

Dr. David L. Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 3, Creation, Land, and Recreation in the Old Testament

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 3, Creation, Land, and Recreation in the Old Testament.

So, we begin to look at the theme of creation, new creation, and land.

I've included them all together because, as we'll see, creation and land, I think are connected, and they both find their fulfillment in as we'll see and anticipate a new creation, which we find anticipated in prophetic texts but which finds its ultimate fulfillment in Revelation 21. So far, we've seen that in a new creative act, God fashions a world that is suitable to sustain the life of his people, and creation is a gift of God. The land is a gift to his people, an environment in which they can live, a place where God intends to dwell with them and take up residence with them as well.

It's important to realize that the theme of creation has both physical and spiritual elements to it. So, we are talking about a physical earth, yet it's a place of blessing, a place of God's presence with his people. It's a place that requires their obedience.

So, when we think about the theme of creation and land, we're dealing with one that is not only purely physical but probably has both physical and spiritual elements connected to it. One other interesting, maybe sort of a side note, but one I don't want to develop a lot because there's even debate about how to understand the language of Genesis 1-2 with the earth being formless and void before God begins in six days of creation to bring about this environment, this gift of the land that he gives to his people. But possibly, when we think about formless and void, this at least introduces a theme of God taking that which is in disarray or disorder and bringing about order in a creative act or God overcoming disorder in a creative act.

We'll see this sets up a pattern that will actually emerge in several places in the Old Testament and in the New Testament as well, where creation is seen as a place of disorder and now, with sin, a place of chaos that God will overcome in a new creative act which eventually takes place in a new creation anticipated in some prophetic text but also in Revelation 22. So, we might return to that later, but just keep that kind of in the corner of your mind. We've looked at Genesis 1-2 in terms of what it says about creation, but I want to look at some further Old Testament texts, and if you're interested in an exhaustive treatment and listing of Old Testament text, one could consult Greg Beals on New Testament theology or New Testament biblical theology,

the development of the Old Testament themes in the New for more detailed text and treatment of some of those texts.

But I simply want to look at what I think are some of the major texts that continue following Genesis 1-2 especially the introduction of sin and evil into God's creation. Those texts develop the motif or theme of creation and land and new creation as well. The first stopping point would probably be the flood narrative in Genesis 6-9, which I would entitle *On the Way to a New Creation*.

That is the account of the flood and the whole story of following the flood, the emergence of dry land again, and what we find with God's recommissioning of Noah is, I think, designed to be a new creative act modeled on the first one in Genesis chapters 1-2. So that is, when you read Genesis chapters 1-2 and especially chapters 8-9 of Genesis in the flood account, there are numerous connections that seem to me to suggest God is renewing his interest in creation or God is, in a sense refashioning in almost a quasi-new creative act refashioning creation. Let me just mention a couple of them.

We don't have time to look at a lot of detail, but for example, in Genesis chapter 8, verses 17 and 20, we find water covering all of creation, perhaps in the same way that the spirit hovers over the watery deep or the watery creation in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 2. So, in chapters 8 and 17-20, bring out every kind of living creature that is with you: the birds, the animals, all creatures that move along the ground so that they can multiply on the earth. So, Noah came out together with his sons and his wife and his son's wives, all the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground, and all the birds and everything that moves on earth came out of the ark one kind after another, and then Noah built an ark. Actually, that is not the one I wanted.

It is chapter 7. For forty days, the floods kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased, they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the earth and heavens were covered.

The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. You should get the picture by then that you have this picture of the waters covering all of creation, perhaps as a reflection of Genesis 1-2, where the spirit hovers over the watery deep. Then we find in Genesis 8:11-14 that dry land emerges, perhaps as a reflection of Genesis 1, where dry land emerges on the third day of creation, where the water separates, and dry land emerges.

So, in the flood narrative, the waters recede, and dry land emerges. Chapter 8 is starting with verse 11. When the dove returned, so Noah sent out a dove; when the

dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf.

