

Dr. Dave Mathewson, The Storyline of the Bible, Lecture 3

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Review

Alright, we've been talking about the storyline of the Bible, and I suggested that although the Old and New testament are comprised of a diversity of types of books, and literary genres written for different purposes and at different times and places, there's an underlining narrative or underlining story that unifies the books that the different books attest to. I don't want to suggest that every last verse in the Old and New Testament somehow directly relates to the storyline, but instead it suggests that the documents as a whole and the major movements, and major themes and major purposes of the book rely on or reveal this story goes all the way back to Genesis chapters one, two, and three. In the beginning of the story the setting where God is the sovereign creator of the universe, creates humanity, creates his people, a people that he will enter into a relationship with, a relationship that resembles the covenant relationships that are found in the rest of the Old Testament. God enters into a relationship with his people he creates an environment suitable for them to live in. He gives them the land, and creation as a gracious gift that they are to keep and guard. He places humanity in the Garden of Eden, his sanctuary, the place where God will dwell with his people. They are to guard and keep that.

Humanity is given the mandate to represent God's rule to spread God's rule and spread his glory throughout all of creation. Yet we saw that humanity fails at that, and because of sin Adam and Eve are exiled from the land, so that the rest of the Bible starting with Genesis chapter four and following is going to be the story of how God will restore that. How will Genesis one and two be restored?

We also saw then that God's primary means for restoring his intention for all creation, was focused in choosing the nation of Israel. So God calls Abraham, and again all those dominant themes. God is now going to create a people, he is going to give them the land as a place of blessing and he is also going to dwell with them in the form of the

Temple. He also enters into a covenant relationship through Abraham and then through Moses with the people. The people are to reflect God's glory. They're to reflect God's rule throughout all of creation that ultimately is to take place through a Davidic king that will rule over the people and on behalf of the people spread God's rule throughout all creation. So, generally, the story of the Bible is how can all creation become a dwelling place for God with his people he has created?

Prophets and the Storyline

Again, I want to focus on that handful of themes as we move from the creation account into the history of Israel and now today into the prophets because we saw that Israel's history basically resembles that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. As Adam and Eve sinned and failed to keep the covenant and relationship with God, in the same way Israel failed to keep the covenant relationship with God and they were also exiled from the land that God had given them and from God's presence. So the story then still remains without a conclusion and that is: How can all of creation become a dwelling place of God and his people? And so those five main themes we traced through creation and into the story of Israel both end with failure. Now we want to trace them into the prophets to demonstrate how the prophets are unified in their expectation that God will fulfill his intention from Genesis one and two for humanity and for all of creation.

Now the main cluster of themes we want to look at, are: the people of God, the covenant that God establishes with them, the land and creation that God gives them as his gracious gift, the temple garden, the place of God's dwelling and presence with his people, and then also kingship.

Because of humanity's sin in Genesis chapter three then from that time on humanity denigrated its kingship and rules and abuses that rule by ignoring the creator whom they were to represent. Furthermore, the Bible is clear that because of humanity's sin, because Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan in Genesis 1 and 2, now the world becomes the kingdom of Satan and evil. So that the story is about: How is God going to rescue the situation? How will God rescue the world from the ruler-ship of the Satan and the way that

humanity denigrates its rule over creation? How will God rescue that and spread his rule throughout all creation, and once again make creation a place where humanity can dwell and where God can dwell in their midst? How can he restore the place where God's rule is spread over all creation and establish his covenant relationship with his people? How can they as his representatives they spread God's glory and God's rule throughout the entire creation? How does that become a reality?

Prophets: exile and restoration

Now that Adam and Eve have failed, now that Israel has failed, the prophets then basically address a situation of Israel's pending exile or Israel in exile because of their sinfulness. What the prophets do then is they address the prospect or they paint a picture that articulates the prospect of restoration beyond their situation in exile. So Israel will go into exile or is already in exile because of their sinfulness, because of idolatry, because they have broken the covenant much like Adam and Eve did in Genesis chapter three. Now the prophets anticipate a time when that will be restored. Remember what we need to pay attention to is this story of restoration as two facets, because Israel was God's means of bringing about restoration to all of creation from Genesis one and two and because Israel blew it as well, God must restore both Israel and creation. The restoration of Israel is the means by which God will restore all of creation. So the story of Israel is the key to understanding the story of God's dealing with all of creation from Genesis one and two. We'll see how that works out in the prophetic literature.

