

Dr. Dave Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Lecture 2

© 2011, Dave Mathewson and Ted Hildebrandt

Review Genesis 1-3 and Abraham

In the last lecture we looked at the setting of the story, what I call the storyline of the Bible, the setting in Genesis 1-3, which introduces both the setting and the complication where God creates humanity, creates Adam and Eve, to be his people. He enters into a covenant relationship, gives them the land as a gracious gift, as a place of blessings. As God's image bearers they are to represent God's kingship. As God's vice-regents they represent the sovereign and suzerain, God's rule over all creation. They are to spread God's rule and his glory throughout all creation and God will dwell in their midst. Yet sin enters the scene. Adam and Eve violate the covenant relationship with God, they are exiled from the Garden, the place of blessings, so that at the end of chapter 3 of Genesis, which could be seen as the major break in the storyline, after that the question still arises: if God isn't going to scrap the whole project, how is God going to restore his original intentions for creation?

We moved forward rather quickly and looked at the next major event in the story: God's choice and calling of Abraham. God chose Abraham to enter into a covenant relationship with him so that from Abraham would produce an offspring, a nation of people. God would give them the land as a place of blessing. God would enter a covenant relationship with them; and they were then to spread God's rule over all creation and fulfill God's mandate to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth with God's glory. They were to fulfill that mandate. The nation of Israel would be God's means of accomplishing that intention and to continue that story. We saw then that with the further selection of Moses and the covenant God makes with Moses, more specifically, the Mosaic covenant is the means by which the nation of Israel will fulfill God's intention expressed in the covenant God made with Abraham and God's intentions for all of creation, for humanity from Genesis 1 and 2.

Introduction to the Exodus Storyline

So then the book of Exodus begins with God, not only with his choice of Moses, but also begins with Israel, especially in chapter 1. Again what I want to do is simply move through the story of Israel starting in Genesis, rather quickly and focusing mainly on the Pentateuchal narrative from Exodus through Deuteronomy but at times bringing a couple of other texts in as well to start to fill out the story. Exodus begins with the story of Israel. Again I simply want to highlight the dominant themes and threads of the story, such as: covenant people of God, God's temple dwelling in Eden, images of Eden, God dwelling with his people, being fruitful and multiplying, functioning as God's vice-regent to represent his rule and spread his rule throughout all creation. I want to highlight how those themes begin to emerge and get picked up and fulfilled in the ensuing story beginning with Israel.

Israel's Multiplying

So Exodus, chapter 1 and verse 12, begins this way, I'll back up to verse 11. So Israel now is in Egypt, which is where the Genesis narrative ends. Exodus begins with Israel in Egypt and it says in verse 11, "Therefore, they set task masters over them [the Israelites] to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities Pithom and Rameses for Pharaoh. But the more they [the more the Israelites] were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites." Notice that in this section in verse twelve, this reference to Israel multiplying and spreading reflects God's intentions for Adam and Eve in Genesis 1 and 2 that they would be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Now Israel, as God's newly chosen people, as the means by which God will restore his intention for creation that was not fulfilled with Adam and Eve. Now Israel, as God's people, is fulfilling the roll for being fruitful and multiplying. So they are increasing and spreading as was God's intention in Genesis 1 and 2, and as was God's intention for Abraham in Genesis 12 and the later sections of the Abraham story where Abraham's offspring would be more numerous than the stars of the sky.

But their situation in Egypt constitutes a threat to God's intention for them, for his people, going back to Genesis 1 and 2, so that God must deliver them from Egypt and

God's deliverance of his people from Egypt becomes the model for how God will subsequently act to rescue his people in bringing them to fulfill their intention from Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Now that brings us to Exodus chapter 3. This is where Moses comes in; Moses will be the one who will lead the Israelites out of Egypt in order to fulfill God's intention to bring them to the land, the place of blessing so they can fulfill their intention from creation. So that in Exodus chapter 3:6-8, this is where God first appears to Moses. What I want you to notice is how God's intention to rescue Israel is tied in with the promises made to Abraham. This is all linked to the land and again which is in a sense multi-layered in that it goes all the way back to creation and Genesis 1 and 2. So that according to Exodus chapter 3, God says to Abraham, "I am the God of you father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." So God clearly announces his intention with Moses and Israel to keep his promise made to Abraham, which again was the means by which God would restore his people to their original intention. This means God would restore his intention for his entire creation for his people from Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Israel and the land

So again Israel is to be rescued from Egypt. The reason they're rescued from Egypt again is tied in with God keeping the covenant that he made with Abraham. So that God brings them out of Egypt in order to settle them in the land that God promised to Abraham. But it's the promise to Abraham to bring Abraham into the land which was itself meant to fulfill God's intention to give the land as a place of blessing, as a gracious gift to his people all the way back in Genesis chapter 1 and 2.

