

# **Dr. David L. Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 2, The Beginning of NT Theology in Genesis 1-3**

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 2, The Beginning of New Testament Theology in Genesis 1-3.

We started looking at New Testament theology in terms of its beginning, and I suggested to you, and others have suggested the same, that Genesis, in a sense, provides the beginning, in the beginning, the beginning point of biblical theology and New Testament theology.

That is, in Genesis one through three, we find all the dominant themes beginning to emerge that will be developed in the rest of the Old Testament, but we'll also find their climax and development in the New Testament as well. And so, it's important that we at least begin there and ask not all the questions that we could or should ask of Genesis one through three, but at least look at it from the standpoint of how those dominant theological themes begin to emerge in Genesis one and three. We said that the starting point, beginning point is that God is the sovereign creator of all that exists and that creation owes its existence to the God who speaks creation into being by his powerful word.

This kind of provides the starting point for not only the book of Genesis in the Old Testament but for biblical theology as well. What I want to do then is simply make a number of comments on Genesis one through three, again focusing not on the exegesis of all the details of the text but on what I see as the dominant theological themes that emerge from this section. There are two very intriguing books, one by William Dumbrell on biblical theology and another book from Eden to the New Jerusalem.

Both authors intriguingly begin with Revelations 21 and 22 to find their dominant themes, and then they go backward and start with Genesis to trace how those themes develop. And there's certainly a lot of validity to that, but again, we'll start with Genesis one and three and find virtually those same themes and then trace how they develop and ultimately how they'll end in Revelation chapters 21 and 22. But the first thing I want to say about this chapter, Genesis 1 through 3, as far as biblical theology, is that what I find going on here is that God is creating an environment suitable for his people.

Now, there are many things going on in Genesis one through three that we can't talk about, and nor am I prepared to talk about all of them, but the thing I want to focus

on is we find here God, again the sovereign creator of all that is, by his powerful word speaking things into existence, but God is creating a land on which his people can live and dwell. So, in the first section of Genesis, I won't read the whole thing in chapter one, but you'll notice that I'll start with verse three, and God said let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. There was evening and morning on the first day. And there's a lot that could be said about that phrase, but again, I'm going to pass over that.

And God said, let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water. So, God made the expanse and separated the water above the expanse from the water above it. And it was so God called the expanse sky.

There was evening and morning on the second day. And God said, let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear. And it was so, and God called the dry ground land, and the gathered water he called the seas.

And God saw that it was good. Then God said, let the land produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants, and trees that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds. And it was so; the land produced vegetation, plants bearing seed, according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed, according to their kinds.

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and morning on the third day. And I'll stop right there.

It goes on and recounts the other days of creation, but you kind of get the point. Notice the, the, the key features of, of the necessity of having light and darkness, uh, light being separated from darkness, the emergence of, of, uh, the water having its place, the emergence of dry land plants, and especially trees that bear fruit. What I think is going on here is the author is portraying the land as a gift that God gives to his people.

God is creating or preparing an environment or a land that he will give to his people as a gift. The intention, though, is that they will, and humanity will live in the land that God created. So what God is doing in the first seven days is, is the focus, in my opinion, not just so much on, uh, how did these things emerge and come into being? Uh, what, what are the, how do we account for the origin of all these things? Though Genesis one through three certainly says a lot about that, instead, I find God, the whole purpose of what is going on in this description is what is beginning to emerge is something that will be suitable for humanity to dwell on.

Now this, uh, this, I think, is an important theme that has implications for a number of things. Notice that, first of all, God's intention is for humanity to be a physical existence. That is, God's plan is for his people to dwell physically on a physical creation.

So, from the very beginning, we'll see this becomes an important theme that actually biblical theology historically has not always touched upon and has often missed. But some new Testament writers such as N.T. Wright and others have begun to make a big deal out of when it comes to biblical theology. From this beginning to the get-go, God's plan was always for humanity to dwell on a physical creation.

