

Dr. David L. Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 9, Covenant, Old Testament and New Testament, Part 1

© 2024 Dave Mathewson and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lectures on New Testament Theology. This is session 9, Covenant, Old Testament and New Testament, Part 1.

We've introduced the concept of covenant, and what I want to do now is just survey very briefly the covenants in the Old Testament in preparation for looking at how they get fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in the New Testament, but maybe just say a couple of brief things about their relationship to each other.

The question that we raised was whether there is a covenant in Genesis 1 and 2, and scholars debated whether there was, but not all agreed. First and foremost, there's no mention of a berit or the word covenant, but a number of features of covenant seem to appear in Genesis 1 and 2, or there are a number of connections that might suggest there was a covenant. First of all, God's covenant with Noah later on in chapter 9 seems to recall Genesis 1 and 2. We'll look at that later, but as we already saw earlier on, there are a number of connections between what's going on in Genesis 9 in the flood narrative and Genesis 1 and 2 in the creation, the original creation.

Genesis 9 is sort of a new creation or renewal of the first creation. So, the connections between Genesis 9 and Genesis 1 and 2 may suggest that the covenant with Noah is a renewal of the covenant made in Genesis 1 and 2. Some of the elements of a covenant are found here. God is portrayed as king, as the sovereign ruler of all who enters into a relationship with his people.

He provides for his people in creation in Genesis 1 and 2 as well. God issues stipulations for maintaining that relationship in creation. So, for example, when you go back to Genesis 1 and 26 and 27, then God said, let us make man in our own image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, the birds of the sky over the livestock and all the wild animals and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

So, God created mankind in his own image, in his image of God, he created them, male and female, he created them. God blessed them and said to them, this is verse 28, be fruitful and multiply in number, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea. Then, in chapter 2, in verse 15 and the following verses 15 and 16, the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work on it and care for it.

And the Lord God commanded the man, you are free to eat from the tree of the garden, verse 17, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for when you eat, you will surely die. So, notice the reference here to stipulations or commands for maintaining the relationship between God and Adam and Eve, but also the blessings and the cursings for obedience and failure to obey, likewise in chapter 2 verse 17.

So, whether we should describe this as a covenant or not, God's relationship with his people certainly bears the marks of later covenant relationships that God establishes with his people. So that God's relationship with Adam and Eve is at least a covenantal type of relationship. Again, there are some drawbacks to describing it as a covenant, whereas others have argued that it is a covenant relationship.

So, I will leave it at that. At least we do find the marks of later covenant relationships already present with God's relationship with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden in Genesis 1 and 2. The next stopping point is the covenant made with Noah, the Noahic covenant in chapter 9 of Genesis. The covenant made with Noah is significant.

It is a universal one made with all of humanity. We'll see where most of the other covenants are made primarily with the nation of Israel. The covenant with Noah is a universal one made with all of humanity.

We've already noted some of the connections with Genesis chapters 1 and 2, especially in chapter 9. For example, the reference to the water receding and dry land emerging. We've noted the renewal of the mandate that was given to Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply now repeated to Noah. So in chapter 9, verse 1, then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, be fruitful and multiply in number and fill the earth.

The very mandate that was given to Adam and Eve back in Genesis chapter 1. And then also starting with verse 6, he says, as for you be fruitful and multiply in number, multiply on the earth and increase upon it. Then God said to Noah and his sons with him, I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you. And with every living creature that was with you, the birds, the livestock, etc., every living creature on earth, I establish my covenant with you.

Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood, and never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. And then again, notice the number of times the word covenant occurs starting at verse 12. God said this is the sign of my covenant.

I am making between me and you and every living creature with you a covenant for all generations to come. Verse 15, I will remember my covenant between me and

you and all living creatures. In verse 16, whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, kind of the sign of the covenant, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on earth.

So basically, what appears to be going on with the covenant made with Noah is that it is a reaffirmation of the creation mandate or God's intention for creation in Genesis 1 and 2. All creation was to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth with God's glory. So the covenant with Noah is reaffirming God's commitment to his first creation, and if Genesis 1 and 2 is a covenant, then we now find that a covenant does not have to initiate a new relationship, but a covenant could formalize an already existing one.