So notice, for example, throughout the Pentateuch how the land, especially in the promises, not just in the promises made to Abraham, but the promises made to Moses, how the land is described as a place, for example, flowing with milk and honey. So verse 8 of Exodus chapter 3, it says, "Indeed I know their suffering and I have come down to deliver them [the Israelites] from the land of Egypt and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, that is, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of

the Canaanites.” So again this land is clearly connected with the fruitfulness that existed with the original creation from Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Now God declares his intention through Moses and through Israel and bringing them out of Egypt to bring them to the land, to restore his original intention for creation. For example, again in Deuteronomy chapter 28, to go to the very last book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy 28 starting with verse 11. Again I want you to notice all the connections with Eden, the notion of fruitfulness and this idea of plants springing up and the fruitfulness of creation, and the land as a place of blessing. This is all meant to go back and recall Genesis 1 and 2 and the original creation as a place of blessing and a gracious gift of the land to the people with all its fruitfulness. So Deuteronomy 28, starting with verse 11, this is God’s promise to the Israelites, as they’re about to go into the land, “The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground in the land that the LORD swore to your ancestors [Abraham] to give you. The LORD will open for you his rich storehouse, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all your undertakings. You will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow. The LORD will make you the head, and not the tail; you shall be only at the top, and not at the bottom-- if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today, by diligently observing them, and if you do not turn aside from any of the words that I am commanding you today, either to the right or to the left, following other gods to serve them.”

So notice two things: number one, the connection of this promise to Israel of blessing in the land, the connection back to Abraham that this is part of God’s intention to restore and fulfill what he promised to Abraham. But also the connections back to Genesis 1 and 2 in creation, all this language of fruitfulness and blessing in the land is ultimately meant to reflect God’s original intention for his creation from Genesis 1 and 2, that the land is a place of fruitfulness and blessing for Adam and Eve and for the people of God, if they would obey. Now the same condition exists here. If they will obey God’s covenant relationship with them and the covenant stipulations, and be careful to observe

everything God commands them, then they will enjoy blessing in the land just as Adam and Eve did.

Israel and the Covenant

But that brings us to the next theme, another theme I want to touch upon, that is God's covenant relationship that we've already talked about, the covenant that God makes with Israel, the Mosaic covenant. The books of Exodus through Deuteronomy generally give the legal and the cultic basis for God's covenant with his people. So God, in Exodus through Deuteronomy, God elects Israel as his people and again, just like Adam and Eve in the Garden who were in covenant relationship with God, their ability to remain in the Garden and to enjoy its fruitfulness and blessing was conditioned upon obedience. If they refuse to obey, that is eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God forbid them to eat from, if they transgress that then they would be removed from the land, the place of God's blessing, the place of God's presence. Indeed, that's exactly what happened.

The same is true with the covenant relationship that God enters into with the nation of Israel. He elects them as his people. He brings them to the land in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2. Part of the covenant stipulation, then is that they will enjoy the fruitfulness and blessing of creation of the land as God's gracious provision if they keep God's commandments.

So again, let me read part of Deuteronomy chapter 28, just the first few verses, "If you will only obey the LORD your God, by diligently observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth; all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the LORD your God: Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, both the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way,

and flee before you seven ways. The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns, and in all that you undertake; he will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.”

So, clearly, the blessing that they are to enjoy in the land, just like Adam and Eve in the original creation in the Garden of Eden, was conditioned as part of the covenant upon their obedience. Refusal to obey will result in a curse and will result in exile from the land.

So, for example, again in Deuteronomy, this blessing and cursing theme is part of the covenant that runs all throughout the book of Deuteronomy. But Deuteronomy chapter 6 and verses 1-3, “Now this is the commandment-- the statutes and the ordinances-- that the LORD your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, so that you and your children and your children's children may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.”