And it doesn't take too much thinking to see that that's how the Bible ends up in Revelation 21, with John envisioning a new creation and all of redeemed humanity dwelling on a new, in a new heavens and a new earth on a new creation. So, God's intention for humanity was never that they are disembodied spiritual beings, but instead, God created them as physical beings to live on physical earth. So what we find, I think, in Genesis one is God is creating earth as a place for his people to enjoy.

It is almost as if he delights in making something in Genesis one that his people will enjoy. Now, what that means is, in my opinion, we'll see this in a moment in the next thing I point I want to make, but in my opinion, God's intention all along was to create human beings. So when I read Genesis 1, I don't see it that God is, is displaying his power and his might and, and his creativity and he creates things, and then he gets to the end and, and, oh, I, maybe I should make someone actually to live on this thing.

Instead, what you find at the very beginning with God separating day and night and separating the waters and dry ground emerging and plants and trees for fruit is God is creating an environment that will be suitable for his people, a place where people can actually live. And so, the pinnacle of his creation is what we're going to see, which is creating humanity in his image. So that's the first point I want to emphasize. I think, from a biblical theological standpoint, in Genesis one through three, but especially in the first couple of chapters, God is creating an environment that is suitable for his people.

He's creating a place that will be suitable for his people to live and dwell. He's giving them the gift of the land for them to enjoy. The second thing is that God then creates humanity in his image.

And as I said, the creation of human beings, male and female, is, I think, the climax of God's creation. It's not an afterthought. Again, God doesn't get to the end and decides he's going to make people. Maybe that would be nice if there were people to populate the earth and enjoy it.

Instead, from the beginning, his goal from the very beginning of creation is to make something so that God will be suitable for His people to dwell on and live on. They are, as some have described, the crowning jewel of God's creative activity. But God creates humanity in his own image.

And we'll unpack this, and we'll unpack some of these themes in more detail. I will deal with them in more detail in the remainder of this course, but I simply want to introduce them here and their significance. But one of the key debates is to, is what do we mean when we say God created humanity in his image? And there's a lot that could be said about that.

And there's been a lively debate as to what the word image means here. And I don't want to go into that, and I don't want to be too exclusive and say that there's one way we have to look at this. But when humanity is created in God's image, at least in Genesis 1 and 2, I think the emphasis is that as God's image bearers, Adam and Eve are to be God's representatives.

And they are to be God's representatives on earth. Or another way of putting it, as several Old Testament scholars and biblical theologians have said, is that Adam and Eve were to be God's vice-regents. As the sovereign ruler, a creator of all that is, and as the sovereign ruler over all creation, now God creates human beings in his image.

That is, as his vice-regents, as those who will rule in his place. Adam and Eve were to rule over God's creation in his place. That is, God was to rule, or another way of putting it, God was to rule over creation through his image bearers.

Many have pointed to the practice of an ancient Ezeze, of a king erecting an image that would be a visible representative of his rule over the land. And so now Adam and Eve are God's image. They are to reflect and represent God's rule over all of the earth.

You find this in chapter 1 and the starting of verses 26, and I'll read 27 as well. At the very climax of chapter 1, we said the climax of God's creative activity was the creation of humanity. The whole goal of the first few days of creation and the emergence of land and plants, et cetera, was to create a suitable environment.

So now, in verse 26, then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So, God created man in his image. In the image of God, he created them, male and female, he created them.

So again, God's creation of humanity in his image is that purpose is that they will be his vice-regents. That is, they will rule on his behalf. They will be representatives of

God's sovereignty, his rulership, over his creation that we find God emerging because of God's powerful word in the first chapter of Genesis.

Now, interestingly, Greg Beal has argued in a number of places that actually what is going on here is humanity, is the mandate for humanity, for God created Adam and Eve in his image, is that they will actually spread God's rule and glory throughout the entire earth. So, starting in the Garden of Eden, where in chapter 2 we'll find God placing Adam and Eve, starting with the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve are to eventually extend God's rule and glory throughout the ends of the earth. And this, Beal says, is part of their mandate to be fruitful and multiply, which we also find in Chapter 1. God's command that they be fruitful and multiply is that they will produce offspring, other image-bearing offspring who will populate and fill the entire earth as representatives of God's sovereignty and glory.