If there is a covenant in Genesis 1 and 2. But at the very least, the covenant made with Noah again reaffirms God's commitment to his creation and humanity. And will provide the basis for God's redemptive covenants that he will make with his people. That will restore his original relationship with humanity in Genesis 1 and 2. So one possible way to see it then is God establishes a covenantal type of relationship with humanity in Genesis 1 and 2. But because of sin, that relationship is broken.

And then God judges the earth in Genesis chapters 6 through 9. But then God reaffirms his commitment through a covenant with Noah. God reaffirms his commitment to creation and humanity in Genesis chapter 9. In preparation for the redemptive covenants that he will begin to establish with his people, starting with the covenant that he made with Abraham.

So, the next covenant to look at is the Abrahamic covenant. We find the Abrahamic covenant described and established and developed in Genesis 12, Genesis 15, Genesis 17, and Genesis 22 as well. In God's covenant with Abraham, beginning in Genesis 12, we find God's intention to take Abraham from the land in which he is now living.

And take him to a new land that he is going to give him. We saw the land that he was going to give Abraham, and it was with the intention of fulfilling his promise in Genesis 1 and 2. Since Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, God intends now to bring them back through a covenant he's going to make with Abraham. As a result of this, he will make Abraham's name great and bless him.

Eventually, all the nations of the earth will be blessed by Abraham. This kind of draws a connection back to the Noahic covenant where God expresses his intention, his commitment to all of creation. But the Abrahamic covenant is the first covenant that is meant to bring about redemption.

So many have called it a covenant of redemption. In fact, Abraham is probably being described at least partly as a new Adam type of figure, and now all the nations of the

earth are to be blessed. Again, what Adam and Eve were supposed to do, and that fills the entire earth, be fruitful and multiply and fill the entire earth, now will be fulfilled through the Abrahamic covenant where he will be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

All the nations of the earth will be blessed through Abraham. We've already noted the fact that he is to go to a land that God will show him, again, which the original Adam lost when he and Adam and Eve were expelled or exiled from the garden of Eden. Now God is going to return them to the land, to the garden, to the paradise, to the first creation as God originally intended them.

Furthermore, the reference throughout Genesis, the reference to Abraham's seed or Abraham's offspring, where God makes promises about Abraham's seed and Abraham's offspring, probably recalls the seed of Genesis 3, verses 15 and 16, where the woman's seed would ultimately crush the serpent's head. Now it's as if the covenant made with Abraham and Abraham's seed is beginning to answer the question, how is the woman's seed going to crush ultimately the serpent's head? How will redemption be accomplished through the woman's seed? Well, it'll be through a specific seed, that is, Abraham and his seed or his offspring. So, there are connections back with, once more, with the original creation.

Now, I owe these observations to the book *Kingdom Through Covenant* by Gentry and Wellum, which I referred to earlier, but they highlight at least four elements of the structure of the Abrahamic covenant. The first one is the election or calling of Abraham, which we've seen is at the heart of the covenant in Genesis 12, verse 1, where God, once more, takes the initiative to call Abraham and to choose Abraham as the person through which he will ultimately bless all the nations of the earth. Second, God made promises to Abraham, promises of descendants, and promises of the land, as in Genesis 12 and Genesis 15.

Third, the covenant is confirmed through the sign of circumcision, Genesis chapter 17. Finally, in the fourth element in Genesis 22, Abraham responds in obedience, and the covenant is confirmed by an oath. So, once more, all the elements of a covenant are found throughout the Abraham narrative in Genesis 12 through 22.

So, to summarize, the Abrahamic covenant is the means or the way by which God will now implement his plan of redemption. It's the means by which God will restore his original intended relationship with humanity in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 that was ruined by sin, a relationship that God affirms his commitment to again in Genesis chapter 9. Now, the Abrahamic covenant is the way God will implement his plan of redemption to restore that original relationship from Genesis 1 and 2. The next major covenant I wanted to talk about briefly is the Mosaic covenant, the covenant that God made with Moses in Exodus 19, and the following. The Mosaic covenant is now, again, not to be seen as something different or separate from the other

covenants, from Noah, the covenant of Noah, or creation if you see one there or the Abrahamic covenant.

But more specifically, the Mosaic covenant is the specific means by which God will deal with Israel in fulfilling his covenant with Abraham. Again, to quote Scott Hafeman in his chapter in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology*, he says that God's original covenant relationship with humanity before the fall, based on creation, is established with both Abraham and Israel through the Mosaic covenant as an act of redemption. The article in the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* on covenant says the Mosaic covenant guarantees the preservation of Israel, Abraham's national posterity.

