

Dr. Dave Mathewson, Hermeneutics, Lecture 26, Theological

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We've been looking at different methods of interpretation, many of them related to understanding the text within its original historical context and asking questions about the author and the author's probable intent and what the readers might have or most likely would have grasped looking at the text and its context being a very significant aspect of interpretation, looking at the wording and meaning of crucial and important words and grammatical constructions and so on. What I want to do is look at a further important facet of the interpretive process and that is what I'll call theological analysis. There's actually a whole movement today that seems to be picking up steam and that is something known as theological hermeneutics or theological interpretation and I don't intend to go into detail about what that is.

Certainly, there are some questions that could be raised about it, but what is valuable is it intends to recover the theological nature of the Old and New Testament and the theological nature of the enterprise of interpretation. So part of interpretation is interpreting the Old and New Testament text theologically. This goes back to the fact that Christians confess that the scriptures are inspired, they are the very words of God.

Therefore the Old and New Testaments are more than, though not less than, they are more than simply historical documents. They are more than just documents written and produced in a specific historical setting, but they are also highly theological and therefore we must ultimately read the Bible in a theological manner. By even calling it scripture, when we refer to the Old and New Testament as scripture, that entails a recognition that the Bible is a religious book.

It entails the recognition that one cannot merely read it as just a historical document, although again it is that, but that we confess that the Old and New Testament are scripture, that is they are the scripture for the church. They are the documents that testify to God's redemptive dealing with his people. We testify that it is God's revelation of himself in history of his will to his people.

Therefore, any interpretation of a biblical text is incomplete until we interpret the text, the New World Testament text, theologically, within its theological context. Related to that though also is the fact that we possess a Bible as Christians today. We possess a Bible in which the Old and New Testaments are conjoined into an entire book, and therefore they stand in relationship to one another.

So the Bible as it stands and as we possess it consists of the Old and New Testament that now stand in relationship with each other and in a sense then provide the entire context in which any given Old Testament book is to be understood. So the ultimate context of interpretation, we've talked about the historical context and the literary context of a book, but ultimately the final and ultimate context is the canonical context, the context of canonical scripture. And right now I don't intend to go into detail as far as justifying the 66 books that we find in our canon of scripture and the Old and New Testament, but my assumption is that the 66 books of the Old and New Testament that we have constitutes the word of God and the context for doing interpretation.

And therefore, the entire canon of scripture is the ultimate context for doing interpretation. So the Old and New Testament books form a unity and come together and provide the ultimate context for interpretation and are therefore to be read theologically. That is, we confess that the Old and New Testament are the scriptures of the church and therefore that means that we read any text in light of its ultimate theological canonical context.

The church is the word of God to his people and as his people we confess that God has spoken through his word and continues to speak through his word as scripture to his people. Therefore, it seems to me then, based on that, there are a number of important themes or principles to consider when interpreting the Bible theologically or analyzing the Bible theologically. Again, I'm assuming that one has done the work of interpreting a biblical text in light of its historical context and what we can know of the literary genre and the historical background, the historical cultural references in the text, asking questions of the literary context and what the author most likely would have intended and what the readers most likely would have understood by the text, examining it within its literary, grammatical, historical context, understanding the meanings of crucial words.

That forms the basis for reflecting on the text theologically. But to make a number of important observations or to raise a number of important themes regarding a theological analysis of scripture, and then we'll ask what that might look like and by giving a couple of examples of how one might analyze an Old Testament text and a New Testament text theologically or from a theological perspective. First of all, a theological perspective operates with the unity and coherence of scripture.

That is, by focusing on scripture as God's word, by focusing on it as canonical scripture, we assume its essential unity. So we can, therefore, we understand that the ultimate canon forms the broader theological context and provides a broad theological unity for understanding each New or Old Testament document. So the canon provides the broader theological unity to which each book belongs, and a book in the Old and New Testament belongs and contributes.