Now, there's no doubt there are other aspects to God's image. Some have pointed to the fact that we are persons, that we have dignity, that we are endowed with intellect and moral capabilities etc., etc., and I certainly would not want to doubt that. But primarily in Genesis chapter 1, I find the emphasis being on God's image bearers reflecting and representing God's sovereignty or his rule over the earth.

And so that's the second theme. First of all, or the second thing I want to emphasize, God created Adam and Eve, or God created the earth to be a suitable environment, a place where his people can dwell, and ultimately, we'll see so God can dwell with them on the earth. Second, God creates Adam and Eve in his image as his image bearers who will reflect God's glory spread God's rule, have sovereignty over all the earth, and rule on his behalf as his vice-regents.

As Thomas Schreiner said in his most recent book on biblical theology, God is the sovereign creator who extends his kingship over the world, but he extends his rule through human beings, for as God's image bearers, they must govern the world for God's glory and his honor. I think that's a good summary of what we find in Genesis 1 as far as Adam and Eve being created in God's image. The third thing I want to say about this section is that God dwells with his people, or God intends to take up residence or dwell with his people.

So, God does not just create the world and then create human beings and place them on earth as his vice-regents, as his representatives, and then somehow he retreats to heaven and kind of minds his own business while his vice-regents carry on their business and perhaps they entertain God as they go about their business. Instead, we find that God actually intends to dwell with his people in creation. In fact, and again, this is a theme that we'll develop in more detail later, what further solidifies this is when you read the account of Genesis 1 and 2, particularly later accounts of the building of the Tabernacle and Temple in the Old Testament, there

are all sorts of connections between the Garden of Eden and the Tabernacle Temple in the rest of the Old Testament.

In fact, I would argue that the Garden of Eden is not modeled after or connected to the later Tabernacle and Temple. It's the opposite. The Tabernacle and Temple that we find emerging later on in the Old Testament are meant to replicate the Garden of Eden as the first place where God first took up residence with his people, Adam and Eve. The Garden was the place where God dwelled with his people and lived with his people, and we'll deal in more detail with this later, but as a number of Old Testament scholars and others have recognized, for example, Adam's mandate in chapter 2 and verse 15, and when it says, the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

A number of people have recognized that that language of working and keeping or working it and taking care of it is meant to point to later uses of this word, referring to priests in their work in the Tabernacle or the Temple. For example, this is Ezekiel chapter 44 and verse 14 in Ezekiel's vision of an end-time Temple, but one that is modeled after and reflects the present Temple in Ezekiel chapter 44 and verse 14. After the temple is rebuilt, I will put them in charge of the duties of the temple and all the work that is to be done.

And again, you can sometimes look up First Chronicles 23 and verse 32 or Numbers chapter 3 and verses 7 and 8. This notion of working and keeping or taking care of is the language used for what the priest was to do in the Tabernacle or the Temple. And we'll see later that the Tabernacle was a portable temple; the Temple was a more permanent Tabernacle, so I'm not necessarily going to distinguish the Tabernacle from the Temple. But the point is, what Adam was to do in the Garden of Eden is something that we were later to do in the Tabernacle Slash Temple.

Also, you find this concept in some later Jewish writings, such as some of the apocalyptic literature, such as 2nd or 3rd Enoch, apocalypses that are not included in our Old Testament canon, and other works where you find Adam described as a priest who was to maintain the Garden Sanctuary where God had placed him, and where God dwelled with his first people. You actually find one Jewish text describing the Garden of Eden as the place where God's Shekinah glory flashed from one end of the Garden to the other. So, this idea is that the Garden of Eden was a temple or a Tabernacle or a sanctuary where God dwelled, and Adam was a priest figure who was supposed to maintain the Garden Sanctuary as the dwelling place of God.