So, the Mosaic covenant is going to be the specific way God will deal with Israel in bringing about the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Now, in Exodus chapter 19, for example, there are a number of texts that we could read. But in Exodus chapter 19, we find indications of God's covenant relationship that he will now establish through Moses with his people.

So, I'll read the first six verses of Exodus 19. On the first day of the third month, after the Israelites left Egypt, on that very day, they came to the desert of Sinai. After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called him from the mountain. Again, notice God taking the initiative to establish a relationship and called him up to the mountain and said, this is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob. Notice the connection back to the Abrahamic covenant, Abraham, and his descendants.

This is what you are to say to the sentence of Jacob and what you are to say to the people of Israel. You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself. Notice the notion of God's provision for his people.

Now, if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations, you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. These are the words that you are to speak to the Israelites.

So, notice the themes of provision and the stipulations to keep the covenant and keep the commands that God will give them starting in chapter 20, the Decalogue of the Ten Commandments. Notice the theme of blessing if they obey. Later on, we find cursings throughout the Mosaic covenant stipulations, cursings for refusing to obey and keep the covenant relationship.

We've also already mentioned the covenant formula later on in Leviticus 26 and verses 11 and 12, which we already find at least in part in several other sections in Exodus. I will be, you will be my people. I will be your God.

So, the Mosaic covenant then is God's means of entering into a relationship with Israel to maintain that relationship as his way of fulfilling the covenant that he made with Abraham. The next major covenant is the Davidic covenant. We find the Davidic covenant referred to most explicitly in 2 Samuel chapter 7, where the prophet Nathan comes to David.

1 Chronicles chapter 17, and then among other Psalms, Psalm 89 has clear references to the covenant God makes with David. There's a reference in Isaiah 55 to the covenant God makes with David. In Ezekiel 36, there's a reference to the Davidic covenant.

So, the Davidic covenant plays a key role. The basis of this is that God makes a promise of perpetual kingship to David. It's unclear, for example, starting in 2 Samuel 7, whether David thinks that a specific son will eternally sit on his throne or that the throne will just perpetuate forever and ever.

We'll see that it becomes more clear, even by the time you get to Isaiah chapter 9, that the author of Isaiah expects a certain son to fulfill that covenant role of sitting on David's throne and that the kingship will be one that lasts forever. But the heart of the promise is a perpetual kingship that will come through David. Note that even in the 2 Samuel 7 and verse 14, which is usually the text pointed to, although it's much broader than that.

But in 7:14, note the covenant formula. I will be his father, referring to the descendant of David. I will be his father, and he will be my son.

So, notice that covenant language of father and sonship that is at the heart of covenant language, very similar to, I will be their God, they will be my people. I will be his father, and he will be my son. If you read a little bit more broadly, though, I want you to notice some of the connections also to the Abrahamic covenant, suggesting that the Davidic covenant is a further way that the Mosaic covenant, but also the Abrahamic covenant will be brought to fulfillment.

Let me back up. Again, we often read just chapter 7 and verse 14, but in this broader context, there are a number of connections back to the Abrahamic covenant. So it begins, I'll start with verse 8. Now then, tell my servant David, this is what the prophet Nathan is to tell David, speaking the word of the Lord to him.

This is what the Lord God Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people in Israel. I have been with you wherever you've gone. I have cut off all your enemies from before you.

Now, I will make your name great, just as God was to do with Abraham, like the names of the greatest men on earth. And I will provide a place for my people, Israel, and plant them there, reflecting the promise of bringing Abraham to the land, to a place that God would show him. I will provide a place for my people Israel.

I will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning. Then he ends by saying, I will give you rest from all your enemies.

The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you. When your days are over and rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your seed or offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood. So, notice the reference to the great name, giving them a place, the seed, or descendant.

So, I think what's going on at the Abrahamic covenant now is God is now expressing in more detail how the Abrahamic covenant through the Mosaic covenant is going to be fulfilled. It will now come through a specific seed, through the seed of David. Intriguingly, just kind of as a side note, it's interesting in Matthew chapter 1:1 that when Jesus Christ arrives on the scene to fulfill these covenants, we find Jesus Christ is described as the son of David, son of Abraham, both of them together.

