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TEACHING THE BIBLE'S STORYLINE
AT GRACE BIBLE CHURCH,
MIDLOTHIAN, VIRGINIA

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TEACHING THE BIBLE'S STORYLINE
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MIDLOTHIAN, VIRGINIA

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To my wife, without whose support and encouragement I could not have completed this project and by whose love and friendship I find life so rich.

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PREFACE

I thank Christ for the many gifted and caring people to whom he has led me. Many friends and former professors helped shape my understanding of the Scripture's great story. I wish to acknowledge particularly Dr. William Varner, who led me to think inter-textually and to learn the Greek language. Dr. Abner Chou has been a great friend and patient teacher to me in the way the apostles understood the Old Testament. Most recently, Dr. Jim Hamilton essentially and almost single-handedly reset the foundation for how I see the Bible holding together. These faithful men were instruments of the Holy Spirit to bring my heart "to burn within me" in love for Christ and his gospel. This project came about in large part to their faithfulness to open the book and point to Christ.

Furthermore, the entire academic community at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has served me so well. My professors helped to conform my thinking about Christ and his church to God's Word. My fellow students proved true friends and encouragers in the study of God's Word and the ministry. Particular thanks are due to a few men that most directly facilitated the completion of this project. Dr. John David Trentham provided the necessary guidance for my proposal, along with the final emendations for a stronger project. My supervisor, Dr. Robert Plummer, helped greatly to improve the project and ensure its completion with timely comments and reassurances. Jacob Harris, a fellow doctoral student, proved to be a gift to me. I am not sure whether I would have been able to finish this project without Jacob's encouragements and constant accountability.

The faithful saints at Grace Bible Church remain a continual encouragement to me and even for my efforts here in this project. They have given me a picture of love for the church, and for that I cannot express any adequate gratitude. Our four children have

been most forgiving of the time this project has stolen me from them. May I point them more faithfully to the great Redeemer in this grand story in part because of this project.

And the one to whom I dedicate this project, my wife, deserves any real praise and reward this project may ever generate in this life or the next. I have been richly blessed by this grace-filled woman. May our small story continue to echo something of the joy, love, and peace found in the culmination of the great story that this project tells.

Rick Zaman

Midlothian, Virginia

December 2014

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to teach the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible to members of an adult discipleship class at Grace Bible Church in Midlothian, Virginia.

Goals

The first goal for accomplishing this project was to evaluate the class participants' current understanding of the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible. This goal was measured by conducting a survey before the class began.¹ The benchmark of success was the completion and return of the survey by the class of at least fifteen participants. Then the responses to the survey were assessed to determine each participant's current understanding of the Bible's storyline.

The second goal was to develop teaching material, an outline, visuals, and homework for use in teaching this class the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible. Upon its completion, the curriculum was given to the other staff pastors for their review. This goal was measured by the staff pastors completing an analysis survey of the curriculum using an evaluative rubric. The benchmark of success for this goal was a rating of "sufficient" or "exemplary" on 90 percent of the rubric's components, by each evaluator.

The third goal was to implement the curriculum by teaching the redemptive-

¹All the surveys can be found in the appendices.

historical storyline of the Bible to the class. To encourage the participants' understanding of the Bible's storyline, homework was administered. This goal was measured by two surveys. First, the initial survey was again administered to the participants so as to determine the extent to which the class participants' comprehension of the Bible's storyline increased, if any. Second, a curriculum assessment survey was administered to the class participants' to evaluate how well the curriculum and class time disseminated the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible. The benchmark of success for this goal was a positive, statistically significant change, as evidenced by a "t-test" for dependent samples.

Ministry Context

Grace Bible Church (hereafter, GBC) formed in 1989 out of an independent Baptist church in the same Richmond area. Through all of the various teachings at GBC, the elders have maintained the church's founding emphases: expository Bible teaching and elder-led polity. Along with these emphases the church's doctrinal statement articulates a Dispensational eschatology (i.e., pretribulational, premillennial position).

Though exposition of Scripture continues as a strength of the church's ministry, GBC's teaching content, as a whole, is less Christ-centered than it ought to be. This is not to say that the gospel and Christ's glory are entirely missing from GBC's preaching and teaching. When the passage at hand centers directly on Christ and the gospel this church's teaching faithfully puts forth the meaning of the gospel and greatness of Christ. If the text at hand, however, does not refer most directly to Christ and the gospel, then characteristically our teaching will fail to draw out this glorious theme of the gracious Christ. That is, at times, we focus so specifically on the "trees" of the text that we miss the gospel "forest." We proclaim the primary truth of a particular passage, but then we neglect connecting the passage-at-hand to the Scripture's larger theme of the gospel of grace through faith in Christ. As a whole we, and Rich Ryan in particular, are

moving in the right direction,² but GBC’s teaching content must more effectively connect Christ and the gospel to each sermon, Sunday school lesson, and small group teaching.

One cannot be precisely sure as to why our teaching is less Christ-centered than it should be. We have not intentionally sought to undermine Christ’s glory and the gospel in our teaching. But two elements of the church’s background undoubtedly contribute to our diminished emphasis of Scripture’s larger theme of Christ and the gospel.

First, many of the church’s members have been attending church since they were children. That is to say, the majority of our people were raised in homes and churches where the Bible—and more particularly, numerous Bible stories—were taught. Many of GBC’s members grew up hearing stories about Noah and the flood, Abraham and Isaac, Joshua and Jericho, and David and Goliath.³ So there was faithful teaching. However, these teachings were either poorly communicated by the teachers or poorly received by the children, because the children (now adult members) largely took these stories to teach moralism rather than pointing to the gospel.⁴ In a sincere effort to apply Scripture, especially the Old Testament, there is a tendency among pastors and Sunday School teachers to preach inadvertently a false gospel of moralism by missing Christ and the gospel in their preaching and teaching.⁵ In short, if the teacher fails to tie the Old

²Rich Ryan, GBC’s teaching pastor, would admit that his sermon “Great Faith in the Face of Great Fear” on 1 Sam 13:15-14:23 (delivered on November 14, 2010 at GBC) marked a shift towards Christ-centeredness in his own preaching. The lasting response and questions from the congregation demonstrate what kind of change that sermon made on how to view the Old Testament in a *rightly* Christological way.

³Goldsworthy gives a clever discussion on the moralizing of children’s Bible stories in *The Goldsworthy Trilogy* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 2000), 7–10.

⁴One may contrast this reality to how Paul describes Timothy’s instruction from childhood (see 2 Tim 3:14-15).

⁵In his book *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), Michael Horton laments how moralism characterizes much of the teaching in evangelical churches.

Testament story into the larger story of redemption in Scripture or fails to demonstrate how the elements of the story pattern themselves after Christ's salvation at the cross, then the teacher and student are left with only heroes to imitate or rules to obey.⁶ GBC members' "Christian" upbringing in moralistic Bible stories fosters only more misinterpretation and misapplication of the Old Testament and even perpetuates more moralistic Bible reading, preaching, and teaching among the coming generations in our own church.

Another likely contributing factor to our diminished emphasis on Christ and the gospel of grace stems from our Dispensational background. Dispensationalism as a system emphasizes authorial intent by using the grammatical-historical hermeneutic.⁷ Dispensationalists correspondingly guard themselves against using allegorical methods of interpretation. Both of these aspects to Dispensationalism are well-intended. Both of these emphases, however, can be applied too rigidly. For example, one may emphasize the human author's intent to such a degree that one fails to understand how this smaller text fits into the larger story of redemption as told by the divine Author. Furthermore, in an attempt to guard against allegorical interpretations, the Dispensational interpreter can be overly literal in his Bible study. This "over-literalism" has led *some* Dispensationalists to be unable to make sense of how the New Testament writers understand and use the Old Testament.⁸ For fear of misinterpreting the text by allegorizing, many of those in

⁶This formulation of "heroes to imitate and rules to obey" is put beautifully in Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* (Grand Rapids: Zonderkidz, 2007), 14–17.

⁷See Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New versus the Old* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2002), 366.

⁸For example, Robert Thomas describes some of the apostles' use of the Old Testament as "inspired *senus plenior* applications" (ibid., 247). He explains, "In such uses, New Testament writers applied Old Testament texts to situations entirely different from what was envisioned in the corresponding Old Testament contexts. The New testament writers disregarded the main thrust of grammatical-historical meaning of the Old Testament passages and applied those passages in different ways to suit different points they were making" (ibid.).

Dispensational churches do not intend to see Christ and the gospel in the Old Testament. So even if they had a more balanced picture of the story of redemption and grace, they would not see how the Old Testament account at-hand moves the story of redemption or how the pattern anticipates Christ. They would not see it because they would not be looking for it as they read. In summary, Dispensationalists and those taught by them will be prone to over-emphasize discontinuity between the Old Testament and New Testament and so then miss the legitimate connections to Christ and the gospel that are present.

Rationale

Christ mandates for his church to preach and teach the Scripture.⁹ As believers expound the meaning of Scripture for themselves and for the world, the Bible's preeminent theme ought to shine forth from their preaching: "God's glory¹⁰ in Jesus Christ of the gospel."¹¹ Preachers will know that they have taught the Scripture rightly if

⁹Paul's letters to Timothy mandate the preaching and teaching of the Scripture in the church. As he lists the requirements for officers in 1 Tim 3, Paul demands that overseers be "able to teach" (1 Tim 3:2). Then in the following chapter, the apostle encourages his son in the faith to devote himself "to the public reading of Scripture, exhortation, and teaching" (1 Tim 4:13). Paul concludes that argument with the exhortation for Timothy to devote himself to his life and doctrine, or teaching (1 Tim 4:16). More broadly, he continues to instruct Timothy about appropriate conduct in the church as to how teaching elders ought to be viewed: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching" (1 Tim 5:17). And then in 2 Tim, Paul also demands precision and accuracy in the transmission of the gospel teaching. In this way, Timothy could be an approved and unashamed worker, as one "rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). Soberly then in 2 Tim 4:1-2 Paul charges Timothy to "preach the word." Paul understood the reading, preaching, and teaching of the gospel in the Scripture as the foundation and center to the church's ministry.

¹⁰For a defense that the whole Scripture story points to Jesus Christ and his work on the cross as the ultimate manifestation of God's glory, see Tom Schreiner *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 13–14; and idem, "Preaching and Biblical Theology," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2 (2006): 20–29.

¹¹In my understanding, this is essentially the same central theme that James Hamilton argues for in his biblical theology (*God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 56–59). While he phrases the Bible's central theme more broadly ("God's glory in salvation through judgment"), Hamilton rightly sees Christ and the cross as the climax to the revelation of God's glory in salvation through judgment. Hamilton states that "the cross of Christ, the climatic expression of the glory of God in salvation through judgment, is the turning point of the ages" (57). One should read Hamilton's biblical theology to find an able defense of "God's glory in salvation through

God's glory in Christ the Savior is evident in the exposition of the text.

For example, the apostle Paul makes clear that Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection form the center and summary to the story of God's promised redemption. In 2 Timothy 3:15 "Paul gives," according to Knight, "the central purpose of the 'holy scriptures.'"¹² Knight adds, "In doing so [Paul] echoes Jesus' statements to the same effect (cf., e.g., Lk. 24:25-27, 44-47; Jn. 5:39, 46) and verbalizes what was evident in his own use of scripture in preaching to Jews (cf. Acts 17:2-3)."¹³ What is this central purpose to the Scripture? "That which the scriptures are able to do," answers Knight, "is 'to make wise unto salvation.'"¹⁴ And that salvation comes "through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15). The apostle to the Gentiles understands the central theme of the Scripture to be salvation (or, redemption) through faith in Jesus Christ.

If pastors wish for people to see how particular texts, especially Old Testament texts, accurately point to Christ, they need first to provide congregants with an outline to Scripture's single story. The Bible's over-arching story of redemption provides the context and background for understanding how Christ fulfills that promise of redemption.

Next, the question then becomes how best to orient people to Scripture's story of God's glory through redemption in Christ. This project provides an adult instruction class that covers the redemptive-historical storyline. A class setting, in contrast to monologue sermons, allows the opportunity for participants to interact and ask questions. And, without the time constraints of a short series of sermons the teacher could cover

judgment" as the center to the Scripture's storyline. As one reads God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment, however, I urge the reader to keep in mind that Jesus and his work on the cross is, to quote Hamilton again, "the climatic expression of the glory of God in salvation through judgment" (ibid.).

¹²George William Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 443.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 444.

more of the redemptive patterns and walk through the development of the promise more slowly in order to enlighten the textual details that hold the promise together.¹⁵ By providing the background and outline to Scripture's redemptive story in this way, our preaching and teaching ministry will be able to make reference to the Christ-connections persuasively in later sermons and teachings.

Two further practical elements provide good reason for addressing our deficiency in understanding Christ's gospel of grace as the overarching theme to Scripture at this time. First, our church recently began offering regular, in-depth Bible instruction on Sunday morning for the first time in five years. The adult Bible class provides an excellent environment to explain and present the Scripture's storyline, how to read the Old Testament, and how to apply the Bible. Second, GBC's teaching pastor recently finished an almost two-year series preaching expositionally through First and Second Samuel. As noted above, Rich Ryan rightly connected the Samuel narrative to the redemptive storyline and its Christological end. These connections to Christ from Samuel were well received by the congregation, but at the same time the congregation greeted these connections to Christ hesitantly and with some skepticism. The congregation appears ready to receive more teaching that points to Christ from the Old Testament, but they need a framework for doing so. This project aims to address these needs by demonstrating Scripture's overarching storyline of redemption in Christ and by showing how the Scriptures' repeated themes and pictures create patterns that anticipate Jesus' coming and work.

¹⁵To survey just some examples of the textual details that hold the Scripture story together, see the various tables throughout James Hamilton's *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*. A list of the tables is included on pp. 21-22 of Hamilton's book.

Definitions and Limitations

Biblical metanarrative or storyline. The biblical metanarrative or storyline refers, according to Jim Hamilton, to the “all-encompassing story, the Bible tells.”¹⁶

Biblical theology. In this project, the term biblical theology reflects Brian Rosner’s definition:

Biblical theology may be defined as theological interpretation of Scripture in and for the church. It proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyse and synthesize the Bible’s teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible’s overarching narrative and Christocentric focus.¹⁷

Covenant theology. In his *Moody Handbook of Theology*, Paul Enns describes Covenant Theology as “a system of teaching that God entered into a covenant of works with Adam, who failed, whereupon God entered into a covenant of grace, promising eternal life to those who believe.”¹⁸

Dispensationalism. Paul Enns defines Dispensationalism as “a system of theology recognizing different stewardships of man under God.” Furthermore, Enns notes that “Dispensationalism is distinguished by: (1) consistent literal interpretation; (2) clear distinction between Israel and the church; (3) the glory of God as God’s ultimate purpose in the world.”¹⁹

Redemptive-history. In his article “Preaching and Biblical Theology,” Thomas Schreiner defines redemptive history as follows: “The historical unfolding of what God has done may be described as salvation history or redemptive history.”²⁰

Typology. Jim Hamilton defines typology or typological interpretation as

¹⁶Ibid., 49.

¹⁷Brian S. Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 10.

¹⁸Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1989), 632.

¹⁹Ibid., 634.

²⁰Schreiner, “Preaching and Biblical Theology,” 23.

“canonical exegesis that observes divinely intended patterns of historical correspondence and escalation in significance in the events, people, or institutions of Israel, and these types are in the redemptive historical stream that flows through the Bible.”²¹

The primary limitation of this project was the assigned, fifteen-week duration of the ministry initiative. This ministry initiative comprised of three components: a three-week preparation period, a ten-week class, and a two-week evaluation period. I also imposed a delimitation for the class size to be a maximum of twenty-five persons. This delimitation allowed more easily for an interactive teaching environment.

Research Methodology

Participants were enlisted for the class in the following manner. A website form was created for persons to sign-up online so as to reserve a spot for the class. At least two weeks prior to the first session, the class was advertised and announced to the congregation through the public announcements during the morning worship service. Those weeks that the class was announced on Sunday morning there was a pastor, table, and laptop to enable persons to sign-up online and reserve a space for the class. Furthermore, the church’s weekly, email newsletter also announced the class and provided the web link to the sign-up form. Finally, this pastor encouraged various members to participate in the project as he had opportunity through personal interactions.

Three main sections framed the teaching material’s content for the class. Four weeks were to be spent presenting the progression of the redemptive promise through the main biblical covenants: Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the New Covenant. The next two classes were to teach about patterns and how the biblical authors use typology to help advance and hold together the redemptive storyline. The last main section was to

²¹James M. Hamilton, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 4 (2008): 53.

comprise two classes discussing the principles needed to read the Bible through the context of the redemptive storyline. While the first class introduced and surveyed all the material, the final class reviewed the material over the entire project with the goal of answering the students' remaining questions.

The initial process for writing the curriculum and its evaluation proceeded as follows. Prior to the entire project, the topic for each lecture was developed. But, the particular lessons were written only one week prior to its presentation in the classroom. Though the specific lecture outlines and presentation were original, the teacher depended substantially on the works of several biblical theologians: James Hamilton,²² Greg Beale,²³ Peter Gentry,²⁴ and T. D. Alexander.²⁵ The works of these authors formed the foundation for the writing stage of the curriculum.

In regard to curriculum evaluation, two fellow pastors from GBC were recruited to read and critique the lesson outlines. These two men were asked to participate in the project for three reasons. First, as fellow-shepherds, they care deeply to guard the teaching within the church and this evaluation process allowed them to view the teaching ahead of time. Second, as co-workers, we work closely together in many ministry areas and this proximity served well to provide opportunities for dialogue about the curriculum on a weekly basis. Third, as fellow-pastors, these two men wield the theological acumen necessary for understanding the curriculum well enough to critique it knowledgably.

²²Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation*.

²³G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004).

²⁴Peter John Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

²⁵T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

Three different surveys formed the means for determining the project's effectiveness. The first survey assessed the class participants' understanding of the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline. The survey consisted of a series of statements to be evaluated according to the Likert scale. The class participants took the survey both before and after the ten-week class. Each individual's pre- and post-surveys were compared by a t-test for dependent samples to determine the extent to which the student's understanding of the redemptive-historical storyline changed, if at all.

The second and third surveys assessed the contribution and effectiveness of the curriculum for the accomplishment of the project's purpose. Both the second and third surveys consisted of Likert scale questions and short response questions. Questions yielded responses to indicate whether or not the curriculum faithfully and effectively presented the Bible's redemptive storyline. Prior to the class, the curriculum (teaching outline, visuals, and homework) was provided to GBC's staff pastors for review. The pastors' analysis was recorded by means of the second survey. To teach effectively the Bible's storyline the class content needed to be faithful to the Scripture and helpful in its presentation to the participants. This second survey asked our pastors if the teaching content was faithful to Scripture and asked them to project if the presentation of the material would be helpful to the class participants.

At the conclusion of the class the participants evaluated the curriculum and teaching by responding to the third survey. This third survey was virtually identical to the second survey, which the pastors completed. The participants assessed if the teaching content was faithful to Scripture. According to the participants, the survey indicated whether or not the project succeeded in effectively communicating the Bible's storyline.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLE'S STORYLINE: PROMISE OF REDEMPTION FULFILLED IN JESUS

This chapter's thesis argues that the Scripture's main storyline traces the promise of redemption to its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. "In the broadest terms," asserts James Hamilton, "the Bible can be summarized in four words: *creation, fall, redemption, restoration.*"¹ These four words form a progression that traces the storyline of Scripture, with the majority of its pages given to the story of redemption. More narrowly, the Bible's storyline follows the initial promise of redemption given in Genesis 3 to the promise's fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This study will examine five biblical texts that record the redemptive promise and that show the progressive development of the promise through the Scripture's storyline. The following five passages form the structure to this section: Genesis 3, Genesis 12, 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 72, and Galatians 3. Each of the five passages will be considered in turn with a view to establish how each passage states and develops the redemptive promise. The various connections and developments of the promise between the passages form the storyline that holds the Bible together. As one traces the Bible's storyline (as represented in the five various passages considered in this section), one discovers God's initial promise to redeem which comes to its fulfillment in Jesus.

Genesis 3

Genesis 3 records God's initial promise to redeem mankind and vanquish his

¹James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 49.

enemies by means of the woman's seed. This examination of Genesis 3 will be divided into three parts. First, the content of Genesis 1-2 will be summarized so as to understand the context for Genesis 3 and the context of the whole, biblical storyline. Second, the interpretation of Genesis 3:15 will be elucidated. Third, the implications of the Genesis 3:15 promise will be considered with a particular view to explain the redemptive promise.

Context

God created all things by his word and will alone.² Mankind marked the crowning piece to God's creation as mankind represents God on the earth by bearing his image and by exercising dominion over the earth.³ God's intimate relationship with mankind and mankind's dwelling on the earth were initially consolidated to the Garden of Eden.⁴ From there mankind was to expand the borders of the Garden and so expand

²For commentaries and academic support for God's will in creation and for mankind as the climax of creation, see the following resources: K. A. Mathews, *Genesis*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 113–26; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1st English ed, Publications of the Perry Foundation for Biblical Research in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1961), 55; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 56–62; Peter John Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 181–84.

³Note the discussions in the following commentaries and resources for understanding mankind as God's representative: Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 164–72; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 61–62; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1973), 62, 66; Mathews, *Genesis*, 167. For some support and discussion about mankind's mandate from God to exercise his dominion, reference the following works: von Rad, *Genesis*, 59; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 76–78; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 82.

⁴Several commentators and theologians have documented the various parallels between the Garden of Eden and Israel's tabernacle and temples. Hence, the Garden of Eden served as the first "sanctuary." See Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 4 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399–404; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 123–25; William J. Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1-17: A Foreshadowing of a New Creation," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 57–61; Beale, *The Temple*

their dominion and God's presence over the face of the earth.⁵ However, by failing to trust and obey God, Adam sinned and consequently ate upon himself the judgment of death and separation from God.

Interpretation of 3:15

Theologians have long dubbed Genesis 3:15 as the *protoevangelium* ("the first good news") because here God promises mankind's ultimate victory over the Serpent, man's archenemy.⁶ While pronouncing his curse upon the Serpent, the Lord God simultaneously promises hope for humankind with an ultimate victory over the Serpent. The text reads, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen 3:15, ESV). First, God does not abandon humanity to the Serpent's rule or authority. Rather, the Lord ensures a continuing conflict ("enmity") between the two parties and their respective progenies.⁷ Furthermore, God broadcasts the outcome to this struggle: mankind's ultimate victory over the Serpent, man's archenemy. Though the action (רָשָׁע) of the woman's seed parallels the Serpent's action (רָשָׁע) against the woman's seed, the location of the "bruising" (רָשָׁע) indicates the victor amidst the struggle. Kaiser explains, "[The woman's seed] would deliver a lethal blow to the head of Satan while the best the serpent would be able or even permitted to do would be to nip the heel of this male descendent."⁸ The seed's fatal strike to the Serpent's head accomplishes the victory of

and the Church's Mission, 66–80.

⁵For defense and collaboration that God's purpose in creation was to expand his glorious presence over the earth, reference the following sources: Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation*, 73; Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 19–31; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 24–25, 365–73.

⁶Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 200.

⁷Mathews, *Genesis*, 245.

⁸Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing

humankind over Satan, represented in the snake.

More particularly, as already alluded to, this victory comes by means of the woman's seed. The term "seed" (זָרַע) can refer either to a collective group or to a singular referent.⁹ That is, does the author mean that the woman's descendants collectively will overcome Satan or will a singular descendent be the one to bruise Satan's head? Though the term "seed" itself carries some ambiguity, the remaining syntax of Genesis 3:15 indicates a singular referent.¹⁰ Rydelnik explains that when the Hebrew writer "has an individual in mind, he uses singular verb forms and pronouns to describe the 'seed.'"¹¹ "Thus," continues Rydelnik, "when the text says 'He will strike your head,' it means that a particular, future individual, descended from the woman, will strike the head of the tempter."¹² Additionally, Alexander notes how the very literary structure to Genesis, built on a genealogical concern, coincides with the interpretation of a single victorious seed: "The idea that this seed of the woman refers to an individual is supported by how the rest of Genesis is structured around a unique family line."¹³ In his judgment upon the serpent, God promises the coming of a particular descendent, seed, from the woman, and he will claim victor over Satan.

Implications for the Storyline

The context of Genesis 1-3 also suggests that the seed's victory over Satan

House, 1978), 79; Mathews, *Genesis*, 245.

⁹For a brief, though helpful, discussion about the use of "seed," see James M. Hamilton, "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *Tyndale Bulletin* 58, no. 2 (2007): 261–62.

¹⁰Jack Collins, "A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is The Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 48, no.1 (1997): 139–48.

¹¹Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* New American Commentary Studies in Bible and Theology, vol. 9 (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 140.

¹²*Ibid.*, 140.

¹³Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 143. Reference Alexander to understand how the genealogies form the structure to Gen (*ibid.*, 134–45).

signifies more than simply the serpent's doom. The seed's victory over the serpent accomplishes both the reestablishment of mankind's vice-regency and of God's blessing to his people. That is, the seed's victory restores an Edenic-state where humankind dwells in God's presence to then expand the borders of the sanctuary and fill the earth with the glory of God.¹⁴

At least two observations confirm the notion that the promised seed will reestablish humankind's authority over all creation. First, the human seed's victory over the serpent inherently demands man's rule over or domination of the rebellious creature. Once they heeded the Serpent's "counsel," Alexander explains that "Tragically the authority delegated to [humankind] by God now passes to the serpent."¹⁵ But as the seed of the woman triumphs in striking the serpent's head, there is a return, Dempster reasons, "to the Edenic state, before the serpent had wrought its damage, and a wresting of the dominion of the world from the serpent."¹⁶ As the seed triumphs over the rebellious and reigning serpent, the dominion over the earth is restored to its rightful rulers, human beings.