So, the Garden was a place, the first creation was, again, not just a place where God gave to human beings and kind of let them go about their business and made sure that they kept on track once in a while, but the Garden of Eden, the first creation, was also the first Sanctuary, a Temple, a sacred space where God dwelled with his people, where God took up residence with his first people. Once more, we will

develop this in much more detail later on.

A fourth idea, a fourth important theme to develop that I think emerges from this, is God enters into a covenant relationship with his people.

Now, there's been a lot of debate as to whether God established a covenant with Adam and Eve. I mean, the first thing to recognize is the word covenant is not used. And some, therefore, have said that the word covenant is not used because you don't find the concept of covenant explicitly mentioned or something like that, the language of the covenant, that we don't have a covenant here in Genesis chapters one through three.

But first of all, one cannot judge based simply on the absence of the word covenant, whether a covenant was present here or not. In the same way that one cannot decide or judge whether the notion of the kingdom of God or Messiah, or whether Jesus was the Messiah, is based on the presence or absence of the word kingdom or the presence or absence of the word Messiah. Sometimes, the concept may be there, even though the language and vocabulary are not.

But one has to determine whether elements of the covenant are present. Now, again, we'll talk more about this later on when we develop the theme of covenant. And so right now I don't want to talk about whether there's a covenant creation or covenant of grace, covenant of works, the different types of covenants is not my point.

But it seems to me that God's relationship with Adam and Eve was at least covenantal. Whether you want to say there's a formal covenant established here, there are all the marks of a covenant. God enters into a personal relationship with his people.

God is the sovereign ruler who establishes that relationship. God is the sovereign ruler who takes the initiative to establish or enter into a relationship with his people. And God promises to bless his people.

And there are consequences also if they refuse to obey. And the consequence is death. So again, when you read into chapter 2, notice in chapter 2's account of the creation of the universe, but also the creation of Adam and Eve.

I'll start with verse 15. Actually, start with verse 8. Now, the Lord God had planted a garden in the east in Eden. And there he put the man that he had formed.

And the Lord God made all kinds of trees to grow out of the garden, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden was the Tree of

Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden, which was separated into four headwaters.

The name of the first is Pishon. It winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. Let me skip down to verse 15.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For when you eat of it, you will surely die.

And so, we find in Genesis chapter 2, one of the elements of a covenant is a blessing. The blessing that God provided was all of creation for Adam and Eve to enjoy, but there was also a prohibition followed by a curse or consequences if they refused to obey. And that is death.

So even though the wording is not found here, it does seem to me that the traditional covenant formula that you find elsewhere in the Old Testament fits. And that is, I will be their God, and they will be my people. And again, the word covenant is not found, but it does seem to me that God's relationship with Adam and Eve is a covenantal one and does fit.

One of my colleagues from Gordon Conwell Seminary in Massachusetts, in the United States, Roy Chiampa said this: God blesses his vice-regents, and he places them in a garden paradise that is marked in a special way by God's presence, where they will experience only blessing as long as they faithfully respect his command not to eat of the tree of life, or I'm sorry, command not to eat of one tree. He warns them that they will die on the day that they eat its fruit. And that seems to me to summarize at least part of what is the heart of what we find elsewhere in the New Testament of the covenants that God makes with his people.

So, we'll examine this in more detail later in Genesis, but we will also look at the other covenants that God established with his people. And as some have argued, the covenant is the primary way throughout the entire scripture that God relates to his people. And that the starting point may be here, In Genesis chapter one, you certainly find that, at the very end of creation, at the very end of the Bible in Revelation chapter 21, you find God's relationship with his people in the new creation being a covenantal one.