What I want to do as we look briefly at the prophets. Again I won't touch on every single prophetic book, but instead, I want to touch on major sections of the literature just to give you a sense of what I think can be found in much of the other prophetic texts. I hope to demonstrate how these five themes that begin in creation weave their way through the story of Israel starting with Abraham and then into Moses and the story of Israel, then how those five themes all emerge again in the prophetic expectation. God will indeed restore his intention for all of creation and for Israel as well, primarily restoring Israel so eventually all of creation can be restored.

Restoration of God's people

The first theme then that I want to look at is the restoration of God's people. This is a fairly obvious one throughout the prophetic texts. Most of the prophetic texts that address Israel as about to go into exile or Israel in exile all anticipate a time when God himself will restore his people back to a relationship with himself. So the people are seen as scattered because of exile but now the prophetic texts anticipate a time when God's people will be gathered back together as the one people of God. So, for example, a text like Isaiah chapter 60, clearly refers to the restoration of God's people beyond exile. Isaiah 60 begins, "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and the thick darkness is over the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you." Notice the theme of God's light and his glory and his presence with the people. Then verse 3, "Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you, to the people of Israel that have been scattered because of exile. "They all gather together. They come to you [to Jerusalem] your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurse's arms." And you can read more of Isaiah chapter 60 in the sense of God gathering his people who have been scattered through exile and restoring them, recreating them to be his people again.

Another text, and what I'll be doing is simply reading through and commenting on a number of prophetic texts, but Ezekiel chapter 36 and verses 9 through 11. Again notice the theme of the restoration of God's people. Notice how it connects this restoration with the ongoing storyline that we've looked at so far. Chapter 36 and 9 through 11, "See now, I am for you; I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown." Now listen to this, "and I will multiply your population, the whole house of Israel, all of it; the towns shall be inhabited and the waste place is rebuilt; and I will multiply human beings and animals upon you. They shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times; and will do more good to you than ever before." Notice again especially in verses 10 and 11 that language of multiplying the people and of them being fruitful and increasing.

This is the language of the mandate to God's people, Adam and Eve back in Genesis chapter 1, that they should "be fruitful and multiply." Now once again when God restores his people in fulfillment of his intention for humanity to be fruitful and multiply, that was to be carried out by Israel. The story of Israel, God restores his people to a situation where they will be fruitful where he will cause them to multiply and increase in number as was his original intention in the creation narrative.

The very next chapter of Ezekiel, in chapter 37, is also a prophecy of the return of the people from exile, the restoration of the people from exile. Here God communicates to Ezekiel through the image of dry bones. They are dead bones that now come together and are raised and given life. What I want to focus on is, notice, start with verses 7 through 10 of Ezekiel chapter 37, but I want you to pay attention to the last couple of verses. Ezekiel 37:7 said, "So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together." The bones he had seen lying around as emblematic of Israel's death because of exile, because of separation from the land of blessing and the place of God's dwelling. Now these bones came together bone to its bone. "I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon on them, and skin had covered them but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breath upon these slain, that they may live. I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.'" Not only does the idea of a vast multitude and a large number perhaps suggest the increasing and multiplying of Genesis 1 and 2. Notice the imagery of God breathing life into their lifeless body so you have these dry bones that raised up and they even take flesh and sinew, but there was no breath to give them life. Much of it as it was in the creation narrative where God forms human beings and forms Adam from the dust of the earth, yet he has to breathe life into humanity. So we see once again, in fact, a new creation in Ezekiel chapter 37 as God recreates his human beings. God recreates his people as he did in the creation narrative by giving life to lifeless bodies through his breath.