Second, later biblical writers borrow language and concepts from Genesis 3 to convey royal dominion over one's enemies. James Hamilton has observed several terms related to the serpent's curse and the seed's victory that "get picked up" by later biblical authors to describe their own situations. Hamilton notes the recurrence of the following ideas in the Old Testament: broken heads, broken enemies, trampled underfoot, licking the dust, stricken serpents, and saving smashing.¹⁷ And in several of these parallel

¹⁴Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 68; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 627; Mathews, *Genesis*, 246.

¹⁵Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 127.

¹⁶Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 68.

¹⁷James M. Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30–54.

passages, some of the concepts and terms are used in contexts where a king or ruler dominates his enemies. For example, Numbers 24:17 prophesies a coming ruler (“a scepter shall rise”) who will “crush the forehead [or, “skulls” NET Bible] of Moab.” Or, in his study, Hamilton considers Jeremiah chapters 23 and 30 and he concludes that “these texts in Jeremiah seem to promise the triumph of the future Davidic ruler, and the judgment described in imagery reminiscent of Gen 3:15.”¹⁸ Furthermore, James Hamilton observes several images from the royal Psalm 110 taken from Genesis 3:

This is a Davidic Psalm (110:1), and the use of the verb *māhas* (crush, shatter) and the term *rō’s* in a number of head-crushing contexts in the OT (cf. Num 24:8, 17; Judg 5:26; 2 Sam 22:39; Job 26:12; Ps 68:22, 24; Hab 3:13) would seem to color the use of these terms in Ps 110. The statement that the enemies will be made a footstool for the feet of the Davidic king (110:1) seems to draw on the connection between the damaged heel and head in Gen 3:15.⁶³ The reference to the scepter being sent forth (110:2) calls to mind texts such as Gen 49:10, Num 24:17, and Ps 2:9 (though a different term is used for “scepter” in those texts).⁶⁴ And finally, the Lord will also do some shattering in 110:5 (*māhas* again). Yahweh smashes, the Messiah smashes, and the enemies are under the feet. Genesis 3:15 is not directly quoted, but it is not far away.¹⁹

The borrowing of terms and ideas suggests that these later biblical authors understood the seed’s victory over the serpent to, at least, parallel other rulers subjugation of their enemies. Based on the context of Genesis 1-3 and later biblical authors’ conception of the seed’s victory, the seed’s victory represents not simply the subjugation of the Serpent, but it indicates the reestablishment of humankind’s vice-regency over the earth.

Furthermore, the seed’s victory signifies the reestablishment of God’s blessing upon his people. As the narrative in Genesis continues, the text highlights God’s blessing as the central thing which the seed brings.²⁰ First, the word “bless” (ברך) occurs with reference to the seed as the narrative continues to follow, in the words of Alexander, “the

¹⁸Ibid., 36.

¹⁹Ibid., 37–38.

²⁰Summarizing the theology of Gen 1-11, Kaiser states, “The hallmark of Genesis 1-11 is to be found in the Edenic, Noahic, and Abrahamic ‘blessing’” (*Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 71).

divinely chosen family lineage.”²¹ After the “fall” in chapter 3 and another passing reference in Genesis 5:2 (which reiterates how God blessed Adam), the next occurrence of “bless” (ברך) arises as God commissions Noah, of the anticipated lineage, to the Adamic mandate of Genesis 1: “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen 9:1). Gentry then concludes that “Noah is recommissioned with all of the ordinances given at creation to Adam and Eve and their family.”²² As the Genesis text follows the chosen family line to Noah, God reestablishes a relationship of blessedness that parallels the same blessing Adam received from God in chapter 1. Then as the narrative progresses following the genealogies to Abraham (see Gen 11:27-32), God engages and speaks blessings to Abraham. Commentator Wenham notes how “five times in vv 2-3 Abraham is said to be ‘blessed’ or a ‘blessing’ to others. This harks back to the first great blessing of mankind at creation (1:28) and its renewal after the flood (9:1). . . . So Abraham will become a source of blessing to all who seek it.”²³ Alexander summarizes the universal significance here: “At the heart of this speech [Gen. 12:1-3] is God’s desire to bless humanity and so reverse the negative effects of the divine curses under which they live.”²⁴ Furthermore, Alexander notes that the reiteration of this promise to bless in Genesis 22:16-18 specifies that it will be a particular descendent (“seed”) of Abraham who will bring God’s blessing to all the nations.²⁵ As the seed of the woman claims victory over the serpent, God’s blessing will once again

²¹Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 149. Again, reference Alexander’s work (ibid., 134–45) to see how the Gen narrative is structured by following the chosen family lineage.

²²Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 163. And for a more detailed defense of this point, see ibid., 163–75.

²³Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 282.

²⁴Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 152.

²⁵T. Desmond Alexander, “Further Observations on the Term ‘Seed’ in Genesis,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 48, no. 2 (1997): 363–67.

come to humankind.

Though the Serpent won the first battle, the Lord God has not given up the war. By deceiving the woman which led to the man's disobedience, the Old Serpent and Accuser seemingly upset God's plan to advance the glory and presence of God over the earth through his image bearers' dominion. Because of man's sin, God's relationship with mankind is severed as mankind is sentenced to death and exile from God's presence. But the Lord God plans and promises to give victory to the woman's "offspring" over the Serpent, the enemy of God and humankind.

Readers are looking for a seed of the woman who will defeat God's enemy and lead to the fulfillment of God's rule on the whole earth through image-bearers.

Genesis 12

In Genesis 12 God builds on the initial promise from Genesis 3:15 by telling Abraham that all the families of the earth will be blessed through him. This section of the study will examine Genesis 12:1-3 with an eye to understand how God's promise to Abraham connects to the promise of Genesis 3:15 and how Genesis 12 develops the initial redemptive promise of Genesis 3:15. Three stages will comprise this inquiry into Genesis 12:1-3: interpretation of Genesis 12:1-3, connection of Genesis 12 to Genesis 3:15, and expansion (or, development) of the initial redemptive promise by God's promise in Genesis 12.

Interpretation

In his co-authored *Kingdom through Covenant*, Gentry's literary analysis clearly demonstrates the two-part structure of God's word to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. Gentry summarizes the organization of Genesis 12:1-3 as follows: "In the Hebrew text, there are two commands . . . : 'go' and 'be.' Each of these two commands is followed by

three prefix forms . . . , and normally prefix forms following commands mark purpose or result.”²⁶ By recognizing this structure, Gentry establishes two significant implications. First, the prefix form verbs constitute promises based on the command to which the prefix verb relates.²⁷ So, if Abraham will “go,” the Lord promises to make him a “great nation,” to bless him, and make Abraham’s name great. Likewise, if Abraham will be a blessing (v. 2b), then God will “bless those who bless” Abraham, curse those who dishonor Abraham, and allow the nations to be blessed through (or, “in”) Abraham. This structure highlights the particular focus on the individual Abraham in the first half of God’s word to Abraham (vv. 1-2a) and then how the second half (vv. 2b-3) addresses the whole world, though still related through Abraham.²⁸

Second, relating back to the grammatical structure, the first command “go,” with its accompanying promises (“great nation,” “blessing,” and “great name”), becomes the means by which the second command “be,” and its accompanying promises (“blessing,” “cursing” for enemies, and “blessing for all nations”), comes about. Summarizing this observation, Gentry writes, “There is, then, in Genesis 12:1-3 a causal relationship between the first group of three promises and the second group of three promises. God’s plan to bless Abram and his family is a means to bring blessing and salvation to all the nations.”²⁹ Thus, the two-part organization of God’s word to Abraham highlights that God has chosen to bless Abraham so that his blessing may overflow from him unto all the nations of the earth.³⁰

²⁶Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 231–33; see also Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 152n.6.

²⁷Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 231.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 234.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 243.

³⁰Similarly, see Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 75–77.

Before turning to the connection of this text to Genesis 3, our analysis will briefly explain the meaning of God’s word to Abraham. In the first half (vv. 1-2a), God commands Abraham to leave his country and go where God will show him. If he is obedient, the Lord will then accomplish three things for him. First, God will make Abraham a great nation (גִּוִי גָדוֹל). This phrase and concept necessarily implies that God will create many descendants for Abraham and grant them a land or region (cf. 12:7).³¹ Second, the Lord promises to “bless” Abraham, if he leaves and goes to this new country. Considering the context, Gentry explains God’s blessing as “the manifestation of a faithfulness, fidelity, and solidarity in relationships whereby one’s natural and personal capacity to fulfill God’s intention and purpose is advanced and furthered.”³² In other words, God will be in a favorable relationship with Abraham so as to enable him for God’s calling upon Abraham’s life. Third, the Lord will grant Abraham a “great name.” Both Wenham and Gentry note how this phrase “great name” signifies more than simply fame. Rather, when compared with the terms describing King David in 2 Samuel 7:9, “great name” carries royal connotations.³³ That is, the Lord promises to make Abraham a king, a royal figure.³⁴ If Abraham will obey and “go,” God will make him into a great nation by multiplying his descendants and by giving them land, will bless Abraham with a favored and enabled relationship, and will grant him kingly fame.

The second half of God’s blessing (vv. 2b-3) moves from directly dealing with Abraham and turns to describe how the world will relate to God through Abraham. First, if Abraham will obey and be a blessing (v. 2b), the Lord will bless those who bless

³¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 371–72.

³²Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 242.

³³Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 275–76; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 236.

³⁴For more textual argumentation to defend the royal connotation of “great name,” see Hamilton’s and Gentry’s respective works (Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 372–73; and Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 236–38).

Abraham. Conversely, God will also curse those who dishonor Abraham. Commentator Hamilton summarizes the implications to these promises with the following statement: “God states that his relationship to others will be determined by the relationship of these others to Abram.”³⁵ Furthermore, it appears as though God himself summarizes these earlier promises with the final climatic promise: “and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (12:3b).³⁶ If Abraham will be a blessing in obedience to God’s command (12:2b), then the Lord will extend his blessings through Abraham unto “all the families of the earth.”

Connection

In this study’s consideration of Genesis 3, we noted how the Genesis narrative follows the line of the chosen seed, who will bring God’s blessing. And in chapter 11, the storyline focuses upon the line of Terah and this leads to his son Abram.³⁷ God’s blessing upon Abraham in Genesis 12 relates to the initial promise of redemption in two additional, major ways. First, the blessing of Abraham directly answers the curses of Genesis 3. Second, God’s blessing to Abraham in Genesis 12 appears to fulfill the intent of the mandate for humankind given in Genesis 1-2.

Several theologians and biblical commentators have noted that God’s blessing of Abraham answers or reverses the curse of Genesis 3. First of all, the word “curse” (אָרַר) appears five times in Genesis 3-11 and God pronounces a five-fold blessing to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 that appears to overcome the original curse.³⁸ Furthermore, in

³⁵Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 373.

³⁶Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 238; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 374.

³⁷For further explanation the Gen toledot structure, significance of seed, and how this leads to Abraham, see Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 134–52.

³⁸Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 242; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 77; Hamilton, “Seed of the Woman.”

his biblical theology, James Hamilton claims that “the content of the blessings in Genesis 12:1-3 matches the content of the curses in Genesis 3:14-19.”³⁹ For example, Hamilton understands the conflict between the seeds of Genesis 3:15 to correspond to God’s promise that all the families of the earth will be blessed in Abraham. The disunity between the genders will be resolved as the barren Sarah has a seed and it grows into a great nation (12:2). Finally, Hamilton convincingly demonstrates how the land promise (12:1-2, 7) reverses the curse of the land from Genesis 3:17-19.⁴⁰ Earlier we noted that the seed of the woman would crush the Serpent so as to bring God’s blessing again and thereby reverse the curse. Now in Genesis 12, more specifically, the narrator points to Abraham and his lineage as the means for returning God’s blessing to mankind.

Furthermore, Genesis 12:1-3 appears to fulfill much of the intent of God’s original mandate from Genesis 1-2 and thereby signifying the restorative blessing of the victorious seed. Each component to God’s individual blessing to Abraham (Gen 12:1-2a) corresponds to some aspect of God’s original mandate for humankind. For example, the Lord’s promise to make Abraham a great nation, along with its accompanying implication for many descendants, parallels God’s initial mandate for humankind to multiply bountifully. The dominion component to God’s mandate from Genesis 1 would be fulfilled in the Lord’s promise to give Abraham a “great name.” It was noted earlier that “great name” carries royal connotations. Abraham’s “great name” mirrors Adam’s charge as God’s vice-regent upon the earth.

Additionally, the Lord recommences his initial blessing upon humanity, instead of curse, when he promises to bless Abraham. As God’s reiterates his blessing upon Abraham later in the Genesis narrative, the Lord uses several of the same terms

³⁹Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation*, 80.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 80–82 provides a summary explanation to each of these points. But, for more detailed argumentation, see Hamilton’s article “Seed of the Woman.”

with Abraham that he originally spoke to Adam. For example in Genesis 17, God says he will multiply (Gen 17:5; cf. Gen 1:28) Abraham and that he will make Abraham exceedingly fruitful (Gen 17:6; cf. Gen 1:28), just as God commanded Adam. Furthermore, when Abraham's blessing passes to his descendants Isaac⁴¹ and Jacob,⁴² again the Lord utilizes some of the same language from the original creation mandate from Genesis 1.⁴³ God tells Isaac that he will “bless you and multiply [רבה] your offspring” (Gen 26:24). Later the Lord even commands Jacob, just as he did Adam, to “be fruitful [פְּרֹה] and multiply [רַבֵּה]” (Gen 35:11; cf. Gen 1:28). Upon making these observations, N.T. Wright draws the following conclusion: “Thus, at the major turning-points in the story . . . he narrative quietly insists that Abraham and his progeny inherit the role of Adam and Eve.”⁴⁴ In the same way that God blessed the first humans, the Lord blesses Abraham and consequently implies that he and his promised descendants will bring a victorious end to the curse.

Though the specific blessing to Abraham (Gen 12:1-2a) corresponds to the global blessing and mandate for Adam and Eve, there remains a blessing for all the peoples of earth.

Expansion

Though there exists much continuity between the initial redemptive promise of Genesis 3 and the later blessing to Abraham, God's blessing upon Abraham expands the initial, redemptive promise of Genesis 3. Two new developments from God's dealings

⁴¹See Gen 26:2-5, 24.

⁴²See Gen 25:23; 27:27-29; 28:2-4, 13-15; 32:12, 28-29; 35:9-12; 46:2-4.

⁴³For a helpful chart displaying the various statements and restatements of Abraham's blessing in Genesis, see Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation*, 83.

⁴⁴N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 263.

with Abraham will change or clarify how the redemptive promise will be fulfilled. That is, two developments to the redemptive promise, in particular, direct the redemptive storyline to focus upon Abraham's seed (or, descendants) and the promised land of Canaan.

While the initial redemptive promise spoke more generally of victory coming through some human ("seed of the woman"), God's blessing to Abraham specifies that the curse will be undone for all the families of the earth by Abraham and his seed. Thus, the remainder of Genesis (and the whole Old Testament) from Genesis 12 onward shifts markedly from an international scope to focus on a particular family: Abraham and his descendants. That is not to say that God has abandoned his global objective to spread his blessing to all the world. But, this blessing and glory will be mediated to the world through Abraham's family: "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3).⁴⁵ It should be again mentioned, however, that the explications of Abraham's blessing in Genesis 22 clarifies that a single, particular seed of Abraham will be the one to bring ultimately God's blessing to the nations (cf. Gen 22:17b-18).

Another particular development to the redemptive promise comes with the new focus on the promised land of Canaan. The original mandate did have a land component to it as God commanded humans to fill the "earth." But, the global scope of God's promise has apparently been consolidated into a small strip of land on the East side of the Mediterranean Sea. Reflecting on differences between God's call upon Abraham with that of Adam, N. T. Wright notes that the "possession of the land of Canaan, together with supremacy over enemies, has taken the place of Adam's dominion over nature."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Alexander concludes similarly when he writes, "The climax of the passage comes in the concluding words that 'all the families of the ground may be blessed through you.' Here for the first time we meet an idea that is prominent in the rest of Genesis. Through Abraham and his 'seed,' as we shall observe below, God's blessing will be mediated to humanity," (*From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 153).

⁴⁶Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 263.

Furthermore, as the Genesis narrative continues, the Lord “enshrines” his blessing to Abraham in a covenant (Gen 15) and God further confirms the Covenant with a sign (Gen 17).⁴⁷ And an examination of those chapters (cf. Gen 15, 17) discovers that the promised land of Canaan plays a prominent role.⁴⁸ Though at this point in the early biblical narrative (cf. Gen 1-22) it may not be obvious what particular significance the land bears for fulfillment of the redemptive promise, Alexander’s assessment is right: “Abraham is assured that, as a part of the process by which the nations shall be blessed, his descendants will possess the land of Canaan.”⁴⁹ In some way, as Abraham becomes a great nation and so possesses the promised land, God will then bless all the families of the earth.

Though the connection between the promise to possess the land and the promise for all the nations to be blessed is not yet obvious at this point in the redemptive storyline, the biblical text does draw a connection between the proper worship in God’s presence and the promised land. At least two observations support the notion that the acquisition of the promised land relates directly to the worship of God’s people in his presence. First, James Hamilton argues that the biblical text presents the promised land essentially as a new Eden, where God’s presence resides with his people.⁵⁰ Second, Gentry finds particular significance in Abraham’s behavior upon receiving the land promise in Genesis 12:7. The text states that within the promised land Abraham “built an altar there to the Lord” and “built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord” (Gen 12:7, 8b). Furthermore, “The altar is mentioned,” notes Gentry, “only in

⁴⁷See Gentry for a helpful understanding on how the different chapters (Gen 12, 15, 17) related to the Abrahamic Covenant fit together (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 247–80).

⁴⁸See Gen 15:7-21; 17:8.

⁴⁹Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 170.

⁵⁰Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation*, 81–82.

connection with sojourning in Canaan (Gen 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9 [2x]). There is no altar during his sojourns in Egypt or in Gerar.”⁵¹ Gentry then makes the following conclusion and consequent connection: “Now we see Abram fulfilling *an Adamic role*: he offers sacrifice as priest and worships God in this mountain sanctuary.”⁵² Thereby it appears as though the promised land will indeed serve as a sort of new Eden, an earthly location of God’s presence, where God may once again dwell with his people.⁵³

Summary

God expands on his initial redemptive promise (cf. Gen 3:15) as the Lord promises to bless Abraham that he may be the channel of God’s blessing to the world. As the Genesis 3 statement promises to reverse the curse, God explicitly reestablishes his intent to bless all humanity by blessing Abraham and his seed (Gen 12:1-3). Abraham’s blessing will result in a new and great nation with many descendants and a fruitful land. Furthermore, this promised land will provide the space where God will once again “walk” and dwell with his people. Abraham’s blessing will grant royal status to Abraham through his conquering seed (cf. Gen 17:6; 22:17b; 49:10). And it is the promised seed who will bring God’s blessing to “all the nations of the earth” (Gen 22:18). In summary, God promises blessing to all the world through Abraham’s kingly seed who will reverse the curse of Genesis 3 by defeating Satan, our enemy, and so restoring our place before God’s presence.

2 Samuel 7

The Lord promises David that his seed will reign as king forever in 2 Samuel

⁵¹Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 235.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Examining other sacrificial sites in Gen, Alexander concludes similarly when he writes, “The promises given to the patriarchs build on God’s creation blueprint that the whole earth shall become his dwelling place as holy people populate it” (*From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 32).

7. This section will demonstrate the relationship of God’s revelation in 2 Samuel 7 with the redemptive promise, as stated in Genesis 3 and 12. Three subheadings comprise this section: interpretation, connection, and progression.

Interpretation

Before zooming out to consider the canonical, redemptive context to 2 Samuel 7, this study provides a brief summary to the text’s meaning from its most immediate context. From Genesis 22 the biblical text follows Abraham’s descendants and recounts God’s blessings upon them.⁵⁴ Acting upon this promise to Abraham (cf. Exod 2:23-25), the Lord delivers the Israelite nation from slavery to bring them into a covenant relationship with him. And from this covenant relationship, God commissions Israel to serve as God’s agents to bring God’s blessing to the world (cf. Exod 19:5-6).⁵⁵ Progressively Israel comes to possess the promised land (cf. Josh 23:14; 24:12-13) and a single king reigns over the united nation. King Saul, however, forfeits his dynasty through disobedience and God establishes his own chosen king, David. Upon consolidating his kingdom (cf. 2 Sam 5) and bringing the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem (cf. 2 Sam 6), King David turns to evaluate the state of God’s presence in Israel. The above background forms the context to our passage, 2 Samuel 7.⁵⁶

The seventh chapter of 2 Samuel divides neatly into two sections.⁵⁷ The first part (vv. 1-17) records God’s promise to David or, in the words of commentator

⁵⁴See Hamilton for a concise demonstration from the text of Exod on how God blesses his people according to his promise to Abraham (*God’s Glory in Salvation*, 90–91).

⁵⁵Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 388.

⁵⁶Gentry provides a helpful summary to the background of 2 Sam 7 with a particular focus on “covenant” (ibid., 389–92).

⁵⁷P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 190–241; A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 11 (Waco: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 112; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 393.

Anderson, “dynastic oracle.”⁵⁸ The remainder of 2 Samuel 7 consists of David’s response to God’s blessing. But it is the first half of chapter seven that demands particular attention because in this section (vv. 1-17) God himself speaks in reference to his redemptive promise.

Before demonstrating how this section fits in the flow of redemption, the content of 2 Samuel 7:1-7 needs to be summarized. David desires build a more permanent and appropriate residence for God’s ark, as he considers the seeming superior grandeur of his own dwelling.⁵⁹ And though the prophet Nathan commends David’s ambitions, the Lord that night reveals his own plans to Nathan and then to David (vv. 4-17). First, God essentially rejects David’s plan to build a “house” (בַּיִת) for God (vv. 4-7).⁶⁰ But then, the Lord promises to build a “house” (בַּיִת) for David instead (vv. 8-16).⁶¹ As he analyzes the literary structure to 2 Samuel 7:8-16, Gentry recognizes two components of God’s promise to David: promises to be realized during David’s lifetime (vv. 8-11a) and promises to be realized after David’s death (vv. 11b-16).⁶² By this division then,⁶³ the Lord will provide the following to David before his death: to take him from the pasture, to make him prince over God’s people, to be with David, to cut off David’s enemies, to make David a great name, to appoint a place for his people, to plant God’s people in an undisturbed place, and to give David rest from all his enemies.⁶⁴

⁵⁸Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 112.

⁵⁹Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 335.

⁶⁰McCarter, *II Samuel*, 197.

⁶¹Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 142–43; Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation*, 172.

⁶²Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 393.

⁶³Note Gentry’s textual and grammatical explanations for why the text should be understood this way (ibid., 394).

⁶⁴Gentry summarizes these same blessings into three categories: “(1) a great name, (2) a firm place for Israel as the people of God and, (3) rest for David from his enemies” (ibid.).

Then upon David's death (7:12), the Lord promises further, in summary, to make a house or dynasty for David. The following four concepts summarize what God promises for David upon his death: seed, kingdom, temple, and relationship.⁶⁵ In verse twelve, God promises to raise up a seed or an offspring (עֵרֶךְ) after David's death. Furthermore, this seed's kingdom will be established by God (v. 12), even forever (cf. 7:13, 16). And this reigning seed of David will, finally, be the one to build God's house, a temple (v. 13). Lastly, this Davidic seed will enjoy a special, covenantal relationship with the Lord: "I will be to him a father and he will be to me a son" (v. 14).⁶⁶ And even if the Davidic seed would disobey, the Lord will not ultimately reject David's dynasty, but God will establish David's dynasty, throne, and kingdom forever (vv. 15-16).

Connection

Based on Genesis 12:2, the reversal of the curse will come through Abraham acquiring from God a great nation and name, which both imply a royal reign. This kingly fame and name correspond to mankind's initial mandate from God to rule as God's vice-regents over the earth (cf. Gen 1:26, 28). Furthermore, Genesis 17:6 records God's promise that kings will come from Abraham. Then after almost sacrificing Isaac, the Lord promises Abraham that a particular seed from his line will rule or "possess the gates of" his enemies (Gen 22:17). This kind of possession or rule would imply a king-like rule or reign.⁶⁷ As he blesses his sons near his death, Jacob bestows a special blessing upon Judah that indicates that one of his descendants will always reign as a king (Gen 49:10).⁶⁸

⁶⁵I formulated these four summarizing concepts based on my own study of the text and of the works of Kaiser and Gentry (Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 149–52; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 393).

⁶⁶For some explanation as to what is meant by this new familial relationship, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 395–99.

⁶⁷Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 171–72.

⁶⁸Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 146.

Now, in 2 Samuel 7, one discovers God's intent to give David a great name (2 Sam 7:9) and to establish the reign of David's offspring forever.⁶⁹ The great monarch anticipated by God's initial blessing to Abraham will come from David's line.

Not coincidentally, the Lord calls this promised one of David's heritage David's seed or offspring (זרע) in 2 Samuel 7:12. Certainly the use of seed (זרע) harkens back to the promise about Abraham's seed who would bless the nations (Gen 22:18) and ultimately back to the victorious seed of the woman from the initial redemptive promise (Gen 3:15). Just as Bergen notes, "The emphasis on an offspring/seed who would come from David's body links this [i.e., Davidic] covenant with the Abrahamic covenant."⁷⁰ God's blessing to David about his seed suggests that David's seed is, indeed, the victorious seed of the woman of Abraham's line that will bless the families of the earth.