So, Revelation chapter 21 in verse three, in the midst of the new creation that John sees with God's people in its midst and God dwelling with his people, chapter 21 in verse three says, and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Now the dwelling of God is with people, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God, which is this language taken right out of



the covenant formula from Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel chapter 37. We'll look at that text in more detail later, but it's certainly plausible that as the Bible ends on the new creation with God in covenantal relationship with his people, that is the fulfillment of what we find in Genesis one and two with God in covenantal relationship with his first people.

The fifth thing that I want to say about this section is that God requires the obedience of his people, which I think introduces another very important theme that is related to number four, the covenantal relationship, but also one that emerges throughout the rest of the old New Testament. And that is, God requires the obedience of his creation of his people. Again, I'm not interested in going into detail about the identity and function of the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Rather, I simply want to emphasize that God required unqualified obedience on the part of Adam and Eve, his people. Part of being his people is that they respond in obedience to the will of the creator, as expressed in the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now, it's important to realize in this context, too, that Adam and Eve are told this in my view, as I read this, not as a way of earning God's merit or meriting God's favor or earning God's favor. Instead, this was to be a response to God's goodness, to God providing them the land, to God replacing them within the context of paradise.

And now God is dwelling in their midst in a personal relationship in response to all this. And in response to what God has done, Adam and Eve were to respond in unqualified obedience to God's command. We see that obedience would bring life, and disobedience would bring death.

The very thing that we find, the same stipulations that we find later on in the Mosaic covenant in association with the law that was given to Moses. So, God's people in response to God's gracious provision of his creation and his presence with them, Adam and Eve then were asked to respond in unqualified obedience to God's command, which when you get to chapter three of Genesis, we find that Adam and Eve failed to obey. They failed to maintain a covenantal relationship with God.

And that is that they were to respond in obedience, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So, Genesis three begins, now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden? The woman said to the serpent, we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.

You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be open, and you'll be like God, knowing good from evil. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food that was pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some of it and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Then come the consequences. Then, both of their eyes were opened. They realized they were naked.

So, they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to them and said, where are you? And Adam answered I heard you in the garden.

I was afraid because I was naked. And he said, who told you you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? And the man said, the woman you put here with me, she gave me some of the fruit. Then the Lord God said to the woman, why have you done this? The woman said the serpent deceived me.

So the Lord God said to the serpent, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals. Verse 15, I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

I won't read the rest of this, but it's interesting then that when you follow the rest of Genesis, you find this haunting phrase occurs over and over again, and he died and he died. So, whether it's the genealogy, when you start reading the genealogies and chapter five, for example, everyone who is someone ends up dying as part of the curse or what God promised would take place if Adam and Eve failed to keep their end of the covenant relationship. So, God required absolute obedience from his people with whom he entered into a covenant relationship.

The sixth thing related to that that I want to mention is that humanity sins against God, which begins a cycle that's going to be repeated in the New Testament of sin, exile, and restoration. So, the sin of Adam and Eve demonstrates their rejection of God's word and the rejection of God's rule in their lives. They become autonomous rulers.

So those who were created in God's image to rule on his behalf now become autonomous rulers. They reject God's goodness and his word. And one of the most significant figures that we'll see emerge later on is Satan or the serpent.

Again, I'm not interested in speculation as to where Satan came from. When did he emerge as Satan? When did he fall? How do you have Satan in the midst of a creation that God said is good? Did Satan enter a snake? How metaphorical or literal is this? I don't want to enter into a debate regarding these things, but simply to recognize that Satan is the one responsible for introducing sin and evil into God's good creation, for opposing God's plan to establish his rule and to spread his glory throughout the entire earth, throughout the creation. And so we'll see the serpent or a serpent or dragon-type figure will play a key role throughout the rest of the Old Testament and actually into the New Testament.

And you'll find him emerging all over the place in the book of Revelation, for example. So, the serpent will play a key role in the Old Testament and New Testament as something that God must deal with and something that God must and ultimately will defeat. But the idea now is that sin enters the world, followed by exile.

So, when you read the rest of chapter three, I'll start with verse 21 at the end of chapter three. After God's words to both the serpent and to Adam and Eve, verse 21, the Lord God made skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said that man has now become like one of us, knowing good from evil.

