (PP)
 - “The Old Testament on its own is an unfinished story; a promise without a fulfillment. We must read on to the New Testament if we want to know what it really means. And the New Testament constantly looks back to the promise it fulfills. The Bible must be understood and read as one book with one ultimate author, God, and one ultimate subject, God’s plan of salvation through His Son Jesus.”¹⁷⁹
- It is this Old Testament story with all of its promises, prophecies, shadows, and types that Jesus brings to their climactic fulfillment.
- Jesus sheds light backward on the Old Testament story, and it is the Old Testament story that Jesus completes. When one reads the two Testaments together, God’s plan of redemption is unfolded.¹⁸⁰

The Bible’s Plot

- Every story has a central plot, and along the way, subplots may be introduced into the storyline.
- Most bible scholars propose four major plot movements that can be identified in Scripture as...
 - creation, fall, redemption, and new creation.¹⁸¹ (PP)
- It has been said that the *Bible is “glued” together by these plot movements*.¹⁸² The Bible’s grand story begins with God’s creation of the world and its fall into sin through Adam and Eve. The rest of the story reveals God’s plan of redemption for humanity and the world.

¹⁷⁹ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 21.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁸¹ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 51.

¹⁸² Wellum, “From Alpha to Omega,” 80.

A Promised Bloodline

- One of the things that is important to pay attention to in Scripture is following the promised bloodline.
- A promised bloodline is carefully traced through the Old Testament beginning from Adam and continuing through Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, finally culminating in Jesus, the promised Messiah. Scripture's genealogies carefully preserve this bloodline from Adam to Jesus. Jesus is the singular seed of the woman that God promised in the Garden of Eden. Jesus' cross is the plot's "great twist"¹⁸³ according to Hamilton. At the cross, the long-awaited Redeemer came, yet was killed. The plot will finally culminate in the return of Christ to judge His enemies and save His people. God's people will join Him in the new creation and be transformed, and at that point, the plot will be resolved.

God's Covenants

- What moves the narrative along from creation and fall to redemption and restoration (new creation) are the different covenants God makes with His people to bring restoration to His kingdom.¹⁸⁴
- What is a Covenant?
- Goldsworthy identifies that a covenant is a *biblical concept that refers primarily to how God relates and is committed to His people.*¹⁸⁵ (PP) The word covenant communicates who God is and how He acts.
- On the subject of the covenant, Hunter and Wellum suggest that a *covenant informs one that God enters into relationships, and He chooses to enter into relationships with people.*¹⁸⁶ Biblical covenants bring order, direction, and focus to the story of God's redemption of fallen humanity, and covenants are how the Bible's story moves along from beginning to end.
- A covenant is a chosen relationship between two parties ordered according to specific promises. Jeremy M. Kimble and Ched Spellman define biblical covenant as a "*relationship in the biblical storyline between God and a group of His created people based on a spoken promise.*"¹⁸⁷
- Most scholars identify six covenants in the biblical storyline that God established with His people: (PP)
 - Covenant with Adam (Gen. 1–3, esp. 1:26–31; 2:15–17);
 - Covenant with Noah (Gen. 6–9, esp. 8:20–9:17);
 - Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12–22, esp. 12:1–7; 15:1–21);

¹⁸³ Wellum, "From Alpha to Omega," 31.

¹⁸⁴ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 70.

¹⁸⁵ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 73.

¹⁸⁶ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 54.

¹⁸⁷ Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 66.

- Covenant with Moses and Israel (Ex. 19–24);
 - Covenant with David (2 Sam. 7, esp. 7:8–17; 1 Chron. 17);
 - The New Covenant in Christ (Deut. 30:6–10; Jer. 31:31–35; Ezek. 36:22–32; Heb. 8–10).¹⁸⁸
- All of Scripture is tied together through the covenants God makes with His people. Hunter and Wellum are in agreement that the one covenant of salvation God makes with His people can be traced throughout the Old Testament and culminates with the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus.¹⁸⁹
 - Understanding the covenants is key to comprehending God’s unfolding plan of redemption. The theme of covenant draws a line through the Old Testament Scriptures and points to the Old Testament’s fulfillment in the new covenant, inaugurated in the person and work of Christ.¹⁹⁰ Kimble, Spellman, and Emerson agree that biblical covenants form the “backbone” of Scripture.¹⁹¹

Characteristics of Biblical Covenants (used from Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*)¹⁹²

- Now, let me clarify several characteristics of biblical covenants that are important to grasp as we look closely at the Bible’s unfolding story.

1. God’s covenants are part of God’s one plan of salvation. (PP)

- Multiple covenants do NOT mean multiple ways of salvation. There is one plan of God for redemption, and the covenants unfold that one plan.
- The covenants are interrelated, beginning in creation and finding their fulfillment in Christ.
- But it’s important for us to think through how each covenant uniquely contributes to God’s overall plan as it is fulfilled in Christ.
- Each covenant has its own part to play in preparing us for the coming of Christ and the culmination of God’s glorious and unified plan of salvation.

2. God’s covenants progress from one to another. (PP)

- Across Scripture, we see many different covenants, but again they are not separate from one another in God’s plan and purposes.
- So how do these covenants relate to one another and unfold God’s plan? We will look at that later on but, for now, it’s enough to say that God’s various covenants

¹⁸⁸ Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 66.

¹⁸⁹ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 14.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁹¹ Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology*, 290.

¹⁹² Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 60–62.

PROGRESS from one to another, revealing his one salvation plan as it leads us to Christ.

3. God's covenants are unconditional and conditional (PP)

- Each covenant is unconditional and unilateral because of God's gracious initiative to redeem and to keep his own promises.
- On the other hand, each covenant is conditional because it involves a human partner who is called to obey God.
- God, as our Creator and Lord, demands perfect love, loyalty, and obedience, which highlights the conditional aspect of each covenant.
- Why is this important?
- Because as the Bible's story unfolds, it becomes clear that God always keeps his promises, but human beings do not.
- In each covenant that God makes, we eventually find that no human partner loves and obeys God perfectly.
- What hope can there be for us? The only hope is that God keeps his own promise to redeem us through the provision of his Son, who does perfectly keep his promises.
 - Jesus simultaneously meets God's own righteous demands and acts as our obedient covenant representative and substitute.
- Through his obedience, sinners can be saved.

4. God's covenants are revelatory; they reveal who God is and his plan. (PP)

- The covenants include many different elements, including laws and commands, but they are far more than a collection of rules. In all of their elements, the covenants reveal the Nature of God and His Plan to Save.
- In studying each covenant, we learn more about the God who makes these promises, who he is and why he does what he does.
- We learn that our God is a gracious God, faithful to His Word, and he saves through His Promised One.
 - The covenants reveal who this Promised One is, the need he comes to address, and what he does to save.
- As we read the Bible's story, we are always asking ourselves,
 - How does this covenant reveal the God who saves and the Savior he sends?

Typology

- One of the ways the Bible moves its storyline is by using typology.
- Tony Merida has defined typology as it relates to Christ's person and work:
 - *“as the study of the correspondence between persons, events, and institutions that first appear in the Old Testament and preview, prepare, or more fully express New Testament salvation truths.”*¹⁹³ (PP)

¹⁹³ Merida, “Preaching the Forest and the Trees,” 37.

- God provides types in the Old Testament to point to a greater future fulfillment. Biblical authors note that in God’s plan, He has established the story and unveiled its significance through various patterns. God is not random, and these patterns serve a purpose to communicate a greater truth about God’s plan of redemption.
- Emerson expresses that, “*Jesus is the centerpiece of God’s story and fulfills the Old Testament; thus, Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of every biblical type.*”¹⁹⁴(PP)
- The simple way to grasp this is to say that..
 - The Old Testament is the story of God’s promise and the New Testament is God’s fulfillment of all he has promised. (Jesus Fulfilled the O.T.)
- So it is beneficial for us to know how to view biblical types (people, events, and institutions).¹⁹⁵
- One theologian describes it this way:
 - “Typology is simply symbolism with a prospective reference to fulfillment in a later epoch of biblical history. It involves a fundamentally organic relation between events, persons, and institutions (type) in one epoch and their counterparts (antitype) in later epochs.”¹⁹⁶
- By us understanding these types, we gain insight into how God’s plan anticipates and predicts the coming of Jesus. Jesus, as the center of God’s plan, is the ultimate fulfillment of every biblical type.¹⁹⁷

Types and Characteristics (used from *Christ from Beginning to End*)¹⁹⁸

Types

People (PP)

- In the Bible we read countless names. But if we believe that the Bible is the Inspired Word of God then God has listed these names for a reason so that means every person we read about is important in some way.
 - Every name in every genealogy moves the story along.
- In thinking about people, we should note that some are especially significant because God intends them to function as types that point to Christ.
- When these people first appear in the story, we see something of their importance, but we especially discover God’s intent as later biblical authors refer back to them.
- For example, the Bible tells us that Adam is intended to point us to Christ. When Adam is first introduced, we know he is important because he represents the entire human race.

¹⁹⁴ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 64–65.

¹⁹⁵ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 75.

¹⁹⁶ Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 304.

¹⁹⁷ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 65.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 65–68.

- This truth is reinforced as “Adam-like” people continue to carry on Adam’s role through the covenants.
 - (Noah, Abraham, Israel, David)
 - Which ultimately reaches fulfillment in Jesus, who is called the last Adam (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-28; Heb. 2:5-18)
 - Each of these people served as a type for the greater one to come, Jesus Christ.

Events (PP)

- In addition to specific people, many of the events in the Bible are significant in God’s plan.
- They not only had meaning for the people of the day in which they occurred, but they also point forward and anticipate Christ’s coming and work.
- The Exodus is the best example of this. In the exodus, God redeems Israel from Egypt, an event tied to his covenant promises. He does this through a sacrifice whereby they escape God’s judgment and experience deliverance.
- As later biblical authors anticipate what God will do in the future, the exodus serves as a type/pattern of what is to come.
- Ultimately God will redeem us from our sin and not merely from political oppression (Is. 11:10-16; 53:1-12; Hos.11:1)
- In the New Testament, Jesus’ cross is understood as an act of redemption or exodus (Lk. 9:31; Eph. 1:7), fulfilling what God had previously done for his people but now revealing something even greater.
- By his atoning sacrifice, Christ redeems us from slavery to sin, death, and Satan.
- The prophets predicted that the coming Messiah would bring a new and greater exodus (Is. 11:1-16), while the New Testament announces that this is precisely what Jesus has done.

Institutions (PP)

- Specific institutions by their very nature, structure, and purpose also anticipate the Redeemer to come.
- An example of this is found in the institution and role of the Priests – especially the High Priest, who acts as a mediator between God and the people (Heb. 5:1-2). The entire priestly role anticipates a greater priest, Jesus (Heb. 5:1-10; 7:1-8:13).
- The priestly work transpires in the context of the tabernacle and temple and by means of the sacrificial system that functions to forgive sin.
- This entire system – with its *priesthood, its sacrifices, and its temple* – anticipates a redeemer who will fully deal with sin and bring full access to God (Heb. 9:1-10:18).
- The institution of the kings also functions in this way. By the Davidic promise, the kings anticipate a true and greater king who will rule in righteousness and rescue his people from their sins (2 Sam. 7:14; Is. 9:6-7; 11:1-16; 53:1-12; Ezk. 34)

Characteristics of Biblical Types

1. Types are patterns rooted in history. (PP)

- Each pattern is real history. Types are not merely imaginative ideas; they are real people, events, and institutions that signify something greater to come. Types also involve repetition. They reveal the way God works, giving us clues regarding his future work and how he will keep his future promises.