Then Noah knew the water had receded from the earth. He waited again more days and sent his dove out again, but this time, it did not return. By the first day of the first month of Noah's 601st year, the waters had dried up from the earth, and Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw the surface of the ground was dry.

So, this picture of dry land emerging, as well as perhaps the mention of the olive leaf that the dove plucked, also reflects the vegetation that emerges in the first creative act in Genesis 1. But then the third thing to draw attention to, in addition to the water covering the earth, in addition to dry land and even plants emerging, the third thing is the creation mandate given to Adam, which is also repeated to Noah in chapter 9. So as Noah and his family emerged from the ark on the dry land after the waters had emerged in this sort of new creation, a new creative act, in chapter 9, verse 1. Then God blessed Noah and his son, saying to them, Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. And verse 7, And as for you, be fruitful and increase in number, multiply in the earth and increase upon it. Actually, the same mandate is given to the animals.

Verse 17: Bring out every kind of living creature; this is chapter 8, verse 17, that is with you, the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it. So, the same mandate that was given to Adam and Eve and the animals to increase and be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth is now given to Noah and the animals that emerge from the ark. So, in conclusion, I think these connections suggest that the flood narrative is, in a sense, both a decreation and a creation.

That is a decreation and judgment by water covering the entire earth, in a sense undoing, judging the first creation and then a new creative act patterned after chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis. A new creative act where the water recedes, dry land emerges, and plant life emerges, and then the recommissioning is given to Adam like Noah in Genesis chapter 9. So, in Genesis chapter 9, the flood narrative could be seen as sort of on the way to a new creation. It's sort of a quasi-new creative act where God judges his first creation with water but then begins to fashion a new creation, also demonstrating God's commitment to the first creation once more that he's not going to scrap the whole plan and simply start over.

The next stopping point after the flood narrative is probably Genesis chapter 12. In Genesis 12, 1 through 2, we begin a long narrative where Abraham is the primary character and features in a large section of the book of Genesis, starting with chapter 12. In Genesis chapter 12, 1 and 2, I'll read the first three verses of Genesis 12, part of God's promise made to Abraham as he establishes what has come to be known as the Abrahamic covenant, which we'll deal with later on.

By the way, one thing to say here is kind of an aside but needs to be stated, at least dealing with the very first theme. It's impossible to deal with these themes in isolation from each other. When you start dealing with one theme, you almost inevitably have to touch on and merge it into other themes.

In fact, we'll see that some of the same texts that we deal with in creation, such as new creation, will be dealt with in relationship to other themes. So, it's impossible to simply treat these in an isolated fashion. They relate to each other very closely.

So, the issue of land related to Abraham is also closely related to covenant and a number of other themes as well. So, we'll deal with this chapter again later on when we deal with the theme of covenant and the covenant that God made with Abraham starting here and elsewhere in Genesis. But let me read these first three verses of chapter 12.

The Lord said to Abraham, leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to the land that I will show you. And I will make you a great nation. I will bless you.

I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you. Whoever curses you, I will curse, and all peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.

Now, notice some of the connections to creation. Note the language of blessing and cursing that could connect back to creation. Later on, the issue of seed, the seed or descendants of Abraham, links back to the seed of the woman in chapter 3 of Genesis.

So, there are all kinds of other connections. But I want you to notice in the very first verse that God's intention in calling Abraham here is eventually to bring him into the land. So, God promises that he is going to bring Abraham into a land.

Now my immediate question is, why is he going to take him to a land? What's the purpose of that? Why not this land? Why is he going to go to another land? At the end of the day, and for our purposes, it's enough to realize that this is to fulfill God's promise in creation in Genesis 1 and 2. Adam and Eve were expelled from the land. So, in Genesis 1 and 2, God creates a land, a suitable environment for Adam and Eve to live in. He places them in Eden, in the garden sanctuary where God dwells with his people.

