

Dr. David L. Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 16, The Image of God, Part 2, and Introduction to the Kingdom of God

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 16 on the Image of God, Part 2, and An Introduction to the Kingdom of God.

So, we end up by looking at Colossians chapter 3 and verses 9 and 10, where we find a reference to the renewal of God's image in us, his people, and I begin to link that back to chapter 1 and verse 15 of Colossians where Jesus Christ, the incarnate Christ himself, is the image of God.

And now in 3, 9, and 10, especially verse 10 of Colossians, we find a reference to the image of God being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator. Probably, the linkage is that it's by virtue of being joined to Christ, who is the image of God, chapter 1, verse 15, that the image is beginning to be renewed in us. So not by being joined to the old man, the old self, being in Adam, but now by being in Christ, being joined to the new man who is the image of God, chapter 1 verse 15, now Paul says the image of God is being renewed in us.

So, this is sort of the already aspect of the image. We are already being renewed in the image. The image that Adam lost or ruined Adam is now being restored in us by virtue of being joined to the new man that is, to the person of Jesus Christ.

Some have even suggested that in verse 10, the reference to being renewed in knowledge, and some have suggested that it may reflect the knowledge, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in Genesis chapter 2. I don't want to pursue that any further, but the point is there are clear references back to Genesis chapters 1 and 2 in the language of image in Colossians chapter 3 and also chapter 1 as well. Another place where we find an image of God's language in the Pauline literature is 2 Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 18, for example, 2 Corinthians 3 and verse 18.

I'll back up and read 17, and now the Lord is the Spirit. This is the end of that section that deals with the new covenant, Paul being a minister of the new covenant that centers around the giving of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It ends by saying, now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

And we all who have unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, which is being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory that comes from the Lord, who

is the Spirit. So now being renewed in the image, the image of God being transformed into Christ's image now comes about by the work of the Spirit in the life of his people. Chapter 4 and verse 4, the God of this age, still 2 Corinthians, chapter 4 and verse 4, the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

Similar language to what we find in Colossians 1 and verse 15. So, most likely, these texts from 2 Corinthians should be understood and read much like Romans 8-29 and 1 Corinthians 15 and 45 and following 49. Also, Colossians chapter 1 and verse 15 reference Christ being the image of God.

Interestingly, at the climax of the 2 Corinthians reference, there is 2 Corinthians 5:17, the new creation text. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. So now God does this on a new creation, which he inaugurates through the resurrection of his son Jesus Christ.

Once more, Jesus is the true image of God in fulfillment of the Adamic image and what Adam was supposed to do. Now, Jesus is the true image of God, and the image is restored in us by virtue of belonging to Christ. Through his Holy Spirit, that image we are being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ, therefore beginning to restore and fulfill what Adam failed to accomplish in Genesis chapter 1. So to quote from Charles Scobie's book again, *The Ways of Our God*, his biblical theology, he summarizes by saying Paul believes that the eschatological age, that is, the new creation, the kingdom of God, has been inaugurated by a man, that is Jesus, who embodies God's intent for all man, an intent that was thwarted by the first Adam but now is fulfilled in the last.

And again, he does this on a new creation which he inaugurates. Now, when we move outside of the Pauline literature, we do see other references to implicitly or explicitly to Jesus Christ in God's image or fulfilling Jesus Christ actually fulfilling the role of Adam and the commission of Adam, accomplishing what Adam failed to do. And then one text that we'll look at briefly that seems to, I think, implicitly reflect the not yet aspect of the image of God in his people.

The starting point would be the book of Hebrews for references to Jesus Christ or to humanity in God's image, particularly reflecting the Adamic image. Chapter 1 and verse 3 at the very beginning of the book could be a reference to Jesus Christ again as the image of God. Verse 3 of Hebrews 1, the sun is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being sustaining all things.

