

Mathewson Storyline Of The Bible Lecture 4 - Jesus

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This is lecture number four by Dr. Dave Mathewson on the storyline of the Bible. In this section, he will trace the five major themes, the land, the covenant, the temple, God's people, and kingship in the life and teachings of Jesus. We've been looking at the storyline, what I call the storyline of the Bible.

I suggested that throughout and underneath the diversity of literary types is a unified story that consists of a number of threads. I said the story has its setting back in the creation narratives in Genesis 1 and 2 and then the complication that arises in chapter 3 that the rest of the Bible will in some sense rectify. But in chapters 1 and 2, we saw all the primary setting and the primary story, all the elements of the story beginning.

God creates humanity, and creates Adam and Eve in his image to be his representatives to spread his glory and his rule throughout all creation. The land which he gives them, the place of blessing, the place where God will reside and dwell with his people. As long as they keep their end of the covenant relationship that God establishes, as long as they obey, they will remain in the land of blessing and the place where God is present.

The Garden of Eden being sacred space where God dwells with his people, the temple garden. And Adam and Eve are then to reside there with God dwelling in their midst and as his image bearers and representatives, they are to spread God's glory and his rule throughout all creation. Yet Adam and Eve fail to establish or accomplish the mandate God has given them and instead because of sin and disobedience, Adam and Eve are expelled from the temple garden, the land of blessing.

They are exiled from the land of God's presence. So that the rest of the Bible after chapter 3 of Genesis can in a sense be seen as God's way of restoring his intention for humanity in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. And skipping over large parts of the story, we looked at Abraham, the story of Abraham, and how God chose Abraham and through him the nation of Israel to be the means by which God's intention for humanity will be restored. So we see all those same elements.

God will give them the land as a place of blessing through the temple. God will dwell with his people. God enters into a covenant relationship consisting of blessing if they obey and abide by the covenant, a blessing in the land where God's temple is and where God continues to dwell with his people, but a curse and exile and removal from the land if they refuse to obey.

And that's exactly what happens. There's a parallel between the story of Adam and Eve and the story of Israel where Israel does not fare any better than Adam and Eve in accomplishing God's intention for humanity. So, Israel also is expelled from the land or exiled from the land, from the garden and the place of God's presence because of violating the covenant that God has established with his people.

Therefore, the prophetic texts then anticipate a time when God will indeed restore his intention for humanity through Israel. Remember, God in a sense has two problems to solve in a sense. One of them is the broader global problem or universal problem of the sin of all humanity and the lack of fulfillment for his intention of all creation in Genesis 1 and 2. But also now Israel was God's chosen means by which he would rectify the situation, yet Israel has failed as well.

So, God must in a sense save Israel first. He must restore Israel into its land and the covenant relationship with him, with God dwelling in their midst and God ruling over them and Israel spreading God's rule and glory so that eventually through Israel's salvation the entire earth might experience God's salvation and restoration and that God's intention for all of creation from Genesis 1 and 2 would be established as well. So the prophetic texts pick up on the story and all the elements of the story and end with an expectation, a prophetic expectation of how that story will be fulfilled and reach its climax.

And we said last week that what remains is to demonstrate how that story and how that expectation gets fulfilled. And so what I want to do is focus on the five, at least five main themes. There could be other themes, but these are at least the five I've chosen to focus on.

We saw the theme of people of God and all of these themes going all the way back to Genesis 1 and 2 and creation weaving their way through Israel's story into the prophetic text. But the theme of people of God, the theme of covenant, God making a covenant with his people, the theme of land or creation, new creation, the theme of temple or God dwelling with his people, and the theme of kingship, God ruling over his people, and more importantly, the people as a vice-regent of God ruling in God's stead, spreading God's kingdom and representing his rule throughout all the earth, which we saw in the prophetic text was then focused in the Davidic king. So you have all of these expectations and these five themes emerging in the prophetic expectation.

Now we'll see how those five themes get carried over into the New Testament. And let me make a couple observations about how these themes are fulfilled in the New Testament. First of all, we've already said that it's virtually impossible to unravel these threads, to pull one out without unraveling all of them.

They mesh together in a coherent story so that it's impossible to talk about one theme, say, people of God, without talking about covenant. It's impossible to talk about the theme of covenant without talking about land, and without talking about kingship. It's impossible to talk about kingship and Davidic rule over the people without evoking the notion of land and temple.