He places them there to care for them and keep them, to protect them as God's dwelling place. Yet Adam and Eve sin, and they are expelled from the land. Now, I think what we find going on in chapter 12 is God is now fulfilling his intention to

bring his people back to the land that he originally intended for them to enjoy in Genesis 1 and 2. Again, we'll see numerous other connections between Genesis 1 and 2 and the narrative here.

But the point is that Adam is the beginning of God's plan to fix what went wrong in Genesis 1 and 2 on a number of levels. But one of those levels is the promise of the land. God is creating a land in Genesis 1 and 2 for his people to enjoy.

They are exiled from that because of sin. Now, in setting, as we said, God can't just scrap his plan. But God will now; the Old Testament and New Testament are sort of a conflict resolution.

How will the conflict introduced in chapter 3 of Genesis get resolved? Now, we see the resolution that is beginning to take place. We saw it in a sense forecasted and anticipated in the quasi-creative act in Genesis 8 and 9 in the flood narrative. But now we see the resolution of that beginning to take place with God calling Abraham and now bringing him to a land.

That is, now God is beginning to fulfill the purpose of his people dwelling in a land. And we will see God dwelling in their midst later on. But Abraham is the beginning of God's plan to fix what went wrong in Genesis 1 and 2, with Adam and Eve being expelled from the land.

Now, God is demonstrating his intention to bring them back to the land that he created for them to enjoy in Genesis 1 and 2. There is a lot more to be said, but at least at this point, Genesis 12 is not just isolated; this is a new part of the story. This connects back to Genesis 1 and 2 and expresses God's intention to set right what went wrong back there. Another stopping point, just to touch on very, very briefly, but another stopping point should probably be the Exodus.

In the book of Exodus, the early chapters of Exodus should probably also be seen in a sense as a new creation. Obviously, the Exodus, as you find later on in the Old Testament, in Israel's literature, the Exodus becomes the demonstration par excellence of God's redeeming of his people and acting to rescue his people out of slavery and out of Egypt. But at another level, the Exodus is probably also to be seen as a new creation.

In fact, one intertestamental biblical text calls the Exodus a new creation. It says something in terms of, in a sense, God is creating, as it were, creating things anew. For example, Greg Beal has argued that with the coming of all the plagues, they were meant as judgments upon the earth, similar to the way God judged the earth with the flood.

So, the ten plagues that God brings upon Moses, brought upon the land of Egypt, could be seen as a decreation or a judgment upon the earth. Notice that once more, the theme, even of the Red Sea, we might see, I would argue, and we'll see this later on, because we'll deal with the theme of Exodus in more detail later. But the spreading of the water, or the removal of the water, so that dry land emerges, seems also to reflect the creation account in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Where again, God, something that is threatening to the people, something that is a barrier, something that is disorderly, now is removed so the people can cross over on the dry land, on their way to their inheritance.

Which is the land promised to Abraham back in Genesis chapter 12. So, this theme of the plagues as a judgment upon the earth, the Exodus is sort of a new creation, the removal of water, so the people can cross over and eventually go into the promised land that God has given them. All of that suggests that, in a sense, the Exodus could also be seen as a new creation.

I'll just summarize, I won't look at any text in detail, but obviously, the Old Testament narratives relating to the conquest of the land of Canaan are meant to be the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and the patriarchs starting in Genesis 12 and elsewhere. Obviously, after Abraham, the other patriarchs were also promised the land that God had originally promised to Abraham. So the Old Testament narratives of the conquest of the land of Canaan, starting in Joshua and elsewhere, are meant to be the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, but also of God's intention for creation in Genesis 1 and 2. This is the gracious provision of the land that God had established already in Genesis 1 and 2. Adam and Eve lost because of sin, but now, starting with Abraham and now being fulfilled in the conquest, God is bringing the fulfillment by bringing people back to the land after expelling Adam and Eve in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 and Genesis 3 particularly.