Now we find the ultimate final image bearer of God, the one who reflects God's glory, the one who is God himself, and the exact representation of God's very being. But then in chapter 2, verses 8 and 9 of the book of Hebrews, in chapter 2, actually 6

through starting of verse 6 of Hebrews 2, the author begins to quote from Psalm 8. We already saw that Psalm 8 is a psalm that celebrates God's original creation and the dignity of humanity as created in God's image, who was meant to rule over it. Now the author of Hebrews 2 quotes that psalm, starting in verse 6, he says, but in chapter 2, there is a place where someone has testified, what is mankind that you are mindful of them? A son of man that you care for him.

You made them a little lower than the angels, you crown them with glory and honor, you put everything under their feet. He then goes on to draw out the implications of the psalm. In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them.

Yet, at present, we do not see everything as being subject to them. That's kind of the already, or that's the not yet. We do not yet see everything subject under humanity's feet.

But then, in verse 9, he says, but we do see Jesus who was made lower than the angels for a little while, but now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death so that by grace, the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone. Now, when I read this, I wonder why the author quoted Psalm 8. I mean, if you go back and read Psalm 8, it's really not prophetic. It doesn't seem at first glance to be a Davidic psalm, a kind of royal psalm that you often see getting applied to Christ in the New Testament.

Why Psalm 8? I think again; the connection is that as the Davidic son, if you go back to earlier in chapter 1, verse 5, the author quotes the son text again, he's referring to Jesus as a son. In verse 5, he is the son of David. You are my son.

Today I become your father. I will be his father, and he will be my son, 2 Samuel 7. So it's as the Davidic son. Now in chapter 2, we find Christ as the son of David, fulfilling the role of Adam.

In other words, God's intention for humanity was established and reflected in Psalm 8, that they would rule over all things that the writer says, but now we don't see that. It ultimately finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who is the second Adam. So again, what Adam and Eve failed to do in Genesis 1 and 2 and in Psalm 8 now gets accomplished in Jesus Christ.

So, for that reason, the author can quote Psalm 8 in reference to Christ, not because it's necessarily prophesying the coming of Christ, but simply because God's intention for Adam in Psalm 8 now finds its fulfillment in the last Adam, who is Jesus Christ, who now comes to accomplish what he failed to do. And again, he does that as the Davidic son from Psalm chapter 2 and Psalm 110 and 2 Samuel 7. Another text to move beyond Hebrews, to sort of move beyond Hebrews that might also reflect the

image of God's language, Adamic language, would be chapter 1 and verse 8 of James. So, James 1, I'm sorry, 18, James 1:18, again, implicitly, may implicitly reflect the Adamic image.

He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, and we might be the firstfruits of all he created. And all I want to make of that is implicitly, we find, we refer to this text, I think, in the context of discussing new creation and referring to creation, new creation theme. But once more, the fact that we are firstfruits of his creation, literally firstfruits of his creation, may express again, implicitly, that now God's intention for his first creation and his image bearer, Adam, finally gets fulfilled in his people in a new creation.

But what I want to end with is the book of Revelation and look at, again, in 21 and 22, especially 22. In one text in particular, we saw that Revelation 21 and 22 is John's climactic vision of the goal of redemptive history being all humanity living on a new creation in the new covenant relationship with God and the Lamb who now dwell in their very midst. What I want to do is move to the end of chapter 22, but before I do that, just notice in that summary that I just stated the language of creation, again suggesting connections back to the first creation. But in chapter 22:5, we find that at the very end of his description of the new creation, and now John is describing the people of God themselves and what they do in the new creation, kind of their role, and verse 5 says, There will be no more night.

They, his people, will not need the light of the Lamb or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever. Now, I'll pick this text up again in connection with the kingdom, but it seems to me that here we find the ultimate goal reached of God's intention for Adam and Eve in Genesis 1, that they would rule over the earth. As his image bearers, as those created in God's image, they would rule over creation so that chapter 22 of Revelation ends with God's people reigning forever and ever over a new creation, in my opinion, in fulfillment of God's original intention for humanity anyway.