So, they're all inextricably bound together. So the first thing I want to say then is when one or two of these themes are mentioned in the New Testament, it assumes the presence of the others. That is, the authors will not pull out one thread and theme and suggest that somehow that gets fulfilled in isolation of all the rest.

But as a coherent story, if one facet of the story gets evoked in the New Testament, it assumes that the other facets of the story lie behind the surface and are evoked. The entire story is evoked. The second thing that I want to mention is that two distinctions need to be kept in mind in the way that these threads are fulfilled.

First of all, is to realize that this story in the New Testament, the way this story and these five themes get fulfilled in the New Testament, is first of all, they get fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. So Jesus Christ becomes the climax of the story, as we'll see. He is the one who takes up these themes and brings them to fulfillment.

So the key to fulfillment is the person of Jesus Christ. However, by extension then, these themes get fulfilled in His people, the church, in that they are incorporated into Christ, in that they belong to Christ, in that He is their representative, to use later Pauline language, and that Jesus is their head, and that they are in Christ. We'll see that in the New Testament, the church, God's people, also participate in these promises.

The promises also get fulfilled in them, but primarily by way of being fulfilled in Christ. So first of all, again, the first distinction is, that these promises find fulfillment in Christ, and then by extension, they get fulfilled in His people by virtue of the fact that His people belong to Him. The second distinction to make is found in the very well-known and popular distinction between the already but not yet, the fact that the promises made to Israel and the prophetic expectation of a coming kingdom of God and a new creation and a restoration of God's people, that expectation gets fulfilled in two stages in the New Testament.

First of all, it gets inaugurated through Jesus Christ and His people, yet that inauguration is only a foretaste or a down payment of the final consummation, when in the future, I take up these promises in the story, we'll find its consummation. So the end of the story has already begun in Christ, but only partially. God's kingdom has already arrived.

When you look at the Gospels, especially Matthew, you find that God's kingdom is already present in the person of Jesus Christ. God's kingdom is powerfully active in the person and the proclamation and ministry of Christ, and by extension, His people then, but that's only a down payment of, and the presence of the kingdom in advance of its final consummation. So, I would suggest that we'll see that the story, these five themes that we're focusing on, again, there could be more, but I've chosen to focus on these five major themes of the story.

These themes that start all the way back in creation, weave their way through Israel's story and then are found in the prophetic expectation of the conclusion of that story, get fulfilled in these two stages. They are already fulfilled and inaugurated in the person of Christ and His followers but in advance of the final consummation and the final conclusion of that story in what we call the second coming of Christ. And so the rest of our discussion of these themes will focus on those distinctions.

Today, we'll look at how the story and these five themes get focused on and fulfilled in Christ, and then the rest, and His followers, but the rest of the time that we spend in the New Testament will focus on primarily how the rest of the New Testament documents, outside of the Gospels, but the rest of the New Testament documents, also attest to that fulfillment in Christ and His followers. That would be the already. And then the final segment that we'll do together will focus on the not yet aspect.

How does this story reach its consummation and its climactic fulfillment in the new creation? And there we'll focus primarily on Revelation chapters 21 and 22, where all these five themes come together in the finale, the grand finale to the story. But in light of that, let's focus on Jesus as the climax to this story. And the way I want to handle this is I'm going to primarily focus on the Gospel of Matthew.

Although I'll bring other texts in, in discussing these themes, to demonstrate that it's not just Matthew, but the other Gospels as well, attest to the fulfillment of the story and these themes in the person of Christ. And in doing so, I hope to demonstrate that the Gospels either explicitly depend on or at least assume this story. And again, I don't want to suggest that every last verse in the Gospel somehow has to be forced into the story.

But again, primarily the Gospels either assume or explicitly depend on the story as it now reaches its climax and fulfillment in Jesus Christ. So, Matthew. In Matthew chapters 1 through 4, we'll begin by looking at just several elements in Matthew chapters 1 through 4 to see how this story, the end of the story is reached there.

And then touch on a couple of other sections outside of the first four chapters of Matthew. And again, bring in a few texts from other Gospels just to show that this is not unique to Matthew alone. But Matthew chapters 1 through 4. Matthew chapter

1 begins like this, an account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Now, those two titles given to Jesus, son of Abraham and son of David, immediately tie Jesus' story with the story of the Old Testament. And we'll look at these two terms later. But the title son of David obviously ties Jesus' story in with 2 Samuel 7, the covenant made with David, and also the prophetic expectation of a king coming in the line of David who will sit on David's throne.

