An Overview of the New Testament

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.!

Or think about Moses, who lived out his 120 years, never even setting foot in that promised land, 40 years of which were spent wandering in a barren waste.
What would he say of the fruitful paradise that is the New Testament text? We have a rich blessing in the New Testament. And as we enter into the New Testament, we are also on the cusp of a new covenant, which contains the climax of the story that began in the Garden of Eden.
The new covenant, which God promised originally in Jeremiah 31, that this covenant would actually cleanse God's people. It was talked about in Ezekiel 36, where God says he would remove the heart of stone out of his people and give them a heart of flesh.
What we see in the Old Testament are shadows and symbols. What we see in the New Testament is substance and sight in living color. Here we meet in flesh and blood the prophet, priest, and king.
[1:33] We meet Jesus, the Messiah, the one in whom all of God's promises are yes and amen, according to 2 Corinthians 1. And yet as the Old Testament closes and we enter into the New Testament, there are still so many promises yet to be fulfilled.

As the Old Testament comes to a close, Israel is back in the promised lands, but there are people decimated by 70 years of captivity in Babylon, turned Persia.
They've lost their language. They know the language of the false gods, but they have lost their language that their Bible was written in, and so effectively they've lost their Bible as well.
They've lost their independence as a nation. They have a temple, but it's a playhouse compared to what Solomon originally built. Is this all there is to the story? Is God done with his people?
No. No. At the close of the Old Testament, God has still not made good on one very important promise. The promise he made in the garden to send a serpent-crushing king.
[2:48] He made that promise to Adam and Eve in roughly 4000 B.C. The last word he speaks to Israel is in 400 B.C. And now at the beginning of the New Testament, we're in roughly 4 B.C.

And still no Messiah. Will God keep his promise? God keep his promise. And here, the New Testament enters triumphantly and declares that God is not done.
God will keep all of his promises. His people have been faithless, but he has remained and will continue to remain faithful. And what is the New Testament's muse?
What is it that the New Testament focuses on? The New Testament has a laser-like focus on Christ. He is the heart of everything.
He is the center of it all. In the Gospels, Christ is described. In the Epistles, Christ is explained. In Revelation, Christ is exalted. Jesus is everything.
[3:48] And so for our study tonight, I want to ask and answer four questions pertaining to the Messiah. And I want to imagine that we are asking these questions as if we are standing in Old Testament territory on the threshold of the New.

And I want to let the New Testament give us its answers to these four questions. Who will Messiah be? What will Messiah do? Who will Messiah's people be?
And what will Messiah's kingdom be like? So question number one, who will Messiah be? The Bible started with, well, a beginning.
In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And what we see is the New Testament also begins with a beginning. Matthew 1, verse 1. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.
If we were to translate this very literally, verse 1 would read, the book of the genesis of Jesus Christ. And we begin the New Testament here with a genealogy.

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[5:04] Not exactly a totally captivating introduction for us from our perspective, but this is giving to us the lineage of the Messiah. And what we learn is that he had twisted stories in his family tree like the stories of Tamar.

He had heartwarming stories like the testimony of Ruth. And he had sad stories like the story of Bathsheba. One author said, And we find in Matthew 1, verse 18, that Jesus' birth was significant. His conception was significant. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.
So Christ was conceived of a virgin, Mary. And what we find, if we're reading carefully, is that Jesus is the last installment of this theme of unlikely births.
All throughout the Old Testament, when there is a woman who cannot conceive, or at least it's extremely unlikely that she would conceive, the male son she gives birth to is a heroic figure.
[6:45] You think of Sarah, unable to conceive, gives birth to a son of promise, Isaac. You think of Rebecca, who is unable to conceive, and then gives forth Jacob, whose name would become Israel.

You think of Rachel, Jacob's wife, who is unable to conceive, and she brings forth Joseph and Benjamin. In Judges 13, there's Manoah's wife, who is barren, and she gives forth Samson. Hannah gives birth to Samuel. Elizabeth gives birth to John the Baptist. And now we have this, the unlikeliest birth of all.
Jesus did not have an earthly father. We're expecting the seed of the woman, the Messiah, when he comes to have an unlikely birth.
And Jesus was brought forth of a virgin. Which is why, if you remember, the serpent-crushing king who was promised in Genesis 3.15 was described as the seed of a woman.
[7:52] Very strange description. And here it's made plain. He'd be born of a virgin. And again, Matthew starts with a genealogy, which seems like a strange start, but the Jews were high on genealogy because they were tracing the line of Messiah.