Again, this motif linking this back with the ancestors, with Abraham, but the language of multiplying, that goes back to the creation narrative. This suggests again that Israel, about to enter the land and God’s promise, will enjoy blessing and multiplication in the land as part of God’s original intention for his people. It goes all the way back to creation.

Back to Deuteronomy chapter 28 again, the first part of chapter 28 that we just read promises blessing in the land if they will obey. But notice chapter 28 and verses 62-64 of Deuteronomy. Again, notice the connections back to the covenant with Abraham and even back to creation. Verse 62, “Although once you were as numerous as the stars in heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the LORD your God. And just as the LORD took delight in making you prosperous and numerous,” again in fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham and also the mandate to Adam and

Eve to be fruitful and multiply, “And just as the LORD took delight in making you prosperous and numerous, so the LORD will take delight in bringing you to ruin and destruction; you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to possess. The LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known.” So the accompanying promise of blessing in the land, if they obey is also the accompanying promise of cursing and exile from the land, if they disobey.

So again, the Mosaic covenant is God’s promise to Israel. It is through the covenant established with Moses and the nation of Israel, that Israel will fulfill God’s intention for the covenant he made with Abraham, but ultimately his intention for creation established back in Genesis 1 and 2. Again there are other texts we could look at. As I said, Deuteronomy is filled with the language of blessing and cursing, which goes back and reflects the creation account of blessing and cursing. Again the promise of exile from the land if they refuse to obey, removal from God’s presence, from the place of blessing and fruitfulness. All that reflects both the Abrahamic covenant, which also goes back to the original intention of God for all his creation and for his people.

Temple/tabernacle

Now the next theme I want to talk about, again we’ve talked about people of God, we’ve talked about covenant, we’ve talked about land, and how those link back to Genesis and to creation; as God’s intention to fulfill his original mandate for creation and for his people from Genesis.

The next theme is tabernacle and temple. Again I’ll kind of treat these together as I understand it. Basically the tabernacle is a portable version of the temple. The temple was a more permanent version of the tabernacle. So the tabernacle was suitable as the Israelites wandered in the wilderness on their way to the land. Once they were there, settled and established, then a more permanent structure was built in the form of a temple. But generally I think they both served the similar purpose and that is the tabernacle that accompanied Israel in the wilderness as they left Egypt and made their way to the Promised Land, the tabernacle was emblematic of God’s dwelling and his

presence with his people. Then finally when they build a temple, a more permanent place of God's dwelling, the temple was emblematic of God's presence with his people. No doubt the temple was significant for other reasons as well, but at the heart of it, the temple was a place where God dwelled with his people.

Now as we already said, the significance of this is that the Garden of Eden in Genesis, and in a sense, all of creation, was meant to be sacred space, the place where God dwelled with his people. In a sense, the Garden of Eden was to be understood as God's temple, or God's tabernacle; where God's presence rested, came to rest at the completion of the building of the temple. By the way, sometime read the account of the building of the tabernacle in Exodus 25 and following, and the account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, and notice the similarities between the two. Genesis 1 and 2, again God is constructing a dwelling place, a temple, a sanctuary where his presence will come to rest with his people.

Now the garden was sacred space. So again both the tabernacle and the temple, I take it, were meant to be replicas, in a sense, of the Garden of Eden. We've already looked at some of the similarities between the Garden of Eden as described in Genesis 1 and 2 and the temple. For example, we see in the temple, both the tabernacle and the temple actually, that gold is one of the dominant metals of which the tabernacle and the temple were made. When you go back to Genesis chapter 2 and the description of the Garden of Eden it's intriguing that gold is one of the precious stones found in the area of Eden. We also talked about the concept of God resting, as God's dwelling or his presence resting in the temple. The idea of the luminaries and the lights that reflect the lampstand in the temple and the lampstand perhaps reflect the tree of life as well.