So Adam and Eve were to, as God's image bearers, spread God's rule over all creation, which they failed to do, but now, through Jesus Christ, beginning to restore the image of God in his people and through his people's union with him, the image of God being restored in them, now we find the not yet finally reached. Now, we find the consummation of that restoration with God's people. Though the word image is not used here, we could say here are God's people reflecting God's image by ruling with him over all creation, over a new, restored, renewed creation. So, if I can summarize the theme of the image of God throughout the Old and New Testament, Greg Beal says this in his New Testament biblical theology he says Christ has come as the end time for Adam to do what the first Adam should have done and reflect his father's image perfectly and to enable people to have that image restored in them also.

In doing so, Christ is restarting history, which is a new creational age to be successfully consummated at his final coming. Then, the image of God is transformed in us by us belonging to Christ. At the end of Adam, who reflects God's image perfectly, that image is transformed in us who belong to Christ, who is the true image of God. So in Christ, what Adam failed to do is accomplished in Christ and now is being accomplished in his people and will be accomplished in the consummation with God's people ruling over a new creation in reflecting the image of God as Adam was originally supposed to in Genesis chapter 1. So, another connection between the beginning and the end of the Bible.

The theme of the image of God provides a nice transition into the next topic or the next theme, a biblical theological New Testament theme that we want to discuss, and that is the theme of the kingdom of God. Again, a number of scholars think that this is the overarching theme or is the center of dominant theme or the central theme of New Testament theology. Whether that's the case or not, it certainly is a prominent theme, and as we're going to see, it is able to integrate a number of other themes in the New Testament.

And so when we discuss the kingdom of God once more, we'll have to touch on creation, the image of God, the people of God, and the New Covenant; all of those will find a close relationship to the theme of the kingdom of God. But first of all, to briefly mention the linguistic evidence, the word kingdom from the theme kingdom of God comes from the Hebrew Malkuth or the Greek basilea for kingdom. But it's also important to realize that as we look at the theme kingdom of God we should not restrict ourselves to the occurrence of those terms.

Yes, they're important, and they should be a starting point for our understanding of what those terms mean, but their presence or absence does not necessarily signify the presence or absence of the theme of the kingdom of God. So, if the term kingdom is not there, it does not mean that the concept, the biblical-theological theme of the kingdom of God, is not being discussed. Both terms, probably primarily when we think in terms of the theological theme of the kingdom of God, suggest the notion of God's dynamic reign or rule or sovereignty.

Not so much, although they can be used for, when we think of the term kingdom of God, we should think not primarily in terms of a geographical territory such as the United Kingdom. We should not think exclusively of a period of time or some other notion, but instead, again, we should think in terms of the kingdom of God being God's dynamic reign or rule or God's sovereignty that he is going to establish over the entire earth. Now again, to just consider perhaps a couple of models for understanding the kingdom of God.

In the past, people have done a number of things with the kingdom of God. Sometimes it has become co-extensive with society and with this world. Classic dispensationalism basically limited the kingdom of God to the future millennial kingdom when God would rule through Christ on the earth, so they limited it to a period of time, that is, the thousand-year reign that we read about in Revelation chapter 20.

We will talk about that text later on in relationship to the kingdom of God, but at this point, I simply want to mention one very common conception of the kingdom of God which is to restrict it to a specific period of time and location that is Jesus Christ reigning and ruling for a thousand years in the future over the nation of Israel. We will interact with that view, and hopefully, as our discussion unfolds, you will come to an understanding of what the kingdom of God means. Again, I don't want to discuss everything that the kingdom of God entails.

It can easily become a very broad topic, but once more, I am more keen on looking at how the concept develops across the Testaments and finds its fulfillment in Christ and his people in the New Testament. Also, as you have already guessed, we will look at how it participates in that already but not yet scheme in terms of its fulfillment. It is true, though, that in some synoptic texts, the notion of a realm that one enters does appear to be present because, for example, in Luke chapter 16 and verse 16, we will look at what the gospels say about the kingdom of God in more detail later but I just want to highlight a couple of texts.

In Luke 16 and verse 16 the author says, The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. There are different ways of translating that, but all I want to emphasize at this point is that the kingdom of God does appear to establish a realm that one can enter.