2. Types are designed by God. (PP)

- Types are not random; they are purposeful in God's plan. Through the covenants, the biblical authors interpret specific persons, events, and institutions as purposely reaching their fulfillment in Christ. A pattern is first given, then repeated and picked up by later authors in the Bible, and we discover that the pattern and its significance were intended by God.

3. Types involve progression toward fulfillment in Christ. (PP)

- As types are unpacked through the covenants, they move from lesser to greater in scope and significance for God's purposes, especially as they come to final fulfillment in Christ.
- When the last Adam finally arrives, or we meet the prophet Moses predicted or David's son, we see that he is greater than those who preceded him.
- In Christ all the previous patterns are fulfilled, and we as his people become the beneficiaries.

Without Christ, the Bible's story makes no sense and God's promises of salvation are left unfulfilled.

Introduction to Biblical Theology

Teaching Manuscript

Week 2

Introduction:

- Last week we introduced a lot of information pertaining to the subject of biblical theology. We talked about what biblical theology is and why it is important. We talked about the benefit we have for understanding the Bible story by beginning with the Gospel message. We discussed important things to pay attention to when reading the Bible story such as the different plots, promised bloodline, covenants, and typology.
- Today we get to dive into the Biblical story and where it all begins.
- And, so we begin with the First Plot found in Scripture:
 - CREATION (PP)
- Every story has a beginning including the Bible.
- The first book in the bible is the book of Genesis and it's here that the greatest story (God's plan of Redemption) in the world begins.

- We need the book of Genesis because it tells us how everything begins.
 - It teaches us the...
 - Doctrine of God
 - Doctrine of Man
 - Doctrine of Salvation
- So what we know about God, about creation, about ourselves, and about our salvation begins in Genesis.

God is Revealed As Maker (PP)

- The biblical story opens with the words...
 - In the beginning God . . . (Gen. 1:1)
- So "in the beginning" marks the beginning of the universe of time and space.
- But, this is not the beginning of God because God is eternal. God has always existed. God has always been. There has never been a time when God was not.
- From the opening line of this story we see who the main character/actor is.
 - God is the most important person in the story. (PP)
 - God is the central character.
 - He is sovereign Lord and Creator.
- The name for God that is used here is *Elohim* and it dominates the whole chapter occurring more than 30 times. So as you read it, the name for God is constantly catching your attention and this is on purpose.
- God is the subject. God is Creator. God is maker of all things.

- But what does it tell us about God? What is the verb?
 - Created

- The word “created” is only used of God in the Bible because only God creates. The Hebrew verb ‘bara’ which means ‘to create’ never has a human subject. That means that this verb is reserved for God alone and signifies a work that is uniquely his.¹⁹⁹ God created the “heavens and the earth.” That means he created all things! Every atom was created by God!
- The biblical story tells us how everything came into existence (light, dark, earth, sky, water, land, fish, dogs, horses, us).
- So what we learn is that God is the Creator of all things. He is the Source of everything and he created everything by His word.²⁰⁰
- Verses 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26 all begin with “Then God said....”.
- One expression that has been used over the years when referring to God as Maker is “*creation ex nihilo*” which means “creation out of nothing.”²⁰¹ (PP) That means that God made everything out of nothing. When God went to the drawing board, He started from scratch. Imagine attempting to build a house or prepare a meal or fix a car with no materials or ingredients or directions. It would be impossible wouldn’t it? You need some basic essentials in order to create. God, however, was able to speak the world into existence with nothing at all – no raw materials, no blueprint, no guidance. He relied only upon His own creativity and ingenuity.
 - The beauty of a sunrise and sunset – God’s idea.
 - The beauty of mountain ranges – God’s design.
 - The beauty of the ocean – All God.
- Scripture is full of acknowledging God as Maker and Creator.
- Psalms 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” (PP)
- Psalms 90:2 says, “Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world...” (PP)
- Psalms 146:6, says, “He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them...” (PP)
- Revelation 4:11 says, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” (PP)
- So immediately we learn from the opening line of God’s story that He is the Sovereign Creator.
- And, when God created the world, everything was Perfect.
- But remember, every time we read a passage of Scripture, we are not just looking for what it means today but also we have to understand what it meant for the original audience.
- Moses is writing Genesis 1–2 primarily to teach the newly redeemed people of Israel about their Redeemer God and to look to Him for an even greater Redeemer and

¹⁹⁹ Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 1972), 33.

²⁰⁰ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 74.

²⁰¹ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 394; Norman Geisler, “*God and Creation*” *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2003), 441.

redemption—a Redeemer greater than Moses and a redemption greater than a physical deliverance from Egyptian slavery.²⁰²

- Have you ever thought about the fact that there was a plan of redemption before there was a creation?
- Ephesians 1:4 says,
 - For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight. (PP)
- That phrase, “foundation of the world” indicates the centrality of the gospel in God’s plan for history.
- The Son of God’s coming to redeem was planned before the world’s foundation was laid.
 - Revelation 13:8 says, that Jesus is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (PP)
- The Apostle Peter writes about Jesus’ saving work,
 - “He (Jesus) was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you.” (1 Peter 1:20) (PP)
 - The plan for Christ’s sacrifice and redeeming work on behalf of sinners was fixed in eternity past.
- So what these verses communicate to us is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had arranged to redeem the world before they created the world.
- When they created the world, redemption was in view. (PP)
- When we read the first chapter of Genesis, we must remember that not only the first lines and the first chapter but also the whole plan of redemption were already written. Redemption was already planned when God said, “Let there be light.”²⁰³

God’s Masterpiece

- The pinnacle of God’s creation comes at the end of day 6 when he makes human beings. (PP)
- Listen to what Genesis 1:26–31 says,
 - Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” . . . God saw all that he had done, and it was very good.
- The crucial theme in this passage is that we are created in the image of God.
- But what does that mean?
 - Its central meaning is that we were created to be like God and to represent him in the world. (PP)

²⁰² Murray, *Jesus on Every Page*, 44.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 45.

- Matthew Emerson says, “*bearing the image of God means that they uniquely demonstrate to the world who God is and what he is like.*”²⁰⁴ (PP)
- It also means that we have been created to have a unique relationship with God. (PP)
- We see this particularly in Genesis 2, when God creates Adam by first forming his body out of the dust of the ground and then breathing his spirit into him.
 - Genesis 2:7, “Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.” (PP)
- So the verb “*formed*” describes the action of a potter. The idea is that we are skillfully created and put together by the hand of God.²⁰⁵
- But we are more than just material beings.
- It was only when God breathed into the man’s nostrils the breath of life that Adam became alive. God is Spirit; thus, when God breathed into him, Adam and every human being after him became a unique mix of the physical and the spiritual.²⁰⁶
- Nothing else created by God was designed to be in His image, nor created to have a relationship with him.
- Some scholars say that, “*Perhaps then the best definition for the image of God is the ability to relate to God in a personal way.*”²⁰⁷
- We learn about image bearing from the ancient Near East because they used this idea of an image bearer to indicate that a certain person represented someone else, usually the king. An image bearer was therefore an ambassador, a representative of his ruler’s authority.²⁰⁸
- For Adam and Eve to be image bearers means, then, they are God’s representatives on earth, the wielders of his authority, his vice regents.²⁰⁹
- One author writes,
 - *‘Man is a creature because he is made by God. But he is a unique creature, he is made like God.’*²¹⁰
- We reflect something in God’s nature in a way that nothing else in creation does. As those who have been made uniquely in God’s image, all human beings have great dignity

²⁰⁴ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 20.

²⁰⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 51.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Vang and Carter, *Telling God’s Story*, 25.

²⁰⁸ G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT (Grand Rapids: IVP, 2004), 66–70.

²⁰⁹ William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 17.

²¹⁰ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery* (Leicester: IVP, 1988), 19.

and have been set by him above the rest of the created order with responsibility for it. We are God's stewards, entrusted with the care of his precious creation.²¹¹

- God gives Adam and Eve tasks while they are in the garden.²¹² (PP)
 - 1. Be fruitful and multiply and fill all the earth (1:28)
 - God wants his creation to be filled with his image bearers.
 - 2. Subdue the earth.
 - (1:28) “have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
 - Basically, this means that Adam and Eve are to rule over the entire earth.
 - 3. Cultivate and Keep the Garden (2:15)
 - 4. Obey His Law
 - God only gives them one law, don't eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (2:15-17).
 - But this one law governs them entirely.

- From the very beginning, we see the covenantal relationship between God and his people. Even though the word ‘*covenant*’ doesn't appear in Genesis 1–2, several clues indicate that God created humanity to relate to him covenantally.²¹³
- God's instructions to Adam were crystal clear: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” (Gen. 2:15–17).
- God provided Adam with a list of duties and commitments, and he promised blessing for obedience and curse for disobedience.²¹⁴

“In Adam”

- The Bible says that we were created “in Adam.”
- Adam is a significant character in Scripture. Not only is he the first man created but he serves as our covenant head and representative. (PP) The significance of this role becomes apparent as history and the Bible's story unfolds.
- God demanded obedience and still obedience is what he demands.
- Adam disobeys and as the story continues, Adam's role and headship will be contrasted with that of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, who comes as the head of the new creation. The entire Bible is structured in terms of these two men. We are either “in Adam” by our

²¹¹ Roberts, *God's Big Story*, 31.

²¹² Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 21–22.

²¹³ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 33.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

natural birth, or we are “in Christ” by a new, spiritual birth. But there are no other options available to us.²¹⁵

- The Apostle Paul writes about the death that is in Adam and the Life that is in Christ. (Romans 5:12–21).

Trajectories for the Storyline Ahead (taken from *Christ from Beginning to End*)²¹⁶ (PP)

- Let me share with you three significant trajectories that take on greater significance as the story unfolds.

1. Creation Defines God’s Relationship with His People as Covenantal. (PP)

- As we noted, Adam is humanity’s representative and the head of creation.
- He is God’s image bearer and his role defines all of our roles.
- As the story unfolds in the Old Testament, the responsibilities that God gave to Adam are uniquely expressed in various other people—specifically, those who function as prophets, priests and kings.
 - Prophets Mediate God’s Word (PP)
 - Priests Mediate God’s Presence as worshipers. (PP)
 - Kings Mediate God’s Rule. (PP)
- In a very basic form, each of these functions first belonged to Adam and then by extension to the entire human race. We see this in several ways.
- God spoke directly to Adam, and Adam (in a prophetic role) was responsible to mediate God’s word by trusting, keeping, and preaching it to his wife and children.
- Now, God is distinct from his creation, but he is not distant. He is uniquely present through covenant relationship.
- Adam in a Priestly Role was responsible to mediate God’s presence to the world by universally expanding Eden’s borders, filling it with image-bearers, and ruling over creation.
- And while God is King of the universe, he has chosen to exercise his rule through humans, as his royal kings and queens.
- Adam in a Kingly Role was given dominion over the world as a servant king, who was to act as God’s image, his representative and son.
- As Psalm 115:16 says,
 - The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind.
- Now in the garden, these roles were not an explicit title or office but they were functions.
- Later in the Bible’s story, these titles are revealed to identify people who carry on the tasks that originated with Adam.
- Basically, these roles express the deeper role God originally intended for humans.
- That role was first established in Adam, but then only Jesus as the last Adam and God the Son perfectly fulfills it.

²¹⁵ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 78.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 80–82.