The temple constitutes the third major concept that connects the Davidic promise to the initial, redemptive promise. Earlier in Genesis, we noted the relationship between the promised land and the proper worship of God (cf. Gen 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9). Now with the Davidic promise, God will secure for his people that land and rest within the land (cf. 2 Sam 7:10-11).⁷¹ Furthermore, the acquisition of the land provides the impetus for setting up the temple (cf. 2 Sam 7:1, 9, 10, 11).⁷² Just as McCarter observes, "the theme of rest for the people is tied to the prospect of a central sanctuary."⁷³ That is, as the land is secured then the presence of God on earth can be securely established, once again. The Davidic promise delivers the Abrahamic promise regarding

⁶⁹On how to understand "forever" in 2 Sam 7, see Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 109n61.

⁷⁰Bergen, *I, 2 Samuel*, 340; and similarly, see Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 151.

⁷¹Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 423.

⁷²Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation*, 171–72.

⁷³McCarter, *II Samuel*, 204.

the land.⁷⁴ And this land fulfillment allows for the reconstitution of an abiding place where God's presence is localized on earth, just like it was in Eden.⁷⁵ Through David's seed something of the curse's reversal comes to pass with the erection of God's dwelling among his people.

Progression

Though the Davidic promise closely corresponds to the initial, redemptive promise of Abraham and the woman's seed, the Lord develops the redemptive promise with two aspects of the Davidic promise: David's dynasty and an eternal reign. First, the redemptive promise now specifies that the curse's reversal will come through one from David's genealogical line. Reflecting on the text of 2 Samuel 7, Dempster notes the narrowing of attention within the canonical narrative: "It is not a matter of focusing on the many descendants of Israel or on the tribe of Judah, but on one family from that tribe, the family of David."⁷⁶ Next, Dempster considers what implications this new focus has for the greater redemptive storyline: "The stress on descendants and lineage in 2 Samuel 7 and the concern for succession point to a future hope pinned on a descendant of David."⁷⁷ The Lord's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 specifies that King David's seed will be the one to mediate God's blessing to the world.

Second, God's word to David builds on the initial, redemptive promise by revealing that David's kingdom will mediate God's blessing forever. Seven times 2

⁷⁴Gentry affirms the same when he writes, "So the covenant with David was a means to fulfill the promises in the Abrahamic covenant" (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 424).

⁷⁵Notice the use of "rest" in 2 Sam 7:1, 11 with Gen 2:15 and note the occurrence of "plant" in 2 Sam 7:10 with Gen 2:8. For some further support, see Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation*, 171–72.

⁷⁶Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 142.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 143.

Samuel 7 states that David's dynasty will last forever or perpetually.⁷⁸ An eternal dynasty could be established in one of two ways. Either the kings perpetually produce heirs or there comes a king who lives forever.⁷⁹ This promise of an eternal reign, to use Bergen's words, "seems to vault this portion of the prophecy beyond the bounds of Solomon's reign and give it eschatological and/or messianic overtones."⁸⁰ As Kaiser notes, this eternal, Davidic reign clarifies the means to how the redemptive promise will be fulfilled: "This was the new addition to the promise plan: all that had been offered to the patriarchs and Moses was now being offered to David's dynasty. Nor was that all; it was to last on into the future."⁸¹ The throne of David's son will last forever and provide the channel for God's blessing to all the nations.

Summary

In 2 Samuel 7 the Lord promises to build David a royal dynasty that will reign forever. And more than this, the wording and themes the Lord uses to describe this Davidic promise indicate that this new work with David develops the previously revealed, redemptive promise. Hence, the biblical text anticipates a royal son of David to have victory over the Serpent and bring God's blessing to all the nations.

Psalm 72

In Psalm 72 David reflects on God's promise to him (cf. 2 Sam 7) and understands that his offspring, who fulfills that promise, will also fulfill the promise of blessing to all the earth given to Abraham (cf. Gen 12). That is, David's meditation in

⁷⁸Ronald F. Youngblood, *1 and 2 Samuel*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, J. D. Douglas, and Dick Polcyn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 891. For how to understand "olam," see Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 109n.61.

⁷⁹Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 421–22.

⁸⁰Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 340.

⁸¹Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 150–51.

Psalm 72 references main themes and even some identical wordings from the other, primary promise passages of 2 Samuel 7, Genesis 12, Genesis 3, and Genesis 1-2. By referencing back to these promise themes, David binds these different passages into a single promise. David's meditation in Psalm 72 demonstrates the unity of the single, redemptive promise as found in the diverse, promise passages. After providing a brief summary, this analysis of Psalm 72 will underline the allusions found in Psalm 72 taken from Genesis 3 and Genesis 12.

Interpretation

Psalm 72 opens with a Hebrew subtitle whose interpretation is debated. The opening לְשֹׁלֹמֹה could either indicate that Solomon was the author or that someone wrote this Psalm for Solomon. But, based on the Psalm's final verse, a number of biblical interpreters have concluded rightly that this Psalm likely comes from David's pen and that the King wrote it for his son, Solomon.⁸² At its most fundamental purpose, Psalm 72 serves as a royal Psalm where favor and blessing are sought for the future or ascending king.⁸³ King David asks the Lord to bless his son so that he would be able to establish justice (vv. 2, 4), prosperity (v. 3, 16), deliverance (vv. 4, 12-14), and longevity for God's people (vv. 4-7, 15-17). And though these type of requests appear typical, the scope and extent to these requests pushes the resultant blessings beyond what seems humanly possible.⁸⁴ David's prayer in Psalm 72 petitions God to fulfill his grandiose promises for the Davidic monarchy, as revealed in 2 Samuel 7.⁸⁵

⁸²Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Waco: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 222; Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation*, 284.

⁸³Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, J. D. Douglas, and Dick Polcyn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 469.

⁸⁴Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2008), 254.

⁸⁵Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 222; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 423–27.

King David understands the fulfillment to the Davidic promise to coincide with at least three fundamental concepts to God's purpose for mankind as revealed in Genesis 1-2: earthly dominion, divine blessing, and God's, world-wide glory. First, the author desires for the royal son (v. 1) to exercise dominion (הָרַד) over the entire earth, just as God originally mandated for humankind (cf. Gen 1:26, 28).⁸⁶ Second, the act of God's blessing upon mankind that began in Genesis 1 corresponds to God's people calling for blessings upon the Davidic King (v. 15) and God's people finding God's blessing for themselves in the Davidic King (v. 17).⁸⁷ Third, the final fulfillment of the Davidic promise, as presented in Psalm 72, culminates with God's glory covering the earth: "May the whole earth be filled with his glory!" (Ps 72:19). As he fulfills his promise to David, the Lord simultaneously accomplishes his ultimate intent for creation to spread his glory and presence over the entire earth.⁸⁸ By means of delivering on his word to David and David's seed, God achieves his original intent for creation, as articulated in Genesis' first two chapters.

Connections to Genesis 3

Furthermore, David portrays his royal son as the victorious seed of the woman from Genesis chapter three. Psalm 72:4 says that the victorious son will crush the oppressor, like the seed of the woman crushes the Serpent's head.⁸⁹ Hamilton observes the similar idea of "eating or licking dust" used in both Psalm 72:9 and Genesis 3:14:

⁸⁶Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 154.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation*, 284; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 154.

⁸⁹The words for "crush" in Gen 3 and Ps 72 are not the same, but the concepts behind the different respective words are the same. The prominence of the concept "crushing the Serpent's head" allows for reasonable allusions to be made even when the terms are different. James Hamilton makes the connection between Gen 3 and Ps 72 and defends the allusion based on different terms. See Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," 39, 50n49.

“The licking of the dust calls to mind the fact that the serpent was told that he would eat dust (Gen 3:14).”⁹⁰ David envisions his royal son as the victorious seed of the woman who overcomes the enemies for God’s people.

Connections to Genesis 12

In Psalm 72, David asks the Lord to bless the nations through his royal son and so fulfill the blessing promised to the nations through Abraham’s offspring. That is, King David understands his son to be the one to bring about the blessing of the nations promised to come through Abraham’s offspring. Kidner observes that the wording of Psalm 72:17 (“May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed!”) matches the redemptive promise as articulated to Abraham and his immediate descendants.⁹¹ Gentry explains the significance to this correspondence as follows: “The Davidic covenant narrows the mediator of blessing to the nations from the nation of Israel as a whole to the king, who represents and stands for the nation.”⁹² The blessing promised to come through Abraham’s seed will be fulfilled through a particular, royal seed of King David’s line.

Summary

King David’s prayer confirms the notion that the different promise passages from Genesis and 2 Samuel actually articulate the same, though developing, redemptive promise. James Hamilton summarizes the significance to this Psalm when he writes, “This remarkable prayer weaves together the definitive triumph of the seed of the woman over the seed of the serpent with Yahweh’s purpose to cover the dry lands with his glory

⁹⁰Ibid., 39.

⁹¹Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, 257; see also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 426.

⁹²Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 426.

and bless all nations through the seed of Abraham.”⁹³ It appeared as though man’s sin thwarted God’s great purpose to spread his presence and glory through his image-bearers. Yet, the Lord mercifully promised to provide victory through a seed of the woman and so reverse the curse through the blessing coming through Abraham’s seed. Finally Psalm 72 clarifies what seems to be the case from 2 Samuel 7: David’s royal son will be the one to have victory and return God’s blessing to all the nations. David’s son will fulfill the great purpose of God to spread his glorious presence over the earth.

Galatians 3

Paul understands, in Galatians 3, the blessing promised to the nations (cf. Gen 12) comes by faith in Jesus Christ, the offspring of Abraham *par excellence*. This brief section will establish two propositions from Galatians 3. First, Paul indeed references Abraham and Genesis 12 and so connects the Abrahamic promise to God’s present blessing upon the Gentiles based on faith. Second, Paul understands Jesus to be the seed of Abraham anticipated in Genesis 12 that will bring God’s blessing to the nations. Finally, this means that Paul presents the redemptive promise coming to pass through Jesus Christ.

As he moves to chapter three in Galatians, Paul sets forth the primary point to his letter in verses one through five: justification by faith.⁹⁴ In the remainder of chapter three, Paul argues that God justifies sinners only by faith and he seeks to prove this doctrine by initially harkening back to Abraham. In verses six through nine, the apostle demonstrates that God’s blessing to the nations through Abraham comes through faith. The apostle then establishes Christ’s death as the means for how the blessing of Abraham

⁹³Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation*, 284.

⁹⁴ Thomas R Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series: New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 177; Timothy George, *Galatians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 204.

comes to believers in verses ten through fourteen. Paul argues that the Mosaic Covenant does not nullify the Abrahamic promise to his seed, who is Jesus (Gal 3:15-18). So, the promised blessing to Abraham of justification by faith comes through faith in Jesus Christ, the promised seed of Abraham.

First, Paul indeed references Abraham and Genesis 12. This reference connects the Abrahamic promise to God's present blessing upon the Gentiles based on faith. The apostle frames his central argument with the question about what serves as the basis for their relationship with God (i.e., reception of the Spirit): works or faith. And to prove that faith alone forms the basis to one's relationship with God, Paul references back in redemptive history to Abraham and God's promise to him (Gal 3:6-9). Abraham arises as a prominent point and proof for Paul's argument in Galatians. Paul references Abraham some nineteen times with the first occasion coming in verse six.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the apostle does not simply consider Abraham an example of faith. Rather, the apostle Paul quotes from Genesis 12:3, where Moses recorded God's redemptive promise given to Abraham for the blessing of the nations (Gal 3:8).⁹⁶ Commentator Schreiner summarizes the implication to Paul's quotation from Genesis:

Genesis 12:3 promised that all nations would be blessed in Abraham and in Gal[atians] 3:8 Paul explains that this blessing becomes a reality when Gentiles are justified by faith. Hence, Paul draws the conclusion here that those who believe enjoy the same blessing that the believing Abraham did.⁹⁷

⁹⁵George, *Galatians*, 216.

⁹⁶Though there is some debate as to the nature of the quotation from Gen 12 and that it may be a conflation with Gen 18:18 (a development of the promise), most scholars agree that Paul has in mind God's redemptive promise to Abraham as written about in Gen 12. See the following works for support and further discussion of the textual nuances: Schreiner, *Galatians*, 194; Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations* (London: Macmillan, 1865), 137; George, *Galatians*, 224; Herman N Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1953), 120–21; C. John Collins, "Galatians 3:16: What Kind of Exegete Was Paul?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 54, no. 1 (2003): 79–81.

⁹⁷Schreiner, *Galatians*, 195.

The blessing received by Abraham and promised to come through him is the same blessing that now comes upon the Gentiles by faith. That is, the blessing received by the Gentiles by faith fulfills the redemptive promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12:3.

Second, Paul sees Jesus as the promised seed of Abraham that brings about the promised blessing. In Galatians 3:14 the apostle expressly states that God's blessing through Abraham comes to the Gentiles through faith in Jesus Christ. In reference back to Paul's logic in Galatians 3:6-9, where he reasoned that the nations are blessed by the Abrahamic promise, the apostle demonstrates that Jesus is the vehicle and his death the means by which God's blessing may come upon the nations.⁹⁸ Paul substantiates Jesus as the means for God's blessing further by stating that Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham anticipated in the redemptive promise. Considering the redemptive promise to Abraham, Paul observes that God gave his promises to Abraham and to a specific and singular, future (at the time of Genesis) descendant (Gal 3:16).⁹⁹ Then the apostle identifies precisely this promised descendant: "'And to your offspring,' who is Christ" (Gal 3:16). Again Schreiner helpfully articulates the significance to Paul's argument here: "The promises made to Abraham have become a reality in Jesus Christ. They always pointed to the one offspring, Christ Jesus."¹⁰⁰ The apostle Paul argues that Jesus Christ fulfills the role of the singular, anticipated seed of Abraham and so then brings the blessing of God's redemptive promise to all believers.

Paul understands the redemptive promise to come to pass through Jesus Christ.

⁹⁸Ibid., 200.

⁹⁹Though scholars have debated the legitimacy to Paul's exegesis of Gen seen in Gal 3:16, Paul's conclusion is clear: Jesus Christ is the singular, anticipated seed of Abraham (ibid., 228–30; Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, 132–34; George, *Galatians*, 246–48). Contra Schreiner (*Galatians*, 230), I find Collins' reconstruction of Paul's exegesis and interpretation of the Gen texts convincing. Namely, based on the development of the promise in passages like Gen 22:17-18, Paul rightly understood the redemptive promise to anticipate a singular offspring (see Collins, "Galatians 3:16: What Kind of Exegete Was Paul?," 84–86).

¹⁰⁰Schreiner, *Galatians*, 230.

All those who believe in Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection will receive God's blessing as initially promised long-ago with Abraham. Paul presents Jesus as the promised, Abrahamic seed who will bring about the blessings of the redemptive promise. God's promise to reverse the curse and restore God's blessing on his people becomes a reality through Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman, the seed of David, and, in particular, the seed of Abraham.

Conclusion

The five biblical passages chosen and examined show the progressive development of the redemptive promise through the Scripture's storyline. Genesis' first two chapters display God's plan for creation to spread his image and then glory over the earth. Then Genesis 3:15 specifically records the seminal, redemptive promise to reverse the curse and overcome the enemy who led humankind into deadly rebellion. Following the Genesis' narrative to its twelfth chapter, the reader discovers God's promise to bless all the world through Abraham's kingly seed who will reverse the curse of Genesis 3. The redemptive promise develops further with God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7. God's promise to David anticipates a royal son of David to have victory over the Serpent and bring God's blessing to all the nations. David's later meditation about the promise, as recorded in Psalm 72, demonstrates how God's promise to David connects to the earlier redemptive promise as seen in passages like Genesis 3, 12, and 2 Samuel 7. Finally, Paul shows the New Testament perspective. In Galatians 3, the apostle shows his understanding of the gospel as the Old Testament redemptive promise and he draws the connection that Jesus is the anticipated seed of Abraham that brings God's promised blessing. These several texts taken from various parts of the Bible demonstrate that the Bible's storyline follows the initial promise of redemption given in Genesis 3 to the promise's fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLE'S OUTLINE IN COVENANTS: TENSION OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

This chapter's thesis is that an outline of the Bible's storyline structured by the major biblical covenants (i.e., Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New) better maintains the tension of continuity and discontinuity found within the Bible than do the outlines offered by traditional, Dispensational and Covenant theologians. This chapter consists of three main sections that summarize different outlines to the Bible's storyline. Along with a summary, this study will evaluate how each outline and its corresponding elaborations address the Bible's discontinuity-continuity tension.

The outlines for the Bible's storyline considered for this chapter are as follows. First, Covenant theology's outline of the Bible's redemptive history will be explained. As they defend their system, Covenant theologians emphasize strong continuity throughout the Bible's story. Second, the typical structure provided by Dispensationalists for the Scripture's metanarrative will be outlined. Dispensational theology tends to highlight the Bible's discontinuity. Third, this study will consider the framework of the biblical covenants provided by Gentry and Wellum in their book *Kingdom through Covenant*.¹ Gentry and Wellum's outline and perspective deliberately maintain the tension inherent in the Bible's storyline between continuity and discontinuity.

Outline of Covenant Theology

Covenant theologians outline the redemptive storyline through the three-fold

¹Peter John Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

structure of the covenant of redemption, covenant of works, and covenant of grace.² This traditional outline and accompanying explanation given by Covenant theologians overstate the continuity of the Bible storyline so as to produce two theological errors: infant baptism and the mixed nature of the church.³

Three-Part Storyline Structure

Covenant theologians divide the Bible’s storyline into three covenants: redemption, works, and grace.⁴ At this point the study will briefly define and summarize each covenant as understood in the general thought of Covenant theologians. After each covenant has been defined and summarized, then the primary principle of continuity will be established from the writings of Covenant theologians.

Covenant of redemption. Of the three covenants of Covenant theology, the covenant of redemption finds the most tenuous support. For example, theologian O. Palmer Robertson notes that “This particular ‘covenant’ finds no specific development in

²The scope of this chapter prevents comprehensive investigation into the different debates and stands of thought amongst Covenant theologians. Rather, this study seeks to frame the general outline of Covenant theology from some traditional and modern Covenant theologians. Hence, the reader will notice dependence upon general works (i.e., systematic theologies), along with a few mainstream thinkers within Covenant theology.

³The space afforded this chapter prohibits any fresh assessment or critique of the biblical basis for infant baptism or for a mixed nature of the church. For a defense of believer’s baptism and a critique of infant baptism, see Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, eds., *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2006). As to the nature of the church, see Gentry and Wellum’s summary comments at the end of their book *Kingdom through Covenant*.

⁴Michael Scott Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 5; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1941), 211–83; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 2:117–376; Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 515–22; John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Pub., 2013), 55–67. The Westminster Confession comments directly on the “Covenant of Works” and the “Covenant of Grace.” Though the Westminster Confession does not appear to mention the “Covenant of Redemption” expressly, the understanding is essentially there (see Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and Westminster Assembly, *The Confession of Faith: The Larger and Shorter Catechisms, with the Scripture Proofs at Large, Together with the Sum of Saving Knowledge (contained in the Holy Scriptures, and Held Forth in the Said Confession and Catechisms), and Practical Use Thereof* [Inverness: Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1967], 42–45).

the classic creeds of the Reformers.”⁵ Robertson even goes as far to assert that “to speak concretely of an intertrinitarian ‘covenant’ . . . is to extend the bounds of scriptural evidence beyond propriety.”⁶ Nevertheless, many classic and modern covenant theologians still defend the scriptural basis for the covenant of redemption.⁷ Theologian Michael Horton contends that “Far from being the result of abstract speculation, this concept of the covenant of redemption is . . . a revealed teaching of Scripture.”⁸ Though it may be debated, the mainstream thought of Covenant theology affirms that the covenant of redemption comes from Scripture and that this covenant forms a foundational component to the Bible’s, or redemption’s, storyline.

As taught by Covenant theologians, God the Son agrees with God the Father to redeem the elect and this agreement within the Trinity occurred prior to creation. Covenant theologians call this arrangement the covenant of redemption. In his *Systematic Theology*, Berkhof defines the covenant of redemption “as *the agreement between the Father, giving the Son as Head and Redeemer of the elect, and the Son, voluntarily taking the place of those whom the Father had given Him.*”⁹ In the thought of Covenant theologians, the covenant of redemption marks the beginning of God’s redemption as the Son agrees to redeem the Father’s chosen ones.

With our focus on the Bible’s storyline structure, the following needs to be highlighted. The covenant of redemption happens before the storyline of the Bible

⁵O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1981), 54.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 358–61; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 265–67; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 518–19. See Horton’s book for a more recent response to the claims of Robertson (*God of Promise*, 70–74).

⁸Horton, *God of Promise*, 72.

⁹Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 271, italics original.

essentially begins. That is, biblical revelation begins with God's acts in history, particularly creation. Covenant theologians provide biblical references to support their advocacy of the covenant of redemption, but these references occur generally in the New Testament.¹⁰ The description of the covenant of redemption found in Scripture occurs "out-of-order" from the biblical storyline. The Bible's storyline begins in Genesis with creation and then moves to the full consummation in Revelation. Any pre-creation covenant, therefore, provides no structure to the biblical account that begins with creation in history. The covenant of redemption offers little in outlining the Bible's actual storyline.¹¹

Covenant of works. As the covenant of redemption pre-dates creation, the covenant of works marks essentially the beginning of the biblical story. Furthermore, while the covenant of redemption exists between divine parties, the covenant of works stands as God's first and direct covenant with mankind. Covenant theologians understand God to have established a covenant with all of mankind through Adam as their representative. The covenant of works requires Adam to obey God's command perpetually so as to maintain his own life and relationship with God. Theologian Hodge represents a classic statement of the covenant of works: "God having created man after his own image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil upon the pain of death."¹² In the covenant of works, God creates a relationship with man based on mankind's perfect obedience.

¹⁰For example, see Berkhof's abundance of New Testament references compared to his Old Testament references (*ibid.*, 266).

¹¹ Horton essentially concedes that the covenant of redemption does not outline the biblical storyline when he notes that the covenant was ratified prior to history (Horton, *God of Promise*, 73).

¹²Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:117. See also Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 211–18; and Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 516–18.

In regard to the outline of the Bible's storyline, the covenant of works establishes God's relationship with mankind through Genesis 1-3. Upon Adam's failure, God's judgment of death looms over mankind. Yet, God graciously postpones judgment and even establishes a renewed relationship with mankind, called the covenant of grace. Though the works-covenant persists with lasting implications (if not direct re-establishment), the covenant of works most specifically outlines Genesis 1:1-3:14 of the biblical storyline.¹³

Covenant of grace. If the three opening chapters fall under the covenant of works, the remainder of the Bible's story describes the unfolding of the covenant of grace. Just as Grudem notes, "The rest of Scripture after the story of the fall in Genesis 3 is the story of God working out in history the amazing plan of redemption whereby sinful people could come into fellowship with himself."¹⁴ The *Westminster Confession* describes the relationship between the covenant of works with the covenant of grace as follows:

Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved and promised to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.¹⁵

¹³The covenant of works exclusively governs this era in the Bible's storyline. That is, no other covenant between God and mankind has been yet established. Michael Horton warns, however, about considering the "covenants" on mainly chronological terms (*God of Promise*, 79). For the arrival of the covenant of grace then establishes two persisting covenants by which mankind relates to God, either a covenant of works and law or a covenant of grace and promise (*ibid.*, 74–95). But if one seeks to understand how Covenant theology structures the Bible's unfolding story of redemption, one recognizes how Covenant theologians organize history in some measure around when the covenants are inaugurated. And once the covenant of grace begins, this covenant of grace then takes center-stage as to how God works in redemptive history.

¹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 519.

¹⁵Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and Westminster Assembly, *The Confession of Faith*, 42–43.

In response to man's fall, God establishes a new arrangement of how to relate to his people: the covenant of grace. Unlike the covenant of works, God will not interact with his people most fundamentally on the basis of their obedience, but on the basis of his free, divine favor. "Since man became incapable of works suitable for meriting salvation," Robertson explains, "this period [after the Fall] has been understood as being controlled primarily by the grace of God."¹⁶ In the framework of Covenant theology, this covenant of grace governs the rest of Scripture, from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22, as God relates to his people.

The covenant of grace then looms large over the storyline of Scripture in the covenant theology system. All the explicitly, biblical covenants found in the Scripture between Genesis 3 and the end represent the "outworking" of the covenant of grace. Classic Covenant theologian Berkhof states plainly that the covenant of grace "is essentially the same in all dispensations, though its form of administration changes."¹⁷ Reflecting on some of the prominent, biblical covenants (i.e., Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic), Robertson explains, "Particular details of the covenants may vary. A definite line of progress may be noted. Yet the covenants of God are one."¹⁸ For Covenant theologians, this one primary covenant is the covenant of grace. As an organizing element, the covenant of grace encapsulates most all of God's dealings with his people and so then the covenant of grace necessarily creates a unifying element to the Scripture's storyline.

Overstated Continuity

As he studies the Bible, the Covenant theologian perceives much continuity

¹⁶Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 55.

¹⁷Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 279.

¹⁸Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 28.

throughout the Scripture's storyline. As noted above, Covenant theology's covenant of grace encapsulates and brings unity to this explanation of the Bible. Hence, an emphasis on unity and continuity to the Bible's story of redemption serves as a particular distinctive of Covenant theology. Yet, this emphasis on continuity has produced or justified two particular theological errors common among covenant theologians: infant baptism and mixed membership of God's people.¹⁹ This following section will demonstrate briefly the continuity emphasis among Covenant Theologians. Then this study will document among Covenant theologians the teachings of infant baptism and of a mixed membership among God's people.

