

## **Mathewson Storyline Of The Bible Lecture 3 - Prophets**

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This is the third lecture of six by Dr. Dave Mathewson on the storyline of the Bible. In this third lecture, he'll cover the prophets and the five major themes, the themes of land, covenant, temple, God's people, and kingship. Dr. Dave Mathewson.

All right, 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 underlying narrative or an underlying story that unifies the books, that the different books attest to. And again, I don't want to suggest that every last verse in the Old and New Testament somehow directly impinges upon or relates to the storyline, but instead to suggest that the documents as a whole and the major movements and major themes and major purposes of the books rely on and reveal this story. And we said the story goes all the way back to Genesis chapters one and two and three, the beginning of the story or the setting, where God as 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, the 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. And humanity is given the mandate to represent God's rule, to spread God's rule, to 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 1 and 2 be restored? But we also saw that God's primary means for restoring his intention for all creation was focused on choosing the nation of Israel. So God calls Abraham.

And again, all those dominant themes that 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 are to reflect God's rule throughout all of creation that ultimately is to take place through a Davidic king who will rule over the people and in behalf of the people, spread God's rule throughout all creation. So generally, the story of the Bible is about how can all creation become a dwelling place for God with his people he has created? And 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 resembled that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. That as Adam and Eve sinned and failed to keep the covenant and their 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 with his people? And so those five main themes that we trace through creation and then into the story of Israel that both end

with failure, we want to trace into the prophets now to demonstrate how the prophets are unified in their expectation that God will fulfill his intention from Genesis 1 and 2 for humanity and for all of creation. Now the main themes that we want to look at, the cluster of themes, 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 3 then, from that time on humanity arrogates its kingship and rules and abuses that rule by ignoring the creator whom they are to represent.

Furthermore, the Bible is clear that because of humanity's sin, because Adam and Eve are tempted by Satan in Genesis 1 and 2, now the kingdom becomes, the world becomes the kingdom of Satan and evil. So that again the story is about how is God going to rescue this situation. How will God rescue the world from the rulership of Satan and the way that humanity arrogates 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 along with them, in a place where God's rule is spread over all creation and God now is in covenant relationship with his people and as his representatives they spread his glory, God's glory and God's rule are spread throughout the entire creation. How does that become a reality? Now that Adam and Eve have failed, now that Israel has failed, the prophets then basically address a situation of Israel, Israel's pending exile or Israel in exile because of their sinfulness.

And what the prophets then do 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 or is already in exile because of their sinfulness, because of idolatry, because they've broken the covenant, much like Adam and Eve did in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, but now the prophets anticipated the time when that will be

restored. Now 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 1 and 2, 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 restoring Israel, the story of Israel is the key to understanding the story of God's dealing with all of creation from Genesis 1 and 2. And we'll see how that works out in the prophetic literature.

But what I want to do as we look briefly at the prophets is as we move through the literature is again I won't touch on every single prophetic book, but instead I want to touch on major swaths of the literature just to give you a sense of what I think can be found in much of the other prophetic text, and 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, how those five themes all emerge again in the prophetic expectation that God will indeed restore His intention for all of creation and for Israel as well, primarily restoring Israel so that eventually all of creation can be restored. 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 text, and 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, the people are seen as scattered because of exile, but now the prophetic text anticipates 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. Chapter 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 thick darkness the people. 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 of the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around. They all gather." In reference to the people of Israel, they have been scattered because of exile. "They all gather together, they come to you, to Jerusalem.

Your son shall come from far away, and your daughter shall be carried on their nurses' arms." And you can read more by Isaiah chapter 60 and this 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, and 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 town shall be inhabited, 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, of them being fruitful and increasing. Again, this is the language of the mandate to God's people, Adam and Eve, back in Genesis chapter 1, that they would 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. Now God restores his people to a situation where they will be fruitful, where he will cause them to be fruitful and 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, also a prophecy of the return of the people from exile, the restoration of the people from exile.