So understanding the Bible theologically points to, and understanding the Bible as canonical scripture points to a coherent portrayal of God's redemptive work and

God's redemptive activity on the part of his people. But it's important also to understand, obviously, that much of this owes itself to the fact that the Bible is both a divine book, yet is a human book as well. We discussed that concept back when we discussed inspiration.

But understanding the book as a human document as well, we also confess that the Bible consists of a diversity within that unity, so that individual books make up that unity, yet they reflect a diversity. We saw that there were, we've already seen there are diverse literary types within the Old and New Testament. There are diverse authors who write out of diverse backgrounds.

There are diverse, there's diverse vocabulary, diverse perspectives, yet all of those come under the umbrella of the essential coherence and unity of the Old and New Testament. So that doing theological analysis, at least from a Christian perspective, understands that the Old and New Testament texts are not at odds with each other. They do not contradict each other.

The books do not stand at odds with other books. For example, Paul and James do not stand at odds with each other. However much diversity exists and however different the perspective, ultimately within the broader theological unity of the Old and New Testament canon, they do not stand in contradictory relationship.

But again, while confessing there are a diversity of authors and literary types and backgrounds, these documents, even especially New Testament documents, we've seen are highly occasional. Their response is to very diverse situations in history. And we find multiple responses to different perspectives, but still all of that under an exemplifying a coherence and a unity within the broader canon.

This perspective, I realize, is in contrast to more post-modern trends, to see a variety of voices that are diverse but even contradictory, and refusing to acknowledge a meta-perspective or a meta-story that would account for all the others, so that there are multiple, even contradictory voices within interpretation, but also perhaps within the Old and New Testament canon. However, a theological approach from a Christian perspective affirms the unity and the coherence of Scripture as the Word of God to His people, as the final canonical Scripture, consisting of the Old and New Testament that stand in relationship to one another. A second important theme or principle that is significant for doing theological analysis of biblical text, and related to the one that we just discussed concerning coherence and unity of Scripture, is that one also confesses and assumes a canonical relationship between the Old and New Testament.

As we've already mentioned, the Scriptures that we possess provide the ultimate context for interpreting any Scripture, and what we possess is the Old and New Testament conjoined in relationship to one another. And they stand in a relationship primarily and generally of promise and fulfillment. The Old Testament is seen as anticipatory of the final climactic revelation in the person of Jesus Christ.

This perspective is found in texts such as Hebrews chapter 1, and the first couple of verses where the author says, in the past, God spoke in various ways and through various means to our forefathers and through the prophets, but in these last days, God has spoken through His Son. That verse establishes a relationship, an integral relationship, an organic relationship, between the Old and New Testament. So the New Testament is seen as fulfilling, the ultimate fulfilling of what is promised and what is anticipated in the Old Testament.

So, the Scriptures then are a testimony to God's ongoing redemptive acts on behalf of His people in the world. And what this means, when we read the Bible as a unity

that consists of a relationship between the Old and New Testament, that means that one must be sensitive to and be able to relate interpretation of any text to the overarching theme or themes, or the overarching story of the entire biblical text and biblical canon. It's a story that is rooted in creation, in Genesis 1 and 2, where God creates a people, and God enters into a covenant relationship with them, and desires and determines to dwell in their midst, and gives them the land as His gracious gift, which they are to care for, and that they will, as God's image bears, that they will spread God's rule and His kingdom, and they will spread His glory throughout the entire earth and throughout all of creation.

But it's also a story of how sin enters into that desire or intention for creation or for humanity, and wrecks that, or begins to unravel that part of the story. And so, the rest of the Old Testament and the New Testament is how God now chooses Israel, God chooses Israel to be His people, where He redeems them from Egypt, He then takes them out of Egypt, takes them to the land, enters into a covenant relationship with them, takes them to the land that He would give them, and intends to dwell with them through a temple, and establishes His relationship to restore them, and eventually His intention to restore all of creation, which was His original intent from Genesis 1 and 2. But, it's also then a story of how God intends to ultimately rescue all of creation, and to rescue the nation of Israel itself, and eventually all of creation, and all people, which reaches its zenith in the person of Jesus Christ. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God now begins to establish and fulfill His intention for humanity, that was begun at creation, and was reestablished with the redemption, and with God working through Israel.