Just to give you a glimpse into another prophetic text, or an example from another prophetic text. Zechariah chapter 8, also anticipates the restoration of God's people from exile. In Zechariah chapter 8, start in verses 7 and 8. "Thus says the Lord of hosts: I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, and I will bring them to live in Jerusalem. They shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness." So clearly Zechariah anticipates the restoration of God's people were they will be his people in covenant relationship.

Notice this, the theme of the people of God cannot be distinguished and separated from the theme of covenant as well. So notice that part of Zechariah's anticipation of restoration is that God, says, "they will be my people I will be there God" which is the covenant formula that you find elsewhere in the Old Testament. So part of the prophetic expectation in reflecting Gods intention for Israel and ultimately reflecting God's intention for creation is the restoration of people who will be too numerous in number, who will be created and given life as God's people and who will enter into a covenant relationship with God himself.

Prophets and the Covenant

That anticipates then the second theme that I want to look at and that is the theme of covenant. We saw in the last couple lectures that covenant was the dominant way, by which God would relate to his people. It borrowed the imagery of covenant reflecting the suzerainty relationships or the suzerainty treaties of the ancient Near East. So God is depicted as the creator, the ruler of all things who now enters into a relationship with his people. He adopts them or chooses them as his people and will now bestow blessing on them. But we saw that the covenant relationship which maybe there's dispute over whether Genesis one and two should be called a covenant, but at least all the elements of the covenant relationship were there. The later covenant relationships God establishes with his people closely resemble his relationship with Adam and Eve and creation.

But the covenant we saw with Moses failed, not because of the covenant itself, but the people failed to keep the covenant relationship. Therefore they were exiled from the

garden of Eden from the land so that God then through the prophets God promised to institute a new covenant. God will once again establish a new covenant with his people that will not fail as the old covenant or, better yet, as the people did with the old covenant. The new covenant God will establish with his people and several prophetic texts anticipate this. We already read in Zechariah chapter 8 and verse 8. When he says, “I will bring them to live in the land, they will be my people and I will be there God.” That is the heart of the covenant formula that we find throughout the Old Testament. But there are other Old Testament texts that clearly anticipate the time when God will establish a new covenant relationship with his people in the future when he restores them.

Prophets and the Covenant

So, for example, in Jeremiah chapter 31 is the classic text that relates to the new covenant particularly because the author uses the word “New Covenant” to describe this relationship that God will reestablish with his people. But Jeremiah chapter 31 and verses 31 through 34 “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors, [the Mosaic covenant] when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt--a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” So notice the covenant formula. “No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.” So this again takes place in the context of Jeremiah anticipating a time of Israel being restored from exile and God entering and renewing his covenant relationship now through a new covenant where God’s law is now actually written on their hearts.

Another text that also anticipates a new covenant, although again the language of the word covenant is not used, the language of covenant is clearly there. In a number of

places, is the book of Ezekiel, which also anticipates a time of restoration of God's people, a restoration from exile. So, for example, Ezekiel chapter 34, verse 25, in anticipating this restoration God says through Ezekiel: "I will make with them [the people of Israel], a covenant of peace and will banish the wild animals from the land, so that they may live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely." But notice the anticipation of the covenant, which gets picked up and described in more detail later on. So chapter 36, still anticipating God's restoration of his people, verses 25 and 26, I'll back up and start with 24. "I will take you from the nations," so here's the theme of restoration of God's people. "I will take you from the nations," because they had been scattered because of exile, "and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land." And here's the new covenant language, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. A new heart, I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." Chapter 37 and verses 26 and 27, "My dwelling place shall be with them [with Israel, his people]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Notice again the covenant formula, "Then the nations shall know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them forevermore." So the New Covenant is the means by which God will ultimately deal with the sinfulness of Israel and ultimately the sinfulness of the entire world, as he reestablishes and recreates his people. He will enter into a covenant relationship with them, again in fulfillment of his original intention for humanity all the way back in creation. So the primary means by which God will deal with his people, in entering the relationship with his people, is through the establishment of a new covenant, where he will purify his people from the sin and reestablish them as his people. He will be their God; they will once again be his people.