He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and also take from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever. So, the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove them out, he placed them on the east side of the Garden of Eden, Caribbean, and a flaming sword flashed back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

So, the point is that you find the beginning of a pattern that will take place later on. And that sin has now entered the world, followed by Adam and Eve's exile. So, Adam and Eve are removed from the garden of Eden, the sanctuary, the temple garden, the place of God's dwelling, the place of God's presence.

They're thrown outside of the garden. And the entrance of the garden is guarded by two angelic beings. And what, again, I want you to notice going back to point number two, I think, or three on the garden is the place where God dwells with his people.

Notice all the temple imagery, the angelic guardians who guard the east entrance. For example, in Ezekiel chapter 43, the east is the direction from which the presence of God enters the temple. So now it's the east side of the Garden of Eden that is guarded because it is God's sanctuary.

It is God's temple, the place where God dwells with his people. And so you find this pattern emerging of sin, exile, and restoration. Here, we find sin and exile.

Adam and Eve sin. They refuse to keep the covenant relationship. They disobey God's command.

And now they are exiled from the garden, the place of God's presence. We will find this anticipates, again, a theme that will recur again. When the nation of Israel, in Israel's history, refuses to obey, they will disobey God's command, break the covenant relationship, and they too will be exiled from their land, from the place of God's presence, from the temple sanctuary where God takes up a residence with his people.

Now, the third part of that is restoration. In the midst of humanity's sin, in Genesis chapter three, in the midst of this, we find a glimmer of hope for restoration and redemption and the redeeming of what has now been ruined because of God's sin. Probably what has become one of the most well-known sections, at least in Genesis, in these first chapters is chapter three and verses 15 and 16.

I'll read verse 15. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

And that is. Apparently, this verse anticipates what some have called the proto-evangelium, whatever you want to call it; this verse does seem to anticipate the ultimate defeat of the serpent by a crushing blow delivered by the seed of the woman. Now, we're certainly far from what we find in the New Testament and what we find, for example, in the book of Revelation, where this verse will get picked up and developed. We're certainly far from that, but at least at this point, I think we find the anticipation of restoration in the form of God's promise to ultimately defeat the serpent figure and his seed by the crushing blow that will come from the seed of a woman.

Also, perhaps we should read chapter three and verse 21, where it says, the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Many have seen in this as another signal or symbol of God's provision for his people following their act of disobedience. Now, the other thing to say about the section is when we think about God's redeeming and restoration of his people is I think we should not limit it just to God's people.

When we think of God's redemption, we think of salvation. We think of God saving his people. Certainly, that's true. We've already seen humanity as the climax, the crowning jewel of God's creation.

We read of God's plan for redeeming his people as one of the primary themes that weave its way throughout the rest of the Old and New Testaments. Certainly, that's correct at one level, but it's important not to limit it to that. God is not just going to restore and save his people, but God is eventually going to restore all of creation.

In other words, God does not create the universe and then place humanity in its midst and then decide to save humanity but to scrap everything else. Instead, as Desmond Alexander, who wrote the book *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, a kind of introduction to biblical theology, said, following the sin of Genesis 3, the complex story that follows centers on how the earth can once more become a dwelling place shared by God and humanity. So, I think that's important.

The complex story that's going to follow Genesis 3, the complex story that follows centers on how the earth can once more become a dwelling place shared by God and humanity, which was God's intention in Genesis 1-3, that the earth would be placed not only as a gift that God gives to his people for their enjoyment and as a suitable dwelling place but a place where God can dwell with them. God can take up residence with them. We've already seen in numerous places the Garden of Eden, the first creation, is described as or is portrayed as a sanctuary.