Now that reaches its climax in the person of Jesus Christ, His death, His resurrection, and His establishment of a new people of God, who will obey Him, and who will spread His rule and His glory throughout the entire earth. But again, this story is one that reaches its ultimate climax in a new creation, and a renewed earth, and a

renewed heavens, where God's intention for humanity, where God's story is fully and perfectly realized and fulfilled. So given this overarching narrative, or overarching story, or these overarching theological themes, theological interpretation then asks, how does each part fit in with and contribute to this whole? As one is studying a biblical book, or a biblical text, theological analysis asks, how do the different books, how do the different texts, fit into this story of God's redemptive dealing with His people? His people, and ultimately all of creation.

How does each text, how does each book contribute to that, and fit within those themes in that story? What that means is, first of all, that the New Testament is ultimately read in light of the Old Testament, but furthermore, ultimately the Old Testament will be read in light of the New as well. As we'll see, that does not mean that we do not study the Old Testament in its original historical context, and ask what it would have meant to the original readers, and let the text have its own integrity and understanding in its historical context, but ultimately, once again, we confess that the Old and New Testaments stand in its ultimate context in theological relationships, so it's valid then to read the New Testament in light of the Old Testament, and the validity of that move is rather obvious because we looked at the use of the Old Testament in the New, and New Testament authors themselves, and Jesus Himself demanded that this New Revelation be seen in light of, and in continuity with the Old Covenant Revelation, as bringing it to fulfillment. But I think it's also legitimate to ultimately, when one has done one's exegesis and interpretation of the Old Testament text, to understand and explore how it gets fulfilled in the New Testament, how it reaches its climax in the person of Jesus Christ.

So, theological interpretation works with at least these two themes so far, the unity and coherence of scripture, that the broader Old and New Testament canon form a unity that must be considered when interpreting any individual book. Second, that the Old and New Testament, within the Old Testament canon, stand in theological

relationship with each other. Again, this does not ignore the distinct contribution of each text, or it does not ignore or undermine the unique contribution that each individual author makes in its historical context, but again, it does not ignore how the text functioned for its first readers, etc., and its place in salvation history and the working out of God's purposes.

But it does recognize, again, that each text is part of a larger canonical whole. As we've already said, the final canon of scripture ties together the Old Testament and New Testament in a relationship which now testifies to God's ongoing redemptive activity on behalf of His people, and on behalf of all of creation. And so, in light of the meaning of a text in its historical context, then, as I said, one needs to ask, what role does it play within the broader canonical and theological context? What role does it play as part of this overarching story of God's redemptive work for His people, in history, and ultimately for all of humanity and the entirety of creation? So, part of, it's just important to understand, is when we think of context, interpreting scripture in its context, we've examined things like its broader literary context and understanding a text in its historical context, but now I'm arguing for ultimately understanding a text in light of its theological context, that is, the context of the broader canon of scripture.

How it fits into this ongoing story of God's redemptive activity in the world and for His people. A third important principle or theme is that Christian theology is Christologically focused. That is, ultimately, the focus of, or the climax of God's redemptive dealing with humanity comes in the person of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus' teaching, Jesus' death, and His resurrection, all of these are seen as the fulfillment of the climax of God's redemptive activity on the part of His people. And for all of creation. So, this overarching narrative or story that we talked about finds its climax in the person of Jesus Christ.

We've already seen, especially when we talked about the Old Testament usage in the New, that for New Testament authors, the primary lens through which they would have interpreted the Old Testament was the person of Jesus Christ. They saw Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of scripture, and perhaps they took their cue from Jesus Himself, who said things like, I have come not to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. Or in Luke 24, how He discussed with the two individuals on the road to Emmaus, He discussed how everything in scripture was fulfilled in Him, so that when one reads the Old New Testament, we ultimately have to understand how everything reaches its climax and fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ.