But, like Adam and Eve, as the story goes, just like Adam and Eve, Israel disobeys in the land, and they are exiled from the land as God's gift to them, as the place of God's blessing, and as the place of God's presence. To show you once more that these themes are all interrelated, this was part of the covenant promise, that God promised that there would be a blessing in the land if they obeyed, but there would be cursing and expulsion and exile because of disobedience. And that's exactly what happens.

So, particularly when you get into some of what is called the pre-exilic or exilic prophets, you start to read the story of how first the northern kingdom of Israel and then the southern kingdom of Judah were carted off into exile, removed from the land, the place that God had brought them, the place he promised to Abraham, in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2. Now, they are exiled just as Adam and Eve were from the first creation. So, this then leaves us with the question, then once more, the same question we saw in Genesis 3 now gets raised again. How will God return his

people to their land? How will the land once again become a place where God's people dwell and where God dwells with them in their midst? How will God resolve the conflict? How will he fulfill his promise? Starting in Genesis 1 and 2, but then beginning with Abraham in Genesis chapter 12.

The answer occurs in the prophetic literature and the prophets. Where the prophets anticipate over and over again, in addition to other things, and we'll see the prophetic literature plays a key role in our development of a number of these themes. The prophets anticipate a time when God will once more restore his people to their land.

Again, in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2, but also in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12, which both go together. These aren't two separate things. But the prophets anticipate in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2 and Genesis 12, a time when God will restore his people back to their land.

So, God's intention to recreate a land in order to provide a place suitable for his people to dwell in and so that God can live with them will be fulfilled. So, what I want to do is simply look at some of the more obvious prophetic texts as examples of how the prophetic texts are unanimous. We could point to a number of others, but to demonstrate how the prophetic texts are unanimous in anticipating a return to the land of Israel by God's people.

And the starting point, I think, the text will start with is Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37. Again, one could point to text in Zechariah, one could point to text in Jeremiah, and one could point to text in virtually any prophetic book that anticipates the return from the land following the exile. As Israel followed the pattern of Adam and Eve of being in the land, disobedience caused exile.

Now, prophetic texts anticipate a return to the land in fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2 and Genesis chapter 12. Ezekiel 36 and 37, actually Ezekiel 37 to the very end of the book, chapter 48. But I'll just focus for a moment on a handful of passages from Ezekiel chapter 36 and 37 where God describes his intention to restore the people to the land.

And in some of these texts, there are clear connections with Genesis 1 and 2 and Genesis 12 as well. Once more, this is not just God bringing them back to the land for the sake of bringing them back to the land because they need a place to live. But God's intention going all the way back to Genesis 1 and 2. So in Ezekiel 36 and 37, we find God prophesying a time where he will gather the people from exile and return them back to their land.

So, for example, in chapter 36, I'll just read a smattering of verses 17 through 18. I'll read verse 16 as well. And the word of the Lord said to me, son of man, which is God's way of addressing Ezekiel in these texts.

Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. That is the land that God had given them in fulfillment of his promises to Abraham and Genesis 1 and 2. They defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness in my sight.

So, I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. I dispersed them among the nations, and they scattered throughout the countries. I judged them according to their conduct and their actions.

And verse 24, for I will take you out of the nations. I will gather you back from all the countries and bring you back to your own land. And verse 28 as well.

You will live in the land I gave your forefathers. That is the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, repeated to Isaac and Jacob. I will bring you back to the land I gave your forefathers.

You will be my people, and I will be your God. There's the covenant formula, so land and covenant are connected as well. But my point is, notice in all these texts God intends to restore his people to the land, which he connects to the promise God made to his forefathers starting in Genesis 12, which we argued is part of the fulfillment of God's intention in Genesis 1 and 2, that his people would live in the land, the gracious land or earth that God creates for his people.

To jump to the next chapter, chapter 37 of Ezekiel. 37 and verses 21 through 23. And God tells Ezekiel to say to the people; this is what the Sovereign Lord says.