So we already saw a number of temple motifs, motifs in the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and 2 that get picked up in the descriptions of the temple later on. But again, the temple and the tabernacle were meant to be replicas of the Garden of Eden. They were kind of the Garden of Eden in miniature, the Garden of Eden *en nous*. So again the temple and tabernacle in a sense were meant to be a picture of eventually what all of creation was to be like, with God's presence permeating the whole, with God's glory and

his rule and kingship filling all of creation--again Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So the temple and tabernacle were pictures of what eventually all of creation was to look like. As we said, gold was one of the prominent materials. All you have to do is read through the description of the tabernacle in Exodus 25 and following, then read through 1 Kings 5-7, the account of the construction of the temple and notice the prominent role that gold plays. Again gold is one of the precious metals found back in Genesis 2 in the description of paradise and the Garden of Eden.

But notice, and we already said much of Jewish literature, for example, apocalyptic literature and other literature depicted Adam as a priest who functioned as a priest in the Garden of Eden. It depicted the Garden of Eden as the place of God's presence, where the light of God's glory shone throughout the entire garden.

But there's a number of other interesting indications, for example look at 1 Kings chapter 6, which is part of the description of the construction of the temple by Solomon. 1 Kings chapter 6 and verses 29 and 30, it says, "he carved the walls of the house all around about with carved engravings of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers in the inner and outer rooms. The floor of the house he overlaid with gold, in the inner and outer rooms." We've already mentioned gold, but why is the temple engraved with carvings of cherubim, these angelic beings, and palm trees and open flowers? Probably because they are reflecting the fruitfulness of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 and in the Garden of Eden that had the trees, including the tree of life. The trees springing up and the plants springing up gave fruit. Most likely then the carvings on the temple are meant to reflect that. Again the carvings of the cherubim perhaps reflecting the two cherubim that guard the entrance to the Garden of Eden, the temple, the temple-Garden, the sacred space, after Adam and Eve were exiled because of their disobedience. So the engravings of plants and palm trees recall the fruitfulness of the original creation and the original paradise.

It's interesting as well that when the Ark of the Covenant is built, in chapter 6 you read about this as well. There are two cherubim that guard it, that kind of watch over it. Now they're placed in the holy of holies. Again the cherubim that guard the holy of

holies where God's presence is particularly manifested probably reflect the two cherubim, the angelic beings, that guard the entrance to the Garden of Eden, the place of God's presence in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Interestingly, the lampstand, as I said, reflects the tree of life in the Garden of Eden.

In Ezekiel chapter 47, in the next lecture we'll talk more about the prophetic expectation and how that fits into where the storyline is going. But in Ezekiel 47, we find a description of, actually Ezekiel 40-48 is Ezekiel's vision of a restored temple and this will play a key role in our understanding of the storyline. But in chapter 47 Ezekiel describes the temple as a place where a river flows out of it. This again is very similar, and in fact the river has trees on either side that give off fruit, all of that recalls the description of the Garden of Eden back in Genesis chapter 2, where a river flows out of it, the tree of life, the fruitfulness, etc.

So what this suggests is clearly the temple and tabernacle were meant to be replicas of the Garden of Eden, again kind of a picture, a snapshot, or a portrait in miniature of what God intended for the entirety of his creation. A place of blessing and fruitfulness where God would dwell in the midst of his people and God's glory and his rule would be spread throughout the entirety of creation in fulfillment of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. That is now beginning to be fulfilled and that is now crystalized in, or demonstrated in, the establishment of both the tabernacle and the temple as the place of God's blessing, again as I like to call it, the Temple-Garden. So the theme of Temple-Garden is clearly indicated in the ongoing story of God's dealing with Israel. Again Israel is God's means of restoring his original intention for creation.

Kingship in Israel

Another dominant theme found in the story of Israel is that of kingship. This is reflected in two ways. Number one, already back in Exodus chapter 19 and verse 6, "Israel was to be a kingdom of priests." So notice both the priestly or temple imagery, but also the kingship imagery. Again, the intention for Israel to be a kingdom of priests clearly reflects, God's intention for humanity: to rule over creation and to spread God's glory and presence throughout this temple-Garden from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Adam

and Eve failed at that and were exiled. Now Israel, as the kingdom of priests, is God's means of fulfilling that intention.

Yet more specifically the theme of kingship, or ruler-ship, or Adam and Eve functioning as God's vice-regent is expressed more clearly and reflected in Israel's king and even more particularly in the Davidic covenant. So if you go to, for example, 2 Samuel chapter 7, which is the establishment of God's covenant with David. Most of the expectations of fulfillment of a Davidic king, Messianic promises throughout the Old and New Testament go back to 2 Samuel chapter 7. But in 2 Samuel chapter 7, and particularly the verses around verse 14, let me back up to verse 8, and this is God's promise to David, "Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name." Notice the connection with the Abrahamic covenant to give Israel a great name, to make Abraham's great name, "like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies."