Prophets and the Land

This theme of a covenant and also people of God is clearly related to the next theme and that is the theme of "the land." We already read a text like Isaiah chapter 60 and verse 4, as well as the Zechariah 8 passage, where God will bring the people back to the

land. So, the heart of God's restoration of the people is to return them back to the land, which we said was part of the promise God made to Abraham, which we said goes all the way back to creation: God's gracious provision of the land, as a place of blessing; a place where God would ultimately take up residence with and dwell with his people. So notice how frequently the return to the land plays a role in prophetic expectation. But interestingly, a text to look at before that is Jeremiah chapter 4, I want you to notice, in reflection, this motif of creation. It's important to understand when you look at the prophetic literature and it talks about return to the land, it's not only seen in connection with Abraham and the story of Israel, but it frequently connects it all the way back to creation. In fact, Israel's exile is seen as a return from chaos; a de-creation as it were; a return to pre-Genesis chapter 1 verse 1. So notice, Jeremiah chapter 4 and verses 23 through 26 and notice how the languages evocative of Genesis chapter 1 and the earth being formless and void and without life, and awaiting fruitfulness and waiting to be made into a habitable environment for the people. So this is the description of exile, and again notice the connections with de-creation, chaos; a return to a chaotic pre-creative state. Verse 23: "I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void, and to the heavens and they had no light. I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. I looked, and lo, there was no one at all, and all the birds of the air had fled. I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before his fierce anger." Again, notice the language, kind of the de-creation language or the return to chaos. The pre-Eden state where there's no fruitfulness, there's no light in the heavens, the mountains quake, things are empty and void, awaiting a new creative act.

The return to the land then is often depicted as a new creation or a new creative act. So, for example, Isaiah chapter 51 and all these texts I'm going to read from the prophetic literature, all are in the context of Israel's return to the land, and what I want you to notice is how they are connected, both to the promise made to Abraham, but also to Eden and the creation from Genesis chapter 1. So, Isaiah chapter 51 and verses 2 and 3, I'll start with verse 1: "Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to

the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.” So the restoration of Israel to the land is clearly tied to the Abrahamic covenant. But now verse 3 of Isaiah 51: “For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.” So the restoration to the land is seen as a restoration of the Garden of Eden; a return to Eden-like conditions from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So again, the return of Israel from exile back to the land is seen as both the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and promise, but also the promise that he would have numerous descendants and God would take them to the land. He would give them the land, but also link back to Eden as a restoration of God’s intention for humanity to live on earth and the land as a place of fruitfulness and a place of blessing.

Ezekiel 36

There are other Old Testament texts too in the prophetic literature that link Israel’s return to the land and restoration, with both Eden and also the promise to Abraham, the story of Israel. Ezekiel chapter 36 and there are a number of verses in this section that clearly are important, not only because they mention land so often, but because they tie it both in with an Abrahamic promise, but also all the way back to the Garden of Eden. So, chapter 36, starting verse 4: “Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord, your God. Thus says the Lord God to the mountains and the hills.” The water, of course, is what I want you to listen to, the language of fruitfulness and water, as opposed to waste and de-creation chaos. So, “thus says the Lord God to the mountains and the hills, the watercourses and the valleys, the desolate wastes and the deserted towns, which have become a source of plunder and an object of derision to the rest of the nations all around; therefore, says the Lord God: I am speaking in my hot jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all of Edom, who, with wholehearted joy and utter contempt, took my land as their possession, because of its pasture, to plunder it. Therefore prophesy

concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and the hills, to the watercourses and valleys, Thus says the Lord God: I am speaking in my jealous wrath, because you have suffered the insults of the nations; therefore, thus says the Lord God; I swear that the nations that are all around you shall themselves suffer insults. But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot out your branches,” So, here comes the theme of fruitfulness. “And yield your fruit to my people, Israel; for they shall soon come home,” Therefore, he links fruitfulness with restoration of God’s people. “See now, I am for you; I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown; and I will multiply your population, and the whole house of Israel, all of it; the towns shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt; and I will multiply human beings and animals upon you. They shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited, as in your former times and I will do more good to you than ever before. Then you shall know that I am the Lord. I will lead people upon you--my people Israel--and they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance.” This reflects the promise that Abraham’s descendants were to inherit the land. “No longer shall you bereave them of children.” A later text in chapter 36 of Ezekiel verse 28, again, all of this in the context of restoration from exile, I’ll back up and read verse 27: “I will put my spirit within you [that’s a new covenant text] and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.” Now listen to this: “Then you shall live in the land that I gave your ancestors.” So the language of the covenant is tied up with Israel living in their land which is tied to the promise to the ancestors; the promise to Abraham. “And you shall be my people, and I shall be your God.” Again here is the covenant formula. Verse 30, a couple verses later. “I will make the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field abundant.” Notice the language of fruitfulness that goes back to Eden: “So that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.” Verse 34 and 35, the last two verses I’ll read in this section. “The land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all those who passed by. And they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate of ruined towns are now inhabited and fortified.” So again this language of Israel’s restoration to the

land that previously was one of death, chaos and de-creation, now will be restored to a situation of fruitfulness and blessing as it was in the Garden of Eden, and in fulfillment of the promises that God made to Abraham that his people would possess the land.

Jeremiah 31

Jeremiah chapter 31, just to show you that other prophetic texts include the theme of restoration to the land in terms of the promise made to Abraham or Eden. Jeremiah 31 verse 12. Again notice a theme of restoration and people of God. “They shall come and sing aloud in height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of flock of the herd, their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again.” So even Jeremiah picks up on the Edenic imagery to describe the return of Israel to their land that God has promised them in fulfillment again not only of the promises made to Abraham, but ultimately God’s intention for humanity from Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Isaiah 65

The last text that I want to look at, and there’s many more, Isaiah has a number of them but the one I want to focus on just for a moment is Isaiah chapter 65 and verses 17 through 20. Isaiah is still anticipating a time now even beyond the exile when God’s people will ultimately be restored. And it’s interesting what Isaiah does, Isaiah is now going to anticipate a day of restoration that exceeds the return of Israel to the land of Palestine, but now he’s going to conceive of restoration ultimately in terms of a new creation. So starting with chapter 65 and verse 17, Isaiah says, “For I am about to create a new heavens and a new earth.” Notice the parallel with Genesis 1:1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Now Isaiah says: “God is about to create a new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight.” So notice the theme of recreating the people and restoring the people. “I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.”

Now the next two or three verses I'm going to read and I want you to pay attention to the Eden and Genesis chapters 1 and 2 creational language. Verse 20, Isaiah chapter 65, "No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime." And remember, after a part of the curse was to bring death upon humanity. So Genesis, starting in chapter 5 and following, everybody who is anybody dies, and you have this repeated refrain "and so and so died; and so and so died." Now you see death being reversed so there will not be an infant who lives only a few days or an old person who does not live out a lifetime. "For one who dies at 100 years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of 100 be considered accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit." Again recalling the fruitfulness of Eden. "They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat," which is what happened when they were taken off into exile, "for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the works of their hand. They shall not labor in vain, or bare children for calamity, for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord and their descendants as well."

So notice then, Isaiah anticipates a time of restoration that even exceeds what happened when Israel was restored to exile, that is, he anticipates a new creation, modeled after the first creative act in Genesis chapter 1. Again notice the Eden imagery that this will be a time of fruitfulness a time of reversing the curse of death. Another interesting thing in verse 22 (ch. 65) it says, "For like the days of a tree shall be the days of my people." The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament actually says, "For like the days of a tree of life," which is the exact wording you find from Genesis, the tree of life that is in the center of the garden. So clearly, Isaiah anticipates a time of restoration that will be a return to the conditions of Genesis chapters 1 and 2, the first creation and the Garden of Eden. So this linking of the land of Palestine and the restoration of God's people back to their land and Eden suggests that the restoration of Israel to their land is ultimately the means by which the entire cosmos will be restored and recreated in a brand new creation.