2. Creation Defines Marriage as Foundational for the Story Ahead (PP)

- In the Garden we find Adam realizing that there is no one else like him. Out of Adam, God creates Eve and walks her down the aisle as he presents her to Adam.
- So the first wedding and marriage takes place by God’s design in the Garden of Eden. Marriage was God’s idea.
- God told them to procreate (have babies) and to fill the earth with other God worshippers.
- But what we can’t miss is that God created marriage as a type or pattern to point beyond itself to a greater relationship – God’s covenant relationship with his people.
- So, marriage serves a bigger picture.
- Marriage typifies God’s exclusive love for his people as shown in the new covenant relationship of Christ’s love for his church.²¹⁷
- When the Apostle Paul is speaking on marriage in the famous marriage passage in Ephesians 5, he says in (v.32):
 - This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.²¹⁸ (PP)
- Jesus is the Bridegroom and the church is His bride. Every husband is to take his cues from Jesus on how to love his wife. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. The way Jesus loves, protects, and cares for the church should be every husband’s motivation in how he treats his bride.²¹⁹

3. Creation Defines Rest as the Goal of Creation (PP)

- The creation story climaxes with God’s rest on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1–3).
- How many have ever thought about the significance of God’s resting on the seventh day in light of the whole story of the Bible?
- It’s easy for us to skip over the theme of God resting but it gives us unique insights into the Bible’s larger storyline.
- The seventh day of rest is an important type and pattern that begins in creation and is picked up in the Mosaic law in relation to the promised land and the Sabbath-day command (Josh. 21:43–45; Ex. 20:8–11; Ps. 95:11).
- But even more significant is God’s creation rest ultimately points forward to Jesus, who by his work brings salvation rest and restores us to full relationship with our covenant God.
- Jesus says in Matthew 11:28–30; (PP)
 - Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
- One day, all those who believe in Christ will experience the ultimate rest of being with Christ.

²¹⁷ Mitchell L. Chase, *40 Questions about Typology and Allegory*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2020), 125.

²¹⁸ Nicholas P. Lunn, “‘Raised on the Third Day according to the Scriptures’: Resurrection Typology in the Genesis Creation Narrative,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 3 (September 2014): 526.

²¹⁹ John MacArthur, *Ephesians*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1986), 304–305.

- So God created a perfect place but then it gets ugly.
- In Genesis 3 we are introduced to the second plot of the Bible story.

Plot 2: The Fall (PP)

1. The Conception of Our Sin (PP)

- Genesis 3 is a text of major significance in the Bible storyline because it tells us what went wrong with humanity and why God’s good world is now so messed up. Just like any good story, the Bible has conflict and it’s first seen in Genesis 3.²²⁰
- Read Genesis 3:1–7.
- Their eyes were open and they realized they were naked and they felt shame for the first time. They realized they were different and tried to cover their shame.
- Remember 2:25, “Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”
- Question: “What was different?
 - Sin had been birthed!
- Satan promised that they would “be like God” and know good and evil, and his promise was tragically fulfilled. It wasn’t what they thought it would be. They had lost their innocence.
- Now there is broken fellowship between God and humans. There was a broken connection, an intimacy that was now lost.
- Adam and Eve experienced firsthand the fourfold effects of sin. (PP)
 - Vertically – they experienced alienation and condemnation from God.
 - Horizontally – they experienced alienation from each other.
 - Internally – they experienced alienation within themselves.
 - Cosmically – they experienced alienation in the world they were created to rule.
- These four effects of sin play out across the Bible’s story, but they are immediately apparent from the very moment sin enters the world.²²¹

But now notice...

2. The Cover Up of Our Sin (PP)

- Read 3:8-13 (PP)
 - 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” 11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” 12 The man said,

²²⁰ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 83–84.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

“The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it. 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

- When the relationship between God and humans breaks down, everything else falls apart too. The world after the fall is not the same. The setting of the Bible story is no longer the good creation of Genesis 1–2. It is the fallen creation, marred and distorted by Adam’s choice and our ongoing sin. The effects of the fall are immediate and long lasting.²²²

God’s Good Creation Is Now Corrupt²²³

- All people that have been born since Adam now enter this world “in Adam,” under the law of guilt and pollution of sin. Humans, created to rule over the earth, now experience the earth turned against them in the form of natural disasters. In Adam, we do not rule or reign as intended.
- But the effects of sin’s curse run deeper than these deadly disasters; sin also corrupts the very fabric of the material world. That’s why we see children born with disabilities, living under the curse of corruption. Human sin has affected the entire created order.
- For instance, some think that sickness and death are natural. But, biblically, sickness and death are unnatural.
- Everything wrong with this world traces back to Adam’s sin, God’s curse, and the outworking of Adam’s rebellion among his descendants.
- Romans 8 is an excellent commentary on the effects of sin on creation.
 - The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:19–23)
- God has cursed this world due to our sin so that everything that happens in this world, from handicaps to natural disasters, serves as a reminder that we are in rebellion against our Creator, and that the condition of this world is no longer normal. The universe was placed under a curse at humanity’s fall; now the universe waits for humanity’s fix.

3. The Consequences of Our Sin (PP)

- Adam’s failure changed everything.

1. Adam is a failed Prophet, Priest and King. (PP)

²²² Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 88.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 88–89.

- Adam traded the truth of the Creator’s word for the creature’s lie, so God’s word changed from a promise of blessing to a word of judgment. Adam wanted to be like God instead of with God, and he failed to keep his covenant responsibility.²²⁴

2. The First Marriage is Strained. (PP)

- Marriage was created to illuminate the love and unity that God has for his people, the good news that marriage was intended to typify is now distorted. As the story continues to unfold, marriage will still function as a picture of our relationship to God, but our sins of infidelity and unfaithfulness now reflect our awful sin against the God who is worthy of all our love, devotion, and trust.²²⁵

3. Rest is Lost (PP)

- Because of Adam’s sin, we no longer experience the rest that God intended for us. Covenant relationship with our God is the goal of our creation, but now we are alienated from him, and the world we live in is a restless and unfulfilling place. We need God to act in grace to save us to recover the rest we have lost and to be restored to the purpose of our creation.²²⁶
- Scripture is clear that sin affects everything and when we see that we begin to understand the scope of God’s salvation that he promises throughout the rest of the story of redemption. Matthew Emerson notes, “*As we walk through the rest of the biblical story, it is of utmost importance that we remember what God made human beings to do—dwell with him and glorify him as his image bearers, rule, obey, multiply, and cultivate—and that each of those functions has been distorted by the fall.*”²²⁷ (PP)
- If that was the end of the story then we would all be doomed.
- However, Genesis 3 does not just contain the second plot of the story but it also contains the third plot of the story.

Plot 3: Redemption (PP)

- The day in the garden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God was a dark day. However, when God was handing down the curses he delivers a glimpse of hope.
- Because humanity was now sinful, we needed to be reconciled and justified.
 - Reconcile – making things right between us and God. (PP)
 - Justify – clearing our account of guilt.²²⁸

²²⁴ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 91.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid., 92.

²²⁷ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 25.

²²⁸ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 93.

- Our sinful condition makes us condemned before a holy God and there is nothing that we would ever be able to do to change that.
- But in the garden, God gives hope.
- The Bible teaches that in his grace, he has chosen to redeem us even though he could have destroyed what he had made.

Notice....

4. The Cure for Our Sin (PP)

- When God is giving out the curses we hear the promise of death given to the serpent and a promise of life for humanity.
- Listen to what it says,
 - I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. (Gen. 3:15) (PP)
- Scholars refer to this verse as the protoevangelium or “the first gospel.”²²⁹ (PP)
- This is the 1st Promise of Christ!
- Adam and Eve would have a child, and the human race would continue to grow and multiply. The battle with the serpent would continue but eventually the promised seed of the woman would be like Adam—a man. But unlike Adam, he would obey God and defeat the serpent. The woman’s seed would crush the serpent’s head, destroying him, and, we can infer, reversing the disastrous effects of the fall. Although the woman’s seed would suffer, he would live and triumph in victory.²³⁰
- The woman’s offspring is Jesus and this is the 1st Prophecy that every story in the Bible would flow out of this Promise!
- Question: How did Jesus crush the serpent’s head?
 - By his death and resurrection!
- You see from the very beginning bloodshed was the requirement.
- God knew from the very beginning that He was going to give of Himself, that God the Son (Jesus) would leave heaven at the appointed time and become man to die for the sins of humanity.
- Genesis 3:21 is the secret to understanding the whole scenario, God gives us a preview of what is to come in the future.
- Listen to what it says, “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” (3:21) (PP)
- Hebrews 9:22 says, (PP)
 - “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.”
- One day, Jesus would shed his blood to bring ultimate forgiveness and all those who trust in his finished work would be clothed in His righteousness.²³¹

²²⁹ Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament*, 70.

²³⁰ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 95; Schreiner, *The King In His Beauty*, 10.

²³¹ Chase, *40 Questions about Typology and Allegory*, 126.

- 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, (PP)
 - He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Now I want to spend a little time unpacking this idea of the First Adam and the Second Adam. (PP)

- One of the best places for us to unpack this is found in Romans 5 (Read Rom. 5:12–21).
- In this passage, the Apostle Paul contrasts Adam and Jesus.
- Adam, being the first human being serves as humanity’s covenant head and representative. That means that all humans were created “in Adam.”
- Paul contrasts Adam’s role and headship with that of Jesus, who is the Last Adam and the head of the new creation.
- Adam’s sin was a personal, deliberate act that plunged the human race into physical and spiritual death. All people are now born spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-3). Adam’s sin had this broad effect because he was a type or prefiguration of Jesus and represented all of humanity²³² just as Jesus would do on the cross.
- In (vs. 15–16) the works of Adam and Jesus have similar scope but drastically different effect. One sin plunged humanity into ruin, but God gave the gift that issue in justification in spite of our many trespasses. What was gained through Jesus is far greater than that which was lost through Adam.
- (v.18) Adam’s sin resulted in condemnation for everyone, whereas Christ’s substitutionary death made possible justification leading to life for everyone.
- Paul contrasts Adam and Jesus and demonstrates that the world is changed by both Adam and Christ’s actions.²³³
- John MacArthur says it like this: (PP)
 - Paul’s primary teaching in these two verses (18 & 19) is that the essence of Adam’s one transgression (v.18a) was disobedience (v.19a), whereas the essence of Christ’s one act of righteousness (v.18b) was obedience (v.19b). When God commanded Adam not to eat of the forbidden fruit, Adam disobeyed and brought death. When God sent His only begotten Son into the world to suffer and die, the Son obeyed and brought life.²³⁴
- The verb “made” is important because it carries the idea of being given a status. The guilt of Adam’s disobedience was imputed/given to all his descendants. That means we are made sinners in the sense that we are legally guilty in God’s sight. We are born with a guilty status before God.
- In the same way, but with the opposite effect, Christ’s obedience causes those who believe in Him to be made righteous in God’s sight. The consequence of His perfect

²³² David Schrock, “From Beelines to Plotlines: Typology That Follows the Covenantal Typography of Scripture,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 38–39.

²³³ Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011), 220.

²³⁴ John MacArthur, *Romans*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1991), 307.

obedience—an unblemished, impeccable righteousness—is imputed/given to their account, making them legally righteous.²³⁵

- We are declared righteous and our guilty status has been removed and we are given a righteous status before God.
- What happened in Eden is nullified for those who believe on Jesus. Jesus' death, that one act, replaces condemnation with justification. It replaces judgment and death with life.²³⁶
- Adam failed in the Garden but Jesus succeeded!
- Jesus is the Last Adam.
- Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:45, (PP)
 - The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.
- Condemnation and death came through the first, justification and eternal life came through the last. Adam was tempted and failed, but Christ was tempted and prevailed.²³⁷
- Jesus is the true and better Adam.²³⁸ (PP)

²³⁵ John MacArthur, *Romans*, 307.