I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone into exile. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel.

There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their other offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding.

I will cleanse them. They will be my people. I will be their God.

There's the covenant formula again. Verse 25. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived.

So, in this section, God expresses his intention to bring the people back to the land in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham that he would give them land. And again, to repeat, that promise of the land to Abraham was meant to be a fulfillment of God's original intention for humanity from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So now we find this development of this land theme climaxing, at least at this point, in the Old Testament prophet's anticipation of a day when God will restore his people back to the land in fulfillment of his original intention. One interesting feature of this, too, is that we've noted in both the sections I've read in Ezekiel 36 and 37, the clear reference to the patriarchs, to Abraham, the promise made to Abraham.

But there are also a couple of references to the Garden of Eden, suggesting that the return to the land was also a return to the fulfillment of God's purposes for Eden, in my understanding. So, back to chapter 36 and start with verse 30. This is in the context of God restoring them to the land in verse 28.

Now I'll read verses 29 and 30, actually. I will save you from all your unkindness, I will call for the grain and make it plentiful, and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.

Notice that language of increasing fruit and increasing crops. Now, that could just be a general theme of blessing and fruitfulness, which it probably is, but the next one leads me to think that it might also have a connection: the next couple has a connection with Eden. So, in verse 25, I'll read verse 34; this is still chapter 36 of Ezekiel.

Chapter 36 of Ezekiel, verse 34. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. They will say that this land that was laid waste has become like the Garden of Eden.

The cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited. So, notice the clear connection with the Garden of Eden. Again, one could say that's just a metaphor for how nice the land will be, possibly.

But again, when you look at this biblically and theologically, it's hard to miss the fact that this is more than just a metaphor for what the land is going to be like. The author expresses the intention that God restores his purposes for his people, which was originally in the Garden of Eden. Chapter 36 and verse 11 are what I think are other clear allusions to Genesis 1 and 2. Actually, I'll back up and start with verse 9, Ezekiel 36, verse 9. I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor.

You will be plowed and sown. I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited, and ruins will be rebuilt.

I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Notice that the language of both people and animals being fruitful and increasing or multiplying on the land, which I think is a clear allusion back to Genesis 1 and 2 and God's intention for his first creation.

So, the book of Ezekiel, especially 36 and 37, but we could find other texts, I think, and all the way to the end of the book of Ezekiel, express God's intention to gather his people and restore them from exile and return them to their land in fulfillment to this biblical theological connection, the fulfillment of Genesis 12 and God's promises to Abraham and the patriarchs, but also going all the way back to the Garden of Eden and demonstrating the return to the land is ultimately an expression of God's intention for all creation and for his intention expressed in his very first creative act in Genesis 1 and 2. Again, God is not going to scrap that, and that was plan A that didn't work; let's try plan B, but God intends to fulfill his purposes for his creation. Another important text is found in two of them that we'll look at in the book of Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah chapter 60, Isaiah likewise, we could look at all kinds of passages in Isaiah, starting especially in chapter 40, where God begins to express his intention to restore his people to their land over and over again.

Chapter 40 is actually a well-known one: Comfort, comfort my people, says the Lord, speak tenderly to Jerusalem, proclaim to her that her service has been completed. Verse 3, a voice of one calling in the desert, prepares the way of the Lord, a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low, the rough ground shall become level, rugged places plain, the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

It's already God expressing his intention in Isaiah 40 to bring the people back to the land in a new creative act. The text I want to look at is Isaiah, chapter 60. In Isaiah chapter 60, beginning to describe or anticipate the restoration of God's people who are now in exile, chapter 60, arise and shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

Now you'll notice, you don't find, at least in the English translation, you don't find the land or the word Eden or anything like that, but clearly this notion of the people being restored back to the land. Arise and shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the people.

But the Lord rises upon you, his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, that is, to Jerusalem, to Israel, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look about you, all assemble and come to you.