It's portrayed in a language that we find applied to the Tabernacle and Temple later on in the Old Testament. So, what God must do then is not just save his people from their sins, although that is probably at the heart of it, but at the same time, God is going to redeem earth as the place where his redeemed people will reside and where God will reside with them. How is God going to reclaim all of creation as a dwelling place that will be shared by himself and his people? And in fact, again, to kind of jump ahead, when you get to the end of the Bible in Revelation 21 and 22, that's exactly what you find is the end goal of Genesis 1 and 2 has been reached.

Creation is once again reclaimed as the place where God will dwell with his people. Creation itself is redeemed. It has become a temple, a sanctuary, a dwelling place where God resides in a covenant relationship with his people once again in Revelation 21 and 22 in fulfillment of what God originally intended in Genesis 1 through 3, as N.T. Wright often likes to say, addressing this theme, that one day, God will sort the whole thing out.

God will put everything to the right, that is, creation as well as humanity. In fact, this helps us perhaps see a little bit how the rest of the Bible will develop, and that is very almost simplistically and very generally, the rest of the Bible or the whole Bible, the Old and New Testament together, develop in a conflict resolution structure. That is, Genesis chapter 3, seeing Genesis 1 and 2, kind of the introduction to God's creation and his intention for creation and humanity, the watershed seems to be Genesis 3, where sin enters and mucks everything up and brings about a conflict to which the rest of the Bible is going to respond with the resolution.

We will see the resolution does not come in one concrete act at one point but comes in a series of concrete acts as God acts in history to bring about a resolution to the conflict. This conflict resolution structure seems to be present in that quote that I

just read by Alexander. The story that follows centers on how the earth will once more become a dwelling place.

That assumes a conflict that has been created by sin in Genesis chapter 3. Now, how is God going to resolve that conflict created by sin? How is God going to restore creation as a dwelling place where God and his people will reside in relationship to one another? So again, for the rest of the Old and New Testaments, how is God going to restore his good purposes for humanity and his creation? How will God deal with the problems of sin and evil? How will God's people, as his image bearers, end up fulfilling their mandate to fill the earth with God's rule and God's glory? How will God's people once more be his people and God be their God? How will God once more take up residence with his people on earth? How is God going to bring this all about by the seed of the woman? Genesis 3:15. In my opinion, then the rest of the Old and New Testaments will answer this. The rest of the Old and New Testament will begin to unveil God's plan for answering these questions, for bringing about a resolution, for bringing about the ultimate fulfillment of his intention for his creation, especially humanity in Genesis 1 and 2 that was wrecked and ruined by sin in chapter 3. So again, Genesis 1 and 2 are not just a kind of something to get the story started that you kind of put in the background, and the rest of the story goes its own way. No, God cannot and will not scrap his plan in Genesis 1 and 3. The rest of the Bible, or the New Testament theology, on one level, is the story of how God is going to accomplish his intention for his creation for humanity in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. How will God do this? The rest of the Old Testament climaxing in the New Testament will unveil God's plan for accomplishing this.

So what we are going to do in the rest of our study is look at the major themes related to this, the major themes that have emerged from the book of Genesis, chapters 1 through 3 especially, but other themes that emerged too, and notice how they get developed in the Old Testament, how they get developed and find their climax in the New Testament, particularly how they find their climactic fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. As I said, we will pay more attention to the New Testament because this is a New Testament theology, but it is impossible to deal with a New Testament theology, to construct a New Testament theology, without being aware of the Old Testament antecedents that it develops. Now, the other thing to remind you is we already said that as we do this, we need to be aware of and pay attention to how this gets developed within the framework of that already-but-not-yet tension.

That is, how God's plan, anticipated and promised in the Old Testament, finds its fulfillment in the New Testament, first of all in an inaugurated fashion, in an already fashion, first of all in Jesus Christ, and then in his people that he is creating in the church, and then finally how that finds its ultimate fulfillment in the new creation, in the consummation that we read about in several places, but especially Revelation 21 and 22. So that's kind of how the rest of this course will develop. And what I want to

do is introduce you to the first part, the first theme that I want to deal with, and that is the theme of creation and new creation, or land, in the New Testament.