The mention of the son of Abraham ties Jesus into the promises made to Abraham of a great nation and that all the nations of the earth would ultimately be blessed. Now, Matthew clearly signals his intention to demonstrate that Jesus' story, the story he's about to narrate about Jesus, is the climax of and the continuation of the story begun in the Old Testament. And so, among other reasons for the inclusion of Matthew first in the New Testament, at least its canonical order is fitting because Matthew himself clearly announces his intention right at the outset to link Jesus' story with that of the Old Testament.

Now, in starting with Matthew chapter 2, we'll begin to see where all these threads come together. And one of the things that Matthew does in chapter 2 is portrays Jesus. Another part of the story is a dominant theme in chapter 2 is Jesus is going to be portrayed as a deliverer or as a savior who leads his people Israel out of exile in a new exodus.

So, you'll see the exodus theme that goes all the way back to God first delivering his people as he began to fulfill his story and his intention to restore his intention for humanity and creation. We'll see now that that Exodus theme gets picked up. Again, as if Matthew wants to say, that Jesus is the continuation of the Old Testament story.

What God intended from creation now is going to be fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ who comes to rescue his people in a new exodus. And as we start looking at some of the details, some of the five themes, and the story in more detail, you'll notice connections with the exodus. So, let's start with the theme of the people of God.

And again, remember, it's impossible to pull these themes apart. They're integrally related to each other. So, in talking about one, we'll often kind of overstep the boundary into another theme as well.

But people of God. In chapters 1, 1 through 17, in this genealogy, what is interesting is the way Matthew structures this genealogy to mention the exile no less than four times. So, for example, in chapter 1, verse 11, he says in his genealogy, he comes to, Josiah, the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon, or the exile to Babylon.

And then verse 12, and after the deportation to Babylon, the very next verse, he mentions that again. And then verse 17, where he mentions it twice. So, all the generations from Abraham to David are 14 generations.

And from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations. And from the deportation to Babylon. So, notice how many times Matthew emphasizes the exile or the deportation to Babylon.

As if to say now that Jesus is now the ultimate end of the exile. Jesus will know, what Adam and Eve failed to do that resulted in their exile, what the people of Israel failed to do that resulted in their exile, now Jesus is going to accomplish by ultimately and finally leading his people out of exile in a new exodus, chapter 2, and establishing and bringing to completion his intention for Israel and eventually all of creation from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Now, before we look at what Matthew does with the theme of people of God, which is announced already, Jesus' intention to restore Israel. So, we're to read chapter 1 in the mention of exile, we're to read that as here's the restoration of God's people, anticipated in the prophetic text.

We looked at all those texts that anticipate a return and a restoration of the people of God. Now, Jesus will bring that. But, one interesting anticipatory note, in chapters 3 and 9 and 10, we get a hint of what that restoration will entail.

Starting in verse 8, this is Matthew 3, 8 through 10. Jesus says, Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our ancestor.

Now, interestingly, Matthew just claimed Jesus is the son of Abraham. So, part of the question is who belongs to Abraham? Who are Abraham's children? Who participates in the promises made to Abraham back in Genesis? Jesus says, do not presume... He's speaking to the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and telling them, do not presume to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our ancestor, which they did physically. For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

Even now the axe is lying at the root of the tree. Every tree, therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So, interestingly, at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry here, there is a hint of how Jesus will restore the people of God.

And that will entail more than just physical ancestry. Jesus says, don't presume that just because you can trace your ancestry back to Abraham, that somehow that automatically designates you as a people of God. What is necessary, Jesus says, is repentance and bearing the fruit of the kingdom that Jesus Christ himself is now going to bring.

So, already early in Jesus' ministry, we get a hint that the people of God are going to entail more than just physically those who are of Israel. In fact, even before that, this is anticipated in Matthew chapter 2, by having the wise men, the Magi, come and visit Jesus. The Magi are foreign Gentiles, astrologers who come from foreign lands to visit Jesus when the Jewish authorities and leaders don't even go out their back door to Bethlehem to worship Jesus at the news of the arrival of the promised Davidic king.

But instead, Gentiles do come and they do worship Jesus and bear fruit fitting for repentance. So already Matthew is beginning to anticipate who these people of God are and what it means to be God's people, how Jesus is restoring the people of God. But there's another slight twist that takes place in Matthew, is Matthew is also convinced that primarily the history and destiny of Israel are now fulfilled and focused in the person of Jesus Christ.