Your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on their arms. Then you will look and be radiant, and your heart will throb and swell with joy. The wealth of the seas will be brought to you; to you, the riches of the nations will come.

I'll skip down to verse 9. Surely the islands look to me, in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar with their silver and gold, to the honor of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, who has endowed you with splendor. Verse 10, foreigners will rebuild your walls, the kings will serve you. We can go on and read more of chapter 60 of Isaiah, and I'd encourage you to read the rest of that because the entire chapter is devoted to the restoration of God's people.

So now, this touches on the theme of God's people as well. But Isaiah 60 describes the return of God's people, the restoration of God's people to the land. Once more, within the canonical context, it is in fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, as well as his original intention for creation.

Perhaps one of the fullest prophetic expressions of this is found in Isaiah, chapter 65. And Isaiah chapter 65, very interestingly, takes this concept of restoration of the land and sort of bumps it up a couple of keys. Starting in verse 17, the promise of the return of the people from exile to the land is now understood in terms of a new creation.

And here we find the language of new creation. In fact, we find the language of new heavens and new earth, which we'll see in just a moment, seems to recall the Genesis account as well. So, there are numerous connections to Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So this seems to be, as I said, it seems to bump up the return of the land expectations to a new key, where the expectations of restoration now seem to have been expanded beyond simply the land of Palestine and to now embrace an entire recreated cosmos or a new creation.

So, starting in chapter 65 of Isaiah and with verse 17, Behold, I will create a new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create, for I create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people. The sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. And we'll read a couple of other verses in just a moment.

But notice that first one in verse 17. Behold, I will create a new heavens and a new earth. So God now expresses his intention to restore the people from exile, but now not just in terms of a return to the land of Canaan, the promised land, but now in terms of inhabiting an entire recreated cosmos.

And I want you to notice all the connections with Genesis chapters 1 and 2. The first one we've already alluded to is in verse 17, where the new heavens and new earth recall the original created order of Genesis 1 and 2. That is in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 1, where the author says, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now we find God creating a new heavens and a new earth. So even vocabulary-wise, the language of heavens and earth, repeated here in Isaiah 65, 17, recalls the original created act.

In the same way that in the second part of 17, the former things will not be remembered. Perhaps also an allusion to the former creation, as well as their situation in exile. So, the new heavens and new earth recall the original created act of Genesis 1 and 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Now, God creates a new heavens and new earth. Number two, fact, when you go on and read in verse 20, the fact that there is no premature death seems to recall the curse of death because of Adam's sin. Look at verse 20: For never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years.

He who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth. He who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit, etc.

But notice what I want to draw attention to is this language of no more premature death, no one who does not live out their life fully. Now elsewhere in Isaiah, the prophet actually anticipates a time when death will be no more. But however we deal with this, I think Isaiah is probably speaking in very poetic language in terms of how what happened in the first creation because of sin is now going to be reversed in the new creation.

And so, this language of no more premature death seems to reflect the reversal of what happened as a result of Adam's sin. Notice in verses 21 and 22 that the author envisions a time when there will be no more exploitation or injustice. But I want you to note the language of fruitfulness in the land which again seems to recall the language of the Garden of Eden.

So, 21 and 22, they will build houses and dwell in them; that is God's people, Israel, when he brings them back to the land. They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses, and others will live in them or plant and eat.

For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people. So, I noticed that the language of trees and fruitfulness seem to me to recall the language of Eden. So, this new creation is meant to be a new Eden, a new creation after the first one in Genesis 1 through 3. There is one specific reference to Eden, I think, and that is the verse we just read, the second part of verse 22.

For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people. Interestingly, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, here in Isaiah 65 verse 22, has for as the days of a tree of life or as the tree of life, clearly drawing a connection back to the Garden of Eden in Genesis chapter 2 with its clear reference to the tree of life. So, Isaiah chapter 65, Isaiah 65 anticipates then a day when God will return his people to the land but now seems to conceive of it as something more than just a return to the land of Palestine but a renewed cosmos, a new creation, a new heavens and a new earth after the fashion of the first creation in Genesis 1 and 2. You find something similar in chapter 62 and verse 66.