So we've seen the prophetic literature is carrying on the storyline and touches on the

dominant theme of people of God. The prophets anticipated a time following the exile, where God will restore the people in a new creative act. He will create them as his people. He will enter into a covenant relationship with them by establishing a brand new covenant and he will also then restore them to their land in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. Ultimately this is in fulfillment of God's intention for Eden and for the first creation that will ultimately transpire in a new creative act, a brand new creation that will restore the conditions of Genesis 1 and 2 and the conditions of the Garden of Eden; God's original intention for his people.

Prophetic Temple Theme

Now the mention of the Garden of Eden and land imagery naturally leads one to the next theme and that is the theme of the temple, or Garden. Remember that we said in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, the Garden of Eden was seen as a sanctuary, a place where God dwelled with his people, a resting place of God's presence. When Adam and Eve are expelled from and exiled from the Garden, the place of blessing in God's presence, God then chooses Abraham and then creates a new people, the people of Israel that he will enter into a covenant relationship with and part of that is that Israel is to build a tabernacle and a temple as the place of God's dwelling; as the place where God's presence will rest with his people. Interestingly though, we noted a number of connections between the Temple and the Garden of Eden. So the Temple is kind of a miniature Garden of Eden. The Temple is a microcosm of what God intends to eventually encompass the entire cosmos with God's glory and his presence permeating his entire creation.

The prophets also naturally then anticipate a time when Israel is back in the land in a covenant relationship with God and the conditions of creation and Eden are restored. God's presence will also be there in the midst of his people in the form of a restored or rebuilt temple. So many prophetic texts anticipate the restoration of God's dwelling with his people, or more specifically God constructing or rebuilding a temple where he will dwell with his people.

We already looked at Zechariah 8:8 this is often linked with the covenant

formula, “I will be your God, they will be my people,” that comes at the tail of God's promise to dwell in the midst of his people. Later on in Zechariah chapter 14 the very last chapter of Zechariah, God expresses his intention to take up residence with his people. The city will be called, “the place where God dwells.”

Ezekiel's Temple

Probably the most extensive description of an articulation of the restoration of God's temple as indwelling his people is found in Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48. A rather lengthy section where, when you read most of it is devoted to a rather detailed description of the temple and it's measurements, its makeup, its construction and function and what's supposed to happen there, when God's presence once again comes to rest with his people. But, what I want to do is focus on a couple of interesting texts within that and clearly, although there are differences the description and measuring, the temple in Ezekiel 40-48 clearly recalls previous detailed descriptions of the temple in I Kings and the tabernacle back in Exodus. Not only does this have links with Israel's temple so that Ezekiel, in a sense is saying, God's promise to dwell with his people, Israel, is now being fulfilled but what I want you to notice is that this also has clear links back to the Garden Eden, back to the divine space or sanctuary from Genesis chapter 1 and 2.

For example, Ezekiel 43:1, the significance of this section is that right after the detailed description of the makeup and construction of the temple and what it's going to look like and all the different facets of it and the courts etc. The description of the most holy place, and the furniture, are all the things you would expect in the description of the temple. When that is finally done, in chapter 43:1, and by the way, Ezekiel 40 to 48 is an apocalyptic type vision Ezekiel is seeing. In a vision he's actually transported through a visionary experience by a heavenly being and shown these things, but then starting with 43:1: "Then he," this angelic being guiding Ezekiel through this visionary tour, “He brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. And there the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; the sound was like the sound of mighty waters; and the earth shone with his glory." Now in chapters 40-42 the temple has been constructed and described.

Now it's ready for God's glory to once again rest upon it. In the same way that in Genesis 1 and 2 once creation had been built, the creation temple, now God can rest, in Ezekiel now his presence can rest in his temple. His presence once again comes to rest and dwell in the temple.

One interesting feature I want you to pay attention to here is the directional notation here. He is brought to the gate of the temple that is facing east and that God's presence comes from the east to enter the temple. That recalls intriguingly, and I think this is intentional, back in Genesis chapter 3 when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden they were expelled from the east entrance. Two angelic beings were posted at that entrance to guard God's presence. Now God's presence again arrives through the east entrance to take up residence in his temple. This clearly suggests that the Garden of Eden was meant to be a temple, a dwelling place of God. Now God's glory and presence takes up residence in his temple through the east much in the same way Adam and Eve were expelled from the east entrance of the temple.