In a couple of different ways, Matthew has Jesus rehearsing and kind of recapitulating the story of Israel. So, for example, we've already suggested in chapter 2 of Matthew, Jesus rehearses and repeats the history of Israel in terms of a new exodus. Notice verse 15, for example.

I'll back up and read 14. This is Matthew chapter 2. Then, Joseph, this is again the story of Jesus' birth and his early childhood in chapters 1 and 2. And now verse 14, Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, out of Egypt I'd called my son.

That is now, if you go back and look at this text, out of Egypt I've called my son, spoken by Hosea the prophet, it refers clearly in that context of Hosea 11, it refers to Israel. It's not a prophecy about Jesus at all. It clearly is a historical reminiscence of Israel as God's son being in Egypt.

So now, how does Matthew apply it to Jesus? Well, he understands Jesus as fulfilling the true intention and the true destiny of Israel. So he's rehearsing, recapitulating their history in a sense. The pattern of God dealing with his people Israel, his son Israel, is now repeated with God rescuing and delivering his greater son, Jesus Christ.

So Jesus is seen as the true Israel. Jesus' story intersects with the story of Israel by demonstrating that Jesus, now in a new exodus, is delivered from Egypt as Israel, as God's son was. And Jesus is now inaugurating a new exodus to restore and deliver his people.

In addition to that, skip over to chapter 3, and the end of chapter 3, and the beginning of chapter 4, in the baptism of Jesus that is narrated for us at the end of

chapter 3 and chapter 4, what is significant about this? I want you to notice that the story and the parallels with Israel continue. So that Jesus, like Israel, is found being baptized in the Jordan River, in a river, much like Israel was delivered through and baptized into the Red Sea and rescued and delivered. At this point, having been rescued from Egypt through the Red Sea, they entered the wilderness to be tested and to be tempted.

Yet you remember the story, Israel, of course, failed, ultimately failed, and were exiled from their land. So notice what happens in chapter 4. So in chapter 3, then, Jesus is baptized. Jesus then is delivered from Egypt.

He goes, in a sense, to the Red Sea in his baptism. Now he is led into the wilderness like Israel to be tempted. And intriguingly, all the Old Testament texts, as Jesus is tempted by Satan, all the Old Testament texts that Jesus uses to retort, as a retort to Satan's temptation, are all texts that come from Deuteronomy.

Most of them are texts that come from Deuteronomy and refer to Israel. Do not tempt the Lord your God. That was a reference to what Israel was not supposed to do.

Furthermore, not only do you find parallels with the nation of Israel, so that Jesus is seen as like Israel. He's led out of Egypt into the wilderness where he is tested and tempted, just as Israel was. Yet it's hard not to see the parallels with Genesis in the creation narrative as well, where Jesus is like Adam and Eve, is tempted by Satan himself in the desert.

He's tempted in relationship... The very first temptation is in relationship to food, as, in a sense, as Adam and Eve were. So that you have this interesting picture, and a number of commentaries have recognized both the connection with Israel and the connection with Adam and Eve. And I think that is significant.

What is happening is, in a sense, Jesus is repeating both stories. He's repeating and recapitulating and rehearsing the story of Israel, but in doing so, also in reference to the broader story of creation. So you have this pattern developing in the Old Testament that now gets picked up here.

As we said, Adam and Eve are created in God's image to fulfill God's intention for creation. They are tempted, and they fail the test. And they're exiled into the wilderness.

Exiled from the land, from God's presence into the wilderness. Then God chooses Israel as His means to fulfill His intention for humanity and for creation. They too are brought into the land of blessing with God dwelling in their midst.

They too are tempted and tested, and like Adam and Eve, they fail. And so, they are exiled from the Garden of Eden, and from the place of God's blessing. Now comes Jesus.

Like Adam and Eve, and like Israel, Jesus is also taken into the wilderness to be tested. Yet Jesus passes the test. As the true Israel, Jesus is the one who not only rehearses Israel's story but brings it to completion.

Jesus is the one who fulfills the destiny of Israel and of all humanity. And remember, this story primarily repeats that of Israel, but perhaps we're to hear echoes of the creation, the temptation in the garden as well from Genesis, so that Jesus fulfills the destiny and intention of God for Israel, but also all of humanity. So what that means is, that what we're beginning to see is Jesus is starting to redefine what it means to be the people of God.