Isaiah 66 and verse 22 again, as the new heavens and the new earth that I will make will endure before me, declares the Lord, so will your name and descendants endure. So once again, Isaiah ends with a reference to new creation. The last text I want to deal with is, it's interesting texts that we might not associate with land but there are a number of texts in the Psalms that seem to anticipate a day when the Messiah, when a king rules, a son of David rules, his reign will be extended to embrace and cover the entire earth.

The entire earth will be his inheritance. So, for example, in Psalm chapter 2 and verse 8, which often is labeled by scholars or described as a royal psalm, in Psalm chapter 2 and verse 8, God addressing the king, the anointed one, says, ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter, and you will dash them to pieces like pottery.

So, Psalm chapter 2 verse 8 anticipates a time, anticipates that the Messiah, the anointed one, will eventually be given the ends of the earth, not just the land of Palestine, but the ends of the earth as his possession. That is, in the same way, that Adam and Eve were to extend the rule of God to embrace the entirety of creation, now seems to find its fulfillment ultimately in an anointed one, a messianic figure in Psalm chapter 2 verse 8, where he will be given the ends of the earth as his possession, as the one who will rule over it. Psalm chapter 89, another psalm that addresses the Davidic king or a messianic figure or ruler, in Psalm 89 and verse 27.

Let me back up to verse 25. I will set his hand, referring to verse 20, I have found David my servant. With my sacred oil I have anointed him.

Then, in verse 25, I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the river. He will call out to me, you are my father, my God. The rock, my savior, which recalls the Davidic covenant formula in 2 Samuel 7. You are my father, I will be your son.

Then, verse 27, I will appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. So again, Psalm 89 also envisions a time when David, the anointed one, a son of David, will eventually rule over the entire earth, not just over the land of Palestine. Psalm 110.

Psalm 110 and verse 6, another psalm often called a messianic psalm. Let me start reading at verse 1. It's a rather short psalm. Psalm 110.

The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion. You will rule in the midst of your enemies.

Your troops will be willing on the day of battle, arrayed in holy majesty from the womb of the dawn. You will receive the due date for your youth. The Lord is sworn, and he will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. The Lord is at your right hand. He will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. He will drink from the brook beside the way; therefore, he will lift up his head. You find something similar in Isaiah chapter 9, which also addresses a messianic son who is to be born.

But the point of all these is that eventually, the entire earth will be the inheritance of the Davidic ruler. Now, we'll see this is important when you'll notice, well, a couple of things. Number one, you'll note now that the theme of land and creation is linked with the theme of kingdom and kingship.

But this will also be important when we deal with the theme of Jesus as Messiah and how that relates to the theme of land. But the point here is that starting with Isaiah 65, but also in several Psalms, we find this idea that eventually what God's people are to inherit is a new creation, the entire earth. Eventually, the entire earth will be the inheritance of the Davidic ruler in the future.

So far in the Old Testament, we've seen that God, starting with the flood narrative, God begins to demonstrate his intention through showing his faithfulness to creation. Even in the flood, God shows his intention to bring his people back to the land, to restore the land so that it can be a place where God can dwell with his people, where his people can live and share in God's presence in the land. We also

saw that this was part of the promise made to Abraham. When God demonstrated his intention to take Abraham into a land, he would show him.

This was not just to do something nice for Abraham, but this was part of the fulfillment of Genesis 1 and 2, where Adam and Eve in chapter 3 were expelled from the garden. Now, God expresses his intention to bring his people back to the land that he originally created and gave them as a gracious gift. We saw this throughout the Old Testament history as Israel entered the land of Canaan.