Continuity emphasis. Covenant theologians emphasize a continuity and unity to God's dealings with his people throughout redemptive history. "Covenant theology," Michael Horton frankly asserts, "begins with continuity rather than discontinuity."²⁰ This emphasis on continuity does not mean that Covenant theologians fail to recognize any discontinuity.²¹ But the emphasis on Scripture's continuity eventually swallows up certain discontinuities and distinctions of God's dealings with his people. O. Palmer Robertson explains the unified work of God in redemption through history as follows: "Diversity indeed exists in the various administrations of God's covenants. This diversity enriches the wonder of God's plan for his people. But the diversity ultimately merges into a single purpose overarching the ages."²² Furthermore, the very structure to the covenant of grace, that refers to everything between the Fall and the Consummation, almost

¹⁹In their work, Gentry and Wellum note these errors within Covenant theology (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 71–80).

²⁰Horton, *God of Promise*, 11.

²¹For example, see Horton continue in the passage just quoted: "Covenant theology helps enormously in understanding both the continuities and discontinuities as we aread Scripture" (ibid., 11).

²²Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 61.

necessarily creates a unity to their perspective of the Scripture's storyline. Michael Vlach's assessment summarizes similarly: "Significant continuity exists between the covenants of Scripture since they are all outworkings of the Covenant of Grace."²³ Covenant theology understands the diverse and varied works of God to be different pieces to God's single-plan to redeem his people.

Error of infant baptism. Many Covenant theologians argue for the practice of infant baptism.²⁴ Their justification for infant baptism depends in large measure to their emphasis upon continuity. The following section will document the teaching of infant baptism among Covenant theologians. Then this study will relate Covenant theology's emphasis on continuity with their practice of infant baptism.

Though not universal, many Covenant theologians advocate for the practice of infant baptism. Both Hodge and Berkhof in their respective systematic theologies present infant baptism as the right and faithful practice for the church.²⁵ Berkhof expressly affirms that "Baptism is intended only for properly qualified rational beings, namely, for believers and their children."²⁶ Even more recently, Bryan Chapell, former President of Covenant Theological Seminary, states plainly that "We baptize infants because we believe that the Bible teaches us to do so."²⁷ And Douglas Wilson asserts that failing to baptize children actually "is nothing other than teaching our little ones to doubt the

²³Michael J. Vlach, "New Covenant Theology Compared with Covenantalism," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 18, no. 1 (2007): 204.

²⁴Certainly not all "Covenant theologians" argue for infant baptism as the *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith* makes plain.

²⁵Indeed, Hodge laments that "the neglect of baptism . . . is one of the crying sins of this generation" (*Systematic Theology*, 3:579).

²⁶Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 631. See the following section in Hodge's work to discover his statement about infant baptism (Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:546–57).

²⁷Bryan Chapell, "A Pastoral Overview of Infant Baptism," in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Phillipsburg, N.J: P&R Publishing, 2003), 9.

promises of God.”²⁸ Indeed, many Covenant theologians advocate for the practice of infant baptism and understand infant baptism to provide great benefit for the church.

Some Paedobaptists will admit readily that the New Testament portrays no specific example of infant baptism.²⁹ Thus, their practice could not depend upon an expressed New Covenant command or any explicit biblical example. Rather, the inherent continuity and unity of God’s work throughout biblical history in the covenant of grace provides the worldview in which infant baptism makes sense, at least for the Covenant theologian. John Murray distills the justification for infant baptism as the continuity of God’s gracious covenant: “The argument in support of infant baptism is based upon the essential unity and continuity of the covenant grace administered to Abraham, unfolded in the Mosaic and Davidic covenants, and attaining to its highest fruition in the new covenant.”³⁰ In his own defense for the practice of infant baptism, Randy Booth argues for the continuity between the Old and New Covenants to then justify the admittance of children into the New Covenant, just as they were a part of the Old Covenant. Booth reasons, “The transition from the old covenant to the new covenant is a smooth unfolding of God’s redemptive plan, because the two covenants are organically connected—they are essentially one covenant of grace.”³¹ Venema, a Reformed theologian himself, observes, “The Reformed practice of baptizing believers and their children, as Warfield rightly maintained, is largely based on an understanding of the biblical doctrine of the

²⁸Douglas Wilson, “Baptism and Children: Their Place in the Old and New Testaments,” in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 300.

²⁹Gregg Strawbridge, ed., *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 6, 18; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 632.

³⁰John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray: Professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1937-1966* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 2:374.

³¹Randy Booth, “Covenant Transition,” in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 199.

covenant of grace.”³² The covenant of grace and its emphasis upon continuity provide a foundational justification for the advocacy and practice of infant baptism.

Error of mixed membership. Covenant theology’s focus on continuity leads to a related error: mixed membership for the church. That is, Covenant theology presupposes such strong continuities between the Old and New Covenants that they understand both covenants to be comprised of both believers and unbelievers, the saved and the damned, the elect and reprobate. Hence, local church membership deliberately includes professing believers and non-professors, typically children. This following section will document Covenant theologians’ teaching of a mixed-membership for the New Covenant. Then this study will briefly demonstrate that this teaching of mixed-members stems from their emphasis upon continuity.

Many Covenant theologians teach that non-professing, baptized infants comprise a part of the church membership. Randy Booth contends, “Believers and their children have always been members of God’s gracious covenant and recipients of his covenant promises and signs.”³³ “The new covenant in Christ,” Venema argues, “continues to embrace believers *and their children*.”³⁴ Thus if members of the church and participants in the New Covenant include believers and infant children, then the church, in Hodge’s own words, “does not consist exclusively of the regenerate.”³⁵ Baptists may agree that Hodge’s statement is true, but they would lament this fact and attempt through discipline to remedy it.³⁶ Covenant theologians, like Hodge, rather invite unregenerate

³²Cornelis P. Venema, “Covenant Theology and Baptism,” in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 203.

³³Booth, “Covenant Transition,” 200.

³⁴Venema, “Covenant Theology and Baptism,” 225, emphasis in the original.

³⁵Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:548.

³⁶See Shawn D. Wright, “Baptism and the Logic of Reformed Paedobaptists,” in *Believer’s*

children into church membership: “If the Church is one under both dispensations; if infants were members of the Church under the theocracy, then they are members of the Church now.”³⁷

Their emphasis upon continuity in God’s redemptive plan provides the basis for allowing unregenerate, infant children into church membership. For example, Hodge asserts that “The Church under the New Dispensation is identical with that under the Old.”³⁸ So, if membership in the Old “Dispensation” or covenant consisted of both believers and their unbelieving children, the New Covenant’s membership necessarily would include believers and their children.³⁹ In his own defense of infant baptism, Berkhof points to the continuity within God’s covenant of redemption and then reasons as follows in regards to children’s membership in the covenant:

Infants were considered during the old dispensation as an integral part of Israel as the people of God. . . . We would hardly expect the privileges of such children to be reduced in the new dispensation, and certainly would not look for their exclusion from any standing in the Church.⁴⁰

From the perspective of Covenant theology, the church and the New Covenant’s membership encompasses both believers and their children. This configuration of the church necessarily means that the church comprises both regenerate and unregenerate persons. The church, according to Covenant theology, is a mixed membership of the forgiven and unforgiven.

Summary of Covenant Theology

As they study the storyline of Scripture, Covenant theologians recognize a

Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2006), 218–19.

³⁷Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:555.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 3:549.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 3:549–55.

⁴⁰Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 633.

continuity and unity in God's dealings in redemption. Covenant theology frames the Bible's testimony into three covenants: redemption, works, and grace. Within Covenant theology's thought, the covenant of grace encapsulates most of God's redemptive work in biblical history, from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22. The continuity afforded by the covenant of grace encourages or substantiates two theological errors within Covenant theology: infant baptism and the church's mixed membership.⁴¹ Covenant theology's failure to recognize the discontinuity within God's redemptive plan leads Covenant theologians down errant paths in their ecclesiological practice. An outline and perspective more faithful to the biblical testimony will need to incorporate more discontinuity than the framework of Covenant theology apparently allows.

Outline of Dispensational Theology

Dispensational theologians outline the storyline of the Bible typically through a structure of four to seven dispensations: innocency, conscience, civil government, patriarchal rule, Mosaic Law, grace, millennium. This traditional outline and accompanying explanation given by Dispensational theologians overstate the Bible storyline's discontinuity and so produce two theological misunderstandings: the wholly distinct relationship of Israel and the Church and the "literal" fulfillment of the land promise. The following section will explain the seven-fold outline to Scripture's storyline from Dispensationalism's perspective. Then the study will document Dispensationalism's emphasis on discontinuity and how this over-emphasis on discontinuity has led to two particular theological errors in Dispensational thought.⁴²

⁴¹This chapter does not afford the space for a defense of credobaptism. But, the reader could reference Gentry and Wellum's book, which identifies and demonstrates the biblical weaknesses of infant baptism and a mixed membership within the church (see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 62–80, 683–703). Furthermore, see Wright's chapter for a Baptist critique on infant baptism and its relationship with Covenant theology ("Logic of Reformed Paedobaptists"). And for a wholistic inquiry and defense of credobaptism, study the various chapters in Schreiner and Wright, *Believer's Baptism*.

⁴²The purpose of this study is to observe and analyze different outlines of the Bible's storyline.

Seven-Part Storyline Structure

Though a consensus may not exist, Dispensational theologians typically explain the Bible’s storyline through a framework of four to seven distinct phases, or dispensations.⁴³ When they utilize the more robust seven-fold division to redemptive history, Dispensational theologians argue that the Scripture’s story should comprise the dispensation of innocency, conscience, civil government, patriarchal rule, Mosaic Law, grace, and millennium. The section that unfolds below will first describe a “dispensation” within representative Dispensational thought and then each dispensation will be explained with a particular view towards outlining the Scripture’s story.

As one considers the Bible’s storyline and the Dispensational structure to that storyline, one must first understand a “dispensation” within Dispensational thought. The *Scofield Reference Bible*, a foundational work in Dispensational theology, defines a dispensation as “a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some *specific* revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture.”⁴⁴ Ryrie, in his more recent book *Dispensationalism*, defines a dispensation as “a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose.”⁴⁵ Both of these definitions consider the “dispensations” as the organizing features to the outworking of the Bible’s history. That is, the various dispensations structure the whole of biblical revelation, the Bible’s storyline. Continuing to explain a dispensation, Ryrie specifies that “Various stages mark off the distinguishably different economies in the outworking of

Hence, there is not appropriate space to debate the biblical merits of what this study claims as theological errors of Dispensationalism. This author finds Gentry and Wellum’s critique of Dispensationalism on these matters persuasive (see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 683–94; 703–16).

⁴³See the following section in Blaising and Bock’s work to survey how various Dispensational theologians have structured the Bible’s story by dispensations (*Progressive Dispensationalism* [Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 2000], 118–20).

⁴⁴C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1909), 5.

⁴⁵Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, rev. and exp. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 28.

His total purpose, and these different economies constitute the dispensations.”⁴⁶ In Dispensational thought, a dispensation divides the Bible’s storyline into various, distinguishable stages. Hence, the different dispensations comprise Dispensationalism’s outline to the Bible’s storyline.

Though some count four, many traditional Dispensationalists outline redemptive history by seven dispensations.⁴⁷ The first dispensation of innocency refers to God’s dealings with mankind through Genesis 1:28-3:6.⁴⁸ This era or dispensation describes man’s unhindered fellowship with God, as long as man perseveres in obedience.⁴⁹ The next section covers Genesis 3:7-8:14 and this economy is called the dispensation of conscience. Ryrie describes the dispensation of conscience as the time when “obedience to the dictates of conscience was man’s chief stewardship responsibility.”⁵⁰ The dispensation of civil government denotes the era of Scripture described in Genesis 8:15-11:9. In this age, God entrusts the right to govern directly to mankind after the flood until about the time of Abraham. Patriarchal Rule forms the next phase of God’s relationship with mankind. God targets one family to be, in Ryrie’s words, “a representative test for all [families and nations].”⁵¹ God tested Abraham and his descendants with the promise to provide for them a land and everything they would need to serve the Lord. Patriarchal Rule describes the portion in Scripture from Genesis 11:10

⁴⁶Ibid., 29.

⁴⁷For example, see Showers’ similar outline (*There Really Is a Difference! A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology* [Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990], 33–49). Again, reference the charts in Blaising and Bock’s book to find quickly various outlines suggested by Dispensationalists (*Progressive Dispensationalism*, 118–19).

⁴⁸Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 52.

⁴⁹Showers, *There Really Is a Difference!*, 33–34.

⁵⁰Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 52.

⁵¹Ibid., 53–54.

until the giving of the Law in Exodus 18:27.⁵²

The Mosaic Law then governs the era of the next dispensation, from Exodus 19:1 until Acts 1:26. God dealt with Israel on the basis of her performance to obey the Law. Condemnation rightly then characterizes this era in the biblical storyline.⁵³ After the Law's condemnation, the Dispensation of Grace governs the church age after Christ's death and resurrection. The following two truths, according to Ryrie, form the distinctive elements to the Dispensation of Grace: "(1) the blessing is entirely of grace and (2) that grace is for all."⁵⁴ This age of grace begins with the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1 and then ends with Christ's return, as described in Revelation 19:21.⁵⁵ The Millennium forms the final dispensation. In this period, Christ will reign directly over all the earth and fulfill all the remaining promises.⁵⁶ Thus, by these seven divisions or movements, Dispensationalists organize the redemptive storyline of the Bible.

Overstated Discontinuity

In some distinction with Covenant theologians, Dispensational thinkers recognize significant discontinuity throughout the Bible's revelation. Though they certainly recognize some continuity within biblical revelation, discontinuity defines the Dispensationalist's perspective when organizing the Bible's storyline. Their highlighting of discontinuity within the redemptive story creates the justification for two particular errors common among Dispensational theologians: "literal" land fulfillment and Israel and the church's wholly distinct, relationship. The study will document the emphasis

⁵²Ibid., 54.

⁵³Ibid., 55.

⁵⁴Ibid., 56.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Showers, *There Really Is a Difference!*, 47; Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 56.

upon discontinuity among Dispensational theologians. Then, this study will demonstrate the teaching among Dispensationalists of a “literal” land fulfillment for the nation of Israel and the doctrine of the sharp distinction between Israel and the church.

Some Dispensationalists’ understanding of the “dispensation” provides the basis for strong discontinuity throughout the Scripture’s storyline.⁵⁷ For example, as he summarizes the meaning of a dispensation, Ryrie writes, “A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose.”⁵⁸ For Ryrie then, the defining element to a dispensation is this concept: the “distinguishable economy.” In other words, by definition a dispensation demands significant division or discontinuity from the prior era. Renald Showers contends similarly when he defines a dispensation “as a particular way of God’s administering His rule over the world as He progressively works out His purpose for world history.”⁵⁹ As he elaborates on his definition, Showers specifies that a dispensation “must have a particular way of God’s administering His rule. Each dispensation is characterized by a unique ruling factor.”⁶⁰ The dispensations within Dispensational theology require recognized distinctions (i.e., discontinuity) from other dispensations.

Regardless of how dependent they may or may not be upon the definition of a “dispensation,” other Dispensational theologians still acknowledge discontinuity as the defining element to their theological system. In his chapter “Systems of Discontinuity,”

⁵⁷Some Dispensational authors, like Fienberg, will not emphasize the dispensation itself as the basis for discontinuity (see John S. Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments: Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.*, ed. John S. Feinberg [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988], 109–28). Nevertheless, if dispensations do not provide the basis, the dispensations of Dispensational theology provide the framework from which discontinuity makes sense.

⁵⁸Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 28.

⁵⁹Showers, *There Really Is a Difference!*, 30.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 30.

John Fienberg admits, “I consider myself a dispensationalist. . . . I see more discontinuity between the Testaments than others do, and my system qualifies as a discontinuity system.”⁶¹ Furthermore, in his attempt to identify the defining factor for the various forms of Dispensational thought, Wellum states that “Dispensational theology, given the Israel-church distinction, sees more *discontinuity* from the old to the new covenant vis-à-vis the nature of the covenant communities.”⁶² As will be noted below, Dispensationalists advocate for a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church⁶³ and this distinction stems from, according to Wellum, Dispensationalists’ emphasis on discontinuity.

Error of Israel and church relationship. The Dispensational emphasis on discontinuity appears most prominently in their sharp distinction between Israel and the Church. As he surveys the development in thought among Dispensationalists, Wellum concludes, “It seems that what is at the heart of all dispensational theology is the “Israel-church” distinction.”⁶⁴ Michael Vlach identifies this distinction as one of the distinguishing features of Dispensationalism, when he writes the following: “The Israel/church distinction continues to be a defining characteristic of dispensationalism.”⁶⁵ Blaising and Bock recognize eight beliefs that are consistent with all of Dispensationalism’s major forms.⁶⁶ Among those eight teachings the authors include the “uniqueness of the church” as one of Dispensationalism’s defining doctrines. “Traditionally,” Blaising and Bock observe, “Dispensationalism has always viewed the

⁶¹Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” 85–86.

⁶²Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 42.

⁶³See Vlach’s work where he notes in several points the defining features to Dispensational theology through the grid of the church and Israel’s relationship (*Dispensationalism: Essential Beliefs and Common Myths* [Los Angeles: Theological Studies Press, 2008], 22–30).

⁶⁴Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 55.

⁶⁵Vlach, *Dispensationalism*, 26.

⁶⁶Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 13–21.

church as a distinctively *new* dispensation in biblical history.”⁶⁷ The discontinuity of God’s people from the Old to New Testaments distinguishes Dispensational thought from other theological systems.⁶⁸

Error of “literal” land fulfillment. Since they perceive an acute distinction between Israel and the Church, Dispensationalists teach that the nation of Israel must reign over the promised land of Canaan, presumably in the Millennium. Dispensationalist Michael Vlach explains,

What distinguishes all dispensationalists, however, is that they believe not only in a *salvation* of Israel, they also believe in a *restoration* of Israel. . . . [This] “Restoration” involves the idea of Israel being reinstated as a nation, in her land, with a specific identity and role of service to the nations. In other words, in a literal, earthly kingdom—a millennium—the nation Israel will serve a functional role of service to the nations. This point is something all dispensationalists affirm while all nondispensationalists deny.⁶⁹

As they summarize Dispensationalism’s key features, Blaising and Bock similarly note that Dispensationalists “have traditionally held that prophecies regarding the political, national restoration, and blessing of Israel will be fulfilled in the next dispensation.”⁷⁰

And Feinberg attributes Dispensationalists’ insistence for a future, land promise for ethnic Israel to their emphasis on discontinuity: “Only Dispensationalism clearly sees a distinctive future for ethnic Israel as a nation. This is a dispensational distinctive, and the more one’s theological system emphasizes a distinctive future for Israel, the more the system will be a discontinuity system.”⁷¹ Dispensationalism’s emphasis on discontinuity justifies their Israel-church distinction and anticipates their expectation for ethnic Israel’s

⁶⁷Ibid., 16.

⁶⁸To further strengthen this point, Feinberg admits, “The more one’s system moves toward discontinuity, the more one sees the church as a distinctive organism” (“Systems of Discontinuity,” 84).

⁶⁹Vlach, *Dispensationalism*, 29.

⁷⁰Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 21.

⁷¹Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” 83.

return to the “literal” land in the Millennium.

Summary of Dispensational Theology

In contrast to Covenant theologians, Dispensationalists perceive much more discontinuity throughout God’s dealings in biblical history. They structure the Bible’s testimony into four or, up to, seven dispensations. Within Dispensational thought, the sharp distinction between Israel and the Church forms a prominent manifestation of their system’s discontinuity. Furthermore, their persistence in distinguishing Israel and the Church allows for Dispensationalism’s expectation for a millennial restoration to the promised land. Dispensationalism’s failure to recognize the continuity within God’s redemptive plan leads them to errant views about God’s people and the eschatology hope for God’s people. Again, an outline of the Bible’s storyline will need to incorporate more continuity than Dispensationalism recognizes.

Structure from the Biblical Covenants

In their book *Kingdom through Covenant*, Gentry and Wellum contend that the Bible’s covenants “form the backbone of the metanarrative of Scripture and thus it is essential to ‘put them together’ correctly in order to discern accurately the ‘whole counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27).”⁷² That is, Gentry and Wellum propose that the covenants as found in the Bible outline the Bible’s storyline. This section of the study will summarize their outline and explanation for the Bible’s storyline as defended in their book *Kingdom through Covenant*. During the examination of each covenant, the study will review how the authors balance the tension of continuity and discontinuity, as they attempt to account for the aforementioned weaknesses of both Covenant and Dispensational theologies.

⁷²Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 21.

Covenant Structure to the Storyline

Theologians Gentry and Wellum recognize six covenants that hold the Bible's storyline together: covenant of creation, Noahic covenant, Abrahamic, "Old Covenant," Davidic covenant, and the New Covenant.⁷³ Each covenant discussed by Gentry and Wellum will be summarized in turn below. For the summary of each biblical covenant, this study will give specific focus on how the authors relate the covenants together and how they understand the Bible's continuity-discontinuity tension.

Covenant of creation. The Bible's opening chapters recount God's first covenant with Adam over all creation. As he made mankind in his likeness and image, God established a covenant-type relationship with mankind as God's own son and God's vice-regent.⁷⁴ Summarizing their analysis, Vlach writes, "Adam's role was to rule and subdue the earth and thus expand the sacred space throughout God's creation."⁷⁵ Yet, of course, Adam and mankind fall. But God mercifully promises to reverse the curse and consequences of sin.⁷⁶ According to Gentry and Wellum, this covenant therefore records the seminal promise "which the entire story line of Scripture unfolds through various twists and turns, with greater clarity and definition, and through the biblical covenants which ultimately culminates in the person and work of Jesus Christ."⁷⁷ Wellum and Gentry understand God to have established a covenant with Adam where he would spread God's reign over the earth. And in the wake of man's failure, God promises a faithful, human covenant partner who will reverse the curse and fulfill God's intentions

⁷³Ibid., 611–52.

⁷⁴Ibid., 217.

⁷⁵Michael J. Vlach, "Have They Found a Better Way? An Analysis of Gentry and Wellum's *Kingdom through Covenant*," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 24, no. 1 (2013): 8.

⁷⁶Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 623.

⁷⁷Ibid., 628.

for creation.

Noahic covenant. Gentry and Wellum consider God’s covenant with Noah to be a continuation of the initial creation covenant with Adam.⁷⁸ For example, Wellum asserts, “God’s covenant with Noah is best viewed as a reinstatement and upholding of God’s commitment to creation, i.e., his commitment to care for, preserve, provide for, and rule over all that he has made, and in light of sin, to not let the creation project fail.”⁷⁹ But the context from God’s first covenant with Adam changes significantly from this later covenant with Noah. Creation is now fallen. In spite of the fall, however, God covenants to rescue his creation from the trajectory of sinful destruction. Noah and his family-line serve as the covenant mediator “who will reverse,” according to Wellum, “the effects of sin and usher in a restored situation.”⁸⁰ Yet like Adam before him, Noah fails in obedience and as a mediator of God’s blessing to the world. Sin still governs human hearts.⁸¹

Abrahamic covenant. God actively reengages his purposes for creation with Abraham. Following the role and line of Adam and then Noah, Abraham and his family emerge as the ones to fulfill God’s original intentions for humanity. More specifically, God sets apart Abraham and his “seed” from all the other nations to serve as his new “kingdom,” to “fulfill the role of Adam, bring salvation to the nations, and display to the world the kind of relationships that God originally intended for all humanity.”⁸² God promises to Abraham a nation of descendants and a land for the accomplishment of

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., 629.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., 632–33.

God's purposes.⁸³ At this point in the Bible's storyline, the Abrahamic covenant serves as "the basis for all of God's dealings with the human race from this point on," Gentry continues, "and the basis for all his later plans and purposes in history."⁸⁴ Like the covenants before it, the Abrahamic covenant demands obedience from the covenant partners. The obedience necessary and God's promise to fulfill the covenant create a tension in the Bible's metanarrative. Gentry explains, "The tension, then, created in the relationship is that God guarantees the covenant promises and yet, he also requires an obedient son in the covenant relationship."⁸⁵ Hence, the Abrahamic covenant and the Bible's narrative anticipate that faithful son and his accompanying reversal of the curse.

"Old covenant." In the Old or Mosaic covenant, God fulfills his promise to give Abraham's seed many descendants and a land of their own. From these blessings, Israel will bring God's blessing and the reversal of the curse to the whole world. Not only did he appoint Israel as mediators of God's blessing, but God intended for Israel to example for the world how to have a right relationship with God and how to treat others.⁸⁶ Furthermore, Wellum notes that the old covenant develops "many typological structures" that "find their antitypical fulfillment in Christ and the new covenant."⁸⁷ Yet like the covenants before it, the Old Covenant demands obedience from the covenant partners. And Israel categorically disobeys.⁸⁸ God's redemptive plan again appears jeopardized until an obedient son, covenant partner, can be found.

⁸³Ibid., 248–49.

⁸⁴Ibid., 295.

⁸⁵Ibid., 635.

⁸⁶Ibid., 304.

⁸⁷Ibid., 637.

⁸⁸Ibid., 635.

Davidic covenant. Building on the covenants that came before, God's covenant with David develops the redemptive storyline in two main ways. First, the Lord promises to establish David's kingdom forever. Second, David's descendant will enjoy a right and close, familial relationship with God.⁸⁹ These developments indicate that David's son will serve as the mediator of the covenant and, consequently, the mediator of the covenant blessing for all the world.⁹⁰ Though the particular mediator changes from the Old covenant to the Davidic covenant (i.e., discontinuity), the promised King must adhere to the Old Covenant stipulations and fulfill them for those he represents.⁹¹ Again, the unconditional-conditional tension resurfaces with the Davidic covenant, as with the other covenants thus far. The Davidic covenant and promise anticipate a faithful son from David who will fulfill God's intention for humanity and reverse the curse.