They were waiting for this promised one to come, and so they kept careful records of family lines. And the last book in the Hebrew Bible is 1 and 2 Chronicles.
And the first nine chapters of Chronicles is one long genealogy. And 2 Chronicles closes in chapter 36, verse 23, with King Cyrus speaking. He's letting the Jews go back to the promised land.
And he says, whoever would wish to go back, may Yahweh his God be with him. And we start the New Testament with a genealogy. Verse 23 of Matthew chapter 1, behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.
The Jewish Old Testament ends with this blessing from Cyrus that perhaps Yahweh would be with his people when they return to their land. And here we see that he is with them.
[9:12] God became man. Jesus took on flesh. He is God in flesh. Unlike the deliverers he had sent previously in the book of Judges, this one is God himself.

And God has been gracious to us to give us four portraits of this one Jesus. In Matthew, what we find as we read is it's written to a Jewish audience. Matthew emphasizes that Christ is the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament.
He is citing the Old Testament left and right as we read through it. Beyond that, Jesus has five major teaching sessions in the book of Matthew.
Just massive discourses, the Sermon on the Mount being the first. First, Matthew is showing us Jesus is the greater Moses who wrote five major books. Jesus is the fulfillment of what the Old Testament promises.
In Mark, we see from tradition, we learn that these are Peter's recollections for Gentile Christians in Rome and they emphasize Jesus' power over demons, over nature, over sickness.
[10:22] He is the Son of God. The Gospel of Luke is the Gospel for the outcast. First, Jesus has not just come for the Jews but for Gentiles as well.

And in Luke 19.10, the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Coming on the heels of him saving a tax collector in Zacchaeus. In John, we get a unique focus on Jesus' Messiahship and divinity.
In John 23.1 says that these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John teaches us that Jesus was God made flesh.

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Jesus is the only way to be reconciled to the Father. So who will Messiah be? He will be both God and man. He will be the only way to God in order to be reconciled to him.
Secondly, what will Messiah do? What will Messiah do? The Jews rightly expected the Messiah to wear the crown of David and to sit on Israel's throne but they wrongly expected him not to suffer.
[11:35] And what we learn from reading the New Testament is that the cross would come before the crown. And again, this idea of a suffering servant is in the Old Testament.

We can look back with great clarity and see Isaiah's predictions of the Son of God suffering but they couldn't see it quite as clearly as we can now. They couldn't see it in the shadows but now the substance has come and it's been revealed and made plain to us.
And ultimately, what Messiah would do is forgive sin. And this was a nagging riddle in the Old Testament. In Exodus 34, 6 and 7, God reveals himself to Moses as Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness but who will by no means clear the guilty.
How can a righteous God both forgive sin and hold guilty men accountable for their sin?
In Isaiah 43, 25, God simply says, I will remember your sin no more. In Micah 7, 19, he says, I will cast your sins into the bottom of the sea.
[12:53] How is it that a righteous God can simply not remember sin? How is it that an all-knowing God can simply cast our sins away from us?

Christ is the answer to this riddle. Christ is the one in whom the guilty are punished and set free. Christ did not come for himself.
He came for his people. And not just for his people, he came to make his people. Again, Luke 19, 10, he came to seek and to save the lost. And if you'll turn with me now to John chapter 19, we see how he will make a people for himself.
In John 1, we'll get to John 19 in a moment. In John 1, Jesus is walking and he walks past John the Baptist, the one who had prepared the way for him.
And John the Baptist says, Behold, pointing and talking about Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And in John 19, verses 34 through 37, we see this again that Christ will make a people for himself by being the Lamb of God.
[14:26] John 19, 34, But one of the soldiers pierced his side, that's Jesus' side, with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness, that's John.

His testimony is true and he knows that he is telling the truth that you also may believe. For these things took place that Scripture might be fulfilled. not one of his bones will be broken.
And what's quoted there is from Exodus 12, talking about the Passover Lamb. John, the author of this Gospel, introduces us to Jesus by calling him the Lamb of God and at the end of his life shows us he is the ultimate fulfillment of the Passover Lamb and that not one of his bones was broken as he was offered in place of his people.
It's through the shedding of this Lamb's blood that God now has a people who are not just ceremonially clean but actually clean. This Lamb could actually atone for sin and actually take it away through his death on the cross and he trusted God, his Father, through the entire process. Adam and Eve did not trust God in the garden when they were tested. Yet Jesus always trusted God especially in the garden when he was tested.
[15:55] Jesus entrusted himself to the one who judges justly as 1 Peter 2 says. His death on the cross made it for us a tree of life through which we can obtain eternal life.