But primarily, we will see that the term is used for God's dynamic reign or rule, his sovereignty, but again, in some occasions, it can be the realm created by that rule and sovereignty that people can actually enter and belong to. Now, one other thing we will find as you begin to look at the theme of God's kingdom throughout the Old Testament and New Testament is a tension between the fact that God is already king. We will see in a moment that there are a number of psalms that establish the fact that God is the king who already rules over all creation, yet God is already king, yet he still has to become king. God is already king, but he is not yet king.

So, you also get the sense that although God is king, kingship, and sovereignty have yet to be realized fully throughout his creation. So, as we start looking at the theme of the kingdom of God, like most of the other themes we have looked at, the starting point is the Garden of Eden in Genesis 1 and 2. So I won't go back and read the specific text, but much of what I am going to say will reflect material that we

discussed in relationship to the image of God as well. So, the starting point is understanding then that Adam and Eve are then to function as God's vice regents.

We have seen that by being created in God's image, Adam and Eve are to rule as his representatives, and they are to reflect God's glory and God's rule throughout all creation by exercising dominion over the earth. Then, in Genesis 3, we see over and over again how that intention and that plan is thwarted because of sin. So, Adam and Eve are exiled from the garden sanctuary of God, and basically, the earth will be subjected to the rule of Satan.

Satan later on, we will see, especially in some New Testament texts, how Satan is the ruler of this world. He is the king of this world. So part of establishing God's kingdom is how God will defeat Satan and how the earth will once more come under the sovereignty and rule of God and his people in fulfillment of God's intention in Genesis 1 and 2. We also saw that in Psalm chapter 8, Psalm chapter 8 celebrates God's original creative act and celebrates what almost idealizes what humanity should accomplish and what Adam should have accomplished by ruling over creation.

You rule over the works of his hand. You were set up to rule over the works of his hand. But obviously, as we saw in Hebrews, that did not happen and has not happened yet.

But Jesus Christ, as we already saw, comes to begin to inaugurate and restore God's true intention for Adam to rule over creation. So once more, we can put this in the form of a question, following the sin of humanity in Genesis 3. And that is how we will quote from Desmond Alexander in his little introduction to biblical theology from Eden to the New Jerusalem. He says that the sovereignty of God is, to me, sort of a synonym for the kingdom of God.

How will the sovereignty of God be restored and extended over the whole earth? How will God's kingdom be established throughout the world? So, after Genesis 3, the rest of the Old Testament and into the New Testament can be seen as God's intention to restore his sovereignty and rule over all creation through his people.

As he intended in Genesis 1 and 2. The next time, we will jump through major sections of the Old Testament. I only have time to paint with rather broad strokes with the brush. But the next stopping point might be Exodus chapter 19, verse 6. We have already looked at this in relation to the image of God.

However, in chapter 19, verse 6, God expresses his intention that Israel should function as a kingdom of priests. In other words, once more, Israel now is to fulfill what Adam failed to do. And that is to spread God's rule over all creation.

To be mediators of God's rule and his presence as a kingdom of priests throughout all of creation. So now, what Adam failed to do, God now chooses through Abraham. Now, he chooses Israel as his kingdom of priests to eventually spread his rule throughout all of creation.

To mediate his rule and presence throughout all creation. Another stopping point in connection with that is actually to go before that text just a little bit. It would be to look briefly at the Exodus.

God's deliverance of his people in the book of Exodus is ultimately according to Exodus chapter 15. The song that Moses sings once they emerge through the Red Sea. Victorious and delivered from oppression and slavery at the hands of the Egyptians.

The song of Moses is in chapter 15, verses 11-13 and 17-18. 11-13 says this. Who among the gods is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders.

You stretched out your right hand, and the earth swallows your enemies. In your unfailing love, you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength, you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

And then verses 17-18. You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance. The place you made your dwelling, the sanctuary, Lord, your hands established.

The Lord reigns forever and ever. So, the Exodus then was a demonstration. The beginning of demonstrating God's establishment of his sovereignty and his reign over all things.

In fact, one might say the Exodus itself was based on the fact that God was the sovereign king over all things. So, even back in Exodus, we find the themes of kingship and rule and God's sovereignty. The next stopping point would be to look at Israel's monarchy and the Davidic covenant briefly.