So, both covenants are connected. Another connection is that with Genesis chapters 1 and 2 is not only does the Davidic covenant more specifically fulfill the Abrahamic covenant through the Mosaic covenant, but it also goes back to the original creation. We've already noted that God is going to give them a place where they will have rest from their enemies.

It's an interesting connection with the rest that God enjoys in the original creation. Now, God's people are going to be given rest from their enemies when God provides for them a place, again connecting back to the land or the creation that God originally gave his people in Genesis 1 and 2. Furthermore, note the references throughout this to the ruling. God appoints him, is going to appoint David as a ruler over the people of Israel.

And then verse 13, actually back up to verse 12, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood. I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my name.

I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Now, do you see the connection back with Genesis 1? Adam and Eve, part of the mandate God gave to Adam and Eve

in chapters 1, 26, and 27 was to rule over all of creation. Now, I think, more specifically, the way that God, as God's image bearers, back to Genesis 1 for just a moment, as God's image bearers, they were to reflect God's rule and spread God's rule over all creation.

Now, I think what's going on here is, more specifically, the way that God's mandate for his people to rule over all creation, to represent his rule, will now be accomplished through a Davidic ruler whose throne will endure forever, whose throne God will establish so that he will rule over his people and eventually over all creation. Again, if I can bring in some of the later Psalms that we've already looked at, if you remember, in Psalm chapter 2, Psalm 89, eventually, the son of David, the Messianic king, was to be given the ends of the earth as his possession, was to be given all the nations, all the kings of the earth as his possession. So, it seems to me that the way that God will eventually accomplish his purpose that Adam and Eve failed to do in representing God's rule as his image bearer over all creation is through a Davidic ruler who will rule over his people, rule on their behalf, and eventually spread that rule to the ends of the earth and inherit all the earth as his inheritance.

And that will happen when God establishes his throne and his kingdom. And you could go to another text you could look at, which would be Isaiah chapter 9. In fact, in Isaiah chapter 9, another Davidic text, one of those passages we often read at Christmas time or find on Christmas cards, but certainly, it's far more significant than that. Isaiah chapter 9, starting at verse 6, for to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness.

From that time on and forever, the zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. Notice the connection of David with ruling and ruling over all the earth, establishing David's kingdom, probably again in fulfillment of God's original intention for Adam and Eve as his image bearers to rule over creation as God's vice-regents, as God's representative. But they failed at it.

One of the things the Davidic covenant does is demonstrate God's intention to bring that fulfillment through the seed, through the line of David. Finally, we come to the New Covenant, the New Covenant that God makes with his people. At the heart of the New Covenant is the problem of Israel's sinfulness, which was the main problem with the Mosaic covenant and the relationship between God and his people established under the Mosaic covenant.

The problem, as the author of Hebrews, I think, makes clear, the problem was not the Mosaic covenant itself. The problem was the sinfulness, rebellion, and hard-heartedness of the people so that this necessitates the establishment of a New Covenant.

The main distinction is the New Covenant carries with it the guarantee that it will not be broken because it comes with the provision of a renewed heart and the provision of the Holy Spirit that guarantees that, ultimately, the New Covenant will be kept and will not be broken as the old one was. And later on, we'll look a little bit at the book of Hebrews, which compares and contrasts the Old and New Covenant. And at the heart of it again, is the Old Covenant ultimately could not take care of, not that it didn't at all, but ultimately it could not take care of the problem of rebellion and sin and the hard-heartedness of the Israelite people, which the New Covenant now does through the provision of the new heart and the Holy Spirit.

The primary texts that refer to the New Covenant in the Old Testament are Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. But Jeremiah 31, a passage that gets quoted later on in the New Testament, Jeremiah 31 and verses 31 through 33, we read this: the days are coming, declares the Lord. So again, anticipating a time when God will restore his people from exile, Jeremiah says, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

Again, at this time, the kingdom had divided between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. And it will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors, with Moses, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. Again, notice the covenant language.

This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds. I will write it on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people. There's the covenant formula again. No longer will they teach their neighbor or say to one another, no, the Lord, because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

So that's Jeremiah's description of a new covenant relationship where God will deal decisively with sin. He will write his law in their hearts, guaranteeing that God's people will not break the covenant relationship again. We find, I think, the same new covenant, although the word covenant does not explicitly occur in these verses.