²³⁶ Robert W. Yarbrough, "Romans," in *Romans–Galatians*, Vol. III, ESV Expository Commentary, ed. Iain Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 90.

²³⁷ Chase, *40 Questions about Typology and Allegory*, 125.

²³⁸ Joshua M. Philpot, "See the True and Better Adam: Typology and Human Origins," *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* 5, no. 2 (2018): 77–90.

Introduction to Biblical Theology

Teaching Manuscript

Week 3

Introduction:

- Last week, we dove into the Bible story, starting with the book of beginnings. Genesis 1–2 are foundational for us to understand God’s purpose and plan for this world and humanity. We discover that God is Creator of all things and the pinnacle of his creation is us.
- Genesis 3 explains what went wrong with the world!
- But it is within Genesis 3 that God gives a word of hope in the midst of one of the darkest days in human history.
- In Genesis 3:15, God promises that he would send a redeemer to defeat the enemy, reverse the curse, and bring salvation and restoration.
- From that moment, the story focuses on the coming of the “seed of the woman” who would redeem the world.

- Adam and Eve began to have children and one day the oldest son Cain would murder Abel out of anger and jealousy.
- Why?
 - Because God accepted Abel’s sacrifice and rejected Cain’s.
 - Cain’s was a sacrifice of his hands/works. Abel’s was a sacrifice of bloodshed, which pointed to Christ’s sacrifice to come.

- God would bless them with another son, Seth, who the promised bloodline of the seed of Eve would flow through.
- So that means the promise of Genesis 3:15 flows through Seth.

- But wickedness continued to grow and spread as humanity continued to multiply and in Genesis 6 we really begin to see the root of the problem is deep within.
 - The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. (Genesis 6:5) (PP)
- Sin, like a disease, had spread and consumed the human race.
- But once again we find hope in the midst of wickedness.
- (v.8) “But Noah found favor/grace in the eyes of the Lord.”
- This is the first time anything like this is ever mentioned in Scripture. This is the first time that “GRACE” is ever talked about.
- Noah may not have known the details about the future work of Christ. But he looked forward to the promised Deliverer and ordered his life accordingly.
- It is important to note: Noah did not earn God’s grace or favor. Noah found it. It was credited/given to him by God.

- Plus, God had made a promise that One would come from the “seed of the woman” to crush the head of the serpent. If God wiped it all out, He could not carry out his promise. Noah had the promised bloodline running through his veins because he was in the line of Seth.
- Genesis 6–9 tells us the story of Noah. And honestly when people think of Noah and the ark, they think of kid stories and nursery themes. But honestly it’s sort of like a horror story because every person in the world, except for eight people, die.
- God, in his judgment and hatred for sin, sent a flood to wipe it all out.
- So before we can see the beautiful picture of Noah’s story, we must first see it as the Bible does, as something tragic.²³⁹
- Genesis 6:9 says that,
 - Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.
- So Noah was unlike all the people on the earth. And, when God announces his coming judgment, he also informs Noah how he and his family will be saved.
- Listen to Genesis 6:17-18, (PP)
 - I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.
- Now there is an important word in these verses that you cannot miss.
 - It’s the word “but.”
 - Everything was slotted for death, but Noah would live.
 - The world would be judged, but God would establish his covenant with Noah, which would mean life for the world.²⁴⁰
- Now how does God relate to his people?
 - Through Covenant
 - Covenants allow God to enter into relationship with people.
- And remember, there are six biblical covenants that we see in Scripture.
- Last week, we looked at the Covenant that God established with Adam and creation. Today, we are going to continue following the covenants.

²³⁹ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 104.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

Covenant with Noah (PP)

- The next covenant that God establishes is with Noah.
- When God says,
 - But I will establish my covenant with you. . . (Gen.6:18)
 - This is the first time that the word “Covenant” is used in the Bible.
- Robertson defines “covenant” as a “*bond in blood sovereignly administered.*”²⁴¹
- Let’s consider three elements of this definition:
 - A bond. The covenant speaks of a deeply personal relationship between God and people, a relationship so close that God binds or ties himself to them, and them to him. In later covenants with Israel, a favorite expression is, “I will be your God and you will be my people” (as in Jer. 7:23).
 - In blood. A covenant is a serious, legally established relationship, like a marriage (also described as a covenant in the Old Testament). The serious, public nature of a covenant is symbolized in rituals involving sacrifice and the shedding of blood (as in Gen. 8:20–22).
 - Sovereignly administered. This covenant is not a relationship between equal partners who hammer out mutually agreeable terms. As the sovereign Lord, God alone can establish the terms of the covenant relationship and ultimately keep them.²⁴²

- When God makes a covenant with man, there are 3 things you need to know... (PP)
 - 1. Covenants established by God are established by God and not man. (Unilateral) God does not bargain. He does not compromise. He sets the terms and that is it.
 - 2. God’s covenants are Eternal. God does not begin something in one way and then suddenly change his mind and begin to do something else or do it a different way. He knows his plan from the beginning, announces it clearly, and then does exactly what he has promised.
 - 3. God’s covenants are established by GRACE! That is, there is nothing in us to merit/earn them.

- God tells Noah that he is going to destroy the earth but he was going to save a remnant through Noah. And, the way they would be saved was through the building of an ark.
- Noah immediately began to obediently follow God’s design and build the ark to God’s specific design and blueprint.
- At the appropriate time, God told Noah to enter the ark with his family and God shut the door behind them. God then unleashed the rain and flooded the earth.
- Then, when the time was right, the waters had subsided and God told Noah and his family to leave the ark.
- Genesis 8:18–21 says,
 - So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds – everything that moved on land – came out of the ark, one kind after another. Then

²⁴¹ Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 4.

²⁴² Bartholomew and Goheen, *The True Story of the Whole World*, 40.

Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

- Now in Genesis 9 we see the covenant established with Noah.
- Read Genesis 9:1-17.
- As the story of Noah continues, we discover that Noah was not the promised seed of Eve. Noah was sinful and he needed a redeemer.

- So that leads us to ask the question:
 - How does the story of Noah fit into the grand narrative of the Bible?
- When God sent the flood, it was almost as if God pushed the “restart” button to restart the world and his plans for humanity.
- Noah walked off the boat into a new creation as a new Adam.²⁴³

Typology in the Story of Noah (PP)

Noah as Another Adam

- There are several similarities between God’s covenant with Adam and His covenant with Noah.

Similarities between Adam and Noah²⁴⁴

God blessed them and said them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.” (Gen. 1:28)	Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1)
“Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground . . . And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground – everything that has breath of life in it” (Gen. 1:28, 30).	“The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you” (Gen. 9:2–3).
“I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food . . . I give every green plant for food” (Gen. 1:29–30)	“Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything” (Gen. 9:3)

- (PP) One thing that is important to point out is that God is not making a new covenant with Noah. The *cutting of a covenant* represented a new covenant, but the *establishing of*

²⁴³ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 106.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

a covenant represented the renewal of a covenant already in place. So the covenant with Noah is an extension of the covenant that was originally cut with Adam.²⁴⁵

- (PP) Usually a sign accompanies a covenant. In the Noahaic covenant, God gives the sign of a rainbow. The rainbow signals that God has entered into covenant with man and creation and promises to never destroy the earth by flood again.
- The covenant doesn't promise universal salvation, but it does guarantee universal preservation. The bow (rainbow), as the sign of the covenant, represents a weapon of war. If God unleashed his bow and let it fly, then all humanity would be destroyed. The sign of the covenant is that God has withdrawn his bow. He has put his weapons of war down and will not wipe out the human race again.²⁴⁶

- So Noah is a type of Christ, whose mission and work was connected to the new covenant and would inaugurate new creation. Noah was a new Adam who pointed to the last Adam.²⁴⁷

The Ark and Flood²⁴⁸ (PP)

- The Flood was a picture/type of God's righteous judgment and the ark was a type of God's merciful salvation.
- When Jesus was speaking about the Day of the Lord he said that His return would be sudden and unexpected, just like those who were caught unaware in the days of Noah.²⁴⁹
- Jesus says in Matthew 24:37–39,
 - As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.
- Jesus used the Flood to illustrate the point He was making about the coming of the Son of Man, namely that the attitude that prevailed during the days of Noah . . . before the flood will also characterize most people living during the end time just before Christ returns. They will not be expecting His coming.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Schreiner, *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*, 34.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁴⁷ Chase, *40 Questions about Typology and Allegory*, 129; Matthew Y. Emerson, "Searching for the Second Adam: Typological Connections between Adam, Joseph, Mordecai, and Daniel," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 129.

²⁴⁸ Chase, *40 Questions about Typology and Allegory*, 129.

²⁴⁹ David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, Christ-Centered Exposition, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013), 327.

²⁵⁰ John MacArthur, *Matthew 24–28*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1989), 73; Daniel M. Doriani, *Matthew 14–28*, Reformed Expository Commentary, vol. 2, ed. Richard D. Phillips and Philip Graham Ryken (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 383.

- The Apostle Peter says in 2 Peter 3:10,
 - But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.
- In the Bible the day of the Lord culminates “the last days,” or the time between Jesus’s first and second comings. It’s marked by the catastrophic and extraordinary intervention of God in history for the purposes of decisive judgment against his enemies and gracious salvation of his people. The testimony of Scripture is that the day of the Lord will culminate in God’s final judgment of the wicked on earth and the destruction of the universe as we know it.²⁵¹
- The Ark is a type or picture of salvation, which points to Jesus. Everyone who was on the Ark was saved from the judgment of God. At the end of time, everyone who has believed on Jesus will be saved from the final judgment of God.
- So we see that Noah’s life only pictures the coming seed of Eve, but he clearly is not the one hoped for, the one through whom redemption will come. We will continue to see this pattern throughout the story of the Old Testament. As the story continues, wickedness remains rampant and our only hope is God’s intervention through the promised seed of Eve. And as the end of Genesis 11 points out, that seed comes through the line of Abram.²⁵²

- Bloodline (PP)
 - Adam – Seth – Noah – Shem – Abram
- Beginning in Genesis 12 and for the remaining of the book, one man and his family come into focus.
- Read Genesis 12:1-3, (PP)
 - The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
- God is making a lot of promises. Some big promises!
- Look at (v.1), What command did God give to Abram?
 - *To leave the country, his family, and go*
- Where did God tell him to go?
 - *God didn’t tell him. He just said, “to the land I will show you.”*
- What promises did God make to Abram? (PP)
 1. *Make you into a great nation*
 2. *I will bless you*

²⁵¹ Jim Shaddix and Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, Christ-Centered Exposition, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2018), 111; John MacArthur, *2 Peter & Jude*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2005), 123; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, vol. 37, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 383.

²⁵² Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 28–29.

3. *Make your name great*
4. *You will be a blessing*
5. *Bless those who bless you*
6. *Curse those who curse you*
7. *All people will be blessed through you*

- Abraham was a kind of new Adam representing a new beginning. The fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 3:15, will come through Abraham's family. The curses that descended upon the world through Adam would be reversed through Abraham and his family.²⁵³
- Have you ever made a promise that you didn't keep or someone made you a promise and they failed to come through?
- God does NOT do that!
- He means what He says and it will always happen.
- This promise to Abram involves: (PP)
 - A people/nation (that is, a nation more numerous than the stars in the sky/kingdom)
 - A land (that will be rich in resources)
 - A blessing (of protection and care)²⁵⁴
- Now that's a pretty sweet deal. Abram did nothing to earn these promises. He was simply chosen by God. God showed him grace and favor.
- All of this is God's doing.
- We kind of find ourselves having curiosity and wondering when reading these promises to Abraham...
 - What's he going to have to do to receive such a sweet deal?
- That's where the covenant comes in. Flip over to Genesis 17. God goes beyond a simple promise to a covenant.