So that, again, even New Testament authors took up Old Testament texts and understood them in light of how they got fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. So theological analysis will ultimately demonstrate how everything finds its fulfillment in the person of Christ, in His life, His teaching, His death, and His resurrection. For example, when you start, when you even open up to the very first verse of the New Testament, at least in the order in which we have it, the very first verse demands that, number one, that we read the Old New Testament in light of the Old Testament, at least Matthew's book, it demands that we read it in light of the Old Testament, but second, it assumes that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the main Old Testament story.

So chapter 1 begins, chapter 1 and verse 1 of Matthew begins like this, A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, and the son of Abraham. Now, there's three things interesting about this verse. Number one, this notion of the genealogy of Jesus Christ probably recalls material from Genesis, or similar language of Genesis, the origin or the beginnings of.

So Jesus is actually rooted in the Old Testament story beginning with creation, beginning with Genesis 1 and 2. But notice the explicit references to son of David and son of Abraham that immediately takes one all the way back to the covenants that God made with David and Abraham in the Old Testament. David in 2 Samuel chapter 7, where David's kingdom, or his throne, is promised to be a perpetual one. His throne would be established forever.

And then Genesis chapter 12, where Abraham is the one who is chosen to become great, but who would ultimately be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. So Jesus now is placed within this broader story. He picks up the main themes of the broader story going all the way back to creation, to the covenants made with David and Abraham.

But now he is seen, not just to continue that story, but to fulfill it and bring it to its intended goal and climax. So Jesus fulfills the promise to Abraham. He fulfills the promise to David.

He is the son of Abraham. He is the true Davidic king who now fulfills both of those promises. We also see, for example, in the New Testament that Jesus is seen as the ultimate sacrifice in fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices and sacrificial system.

You don't have to read too far into Hebrews to see how this is important for the author to demonstrate Jesus is the ultimate once-for-all sacrifice that, again, doesn't merely just abolish and put to an end Old Testament sacrifices, but again brings them to their true goal and intention and to their fulfillment. He is, again, he is the final and perfect high priest. Again, the book of Hebrews portrays Jesus as the ultimate high priest, although the author of Hebrews portrays Jesus as in a different line of high priest than in the Old Testament.

But still, Jesus is the final and ultimate high priest who offers up that sacrifice. Jesus is portrayed as the Passover lamb. For example, in 1 Corinthians 5 and verse 7, for example, Jesus' death is understood in Old Testament perspective.

So 1 Corinthians 5 and verse 7, the author says, Get rid of the old yeast, that you may be a new batch, without yeast, as you really are. For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. So again, the author draws on Old Testament features of the Old Testament story, an overarching story of God dealing with his people, and now finds parts of it fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

So he is our Passover lamb. He also inaugurates a new covenant in fulfillment of Old Testament prophetic text, such as Jeremiah chapter 31 and Ezekiel chapter 36 and 37. Jesus now brings that promised new covenant.

He initiates a new exodus, where he now is the deliverer and savior of his people from bondage to sin. His resurrection from the dead is the installment and fulfillment of what was promised in the Old Testament. So he inaugurates a new creation.

You remember the text in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, where the author says, If anyone is in Christ, literally, there is a new creation. In other words, Jesus Christ himself inaugurates a new creation, anticipated in texts like Isaiah 65, so that now we can already participate in that new creation by virtue of belonging to Christ. So while every text has its own integrity, and must be understood in light of its original historical context, at the same time, it must be read ultimately in light of how it gets fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, and how God's redemptive activity ultimately reaches its fulfillment and climax in Jesus Christ.

So a theological analysis of the Old New Testament reads the Bible and reads the text Christologically. It's Christologically focused. Again, I'm not talking about doing the

kind of wild allegorizing that some did in the past, to read something in the life of Christ into every little detail in the Old Testament.