There are other texts in Ezekiel to suggest that the temple is meant to reflect the Garden of Eden. For example, chapter 47: "Then he," again the angelic being guiding Ezekiel, "he brought me back to the entrance of the temples there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south and of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar." Notice this language of a river flowing from the temple much as it did from Eden back in Genesis 2. "Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around the outside to the outer gate that faces towards the east; and the water was coming out of the south side." Again, as he takes this tour, the water becomes deeper and deeper and the river becomes broader and finally in verse 5 he can't even cross it. Verse 7: "As I came back I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and the other. He said to me, 'this water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the waters will become fresh. Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be many fish, once these

waters reach there." Good news for those of you who like to fish. "It will become fresh and everything will live where the river goes." Notice again the return to Eden like conditions. The tree that gives fruit, the water that gives life, teeming with wildlife clearly in anticipation of and reflection of the Garden of Eden.

Verse 12 is the last verse of this section that I want to read: "On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves will be for healing." So the temple of God is seen as the conduit for blessing and life throughout the entire creation and the entire land. So clearly the restoration of the temple demonstrates the return to Genesis 1 and 2 and Eden like conditions, as God now fulfills his original intention for humanity; to dwell with his people in a land that is an environment that is suitable for them, a land that is fruitful and a land that is filled with God's glory and presence. It will be much as it was supposed to be in God's original intention for creation in Genesis 1 and 2.

Kingship in the Prophets

The last theme I want to touch upon is the theme of kingship. We said that in Israel's story, Israel was to be a kingdom of priests according to Exodus. Primarily, Israel's mandate to rule was to primarily be fulfilled through the Davidic king. So God chooses David as the king and God makes a promise to David as the means by which God will establish his rule over all creation. It was ultimately through the Davidic king ruling over Israel, in their land, that God's rule and sovereignty would be spread throughout all of creation in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2. The starting point of that is 2 Samuel chapter 7. Back in 2 Samuel 7, God promises an unending throne to David, which functions as the basis for all the rest of the prophetic anticipations of a restored Davidic monarchy. Interestingly, the fact that David was to build a house, although it would be his ancestor that would build the house, even the expectation that an ancestor of David would build a house, shows the connection between the temple and also the Davidic king as

well. Already, in texts such as Psalm chapter 2, we saw that the rule of the Davidic king was to eventually be universal. Again, in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2 that God's rule would become co-extensive throughout all creation. Humanity would be of God's vice regent, to represent and spread his rule throughout all creation. Even in Psalm 2 we find that that is the intention of the Davidic king.

But, again I want to simply look at a handful of prophetic texts that anticipate that at the time of restoration when God restores his people to the land, establishes his temple, recreates all things, establishes a new covenant with his people, that also clearly includes the reestablishment of the Davidic king. Again, God will rule over his people through restoring his promise to David. So, for example, Isaiah chapter 55: "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." This is the call to Israel as they are, in light of this anticipation and expectation of a restoration from exile. "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me and eat what is good, and delight yourself in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, and sure love for David," (Isaiah 55:3). So at the time of restoration God will reestablish or keep his covenant he made with David, that as his vice-regent a king on David's throne would rule over Israel. This is in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2, and God's intention that his sovereignty and his kingship would be acknowledged throughout the entire earth.

Jeremiah chapter 33 and verse 15 again another text anticipating a restoration from exile. So chapter 33 and verse 15, I'll back up and read verse 14: "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah." And here it is, "In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land."

Ezekiel chapter 37, that we've already read, chapters 36 and 37 contained all these themes of restoration of God's people, the new covenant, the new creation, the restoration

to the land, and the restoration of the Temple in chapters 40-48. Now notice chapter 37 and verses 24 and 25. “My servant David shall be king over them;” [This is over a restored Israel], “and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. They shall live in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, in which your ancestors lived; they and their children and their children's children shall live there forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever.” So clearly the restoration of Israel and the land is linked to having David rule over them as king. Again in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2 where God’s rule would extend throughout the entire earth through his vice-regents. Now that vice-regent is David who will extend God’s rule over the nation Israel. Yet, there are still clues throughout the Old Testament that this rule of David is to be universal, more than just over Palestine or the nation of Israel but is to eventually be universal. We already saw that in Psalm chapter 2 David is to be given the ends of the earth as his possession and all the nations.