I think we clearly find the establishment of the new covenant in Ezekiel chapter 36. Probably in other texts too in the prophets, such as Joel chapter two, but that gets

quoted in Acts chapter two on the day of Pentecost. But in Ezekiel chapter 36, and starting with verse 26, let me back up and start with verse 24 of Ezekiel 36.

For I will take you out of the nations. I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own lands. Again, in the context of restoring the people from exile back to their land.

And then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. Again, this is very similar to the language in Jeremiah 31 of forgiveness of sins.

Then I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and to be careful to keep my laws.

Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors, and you will be my people, and I will be your God. There's the covenant formula again. Also, Ezekiel chapter 37 is just another, again; notice the word covenant is not used, but the covenant language is just all over the place.

Then, in chapter 37 and verses 26 through 28, let me back up and start with 24. My servant, David, will be king over them. So, notice that the Davidic covenant is being fulfilled, and they will all have one shepherd.

They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I have given to my father, Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. In reference to the Abrahamic covenant, they and their children and their children's children will live there forever. And David, my servant, will be their Prince forever.

I will make a covenant of peace with them. It will be an everlasting covenant. So, there we finally find the covenant language.

I will establish a with them and increase their numbers. Notice the connection back to not only the Abrahamic covenant but Genesis 1 and 2, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them.

I will be their God, and they will be my people. So, these texts clearly refer to the covenant, a renewed covenant, a new covenant. God is going to make with his people that probably I think functions as the overarching covenant that will bring to fulfillment and bring to realization the relationships established by the other covenants, the relationship established by God with his people at creation.

And then with Abraham, then initiated with Israel and the Mosaic covenant. Now it climaxes in a covenant that God, the new covenant that God makes with his people,

Israel. And again, notice that at the heart of this is the covenant formula, both in Jeremiah 31, verse 33, which is equal to 37, and verse 27.

I will be their people, and they will; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Notice, too, how the covenant is also connected with the theme of the temple. At the heart of the covenant is God's intention to dwell with his people. So, the over, the overarching covenant relationship expressed in the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, and the Davidic covenant is now renewed in the new covenant.

So that all the previous covenants, in a sense, are now realized and find their fulfillment in the establishment of the new covenant. So that, again, these are probably not to be seen as simply a series of discrete covenants that have no relationship to each other, but instead, instead, these covenants build on each other, as if at the bottom, you sort of have a platform with, Genesis one and two, and then the Abrahamic, the Noahic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant, they build on each other with a kind of at the pinnacle then is the new covenant, , through which, , God's original covenant relationship, with his people expressed in the Abrahamic Mosaic and Davidic covenant is now finally realized and finally fulfilled. So that's a very brief, perhaps painfully brief, survey of the covenants in the Old Testament and how they function and their, again, their purpose in relationship to God, establishing a relationship with his people, Israel, but also how that relates back to his intent to establish a relationship with his people in the garden of Eden.

What I want to do then is ask the question, how do these covenants find their fulfillment and realization in the New Testament? , we've already seen in looking at Jeremiah and Ezekiel, especially Ezekiel, we've seen that, and even the Davidic covenant too, we've seen God's intention in the future to establish a covenant, but also, we saw reference, particularly in Ezekiel to the Davidic covenant, to God's intention to bring about the ultimate fulfillment of the, of the Abrahamic covenant. How do these covenants find their fulfillment in the New Testament? Two things to remind you of before we look, specifically at some of these covenants, two things to remind you of, first of all, is that number one, we should expect that these covenants, first of all, find their climax and fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. So, all God's promises are yes in Christ; they all are filtered through their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the climax of God's promises to establish his covenant among his people. And then, by extension, the covenant gets fulfilled in his people who belong to him, who are united to Christ in faith. The second thing is that we should also expect, as we've already seen and the other themes we've looked at, we'll continue to see, we should expect that the covenants will be fulfilled according to the already, but not yet scheme, of, of a realized eschatology or that, that is, the cover, the promises of the fulfilled covenants will, first of all, find their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ and his people.

But that is merely an anticipation of the consummation of those covenants, in the new creation. For example, we'll look at this in more detail. For example, we already, according to the book of Hebrews, we find that Jesus Christ has already established and inaugurated the new covenant, of Jeremiah chapter 31.

We will also see clearly that Paul thinks that the new covenant has all of Ezekiel and Jeremiah fulfilled in Jesus Christ and that his people and his readers have already participated in that. Not, , not least of all, the fact that they experience forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness of sins is tied in with the new covenant.