Notice all these themes that go back to both the Abrahamic covenant, but also back to creation. The theme of giving him rest in the land recalls God resting, the resting of God's presence in the land. Again, the theme of Israel being planted in the land, the theme of blessing, the theme of David's name being made great. All of these connect the Davidic promise and this covenant God makes with David, not only back to the promise made to Abraham, but also back to creation itself. Again you see this continuing story. These are not separate covenants, or separate plans being enacted to try to get things right; they are all integrally connected all the way back, ultimately, to the creation narrative as the means by which God will bring about his intention for creation that was first of all established with Adam and Eve back in Genesis 1 and 2.

Notice further, verse 12, is another connection back with both Abraham and

creation. In verse 12 David is told, “When your days are fulfilled, [or finished] and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body and I will establish his kingdom.” So David is also promised that his offspring, much like Abraham was promised an offspring, David too is promised that his offspring will be raised up.

So what this all suggests is that God’s promise to Abraham is fulfilled ultimately through the Davidic king, by God choosing David. But also the creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 is fulfilled in the Davidic covenant also. But if I can go further, verses 13 and 14, still in 2 Samuel, chapter 7, “He shall build a house for my name,” referring to David’s offspring, “and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a Father to him and he shall be a son to me.” Notice the covenant language of “I will be his father, I will be your God and you will be my people, I will be the father and you will be my son.” So what is taking place here is God is promising David a perpetual throne, that there would always be someone from David’s seed, one of David’s offspring who would sit on his throne and rule over Israel in fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham. Connected with that is the idea that Israel will be in the land, God will restore them in the land, and king David will rule over them and give them rest.

Now what that suggests to me is, that and this is very important, the Davidic king is the means by which God fulfills his intention from Genesis 1 and 2 of humanity ruling over all creation. Again, remember back in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 Adam and Eve are created in God’s image in order to rule over all creation, as God’s representative, they are God’s vice-regent. Now the way that God will ultimately restore that is by choosing, not just the nation of Israel but more specifically, a king to rule over Israel as God’s vice-regent. This is the way God’s intention to rule over all creation, through his vice-regents in Genesis 1 and 2 is now ultimately going to be established.

For example, Psalm chapter 2 and a number of the Psalms are what are often called Royal Psalms, they refer to the Davidic king ruling over his people. And Psalm chapter 2 and verse 8, notice that the ultimate scope of the king’s rule in Psalm chapter 2: “Why do the nations conspire and the people plot in vain? The kings of the earth set

themselves and the rulers take council together against the Lord and his anointed saying, ‘Let us burst their bonds asunder and cast their chords from us.’ He who sits in heaven laughs. The Lord has them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury saying, ‘I have set my King, [that is, king David, or the offspring of David] I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.’ I will tell of the decree of the Lord. He said to me, ‘You are my son, today I have begotten you.’” There’s the covenant formula. “‘Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the end of the earth for your possession.’” So ultimately, the Davidic king was to rule over the entire creation as God’s vice-regent in fulfillment of the vice-regency that was to be manifested in Adam and Eve, as God’s image bearers to rule over all creation.

So again, I take it that the Davidic king is God’s vice-regent who rules ultimately to establish his rule over all creation in fulfillment of the original mandate to Adam and Eve, as God’s image bearers to rule over all creation. So the people living in the land with God dwelling in their midst in the temple and God ruling over them with the Davidic king ruling on behalf of the people are ultimately seen as the ultimate fulfillment and bringing about of God’s intention, not only for establishment of the Abrahamic covenant, but even further, going back to his establishing, his restoring of the conditions of creation. So with these conditions now existing, Israel is to be a light to all the nations and Israel is to declare God’s glory and praise among the nations and to extend God’s sovereignty throughout the entire earth, again in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2.