But there are other indications, for example, Daniel chapter 7 and verse 14, which again is kind of an apocalyptic type of vision that Daniel has. In Daniel chapter 7 and verse 14, Daniel, first of all in the first part of chapter 7, sees the vision of these beasts, these four beasts, and they each represent kingdoms. But this vision of these four beastly figures eventually is replaced by a vision of a Son of Man. I’ll read verse 13 and then verse 14 of Daniel 7: “As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a Son of Man” or “a human being,” which contrasts with the four beasts. “... coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him, [the Son of Man] was given dominion and glory and kingship; that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.” So notice this Son of Man that has resonances with the Davidic themes and the Davidic covenant (the promise made to David) and will get picked up later on obviously in the New Testament. The Son of Man is given a universal dominion or kingship again in fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 1 and 2 that God’s vice-regents would rule as his representative over all of creation. Now this Son of

Man takes his place as God's vice-regent who is now given dominion and glory and kingship over all the nations, and this dominion will be an everlasting one. Even the fact that he's now given dominion over these four beasts, perhaps also reflects creation language of Adam's dominion over the beasts of the field and over the beasts of creation. So, Daniel chapter 7 takes the dominion and kingship and ruling theme found in the prophetic literature in relationship to David but now expands it over the entirety of creation.

Zechariah chapter 9, and verses 9 and 10, we also read of universal dominion when Zechariah, again anticipating a time of restoration: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." Zechariah ends with chapter 14 verse 9 with a reference of the Lord will be King over all of the earth. So, it is through the king, the Davidic king, that eventually God's kingship, as God's vice-regent, and his rule will be spread throughout and realized throughout the entirety of creation.

Remember, because of sin, creation now is the kingdom of Satan and human beings under Satan's power abrogate their rule and do so in defiance of the true King. But now we see a situation where God will reclaim the earth as his true kingdom and make it his kingdom. He will rule over through his vice-regent David in restoring the conditions of creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So when that happens the prophetic text then demonstrates that when Israel is restored they then will be a light to all the nations, once God's people are restored in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham and ultimately in fulfillment of all creation in Genesis 1 and 2. Now all nations will recognize the sovereignty and the glory of God.

Conclusion of Prophets and the Storyline

So the prophets then anticipated time as part of the continuation and movement of

the storyline. The prophets anticipated time, that in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2 but also in fulfillment of Israel's story, when Israel would be restored where the covenant will be restored with Israel. Israel will be brought back to the land in fulfillment of God's intention in creation and be brought back to the land and a new Eden, a place of fruitfulness and blessing. The Davidic king will rule over them and spread God's rule throughout all creation. The temple will be restored so that now God can dwell in their midst. Once this happens now the blessings of salvation can flow to all the nations. So remember, God must deal with two problems, the problem of Israel's sinfulness and ultimately the problem of all creation. So, God then when he restores Israel to its land with a Davidic king ruling over them in a new creation, a new Eden, a place of blessing, and in a new covenant relationship of God, where God is dwelling with his people in the temple again. Then blessing can flow to all the nations, and the entire creation will be renewed in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2. This will be in fulfillment of God's original intentions for his people and for his creation from Genesis chapter 1 and 2.

So the prophets then leave us with the question, the story still is incomplete: How is this expectation going to be realized? How will all the anticipation of a restored people, back in their land, a new creation, a new Eden, with God's vice-regent ruling over them, extending his rule throughout all creation, with a rebuilt Temple, God dwelling in their midst. How is that in a covenant relationship with God? How is that expectation going to be realized? How will God accomplish his purpose? How will he write the conclusion to the storyline? Well, we will have to wait for the New Testament to see how the story's conclusion is written. In the next few lectures that we have on the storyline we'll focus on the New Testament and how the prophetic expectation of the story will get concluded and how that now will be fulfilled.