I'll go back and read the 2 Samuel text just briefly, and then we won't read a number of other texts. A number of texts we've already read in connection with the Davidic covenant. So, everything that we said about the Davidic covenant is applicable to what I'm saying now.

And that is why God made a covenant with David. God establishes his covenant with David, where David will rule in fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. David now will rule, and more particularly, God promises that David's kingship, David will have a son offspring after him so that David's throne will never have an end.

So, in chapter 7 and verse 14, actually, I'll back up, verse 12. When your days are over, and you rest, when David is dead and gone with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. So again, David's kingdom will never end; it will go on, and it will be perpetual.

And he is the one who will build a house for me, my name, a temple, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. The Davidic covenant formula.

And then when we read the rest of Samuel, when you get into 1 and 2 Kings and read the Chronicles, we read the account of Israel's monarchy fulfilled by king after king, some of them good, some of them very bad, and wicked, and at the end of the day that's what gets Israel into trouble and into exile. But the point is, I would argue that Israel's monarchy, beginning with and established by the Davidic covenant, is the means by which the commission of Adam to rule over all creation and Israel's commission to rule, Exodus 19.6, you will be a kingdom of priests, how that is now accomplished. The intention of Adam to rule over creation, which was ruined by sin, then the intention that Israel, as sort of a new Adam, would be a kingdom of priests, the way God will fulfill Israel's intention now specifically will be mediated through a king who will rule over them.

So the Davidic covenant at the end of the day, the covenant that God makes with David that there will be a king and his kingdom will last forever and that this is the way that Israel's being a kingdom of priests will ultimately come to fruition, is again, this is not just an afterthought, that why don't we give them a king to rule so that they can stay in order and things like that and defeat all the enemies, though that's part of it, but ultimately it goes back to God's intention for Adam and Eve at the first creation, and then also God's intention that Israel would accomplish what Adam and Eve failed to do by being a kingdom of priests. Now, Israel will function as a kingdom of priests through the establishment of a Davidic king and the monarchy. When you skip forward to the Psalms, we find references then to the expectation of a Davidic king and a kingdom, but one that would eventually be universal.

So, for example, we saw in Psalm chapter 2, what is often called a royal psalm and one that gets applied to Jesus Christ later on in the New Testament. In Psalm chapter 2, Why did the nations conspire and the people's plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up, the rulers band together against the Lord and against the anointed, saying, Let us break their chains. Verse 4, The one enthroned in heaven laughs, the Lord scoffs at them, he rebukes them in their anger.

Verse 6, I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain. I will proclaim the Lord's decrees. He said to me, You are my son, today I become your father.

Ask of me, and I will give the nations your inheritance. The ends of the earth is your possession. So, in Psalm chapter 2, we see that it is through the Davidic king that ultimately, God's intention to rule over all the earth in fulfillment of Genesis 1 will eventually take place.

And we see something similar in Psalm 8, though that's not necessarily a Davidic psalm. It's interesting that in Hebrews chapters 1 and 2, both of those psalms refer to Christ. But Psalm chapter 8, the ideal picture of humanity ruling over creation, Psalm chapter 89, another Davidic text, all of these anticipate and expect a Davidic king and a kingdom that will extend universally throughout the entire world and over the entire earth.

The other thing we see in the Psalms, interestingly, is the emphasis throughout that Yahweh is already the king over all the earth. For example, in Psalm chapter 24 and verse 1, The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it. For he founded it on the seas, and he established it on the waters.

Psalm chapter 29 and verse 10, for example, The Lord sits enthroned over the flood. The Lord is enthroned as king forever. Psalm chapter 47 and 1 and 2, also 47 and verses 1 and 2, Clap your hands all you nations, shout to the Lord, to God with cries of joy, for the Lord most high is awesome, the great king over all of the earth.

And Psalm 103 and verse 19, for just one more, Psalm 103 and verse 19, The Lord has established his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over all. So again, you get this tension between the fact that God is already king over all things, yet in a sense, he has still to establish his sovereignty over all of creation and bring all people under his sovereignty and his rule. So, what we see so far, then, is Adam and Eve are the first image bearers of God who, in reflecting God's image, are to rule over all creation.

