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SESSION 2 | The Story of Scripture, Parts 1 & 2

I. Introduction

- Biblical Theology is a way of reading the Bible in the way God has given it to us: in the form of one, unfolding, overarching story.
- The Bible's story is about God, and his interactions with his creation—primarily the crown of that creation, mankind—and how he worked (and *is* working) to bring about the redemption of creation, *especially* mankind.
- Because the climax of this story is Jesus Christ and what he did to accomplish salvation, every part of the story is connected to him.
- Biblical theology helps us to see the gospel at the center of the Bible, and everything else as somehow related to it.

II. The Storyline of the Bible

A. An Outline of the Bible's Story¹

Period 1 – Creation: The Kingdom Patterned (Gen. 1-2)

Period 2 – Fall: The Kingdom Lost (Gen. 3-11)

Period 3 – Promise: The Kingdom Hope (Gen. 12-50)

Period 4 – Nation: The Kingdom in Part (Exodus – 2 Chronicles)

Period 5 – Expectation: The Kingdom Prophesied (Ezra - Malachi)

Period 6 – Christ: The Kingdom Present (Matthew - John)

Period 7 – Church: The Kingdom Proclaimed (Acts - Jude)

Period 8 – Consummation: The Kingdom Perfected (Revelation)

¹ These headings are modified from a framework in *God's Big Picture*, by Vaughn Roberts (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2002).

B. The Framework of the Story: “The Kingdom of God”

- God’s redemption of his people is the subject of the story, but this story is set within a larger framework: “The Kingdom of God.”
- *The Kingdom of God*: God’s loving rule over his redeemed people (cf. Matt 5:3)
- A formula that captures the components of God’s kingdom in Scripture: “God’s people, in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing” (Graeme Goldsworthy)

III. Period 1 – Creation: The Kingdom Established (Gen. 1-2)

A. God creates all things

1. God is sovereign
 - Creation is portrayed as the powerful act of a sovereign God
 - Creation’s accountability to God: what God creates, he has the prerogative to rule. And what is created by God owes allegiance to God.
2. God is independent
 - God created on His own initiative—there was no outward force or necessity compelling him to create.
 - The Creator-creature distinction
3. God is purposeful
 - The “mechanism” of God’s creation: the Word of God

“That God creates by his word means not only that the universe is neither an absolute necessity nor an inevitable divine emanation, but also that it is no act of sudden impulse or arbitrary will. Creation is the work of the omnipotent God who acts consciously and rationally.”

Carl F.H. Henry

B. Man as the Crown of Creation

1. Man’s creation is unique (cf. “create”—Heb. *bara’*—vv. 1, 21, 27)

2. Man is created in God's image – v. 26
3. Man is delegated privileged responsibilities – vv. 26b-28
4. Man is the object of God's special care
 - Provision: a garden (2:8-9)
 - Human companionship: a mate (2:18-25)
 - Divine companionship (3:8)
5. Man is accountable to God – 2:15-17
6. God's creation is *very good* – 1:31
 - ***The pattern of the Kingdom:*** "God's people" (Adam & Eve) are in "God's Place" (Eden, a garden-temple). living under "God's rule & blessing"

IV. Period 2 – Fall: The Kingdom Lost (Gen. 3-11)

A. Sin enters the world

1. Sin is fundamentally against God: doing what he forbids or failing to do what he commands.
2. The sin was an indictment of God's character and a rejection of his authority.
3. At its root, sin is a desire to be God and to take the place of God.

B. The results of sin are immediate, destructive, and pervasive

1. Human antagonism
 - a. Loss of intimacy: shame
 - b. Distortion in man and woman's complementary roles
 - God told Eve (3:16): "Your desire (*teshûqā*) shall be for your husband."
 - God also told Eve, "He [Adam] shall rule (*māshal*) over you."

2. Functional distortion (in the relationship between man and creation)

	<u>Pre-fall</u>	<u>Post-fall</u>
Adam:	tilled ground (2:15) loving authority over Eve	tilled ground with hardship (3:17-19) exercised authority harshly
Eve:	bore children (1:28) created to help Adam	bore children in pain (3:16) opposes Adam & his leadership

3. Divine alienation

- a. Corruption of man's nature: shame and fear
- b. Banishment from God's presence
- c. Death

C. Sin spreads to all mankind

1. Cain and Abel (ch. 4)
2. Adam's descendants (ch. 5)
3. Mankind united in sin against God (11:1-4)

D. Humanity's evil calls forth God's judgment

1. Judgment in the garden
2. Judgment in the flood
 - Living creatures are killed (6:7)
 - The division between the earth and the waters is reversed
 - A return to the chaos of Gen. 1:2
3. Judgment at Babel (Gen 11)

E. In the midst of evil and judgment, God acts to preserve a people for himself

1. Enmity between the seed of the serpent and the woman (Gen. 3:15)

- God comes looking for Adam and Eve (Gen 3:8-9)
 - God clothes Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21)
 - God introduces hostility between the source of evil (the serpent) and the offspring of the woman (Gen 3:15)
2. The line of Seth (Gen 5)
 - The process of identifying the seed who will crush the serpent (Ge 3:15) has begun.
 3. The preservation of Noah (Gen 6-9)
 - In the flood God both (a) destroys the seed of the serpent (mankind given to evil), and (b) spares the righteous seed of the woman (Noah and his family).
 4. The line of Shem (Gen 11:10-32)

V. Gospel Connections

- A. The reality of a transcendent God who chose to create and who rules over His creation is the very cornerstone of a Christian worldview.
- B. Man's creation in God's image and reception of God's special care informs the idea of redemption.
- C. Man as a created being accountable to God gives meaning to key ideas such as sin, judgment, & redemption.
- D. Adam being in the image of God prepares for the "second Adam" who, being fully human yet sinless, will manifest all that the divine image in man would mean (Romans 8:29).
- E. Adam as the father of mankind shows us how sin spread to all people (Romans 5), and also shows us how, just as he represented mankind through his sinful actions, Christ can represent mankind through his righteousness (Romans 5).
- F. Eden is a pattern of the kingdom and establishes God's purpose for man: unhindered fellowship with God in a perfect, unspoiled environment.
- G. Adam & Eve's fall defines sin—rebellion against the Creator—and reveals why judgment is necessary.
- H. God's free grace is seen in His commitment to remove evil from mankind.
- I. God's promise concerning the woman's seed creates the expectation for the One who conquered Satan on the cross (Colossians 2:15) and will ultimately destroy him (Romans 16:20; Revelation 20:10).