But still, ultimately, one must be sensitive to how any given text and book functions within its broader canonical context, where the Old and New Testaments stand in relationship of one of promise and fulfillment, where Christ is the fulfillment and the ultimate revelation of God to his people, that climaxes and fulfills his revelation under the Old Covenant. A fourth principle or theme is that a legitimate theological approach to interpreting Scripture, to interpreting the Old New Testament, will affirm and recognize the importance of history in interpretation. That is, as Christians, we confess that Scripture, and we talked about this when we discussed inspiration, but we confess that Scripture testifies to God's activity in history, to God's acting for and on behalf of his people in history.

Therefore, ultimately, we understand the Old and New Testament historically. That is how God has acted in history, to bring about his intention. The overarching story is one of God's mighty acts in history, redemptively.

This approach tempers both historical critical approaches, we talked about the historical critical approach, or historical criticism, several sessions back. It tempers historical criticism, but at the same time, modern, literary, and post-modern approaches. So, for example, it tempers historical criticism in that theological analysis of the text must make room for the supernatural, it must make room for the intervention of God into history on behalf of his people, it must make room for the universal significance of the death of Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ's death on the cross was not just a mere example of someone sacrificing for what they believed in, or was not a historical accident, but it understands the historical and universal significance of the death of Christ, it confesses his resurrection, it confesses that God himself has become incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, and that the biblical story

portrays and testifies to a God who exists, and a God who intervenes throughout the Old and New Testament on behalf of his people.

So, in contrast to some historical critical approaches to the New and Old Testament text, which reads scripture in a closed continuum of cause and effect, that refused to acknowledge anything that has no analogy with the present day, that, again, reads the Old and New Testament from a completely natural standpoint, while still advocating or confessing the value of a historical critical approach, of focusing on history and God's dealing with history, at the same time, theological analysis tempers historical criticism, by recognizing and affirming a God who acts and intervenes in the affairs of history, and confesses a God who intervenes to do things like raise the dead, and become incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. It also tempers literary and post-modern approaches, in that understanding the Bible theologically, where God intervenes in history, where God acts in historical events on behalf of his people, also tempers literary and post-modern approaches, because it reminds us that all historical approaches, especially when literary criticism only considers literary dimensions of the text, and refuses to relate those to historical events, theological approaches can temper mere literary approaches, or approaches that devalue the author and the text, and the author's intent, and the historical background, such as in some post-modern approaches, and again literary approaches. These types of approaches, as we've said, however valuable they are, need to be revised, or at least tempered, in light of a theological analysis of the text, that confesses that God has acted in history, and that we're dealing with more, however much literary criticism draws our attention to the aesthetic value of the text, and the literary dimensions of the text, a theological analysis reminds us that God acting in history cannot be ignored.

So however much a post-modern approach serves to chasten pride in interpretation, and remind us of our limitations, it still reminds us of the need to understand, and

attempt to uncover the meaning of God's historical acts, on behalf of his people, his mighty acts in history, as the creator, and the ruler of the entire world. Our faith is ultimately rooted in past acts of God in history. So theological analysis is historically rooted.

The final thing I want to say is that, when it comes to theological analysis of scripture, theological analysis uses the major themes and terms of the Bible itself. In other words, a theological analysis begins with the Bible's own terms and own themes, that arise from an interpretation of the biblical text. Some of those terms might be creation, covenant, or terms or themes, creation, covenant, promise, blessing, judgment, redemption, kingdom or kingship, temple, faith, priesthood, reconciliation, justification.

These are the terms and themes that emerge out of the biblical text themselves, and describe the theology of the Old and New Testaments. So primarily, a theological analysis begins with the terms and themes of the biblical text itself, and of this overarching story. This is different from what is often known as systematic theology, that is using systematic theological categories, broader categories, that function primarily to categorize or to kind of summarize the major teaching of the Bible on any one theme, as considered important by the theologian.