God's intention in Genesis 1:26-28 is that Adam and Eve rule over all creation and extend God's rule and presence throughout the entire world, but in Genesis 3, they fail to do that because of sin, and they are exiled from the Garden of Eden. Then Israel, God elects and chooses Israel as his new people, in a sense, the new Adam, who will do what Adam failed to do, and that is, as a kingdom of priests, as a kingdom of priests, they will now spread God's rule and his presence throughout all creation. They will mediate God's rule to all creation.

Yet they fare no better than Adam and Eve. They also sin and are exiled from the land and removed from God's presence. But before that, to back up just a little bit, more specifically, how will Israel accomplish its purpose of being a kingdom of priests? It's through the Davidic monarchy.

It's through the monarchy, more specifically, through King David, through David's son and his offspring, his kingdom, that God will fulfill his intention for not only Israel but

through Adam and Eve, that eventually God's reign and rule would spread throughout the entire earth. Now, as I said, Israel fared no better, and the perpetuation of the kingship demonstrates that many of the kings were sinful and wicked and, like Adam and Eve, did not accomplish God's purpose. So, Israel also is exiled and removed from God's presence and exiled under the servitude of a foreign nation.

Now, that brings us to the prophetic expectations of the restoration of a Davidic king or kingdom. Again, the question that we just looked at still stands. How will God's sovereignty be restored and extended over the whole earth? How will God's kingdom be established throughout the world, which Adam and Eve were supposed to accomplish, which Israel was to accomplish, but they failed to because of sin.

The question still remains: How will God's sovereignty and kingdom be restored and established throughout the earth? That brings us then to the prophetic expectations of a restored Davidic kingdom. And remember, the means by which God is going to establish his kingdom through Israel was through the Davidic kingship, through the covenant that God made with David that his kingship would be eternal, that it would never come to an end. And so, we find Old Testament prophetic text referring to restoration, the coming new creation, the coming salvation, the coming restoration of God's people in the context of the restoration of the Davidic kingship.

So, for example, what is probably the most well-known text that I think we've already read but we'll read again? One of the most well-known texts is Isaiah 9 text. Although the Davidic kingship theme is not restricted to this, as I think I mentioned before, you find this language of a shoot of David that is going to spring up, which New Testament authors pick up on that too, but with that kind of language of a root or shoot from Jesse, I should say, is often Isaiah's way of demonstrating the expectation of the restored Davidic kingship. But in chapter 9, starting with verse 6, I'll read 6 and 7. For to us, a child is born; to us, a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

Which already introduces kingship and sovereignty language. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over David's kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. So, Isaiah 9, towards the very beginning of his book, is already anticipating the restoration of David's throne and his kingdom, where he will rule over all.

His kingdom will rule over all things and it will be perpetual. It will go on forever. You see a similar thing in other texts.

Ezekiel chapter 34, and also 36. Ezekiel chapter 34, and not all of these texts explicitly mention the Davidic king. Again, some of these more broadly just refer to the kingdom that will be restored.

But chapter 34, and verses 2 and following of Ezekiel, we've read much of some of this already, and I don't want to read the entire thing again. But Ezekiel 34 and 2 through 28, where we find the language of the sheep and the shepherd and the expectation that Israel's shepherds did a poor job of leading the people. They were wicked.

So now the author anticipates another shepherd. And he describes that starting in verse 20 of Ezekiel 34. Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them.

See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep because you shove with flank and shoulder, budding all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away. I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another.

I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David. And he will tend them, he will tend them and be their shepherd. I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among them.

And I, the Lord, have spoken this. We already saw that in chapter 37 of Ezekiel. Verse 24.

My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. So, Ezekiel also anticipates the restoration of the Davidic monarchy.

When God restores his people back to the land, and in a new covenant relationship that involves David ruling over his people in fulfillment of the Davidic promises. Zechariah chapter 14. In Zechariah chapter 14, another text anticipates the future restoration, the future coming of the kingdom of God.