New covenant. The New Covenant marks the end of all the covenants that came before it, as "all of the covenants," Wellum explains, "find their fulfilment, terminus, and *telos* in the new covenant."⁹² This arrival of the New Covenant initiates significant discontinuity while maintaining some continuity within the redemptive plan. In regard to discontinuity, Wellum contends that God's people today "are no longer under the previous covenants in exactly the same way that the people of God were in the past."⁹³ Persons enter into this covenant through its mediator spiritually, by faith.⁹⁴ And yet there remains continuity between the New Covenant and the previous covenants

⁸⁹Ibid., 640.

⁹⁰Ibid., 640–42.

⁹¹Ibid., 641.

⁹²Ibid., 644.

⁹³Ibid., 645.

⁹⁴Ibid., 647.

because the New Covenant fulfills or produces all that the prior covenants anticipated.⁹⁵ The New Covenant is able to deliver these blessings because the representative mediator, Jesus Christ, fulfills the covenant stipulations perfectly, as the better David, Israelite, Noah, and Adam.

Summary. From an inductive approach in their book *Kingdom through Covenant*, Gentry and Wellum recognize six covenants that outline the Bible's storyline: Creation, Noahic, Abrahamic, Old, Davidic, and New. As they explain how the various covenants hold together the Bible's story, Gentry and Wellum attempt to demonstrate and maintain the Scripture's tension of continuity and discontinuity. Continuity persists throughout the Bible in, at least, two major ways. First, God's ultimate purpose with creation and mankind remains unchanged from covenant to covenant. Second, each covenant demanded a faithful covenant partner with God.

At the same time, discontinuity pervades the biblical storyline. With each newly ratified covenant, there arises a different covenant partner, whether Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, David, or eventually Jesus. The final covenant creates particular discontinuity, as persons join the New Covenant by faith instead of by physical birth. Ultimately, it is this change in the "nature and structure of the new covenant community"⁹⁶ that allows sinners to be joined to Christ as the faithful covenant partner and consequently accomplishes God's purpose for humankind. That is, the New Covenant supersedes all the previous covenants by finally bringing to pass all that the previous covenants anticipated.

Corrective for Covenant Theology Errors

With their outline and accompanying explanation, Gentry and Wellum offer a

⁹⁵Ibid., 645.

⁹⁶Ibid., 686.

corrective to Covenant theology's over-emphasis upon continuity. The section below will review Gentry and Wellum's criticism of Covenant theology's teaching in the areas of infant baptism and a mixed membership of the New Covenant.

Corrective for infant baptism. As noted above, Covenant theology's emphasis upon continuity in the covenant of grace accounts for the misguided practice of infant baptism. While still recognizing significant continuity in the Bible's redemptive story, Gentry and Wellum offer a corrective against infant baptism by maintaining more discontinuity between the Abrahamic and New covenants than Covenant theologians recognize.⁹⁷ For example, Wellum and Gentry contend that Covenant theology's "emphasis on continuity of the covenant of grace has led them to flatten the covenant differences and thus misconstrue the nature of the new covenant community."⁹⁸ In particular, "Covenant theology," writes Gentry, "fails to discern correctly how the genealogical principle has changed from Abraham to Christ—and therefore it ultimately fails to understand the 'newness' of the new covenant."⁹⁹ That is, the previous covenants all depended upon a direct, biological connection between the mediator and his seed. But, Christ connects to his seed spiritually, through the regenerating work of the Spirit.¹⁰⁰ Unlike the Abrahamic and Old covenants, the New Covenant's membership only consists of regenerate, believing persons and consequently unbelieving infants should not receive the covenant sign of baptism. In summary, "This is why," Wellum asserts, "the New Testament does not apply baptism, the sign of the new covenant, to one who has not professed faith in Christ and testified that they have repented of their sins and believed in

⁹⁷See the following pages in Gentry and Wellum's work for an expanded explanation (ibid., 694–703).

⁹⁸Ibid., 697.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

Christ.”¹⁰¹ The discontinuity present between the nature of the Abrahamic and New Covenant’s communities demands a change as to whether infants ought to receive the covenant sign.

Corrective for mixed membership. Covenant theologians’ insistence on infant baptism stems, in part, from their perception of continuity between the covenant communities from the Old to New Covenant. While affirming some continuity between the covenant communities in the Old and New Covenants, Gentry and Wellum identify more discontinuity than Covenant theologians’ typically acknowledge. Note Wellum’s description about the continuities and discontinuities between the Old and New covenant communities:

We affirm that old covenant believers were regenerated and that they were saved by grace through faith in the promises of God. . . . But we deny that these salvation experiences were true of the entire old covenant community *and* that the Old Testament saint experienced the same access to God, the indwelling of the Spirit, and other experiences unique to the coming and work of our Lord.¹⁰²

Jesus inaugurated the New covenant and the “newness” of this covenant creates some discontinuity from the previous covenants. In particular, some fundamental discontinuities occur among the covenant people as the redemptive story moves from the Old to the New Covenant.

As the Old Covenant people of God, Israel was a “mixed” group. That is, the covenant community of Israel included believers and unbelievers. One became a member of the Old Covenant primarily by being born physically into this covenant community. The New Covenant community, the Church, is different and this change marks a discontinuity between the Old and New Covenants. “The church, unlike Israel, is *new*,” Wellum explains, “because she is comprised of a *regenerate, believing* people rather than

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid., 684n70.

a ‘mixed’ group.”¹⁰³ The Old Testament prophets anticipated this change¹⁰⁴ and the New Testament announces the reality of this change with the inauguration of the New Covenant by Christ’s death and resurrection.¹⁰⁵ Any outline and accompanying explanation must account for this discontinuity among the covenant people: the New Covenant people consists only of regenerate believers.

Corrective for Dispensational Errors

In *Kingdom through Covenant*, Gentry and Wellum also offer a corrective to Dispensational thought. Specifically, these authors challenge Dispensationalism’s emphasis upon discontinuity, as evident in Dispensationalism’s teaching about Israel and the Church’s relationship and about the fulfillment to the Land promises. This following section will briefly review Gentry and Wellum’s corrective of Dispensational theology’s teaching concerning Israel and the Church and the fulfillment of the Land promises.

Corrective for Israel and church’s relationship. Ultimately, Dispensationalism’s sharp distinction between Israel and the Church serves as its most defining feature. Yet, Gentry and Wellum challenge Dispensationalism’s interpretation about the Church and Israel’s relationship. In short, their outline of the biblical covenants and their understanding about how those covenants relate to one another advocates for a different relationship between Israel and the Church than argued by Dispensationalists. As already noted, Gentry and Wellum agree that discontinuity exists between the Old and New Covenant communities. But, they also perceive some continuity between the different covenant peoples, since the covenants ultimately present one people of God.

With Covenant theologians, and even many “progressive dispensationalists,”

¹⁰³Ibid., 685, emphasis original.

¹⁰⁴For a summary example, see *ibid.*, 686–88.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 688–90.

Gentry and Wellum contend that “there is only *one* people of God (elect) across time.”¹⁰⁶ The authors defend the idea of one people of God by observing how terms and texts directed to Israel later, in the New Testament, are applied to the church. The Bible describes both Israel and the church as an “assembly” (לְהִקָּוֶה and ἐκκλησία). Furthermore, New Testament writers apply to the church Old Testament texts (Rom 9:24-26; Heb 8:6-13; 1 Pet 2:9-10) that originally applied to Israel (e.g., Jer 31:31-34; Hos 1:10-11).¹⁰⁷ And though they clarify that the church properly speaking does not replace Israel, the application of Israelite terms to the church “is strong evidence,” Wellum asserts, “that there is only one people of God throughout the ages.”¹⁰⁸ The Bible presents God’s one people throughout the ages as comprised, in some way, of Israel and the Church.

Corrective for land fulfillment. Dispensationalists anticipate the land promise of the Abrahamic covenant to be fulfilled in the future millennium. Gentry and Wellum, however, contend that this anticipation is misguided. At this point, Dispensationalists fail to recognize fully the storyline’s continuity, as evidenced in the relationships between the covenants and in the Bible’s use of typology.

The Bible’s storyline traces the development of the “promise-fulfillment” theme, which culminates in Christ Jesus.¹⁰⁹ And the inter-related, biblical covenants provide the structure for how the redemptive promise unfolds in the Scripture’s story. So, the storyline and the covenants themselves progress towards an end or terminus: Jesus Christ and his new covenant.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 685 italics original.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 686.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 100–01.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 603.

Furthermore, Wellum adds that the biblical authors use types¹¹¹ as “one of the crucial means” for unfolding God’s redemptive-historical plan.¹¹² Hence, as the land concept develops through the Scripture’s covenants, the land promise typifies the new covenant reality brought about by Christ, namely a restored place in God’s presence.¹¹³ Dispensationalists’ denial of the land’s typological significance leads them to look backwards while the covenants’ progression and typology point them forward to Christ and the New Covenant.¹¹⁴ The most faithful outline and accompanying explanation for the Bible’s storyline must account for the Scripture’s use of typology, especially regarding the land promise.

Summary

Theologians Gentry and Wellum recognize six covenants that hold the Bible’s storyline together: covenant of creation, Noahic covenant, Abrahamic covenant, “Old Covenant,” Davidic covenant, and the New Covenant. Each covenant relates directly to the covenants that precede or follow it. Together the covenants structure the development and fulfillment of God’s promise to redeem and restore fallen man and the world. Furthermore, the covenants anticipate a faithful covenant partner that finally will bring God’s promises of blessing to pass. With the inauguration of the New Covenant through Jesus’ person and work, God’s purpose and blessing finally come to his people and creation.

¹¹¹Borrowing from Richard Davidson, Gentry and Wellum use the following definition for typology: “Typology as a New Testament hermeneutical endeavour is the study of the Old Testament salvation historical realities or ‘types’ (persons, events, institutions) which God has specifically designed to correspond to, and predictively prefigure, their intensified antitypical fulfillment aspects (inaugurated and consummated) in New Testament salvation history” (ibid., 103).

¹¹²Ibid., 101.

¹¹³Ibid., 715.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 714n146.

In *Kingdom through Covenant*, Gentry and Wellum form a “middle way” between the imbalances generated from the respective outlines and explanations given by Covenant and Dispensational theologians. Gentry and Wellum recognize that the covenants as found in the Bible outline the Bible’s storyline. And the authors’ explanation for how the covenants relate together balances the tension of discontinuity and continuity apparent in the Bible’s storyline.

While Covenant theologians over-emphasize continuity, Gentry and Wellum correct this imbalance by noting the discontinuity created by the New Covenant as it fulfills and supersedes all the prior covenants. On the other hand, Dispensational thinkers tend to overstate the Bible’s discontinuity and this exaggeration leads them to faulty expectations about the future and nature of God’s people. Gentry and Wellum, rather, counterbalance this overstatement of discontinuity by highlighting measured continuity, namely the inter-relatedness and direction of the covenants. The biblical covenants progress through the Bible’s storyline to their culmination in the New Covenant and Jesus Christ, the New Covenant’s mediator. There, in the New Covenant, God’s original purpose, developed and carried along through the covenants, comes to pass in Jesus’ person and work. The most faithful outline and corresponding depiction of the Scripture’s story must steer clear from the extremes of continuity and discontinuity and affirm these realities in tension.

Conclusion

Though it is a diverse book made up of many books, the Bible tells a singular story. Over the centuries Christian theologians have attempted to discover the structure of the Bible’s storyline. And two of the most popular outlines of the Bible’s metanarrative are Covenant theology and Dispensational theology. Both of these systematizations fail, however, to account adequately for the apparent tension of discontinuity and continuity within the Bible’s story. In summary, Covenant theology emphasizes continuity in the

Bible's storyline to the point that some distinctions (i.e., discontinuities) are ignored or explained away, like infant baptism. Dispensational thought tends to overstate the Bible's discontinuity and consequently misunderstands the unity of God's plan and purpose in creation.

In *Kingdom through Covenant*, Gentry and Wellum offer a corrective middle-way between these two primary theological systems. Gentry and Wellum recognize six covenants that outline the Bible's storyline: Creation, Noahic, Abrahamic, Old, Davidic, and New. As they explain in their book how the various covenants work together to structure the Bible's story, Gentry and Wellum deliberately maintain the Scripture's tension of continuity and discontinuity. Throughout *Kingdom through Covenant*, the authors demonstrate the persistent continuity manifest through the covenants as God's ultimate purpose with creation and mankind remains unchanged. Moreover, each covenant demands and resurrects the need for a faithful covenant partner with God. At the same time, discontinuity surfaces in Wellum and Gentry's depiction of the Bible's storyline. In particular, the New Covenant supersedes and replaces all the previous covenants because Jesus Christ, the New Covenant mediator, brings about all that the previous covenants anticipated. Any structure offered to systematize the Bible's storyline must account for the storyline's own tension between continuity and discontinuity. Gentry and Wellum's outline of the Bible's storyline, along with their accompanying explanations, provides a preferable alternative to the traditional Covenantal or Dispensational systems.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHING THE BIBLE'S STORYLINE AT GRACE BIBLE CHURCH: A WEEK-BY-WEEK REVIEW

As stated in chapter one, this project's purpose was to teach the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible to members of an adult discipleship class at Grace Bible Church in Midlothian, Virginia. This project implements three components to meet the project's purpose and goals over the fifteen-week period: preparatory study, a ten-week class, and evaluation work. The following chapter will recount the events and procedures from each week of the project. This chapter organizes the weekly descriptions by the three main phases that comprise the elements for the project.

Preparatory Work and Study

Preparatory work and study precede the main teaching elements to the project. This component comprises weeks one, two, and three of the project. This preparatory stage consists of study and outline of the classroom content for the instructor. This three-week period also allows time for recruitment of participants for the classroom component.

Week 1

My primary object for the first week of the project was to recruit participants for the class. I recruited students mainly through two means. First, I provided a convenient way to sign-up for the course by creating an online registration form that simply inquired as to the registrant's name and contact information. Second, I alerted the congregation to my new class. This form helped enlist participants by allowing me to send the link to the online form via email. Our church sends out a weekly, email

newsletter with upcoming events every Friday and I wrote an advertisement for my class to be published in the newsletter with a link to my sign-up form. Two persons enlisted in the class this first week. Additionally, the online form created the opportunity to register participants with a computer on our plaza during the Sunday morning services. We do not typically have computers and stands on our plaza on Sunday mornings, so the presence of a computer and sign garnered attention from our attenders. Furthermore, during this first week, the other staff pastors allowed me to talk about the class during the announcement portion of our worship services on the following two Sunday mornings. With success I wrote the advertisement for our weekly newsletter and developed the online form allowing students to register. Additionally, I was scheduled to make the announcements during the worships service to advertise the class.

Week 2

With the initial groundwork for the classroom registration established, the second week involved little beyond a rehearsal of the announcements and registrations. The church's weekly email advertised the class with a web link to the online sign-up and I announced the class during the conclusion to the Sunday worship service. At the conclusion of the service, I stationed myself on the plaza with a computer to register participants directly for the class and to answer any questions about the upcoming class. In addition to the 2 persons who signed up during the week, 5 more participants signed up that Sunday morning at my computer.

In preparation for the class and for the staff pastors' evaluations, I commenced study and writing for the class itself. Simultaneously, I worked to outline the entire course and to write the lesson for the first class. As initially planned, I formed the first class as a New Testament look at how Christ forms the center or main theme of the Bible. Writing the first lesson and outlining the class comprised most of the study for this second week.

Week 3

In regard to recruitment and registration, week 3 consisted of the same elements as week 2: a church-wide advertisement and a special announcement in the worship services with the accompanying plaza sign-up. An additional 14 participants signed up for the class during the week while another 17 registered with me at my computer on Sunday morning. This somewhat surprising number of registrations put the number of persons enlisted essentially over what the classroom could accommodate. Hence, I closed registration for the course after that Sunday.

I presented the notes for the first class to the two staff pastors for their review, feedback, and evaluation. To accommodate the pastors' schedules, my lecture notes and homework were sent ahead by email, along with a link to an online evaluation form. The pastors could examine my materials and reply to the survey at their convenience that week. I encouraged pastors to follow up with me during the week, if they had any questions or necessary clarifications about my teaching materials.

Two aspects composed my study during this third week. First, I began preparing and writing the lectures for the second class. Second, I developed the student handout or booklet to be used during the lessons each week. These booklets would contain the macro-outline to each lesson. The booklets for each lesson would conclude with the homework assignment, consisting of Scripture memory and Bible reading. Hence, each week's booklet would contain, in one convenient place, the lesson from that week and then the upcoming assignments for the next week. Writing the next lesson and developing the booklet handout comprised my study for the third week.

Ten-Week Class

A ten-week class formed the foundation to the entire project and its instruction element. This component comprised weeks 4 through 13 of the project. This class presented in some detail the storyline of Scripture and its culmination in Christ.

Week 4: Class 1

The fourth week to the project commenced the teaching component, as the adult discipleship class began. Thirty participants crowded in the classroom, as the room typically accommodates 36. I began the class with brief introductions from each person in the room. In turn each attendee gave his name and then commented on why he enrolled in the course. Most of the students expressed a desire to better understand the whole Bible and the theme of redemption in particular. A few mentioned in their introductions that the advertisement or announcement given during the worship service prompted their enrollment. Overall, these introductions served the teacher and the classmates well. For me, as the teacher, the introductions highlighted the various expectations from those attending the course. For the students in the class, the personal introductions encouraged the students to meet one another and develop bonds beyond the classroom.

Upon the students' completing their own introductions, I introduced myself and disclosed the nature of the course. I described in brief how teaching this course serves as the capstone to my doctoral work. Then I requested that if they wished to participate in the course, that they complete the "Pre-Project Survey Evaluation for Class Participants."¹ We took approximately ten minutes of the class time that morning to allow the students to complete the survey.

Upon collecting all the surveys in class, I commenced the formal teaching. The main idea for this first class was the following: the Bible's storyline culminates in the exaltation of God's glory in Jesus Christ and his gospel work. I led the class through some observations from the following New Testament texts: Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:18-20; John 1:1-18; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; and Luke 24:13-49. My brief expositions from these various New Testament passages demonstrated that the storyline of Scripture culminates with the exaltation of God's glory in Jesus Christ and

¹ See appendix 1.

his gospel. Furthermore, these passages, in particular the 2 Timothy and Luke sections, reveal that God's glory through Jesus' death and resurrection coincides with the Old Testament's message as well. Hence, the remainder of this course would attempt to demonstrate how the Old Testament foreshadows and anticipates the exaltation of God's glory in Jesus Christ and his gospel work. Upon concluding the formal teaching, I outlined the remaining classes, the homework assignments, and expectations. Overall, the participants appeared encouraged and excited to continue in the class and engage with the suggested homework of Bible reading and Scripture memory.

Beside the actual classroom time, three other components comprised the project's fourth week. First, I sent the two staff pastors my teaching notes and visuals for my second lesson by email. Along with the teaching curriculum, I sent an email link to the online evaluation form regarding the teaching content.

Second, the majority of the week, in regard to the project, was spent in preparation of the teaching materials for the third lesson about the promise of redemption and the Abrahamic covenant. Third, I sent an email to the students registered for the class during the middle of the week. This email achieved three purposes. In the email I attached my teaching notes and the student outlines. Hence, if anyone missed the first class or a present student missed a point or desired to study further, the notes and outline provided aids to his study. Also, the email served as a reminder to all the students about the suggested homework. Finally, the email alerted the students to the online version of the "Pre-Project Survey Evaluation for Class" form. The reminder and online form allowed the registered students who missed class to complete the form in anticipation for the following classes. During this week, 5 students that were not present for the first lecture completed the online form.

Week 5: Class 2

After considering a number of passages from the New Testament, the second

lesson turned to the Old Testament to begin tracing the Bible's storyline of redemption. The main idea for my second lecture was the following: the Bible's storyline follows the development of God's initial promise to redeem his people and consequently his plan to spread his glorious presence and reign over the face of the earth. My outline for the class period was as follows: orient the students to the general outline used for the course (i.e., creation, fall, redemption, and restoration), cover the Creation section to the outline, teach about the "Fall" section for the Scripture's outline, and explain the initial promise of redemption in Genesis 3:15.

As I began to explain the general outline of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration, I realized I would not have sufficient time to cover all my intended teaching content in that lesson. My teaching outline was too ambitious for the time allotted and the students had several helpful questions while I was teaching. As I lectured, I only surveyed the larger four-part outline of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration and then I taught, in some detail, the "Creation" components to the outline from Genesis 1-2. After showing some connections in the Bible's story of Genesis 1-3 with Revelation 21-22, I concluded with a charge to the students to join God's great purpose to expand his glory across the face of earth by making disciples of all nations.

Overall, the teaching of the second lesson successfully met the intended goals and outcomes, though there was room for improvement. I determined to make the following modifications as I prepared to teach the following weeks. First, I needed to consolidate my teaching content. I brought about ten pages of outline-style notes into my teaching podium that week. I resolved to prepare only seven pages of notes for each lecture at the maximum. Second, I opted to reserve some class time for review of the Scripture memory. It was evident to me that a number of the students were working on the Scripture memory. To serve the students best I determined to review the Scripture memory assignment in class.

For the next several weeks (5 through 12), the remainder of my work on the

project each week consisted of three further components: curriculum evaluation, lecture preparation, and participant follow-up. I administered and reviewed the responses from my fellow pastors about my next lesson. I outlined and wrote the notes for my upcoming lesson. Finally, during the middle of each week, I sent an email to the participants with the teaching notes, along with a reminder about the coming week's homework. The aforementioned tasks formed the activities done during weeks five through twelve of the project.

Week 6: Class 3

Having set the stage the previous two weeks, this lecture presented the core redemptive promise and its initial development in the early chapters of Genesis. From the previous week I determined to incorporate two strategies to best serve the class. We would spend class time rehearsing Psalm 72, the main Scripture memory passage. Also, I would only bring a maximum of seven pages of notes into the teaching lectern, in the hopes that I would complete the lesson. I succeeded in adhering to both strategies. First, we spent the first, nearly twenty minutes reviewing the Scripture memory homework from Psalm 72. Second, I successfully trimmed my notes to only seven pages for this lecture. But with the added time given to Scripture memory, the seven pages still proved too long as I only taught through the first five pages. Hence, I intended to cover the Fall, the Promise of Redemption in Genesis 3, and the Abrahamic covenant. I explained the Fall and the initial promise of Genesis 3:15, but I only introduced the Abrahamic covenant from Genesis 12.

For the betterment of the course and the students, I purposed to make two emendations to the project. First, regarding the course outline, I determined to reassign one of the class lectures about interpretation to the further explanation about the redemptive promise. That is, instead of two classes about Bible interpretation, I would conduct one lecture about hermeneutics and six lectures tracing the redemptive storyline.

Second, I committed to reviewing the Scripture memory in class. The in-class review provided encouragement and accountability for the students. But, I had to discipline the class to spend less time on this aspect of the course during our meeting times. Thus, I determined to devote no more than seven minutes (preferably five or less) to the review of Psalm 72.

Week 7: Class 4

This class session explained the role of the Abrahamic covenant in the development of the redemptive plan. Though I had hoped to introduce the Mosaic covenant, time expired too quickly. The students realized through my pace in teaching that we would struggle to cover the material set aside for that class period. Hence, few interjected with any questions or clarifications during the class period. For the next class time, I intended to make two changes to allow more time and aid the students learning. First, I purposed to ignore the in-class review of Scripture memory, at least for that upcoming class. Second, I planned to open the next class period with a time set aside for the students to ask questions about the material to that point.

The remainder of the project's seventh week consisted of three elements, just like the previous weeks: curriculum evaluation, lecture preparation, and participant follow-up. As usual, I sent an email to the participants with the teaching notes already covered and with a reminder about the coming week's homework. But, in this email to the students, I made a correction and clarification about some things I mistakenly said during the lecture earlier that week. The regular weekly communication with the class participants proved helpful to the students and the teacher. The aforementioned tasks formed the activities done during week 7 of the project.

Week 8: Class 5

This session expounded on the Mosaic covenant and its implications in the Scriptures until, at least, the giving of the Davidic promise. Though I limited my notes to

seven pages, I still failed to explain all the material in my notes. The time saved by skipping the in-class Scripture memory review was then spent on an opening period of question and answers. Judging from the questions and engagement from the participants, the time set aside for questions proved fruitful. Though not all my notes were covered, I explained the Mosaic covenant and its role in preparation for the Davidic covenant.

Week 9: Class 6

This class's lecture consisted of the Davidic covenant and the following curse of exile. Though my pace through the material had been relatively fast, I could not finish teaching through all the notes prepared for this lecture. Hence, I determined to reassign two of the upcoming lectures to different topics. Initially, I scheduled 5 weeks to be devoted to the redemptive promise, 2 weeks on patterns or types, and 2 final weeks on application. I decided to take one lecture about the patterns (or, typology) and one of the lectures on application and reassign each to the promise. Instead of explaining the redemptive promise in five lessons, I would cover the redemptive promise in seven lectures from weeks four through eleven of the project. This restructuring allowed for two more classes to be devoted for developing the New Covenant's role in God's redemptive storyline, the primary component to this project.

In comparison to previous weeks, I spent more hours in preparation for the next lecture on the New Covenant in the Old Testament than in previous weeks. My previous research for this project provided a foundation for the content for the lectures thus far. But, I had written little directly on the New Covenant to this point. Hence, more initial work was required in preparation of all new material for the upcoming lectures. For the project's ninth week, this involved study consumed more of my time for the project, in addition to the curriculum evaluation and participant follow-up.