So systematic theology will use categories of philosophical inquiry, and other categories, and understand how the Old and New Testament, how the text as a whole, and all the data, how it speaks to those categories, how it can be arranged and organized logically to speak to a variety of categories, that are usually deemed important. That's the kind of theology we think about when we talk about systematic theological textbooks, or a systematic theology. But instead, we are primarily beginning with the larger biblical theological text, and the overarching story, and the themes and the terms that emerge from that, and then tracing those themes

throughout the Old and New Testament, recognizing how they develop from the Old to the New Testament and through the text, recognizing how each book or text contributes to that theme, how that theme or the terms function in different places in the Old and New Testament.

So a biblical theology, or a theological analysis of the biblical text, begins with the terms and the themes that emerge from the text itself, again, rather than thinking systematic theologically. I don't want to say that's not valid, I think it obviously is, but at this point, we're asking the question of what the text itself contributes to, what are the main themes and ideas that emerge from the text, and then how does that fit within the overarching story of God's redemptive activity, as testified in the entire canon of the Old and New Testament. So, how do we interpret a biblical text theologically? What role does theological analysis play, then, in one's interpretation? Well, the first step, obviously, is to apply sound principles of interpretation to the biblical text that we've talked about, asking what was most likely the author's probable intention, by placing the text in its historical and cultural context, examining the text in light of its broader literary context, looking at the literary features of the text, also examining its vocabulary, its grammar, and trying to understand the text on its own terms, and what it most likely meant in its original historical context.

So, sound interpretive principles, or sound interpretation, is the first step, or the foundation, or basis for theological analysis. But the second thing, or the second step that I would suggest, is then that one should identify the major theological themes in your text. That is, out of a study of the text, is to consider the main themes, or the main terms that I've already suggested.

The themes or terms that emerge out of the Bible, such as creation, covenant, blessing, faith, justification, reconciliation, kingship, redemption, etc., etc.

Sometimes, how the Old Testament is quoted or alluded to in the New Testament is a key for New Testament texts, as to what some of those main theological themes are. Actually, when we discussed the use of the Old Testament in the New, in the last couple of sessions, we were in essence doing theological analysis, understanding how the New Testament texts pick up Old Testament texts, and those themes, and develop them, and show how they get fulfilled in the person of Christ.

So, the first stage then is to identify the main theological themes, and then to ask, how are they developed in your text? What contribution does your text in the Old or New Testament that you're studying make to this theme? And how does this theme function within the text that you're interpreting? Let me say, at this stage, it might be helpful to read a number of important Old or New Testament theologies that will introduce you to some of these themes, and to isolating themes in different books, or demonstrating how themes get developed. But, try to understand what themes emerge, and how they're developed, what they contribute to your text, and recognize the historical setting that these themes are emerging from, and addressing. Second is to ask, or third, the third step is to ask, how does your text then fit within the broader canonical account, or story, of this overarching story of God's redemptive dealing with creation, and with all of humanity? What does your text contribute to that story? Where does it fit? Where within this grand narrative of God's dealing with his people, that begins all the way back in the creation narrative, and gets developed through God's dealing with Israel, and climaxes in the person of Jesus Christ, where does your text fit within that story? Again, a story that ultimately achieves its fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ.

Where does your text fit within that? And again, we said, if that's the case, then one will ultimately read the New Testament in light of the Old Testament story, to see how it fulfills it, but ultimately, one will also read the Old Testament in light of the New Testament. Again, not that we don't allow the Old Testament to have its own

integrity, and understand what it meant in its historical context, but ultimately, to move beyond that, and place it within its broader canonical context, and ask how it finally gets fulfilled in the New Testament. The final question one could ask, although this begins to take us more beyond interpretation of biblical text, but just very briefly, one will ultimately want to ask, how your text contributes to the church's broader theological reflection, in terms of systematic theology.

But again, the latter, systematic theology, must be based on the former, on understanding the text theologically on its own terms. So again, theology, or systematic theology, usually concerns a coherent expression of the church's faith, and again, it tries to systemize the Bible's teaching, the entirety of the Bible's teaching, in a coherent framework, in light of issues usually deemed important. But again, our focus has been more on what is often called biblical theology, that is, examining the text in light of the themes and terms that emerge from the Bible itself, but also placing the text within the broader biblical theological story, of God's dealing redemptively with his people, and with all of creation.