In verses 16 through 19. Then, the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the king, the Lord God Almighty, and to celebrate the festival of Tabernacles. If any of the persons of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the king, the Lord God Almighty, they will have no reign.

If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no reign. The Lord will bring on them plagues to inflict the nations that do not go up to celebrate the feast of the tabernacles. There will be punishment for those Egyptians, punishment for the nations who do not go up to celebrate.

There's a lot more that we could read in this section, but Zechariah 14 also anticipates a time when God will restore his reign, when God will reign over all things in fulfillment of his promises, again, that I would argue all go back to the original creation where God's intention was to spread his reign throughout all creation through his image bearers. We should probably also bring in Daniel chapter 7, which we read just a moment ago, when Daniel says, starting in verse 11, Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and his body destroyed.

Let me skip down to verse 13. In my vision, Daniel chapter 7:13, I looked at night, and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence.

He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All nations and people from every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that seems to reflect Davidic language, the Davidic covenant language, an everlasting kingdom, and an everlasting dominion that will not pass away.

And his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. So, Daniel 7 also anticipates a son of man figure that we said maybe both corporate and individual—an individual representing the nation of Israel.

But a son of man figure who seems to bring to fulfillment the intention of the Davidic covenant to establish David's reign forever. An everlasting dominion, an everlasting kingdom. But I would also argue then that this goes all the way back to God's original intention at creation that Adam and Eve would spread God's rule throughout all creation, which they failed to do.

So, to summarize the Old Testament evidence, God must establish his universal rule and sovereignty over the entire earth. Which is what Adam and then Israel were supposed to do. Yet they failed to do it.

But God will accomplish this. We'll see in a moment. God will accomplish this through his son, a Davidic ruler, and will bring the blessings of salvation and his kingdom to his people and eventually to the entire earth.

And that's basically where the prophetic text ends. With that promise and that expectation. This brings us to the Synoptic Gospels.

Or the New Testament brings us to the New Testament. We'll start with the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Because they most clearly use the language of the kingdom of God. When you turn to the Synoptic Gospels, you find that the kingdom of God becomes the most characteristic feature of Jesus' ministry at the very beginning of his preaching and teaching in the Gospels. So, for example, in Mark chapter 1 and verse 15, we read verse 14. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God.

And here's the good news, he proclaimed. The time has come, he said, the kingdom of God has come. Repent and believe the good news.

We find the exact same thing at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Matthew chapter 4. So, following Jesus' baptism and testing in the wilderness. Chapter 4 and verse 17. From that time on, Jesus began to preach, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand or has come near.

Now, it's interesting in these texts, Jesus does not define the kingdom of God as far as what it means and what it entails. No one ever asks him to define it. That's interesting.

No one ever says, what do you mean that the kingdom of God is near? What is the kingdom of God that you are now offering? Instead, Jesus and the readers assume that they know what it is. Based, I think, on the Old Testament text that we have just looked at of God's intention to establish his reign and rule over all creation mediated through a Davidic king who will bring the blessings of salvation and the blessings of God's rule to his people. And that rule will eventually spread throughout the entire earth.

So, the Old Testament seems to form the background that would have informed what Jesus intended and what the people understood when Jesus came preaching that this kingdom of God was at hand. Now, before we look specifically at the Gospels, the other thing to say is the most characteristic feature of Jesus' message is the fact that, in some way, the kingdom is already present in Jesus' person and ministry, but it has still not yet come. It still lies in the future.

That is, once more, we're in the context of that inaugurated eschatology that is already but not yet. God's kingdom is already present. Men and women can enter God's kingdom and experience God's kingdom.

We said the kingdom of God means the dynamic reign and rule of God, the sovereignty of God. Men and women can enter that and experience it now, in advance of its final manifestation in the future. Some of the writings by George Eldon Ladd have been the most common, at least in the United States, in popularizing, although others before, Oscar Kuhlman and others before, have developed and talked about the idea of the kingdom is now here but not yet.