Conditionality of the Covenant

However, although these conditions exist, we have to go back to remember the covenant stipulations that God makes with Israel through the Mosaic covenant all the way back in Deuteronomy, that these conditions would continue to exist as long as Israel obeys and keeps the covenant stipulations, in the same way that Adam and Eve would in order to remain in the land of blessing. They would fulfill God’s mandate to rule over all creation, and to spread his glory through all creation, as long as they obeyed. The same is true with Israel, as long as they obey, they will remain in the land, the place of God’s blessing, experience it’s fruitfulness under the rule of the Davidic king and fulfill the

mandate to spread God's rule and glory over all creation. The Davidic king is God's vice-regent with God dwelling in the midst in the temple. That condition would exist as long as Israel keeps the covenant relationship. However, if Israel fails, then they will be exiled just like Adam and Eve were. They will be exiled from the land, the place of blessing and they will fail then to fulfill the mandate that ultimately goes back to creation.

And in fact, as the story goes, that's exactly what Israel does. Israel fails to keep the covenant. They sin, they go after other idols and because they disobey therefore, if you remember your Old Testament history, God has them carted off into exile. They are exiled from the land, the place of God's blessing, the place of God's presence with his people and they are removed to a foreign land, a place of oppression and a place of exile

For example, notice back to 1 Kings. Interestingly at the end of the description of the construction of the Temple in 1 Kings chapters 5-7. Later on towards the end of that, in chapter 9, I'll start with chapter 9 and verse 1 and I'll read through verse 7. 1 Kings chapter 9:

“When Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house and all that Solomon desired to build, the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. The LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you made before me; I have consecrated this house that you have built, and put my name there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time. As for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my ordinances [that is from the Mosaic Law], then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised your father David, saying, "There shall not fail you a successor on the throne of Israel.” So that's the blessing part of the covenant that God established for his people. However, verses 6 and 7: “If you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut Israel off from the land that I have given them; and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight; and Israel will become a proverb and a taunt among

all peoples. This house will become a heap of ruins.””

And in fact, that’s exactly what happened to Israel. Because they failed to obey and keep the covenant relationship with God, they again are exiled from the land, the temple is destroyed, God’s presence is removed from it, and Israel’s removed from the land of blessing, from the place of God’s dwelling and presence. Now they find themselves in exile outside of the land and in a place outside of God’s blessing and presence.

Israel and the Garden of Eden

Now what I want you to notice is the clear parallels between the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis chapters 1 and 3 and the situation with Israel now in the narrative that we’ve so quickly moved through. First of all, again in Genesis 1 and 2 we find Adam and Eve, the first people of God in the land, a place of God’s blessing, a place where God dwells with them, a place where they again are in covenant relationship with God. Yet because they failed to obey God and their end of the covenant, they are exiled from the land, the place blessing. They’re exiled from the Garden, the place of blessing and the place of God’s presence. So Adam and Eve fail. Now Israel as the people of God also are brought to the land, the place of God’s blessing, the place where God dwells now in the miniature Garden of Eden, the Temple. Yet they also sin, they fail to keep the covenant relationship, and they too are exiled from the land.

So in a sense, then, Israel does not fare any better than Adam and Eve do. Adam and Eve fail to accomplish God’s original intention for creation, and are exiled from the land. Israel comes along and they are given the same mandate, they are to be fruitful, multiply, they are to spread God’s rule and glory throughout all creation through their Davidic king. God dwells with them in the form of the temple. In the land they experience blessing and fruitfulness, but they too fail to fulfill God’s intention for creation, and they also are exiled.

So the question then at the end of Israel’s history remains, how then will God restore his original intention for all humanity and for all creation begun in Genesis 1 and 2, but now ruined and thwarted because of sin? Again we just saw, Israel didn’t fare any

better than Adam and Eve did. They also failed to accomplish God's intention. They also sinned and they also were exiled from the place of God's blessing.

Summary/Review

So again, to recap the story Adam and Eve were created as God's image bearers to represent God and spread his glory and his rule as God's vice-regents to spread his rule throughout all creation. God graciously gives them the Land that they are to live in. God will dwell with them. They will enjoy blessing, as long as they obey. Adam and Eve refuse and are exiled. God chooses Abraham and elects the nation of Israel to fulfill his original mandate for creation. He too will give them the land. He brings them to the land, he establishes a covenant relationship with them, they too are to enjoy the blessing of the land, through the temple God will dwell in their midst. Ultimately, through the Davidic king, they will rule over all creation and enjoy the blessing in the land, if they obey and keep the covenant God makes with them. Yet, just like Adam and Eve, Israel sins and they are exiled from the Garden. So the question is: how will God fulfill his original intention with humanity that Adam and Eve failed to realize and then also failed to materialize with God's choice of the nation of Israel?