Now having said that, let me give you a couple of brief examples, of analyzing biblical texts theologically, and what that might look like, and my intention isn't to give you a full interpretation of these texts, but just to probe some of the theological, maybe not all, but some of the theological dimensions of these two texts. And these two texts are ones that we've already considered in other places, or other contexts in our discussion, but I think they both provide very good examples, and helpful examples, of how theological analysis can work. The first one that I want to look at is 2 Samuel chapter 7, and especially focusing on verse 14, but we'll focus on some of the verses around it as well.

But 2 Samuel chapter 7 and 14. 2 Samuel 7, in its broader context, is the prophet Nathan comes to David with a message, a prophetic message, and at the center of

that is usually considered to be verse 14, where through Nathan, God says to David, I will be his father, and he will be my son. In fact, language that you see getting picked up later on in the New Testament, but the whole context of this is, again, God now speaking to David, where he will establish a covenant with David, and affirm his intention to establish his relationship with David, and his throne forever.

Now, when you look at the text, to kind of follow some of the guidelines, when you look at the text, there's a number of important themes that emerge theologically, such as temple. Notice the reference, especially in some of the earlier verses of chapter 7, the emphasis on building a house, or a temple for God, a place where he will dwell with his people. So 2 Samuel 7 reflects temple imagery.

Kingship, especially the language of the Davidic monarchy. We find covenant, although the word covenant is not used in 7.14. That language of I will be his father, he will be my son, is at the heart of covenant language. We also find language of the seed and descendants of David.

So those are important biblical theological themes or terms that arise from the text itself. Notice also, an important facet of this text is found in both verses 13 and 16. Verse 13, he is the one, in other words, God tells David, David, you will not build me the temple, but one of your seed, your offspring, will build the temple.

So he said, he is the one, your offspring, who will build a house in my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Verse 16 then, your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me. Your throne will be established forever.

So what we find here is not just the emphasis on kingship in the Davidic monarchy, but that the throne will be, and David's kingship, will be perpetual. Although at this point, we're not told whether God is promising that the throne will be perpetual in

terms of there will always be a king on the throne, even if there's a succession, or whether there is going to be one king who will emerge that will rule forever himself. At this point, I don't think that is stated explicitly.

But, where does this fit? Looking at these themes of temple, God's dwelling with his people, kingship, especially Davidic monarchy, Davidic kingship, covenant, the covenant he makes with David, emphasis on his seed and descendants, David's perpetual and enduring kingship and throne, where does this fit within the broader canonical story of God's redemptive dealing with his people and with all of creation? First of all, when you read the text, it's difficult to miss some of the allusions back to the Abraham story in chapter 12 of Genesis. For example, notice some of these connections or allusions in verse 9. In verse 9 of 2 Samuel 7, he says, I have been with you, God speaking through Nathan to David, I have been with you, David, wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on the earth.

That reflects the promise made to Abraham where God says, I will make your name great, and I will bless you, and you will be a blessing ultimately to the entire nations of the earth. But another one, verse 12, notice the link with the theme of offspring or seed. Verse 12, when your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring or your seed.

Which again reaffirms and picks up the promise that God made to Abraham over and over about his seed and his offspring being numerous. Now that seed or offspring is seen to continue through the Davidic kingship. But one other one, verse 10, I will provide a place for my people Israel, and will plant them so they can have a home of their own.

Which again probably reflects and is a continuation of the promise made to Abraham to bring him to a land and to give the people the land. So the author of 2 Samuel 7 and God's speech through Nathan to David makes it clear that the Davidic promise then and the Davidic covenant is the primary means through which God's promise to Abraham would be fulfilled and established among the people Israel. But there's another interesting connection to continue to read it in light of the ongoing story.