And what all of this means, what this sacrifice and his resurrection means for us occupies the bulk of the New Testament. The New Testament is simply teaching us these things and applying them. Teaching us these things and showing us how we should live in light of them. And just a point of interest is this is how the Bible always works.
The story comes before the teaching. The historical event is the foundation from which the teaching comes. And this is contrary to every other religious text that's ever been written.
In the Bible something happens in history and God teaches from that. In every other religion they get that backwards. They affirm what they want to teach and make up a story that explains it.
[17:01] Mormonism wants to teach that Jesus is not divine, that God is not the only one. And so they make up a story that Joseph Smith found tablets. Islam wants us to believe that Christ is not divine, that he was just a prophet.

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And so Muhammad was visited by an angel giving him a new revelation. Or even in our context thinking of evolution which is very much a religious belief they want to teach that God did not create the universe and so they make up a story of how the universe was created.
This is how false religions work and this is what sets the Bible apart from everything else. It gives us a story and it teaches from it. It explains who Jesus is and what he did and teaches us how to live from that true story.
So, who will Messiah be? What will Messiah do? Thirdly, who will Messiah's people be? Who will Messiah's people be? In addition to his people being holy and clean in the new covenant, what else will be true about them?
Who will comprise this group of holy people? What we learn is this group will be comprised of Jews and Gentiles.
[18:26] And this really picks up steam in Acts and in the epistles as the gospel spreads. You can go with me to the book of Acts chapter 11. Specifically in verses 14 through 18.

The book of Acts is Luke's part 2. In the beginning of Acts, Luke explains that he wrote in the gospel according to Luke all that Jesus began to do and now Acts is what Jesus is continuing to do on earth through the Holy Spirit and through his church.
And in Acts chapter 10, the gospel has gone to a Gentile and he and his household were saved in the same manner that the apostles received the Holy Spirit so Cornelius and his people received the Holy Spirit in Acts 10.
Now, the Jews were not fans of this. They had a lot of questions about this. They'd never seen Gentile salvation like this and so Peter now has to go back to Jerusalem in chapter 11 and explain what took place.
The Jews were wanting to enforce the old covenant upon these Gentiles telling them they needed to be circumcised and observe Moses' commandments in order to be Christians and Peter is pushing back on them by explaining what he saw.
[19:46] Verse 15 of Acts 11, Peter says, As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. You can see Acts 2 for that.

And I remembered the word of the Lord how he said, John baptized with water but you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?
So Peter is saying this is what took place when I saw these things happening. Who am I that I could stand in God's way? And that phrase is particularly powerful because Peter had stood in God's way before.
When Jesus announced that he would be crucified, Peter said, May it never be, Lord. And Jesus said, Get out of my way. Peter had stood in Christ's path before.
Peter had tried to prevent what God was doing before and learned his lesson and now is saying, I am done with that. This is what God did among the Gentiles. Who am I to stand in his way again?
[20:50] In verse 18, when they heard these things they fell silent and they glorified God saying, Then to the Gentiles also, God has granted repentance that leads to life.

What the New Testament hones in on in a number of places is that salvation is not by works or nationality or bloodline. It is by grace through faith in Christ.
That is how someone is saved according to the New Testament. In Galatians 2, Paul fleshes this out. Peter actually had a problem with this. He was acting differently around Jewish brothers than he was around Gentile brothers and so Paul calls him out in Galatians 2.
In Ephesians 2, Paul is writing and says, you know, formerly in the temple there used to be a dividing wall. The Gentiles could only go so far in worshiping God but now he has brought down the dividing wall of hostility through his blood and those who are far off have now been brought near.
God's people will be made up of Jews and Gentiles in the New Covenant. And if you'll turn with me to Revelation chapter 7, we'll see this in the end of time put on full display.
[22:13] Revelation also being written by the Apostle John at the end of his life, roughly 100 A.D. He was an old man at that point having followed Christ in the 30s A.D.

And he writes of what he sees. And at the last times during the tribulation he sees in Revelation 7, verse 4, I heard the number of the sealed.
144,000 sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel. 12,000 we see from each of these 12 tribes. we see that though God has grafted us Gentiles into his promises, he is not done with Israel.