How are the people of God going to be restored from the prophetic expectation? What does it mean to be truly God's people? By rehearsing Israel's history, by bringing it to completion, by bringing the people of God to their true destiny, now membership in the people of God, belonging to the people of God, is no longer ethnically or nationally defined, but now is defined solely in light of one's relationship to Jesus Christ, who fulfills Israel's destiny, who fulfills the people of God. So already Jesus is beginning to, in a sense, redefine what it means to be the people of God. Well, the one who rehearses and recapitulates and brings fulfillment, Israel's story and destiny, is now the focal point of what it means to be God's people.

And so true membership in God's people, like Jesus told the Pharisees, don't suppose because you are ancestors of Abraham, or you claim Abraham is your ancestor, don't think that that gets you by. But now it revolves around a relationship to Jesus Christ and obedience to Him. So, Jesus clearly intends to restore the people of God with the coming of Jesus, with the arrival of Jesus, the prophetic expectation of a restoration of God's people.

But also, a people who will ultimately fill the destiny of all humanity, from Genesis 1 and 2, is now being fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, and by implication, those who respond to Him in faith and obedience. That brings us to the next theme. That is the theme that, again, I'm focusing on... I'll focus on chapters 1 through 4, but now I'll start to broaden out beyond that.

The theme of kingship. In chapter 1, we already saw that Jesus was designated the Messiah of the Christ, the Son of David. And, in fact, this is only the first of a number of instances where Jesus is referred to as the Son of David throughout Matthew's gospel.

And I don't have time to go through them all, but even notice how Joseph himself is called the Son of David in chapter 1, verse 20. Elsewhere, people recognize Jesus as the Son of David. So, this is a key motif describing Jesus.

And, again, it all goes back to and recalls Old Testament expectations. Starting with 2 Samuel chapter 7, and the covenant that God makes with David, that there would always be someone sitting on His throne, and extending then into the prophetic expectation that when God restored His people and brought them to the land, that would include the restoration of the throne of David and a king in the line of David ruling over them. So, by calling Jesus the Son of David, Matthew clearly evokes this entire story.

And we said the importance of this, too, is that the Davidic kingship theme goes all the way back, ultimately, to creation. The Davidic king was to be God's vice-regent, the way that God's rule would be established, and eventually God's rule established throughout all creation. Now, Jesus as the Son of David is here to fulfill that expectation.

Furthermore, this can be seen in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God. All the gospels agree, the synoptic gospels especially agree, that the primary and characteristic feature of Jesus' kingdom, or preaching, is the arrival of God's kingdom. The kingdom of God is at hand, which, again, is part of the restoration of the expectation of a worldwide kingdom that comes through God's vice-regent, the king who will sit on David's throne.

And so now Jesus brings that kingdom, that rule of God, over all creation. But again, ultimately, it's through this kingdom and through the Davidic king that God's intention for all humanity, that His glory and His sovereignty and rule would spread throughout all creation. Now that is being inaugurated through the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, who comes to offer that kingdom.

A classic text that demonstrates that is chapter 12 and verses 27 and 28. And what is interesting here, you can see what is at the heart of God's rule and the establishment of God's kingdom. Jesus has just cast out a demon, and now is being accused by the Pharisees of casting them out in the name of Satan.

And so now here's what Jesus says, verse 27, if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your exorcists cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, if I cast out demons not by the name of Beelzebub, but if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. In other words, by casting out demons, this is a sign that God's universal kingdom has now arrived in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2. That is, God's rule that is to spread throughout all creation that has been usurped by Satan is now being established.

That is, the world is now Satan's kingdom, and now that is being turned over, it's being taken from Satan and being turned over to God Himself. So, through Jesus Christ defeating the powers of evil and invading the realm and the kingdom of Satan, now God's kingdom is beginning to be established through the Davidic king in fulfillment of God's intention for His rule to spread throughout all of creation. Again, other gospels include the Davidic theme of the son of David and Davidic king, Luke chapter 1 and verse 31 is an example in the very beginning of Luke.

It's the promise made to Mary when Mary finds out she's going to be with her son. It says, "...he will be great, her son will be great, and will be called the son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David." So Luke also has a strong son of David or Davidic promise theme running throughout it. So the theme of kingship is a very important one that again we saw is linked back to the Old Testament story of Israel and the prophetic expectation of a Davidic king.

But the Davidic king was to be God's vice-regent and the means through which God's worldwide kingdom would ultimately be established in fulfillment of God's intention in Genesis 1 and 2. Since we've roved a little bit outside of Matthew 1 and 4, let me look at some of the other themes. First of all, let me just return back to the theme of people of God for just a moment. Two other clear indications in the gospels demonstrate the theme that Jesus is restoring the people of God in fulfillment of the Old Testament story.