Week 10: Class 7

The New Covenant as promised in the Old Testament served as the main

subject for this week's teaching. Two challenges battled against me in my attempt to cover all of my notes about the New Covenant in the Old Testament. First, the prophets' testimony about the New Covenant is vast and rich. To summarize helpfully all that Jeremiah and Isaiah alone reveal of the New Covenant proved difficult enough. Second, a number of new persons sat in on the class. The other adult education class on Sunday did not meet that morning, and many of the students from the other class joined mine. Hence, the classroom overflowed with students and a number of the attendees were not familiar with the previous classes. Thus, I spent more time reviewing the promise and its development. Overall, this review proved helpful to all the students' understanding, but this added review stole time from my lecture on the New Covenant in the Old Testament.

As in prior weeks, the rest of the tenth week of the project comprised the same three components: curriculum evaluation, lecture preparation, and participant follow-up. But like the previous week, the upcoming week's topic on the New Covenant in the New Testament demanded more study time than I had planned for. Like the weeks prior, I devoted time to writing the curriculum, but I needed much more time for the upcoming lecture than for most of the previous sessions. Hence, I spent more time in study to prepare for the upcoming lecture.

Week 11: Class 8

The eighth class marked the end to the lectures on the redemptive promise, as I concluded with a teaching on the New Covenant's fulfillment in the New Testament. Though I may not have covered the New Covenant's fulfillment to the detail I had prepared to, I moved through all the main ideas and components to my teaching outline. The large scope to the redemptive storyline demands an emphasis upon the larger outline, lest the teaching becomes encumbered in the details. Yet, as the student sees the details supporting the given outline, the structuring outline becomes much more useful and persuasive. Striking the balance between the details and the outline in these lectures on

the redemptive storyline proved difficult to maintain.

Week 12: Class 9

Having presented the redemptive storyline over several weeks, the ninth class considered patterns or types in the Old Testament that help develop and anticipate Jesus Christ's ministry. In particular, I led the students through a study of the theme of sanctuary from Eden until its fulfillment in the New Heavens and New Earth. Then, we returned to Genesis to consider the pattern of substitutionary sacrifices throughout the whole Bible, from Genesis until the Lamb in Revelation. These kinds of patterns and types reveal the New Testament writers' worldview, as they relate these patterns to Jesus' ministry. Though the storyline of the redemptive promise forms the center to the Bible's message, these patterns help the central story develop and demonstrate Christ's fulfillment of this storyline. Though I desired to cover this topic on patterns and types with greater specificity, I presented all my notes, at least the main outline. I covered in a single lesson the concept of patterns with some demonstration on how to recognize patterns with the examples of Temple and sacrifices. Overall, the participants asked insightful questions that suggest their understanding of the topic and its relationship to the redemptive promise.

Week 13: Class 10

The final class lesson considered how to utilize the information presented during the course into one's regular Bible reading. We overviewed the redemptive storyline, considering the initial redemptive promise and each covenant thereafter. This review centered on how Jesus fulfilled what each covenant anticipated and then considered how the church relates to each covenant today. The other major component to this lecture reestablished the prominence of God's grace throughout the Bible and presented a few helps for students to read and apply their Bible reading in accordance with this story of God's grace. The lecture moved quickly, but I presented all the material

I prepared to teach. As the teaching finished, I distributed two surveys to all the present participants. One of the surveys reproduced the questions from the survey the students completed at the beginning of the course. The other survey provided questions for the students to recount what they learned and how they valued the teaching and curriculum overall.

With no further lectures to prepare, week 13 differed from the previous several weeks of the project. The remainder of week 13 of the project comprised two main activities: participant follow-up and survey data compilation. Similar to the previous weeks, I contacted the participants through email. I attached with this email resources to aid students' assimilation and use of the class material. Along with my lecture notes, I suggested a Bible reading plan that guides the reader through the entire Bible in a calendar year. My hope was to provide a venue for the students to utilize the lessons learned in this storyline course as they read the entire Bible. In addition to these resources, I provided web links to the surveys I administered in the last class. A few regular students were unable to attend the last class period and the online survey provided a convenient and expeditious way for those absent students to respond. Without the need to prepare a lecture, I proceed to catalog initially the responses from the various students' surveys and evaluations. These above elements encompassed the thirteenth week of the project.

Class Evaluation Work

The final two weeks of the project provided me time to compile and analyze the numerous post-project surveys in order to determine the project's effectiveness in accomplishing its goal. Furthermore, the project's final component afforded the opportunity for reflection on the projects' strengths and weaknesses. In the end, these final two weeks were set aside to assess if the project accomplished its purpose to teach the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline.

Week 14

The project's fourteenth week consisted of compiling the post-project surveys and beginning analysis of the data. I accumulated the data from three sets of surveys for this doctoral project. First, I compiled pastors' evaluations for each lecture. Second, I accumulated and tabulated the students' responses to the "Pre-And Post-Survey Project Evaluation" surveys. The students' first surveys administered prior to the class would be compared against the essentially identical survey administered after the final class' lecture. Third, I catalogued all the answers to the final survey so as to determine the effectiveness of the course's teaching and curriculum.

Data analysis formed the remainder of week fourteen's objectives. In particular, I began to tabulate the responses from the "Pre-And Post-Survey Project Evaluation" so as to perform the "t-test" for dependent samples. Furthermore, I amassed the numerous results from the pastors' and students' curriculum evaluations in preparation for further analysis. These compilations comprised most of the work accomplished in week 14.

Week 15

I dedicated week 15 to completing the survey analysis and commencing an overall assessment for the project. After collecting and organizing all the various survey responses, I calculated and analyzed the data. First, I completed the "t-test" dependent samples for the initial survey from the students. Second, I reviewed the respective pastors' evaluation for each class' teaching material. Third, I categorized and assessed the pastors' and students' survey responses inquiring about their respective appraisal of the course's teaching and curriculum.

Conclusion

This project set out to teach the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible to members of an adult discipleship class at Grace Bible Church in Midlothian, Virginia.

Three progressive stages comprised this doctoral project: preparation, execution, and evaluation. In preparation for the course, I recruited and registered participants for the class. Furthermore, the initial time of preparation provided some opportunity to commence writing the lectures for the course. The ten-week course itself encapsulated the execution phase to the project. Over those ten weeks, I prepared lessons, taught lectures, administered surveys to my pastors, and distributed resources to the students during the week. The project's final stage was dedicated to compiling and analyzing survey data. Upon completing the analysis, I proceeded to evaluate the entire project so as to determine its effectiveness and its areas in need of improvement.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATING THE PROJECT TO TEACH THE BIBLE'S STORYLINE AT GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

The cumulative evaluation for this project consists in seven parts: evaluation of the project's purpose, evaluation of the project's goals, strengths of the project, weaknesses of the project, what I would do differently, theological reflections, and personal reflections. Each part will be considered in turn below with a comprehensive evaluation provided in the conclusion.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

As set out in the first chapter, the purpose of this project is to teach the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible to members of an adult discipleship class at Grace Bible Church in Midlothian, Virginia. Once the initial preparations were completed, I taught a ten-week course explaining the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline. As initially outlined, I hoped to cover patterns (i.e., typology) and application in some detail with two classes devoted to each topic, respectively. But, as the course progressed, I narrowed the focus to the promise, the redemptive-historical storyline; more time was needed to explain the storyline adequately than the initially planned five lectures. I presented the storyline in seven class periods, and the redemptive storyline, consequently, formed the central component to the entire course. Other topics were still addressed that illuminated the redemptive-storyline. For example, the first class presented an overview of the Bible from the New Testament's perspective. The ninth class period described patterns or types and explained how they contribute to one's understanding of the redemptive-historical storyline. The final class period offered strategies for

incorporating the knowledge of the redemptive-storyline into one's regular Bible reading.

In the concluding survey for the class ("Post-Project Participants' Evaluation of Teaching and Curriculum"), the students were asked to respond along the Likert-scale as to their assessment of the following statement: "The teaching series achieved its purpose to teach the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline." All the participants scored the statement with a five or six, representing "agree" or "strongly agree" respectively. The average score of all the students to this statement calculated to 5.9.¹ By the attendees' assessment, this project succeeded in teaching the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline. In the end, this ten-week course presented the redemptive-storyline of the Bible by following the developing promise of redemption through the biblical covenants to its fulfillment in Jesus' ministry of the New Covenant.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

More specifically, three goals formulate the standard by which to assess this project's success. The following section will consider each goal and then assess whether the project accomplished the goal. The analysis below demonstrates that this project met its goals and hence effectively accomplished its purpose to teach the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible.

Goal 1: Assess Students' Understanding

The first goal for accomplishing this project was to evaluate the class participants' current understanding of the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible. The attainment to this first goal was accomplished by conducting the "Pre-Project Survey Evaluation for Participants" before the teaching began.² At the first gathering for the

¹To find the survey's results consult appendix 8 ("Post-Project Participants' Results for Evaluation of Teaching and Curriculum") and reference question 1.

²See appendix 1.

course, I started the class by administering the “Pre-Project Survey Evaluation for Participants” for the first ten minutes. The benchmark of success to this goal was the completion and return of the survey by the class of at least 15 participants. Attendance and registration for the class far exceeded 15, as 36 persons initially completed the survey. But, as would be expected for a class offered during the summer months, attendance and participation varied throughout the course. Some circumstances prevented some of those initial registrants from continuing to attend the course.³ Though class attendance averaged over 30, 25 persons participated regularly in the course throughout its duration. These 25 students constitute the subjects or participants analyzed for this project. In summary, this goal’s benchmark for success was met and exceeded, as 25 persons completed the first survey.

The responses to the survey were assessed to determine each participant’s current understanding of the Bible’s storyline. Two observations from this first survey deserve mention at this point in the project’s assessment. Prior to hearing the course’s teaching, the students assented to the unity of the Bible’s message from Old to New Testaments. For example, the participants, on average, said they agreed with the following statement: “The Bible’s sixty-six books are held together by a single storyline of redemption.”⁴ Yet, the participants’ understanding on how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament and Jesus Christ’s gospel appeared less certain than their professed understanding about the overall unity of redemptive history. On average, the students only “somewhat agreed” with the statement that Jesus is the Old Testament’s main

³For example, some participants had a job schedule change, and another couple had a child with health issues. In addition to summer vacations, such above situations typify those who attended sporadically or only attended the first few classes.

⁴Reference question three in survey results found in appendix 6 (“Pre-and Post-Test Results for Evaluation Survey from Class Participants”).

theme.⁵ Furthermore, the students, on average, somewhat disagreed that they could present the gospel to someone only using the Old Testament.⁶ Though they assented to the Bible's unity, the participants had more difficulty recognizing how the Bible's unity related to the gospel and Jesus' work.

Goal 2: Develop Teaching Material

The second goal for achieving this project's purpose was to develop teaching material, an outline, visuals, and homework for use in teaching the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible. Each week I wrote the teaching material, an outline (i.e., student booklets), visuals, and homework for the students. I completed the materials prior to teaching the upcoming class period and sent the materials to my fellow pastors for review. They⁷ evaluated each lesson of the curriculum using an evaluative rubric. The benchmark of success for this goal would be a rating of "sufficient" or "exemplary" on 90 percent of the rubric's components, by each evaluator. The pastors scored my teaching curriculum as "sufficient" or "exemplary" on 100 percent of the rubric components for each week.⁸ Hence, the benchmark for success of this second goal was met. Thus, this project attained its second goal.

Goal 3: Teach the Redemptive Storyline

To accomplish the project's purpose, the third goal needed to be attained. The project's third goal was to implement the curriculum by teaching the redemptive-

⁵See question 12 in the survey results found in appendix 6.

⁶Reference question 11 from the survey results found in appendix 6.

⁷For lessons 3 through 5, one of the pastors was out of the country for a mission trip. Near the end of the class, this same pastor had a vacation. Hence, there are only evaluations from one pastor for classes 3, 4, 5, and 8.

⁸The results are cataloged in appendix 7 ("Pastors' Survey Results for Evaluation of Teaching Outline and Curriculum").

historical storyline of the Bible to the class. As documented in chapter four, I utilized the curriculum by teaching the ten-week course on the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline. The effectiveness to my teaching and attainment of this third goal would ultimately be measured by two surveys.

First, I administered the initial survey again to the participants so as to determine the extent to which the class participants' comprehension of the Bible's storyline increased, if any. The benchmark of success for this goal would be a positive, statistically significant change, as evidenced by a "t-test" for dependent samples. The teaching of the redemptive-historical storyline to the adult education class at Grace Bible Church made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their doctrinal knowledge ($t_{(24)} = 5.999$, $p < .0000046$).⁹

Second, a curriculum assessment survey was administered to the class participants' to evaluate how well the curriculum and class time disseminated the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible. The results from this survey corroborated the results discovered from the dependent t-test analysis. The students said they strongly agreed with the following statement: "The teaching series achieved its purpose to teach the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline."¹⁰ Furthermore, when asked how to respond to this statement "My knowledge of the Bible's redemptive storyline increased by means of this teaching series," most students responded with "strongly agreed." And the rest of the students at least "agreed" that their knowledge increased because of the study. Only one student responded with "somewhat agreed" when asked if his knowledge increased about the Bible's redemptive storyline.¹¹

⁹To reference the t-test dependent sample results, see appendix 5 ("Pre-and Post-Test Survey Project Evaluation: T-Test for Dependent Samples").

¹⁰See question 1 of the "Post-Project Participants' Evaluation of Teaching and Curriculum" survey and results in appendix 8.

¹¹Reference the results in appendix 8 under question 4.

The results from the t-test for dependent samples for the first survey demonstrate that this course made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their doctrinal knowledge, particularly about the Bible’s redemptive storyline. Furthermore, the participants’ own positive assessment of the entire course, as documented in the second survey (“Post-Project Participants’ Evaluation of Teaching and Curriculum”),¹² coincides with analysis from the t-test for dependent samples of the other survey (“Pre-and Post-Survey Project Evaluation for Class Participants”).¹³ The project’s third goal to implement the curriculum by teaching the redemptive-historical storyline of the Bible to the class succeeded in attaining its benchmark. This project realized its third goal.

Strengths of the Project

The following assessment of this project’s strengths will be considered under four components: teaching, visuals, student handouts, and review.

Considering the project’s purpose, the teaching component deserves the greatest scrutiny and examination. The participants’ assessment and the teacher’s own estimation establish that the overall teaching element to this project was its greatest strength. In the final survey assessing the course’s teaching and curriculum,¹⁴ the students’ nearly all strongly agreed with the following statement: “My knowledge of the Bible’s redemptive storyline increased by means of this teaching series.”¹⁵ Furthermore, the participants also strongly agreed with statements evaluating whether the class

¹²See appendix 8.

¹³For this second survey, see appendix 1 and for the survey’s results reference appendix 6.

¹⁴Reference appendix 8.

¹⁵In appendix 8, examine the results for question 4.

helpfully and effectively taught the redemptive storyline.¹⁶ The lectures from this project presented the Bible's overall redemptive storyline well, as evidenced in the students' assessment.

Further examination reveals that this project excelled in presenting three key facets to the redemptive storyline. First, students' commented in evaluations that the course demonstrated the unity of the Bible between the Old and New Testaments very well.¹⁷ The participants' perception of the unity of the Bible's message increased significantly from the teaching of this course. Related to the Bible's unity, the students' were able to recognize more readily the promise of the gospel and the ministry of Jesus anticipated in the Old Testament.¹⁸ Not surprisingly then, the class' attendees also claimed this course aided their ability to identify God's grace as present in the Old Testament and Mosaic covenant.¹⁹ Finally, this course's teaching increased the students' knowledge and familiarity with the Old Testament, the often neglected first two-thirds of the Christian's Bible.²⁰ The greatest strength to this project was its teaching, the project's main purpose. In particular, the course excelled in presenting the Bible's overall outline, the Scripture's unity across the Testaments, and the grace of God at work in the Old Testament.

Two further elements received particular commendation from the participants and both of these elements were created to aid the teaching of the Bible's storyline. First, several of the students expressed particular gratitude for the visuals used in conjunction

¹⁶Return to appendix 8 and reference the results for questions 1 and 2.

¹⁷Reference the results for questions 1 and 4 in the pre-and post-surveys found in appendix 6.

¹⁸Discover the results for questions 11 and 12 in appendix 6.

¹⁹Return to appendix 6 and consider the results for question 7.

²⁰Compare the various results for the following survey questions in appendix 6: 16, 17, 21, and

with the lectures.²¹ When asked “What was the most helpful aspect to the teaching series,” eight of the twenty-five participant mentioned the visuals expressly as the class’ most helpful component. Second, several other students indicated that the handouts were the class’ most helpful feature. These outlines accomplished two things. First, the attendees were able to follow along in the lecture easily. Second, a few students commented that the outlines provided much helpful information and Scripture references for further study.

The students’ received the storyline of redemption so well in large part to my frequent repetition of the larger outline and review of the story. As I explained the redemptive promise, we spent the first few minutes of each class reviewing what had been taught in the previous lectures. Several participants commented that the repetition and review proved to be the class’ most helpful feature. This regular review was aided through the use of the visuals and charts. The regular repetition and review of the storyline in nearly every class proved to be a strength for this project.

Weaknesses of the Project

Though the teaching was a strength of the project, the following consideration of the project’s weaknesses will revisit the overall teaching to determine any deficiencies. Furthermore, any inadequacy in the teaching content appears to stem from two time-related problems: time constraints and poor class time management by the instructor.

The particular strength of this project was the teaching of the redemptive storyline. Yet, a few topics failed to receive appropriate attention in the lectures or were otherwise poorly received. Specifically, this course’s teaching underachieved in impacting the students’ understanding of the New Testament and in informing the students of the apostles’ hermeneutic. First, several statements from the “Pre-and Post-

²¹Reference question 5 in appendix 8.

Survey Project Evaluation” inquired as to the students’ understanding of the New Testament. When comparing their answers before the lectures and then afterwards, the participants’ assessment of the New Testament changed little, if at all.²² Second, the project proved insufficient in informing the students’ as to the apostles’ perspective of the Old Testament. Returning to the analysis of the “Pre-and Post-Survey Project Evaluation,” the attendees understanding of the apostles’ interpretation of the Old Testament changed little.²³ Though their responses changed in accordance with the teaching, I hoped the change to be more pronounced.

These deficiencies in the teaching, especially on the subject of the New Testament, resulted from time constraints and poor time management from the instructor. In short, I was unable to present all that I wanted to or had prepared to teach for nearly every class period. Even for what I did teach, the lecture paced along rather quickly. This fast pace hindered the opportunity for more questions from the students. Graciously, the students wished that either the course had continued for a few more weeks or that the class sessions were simply longer. Hence, one can argue that the time constraints weakened the effectiveness of the course.

Nevertheless, I, as the instructor, over-prepared for nearly every lesson. That is, I failed to prepare only for the allotted class time. The overabundance of lesson material produced three weaknesses. First, I presented some material too quickly for the students to ask clarifying questions. Second, I simply failed to meet the expectations set up for each class period, as I rarely presented all the material given in the handouts. Third, I had to reassign several lessons to the lectures directly about the storyline or promise. By failing to cover all the material in a few particular lectures, I pushed the unexplained material to the following lecture. From week to week, this reassignment of

²²Consult appendix 6 and the analysis given for questions 8, 10, 15, 20, and 24.

²³See appendix 6 and the analysis provided for questions 25 and 27.

lecture content created a compounding problem. In the end, my solution was to reassign whole lectures to explain just the storyline. Hence, the concepts of patterns (i.e., typology) and hermeneutics were underdeveloped in the teaching series. Furthermore, as evidenced in the survey information mentioned above, I still omitted many of the specifics on how the apostles' understood Jesus to have fulfilled the Old Testament promise. In the end, I underserved the students in the course by inadequately managing the class time through my overly ambitious teaching outlines.

The entire curriculum evaluation process could have been stronger. In short, the evaluators were few in number, only two, and the pastors evaluating the curriculum only had a week prior to the actual presentation to provide feedback. Furthermore, without examining the entirety of the curriculum until the project's conclusion, the evaluators could not have perceived the entire context to the class and its curriculum for most the evaluation process. These factors weakened the substantive help that the evaluators could provide.

What I Would Do Differently

If provided the opportunity to teach this course again, I would make the following four changes. First, to alleviate some of the problem of time constraints, I would allot more time for the course. Instead of ten-weeks of lectures, I would restore the two lost lectures on typology and the apostles' hermeneutics, respectively, to make a twelve-week course. Or, if I were to teach only for ten-sessions, I would focus the class to develop only the storyline of the promise to its fulfillment. That is, I would jettison the lectures about typology and the apostles' use of the Old Testament altogether. This narrowing of the topic would garner one more lecture to devote to considering specific New Testament passages that reveal how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament promise of redemption. As to the actual class time, I would probably abandon the Scripture memory review. Though profitable, several students complained in the surveys that the time given

to Scripture memory review stole too much time away from the lecture. Considering my ambitious teaching outlines, I would do well to leverage all the possible lecture time for teaching the material.

Second, though related to the above changes, I would also narrow the focus of my teaching outlines to a more manageable amount of material considering the time allotted. As I taught this course through for the first time, I attempted many weeks to cover two major components or covenants in a single session.²⁴ Nearly every week I only managed to address one major covenant or section of my outline. If I taught this course again, I would consolidate each lecture to one major covenant or element to the larger course outline.

Third, I would offer this course at a different time of year. A number of participants and other attendees missed lectures on account of their summer schedules. Some students expressed their desire to enroll in the course again when their schedules would leave them in town on Sundays to attend the class. If I would teach this class again, I would offer the class during the fall or spring months, when attendance would be more consistent.

Fourth, I would provide an opportunity to strengthen the evaluation process of the curriculum. Having completed the curriculum, I could submit the entire curriculum to the evaluators so they could make more accurate and informed judgments about the overall coherence and faithfulness of the teaching. Also, I would recruit more evaluators. Other local pastors would serve as excellent critics of the curriculum to help me strengthen further the weaker aspects of the teaching.

²⁴To examine my teaching outlines, reference appendix 4. For several lectures, I intended to teach on two covenants, say the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, in one lesson. Yet, I never managed to cover more than one major component or covenant. The outlines provided in the appendix represent what I actually covered in each class, not what I initially intended to teach. These adjusted outlines would serve me well in teaching this material a second time.

Theological Reflections

Though this project's purpose intended that I would teach, I learned considerable amounts about God, his word, and the church's mission in God's redemptive plan. My understanding about God deepened in two particular areas. From preparing lectures and teaching, my vision of the breadth of God's grace grew. Before this project I knew God was gracious and I would boldly preach his grace. But, studying the storyline of Scripture and seeing God's pervasive and recurrent mercy towards sinners widened the landscape of my perspective to behold his grace. I found God's grace in more and more places along the redemptive storyline. Most tangibly I recognized the prominence of Yahweh's revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus 34. This vision of Yahweh as the "merciful and gracious" God echoes throughout the Old Testament as God's people turn from their sin hoping in the God of mercy (cf. Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; 2 Chr 30:9; Pss 33:5; 57:10; 86:5, 15; 98:3; 103:7-8; 108:4; 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; 138:2; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Mic 7:18, 20). My comprehension of God's grace increased from the study for this project.

Furthermore, the study and teaching for this project clarified my knowledge about God and his intent for all creation. My study of Genesis' first two chapters illuminated God's intent for creation through the lens of God's commands or mandate for mankind. In Genesis 1:26-28, God commands that his image and reign spread through mankind over the face of the earth. I summarized this first mandate with the title "king." Then Genesis 2:15-17 relays the second mandate for mankind to serve like priests mediating God's presence. Hence, I titled this mandate with the word "priest." Putting these commands together into one mandate, God's intent for creation would result in the spreading of his rule and presence over the face of the earth. With these two terms and one mandate in mind, I discovered these concepts turning up time and again throughout my study of the Bible's storyline (see Exod 19; 2 Sam 7; Ps 72; Zech 6; Rev 1, 5, 20, 22). My preparation for this course clarified for me God's purpose in history.

My understanding of God's word in relation to the redemptive storyline increased in two facets. First, I discovered more inter-textual connections between the various covenants and sections of Scripture. That is, I recognized the repetition of particular, important phrases that demonstrate the biblical authors' intent to connect their revelation to what had come before. These textual connections demonstrate that the unity of the Bible's message espoused throughout this course stems from the biblical authors' actual intent and not on some outline superimposed on the Bible. Second, my study in Isaiah for these lectures revealed various promises about the incorporation of the nations into the New Covenant blessings (see Isa 11:11, 16; 19:16-25; 49:6; 55:1-5; 56:1-8; 66:18-23). My preparations for the lectures strengthened the connection between the New Covenant with the blessing to the Gentiles to the Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations. This project illuminated for me from the Old Testament the expressed hope of the Gentiles in the New Covenant.

This project connected the church's mission more directly to God's overall redemptive plan. As she becomes God's kingdom of priests and his holy nation (cf. 1 Pet 2:9-10), the church takes up the mantle and mission of Israel and Adam to spread the rule and presence of God over the earth. Hence, King Jesus commissions his people to go into all the nations and make disciples everywhere (Matt 28:18-20). The church's great commission fulfills the intent of God's mandate for mankind. As we faithfully preach the gospel of Christ, the church joins God in spreading his rule and presence over the entire earth. God's plan to glorify himself, as original stated in Genesis 1-2, now continues through Christ's body, the church. The connection of the church to God's intent for all creation became clearer through this project.