Problems global and national

Now, in a sense God has two issues or two problems, if we can put it that way. He has both the more global problem of Adam and Eve to deal with, but also the more specific problem of Israel. That is, the problem of all creation and all humanity via Adam and Eve and their sin, but also he must now deal with the nation of Israel and their predicament. Because, remember, God has made a covenant with Abraham that Abraham and Israel are the means by which God will fix the larger problem. One way to look at it is, the larger global problem created by Adam and Eve is now going to be fixed by a more narrow situation of God choosing Israel, but again they didn't fare any better. So God has two problems in a sense to fix. He must fix the problem with Israel's sinfulness because they are the means by which God is going to fix the larger problem of Adam and Eve and all of creation. So he must rectify both difficulties and both situations. He can't just scrap Israel and say, "That didn't work, let me try something

else or let me go back to my original intention.” Israel is the means by which God will restore his intention for all creation. Again, all the nations of the earth are ultimately to be blessed through Israel. So Israel too, like Adam and Eve and all of creation and all of humanity just as they must be rescued from sin and death, so Israel must also, perhaps must *first*, be rescued from sin and death in order for the broader problem of all humanity and all creation to be resolved.

So the rest of the Old Testament and then into the New Testament will continue the story. It will continue to answer the question, how is God going to restore his original intention for creation from Genesis chapters 1 and 2? But that can only be answered by also asking, how is God going to restore Israel and the problem there? Because again, Israel was the means by which God would solve and restore his original intention for creation.

Preview of the Prophets

This then, just to anticipate the next lecture, this then sets the stage for the expectation found in the Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Zechariah and the other prophetic texts. This sets the expectation found in the prophets for precisely how God will do this. Again how is God going to rescue Israel from sin and death so that ultimately all of humanity can be rescued from their predicament as well in order to restore God’s intention for creation back in Genesis chapters 1 and 2?

So what we’re going to do then is, we are going to look at the prophetic texts that begin to anticipate and prophesy regarding God’s intention to restore his people from exile and rectify the situation created by Israel’s unfaithfulness and ultimately to restore God’s intention for all of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. As we look through the prophetic texts and anticipate, that is again, we want to be aware of the major themes that we’ve looked at in Genesis chapters 1 and 3 and the setting and then that we’ve seen emerge in Israel’s history the themes of: the people of God, that God creates a people; the theme of covenant where God enters into a covenant relationship with them, with the covenant being the dominate means by which God relates blessing to his people; the theme of land and creation, that the land and creation is seen as a gracious gift that God gives to His

people, as the place of blessing; the land is also the place where God dwells; the theme of temple and Garden, the expectation of a restoration of God's presence, the expectation of the restoration of the temple that God will one day again dwell with his people in the land; and finally, the theme of kingship and vice-regency. How is God going to restore his intention for humanity, to rule over creation, now through Israel that will be particularly focused in the Davidic king? God makes a promise through David that his intention for ruling over creation will ultimately be fulfilled through a Davidic king who will rule on behalf of the people, so the theme of kingship.

All of those themes then, in my opinion all emerge in the prophetic texts. So during the next lecture we'll focus specifically on some of the prophetic texts again, giving a very quick overview but we'll stop and look at some of the major passages and show you how these themes are part of this single storyline that goes all the way back to Genesis 1, 2 and 3--we'll see how these themes begin to weave their way through the prophetic literature.

Then ultimately, just to point beyond that a little bit, we'll see how, ultimately the expectations as articulated in the prophetic texts, will ultimately get fulfilled in the New Testament in the person of Jesus Christ and where all these themes begin to emerge in the New Testament. First of all, being fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ and eventually getting fulfilled in this new people that God will now create, as we march towards the end of this story that began in Genesis chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Transcribed by Kola Olateju, Henry Hagen, Conor Krupke, Zoey Meyer-Jens, Nicky Turk, Young Chang,
and edited by Jesse James Brooks
Edited by Ted Hildebrandt