This is meant to fulfill the promises made to Abraham and the patriarchs, as well as his intention for creation in Genesis 1 and 2. But like Adam and Eve, Israel replicates Adam and Eve's history. And like Adam and Eve, Israel also disobeys. They are also expelled or exiled from the land, the place of blessing, the place of God's presence.

And so, the prophetic texts then anticipate a time when God will once more restore his people to the land in fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, but also in fulfillment of God's original intention in Genesis 1 and 2, to give the land, the earth to his people. So once more, God does not just scrap his plan or start a new one, but instead, God intends to bring his people back to their land. But several texts, for example, in Isaiah chapter 65, some of the Psalms anticipate a time when Israel and God's people will inherit the entire cosmos, that what God will bring them back to is not just the land of Palestine, but in fact a new creation.

Even some of the Psalms anticipate a time when, eventually, the inheritance of the Davidic king will be the end of the earth, the entire earth. Perhaps in fulfillment of God's plan for humanity in Genesis, that they were supposed to rule over the entire earth as God's vice-regents and spread his rule and glory over all of creation. So God will one day restore, to kind of summarize so far, the Old Testament, the Old Testament teaching on land and creation and new creation.

Again, there are other texts we could have appealed to, and I've been rather selective rather than exhaustive. But the point of these texts is that God will one day restore his intentions for humanity and creation in a new creative act, a physical creation, where they will once again enjoy the blessings that they should have enjoyed in the new creation and where once again God will dwell in their midst. Now, that prepares us for the New Testament teaching on land and creation and new creation.

And again, what we want to do is focus on some of the major representative texts. A couple of things to highlight in regard to the New Testament teaching that are interesting and important to keep in mind. One is, until you get to Revelation, and especially chapters 21 and 22 with the new creation, Behold; I saw new heavens and a new earth.

Until you get there, what is interesting is the almost complete absence of land language in the New Testament. You won't find Paul promising the land of the people. You don't find Jesus talking a lot about restoring the people to the land.

You won't find other New Testament authors saying much about the return of the people to the land. Now, there are a number of things that could be made of that. We'll talk a little bit about why that might be and how that might be important.

But the most important thing to keep in mind is almost the complete absence of reference to the land. Until you get to Revelation 21, where you find the new creation emerging, there is very little reference to the land. Now, as we said with the language of the covenant, that does not mean that the land no longer plays a role that creation and land are now absent from the New Testament, or they're important in the Old Testament but not in the New Testament, or they're not important now but they might be later.

It might be later on in the fulfillment, the final fulfillment. So, we need to ask why there might not be a land language, but even if there's not, does the land still play an important and prominent role in the New Testament? The other thing, again, to recognize is that the teaching of the New Testament and creation share in the already but not yet tension of inaugurated eschatology that we've already talked about a couple of times. That is, I think, as I read the New Testament, we'll find that the land promises to kind of anticipate a little bit where we're going.

The land promises that we find in the prophetic literature, what is envisioned in the Psalms, God's intention for creation for the Abrahamic promise is fulfilled already in the coming of Christ and his people in anticipation of the not yet or the ultimate consummation that I think we find in Revelation chapter 21. And in addition to that, that these promises in both the already and not yet, these promises are fulfilled both physically and spiritually. As we said, the land has both a physical and a spiritual dimension to it.

So, as we find fulfillment, we'll probably find it happening both spiritually and physically. But the land promises, I think, are fulfilled according to this already but not yet scheme, already fulfilled in Christ and the salvation he brings and in his people in anticipation of the final fulfillment, the primarily physical fulfillment that one finds in the new creation in Revelation 21. So in our next session, we'll start with the Gospels, and we'll begin to look at how the theme of creation, new creation, and land finds its fulfillment in the New Testament and the Gospels, the Pauline letters, some of the other New Testament writings and climaxing in the book of Revelation and looking at how the creation, new creation, land theme from the Old Testament gets developed in the New Testament and finds its fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ and eventually in God's consummation of all his promises for his people in the book of Revelation.

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 3, Creation, Land, and Recreation in the Old Testament.