Personal Reflections

Though I have been teaching in the church for years, this project revealed helpful ways by which I may improve my own teaching of God's word. In particular, the

preparation and teaching of the course produced three reflections about my teaching. First, I tend to over-prepare and consequently create overly ambitious teaching outlines that cannot be reasonably explained in the time provided. Though my over-preparedness does not surprise me, this project solidified in my mind how this excessive preparation actually hinders, to a point, the effectiveness of my teaching.

Second, and a somewhat contradictory thought, my extensive preparation and detail in teaching encourage receptivity and acceptance among my hearers. In the case of this course, my demonstration of particular connections between texts (i.e., the details) persuaded my hearers to embrace the unity of the Bible's storyline. Furthermore, my detailed study lends to my own familiarity and excitement about the material, and these characteristics serve me well in teaching.

Third, I ought to continue with my detailed preparation, but I must discipline myself to remove more auxiliary content from my teaching outlines. I should develop a more robust editing step between the study desk to the pulpit or lectern. Though I have yet to develop this habit, I have long surmised that writing manuscripts for my sermons and lectures would best aid me in paring down my teaching material to manageable proportions. The teaching subject for this project (i.e., the entire Bible) provided essentially an ocean of potential teaching material. One could not sound the depths of the Bible's storyline in an entire year²⁵ of regular teaching, let alone ten-weeks. The experienced teacher will necessarily remove much helpful and interesting information to focus the lecture on the essential components that most directly establish that lecture's thesis. My ambitiously long teaching outlines for this course only highlighted my need to improve in my editing skills. Hence, I purpose to develop the practice of writing manuscripts for my teachings. These written manuscripts will quantify more tangibly the

²⁵In the comment sections, one participant actually suggested that I turn this 10 week course into a 52 lecture series through the Bible.

amount of content I have already prepared. Then from the written manuscript I should be able to pare down my lectures to a more reasonable and pertinent amount of material that could be covered in a single session.

Conclusion

This project set out to teach the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline to members of an adult discipleship class at Grace Bible Church in Midlothian, Virginia. The above analysis concludes that the project's purpose was accomplished and all the projects goals were attained. In particular, this course on the Bible's storyline excelled in showing the Bible's unity, presenting the storyline's outline, and increasing the participants' understanding of the Old Testament. The lectures could have been improved through better time management of each lesson and through more explanation of the New Testament overall. Thus, if this class were to be offered again, the instructor would both teach the class in more sessions and edit each lecture's notes to a more manageable size. In the end, the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline was taught and taught effectively, as evidenced by the survey analysis.

This instructor intends to teach the Scriptures from the framework of this redemptive-historical storyline continually. Whether preaching a paragraph of biblical text or teaching through the whole Bible, this storyline will form the foundation and context for all my Bible teaching. May God's Spirit accompany the faithful explanation of his word according to the redemptive story so that his people's hearts would burn within them (cf. Luke 24:32). And from this passion for Christ and by Christ's power, may his people go forth and proclaim the glory of Christ, resident in this gospel, to the ends of the earth (Luke 24:44-48).

APPENDIX 1

PRE-AND POST-SURVEY PROJECT EVALUATION FOR CLASS PARTICIPANTS

Agreement to Participate

The project in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding of the Bible's storyline of redemption. This project is being conducted by Rick Zaman for the purpose of collecting data for his doctoral research. In this research, you will answer the questions before and after participation in a class teaching the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this survey you are giving your consent for your response to be used in this research.

Using the following scale, circle the abbreviation (i.e., SD, D, DS, etc.) that best corresponds to your thoughts in response to each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

Statements about the Bible's Unity and Storyline.

1. The God portrayed in the Old Testament seems different from the God portrayed in the New Testament.

SD D DS AS A SA

2. I understand how Jesus' fulfills the promise of redemption given in the Old Testament.

SD D DS AS A SA

3. The Bible's sixty-six books are held together by a single storyline of redemption.

SD D DS AS A SA

4. I think the main ideas and themes in the Old and New Testaments are very different.

SD D DS AS A SA

5. I think the main ideas and themes in the Old and New Testaments are very similar.

SD D DS AS A SA

6. The gospel can be seen in the Old Testament.

SD D DS AS A SA

7. The Old Testament portrays God as gracious.

SD D DS AS A SA

8. The New Testament portrays God as gracious.

SD D DS AS A SA

9. The Old Testament portrays God as wrathful.

SD D DS AS A SA

10. The New Testament portrays God as wrathful.

SD D DS AS A SA

11. I could present the gospel to someone while using only the Old Testament.

SD D DS AS A SA

12. Jesus is the Old Testament's main theme.

SD D DS AS A SA

Bible Reading Statements

1. In comparison to other parts of the Bible, I like reading the Old Testament.

SD D DS AS A SA

2. When I read the Old Testament I usually understand what I read.

SD D DS AS A SA

3. When I read my Bible I normally read from the New Testament.

SD D DS AS A SA

4. I feel as familiar with the Old Testament as I do with the New Testament.
SD D DS AS A SA
5. I feel confident I understand the text when reading the Old Testament as I do when I read the New Testament.
SD D DS AS A SA
6. Other than the Psalms, I do not read the Old Testament very much.
SD D DS AS A SA
7. I enjoy reading the Old Testament.
SD D DS AS A SA
8. I enjoy reading the New Testament.
SD D DS AS A SA

Bible Application Statements

1. I confidently apply the truths of the Old Testament to my life today.
SD D DS AS A SA
2. The Old Testament is vitally important for the life of the church.
SD D DS AS A SA
3. The Old Testament applies to my everyday life.
SD D DS AS A SA
4. The New Testament applies to my everyday life.
SD D DS AS A SA

Bible Interpretation Questions

1. I think Christians should read and interpret the Bible the same way the apostles did.
SD D DS AS A SA
2. Allegory is an acceptable practice to use when interpreting the Bible, especially the Old Testament.
SD D DS AS A SA
3. The apostles exemplified for us how to understand and interpret the Old Testament.
SD D DS AS A SA

Teaching Content Statements

1. The Mosaic Covenant is not a gracious covenant.
SD D DS AS A SA

2. The Mosaic Covenant builds upon the promise given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant.
SD D DS AS A SA

3. The Davidic Covenant builds upon the promise given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant.
SD D DS AS A SA

4. The New Covenant fulfills the promise given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant.
SD D DS AS A SA

5. The blessings of the New Covenant are currently enjoyed by the Church, those in Christ.
SD D DS AS A SA

6. The Church replaces Israel in God's plan as God's people.
SD D DS AS A SA

7. The storyline of the whole Bible follows how God glorifies Himself in history by redeeming His people through Jesus' death and resurrection.
SD D DS AS A SA

8. Jesus is the one who returns God's people from exile.
SD D DS AS A SA

9. Israel's return from exile under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah (beginning in 536 B.C.) fulfilled the prophecies about their return originally given in eighth, seventh, and earlier sixth centuries.
SD D DS AS A SA

APPENDIX 2

PRE-PROJECT PASTORS' EVALUATION OF TEACHING OUTLINE AND CURRICULUM

This second survey asks our pastors if the teaching content is faithful to Scripture and asks them to project if the presentation of the material would be helpful to the class participants.

Agreement to Participate

The project in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding of the Bible's storyline of redemption. This project is being conducted by Rick Zaman for the purpose of collecting data for his doctoral research. In this research, you will answer the questions before and after participation in a class teaching the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this survey you are giving your consent for your response to be used in this research.

Use the below rubric to evaluate the content for each class lesson.

Dmin Project Lesson Evaluation Rubric					
Lesson 1 Evaluation ¹					
1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					

¹A same rubric will be used to evaluate each of the ten lessons of the curriculum.

Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					

Using the following scale, circle the abbreviation (i.e., SD, D, DS, etc.) that best corresponds to your thoughts in response to each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

- Based on a review of the teaching outline and materials, the teaching series could achieve its purpose to teach the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline.
SD D DS AS A SA
- Based on a review of the teaching outline and materials, the teaching material clearly and helpfully presents the Bible's redemptive storyline.
SD D DS AS A SA
- The teaching material was well organized.
SD D DS AS A SA
- My knowledge of the Bible's redemptive storyline increased by means of this teaching series.
SD D DS AS A SA
- The visuals helped the presentation of the Bible's storyline.
SD D DS AS A SA
- The homework should aid the participants' understanding of the Bible's storyline.
SD D DS AS A SA

7. The homework should increase the participants' skills in interpreting the Bible in view of the redemptive storyline.

SD D DS AS A SA

8. The teaching series could increase one's desire to read and study the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

SD D DS AS A SA

9. I would encourage others to participate in this teaching series.

SD D DS AS A SA

Please answer the following questions:

1. What was the most helpful aspect of the teaching curriculum? Why? _____

2. What was the least helpful aspect of the teaching curriculum? Why? _____

3. What was the most significant thing you learned from this teaching series?

4. What would you wish the teaching series would have covered in more detail?

5. In what ways could this teaching series and class be improved? _____

Any other comments: _____

APPENDIX 3

POST-PROJECT PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND CURRICULUM

Agreement to Participate

The project in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding of the Bible's storyline of redemption. This project is being conducted by Rick Zaman for the purpose of collecting data for his doctoral research. In this research, you will answer the questions before and after participation in a class teaching the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this survey you are giving your consent for your response to be used in this research.

Using the following scale, circle the abbreviation (i.e., SD, D, DS, etc.) that best corresponds to your thoughts in response to each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

1. The teaching series achieved its purpose to teach the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline.

SD D DS AS A SA

2. The teaching material clearly and helpfully presented the Bible's redemptive storyline.

SD D DS AS A SA

3. The teaching material was well organized.

SD D DS AS A SA

4. My knowledge of the Bible's redemptive storyline increased by means of this teaching series.

SD D DS AS A SA

5. The visuals helped the presentation of the Bible's storyline.

SD D DS AS A SA

6. The homework aided my understanding of the Bible's storyline.

SD D DS AS A SA

7. The homework honed my skills in interpreting the Bible in view of the redemptive storyline.

SD D DS AS A SA

8. The teaching series increased my desire to read and study the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

SD D DS AS A SA

9. I would encourage others to participate in this teaching series in the future.

SD D DS AS A SA

Please answer the following questions:

1. What was the most helpful aspect of the teaching series? Why? _____

2. What was the least helpful aspect of the teaching series? Why? _____

3. What was the most significant thing you learned from this teaching series?

4. What would you wish the teaching series would have covered in more detail?

5. In what ways could this teaching series and class be improved? _____

Any other comments: _____

APPENDIX 4
OUTLINES TO EACH LESSON OF
THE TEACHING SERIES

Below the reader will discover the outlines for each lecture that comprised the teaching element to this project. Every outline will include the class number, title, thesis statement, and main points to that lecture.

**Class 1: Goal of the Bible’s Storyline—God’s Glory in
Jesus Christ**

The following sentence served as the thesis statement for the first class: the Bible’s storyline culminates in the exaltation of God’s glory in Jesus Christ and his gospel work.

Class 1 Outline

- I. Introduction: The Bible is a very diverse book, but there is an over-arching unity as well.
- II. What is the Bible All About? What is History Itself All About?
 - A. What is the Goal of History? Paul presents the exaltation of Jesus as the culmination or goal of all history (Eph 1:10; Col 1:18-20).
 - B. Why should Jesus be the goal or climax of all history? Because He is God and the ultimate revelation of God and His glory to us (John 1:1-18).
 - C. How does Jesus reveal God’s glory to us? Jesus reveals God’s glory to us most supremely and gloriously through his death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor 15:1-4; 2 Cor 4:1-6).
 - D. What does the Old Testament have to do with Jesus’ gospel work? The New Testament writers present the Old Testament’s message to be mainly about the Messiah and his saving death and resurrection (Luke 24:13-49; 2 Tim 3:14-17).

Class 2: Overview and Creation

The following sentence served as the thesis statement for the second class: God purposed in Creation to spread his glorious presence and reign over the face of the earth through mankind, his image bearers.

Class 2 Outline

- I. Overview of the Promise, the Redemptive Story of Scripture
 - A. How does the OT (that first nearly ¾'s of our Bibles) point to and anticipate Jesus and His gospel work as the climactic event of history to exalt God's glory?
 1. Promise and Patterns
 2. Promise:
 - a. The storyline or plotline that holds the Bible together is this: the development of God's promise to redeem/save His people through His Son Jesus, for God's glory.
 - b. The Bible is the story of God's promise to save His people that comes to fulfillment in Jesus.
 3. Patterns: Routines, or patterns of how God works in the world, how God saves (like sacrifice for example).
 - B. Big Outline for the Bible's Story: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration
 1. Creation: God's intent for creation
 2. Fall
 - a. God's plan derailed
 - b. God's people doomed
 3. Redemption through Covenants: Beginning with the Promise of Redemption in Genesis 3:15
 - a. Abrahamic
 - b. Mosaic
 - c. Davidic
 - d. New Covenant
 4. Restoration
- II. [Creation] Genesis 1-2: God's Purpose for Creation Discovered in Mankind's Mandate(s)—God's Glorious Presence and Reign Spread over the Earth through His Image Bearers
 - A. God the Creator
 - B. Mankind's Mandates
 1. [Mandate 1] Genesis 1:26-28 [KING]

2.[Mandate 2] Genesis 2:15-17 [PRIEST]

3.Summary of Mandate: Mankind, as God’s image bearers, is to expand the localized domain of God’s rule and glorious presence from the Garden unto the ends of earth through dependent obedience.

Class 3: Fall and the Promise of Redemption

The following sentence served as the thesis statement for the third class:

Though mankind rebelled and earned death and separation from him, God mercifully promised to give victory to the woman’s “offspring,” who would reestablish God’s plan and restore God’s blessing to his people.

Class 3 Outline

- I. Genesis 3: Mankind’s Disobedience to the Creator
 - A. Mankind chooses autonomy over dependence on God and so they eat from the forbidden tree--- being their own god, determining what is good for themselves
 - B. Consequence for Sin = Death (Gen 2:16-17).
 - C. With sin comes judgment and with the judgment comes death and ultimate separation from God (Gen 3:8, 23-24)
 - D. As they are banished or exiled from God’s presence, their priesthood has ended and God’s intention to spread his glorious presence is seemingly derailed.
- II. Genesis 3:15: Promise of Redemption—And yet, God mercifully promised to give victory to the woman’s “offspring,” reestablishing God’s plan and restoring God’s blessing to his people.
 - A. Genesis 3:15: *Protoevangelium* (“the first good news”) [hope of blessing in the curse]
 - 1.First, God is not abandoning mankind to the serpent’s rule and authority.
 - 2.Second, notice as well that this means God will mercifully postpone the ultimate judgment of death, at least long enough to have children.
 - 3.Third, God promises the ultimate victory of the woman’s offspring or seed.
 - B. Who is the “offspring” or “seed” of the woman who will bring this victory?
 - 1.At this point, we don’t know.

2. We know that this “offspring” will be a human or a group of humans, like a race of people.
- C. The remainder of Genesis, perhaps the whole Old Testament, continues to be on the look-out for this “seed,” who will bring in the victory, restore God’s blessing, reverse the curse, and reestablish God’s reign through mankind.

Class 4: Abrahamic Covenant

The following sentence served as the thesis statement for the fourth class: the Bible’s storyline follows the development of God’s initial promise to redeem unto the further promise to restore his blessing through the “seed” of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Class 4 Outline

- I. Redemption Promised in the Abrahamic Covenant: An Offspring of Abraham will restore God’s blessing to all the nations and God’s plan to spread his glory over the earth!
 - A. Brief Overview of the Abrahamic Covenant
 1. What is a Covenant? Contractual Relationship
 2. Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Gen 15:18 and Gen 17)
 - B. Genesis 12:1-3: Covenant’s Foundational Promise
 1. Command 1: “Go, you- yourself”(v. 1)
 - a. Result/Promise: I will make you a great nation
 - i. Numerous
 - ii. Implies land (see 12:7)
 - b. Result/Promise: I will bless you
 - i. God will be in a favorable relationship with Abraham so as to enable him for God’s calling upon Abraham’s life
 - ii. Positive Relationship (i.e., He is for you) with God to accomplish his purpose for you
 - c. Result/Promise: I will make your name great
 - i. Fame . . . but more than that
 - ii. Kingly fame (2 Sam 7:9; cf. Gen 17:6)
 2. Command 2: “Be a blessing” (v. 2b) [Worldwide Focus- Priestly Mediation; . . . to be a blessing]
 - a. Result/Promise: I will bless those who bless you
 - b. Result/Promise: I will curse him that dishonors you
 - c. Result/Promise: I will bless all the families of the earth in you

- C. How the Abrahamic Covenant Relate Back the Initial Promise of Genesis 3:15?
 - 1. Blessing of Abraham Answers the Curses of Genesis 3
 - 2. Blessing of Abraham Restores or Continues Mankind's Mandate of Genesis 1-2 (signifying the restorative blessing of the victorious seed)
- D. How does the Abrahamic Covenant Develops the Initial Redemptive Promise? Two new developments from God's dealings with Abraham will change or clarify how the redemptive promise will be fulfilled.
 - 1. Abraham and His Seed Mediates God's Blessing to the World: Seed of the Woman Narrows to Abraham and his Seed (Gen 22:17b-18).
 - 2. Focus on the Whole Earth Narrows to the Promised Land of Canaan
- II. Promise Plays Out in History (Gen 22- Exod 18)
 - A. Blessing passes to Isaac (Gen 26:2-5, 22, 24)
 - B. Blessing passes to Jacob (Gen 27:27-29; 28:2-4, 13-15; 35:9-12)
 - C. Through Joseph, the Lord preserves Abraham's family and, consequently, the worldwide promise of restored blessing.
 - D. Israel goes to Egypt [1876 B.C.]
 - E. The Lord delivers His people out of slavery in Egypt (i.e., the Exodus) because of the Abrahamic promise and brings them to Himself at Sinai [1446 B.C.] (Exod 2:23-25; 6:2-5).

Class 5: Mosaic Covenant

The following sentence served as the thesis statement for the fifth class: in the Mosaic Covenant God reconciles and commissions the Israelite nation to mediate God's rule and presence to the nations.

Class 5 Outline

- I. Mosaic Covenant
 - A. Exodus 19:1-6: Purpose to the Mosaic Covenant
 - 1. Redeemed for Relationship: "I bore you . . . brought you to Myself" (v. 4)
 - 2. Call to Obey the Covenant (v. 5a)
 - 3. Covenant Blessings (v. 5b-6)
 - 4. Mission summary: The Israelite nation, then, is dedicated and commissioned to mediate (like a serving priest) the blessing of God's presence and rule over the earth.
- II. How Redemptive History Unfolds with the Mosaic Covenant

- A. Expanded (or expansion) Explanation of the Law: How an Unholy People are to live with and for a Holy God
 - 1. Leviticus: How to Live as God's Holy People
 - 2. Numbers: 40 Years Wandering from Sinai to the Promised Land [1446-06 B.C.]
 - 3. Deuteronomy: Second Law: Addendum or Explanation of the Mosaic Covenant [1406 B.C.]
- B. Joshua: Conquering the Promised Land to Establish the Israelite Kingdom [1406 B.C.]
- C. Preparation for a Human King
 - 1. Judges/Ruth: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 21:25)
 - 2.1 Samuel: People's Choice vs. God's Choice

Class 6: Davidic Covenant and Exile

The following sentence served as the thesis statement for the sixth class: In the Davidic Covenant, the Lord promises to establish the kingdom of David's offspring, securing God's blessed presence among His people and God's blessing for all the nations.

Class 6 Outline

- I. Davidic Covenant [God's Blessed Presence Promised through the Eternal Reign of David's Offspring]
 - A. Key Text about the Davidic Covenant: 2 Samuel 7:1-17
 - B. Promises to be realized in David's Lifetime (vv. 8-11a)
 - C. Promised to be realized after David's Death (vv. 11b-16)
 - 1. Summary: Build a house/dynasty for David
 - 2. House Comprised of Four Ideas/words:
 - a. Seed/Offspring (v. 12)
 - b. Kingdom (v. 12; eternal- vv. 13, 16)
 - c. Temple (v. 13)
 - d. Relationship (vv. 14-15)
 - D. Connections between 2 Samuel 7 and the Unfolding, Redemptive Promise
 - 1. [Kingdom] Promise of the Great King and Kingdom! (cf. Gen 1:26, 28; 12:2; 22:17; 49:10; Pss 2:7-10; 72:8-11).
 - 2. [Seed/Offspring] Promise of the Victorious Seed/Offspring (cf. Gen 3:15; 22:18).

- 3.[Temple] Promise of Reconciliation with God's Presence (cf. Gen 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9)
- E. Development of the Promise of Redemption through the Davidic Covenant
 - 1.David's Dynasty: Focus Narrows from the Nation or Judah's line to a particular family, David's lineage (cf. Exod 4:22-23 with 2 Sam 7:14).
 - 2.Eternal Reign: The throne of David's son will last forever and provide the channel for God's blessing to all the nations.
 - 3.David's Son Achieves God's Purpose for Creation: God's Glory over all the Earth, Forever! (Ps 72:19)
- II. How Redemptive History Unfolds with the Davidic Covenant
 - A. Is it Solomon?
 - 1.Solomon establishes God's people in promised land (1 Kgs 4:20-21, 34).
 - 2.Solomon builds the Temple (1 Kgs 6:1; cf. 1 Kgs 8:10-11).
 - B. Solomon's Failure:
 - 1.Disobedience to the Law (Deut 17:14-20; 1 Kgs 10-11).
 - 2.Disobedient Idolatry (1 Kgs 11:1-13)
- III. Covenant Curse of Exile
 - A. Northern Kingdom: Israel [931 B.C. – 722 B.C.]
 - 1.Jeroboam Establishes National Idolatry (1 Kgs 12:25-33)
 - 2.Ultimate Result of Disobedience: Exile of the Northern Kingdom, Israel (722 B.C.) [2 Kgs 17:5-23].
 - B. Southern Kingdom of Judah (931 B.C. – 586 B.C.)
 - 1.Manasseh-the Tipping Point (2 Kgs 21)
 - 2.Exile (2 Kgs 24-25)
 - C. As, once again, the curse reigns, the promise of God's blessing appears forever lost. But, even in the anticipation and then the wake of Exile, the promise continues in the New Covenant.

Class 7: Prophetic Hope of the New Covenant

The following sentence served as the thesis statement for the first class: in the New Covenant, God fulfills all the previous, covenant promises, as the Davidic King secures the full restoration/reconciliation of God's people through an abiding priestly ministry.

Class 7 Outline

- I. Prophetic Hope of a Return and a New and Better Covenant (in Jer)
 - A. Jeremiah 16:10-15: Promise of a Glorious Return
 - B. Jeremiah 23:1-8: Return Revolves Around and Remains through the Davidic Reign
 - C. Jeremiah 31: Return and Reconciliation Rests in the New Covenant
 1. Return (See return and New Covenant tied together: Jer 32:36-41)
 2. New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34
 - a. New Covenant:
 - i. Old Covenant is Over/Obsolete
 - ii. New way and kind of relationship with God (vv. 29-30)
 - b. Obedience by the Human Covenant Partner(s): “Law within them” (v. 33a)
 - c. [Certain, Covenant] Relationship (vv. 33b-34a)
 - d. Basis: Forgiveness of Sins! (v. 34b)
 3. Permanent Return (31:35-40)
 - D. Jeremiah 33: The Return and New Covenant Fulfills the Promises of Redemption
 1. Return and Restoration (vv. 1-13) [Return and everlasting covenant in Jer. 32:40]
 2. New Covenant Fulfills the Previous Covenants: (vv. 14-22)
 - a. Fulfills the Promise of the Davidic King (vv. 14-16)
 - b. Fulfills the Levitical Priesthood of the Mosaic Covenant (vv. 17-18)
 - c. Fulfills the Promise of a Permanent King and Priesthood (vv. 19-21)
 - d. Fulfills the Abrahamic Covenant and Creation Mandate (vv. 22-26)
 3. Summary: On the basis of the New Covenant, the Davidic King will return God’s people to the land and restore them to God himself through a permanent priestly ministry.
- II. Prophetic Hope of a Return and a New and Better Covenant (in Isa) [New Covenant Contributions from Isaiah’s Prophecy]
 - A. Nations Incorporated into the Blessed Return (Isa 19:16-25; 11:11, 16; 49:6; 55:1-5; 56:1-8; 66:18-23)
 - B. The Way or Means of Reconciliation Revealed: Substitutionary, Sacrificial Death of the Great King (Isa 52-53)
 - C. Results of the Servant’s Sacrificial Work (Isa 54-56)
 1. God’s People will Possess the Earth (54:1-3)

- 2. God's Compassion Secured for All the Nations (55:1-7)
- 3. God Gathers Israel and the Nations (56:1-8)
- III. Summary of the Prophetic Hope
 - A. Glorious Return from Exile (Isa 11; 60; 65-66)
 - B. New Temple: Ezekiel 40-48
 - C. New Davidic Reign
 - 1. Jeremiah 33:14-18, 23-26
 - 2. Ezekiel 34:11-31, God, David-like as their Shepherd; Also ties in return
 - 3. Ezekiel 37:25
 - D. New and Improved Covenant
 - 1. Ezekiel 36: New Spirit, Rebirth
 - 2. Jeremiah 31:31-34: New Covenant
- IV. Actual Return . . . Hope Deferred
 - A. Less than Glorious Return (Ezra 1-2)
 - B. Less than Glorious Temple (Ezra 3:10-13; Hag 2:1-8)
 - C. Less Than Glorious Rule of David: Zerubbabel?
 - D. The Blessings of the New Covenant Not Active
- V. Still Looking for a the One to Bring God's Blessing
 - A. Restored/Accepted Sacrifice(s): Malachi 3:1
 - B. Finally Law Obedience: Malachi 4:4
 - C. The Lord's Forerunner:
 - 1. Isaiah 40:1-5
 - 2. Malachi 3:1
 - 3. Malachi 4:5-6
 - D. The Gospel of Mark 1:1-15: Now that Jesus has come . . . we go and proclaim forgiveness to the nations (Luke 24:46-47)

Class 8: New Covenant Fulfilled by Christ

The following sentences served as the thesis statement for the eighth class:

Jesus comes and begins the restoration of all things by first reconciling His people by His death and resurrection. Then in the New Heavens and Earth, the plans of God come to full realization through the ministry of the ultimate King and Priest, Jesus Christ.