Here the prophet, God communicates to Ezekiel through the image of dry bones, or kind of dead bones, that now come together and are raised and given life. And what I want to focus on is, notice, I'll start with verses 7, 7 through 10 of Ezekiel chapter 37, but I want you to pay attention to the last couple of verses. Ezekiel said, so I prophesied as I had been commanded.

And as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise a rattling, and the bones that 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 them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath, thus says the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe 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, but notice the imagery of God breathing life into their lifeless bodies. So, you have these dry bones that raise up and they even take flesh and sinew, but there was no breath to give them life, much as it was in the creation narrative where God forms human beings and forms Adam from the dust of the earth, yet 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, as 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, 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.

I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem. They shall be my people, and I will be their God in faithfulness and in righteousness. So clearly, Zechariah also anticipates the restoration of God's people where they will be his people in covenant relationship.

Notice 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, they will be my people, I will be their God, the covenant formula that you find elsewhere in the Old Testament. So, part of the prophetic expectation in reflecting God's intention for Israel and ultimately reflecting God's intention for creation is the restoration of a people who will be numerous in number and who will be created and given life as God's people and who will enter into a covenant relationship with God himself.

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 of lectures that covenant was the dominant way by which God would relate to his people. It was borrowed, the imagery of covenant reflects the suzerainty relationships or the suzerainty treaties of the ancient Near East.

And 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 him as his people and will now bestow blessing on them. But we saw that the covenant relationship and there's a dispute as to whether Genesis 1 and 2 should be called a covenant, but at least all the elements of the covenant relationship are there.

And the later covenant relationships God establishes with his people closely resemble his relationship with Adam and Eve at creation. But the covenant we saw with Moses failed not so much the covenant, but the people failed to keep the covenant relationship, and therefore they were exiled from the Garden of Eden, from the land. So that God then, through the prophets, God promises to institute a new covenant.

God will once again establish a new covenant with his people that will not fail as the old covenant did, 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 just already read Zechariah 8 and verse 8, when he says, I will bring them to live in the land, his people, they will be my people, and I will be their God.

That is at the heart of the covenant formula that we find throughout the Old Testament. But there are other Old Testament texts that clearly anticipate a time when God will establish a new covenant relationship with his people in the future when he restores them. So, for example, in Jeremiah chapter 31, which is kind of the



classic text related 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 I made with her ancestors, the Mosaic covenant, when I took them by the hand and brought 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, no, 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, renewing his covenant relationship now through a new covenant where God's law is now actually written on their hearts. Another text, though, that also anticipates a new covenant, although again the language of the word covenant is not used, the language of the covenant is clearly there in a number of places, and that is the book of Ezekiel, which also anticipates a time of restoration of God's people, a restoration from exile.

So for example, in Ezekiel chapter 34 and verse 25, in anticipating this restoration, God says to Ezekiel, I will make with them, the people of Israel, a covenant of peace and banish wild animals from the land so that they may live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely. But notice the anticipation of a covenant, which gets picked up

and described in more detail later on. So, chapter 36, still anticipating God's restoration of his people.

Chapter 36 and verses 25 and 26, I'll back up and start with 24. I will take you from the nation. So, here's the theme of restoration of God's people.

I will take you from the nations that have been scattered because of exile and gather you into your own land 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 sins or all your uncleanness.

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 nation 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 establishes and recreates his people and enters 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 and enter into a relationship with his people is through the establishment of a new covenant, where he will purify his people from sin and reestablish them as his people. He will be their God.

They will once again be his people. This theme of covenant and also the 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 to 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 or 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, in Jeremiah chapter 4, I want you to notice in reflection of this motif of creation, and 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 to 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 language is evocative of Genesis chapter 1, and the earth being formless and void and without life and awaiting fruitfulness and waiting to be made into an inhabitable environment for the people. So, this is the description of exile. And again, notice the connections with de-creation, chaos, and 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 in 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 the cities were lying in ruins before the Lord because of His fierce anger. So again, notice the language, kind of

the de-creation language or the return to chaos, the pre-Eden state. There's no fruitfulness, there's no light in the heavens, the mountains quake, and things are empty and void awaiting a new creative act.