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He is not done with the Jewish race. To them, he says in chapter 9, belong the covenants and the promises and the fathers. God is not done with the people of Israel.
And we see salvation pour out on the Jewish nation in the last days. But flip over with me to chapter 8, or excuse me, verse 9 of chapter 7.
[23:21] After this, so after the vision of the 144,000, I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

God's people under the new covenant will be Jews and Gentiles. We see this in Revelation 7 as he returns his attention to the people of Israel and pouring out salvation on them and John still sees before the throne of God a mixed multitude of every language, of every nation, of every tribe from all across the expanse of the earth worshiping and praising God.
God. And so what will Messiah's kingdom be like finally? What will Messiah's kingdom be like?
As Christ continues to build his church, we wait and pray and sing for his kingdom to come, for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven and this is exactly what we find taking place at the end of the New Testament.
And so turn with me now to Revelation 21. What we see in Revelation 21 and 22 is that the church victorious shall be the church at rest and everything will be recreated forever.
[25:06] Revelation 21, I'll read the first four verses. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.
He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God.
He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.
Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. the new Jerusalem the capital of the new heavens and the new earth will be like Eden but so much better.
There Christ himself will comfort us, console us, he will cherish us and we will worship him. No longer in the shadows, no longer in the promises but seeing the substance, seeing him in all of his transcendent glory before us, comforting us, serving us as he promised.
[26:23] And we will see him. We will stand before him in awe praising him and Eden in all of its splendor and all of its intimacy with God will seem but a shadow in the past because now God will dwell with us forever.

And there's no potential of sin coming between us. There's no potential of being sent east of this place like Adam and Eve were sent east of Eden. This will be forever.
And if you look at verse 16, the last phrase of chapter, verse 16, chapter 21, talking about this new Jerusalem, its length and width and height are equal.
What John's describing is a cube and the dimensions of the Holy of Holies were perfectly cubed. the entire city will be like the presence of God.
This will be the fulfillment of the pattern that Moses saw on the mountain. Moses was building the tabernacle and ultimately the temple was built off a pattern seen in heaven and here it is.
[27:32] God dwelling with his people. And if you skip down to verse 22 of chapter 21, John says, I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

Verse 23, and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives its light and its lamp is the Lamb. No more mediation.
No more pattern. Only substance. No more placeholders. The sun and the moon themselves will be done away with which are only placeholders of light. God himself will be the light.
We will approach him immediately. We will be before him because we have no more sin. We have no more battle raging within us against our own thoughts and our own minds. We will be with him without shame and without hiding.
In chapter 22, verse 1, then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city, also on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit yielding its fruit each month.

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[28:49] The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and his servants will worship him or literally, his servants will serve him.

They will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads and night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun for the Lord God will be their light and they will reign forever and ever. This is a new Eden with no serpent. This is the new heavens and the new earth with no sin. And all the way back in the book of Habakkuk, God had promised that the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh would fill the earth, would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea and Isaiah in his vision of the Lord in chapter 6 verse 3 hears a report that the glory of God has filled the earth and that promise will be kept as God makes all things new.
And I'm a fan of the Chronicles of Narnia because I'm a child and in the last book, the last battle, C.S. Lewis has summed up the stories of Narnia and he says, I believe it's his niece he's writing these books for, he says, and for us, this is the end of all the stories.
But for them, it was only the beginning of the real story which goes on forever in which every chapter is better than the one before.
[30:27] And friends, when we experience the glory of Revelation 21 and 22, we will look back on our seemingly long lives on earth and understand them only as the preface and introduction of our life's story, of the ultimate story.

When we've been there 10,000 years, bright shining as the sun, we'll have no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun. But until then, God has given us his word which contains his promises and he calls us to trust him.
And as we believe in and trust in Jesus, his righteousness becomes our righteousness. And this is the gospel hope we have and this is what the Bible is all about from beginning to end.
What a gift we have in the New Testament in particular. Let us not lose sight of how much it reveals to us. So many before us would have rejoiced just to glimpse the promises it contains and it is our privilege to read them.
So let us rejoice in the blessing of seeing God's promises kept while we await the complete fulfillment of the totality of his promises in the new heavens and the new earth.
[31:44] And until we get there, let us not just rejoice in what we read. Let us also rejoice in the task of reading itself. This is how God has revealed himself to us.

Let us pray for us. Our Father, we are left speechless by the glories we have glimpsed. We are left■… We are leftính we are left with our feet of their feet and we are left we are left for us to believe in the beginning of what we've read.
We are able to watch all of us and see with us to try and see this will be on the left. We are right in the left. We are right in the next moment. We are right in the next moment.

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