But again, before we look at the New Testament section, we'll go back and, starting with Genesis, we'll look at the Old Testament and how it develops the concept of creation, land, and anticipating a new creation before we look at how that gets fulfilled in the New Testament, in the person of Jesus Christ, and in his followers, and his people, and then ultimately in its fulfillment in the new creation, in the consummation. So, as we've said, the New Testament theology is part of the Bible's plot line or storyline that goes all the way back to Genesis chapters 1 and 3, where Genesis 1 and 3, in a sense, functions as the setting for the rest of the New Testament, and particularly introducing us to the conflict that will get resolved in the rest of the Bible. And just to summarize what we looked at in our treatment of Genesis 1 and 3, in Genesis 1 and 3, we find humanity created in God's image, and as his image bears, they are to function as his vice-regents.

That is, they are to represent God's rule throughout the entire creation. They are to exercise dominion as God's representative throughout all creation, throughout the entire earth. That is, they are to ultimately spread God's glory and his rule throughout the entire creation.

And so, the land is a gracious gift that God gives to his people. He is creating an environment or a place suitable for human habitation. But God places them then in the garden, which is to be a sanctuary, a dwelling place of God.

God places them in the garden to enjoy God's presence as well. And there's a blessing for obedience to the divine command, but there is cursing for refusal to obey the divine command. And so, Adam and Eve are to ultimately spread God's rule, his glory, and his presence throughout all creation by producing other image-bearing offspring who will fill the whole earth with God's glory and rule.

Greg Beal has, in fact, argued that Adam was actually to extend the Garden of Eden. God places Adam and Eve in the garden there to extend the garden of Eden and eventually encompass the entire earth. But as we saw instead, Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden because of their sin.

In Genesis 3, we find the story of humanity's relationship with God, but also their presence in the land, which is now ruined because of humanity's sin. So, the rest of the story is going to provide a resolution to this dilemma. And at least to relate to this theme is how is God going to restore creation and how is God going to place his people back in creation, back in the land that he has given them, where God himself will share his existence, will share his presence with his people.

The first theme I want to look at is creation, new creation, and land in the New Testament. Now, once more, I don't want to spend a lot of time going over material that we looked at from Genesis 1-3, but there are elements of it that we need to revisit and maybe even develop in a little bit more detail. But primarily, we saw in Genesis 1-2 God is creating an environment suitable for human existence.

He's creating the land, the earth, as a gift that he will give to his people, but something on which the land on which he will dwell with them. As I said, I've intentionally sidestepped issues of the age of the earth and whether it's a literal 24-hour day or seven, six literal 24-hour days or whether those symbolize something else. I've not tried to reconcile this with the scientific data.

I'm not interested in doing that at this point because I'm convinced that this is probably not what the author is doing. Not that Genesis 1-2 does not have a lot to say about some of those issues, but that's not primarily what the author is doing. Instead, what the author appears to be doing, as I've already said, is the author appears to be presenting creation as God's gift of the land to his people and creating something that will be suitable for living and for the enjoyment of his people.

In fact, one Old Testament scholar from Wheaton College, John Walton, has argued whether one agrees with everything or not and has, I think, made a good case that the creation account is primarily functional. Not that it does not address issues of how things came into existence or the material existence of the created order, but primarily, again, that creation is functional. Creation is being made suitable for the existence of God's people and for God to live in their midst.

So, this is not just about the origin of the world. It's not just answering our questions: how did creation come about? Instead, it recounts God's gracious gift of the land to his people and God's intention to dwell with his people on this land that he has created and has now given them. This is the beginning of the motif of the land that will play a crucial role in the rest of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

So, we'll begin to look at the theme again, looking in a little bit more detail, perhaps in Genesis chapter 1 and 2, but looking at some of the prophetic literature and how the theme of the land gets developed and continues to emerge, and then how that gets developed in terms of land and creation and new creation in the New Testament as well.

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 2, The Beginning of New Testament Theology in Genesis 1-3.