Class 8 Outline

- I. Jesus Fulfills the New Covenant Promise of Redemption and Reconciliation
 - A. Jesus, the Promised One, Brings Blessing and Restoration (Matt 1:1-17; Mark 1:1-15).
 - B. Jesus' Earthly Ministry: Inaugurated Fulfillment of the New Covenant Blessings

1. Better King / Better Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15; cf. Isa 52:7-12; Luke 1:30-33, 68-79; John 18:33-38)
 2. Better Temple / Better Sacrifice / Better Priest (John 1:14-18, 29, 36; 2:18-22).
 3. Better Covenant Begun (Luke 22:20; John 19:36 with Exod 12:10, 46)
- C. Church: New Covenant Blessings Applied through the Church, Christ's Body
1. New King and Kingdom (1 Cor 15:23-28; Col 1:13-23).
 2. New Temple and Priesthood (Eph 2:17-22; 1 Pet 2:4-10).
- D. New Heavens and Earth: Ultimate Fulfillment of the New Covenant Promises
1. Ultimate Temple-Sanctuary: New Heavens and Earth/New Jerusalem (Rev 21-22)
 2. Ultimate Covenant Engaging Sacrifice: The Lamb in Revelation (Rev 5; 21-22).
 3. Ultimate King: Throne in Revelation (Rev 4:1-11; 22)
 1. Life-Giving Water from God's Throne (22:1)
 2. God's Unrivaled Throne in the New Heavens and Earth (22:3)
 4. Ultimate Fulfillment of Mankind's Mandate: Eternal Reign of Christ's/God's King-Priests (Rev 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 20:4-6; 22:3-5).
 5. Ultimate Fulfillment of God's Purpose for Creation: Glory! (Rev 5, 21-22).
- II. So, for now, What Is Our Role as the Church?
- A. New Covenant Priestly Mediators (2 Cor 5:14-21)
 - B. New Covenant Kingly Conquerors: Making Disciples of King Jesus (Matt 28:18-20)

Class 9: Patterns

The following sentences served as the thesis statement for the ninth class: The Old Testament anticipates Jesus' revelation and saving work by picturing beforehand how God saves. The patterns or little stories complement and help carry along the more central story of God's Glory in redemption. Finally, these patterns also inform our own place and role in God's larger plan of redemption.

Class 9 Outline

- I. Pattern of the Temple or Sanctuary
 - A. Eden: The Garden Sanctuary (Gen 2-3)
 - B. Tabernacle (Exod 25-30, 40; Lev)

- C. Temple (2 Sam 7; 1 Kgs 8; Zech 8; Ezek 40-48)
- D. Christ: Christ as the Temple in John (John 1-2, 11)
- E. Church (1 Cor 3, 6; Eph 2)
- F. New Heavens and Earth: Ultimate Temple-Sanctuary (Rev 21-22)
- II. Pattern of Substitutionary, Atoning Sacrifices:
 - A. Genesis 3-4: Early Hints of Substitutionary Sacrifices
 - B. Genesis 22: The Lord Provides a Substitute on the Mount
 - C. Exodus 12: The Substitute Leads to the Passing Over of Judgment
 - D. Leviticus 16-17: Day of Atonement—Two Pictures of Substitutionary Atonement
 - E. Isaiah 53: The King-Priest’s Self Sacrifice
 - F. Ultimate, Covenant Engaging Sacrifice: The Lamb in Revelation (Rev 5; 21-22)
- III. Patterns and Our Mission as the Church
 - A. Church as the Temple of God: John 20
 - B. Church as the New Priesthood, Offering Spiritual Sacrifices: 1 Peter 1-2
 - C. Summary: These Old Testament patterns and themes inform and clarify our own role in God’s big-story as the Church.

Class 10: Reading the Bible Today in Light of the Redemptive Promise

The following sentence served as the thesis statement for the final class: recall the Bible’s storyline to understand the meaning of Scripture, the prominence of God’s grace to sinners, and to understand how to better live out one’s faith in this God of grace.

Class 10 Outline

- I. Read the Bible Everyday with Gospel Storyline in Mind.
 - A. Creation (Gen 1-2)
 - 1. Christ fulfills the intent of Creation: Christ is the perfect image of God (Col 1:15; Heb 1:3) that will mediate God’s rule over the entire earth (1 Cor 15:25-28; Heb 2:5-9).
 - 2. How should Christians think about their relationship with the original creation mandate? See how the church’s (your!) mission (see Matt 28:18-20) fulfills God’s original intent of creation: God’s image bearers worshipping Him from all over the earth.
 - B. Fall (Gen 3)

1. How should Christians think about their relationship with the original Fall?
2. Recognize how Adam's sin has brought us all under God's curse and alienation from Him (Rom 5:12-19).
3. At the same time, see how Christ's righteous gospel-work has brought us salvation and reconciliation with God (Rom 5:15-21).
4. Live out the new life that Christ has begun in you by putting sin to death (Rom 6).

C. Redemption (Gen 3:15-Rev 19:21)

1. Redemptive Promise (Gen 3:15-Gen 11)

- a. Jesus fulfills the initial redemptive promise. Jesus is the long-anticipated "offspring of the woman" who has victory through His death and resurrection, over Satan and thus brings into the world God's reign over the earth (Rev 12:7-12).
- b. How should Christians think about their relationship with the initial redemptive promise? As the extension of Christ's body on earth, we extend the rule of Christ by preaching the gospel (i.e., Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection) and consequently trampling Satan and his rule under our feet (Acts 28:30-31; Rom 16:20).

2. Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12-Exod 18)

- a. Jesus fulfills the Abrahamic covenant. In Galatians 3, Paul identifies Jesus as the promised seed of Abraham who brings blessing of Abraham to the nations.
- b. How should Christians think about their relationship with the Abrahamic covenant? Realize how Jesus' death and resurrection secures for us by faith the great blessing of God promised to Abraham (cf. Gal 3).

3. Mosaic Covenant (Exod 19-Josh)

- a. Jesus fulfills the intent of the Mosaic covenant. Jesus' own obedient death has made us, the church, to be God's kingdom and priests, who will carry out His reign on earth (Rev 5:9-10; cf. Rev 1:5-6).
- b. How should Christians think about their relationship with the Mosaic covenant? As the new kingdom and priests to God, we must proclaim unto the ends of the earth the excellencies of this God who has showered us with mercy (1 Pet 1:9-10). We fulfill the intent of the Mosaic Covenant through Christ's obedience.

4. Davidic Covenant (Judg-1 Kgs 10)

- a. Jesus fulfills the Davidic covenant.
 - i. Christ rebuilds the Temple of His Body (John 1:14; 2:21-22)
 - ii. Christ builds the Temple of the Church (Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:4-6)
 - iii. He is the Eternal King over the Earth (Acts 2:33-36; 13:33-39; Rom 1:2-6; 1 Cor 15:23-28; Col 1:13-23; Rev 19:11-21)
 - b. How should Christians think about their relationship with the Davidic covenant? By the authority of the Great King Jesus (see Matt 28:18), we go throughout all the earth making disciples of Christ among all the nations (Matt 28:19-20; Rom. 1:2-6; 15:14-21; 16:25-27)
5. Covenant Curses: Covenant Curse of Exile (1 Kgs 11-Mal)
- a. Jesus entirely removes the curse from His people (Gal 3:10-14).
 - b. How should Christians think about their relationship with curse of disobedience? We receive the blessing of God only by God's grace through faith in Christ alone. We get the blessing only and entirely because of what Christ did for us by taking our curse (cf. Gal 3:10-14; Eph 2:1-10; Col 1:18-23)
6. New Covenant [New Covenant Promise in the OT] (Isa-Mal)
- a. Christ inaugurates the New Covenant blessings through His death and resurrection (Heb 9:15-28).
 - b. Through Christ, we enjoy the blessings of the New Covenant (Heb 10:15-25).
7. New Covenant [New Covenant Fulfilled by Christ in the NT]
- a. Jesus' Earthly Ministry: Inaugurated Fulfillment of the New Covenant Blessings (Gospels: Matt-John)
 - b. Church: New Covenant Blessings Applied through the Church, Christ's Body (Acts-Rev 19)
- D. Restoration (Rev 20-22)
1. Jesus' death and resurrection as the Lamb provide the basis for the bringing in of the New Heavens and New Earth (Rev 5; see references to "Lamb" in Revelation).
 2. How should Christians think about their relationship with the final restoration? This is our hope! So, let us be at work as those mercifully reconciled king-priests that spread the presence and rule of Christ as we preach the gospel to the ends of earth (Rev 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 20:4-6; 22:3-5; cf. Matt 28:18-20).

- II. Read the Bible every day to see God's grace and live by God's grace for God's glory.
 - A. God's Grace Predominates in the Redemptive Story
 - 1. Consider the chart of the storyline. Notice the weighted significance to telling the story of God's gracious redemption.
 - 2. As He reveals Himself directly in Exodus 34:1-8, God's grace prevails as His dominant characteristic (cf. John 1:14-18).
 - 3. And it is this glorious vision of a gracious God that Jesus reveals to us in His incarnation and gospel-work (see John 1:14-18).
 - B. Bible Application Questions for Recognizing God's Grace and Living by His Grace
 - 1. Head: What is something new or fresh you learned about God/Christ in these passages? And how is God's grace evident in these passages?
 - 2. Heart: How should my heart or affections respond to this God, as revealed in these passages?
 - 3. Hands: What is something that I can go and "do" that would demonstrate my soul's trust in the truth about God's grace evident in these passages? (Matt 7:24-27; Jas 1:22-25)
 - 4. Herald: Who can I share this message with today or this week? (see 2 Cor 5:16-21)

APPENDIX 5

PRE-AND POST-TEST SURVEY PROJECT EVALUATION: T-TEST FOR DEPENDENT SAMPLES

Upon compiling both pre-test and post-test surveys, I performed a t-test for dependent samples to determine the project's effectiveness in producing change in the participants' perspective. The teaching of the redemptive-historical storyline to the adult education class at Grace Bible church made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their doctrinal knowledge ($t_{(24)} = 5.999$, $p < .0000046$). The following chart presents the summary information of the "t-test" for dependent samples.

Number of Participants	25
Pre-Test Mean	150.24
Post-Test Mean	165.84
t-Stat	5.999
P(T<=t)two-tail	0.0000046
t Critical two-tail	2.064

APPENDIX 6

PRE-AND POST-TEST RESULTS FOR EVALUATION SURVEY FROM CLASS PARTICIPANTS

To evaluate the effectiveness of this project, the class participants completed the “Pre-and Post-Survey Project Evaluation for Class Participants” (Appendix 1) before and then after the course. This following appendix catalogs the various students’ answers by listing the average score for each answer before and then after the course’s lectures. A comparison of the two scores and a summary analysis of the data will be provided for each question.

The following scale provides the potential responses for each question and this chart also notes the numerical score assigned to each response according to the Likert-scale (i.e., Strongly Agree = 1, etc.).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6

Statements about the Bible’s Unity and Storyline.

1. The God portrayed in the Old Testament seems different from the God portrayed in the New Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.4
Post-Project Ave. Score	1.3
Change	2.1

Analysis The presentation of the Bible’s storyline resulted in a drastic change of the students’ perspective on the unity of God’s character across the Testaments.

2. I understand how Jesus' fulfills the promise of redemption given in the Old Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.8
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.6
Change	0.8
Analysis	The students' perceived understanding about how Jesus' fulfills the promise of redemption increased some because of the presentation of the Bible's storyline.

3. The Bible's sixty-six books are held together by a single storyline of redemption.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	5.3
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.9
Change	0.6
Analysis	Prior to the course, the participants recognized the Bible's storyline of redemption. This course strengthened their collective understanding about the Bible's storyline of redemption.

4. I think the main ideas and themes in the Old and New Testaments are very different.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.0
Post-Project Ave. Score	1.6
Change	1.3
Analysis	The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in significant change of the students' perspective on the unity of the Bible between the Testaments

5. I think the main ideas and themes in the Old and New Testaments are very similar.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.6
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.5
Change	0.9
Analysis	The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in some change of the students' perspective on the unity of the Bible between the Testaments

6. The gospel can be seen in the Old Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	5.1	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.8	
Change	0.7	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in some change of the students' perspective on the gospel in the Old Testament.

7. The Old Testament portrays God as gracious.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.5	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.7	
Change	1.2	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in significant change of the students' perspective about God's gracious character as revealed in the Old Testament.

8. The New Testament portrays God as gracious.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	5.6	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.9	
Change	0.3	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in almost no change of the students' perspective about God's gracious character as revealed in the New Testament.

9. The Old Testament portrays God as wrathful.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.7	
Post-Project Ave. Score	3.9	
Change	0.8	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in some change of the students' perspective about God's justice and wrath as revealed in the Old Testament.

10. The New Testament portrays God as wrathful.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.0	
Post-Project Ave. Score	3.9	
Change	0.1	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in essentially no change of the students' perspective about God's justice and wrath as revealed in the New Testament.

11. I could present the gospel to someone while using only the Old Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.1	
Post-Project Ave. Score	4.4	
Change	1.4	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in significant change of the students' perspective about whether they could present the gospel using only the Old Testament. Hence, the students' awareness about the promise in the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills that promise became more clear to them through this course.

12. Jesus is the Old Testament's main theme.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.8	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.1	
Change	1.2	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in significant change of the students' perspective about Jesus' centrality to the Bible's testimony.

Bible Reading Statements

13. In comparison to other parts of the Bible, I like reading the Old Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.5	
Post-Project Ave. Score	4.3	
Change	0.8	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline increased the participants' desire and delight in the Old Testament.

14. When I read the Old Testament I usually understand what I read.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.4	
Post-Project Ave. Score	4.1	
Change	0.7	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline somewhat increased the students' perceived understanding about their Old Testament readings.

15. When I read my Bible I normally read from the New Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.5	
Post-Project Ave. Score	4.3	
Change	0.2	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline made only negligible difference in the participants' Bible reading habits.

16. I feel as familiar with the Old Testament as I do with the New Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	2.2	
Post-Project Ave. Score	3.4	
Change	1.2	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in significant change of the students' perspective on their familiarity with the Old Testament, in comparison with the New Testament.

17. I feel confident I understand the text when reading the Old Testament as I do when I read the New Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	2.6	
Post-Project Ave. Score	3.7	
Change	1.1	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in significant change of the students' confidence about reading the Old Testament with understanding, in comparison to their understanding of the New Testament.

18. Other than the Psalms, I do not read the Old Testament very much.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.5	
Post-Project Ave. Score	2.6	
Change	0.9	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline made a significant difference in the participants' reading habits of the Old Testament.

19. I enjoy reading the Old Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.9	
Post-Project Ave. Score	4.8	
Change	0.9	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline increased the students' joy in reading the Old Testament.

20. I enjoy reading the New Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	5.4	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.7	
Change	0.3	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline made only a little change to the students' joy when reading the New Testament.

Bible Application Statements

21. I confidently apply the truths of the Old Testament to my life today.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.2	
Post-Project Ave. Score	4.2	
Change	1.0	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline resulted in significant change of the students' confidence in applying the Old Testament to their own lives.

22. The Old Testament is vitally important for the life of the church.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	5.1	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.5	
Change	0.4	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline somewhat changed the students' evaluation of the Old Testament for the church today.

23. The Old Testament applies to my everyday life.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.2	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.2	
Change	1.0	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline significantly changed the students' evaluation of the Old Testament for their own lives.

24. The New Testament applies to my everyday life.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	5.6	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.8	
Change	0.2	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline made almost no change to the students' evaluation of the New Testament for their own lives.

Bible Interpretation Questions

25. I think Christians should read and interpret the Bible the same way the apostles did.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.6	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.0	
Change	0.4	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline somewhat changed the students' perspective about the apostles' hermeneutic and our emulation of it.

26. Allegory is an acceptable practice to use when interpreting the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.1	
Post-Project Ave. Score	3.6	
Change	0.5	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline somewhat changed the students' assessment about allegory to be more positive.

27. The apostles exemplified for us how to understand and interpret the Old Testament.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.2	
Post-Project Ave. Score	4.8	
Change	0.6	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline changed the students' assessment about imitating the apostles' hermeneutic.

Teaching Content Statements

28. The Mosaic Covenant is not a gracious covenant.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.1	
Post-Project Ave. Score	2.6	
Change	0.5	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline changed the students' evaluation concerning the graciousness of the Mosaic Covenant.

29. The Mosaic Covenant builds upon the promise given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.4	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.4	
Change	1.0	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline changed the students' understanding about the inter-relationship between the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants.

30. The Davidic Covenant builds upon the promise given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.5	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.5	
Change	1.0	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline changed the students' understanding about the inter-relationship between the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants.

31. The New Covenant fulfills the promise given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.9	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.6	
Change	0.7	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline changed the students' understanding concerning the New Testament's fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

32. The blessings of the New Covenant are currently enjoyed by the Church, those in Christ.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	5.2	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.6	
Change	0.4	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline somewhat changed the students' understanding about the Church's relationship to the New Covenant blessings.

33. The Church replaces Israel in God's plan as God's people.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	3.0	
Post-Project Ave. Score	3.6	
Change	0.6	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline changed the students' understanding about Israel's relationship to the Church.

34. The storyline of the whole Bible follows how God glorifies Himself in history by redeeming His people through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	5.3	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.9	
Change	0.6	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline changed the students' understanding about Jesus' gospel-work in relationship to God's redemptive promise so that nearly all participants strongly agree with the statement.

35. Jesus is the one who returns God's people from exile.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.7	
Post-Project Ave. Score	5.5	
Change	0.7	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline changed the students' understanding about Jesus' gospel-work and God's people return from exile.

36. Israel's return from exile under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah (beginning in 536 B.C.) fulfilled the prophecies about their return originally given in eighth, seventh, and earlier sixth centuries.

Pre-Project Ave. Score	4.2	
Post-Project Ave. Score	4.5	
Change	0.3	
Analysis		The presentation of the Bible's storyline made almost no change to the students' understanding about Jesus' gospel-work and God's people return from exile. I would have thought that this study would have moved the answered further towards the disagreement end of spectrum, but this was not the case.

APPENDIX 7

PASTORS' SURVEY RESULTS FOR EVALUATION OF TEACHING OUTLINE AND CURRICULUM

My fellow staff pastors completed the following surveys to assess the curriculum each week. Their assessments are indicated by a mark ("X") in the appropriate column. One-hundred percent of their evaluations for each week were either "sufficient" or "exemplary."

Table A1. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 1

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator 1			X		
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator 1			X		
Evaluator 2			X		

Table A2. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 2

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator 1			X		
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	

Table A3. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 3

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator				X	
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator				X	
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator				X	

Table A4. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 4

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator				X	
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator				X	
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator				X	

Table A5. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 5

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator				X	
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator				X	
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator				X	

Table A6. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 6

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	

Table A7. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 7

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	

Table A8. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 8

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator				X	
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator				X	
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator				X	

Table A9. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 9

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2			X		
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	

Table A10. D.Min. project lesson evaluation rubric for lesson 10

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Was the content of the lesson faithful to the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content and argument derived from the Bible?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's content communicated clearly?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Were the lesson's goals and outcomes clear?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Would there be high potential for the students to achieve the outcomes?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson clearly organized?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Was the lesson's main theme or point clearly stated?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	
Did this lesson's content seem consistent with the rest of the curriculum?					
Evaluator 1				X	
Evaluator 2				X	

Upon the course's completion, the staff pastors responded to the following statements and questions according to the Likert-scale below.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

1. Based on a review of the teaching outline and materials, the teaching series could achieve its purpose to teach the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline.

Pastor 1-Score 5-Agree
 Pastor 2-Score 6- Strongly Agree

2. Based on a review of the teaching outline and materials, the teaching material clearly and helpfully presents the Bible's redemptive storyline.

Pastor 1-Score 5-Agree
 Pastor 2-Score 6- Strongly Agree

3. The teaching material was well organized.

Pastor 1-Score 5-Agree
 Pastor 2-Score 6- Strongly Agree

4. My knowledge of the Bible's redemptive storyline increased by means of this teaching series.

Pastor 1-Score 4-Somewhat Agree
 Pastor 2-Score 5-Agree

5. The visuals helped the presentation of the Bible's storyline.

Pastor 1-Score 4-Somewhat Agree
 Pastor 2-Score 5-Agree

6. The homework should aid the participants' understanding of the Bible's storyline.

Pastor 1-Score 4-Somewhat Agree
Pastor 2-Score 5-Agree

7. The homework should increase the participants' skills in interpreting the Bible in view of the redemptive storyline.

Pastor 1-Score 4-Somewhat Agree
Pastor 2-Score 5-Agree

8. The teaching series could increase one's desire to read and study the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

Pastor 1-Score 6-Strongly Agree
Pastor 2-Score 6-Strongly Agree

9. I would encourage others to participate in this teaching series.

Pastor 1-Score 5-Agree
Pastor 2-Score 6-Strongly Agree

Please answer the following questions:

1. What was the most helpful aspect of the teaching curriculum? Why? _____

Outlines of the material; Application portions

2. What was the least helpful aspect of the teaching curriculum? Why? _____

No being able to "hear" you present it; outlines were more clear

when I sat in to hear lecture.

3. What was the most significant thing you learned from this teaching series?

Connections of the fall to picture of redemption in the persons

of Genesis; connections between the Testaments

4. What would you wish the teaching series would have covered in more detail?

The land and tabernacle promises in Jesus;

Role of the millennium

5. In what ways could this teaching series and class be improved? _____

Longer with more time for Q&A during the class when _____

questions are fresh; slow it down to bring out more application _____

for the church and to work through the details of some obscure _____

passages. _____

Any other comments: _____

APPENDIX 8

POST-PROJECT PARTICIPANTS' RESULTS FOR EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND CURRICULUM

To evaluate the effectiveness of this project, the class participants completed the “Post-Project Participants’ Evaluation of Teaching and Curriculum” after the course. This following appendix catalogs the various students’ answers by listing the average Likert-score for each statement. Any pertinent short-answer comments will only be addressed through the author’s assessment and recommendation in chapter five of this project. After the average score is listed, I provide a summary assessment for each statement.

The following scale provides the potential responses for each question and this chart also notes the numerical score assigned to each response according to the Likert-scale (i.e., Strongly Agree = 1, etc.).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6

1. The teaching series achieved its purpose to teach the Bible’s redemptive-historical storyline.

Post-Project Ave. Score	5.9
Analysis	By the students’ assessment, this project succeeded assuredly in its purpose to teach the redemptive-historical storyline.

2. The teaching material clearly and helpfully presented the Bible's redemptive storyline.

Post-Project Ave. Score 5.8
Analysis By the students' assessment, this project succeeded by clearly and helpfully presenting the Bible's storyline.

3. The teaching material was well organized.

Post-Project Ave. Score 5.68
Analysis By the students' assessment, this project succeeded through clear organization of the teaching material.

4. My knowledge of the Bible's redemptive storyline increased by means of this teaching series.

Post-Project Ave. Score 5.72
Analysis By the students' assessment, this project succeeded by increasing effectively the students' knowledge of the redemptive storyline.

5. The visuals helped the presentation of the Bible's storyline.

Post-Project Ave. Score 5.76
Analysis By the students' assessment, this project succeeded by utilizing helpful visuals that aided the learning process.

6. The homework aided my understanding of the Bible's storyline.

Post-Project Ave. Score 5.36
Analysis By the students' assessment, the homework helped the acquisition of the course material.

7. The homework honed my skills in interpreting the Bible in view of the redemptive storyline.

Post-Project Ave. Score 5.2
Analysis By the students' assessment, the homework provided helpful practice for interpreting the Bible by the redemptive storyline. However, judging by the comparative scores for these various questions, the homework proved to be the least helpful, major component to the course.

8. The teaching series increased my desire to read and study the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

Post-Project Ave. Score 5.6
Analysis By the students' assessment, this project increased the students' own desire to read and study the Bible.

9. I would encourage others to participate in this teaching series in the future.

Post-Project Ave. Score 6
Analysis The students would enthusiastically recommend this course to others.

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING THE BIBLE'S STORYLINE AT GRACE BIBLE CHURCH, MIDLOTHIAN, VIRGINIA

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This project taught the Bible's redemptive-historical storyline to members of an adult discipleship class at Grace Bible Church in Midlothian, Virginia. The first chapter presents the purpose, goals, and rationale for this project. Chapter 2 argues that the Scripture's main storyline traces the promise of redemption to its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Chapter 3 contends that an outline of the Bible's storyline structured by the major biblical covenants (i.e., Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New) better maintains the tension of continuity and discontinuity found within the Bible than do the outlines offered by traditional, Dispensational and Covenant theologians. The fourth chapter recounts the events and procedures from each week of the fifteen-week project. Chapter 5 analyzes the entire project by evaluating the attainment of purpose and goals and by extending theological and personal reflections. The analysis documents that the project's purpose was accomplished and all the projects goals were attained.

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