Read Genesis 17:1-9

- 17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. 2 Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

²⁵³ Schreiner, *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*, 42.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 43–46.

9 Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.

- So God says: I will give you a big piece of land. I will secure the border. I will bless you with kids and grandkids. I will look after your people, and all I’m asking in return is this: Your Allegiance. You just keep me First.
- Let’s stop and consider the context and why this covenant comes into play. When Abraham walked the earth, super power nations often invaded smaller lands and brought those people into a peaceful agreement. The super power would say: “Let’s make a deal.” We will make this a safe place to live, we will police it and protect it. But you have to pay this hefty tax. And if you do, it will be all good. If you don’t, it won’t be good. You know what I mean?
- People during this time understood these types of agreements. These were commonly done. So here in Genesis 17, God presents a covenant like one they are used to: I will care for and protect; you obey and follow.
- So we have a promise in Genesis 12. And a covenant in Genesis 17. But *wedged* in between these 2 texts is the most telling part of the story. If you really want to understand who God is, if you want to grasp the PLOTLINE of the Bible, you have to get your mind around Genesis 15.

So let’s go there.

- In this chapter, we find Abraham in a deep sleep. He experiences this crazy vision as he dozes off. In this vision, he expresses his doubt in God’s ability to bring forth all that he has promised. (Let that be an encouragement: Here’s a man who made it to the Hall of Faith that began to doubt God).
- What is Abraham’s first question? (v.2) “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?”
- Why is he doubting God’s promise?
 - *God had promised him to be the father of a great nation. But the problem is that he still doesn’t have any children and it’s hard to be the father of a great nation, when you’re not a father at all!*
- But what does God say? (v.4-5)
 - *God assures him that his heir will be his own son. And his descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky.*
- How does Abraham respond to God’s reassurance? (v.6)
 - *The Bible tells us that Abraham believed (trusted) God and because of this belief it was counted to him as righteousness.*
- But ole Abraham still has another question for God.... Skip down to (v.8).
- In (v.8) we find Abraham wanting to know *how can he be certain that he will possess the land that God promised him. Are you ever like that.... Are you one of those “God I need you to write it on the wall” people? Sometimes God does and sometimes God doesn’t but this time he does!*
- So what does God do? *He shows him.*
- Look at (v.9-10)

- “So the Lord said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.” (10) Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. (11) Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.”
- I know..... you’re probably thinking.... “*What in the world!*”
- You have a young cow, cut in 2. A ram and a goat also sliced in half. And then you have one dead bird on one side, and one dead bird on the other side. You have an *Alley of Death!* Vultures are sweeping down to eat the road kill but Abram is beating them away.
- Now stay with me. I know this seems like something in a cult, but hang on because this is the essence of the covenant!
- As I mentioned a minute ago, super power states would impose a covenant upon a people and there would be obligations on both sides. We will protect; you pay taxes. To demonstrate seriousness in this agreement, the leaders of the two nations would take a covenant by walking together, side by side, through this bloody alley of severed, dead animals. This was a common practice in this time. This was a sobering moment when both leaders of both nations would seal the treaty in this walk. The meaning? If either one of us rebels, if I fail to do my part, this is the agreed upon end. Disgusting things will happen if someone sells out.²⁵⁵
- So look at the vision of God in (v.17)....
 - “When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.”
- What do we see here?
 - *We see God taking the covenant walk. He has taken the form of a fiery smoking pot. He often took the form of fire. And he is walking this bloody path alone (anybody see NT here). God travels the bloody alley all by himself (Just like Jesus travels the bloody trail to the cross all by himself).*
- And what does this say about our God?
 - *God is taking full responsibility for the fulfillment of the covenant. Abraham is not invited to join him on this walk. God will ensure that this plan remains in place.*
 - *God is saying that this promise will stay intact regardless of Abram, or Abram’s descendants ability to keep the promise.*²⁵⁶
- That is the Old Testament in a nutshell.
- Why does the smoking pot matter?
 - *It matters because this declares God to be a God of grace. Genesis 15 is the heart of the story. This God will not love people based upon the way they behave. His commitment and his love toward his own people are unconditional.*
- And that is what the rest of the Bible is about.

²⁵⁵ Richard Booker, *The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread: Revealing the Power of the Blood of Jesus from Genesis to Revelation* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2008), 60–65.

²⁵⁶ Schreiner, *Covenant and God’s Purpose for the World*, 48.

- The Old Testament is story after story of man making a colossal mess of the covenant. And yet, it is also story after story of God’s unrestricted commitment to keep his end of the deal. He will preserve a people, he will provide a land, He will establish an everlasting dynasty. He does not depend upon a man.
- He is creating a chosen people and the sign of the covenant will be circumcision (Gen.17)
- Now if you know anything about the story of Abraham and Sarah, you remember that after God establishes his covenant with Abraham, Abraham and Sarah begin to get a little impatient and decide to help God out. So, in (Ch. 16), Sarah gives Hagar, her handmaid, to Abraham and says, “Since I can’t give you children, sleep with her and we will raise a family through her.” I mean surely this is what God meant. So, Abraham, upon the suggestion of his wife, sleeps with Hagar and she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son, Ishmael. God says, “Nope... that’s not what I meant and that’s not the promised heir I was talking about.”
- Finally we get to chapter 21 and we read about the birth of Isaac the promised heir to Abraham and Sarah.
Read 21:1-7
 - 21 Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. 4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. 5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” 7 And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”
- So, finally the promised heir has been born. And it’s through Isaac that God will continue to keep his covenant. Isaac inherits all the promises that God made to Abraham.
- Do you remember the last promise God gave Abraham in Genesis 12:3(b)?
 - “and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (PP)
- This is the 2nd Messianic Prophecy given by God. (Gen. 3:15 – 1st)
- The only way that all people on earth will be blessed through him is if someone greater comes through him.
- The promised seed in Genesis 3:15 comes through Abraham and that Seed is Jesus Christ. (Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, leading to Christ) And it’s through Christ that all men can be saved.

Turn to Galatians 3

- Background/Context:
 - The primary purpose for Paul’s letter to the Galatians was to respond to a particular issue: a group of Jews-claiming to be Christ followers – had begun to argue that Christians are not just saved by faith, but they are also required to keep the Mosaic Law. This went against everything Paul knew about Christ and against

what Paul preached. The main thrust of Paul's teaching was that there is no work we could accomplish to be saved including keeping the law.²⁵⁷

Check out Galatians 3:8

- Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles (us, anyone who is not a Jew) by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."
- That's all nations... Not just my chosen nation of Israel. But all nations. Thus salvation will be for all peoples.²⁵⁸
- How's that going to happen?
- Look at (v. 16)
 - "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.
- Notice the word "seed," is singular, not plural; therefore, in its deepest and fullest meaning it refers to one person, not to many. And that one person, Paul argued, Abraham's true seed, is Christ. That means that all people will be blessed through Abraham because "The Seed" (Jesus Christ) will come through his bloodline.²⁵⁹
- What does that mean for us as believers and followers of Christ?
 - (v.26-29), So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
- So, if you believe and trust in the finished work of Christ then His (Christ's) righteousness is credited to you. Just like it was credited to Abraham.
- Look back at (v.6), Paul is quoting straight out of Genesis.
 - So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."
- Listen, if you belong to Christ and have received his righteousness, then you are an heir to the promise given in Genesis 12. You have been adopted/grafted in to the chosen race of God. The true Israel and the sign of the covenant is circumcision of the heart (Romans 2:29).
- God is a God who keeps His Promises!
- David Platt and Tony Merida note:

²⁵⁷ J. V. Fesko, *Galatians*, The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Jon D. Payne (Powder Springs, GA: Tolle Lege Press, 2012), xxv; G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series, ed. Grant R. Osborne (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 15.

²⁵⁸ Timothy George, *Galatians*, Christian Standard Commentary, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Brandon D. Smith (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2020), 250.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 274.

- *“Christ’s work on the cross also takes us back further to God’s dealings with Abraham. As one from Abraham’s line, Jesus completed the promise to Abraham. Jesus is the Seed to which the promise pointed (Gal. 3:16, 19). Christ perfectly lived the life of faith that is described in Scripture, and He died so that the blessing of God would be made known in all nations (Gen. 12:3). Through trusting in Christ, we become children of Abraham, the people of God. Abraham was pointing us to Christ . . . Abraham was justified by faith in the promise of God, and that promise, ever since the beginning, was pointing to Christ. The only way to come to God is through Christ and Christ alone. Abraham and every other saved person in the Old Testament had faith that was pointing to Christ. Due to the progressive nature of God’s revelation, these Old Testament saints may not have realized all the details about what God was going to do in Christ, but their faith was in the gospel.”*²⁶⁰
- In Genesis 22 we read about the testing of Abraham. God fulfilled his promise to Abraham and Sarah and blessed them with a son, Isaac. This was the promised son that the bloodline was to continue to flow through.
- But then we read Genesis 22:2,
 - Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love – Isaac – and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”
- Now, if you’re not familiar with the story, this would leave you confused. I’m sure it left Abraham confused. He and Sarah had been waiting for years for this child and now God is asking Abraham to sacrifice him.
- But, Abraham faithfully followed God’s instructions and took Isaac with him the next morning and they began to make their way toward their destination.
- Now listen to what happens next,
 - “When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied. ‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.’ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.’” (Genesis 22:9–14)
- Abraham believed and obeyed God, and the Lord repeated his promise to him:
 - “Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed” (Genesis 22:18)
- The promised Savior will come through Isaac but Isaac is not the Savior. Isaac served as a type that pointed toward Jesus.

What are some of the things we learn from the story of Abraham? (PP)

²⁶⁰ David Platt and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Galatians*, Christ–Centered Exposition, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014), 66–67.

1. We are saved by grace.

- Abraham did not do anything to be chosen by God. He was a sinner, who was chosen by God's grace.

2. We receive Righteousness through Faith.

- Abraham believed God and his faith in God made him righteous before God. Abraham teaches us that we stand righteous before God by grace through faith in his promises. Abraham's story reveals that a right standing before God is attained not based on our own works but because God declares us to be just by faith.²⁶¹
- Listen to what the Apostle Paul says in Romans 4:18–25:
 - Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead – since he was about a hundred years old – and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.
- When we come to Christ in salvation, our faith is directed to the crucified and risen Jesus. In faith, we acknowledge our sin before God and take hold of the gift of salvation in Christ. We believe that God will deliver on his promises to save us for all eternity.²⁶² The object of Abraham's and our faith has always been the same.²⁶³
- There is likeness between Abraham and his descendants. Abraham believed in God, who gives life (the birth of Isaac); the children of Abraham are like their father, since they believe in God, who gives life (the resurrection of Christ).²⁶⁴

3. God provides a Substitute.

- Abraham's walk with Isaac to Mount Moriah foreshadows the journey of another Father and Son many years later. The journey of Christ carrying his cross to Golgotha.²⁶⁵ In fact,

²⁶¹ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 122.

²⁶² Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness: Paul's theology of Justification*, NSBT, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2020), 66.

²⁶³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Second edition, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, Gordon D. Fee, Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 314.

²⁶⁴ Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 191.

²⁶⁵ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 124.

some scholars believe that the same mountain that Abraham and Isaac went to, is the same mountain that Jesus was crucified on. Thus the name, “God will provide.”²⁶⁶

Notice the Similarities between Isaac and Christ:²⁶⁷

1. Both Isaac and Jesus’ births were “miraculous” births
 - Gen.17:17, “Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, ‘Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?’”
 - Gen.18:12, “So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, ‘After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?’”
 - Luke 1:34, “‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’”
 - Both of these births in the eyes of man were Incredible and Impossible.