So, the fact that Christ brings about forgiveness and forgiveness of sins for his people suggests the new covenant is already a reality. But then, why do we find in Revelation 21 in the new creation? Why do we find John there quoting the New Covenant formula? , it's because the new covenant has a not-yet dimension where it will ultimately be fulfilled in the consummated relationship between God and his people in a new creation. So, keep those two things in mind.

The covenants find their fulfillment first of all in Christ and then, by extension, his people who are joined to him in faith. And second, the covenants will be fulfilled according to the already but not yet eschatological tension that we've already looked at. So, first of all, let's begin with, let's begin with creation.

Again, there's debate as to whether there was a covenant creation, but at least we find the beginnings of God's intention to establish a relationship with his people at creation in Genesis 1 and 2. We found a number of elements of the covenant in Genesis 1 and 2, so I want to start there and just briefly simply observe that Jesus Christ fulfills the intention of God's relationship with Adam and Eve at creation.

And if you want to talk in terms of a covenant, the covenant God made with Adam and Eve at creation by Jesus himself is portrayed as a new Adam, by Jesus himself accomplishing what Adam failed to do. , we've already looked at one example, one clear example in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 in a text where Paul goes to great lengths to defend the necessity of the resurrection, not only the resurrection of Jesus Christ but the resurrection of believers as well. In verse 45 of chapter 15, 1 Corinthians, Paul says, so it is written, the first man, Adam became a life, a living being, the last Adam, Jesus Christ, a life-giving spirit.

So, here, the author, Paul, explicitly refers to Christ as the last Adam, as the one who comes in the sense who undoes what the first Adam did. So, the first Adam failed to give life and failed to keep the obligation of his relationship. And now, Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, comes to reverse the effects of sin and to do what the first Adam failed to do.

Even more clearly in Romans chapter five, and again, I won't read the entire section, but just enough of that, you can see the explicit contrast that Paul is setting up in chapter five, beginning in verse 12 and actually all the way to the end of this chapter. Again, I won't read the whole thing, but a very explicit contra comparison contrast between what Adam has done and what Christ has now done in response to that, verse 12, therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and death through sin. In this way, death came to all people because they all sinned.

And then Paul kind of cuts his comparison off to explain some things. He says in verse 13, to be sure sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there's no law. Nevertheless, death reigns from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a type of the one who is to come.

So, Paul himself explicitly suggests Adam is a type of something greater of someone yet to come. That is if we use the vocabulary of 1 Corinthians 15, a type of a second Adam, someone who will come and do what the first Adam failed to do. Paul goes on to say that the gift is not like the trespass.

For if, if the many died by the trespass of the one man, Adam, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by that grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many, nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of the one man sin. The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. And then, if I can jump down to verse 18, consequently, just as one trespass results in condemnation for all people.

So also, one righteous act through the person of Jesus Christ, brought life for all people, just as through the disobedience verse 19 of one man, the many were made sinners. So also, through the obedience of the one man, the many were made righteous. In other words, sometimes we just read this to say that Jesus Christ's death overcomes and reverses the effects of the fall.

That's certainly true. But I think Romans five also suggests that not only did Jesus Christ come and fix what Adam did, but Christ also came to do what Adam failed to do. That is to offer the act of obedience, bring life, and accomplish God's purpose throughout creation.

And so, what Adam failed to do, Christ now does and accomplishes through a second Adam, and through his people who are united to him in faith. And the reason I say that is if you go, one other text to turn to in connection to this, that, I think we've already read, but we'll mention it again is Colossians chapter three and verse 10. I'll back up and read verse nine.

Do not lie to each other since you have taken off the old self. And I suggest to you, and I suggested before, and we read this verse, the old self probably represents who I am in Adam, who I am under the authority of connected in connection with Adam. You've taken off the old self with its practices, verse 10, and you have put on the new self.

That is, the new self is who I am in Christ, who I am under the rule of Christ, belonging to Christ within the sphere of Christ's control and authority. You have put on a new self. Now listen to this, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.

And we already said that that's clearly Adamic language. That's clearly creation language from Genesis one and two. So, in other words, Jesus Christ comes and accomplishes what Adam was supposed to do by offering obedience, bringing life, and spreading God's rule.