One of those is Jesus choosing 12 disciples. The fact that he chose 12 is not because that's the ideal small group or Jesus was into small groups, but the number 12 was a reflection of the 12 tribes of Israel. So by Jesus choosing 12 apostles, Jesus is establishing the people of God.

He's restoring Israel. He's restoring the people of God in fulfillment of the prophetic expectations. The fact that, interestingly, in Matthew, we find Jesus using the word church.

Matthew describes Jesus or explains Jesus as referring to Jesus establishing his church and the gates of hell will not overcome it. The word church needs to be divested of all the things that we might read into it about our modern-day structures with elders and deacons and everything that we do in our churches and worship, etc., etc. But the word church that we translate church is actually a word that was used in the Septuagint, a Greek version of the Old Testament to describe the nation of Israel, the gathering or the assembly of the nation of Israel.

So now Jesus says, I've come to build my church. That is based on the 12 apostles, Jesus is now reconstituting and restoring, and reestablishing the true people of God

in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophetic expectations of restoration. But let's move on to the other themes.

In addition to that, we'll return to that later on, especially when we get to other sections of the New Testament. But what about the theme of covenant, which is inextricably bound with the theme of people? If God has restored his people and if Jesus as the son of David is ruling over them, they must now be in a covenant relationship. God must have restored his new covenant with them, which especially go back to Ezekiel 36 and 37, where the theme of Davidic rule is tied closely to the theme of the new covenant and the restoration of God's covenant with his people.

We do find that that's exactly what happens. The clearest indication of Jesus establishing a new covenant with his people is found in Luke chapter 22. And in the midst of Jesus inaugurating and instituting what we call the Lord's Supper, which would have been, again, a fulfillment of the Passover meal, what Jesus says in verse 20 is, he did the same with the cup after the supper, saying, this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

And so connected with the gospel's references to Jesus' death is clearly then Jesus is seen as inaugurating through his death is seen as inaugurating the new covenant. Whereas we read in Ezekiel and in Jeremiah that God would accomplish complete forgiveness of sin, he would wipe away sin and remove uncleanness, he would give them a new heart and the ability to respond in obedience as part of this covenant relationship. And so clearly Jesus is seen as inaugurating this new covenant with the new people that he now restores, that are founded on the 12 apostles, and again, center around Jesus Christ and one's response to Christ.

The theme of temple. We said that all the way back in Genesis 1 and 2, the Garden of Eden was seen as a sacred space, as a sanctuary, as a temple. And even the description then of the Tabernacle and the temple as Israel wandered through the wilderness and then settled in the land and built a more permanent structure of the temple, those had all kinds of resonances with the Garden of Eden.

So, I suggested that the tabernacle and the temple were meant to be a miniature Garden of Eden as a place where God dwelled and resided and his presence rested with his people. Now the temple theme also gets picked up in the gospels as we would expect. If Jesus has come to restore the people and now as the Davidic king to rule over them and has established a covenant relationship with them, then it seems to follow then that the temple would be restored as the Old Testament prophets expected.

God's presence would now come to rest with his people. And again, that's exactly what we find. We find that already in a sense in Matthew, and that intriguingly, the entire book of Matthew is bounded at the beginning and the end.

Again, Matthew who is already in the first few chapters has described the restoration of God's people. Jesus himself is to be seen as the true Israel, the one who fulfills Israel's destiny. We see Jesus described as a messianic king ruling over them.

But also in the context of that, at the very beginning and end of Matthew, we find this note of God's presence with his people through the person of Jesus Christ. So for example, Matthew chapter 1, is the most familiar and well-known of these two texts, but in Matthew chapter 1 and verse 23, when the angel tells Joseph and Mary what they are to name the baby, it says in verse 21, she will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. I take it, again, in the context, this is primarily Jesus restoring Israel, saving them from their sins.

And all this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord. Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means God is with us. So you have this strong indication now of God's presence with his people in the person of Jesus Christ.

Yet when you go to the very end of the gospel, in the so-called Great Commission text, which we'll look at again briefly, is that it ends with Jesus saying, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I command you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age.

So, the book of Matthew is bounded by this note of God's presence, his temple tabernacling presence with his people in the person of Jesus Christ. The gospel of John, the fourth gospel, is even more explicit. At the very beginning of John in chapter 1, we read this of Jesus, a text that we usually hear quoted or alluded to at Christmas time, but we sometimes don't stop to think what that entails.