Chapter 7 of 2 Samuel also, I think, picks up, even if subtly at times, picks up language from Genesis 1 and 2 and the Garden of Eden. Perhaps even that language in verse 10 of, and I will plant my people Israel, and I will plant them so that they can have a home of their own. Perhaps that imagery of planting recalls Eden-like imagery.

But even then still placing the people in the land. Basically, although that goes back to the promise of Abraham, by giving Abraham the land, this is seen as the fulfillment of God giving the land and the earth to Adam and Eve to take care of it and to live in it. But as we saw, because of sin they are expelled.

So God giving Abraham the land is meant to fulfill his intention for creation where God gives the land to Adam and Eve as a gracious gift. Now that promise is continued by God once again intending to settle the people in the land, which was his original intention in creation. Even the language of kingship, the fact that God intends in verses 13 and 16 of 2 Samuel 7 to establish David's throne and his rule forever, is certainly to be seen as the ultimate fulfillment of creation.

Where Adam and Eve are created in God's image to subdue and rule over all of creation. So now the Davidic covenant and the Davidic king and monarchy are the means by which God's intention for humanity to rule over all of creation is now going to be fulfilled in his people Israel. So 2 Samuel 7 stands within this story and

contributes and continues this story that goes all the way back and is directly linked to the Davidic covenant but also has links back to creation as well.

But to move forward we also see that 2 Samuel 7 also provides the backdrop for much of the prophetic expectation of restoration. Without appealing to any text in particular, though one could appeal to Isaiah chapter 9 for example and Isaiah chapter 55. One could appeal to Ezekiel 36 and 37.

But without referring to any specific prophetic text, we find the prophets over and over anticipating a time when God will restore his people. But usually God's restoration of his people in the Old Testament is always seen in terms of God restoring the Davidic throne. And God restoring a king to rule over the people.

And that usually goes back to and assumes the Davidic promise or the Davidic covenant from 2 Samuel chapter 7. And then finally to move the story to its end, we find in the New Testament that Jesus is the ultimate. Jesus himself is the ultimate Davidic king. He is the one who ultimately fulfills the promise made to David in the Davidic covenant where his throne would be an eternal one and an everlasting one.

So that in the New Testament, not only do we find references to the kingdom of God and Jesus proclaiming the kingdom and inaugurating it. But we see Davidic language applied to, for example, Matthew 1.1. He is the son of David. But we even find 2 Samuel 7.14 quoted.

For example, in Hebrews 1.5 where we even find, I will be his father, he will be my son, and I will be his father. Quoted in reference to Jesus Christ. And then to push even further, Revelation 21 and 22, we find that the ultimate intention of having a Davidic son who will sit on the throne and rule over all creation along with his people.

Interestingly, the Davidic promise, the Davidic covenant gets applied to the people themselves in Revelation chapter 21. For example, in 21, at the very beginning of the account of the new creation in 21, this is rather interesting. While in the rest of the New Testament it seems to be applied usually, except for a couple of other places, it's applied exclusively to Jesus Christ.

Notice what happens in chapter 21. We find these words, if I can locate them. Verse 6, He said to me, it is done.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the springs of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this.

I will be his God and he will be my son. Which is a repetition of the Davidic covenant formula. So not only is Christ the ultimate fulfillment of the promises made to David, but now his people as well who belong to him participate in and fulfill the Davidic covenant.

Which is the original intention of creation that all humanity, that God's people would rule over all creation as his representative. Now that finally reaches its climax where through Jesus Christ now we also participate in the Davidic covenant and rule over the new creation. So 2 Samuel 7 plays an integral role not only in developing a number of biblical themes such as creation, covenant, Davidic kingship and monarchy, seed, temple as a dwelling of God.

But at the same time it also plays an integral role in the overarching story of God's redemptive dealing with his people. In the next session now we will look briefly at a New Testament text and look again at some of the theological themes that emerge from it. How it might fit within the overarching story and then we'll move on to

consider perhaps what I think is the most crucial and important stage of biblical interpretation.

And that is making application or as some would call it contextualization. So we'll look at that in the next session.