And now that is accomplished in the second Adam, but it is also accomplished in his people who are united to him in that language of the new self, who I am in Christ, who intriguingly back in Colossians 1:15, we saw that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. The true image of God is Jesus Christ. But now, the image is renewed in us by virtue of the fact that we are in Christ.

The new self, the new man, is who I am in Christ, belonging to Christ. And now the image of God is renewed in Jesus Christ. God's intention through Adam is ultimately fulfilled in the second Adam, who not only fixes what Adam ruined but also does what Adam failed to do.

And then by extension, the image of God is renewed. God's intention for Adam and Eve is renewed in those of us who belong to Christ in the second Adam in faith. So again, whether one says there was a covenant at creation or not, certainly, creation is the starting point for renewing God's relationship with his people.

And so, we find Christ as the second Adam doing that. And God accomplished his purposes for Adam through the second Adam. And it's through the second Adam that God's purposes for humanity are accomplished in us.

The next covenant to talk about briefly is the Abrahamic covenant. We saw with the Abrahamic covenant, this is the first redemptive covenant where God intends to accomplish his purpose through Abraham and through his seed, especially after Genesis 12, all the references to Abraham's seed and God's promise that he will make his seed more numerous than the sand of the sea and the stars in the sky. The promises to Abraham are fulfilled in Abraham's true seed and descendant, who is the person of Jesus Christ.

We've already seen this in Matthew chapter one and verse one, where at the very beginning of Matthew's gospel, he describes Jesus Christ as the son of David and the son of Abraham. Probably, we find Jesus Christ in his role as a son of Abraham starting in chapter two with the visit of the Magi, the wise men who come as foreigners, as people from other nations who now come to experience the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant by coming to worship Christ in Matthew chapter two. But the point is in Matthew chapter one, verse one, the author wants to signal how he is going to present Christ as both the son of David, but also the son of Abraham so that the blessings of the covenant made with David, the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant will now go out to all the nations.

So, Matthew ends up with Jesus calling his disciples to his followers to go make disciples of all nations in fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham. So, Jesus is the true son of David. We find something similar going on, or we do find a similar thing going on in Galatians chapter three, a text that we've already mentioned and referred to in Galatians chapter three and verse 16.

We'll return to this text later on in connection with the Mosaic covenant as well. But in Galatians chapter three, verse 16, Paul is arguing for the primacy of the Abrahamic covenant in contrast to the Judaizers who wanted to exclude Gentiles and who wanted to associate the promises of salvation exclusively with the Mosaic covenant. Part of Paul's argument is to demonstrate the primacy of the Abrahamic covenant where God, again through Abraham, would bless all the nations of the earth.

But in an interesting interpretive move, Paul picks up on the language of the Abrahamic covenant from Genesis in connection with the reference to the seed of Abraham in reference to Abraham's descendants and notices what he does with it. Starting in chapter three, let me back up and read verses seven and eight, which again clearly demonstrate Paul's intention to connect this with the Abrahamic covenant. He says, understand then that those who have faith are children of Abraham.

That's interesting. Paul does not say that those who have faith are the nations that are blessed through Abraham. He actually calls them the children of Abraham.

But later on, he'll say in verse 16 that the promises of the Abrahamic covenant were spoken to Abraham and his seed. Referring back to Genesis 12 through 22. And then Paul says, scripture does not say and to seeds, meaning many people, but, and to your seed, meaning one person who is Christ.

Now, no matter how we explain exactly what Paul is doing here, hermeneutically, the only point I want to make is Paul clearly sees the Abrahamic promises, the promise of a seed now being fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, consistent with what we saw in Matthew chapter one and verse one. So now the blessings of the Abrahamic

covenant will flow to the nations through the person of Jesus Christ, who is the true seed of Abraham. Now, in the next section, we will continue to look at the Old Testament covenants and how they are fulfilled in the New Testament, spending most of our time on the new covenant.

But one more thing we need to say about the Abrahamic covenant is that the Abrahamic Covenant also finds fulfillment in the people themselves. So, Jesus Christ is not only the seed of Abraham, but his followers end up being the true seed of Abraham as well. As we already said in verse seven of Galatians three, Paul calls them his readers, the children of Abraham.

So, in the next section, we'll look at the other biblical covenants and how they find their fulfillment in Christ and the New Testament as well.

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lectures on New Testament Theology. This is session 9, Covenant, Old Testament and New Testament, Part 1.