2. Both Isaac and Jesus were born at the exact time God had ordained.
 - a. Gen.21:2, Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.
 - b. Gal.4:4, But when the set time had fully come God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.

3. Both were the Promised Son
 - a. Gen.3:15, And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

 - b. Gen.15:3-4, And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir; but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.”
 - c. Mt.3:17, “And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son....’”

4. Both Isaac and Jesus were fastened and placed on the wood to be sacrificed
 - a. Gen.22:9, When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.
 - b. Luke 23:33, When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there....

5. Both Isaac and Jesus were loved by their father
 - a. Gen.22:2, Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love – Isaac...”
 - b. Mt.3:17, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

6. Both Isaac and Jesus were obedient to their father even unto death. They were both willing to lay down their life. (Isaac was old enough to resist his dad but he was willing to be bound up and sacrificed.)

²⁶⁶ Booker, *The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread*, 74–75.

²⁶⁷ Chase, *40 Questions About Typology and Allegory*, 132.

- a. Gen.22:9, When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.
- b. Mt.26:39, Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

- Isaac’s life was spared because God provided a substitute. Jesus became the ultimate substitute for all who would trust and believe!
- Jesus is the true and better Isaac.

Let me briefly share a couple of other things that come to light in Abraham’s story.

4. Circumcision of the Heart

- God established the sign of the covenant to be circumcision. This was an outward sign of God’s people.
- However, the ultimate sign is not external circumcision but internal circumcision. It is circumcision of the heart.

5. God’s Global Purpose

- God has chosen Abraham and his seed to restore what was lost in Adam for the entire world.
- Listen to the Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:7–9:
 - Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.
- What did Paul mean?
 - The good news of salvation was to be extended to all peoples, including the Gentiles, who would be declared righteous by God, just like Abraham, on the basis of faith.²⁶⁸

6. Longing for a Perfect Place

- Abraham and his people were promised a place “flowing with milk and honey.” And, though this was a place known as Canaan, it pointed to a future place. The land of Canaan functions as a type, a pattern hinting at something greater . . . The New earth.²⁶⁹
- The line of Abraham continues to flow through Isaac and then through Jacob. We know that Isaac had two sons, but it was the younger twin son, Jacob, who was chosen by God. God would later change his name to Israel and he would have twelve sons.
- Joseph was one of Jacob’s boys and the remaining part of Genesis focuses on his story. It appears that Joseph, like Noah and Abraham looks like a second Adam, but just like the ones before him, Joseph is not the seed.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ George, *Galatians*, 225; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 198–199.

²⁶⁹ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 127.

- In fact, the promised bloodline doesn't flow through Joseph but through his brother Judah.
- As the story continues, it is revealed that Jesus is the true and better Joseph and Judah.

²⁷⁰ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 33.

Introduction to Biblical Theology

Teaching Manuscript

Week 4

Introduction

- Tonight we conclude our course on Biblical theology. Thank you all for participating each week and for your feedback.
- I hope that as we have scratched the surface of Biblical Theology that it has developed a greater appreciation inside you for the gospel and a deeper love for the Lord.
- Tonight we want to cover the 3 remaining covenants of the 6 that we find in Scripture.
- So we begin with....

God's Covenant with Israel through Moses (PP)

- When the book of Genesis closes, Abraham's family is living in the land of Egypt. When we turn to the next book, Exodus, Abraham's family has grown from 70 people to a couple million people in the land of Egypt.
- Exodus 1:7 says,
 - But the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.
- Notice the language that is used in this verse...
 - *Exceedingly fruitful*
 - *Multiplied greatly*
 - *Increased in numbers*
 - *Became so numerous the land was filled.*
- Sounds like God is fulfilling the promise he made with Abraham to make him into a great nation.
- The Israelites have been in Egypt for 400 years and they find themselves in captivity. They are crying out for relief and at the appropriate time God calls Moses, who was an Israelite, raised in Pharaoh's house and was now living in another town making his living as a shepherd.
- God tells Moses to return to Egypt to go to the Pharaoh and tell him to let the Israelites leave Egypt.
- We know that Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let God's people leave. And so God sends 10 plagues on the land to prove that He was the one true God and with each plague he humiliated the Egyptian gods.
- The 10th and final plague was the killing of the firstborn and everyone would experience this great judgment unless they followed God's plan of salvation.
- God gave the Israelites specific instructions on how they could escape the judgment of God (Gen. 12). They were to kill an innocent unblemished lamb and take its blood and apply it to their doorposts (Gen.12:1-3). When the death angel came through the land he would pass over every home that was protected by the blood and every person who was in the house (under the blood) would be saved.

- Moses instructed the Israelites,
 - “Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down” (Ex. 12: 22–23).
- Why the blood? (PP)
 - The blood represented both the death of a lamb in the place of the firstborn and the faith of those who marked their homes, trusting God’s promise.²⁷¹
- Moses also instructs the people to prepare to flee Egypt and to eat in haste due to their quick departure. This dramatic scene is known as the Passover.
- Once the final plague strikes the land of Egypt, Pharaoh finally tells the Israelites to leave Egypt, only to quickly change his mind and pursue them to the bank of the Red Sea. Israel appears trapped with nowhere to turn, and Moses instructs Israel to, “Stand firm and you will see the deliverance of the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still” (Ex. 14: 13–14).
- God miraculously parts the waters of the Red Sea, and the Israelites pass through on the dry ground, and then God brings the waters crashing down on the Egyptian army, and Israel is saved.
- This graphic picture depicts God’s salvation and His judgment.²⁷²
- The exodus is the dominant picture of salvation in the Old Testament.²⁷³ (PP)
- Matthew Emerson writes:
 - *God brings judgment on his enemies through the death of the firstborn son; those who faithfully trust in his word and who, therefore, cover themselves with the lamb’s blood are saved from this judgment; God saves his people from their enemies through providing victory over them; and then he brings them through the water safely to the other side. This pattern provides the type for how salvation occurs in the rest of the Old Testament and for how the New Testament authors explain Jesus’s work in the New Testament.*²⁷⁴
- The exodus gave birth to Israel as God’s covenant people and served as a paradigm for all of God’s saving acts to follow.²⁷⁵

²⁷¹ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 132.

²⁷² Kaiser Jr., “Exodus,” 389.

²⁷³ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 130–139.

²⁷⁴ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 36–37.

²⁷⁵ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 58.

- God leads the Israelites to Mount Sinai, the mountain where he called Moses. It is at this mountain that God gives the Israelites the law and offers them to enter into a covenant with Him (Ex. 19–24). (PP)
- The Israelites needed to understand what it meant to live in covenant with the God who had delivered them from Egyptian captivity. They needed to understand God’s love and expectations. This is the context in which the law was given. It was given to immature believers who had to learn how to respond to God’s grace and to live a life pleasing to him.²⁷⁶
- As Mark Strom notes, “*The Lord did not give the law to establish his relationship with the Israelites. He gave it because he already had a relationship with his people and he wanted them to now learn how to express this relationship faithfully.*”²⁷⁷
- Some scholars argue that this covenant is a covenant of works; however, the stronger argument is that this covenant is a covenant of grace.²⁷⁸ (PP)
 - The latter argument’s strength comes from the idea that God has already graciously saved and delivered the Israelites from slavery.²⁷⁹
- J. A. Motyer states,
 - “*It was the God of salvation who imposed his law on his people; the grace that saves preceded the law that demands. The people were given the law not in order that they might become the redeemed, rather it was because they had already been redeemed that they were given the law. The law of God is the way of life he sets before those whom he has saved, and they engage in that way of life as a response of love and gratitude to God their Redeemer. Grace and law belong together, for grace leads to law; saving love leads to and excites grateful love expressed in obedience.*”²⁸⁰
- Therefore, the Israelites do not keep the law in order to merit the love of God. God has already shown his love for them by delivering them from slavery in Egypt.²⁸¹
- By reason of having rescued Israel from Egyptian slavery, God had a claim on his chosen people.²⁸² God asserts that he has the right to make these demands of Israelites.²⁸³
- But, the order is essential for one to follow: (PP)
 - salvation then obedience.

²⁷⁶ Selvaggio, *From Bondage to Liberty*, 116.

²⁷⁷ Strom, *They Symphony of Scripture*, 51.

²⁷⁸ Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus*, 124.

²⁷⁹ Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, 213.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, Teach the Text Commentary Series, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 104; Selvaggio, *From Bondage to Liberty*, 116.

²⁸² Stuart, *Exodus*, 447.

²⁸³ Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, 473.

- As the narrative unfolds, it becomes apparent that Israel cannot obey and keep their end of the covenant.
- The covenant of law that God established at Sinai, according to O. Palmer Robertson, “*offered the outline for the type of life expected for God’s holy people.*”²⁸⁴
- God’s desire was for His people to reflect His holiness. (PP)
- This covenant, however, was not the final covenant that God had in mind. This covenant points beyond itself to a greater covenant that would eventually be established. The Sinai covenant was insufficient because it only was a shadow of what was necessary for salvation.
- Understanding the entire narrative of Scripture enables one to read God’s covenants and know how they continue to build on God’s original promise to redeem the world. The Sinai covenant points beyond itself to the coming of Christ and the new covenant.

- The prophet Jeremiah speaks about this great day in Jeremiah 31:
 - “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people” (Jer. 31: 31–34).

- In God’s plan, the covenant with Israel was intended to be temporary as part of God’s unfolding plan through the covenants.
- Hunter and Wellum explain,
 - “*It graciously allowed God to dwell in Israel’s midst as their Covenant Lord, but it also revealed the need for a greater covenant tied to a greater mediator and sacrifice.*”²⁸⁵
- The covenant with Israel pointed to the promised seed of Adam and the true son of Abraham, Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:19–4:7).

God’s Covenant with David (PP)

- The books of Samuel recount a key turning point in redemptive history. After Moses led Israel out of bondage in Egypt and Joshua led the nation into Canaan, the long era of the judges saw God’s people falling into idolatry and under foreign domination.
- First Samuel began in the chaotic time of the judges, but 2 Samuel concludes with Israel settled in peace under the reign of King David.
- The books of Samuel tell how God brought peace and stability under David’s kingdom, pointing forward to the saving reign of his descendant, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 188.

²⁸⁵ Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 140–141.

²⁸⁶ Phillips, *2 Samuel*, 132.

- It has been said that 2 Samuel 7 is “*the dramatic and theological center of the entire Samuel corpus as well as one of the most crucial texts in the Old Testament for evangelical faith.*”²⁸⁷
- Israel establishes itself in the promised land, but they long to have a physical king like the surrounding nations. God gives the Israelites their wish and places Saul to lead them. Saul directly ignores God’s word, and God moves from Saul to David from the tribe of Judah.
- David serves as a foreshadowing of Israel’s future redeemer: (PP)
 - the One who will crush God’s enemies and deliver humanity.
- David anointed, as God’s king, was God’s choice to rule his people. David was a descendant of Judah, the promised bloodline (Gen. 49: 8–12).
- Second Samuel 7 depicts God’s covenant with David,
 - “*The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. . . . Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever*” (2 Sam. 7: 11–13; 16, NIV).
- In the promise God makes to David of a “son,” one hears echoes of God’s commitment to providing a man who will come to redeem all of creation (Gen. 3:15).
- The promise “seed/son” will come from David’s bloodline and fulfill all of God’s promises.
- David desired to build a house for the Lord. But, the Lord promised that he would establish a house (dynasty) for David. The Lord promised to raise up one of David’s offspring to succeed him on the throne.²⁸⁸
- This verse is viewed as proof that Jesus was indeed the Messiah; God did indeed “raise up” Jesus, thus legitimizing him as the messianic son of David.
- According to the prophecy, the royal successor would be one...
 - “who will come from your body.”