And so 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 of 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 to 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 a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and promise, but also the promise that he would have numerous ancestors and God would take them to the land, he would give them the land but also linked back to Eden as a restoration of God's intention for humanity to live on the earth, on the land, a place of fruitfulness and a place of blessing. There are other Old Testament texts though 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, 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 them both with the 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, and what I want you to listen to is the language of fruitfulness and water as opposed to waste and decreation and chaos. So, thus says the Lord God to the mountains and the hills. The water of course is in the valleys, the desolate places, 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 water courses and valleys, thus says the Lord God, I am speaking in my 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 in 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, linked with the 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 town 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 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. Which reflects the promise that Abraham's descendants were to inherit the land.

No longer shall you bereave them as children. A later text in chapter 36 of Ezekiel, verse 28. Again, all of this is in the context of restoration from exile.

He says I'll back up and read verse 27. I will put my spirit within you, that 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, the covenant formula. Verse 30, a couple of 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 verse 35, are 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 who passed by. And they will say, the 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 and chaos and decreation, which 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 chapter 31, just to show you that other prophetic texts include the theme of restoration to the land in terms of either the promise made to Abraham or Eden.

Chapter 31, Jeremiah 31, and verse 12. Again, notice the theme of restoration and the people of God. They shall come and sing aloud on the 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 the flock and the herd.

Their life shall be 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 the promise made to Abraham but ultimately God's intention for humanity from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. The last text that I want to look at, and there are many more, Isaiah has a number of them, but the one that I want to focus on just for a moment is Isaiah chapter 65 and verses 17 through 20, which 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 now is 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'm about to create a new heavens and a new earth. Notice the parallel with Genesis chapter 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. 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, I want you to pay attention to again, 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 dies, but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime. And remember after 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 a hundred years will be considered a youth and one who falls short of a hundred be considered a curse.

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 in 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 bear 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 far out 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. And again, notice the Eden imagery that this will be a time of fruitfulness, a time of reversing the curse of death, a time of fruitfulness. And what another interesting thing in verse 22, where 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 and 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 in carrying on this storyline, touches on the dominant theme of people of God, that the prophets anticipated a time that following the exile, 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, but ultimately 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.

Now the mention of the Garden of Eden and land imagery naturally leads one to the next theme, and that is the theme of 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 and exiled from the garden, the place of blessing and 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 that 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. And so many prophetic texts anticipate the restoration of God's dwelling with his people or more specifically God constructing or building a temple where he will dwell with his people.

We already looked at Zechariah chapter 8, verse 8. This is often linked with the covenant formula, I will be your God, they will be my people. That comes in the tale 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. Probably the most extensive description of an articulation of the restoration of God's temple as his dwelling with his people is found in Ezekiel chapter 40 through chapter 48. A rather lengthy section where when you read it, most of it is devoted to a rather detailed description of the temple and its measurements and its makeup and its construction and its function, and what is to happen there as God's presence once again comes to rest with his people.

Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48. 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 of the temple and description of the temple in Ezekiel 40 through 48 clearly recall previous descriptions, detailed descriptions of the temple in 1 Kings and the Tabernacle back in Exodus.

But 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. What I want you to notice is that this also has clear links back to the Garden of Eden, back to the divine space or sanctuary from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So for example, Ezekiel chapter 43 and verse 1. The significance of this section is 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., and the description of the most holy place and the furniture, all the things you would expect in the description of the temple. When that is finally done, in chapter 43 and verse 1, and by the way, Ezekiel 40 through 48 is sort of an apocalyptic type vision.

Ezekiel is seeing this in a vision. He's actually transported through a visionary experience by a heavenly being and shown these things. But then starting with chapter 43 and verse 1, then he, this angelic being who is guiding Ezekiel on this kind of 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. So now in chapters 40 through 42, now that 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 chapters 1 and 2, once creation had been built, the creation temple, now God can rest, his presence can rest in his temple. So now God's presence, his glory comes to once again dwell and rest in his temple.