Verse 14, and the word, which clearly is referring to Jesus, the word became flesh and lived or dwelt among us, and we have beheld or seen his glory. What I want to focus on are those two words, dwelled or lived, and glory. Some people have recognized that the idea of dwell is to tabernacle or to pitch a tent, but the idea is not that Jesus comes to take up temporary residence with his people or to tent for a while.

These two words are far more profound. Both words are utilized in the Old Testament in reference to God's presence in his Tabernacle or in his temple. In fact, in Ezekiel chapter 43 and in the first few verses, verses 1 through 7, these two words, glory and the verb to dwell, are both found in reference to God taking up his presence in the eschatological temple that Ezekiel sees.

We looked at that text and we suggested that the first two chapters of Ezekiel, or 40, 41, and 42, the first three chapters record Ezekiel's visionary tour of the eschatological temple that's rebuilt when Israel is restored with a Davidic king ruling over them in a new covenant relationship, but then chapter 3 records how God's presence comes to finally fill that temple. So, then chapter 43 of Ezekiel, we find that God's glory, several times it says God's glory entered the temple, but also it says it came to reside or live there, a similar form of the verb that we find John using now in chapter 1, 1 through verse 14 of John's gospel. So that is what John is saying when he says the Word became flesh and lived among us, through Jesus Christ, God's temple tabernacle presence was now with the people.

The eschatological presence of God that was to fill the temple in Ezekiel and other Old Testament prophets now resided in the person of Jesus Christ. So clearly the temple theme is present. So that we have, again, we have Jesus who comes now to restore his people, to bring his people, to call them to a relationship with him.

Jesus Christ, who himself rehearses Israel's destiny, now comes to restore his people, to establish a new covenant as a son of David, to rule over them in fulfillment of God's intention, to establish his worldwide rule. And now also with the restored temple, that is God's presence now coming to rest with the people and to abide with the people through the person of Jesus Christ, through whom God's glory now takes up residence and dwells. The last theme that I want to look at is the theme of land and creation.

This is a little more difficult because there's not a lot said about... As you find with the people of God, and as you find with the Davidic king theme and the Messiah theme, you don't find explicit references to the land. But again, I would suggest to you that as part of this story, this complex story, all these other elements suggest that the restoration of God's people to the land is also taking place. If Israel is restored, and if the king in the line of David is now ruling over them and brings along a weighted worldwide kingdom, if God has established a new covenant, if his temple presence has now been restored, then the land must be present as well.

But how? Well, at the very least, I think there are simply some hints in the gospels that I think we'll see explicated in a little bit more detail in some of the rest of the New Testament. But I would argue that already in the gospels, we're beginning to see that the promise of the land is ultimately fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ and in the kingdom and the salvation that he now... the redemption that he now brings to the people. A couple of interesting texts that I'm intrigued with.

First of all, John chapter 15 and the first 17 verses. I don't want to spend a lot of time on this text, but just to mention a relationship to the land, and I am dependent on Gary Burge, professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, for some of his

observations on John chapter 15. But John chapter 15 uses the imagery of a vine and branches to compare the relationship of God's people to Jesus Christ.

This is even relevant to the theme of the people of God. The vine that was used to refer to Israel in the Old Testament, now Jesus applies that to himself. He is the true vine, similar to what we saw in Matthew.

Jesus fulfills the intention and destiny of the people of Israel. But now Jesus is the vine. And intriguingly, notice the language in John chapter 15 of calling for the people to abide in him, and the mention of producing fruitfulness.

So, Jesus begins by saying, I am the true vine, John 15, starting with verse 1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit, He prunes to make it bear more fruit.

You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide or remain in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

What I want to emphasize is two motifs in that section, and one of them is the language of abiding. Probably again, suggesting the notion of abiding in or living in the land, dwelling in the land. But what makes that even more important is the theme of fruitfulness.

We saw how, especially the Old Testament prophets, depicted a time when Israel returned and were restored to their land, it would be a time of blossoming and fruitfulness as Israel was restored to their land. Much like the first creation in the Garden of Eden abounded in fruitfulness. So, by referring to the people as producing fruitfulness, I think partly John is evoking the imagery of the creation and the return to the land from the prophetic expectation.

So, by abiding in Christ and dwelling in Christ and producing the fruitfulness of the creation in the land, I think is John's way of suggesting the ultimate promise of the land now is fulfilled. The blessing and presence of God that was associated with the land now ultimately gets fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. It's by abiding in Him that we produce the fruitfulness of the land.