- The emphasis on an offspring/seed who would come from David’s body links this covenant with the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15:4).²⁸⁹
- The narrative of the Bible shifts to focus on David’s dynasty. The Davidic covenant expands on the covenants established with Abraham and Israel.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 253; Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 112.

²⁸⁸ C. F. Keil, “1–2 Samuel,” 595.

²⁸⁹ Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, vol. 7, ed. Ray E. Clendenen (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1996), 339–340; John L. Mackay, “1–2 Samuel” in *1 Samuel–2 Chronicles*, vol. III, ESV Expository Commentary, ed. Iain Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 332–337; Ronald R. Youngblood, “1 & 2 Samuel” in *Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, vol. 3, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 889–890.

Similarities between Covenants²⁹¹ (PP)

Abrahamic Covenant	Davidic Covenant
Great name (Gen. 12:2)	Name (2 Sam. 7:9)
Children (Gen. 12:2–3)	Dynastic succession (2 Sam. 7:12)
Land (Gen. 15:7)	Land (2 Sam. 7:10)
Curse on enemies (Gen. 12:3)	Rest from enemies (2 Sam. 7:10–11)
Israelite Covenant	Davidic Covenant
God’s “firstborn son” (Exod. 4:22)	King is God’s son (2 Sam. 7:14)
Royal and holy nation (Exod. 19:4–6)	Priest–king (Ps. 110:2, 4)
Stipulations to follow (Exod. 20: 2–17)	Stipulations to follow (Deut. 17:14–20)
Divine promises (Exod. 23:20–33)	Divine promises (2 Sam. 7:8–20)

Figure 2.1 *Similarities between biblical covenants*

- God’s covenant with David continues the story of God’s redemption. (PP) It is through this covenant that God promises to establish his reign forever. In fact, the Davidic covenant is God’s way in which he will achieve his kingdom among all nations.²⁹²
- The Davidic covenant was established by God to continue his royal reign on the earth. The Lord knew that the earthly kings would fail, but the promise itself, sustained by God’s loyal love (*hesed*), would not be nullified.²⁹³
- Tension arises between the covenant’s unconditional and conditional dimensions. However, this tension is resolved through Jesus, the ideal Davidic king, who is fully obedient and will bring about the complete and lasting realization of the promise.
- Robert B. Chisholm Jr. notes,
 - “*In the end, God’s sovereign choice of David and his faithful commitment to his promise override the sins of imperfect Davidic rulers, whose failures delay realization of the promise but do not invalidate it.*”²⁹⁴
- God made promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:11–16 that would shape the future of salvation history.
- But, before he gave those promises, the Lord first pointed out three great blessings that he had designed for David and his people, and that would affirm the all-important message of salvation by grace alone. These promises and blessings were not unique to David.

²⁹⁰ Boda, *After God’s Own Heart*, 17-20; Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 46.

²⁹¹ Thomas and Greear, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*, 195.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 196.

²⁹³ Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *1 & 2 Samuel*, Teach the Text Commentary Series, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 219.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 225.

These were the same promises made centuries earlier to Abraham, the covenant father of God's people.

- In this way, God revealed that the salvation blessings once promised to Abraham would be fulfilled through God's work in David, especially in the person and work of David's great descendant, Jesus Christ.²⁹⁵

The Voice of the Prophets (PP)

- God's people continued to live in rebellion, and after much heartache and exile, God continued to deliver a message of hope through the prophets. The prophets continuously reminded Israel of God's promises to the patriarchs and David. They kept their eyes looking ahead in faith to the promised work of God in the future. It was this promise that brought them hope and joy in the Lord.
- The prophets found comfort in looking for the arrival of the promised Messiah and King.
- They longed for the new covenant that Jeremiah spoke of in Jeremiah 31:33–34.²⁹⁶
 - This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jer. 31: 33–34)
- This new covenant involved a regathering of God's people through a new Exodus (Ezek. 36:26–28)²⁹⁷ and a pouring out of His Spirit in a fresh way, such that all the people of God will be given new hearts to trust and obey their King (Joel 2:28–29).²⁹⁸
- The prophets are even filled with hope as they look toward a new creation, a new heaven, and a new earth in which all the people from all nations will worship before the Lord (Isa. 65:17; 66: 22–23).²⁹⁹
- God's plan to bless the world and fulfill the promise given to Abraham was connected to this future Davidic king. The prophets looked forward to his coming and longed for the arrival of his forever kingdom (Isa. 9: 6–7).³⁰⁰
- At the arrival of this king, he would bring salvation to his people. The prophet Isaiah writes,
 - "and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God" (NIV).
- One wonders, "How?" this king will bring salvation.

²⁹⁵ Phillips, *2 Samuel*, 140; John Woodhouse, *2 Samuel: Your Kingdom Come*, Preaching the Word, ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 220.

²⁹⁶ Smith, *Exalting Jesus in Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 200–201.

²⁹⁷ Dowden, *Exalting Jesus in Ezekiel*, 183–184.

²⁹⁸ Boice, *Hosea–Jonah*, 145–146.

²⁹⁹ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 52–53.

³⁰⁰ Davis, *Exalting Jesus in Isaiah*, 63–66.

- According to the prophets, the promised king will be crushed and killed for the sins of humanity.
- Isaiah says,
 - “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isa. 53:5, NIV).³⁰¹

God’s New Covenant in Christ (PP)

- When the New Testament pages open on Matthew 1, one reads, “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham... (Mt. 1:1, NIV).
- The opening verse of the New Testament announces that Jesus Christ is the promised redeemer, the one that had been promised in the Garden of Eden and the one that all the Old Testament prophets hoped to see.
- In this one verse, one understands that God has kept His promises and covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David.
- With the coming of Jesus of Nazareth—who is revealed to be God’s eternal Son, born into history as a descendant of Adam, Abraham, and David—all of God’s promises are now a yes, and their covenants reach their fulfillment (2 Cor. 1:20).³⁰²
- Jesus is God’s beloved Son, the one in whom the Father is well pleased (Lk. 3:22).
- Unlike Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and Israel, Jesus succeeded and demonstrated that He is God’s true and faithful Son (Lk. 4: 1–13). (PP)
- After the inauguration of Jesus’ ministry, He began proclaiming,
 - “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mk. 1:15, ESV).
- It is important to note that Jesus uses the term “kingdom” with the same meaning it has in the Old Testament.
- It is not referring to a piece of land, rather, it is referring to the rule of a king.
- Sigurd Grindheim says that,
 - *“When Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God, it would be better translated as “the kingly rule of God.”*³⁰³ Grindheim also says, *“When Jesus proclaims the presence of God’s kingly rule, he announces that the dreams of the prophets have come to fulfillment. God himself has come down from heaven and stepped onto the face of the earth . . . God’s rule has been established on earth. God has come to the world as king.”*³⁰⁴
- As Jesus walks the earth, He gathers His followers and begins to teach them about His kingdom (Mt. 13).

³⁰¹ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 53–54.

³⁰² Hunter and Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*, 59–60.

³⁰³ Grindhem, *Living in the Kingdom of God*, 24.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

- Throughout Jesus’s earthly ministry, God’s rule and reign are displayed powerfully.³⁰⁵
- Jesus’ kingdom was not of this world, and His path did not lead straight for a throne but to a cross.
- Just as the prophets had said, the Messiah must suffer first to bring salvation.
- Genesis 3:15 promised that the woman’s seed would one day crush the head of the Serpent, but His heel would be bruised.
- At the cross, Jesus took on the sins of the world and became the final substitute. Through His blood, the new covenant was established (Lk. 22:20).
- The sacrificial system pointed to and found its fulfillment in the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29).
- All of the gospel writers believe that Jesus is the true spotless Passover Lamb, slain to cover the sins of his people and to rescue them from judgment by enacting a new and better exodus (Lk. 9:31; Jn. 19:36). (PP)
- Emerson writes:
 - *In His atoning death, Jesus takes the punishment for humanity’s sin. He is the sacrificial Lamb not just for Israel but all of God’s people, those who believe from every tribe, tongue, and nation. He is the Suffering Servant, promised by Isaiah, the one through whom Israel’s sins are forgiven. Jesus is the High Priest for those who believe, offering Himself as a perfect sacrifice on the cross for their atonement so that they, too have access to God’s throne room. In His resurrection He puts death to death, the final blow in its devastating defeat at the hands of Christ. In his death and resurrection, Jesus pays the penalty for sin and defeats sin, death, and the serpent. He is the promised seed of woman, the One who would restore what Adam and Eve lost in the fall.*³⁰⁶

God’s Kingdom (PP)

- The covenants are God’s promises to restore the kingdom of God that was established but lost in the Garden of Eden.
- When one reaches the New Testament, they discover the theocracy of Israel is replaced by the kingdom of God, which is inaugurated through the coming of Jesus.
- According to Alexander, the establishment of this kingdom, which is one of the central themes of the Gospels, is intimately connected with who Jesus is and what He does.³⁰⁷ The life and work of Jesus is not simply good news because it redeems sinner’s souls.
- Rather, as Emerson points out, it is good news because it is the good news of the kingdom, the good news that, through Jesus, God has restored His kingdom that was lost in the fall and later prefigured in Israel.³⁰⁸
- Genesis 1–2 is the perfect picture of what God intended for the earth and humanity. (PP)

³⁰⁵ Roark and Cline, *Biblical Theology*, 60.

³⁰⁶ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 56.

³⁰⁷ Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 89.

³⁰⁸ Emerson, *The Story of Scripture*, 73.

- One discovers in the Garden of Eden a pattern of the kingdom of God.
 - God’s people, Adam and Eve, live in God’s place, the Garden of Eden, under God’s rule; thus, they enjoy God’s blessing.
- Roberts notes that ever since the disruption of the fall, God has been working to re-establish His kingdom and to redeem His people.³⁰⁹
- The four gospel writers referenced the kingdom over one hundred twenty times. With that many references, there is little doubt that the kingdom is a major theme in God’s story.
- Mark informs his readers that Jesus began his ministry with the announcement, “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk. 1:15, ESV).
- Goldsworthy observes that Jesus evidently understands Himself to be the bringer of the kingdom that fulfills the expectations of Israel in the Old Testament.³¹⁰
- Thus, Roberts is in agreement with a multitude of authors that the kingdom of God was a dominant theme in Jesus’ teaching and ministry.³¹¹ (PP)
- Preben Vang and Terry G. Carter state:
 - *Everywhere he went, Jesus preached the message that God’s kingdom had come near. For three years he walked and taught. His message was consistent in both word and deed. God’s kingdom had come near. Some people were confused, however, because their expectations of the promised Messiah were so different from what they saw in Jesus. Even John the Baptist, who himself had looked forward to God’s intervention, became confused and sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one to come. Jesus sent these words back to John the Baptist: ‘Tell John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and good news is preached to the poor.’*³¹²
- Jesus never verbally defined the kingdom of God.
- Brian Gleeson observes that *He lived it out visually, particularly through His relationships with people, including His relationships with sinners, outcasts, and through His healings and exorcisms.*
- Jesus mostly disclosed what the kingdom of God meant through His *parables, metaphors, similes, and images in His teachings.*³¹³
- Thus, everything Jesus did and said was demonstrating the kingdom of God before human eyes.
- There is a tension concerning the kingdom that scholars label the “already not yet.”
- Jesus has indeed ushered in the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom has not yet been fully consummated.