But what I want to pay attention, one just interesting feature that I want you to pay attention to is the directional notation here that he is brought to the gate of the temple that faces east and that God's presence comes from the east to enter the temple. That recalls, if you remember intriguingly, the fact that, and I think this is intentional, the fact that back in Genesis chapter 3, when Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, they were expelled from the east entrance. And two angelic beings were posted, two cherubim posted at that entrance, at the east entrance, to guard God's presence.

Now God's presence once again arrives through the east gate, the east entrance, to take up residence in his temple. Clearly, again, this suggests that the Garden of Eden was meant to be a temple, a dwelling place of God. So now God's glory, his presence, takes up residence in his temple through the east, much in the same way that Adam and Eve were expelled from the east entrance of the temple.

There are other texts in Ezekiel that suggest that the garden or the temple is meant to reflect the Garden of Eden. So for example, in chapter 47, then he, again the angelic being that's guiding Ezekiel on this visionary tour of the temple, he brought me back to the entrance of the temple and 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 end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.

So notice this language of water, a river flowing from the temple, much as it did from Eden, back in Genesis chapter 2. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around in the outside to the outer gate that faces towards the east, and the water was coming out of the south side. And again, as he walks, as he takes this tour, the water gets deeper and deeper and the river becomes broader, so that finally in verse 5 he can't even cross it. Verse 7, and as I came back I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on 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 water, 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. So, notice again the return to Eden-like conditions.

The trees that give fruit, the water that gives life, teeming with wildlife, clearly an anticipation of and a reflection of the Garden of Eden. Verse 12, 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 for healing. So the temple of God, the place of God's presence, is seen as the conduit for blessing and life throughout the entire creation, throughout the entire land. So clearly the restoration of the temple demonstrates the return to Genesis chapters 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 suitable for them, a land that is fruitful and a land that is filled with God's presence and God's glory, much as it was supposed to be in God's original intention for creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. The last theme that I want to touch upon is the theme of kingship.

We said that in Israel's story, although 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. And 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.

It's ultimately through the Davidic king that God's rule and His sovereignty would be spread throughout all of creation in fulfillment of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. We said the starting point for that was 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. And even interestingly, the fact that David was to build a house, although it would be his ancestor who 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 coextensive throughout all creation, that humanity would be God's vice-regent to represent and spread His rule throughout all creation.

As early as 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, and establishes a new covenant with His people, that that also clearly includes the reestablishment of the Davidic king, that again, God will rule over His people through restoring His promise to David. So, for example, in Isaiah chapter 55, "Behold, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and you who have no money, come, buy and eat.

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." This is a 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 or 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." 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 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 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, contain all these themes of restoration of God's people, new covenant, new creation, restoration to the land, and restoration of the temple in chapters 40 through 48.

Now notice chapter 37 and verses 24 and 25, "My servant David shall be king over them,' over 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 live.

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 in 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, where 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 a kind of an apocalyptic type of vision that Daniel has. And in Daniel, chapter 7 and verse 14, Daniel, first of all, in the first part of chapter 7, sees a 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.

And 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, and all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away. 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 promise made to David, and will get picked up later on, obviously, in the New Testament.

This 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.

Perhaps even the fact that he's now given dominion over these four beasts perhaps also reflects creation language of Adam's dominion over the beast of the field and over the beast 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 chapters 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 and 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." And even Ezekiel chapter 14 and verse 9, the very last chapter ends, I'm sorry, Zechariah ends,

chapter 14 verse 9, ends with a reference to 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, God's kingship 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, irrogate 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, and he will rule over it through his vice-regent David in restoring the conditions of creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. And 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 is 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. So, the prophets then, the prophets 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, anticipated time when Israel will 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, 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 though 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, in a new covenant relationship of God and God dwelling with His people in the temple again, then blessing can flow to all the nations. The entire creation will be renewed in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2, in fulfillment of God's original intention for His people and for His creation from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So the prophets then leave us with the question, they still leave, 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 the rebuilt temple of God dwelling in their midst, 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 have to wait for the New Testament to see how the story's conclusion gets written.

And in the next few lectures that we have on the storyline, we'll focus on the New Testament and how the prophetic expectation of how the story will be concluded, how that now will be fulfilled. This was the third lecture of six on the storyline of the Bible by Dr. Dave Mathewson.