Furthermore, it's interesting in Jesus' teaching that people now enter not the land, but they enter the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. Later on, when we look at the rest of the New Testament in subsequent lectures, I'm going to argue that the land functions primarily to typify what now gets fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The land and the blessings of the land function to typify the blessings that the New Testament authors now find as being offered and fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, which ultimately, however, find their fulfillment in the new creation.

So the New Testament does not strip the land promises completely of physicality. It's just that it ultimately finds the promise of the land fulfilled, first of all, in Jesus Christ and entering the kingdom and producing the fruit of the kingdom, but then ultimately in the new creation, which is where the book of Revelation ends up, but we're jumping ahead of ourselves. A couple of other indications related more to new creation.

Jesus' death and resurrection are probably to be seen as inaugurating the new creation, especially Jesus' resurrection. Remember one of the texts we looked at in Ezekiel 37, the Valley of the Dry Bones, where Israel's restoration to the land in a covenant relationship, restored to their land with a king and David's line ruling over them, was symbolized as giving life to a dead body, the dry bones which come to life and God breathes life into them. That provides the background partially for Jesus' resurrection.

So again, it's Jesus' resurrection. It's his death and resurrection that inaugurates the new creation. It's in Jesus Christ himself that the promises of the land find their ultimate fulfillment.

The fact that Jesus healed and raised the dead throughout the gospels, I think is tied back to new creation texts such as Isaiah 65 and other texts where death is going to be done away with, death that entered the first creation because of sin, now it will not characterize the new creation. So by healing and even other miracles, even miracles of nature, but particularly healing and even the times when Jesus raises the dead, is to be seen as inaugurating the life of the new creation, which Jesus' death and resurrection itself inaugurates. So, in my opinion, I think in the already part of the fulfillment, we see the promise of Israel's return to the land, the promise of the land, and the blessings of the land that ultimately get focused in a book like Isaiah in the new creation.

We find that already fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It's by abiding in Christ, it's by producing fruitfulness, the fruit of the new creation in Christ through obedience. It's through Jesus' death and resurrection that the life of the new creation, the blessing of the land is now inaugurated in the person of Jesus Christ.

But again, all of this still pointing to and awaiting the ultimate fulfillment that will take place in the new creation of a book like Revelation in chapters 21 and 22, which we'll get to later. To bring us back to Matthew, Matthew's story then understandably ends in the so-called great commission at the very end of Matthew and chapter 28. I've already read this, but let me read it again quickly. Matthew chapter 28, where Jesus says, Jesus came and said to them, His disciples, all authority is in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them, that is all nations, to obey everything that I've commanded you. In other words, what is going on is, if what we've seen in the earlier parts of Matthew is true, if Jesus has now restored Israel, if He is now the Davidic king ruling over them, if He has now brought them back to the land, inaugurated the new creation, given them the blessings of the land, if He's entered into a new covenant relationship, if God's temple presence is through Christ, is now resting with His people, then the blessings of redemption and salvation can flow to the entire earth. So that's why Matthew ends with what I think is a fulfillment of God's original intention for humanity, that the blessings of salvation, that His glory and His rule would fill the whole earth.

So now, now that Israel has been restored and God has reestablished His people, now the blessings of salvation can flow to the ends of the earth. So, Matthew ends by saying, go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. In fact, notice the mention of all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, that language goes back to Daniel chapter 7. Again, Jesus has entered His universal rule over all creation.

And so now the blessings of salvation, in fulfillment of God's intention for Genesis 1 and 2, for humanity and for the entire earth, now the blessings of salvation can go out to the entire earth. And so, we see all the main themes of the story, beginning and creation, the themes of people of God, of the covenant, the new covenant of return to the land and creation, of the theme of God's temple and ruling over His people, the theme of kingship, all of those now get fulfilled and climaxed in the person of Jesus Christ. And furthermore, by now restoring Israel, by now dealing with the story of Israel, now the story of all of creation, going back to Genesis 1 and 2, is now being resolved as well.

Now the question is, do we find this story continuing into the rest of the New Testament, into Acts, into Paul's letters, and some of the other epistles? How do these five main themes, how does this story continue to get fulfilled and developed in the rest of the New Testament, in terms of fulfillment in Christ and His people who belong to Him? The next time we are together, we'll talk about how in the rest of the New Testament, this story continues to get developed and fulfilled.