³⁰⁹ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 33.

³¹⁰ Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 50.

³¹¹ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 22.

³¹² Vang and Carter, *Telling God’s Story*, 5.

³¹³ Gleeson, “The Mission of the Kingdom of God,” 329.

- In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He delivers an interesting contrast between present and future rewards (Mt. 5:2–10).
- Alexander discusses this contrast and believes that this contrast is significant because it highlights that although God's kingdom is a present reality, the final consummation of the kingdom awaits in the future.³¹⁴
- Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen observe that the *kingdom is real in the church's present life, but the anticipation of its future completion is also the church's great hope.*³¹⁵
- Christians eagerly await the restoration of this world (new heaven and new earth). And it is at this restoration that God's kingdom will be fully restored and culminate the biblical story.

The Role of the Church (PP)

- One needs to understand the relationship between the kingdom of God and the church.
 - The church is called to build or extend the kingdom of God. (PP)
 - When the church grows, the kingdom grows. (PP)
- However, the church is not the kingdom of God.
 - The kingdom of God is the active rule of God in the world and the presence of his gift of salvation.
- The church is a community of believers who belong to the kingdom of God.³¹⁶ The church represents the kingly rule of God. It shows what his reign looks like and serves as a living testimony to God's rule.³¹⁷ (PP)
- After Jesus' resurrection, He commissions His followers to "make disciples."
 - He says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19–20, ESV).
- Jesus has now given the church the same responsibility that God gave to Israel. The church is now to be a light to the world, represent God to the nations, and bring people to the Lord.
- The Holy Spirit, the presence of God, now dwells within the believer. The believer is called to live the Spirit filled life (Eph. 5:18) and bear gospel fruit (Gal. 5:22).
- The church is tasked to be Christ followers and bear his name well before a lost world.
- G.K. Beale says,

³¹⁴ Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 95.

³¹⁵ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 211.

³¹⁶ Grindhem, *Living in the Kingdom of God*, 81.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

- “Our task as the covenant community, the church is to be God’s temple, so filled with his glorious presence that we expand and fill the earth with that presence until God finally accomplishes the goal completely at the end of time.”³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 402.

Bibliography

- Alexander, Desmond T. *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2008.
- _____. *Exodus*. Teach the Text Commentary Series, edited by Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016.
- Anderson, A. A. *2 Samuel*. Vol. 11. Word Biblical Commentary, edited by David A Hubbard and Glen W. Baker. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989.
- Bergen, Robert D. *1, 2 Samuel*. Vol. 7. The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, edited by Ray E. Clendenen. Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1996.
- Boda, Mark J. *After God's Own Heart: The Gospel According to David*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2007.
- Bartholomew, Craig, and Michael W. Goheen. *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our place in the Biblical Story*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.
- Beale, G. K. *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- _____. *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*. NSBT, edited by D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: IVP, 2004.
- Boice, James Montgomery. *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary*. Vol. 1. The Boice Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
- _____. *Hosea–Jonah, The Minor Prophets: An Expositional Commentary*. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002.
- Booker, Richard. *The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread: Revealing the Power of the Blood of Jesus from Genesis to Revelation*. Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2008.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *First and Second Samuel*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: John Knox, 1990.
- Chase, Mitchell L. *40 Questions about Typology and Allegory*. Edited by Benjamin L. Merkle. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2020.
- Chisholm, Robert B. Jr. *1 & 2 Samuel*. Teach the Text Commentary Series, edited by Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013.
- Clowney, Edmund P. *The Unfolding Mystery*. Leicester: IVP, 1988.
- Davis, Andrew M. *Exalting Jesus in Isaiah*. Christ – Centered Exposition, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2017.

- Dever, Mark. *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006.
- Dowden, Landon. *Exalting Jesus in Ezekiel*. Christ – Centered Exposition, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2015.
- Dorioni, Daniel, M. *Matthew 14–28*. Vol 2. Reformed Expository Commentary, edited by Richard D. Phillips and Philip Graham Ryken. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2008.
- Duguid, Iain M. *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality: The Gospel According to Abraham*. 2nd ed. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2015.
- Dumbrell, William J. *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.
- Emerson, Matthew Y. *The Story of Scripture*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017.
- _____. “Searching for the Second Adam: Typological Connections between Adam, Joseph, Mordecai, and Daniel.” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 123–144.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- Fesko, J. V. *Galatians*. The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary on the New Testament, edited by Jon D. Payne. Powder Springs: Tolle Lege Press, 2012.
- Gabler, Johannes P. “An Oration on the Proper Distinction Between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Specific Objectives of Each.” In *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study*. Edited by Ben C. Ollenburger. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004.
- Garrett, Duane A. *A Commentary on Exodus*. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2014.
- Gentry, Peter J., and Stephen J. Wellum. *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015.
- Geisler, Norman. “God and Creation” *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2003.
- George, Timothy. *Galatians*. Christian Standard Commentary, edited by E. Ray Clendenen and Brandon D. Smith. Nashville: Holman Reference, 2020.
- _____. *Galatians*. Vol. 30. New American Commentary, edited by E. Ray Clendenen. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994.
- Gilbert, George H. “Biblical Theology: Its History and Its Mission I.” *The Biblical World*, 6, no. 1 (July 1895): 6–14.

- Gleeson, Brian. "The Mission of the Kingdom of God: Ultimate Source of Meaning, Value and Energy for Jesus." *The Australasian Catholic Record* 93, no. 3 (July 2016): 326-339.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme. *According to Plan*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1991.
- _____. *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012.
- _____. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000.
- _____. *The Son of God and the New Creation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015.
- Grindheim, Sigurd. *Living in the Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology for the Life of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018.
- Gnuse, Robert. "New Directions in Biblical Theology: The Impact of Contemporary Scholarship in the Hebrew Bible." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62, no. 3 (1994): 893–918. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1465219>.
- Hamilton, Jr, James M. *What is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014.
- Hansen, G. Walter. *Galatians*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series, edited by Grant R. Osborne. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Horton, Michael S. *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.
- Hunter, Trent, and Stephen Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.
- Hughes, R. Kent. *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004.
- Hultgren, Arland J. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011.
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C. *The Promise–Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.
- _____. "Exodus." In *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*. Vol 2. The Expositor's Bible Commentary, edited by Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- Keil, C. F. *The Pentateuch*. Vol 1. Commentary on the Old Testament, edited by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006.
- _____. "1–2 Samuel." In *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel*. Vol 2. Commentary on the Old Testament, edited by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006.

- Kimble, Jeremy M., and Ched Spellman. *Invitation to Biblical Theology: Exploring the Shape, Storyline, and Themes of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2020.
- Klink, Edward W. and Darian R. Lockett. *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
- Lawrence, Michael. *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.
- Lints, Richard. *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Lunn, Nicholas P. "‘Raised on the Third Day according to the Scriptures’: Resurrection Typology in the Genesis Creation Narrative." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 3 (September 2014): 523–535.
- Mackay, John L. "1–2 Samuel." In *1 Samuel – 2 Chronicles*. Vol. III. ESV Expository Commentary. Edited by Iain Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar. Wheaton: Crossway, 2019.
- Matthews, Kenneth A. *Genesis 1–11:26*. Vol. 1A. The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, edited by E. Ray Clendenen. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996.
- MacArthur, John. *Ephesians*. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1986.
- _____. *Matthew 24–28*. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1989.
- _____. *Romans*. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1991.
- _____. *2 Peter & Jude*. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2005.
- Merida, Tony. "Preaching The Forest and the Trees: Integrating Biblical Theology with Expository Preaching." *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, JBTM 6, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 33–42.
- _____. *Exalting Jesus in Exodus*. Christ-Centered Exposition, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014.
- Moo, Douglas J. *Galatians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, edited by Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.
- _____. *The Letter to the Romans*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. 2nd ed. Edited by Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, Gordon D. Fee, Joel B. Green. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018.

- Moorehead, James H. "Redefining Confessionalism: American Presbyterians in the Twentieth Century." *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 79, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 72–86.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23335389>.
- Motyer, J. A. *The Message of Exodus*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005.
- Murray, David. *Jesus on Every Page: 10 Simple Ways to seek and find Christ in the Old Testament*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013.
- O’Keefe, John and R.R. Reno. *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- Phillips, Richard D. *2 Samuel*. Reformed Expository Commentary, edited by Richard D. Phillips and Philip Graham Ryken. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2018.
- Philpot, Joshua M. "See the True and Better Adam: Typology and Human Origins." *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* 5, no. 2 (2018): 77–90.
- Platt, David. *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*. Christ – Centered Exposition, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013.
- Platt, David, and Tony Merida. *Exalting Jesus in Galatians*. Christ – Centered Exposition, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014.
- Roark, Nick, and Robert Cline. *Biblical Theology: How the Church Faithfully Teaches the Gospel*. Edited by Mark Dever and Jonathan Leeman. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018.
- Roberts, Vaughan. *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2002.
- Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Christ of the Covenants*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, Co., 1980.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *Genesis in Space and Time*. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 1972.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2017.
- _____. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. Vol. 37. The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, edited by E. Ray Clendenen. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003.
- _____. *The King In His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.
- _____. "Preaching and Biblical Theology 101." *IX Journal* 3, no. 9 (November/December 2006): 15–22.
- Schrock, David. "From Beelines to Plotlines: Typology That Follows the Covenantal Typography of Scripture." *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 35–56.

- Seifrid, Mark A. *Christ, our Righteousness: Paul's theology of Justification*. NSBT, edited by D. A. Carson. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2020.
- Selvaggio, Anthony T. *From Bondage to Liberty: The Gospel According to Moses*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2014.
- Shaddix, Jim, and Daniel L. Akin. *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*. Christ – Centered Exposition, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2018.
- Smith, Steven. *Exalting Jesus in Jeremiah and Lamentations*. Christ – Centered Exposition, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2019.
- Stringer, Ernest T. *Action Research*. 4th ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc., 2014.
- Strom, Mark. *They Symphony of Scripture: Making Sense of the Bible's Many Themes*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1990.
- Stuart, Douglas K. *Exodus*. Vol 2. The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, edited by E. Ray Clendenen. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006.
- Thomas, Heath, and J. D. Greear. *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*. Christ – Centered Exposition, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2016.
- Vang, Preben, and Terry G. Carter. *Telling God's Story: The Biblical Narrative from Beginning to End*. 2nd ed. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*. [City of publication]: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948.
- Wallace, Peter J. "The Foundations of Reformed Biblical Theology: The Development of Old Testament Theology at Old Princeton, 1812–1932." *Westminster Theological Journal* 59, no. 1 (1997): 41–69.
- Wellum, Stephen. "From Alpha to Omega: A Biblical-Theological Approach to God the Son Incarnate." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 1 (March 2020): 71–94.
- Wilson, Alistair I., and Jamie A. Grant, "Introduction." In *The God of Covenant: Biblical, Theological, and Contemporary Perspectives*. Edited by Jamie A. Grant and Alistair I. Wilson. Leicester: Apollos, 2005.
- World Population Review. "Poplar Bluff, Missouri Population 2020 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs)." <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/poplar-bluff-mo-population>.
- Woodhouse, John. *2 Samuel: Your Kingdom Come*. Preaching the Word, edited by R. Kent Hughes. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1992.

_____. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006.

Yarbrough, Robert W. "Romans." In *Romans–Galatians*. Vol. III. ESV Expository Commentary, edited by Iain Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar. Wheaton: Crossway, 2019.

Youngblood, Ronald R. "1 & 2 Samuel." In *Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*. Vol. 3. [Title of Multivolume Work], edited by Frank E. Gaebelien. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.