It was George Eldon Ladd who popularized it in the United States and also perhaps elsewhere, even though others have developed it before and others have developed it after. But this is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the understanding of the kingdom. What is solely future, according to the Old Testament prophetic text? What they expect is something future that happened to take place on the day of the Lord, when the new creation arrives, the day of restoration, that the new Jesus now and the New Testament authors now are convinced is already present in some way in advance of its final consummation and manifestation.

So, we'll keep that in mind as we look at the Gospel evidence and the evidence of the rest of the New Testament as well. Now, just briefly, as far as some of the lexical data, the phrase kingdom of God itself, which I believe that phrase does not in that form occur in the Old Testament, although there are plenty of references to king, kingship, and God reigning and ruling and things like that. But the phrase kingdom of God occurs only four times in Matthew, actually.

Instead, Matthew prefers another phrase, which is the kingdom of heaven. In my opinion, those two terms are synonymous. They're not referring to different things.

The Kingdom of Heaven probably is just simply a way of describing this kingdom as coming from above. It's as opposed to an earthly kingdom. This is a kingdom that comes from above, that comes from heaven.

And so, Matthew prefers the kingdom of heaven and uses it 32 times in contrast to the kingdom of God four times. Mark uses the phrase kingdom of God 14 times. Luke uses the phrase kingdom of God 32 times.

And John uses it only four times. He prefers the terms eternal life or life, where often the synoptic Gospels refer to the kingdom of God. So, as you can see, throughout the Gospels, the kingdom of God plays a crucial role in what Jesus Christ comes to do and what he comes to offer.

Now, before we look at some of the evidence, if I could just summarize, then maybe it'd be more valuable to wait until the end but provide a framework for looking at some of these passages. Thomas Schreiner, Thomas Schreiner in his New Testament theology, summarized the kingdom of God as this. That is, when Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God, what was it he was offering? And what did his listeners expect? What did they understand? Tom Schreiner says this: they understood him to be proclaiming the dawn of the glorious era in which Israel would be exalted, and the nations would be subservient to Israel's God.

The Lord would reign over the whole earth. The son of David would serve as his king and the exile would be over. The new covenant would be fulfilled.

God's people would keep his law, and the promise of new creation would become a reality. The Lord would pour out his spirit on all flesh, and the promises to Abraham that all the nations would be blessed to the ends of the earth would become a reality. And according to Schreiner, the kingdom of God is a kind of blanket that covers all of that.

So, you can see the kingdom of God can easily become a fairly broad concept. But this description simply, I think, describes the time, the implications, the effects, and the accompanying blessings that are established when God comes to establish his kingdom. So, this is what the people are expecting.

And again, this is why when Jesus comes proclaiming the kingdom of God, he does not need to define and describe it. His readers do not need to ask for clarification as to exactly what he means. However, we'll see that his readers or his listeners are often confused because of what they expect to transpire.

Sometimes the kingdom Jesus offers is in a little bit different form than they expect. But this is what the people would have expected when they heard that the kingdom of God was now being offered and proclaimed by the person of Jesus Christ, that men and women could enter it. Now, the starting point, I think, is with the book of Matthew.

And once more, Matthew chapter 1 and verse 1. At the very beginning, Matthew demonstrates his intention to portray Jesus Christ, to present Jesus Christ, and to do the rest of his work as the son of David. He's the son of David, son of Abraham. But Matthew will present Jesus as the son of David.

And by saying that, Matthew immediately wants your mind to jump back to all the Davidic promises. We looked at some of the ones starting with 2 Samuel 7 and all the way through the Psalms and into the prophetic texts. Matthew wants to be clear that Jesus is now the Davidic king.

The fulfillment of the Davidic covenant and the promises of a restored Davidic kingdom. In fact, we usually skip over the genealogy in the rest of Matthew 1 so we can get right to the birth of Christ. The genealogy is interesting because its primary function is to clearly connect Jesus Christ to show that he has the legal right to sit on David's throne.

He is the true son of David. What's interesting, too, is that some people have pointed out that genealogy is divided into three sets of 14 generations. I don't recommend doing this everywhere in scripture, but I think it's intentional here.

If you add up the numerical value of the Hebrew letters for David, it comes to 14. This is just another way that the author of Matthew is reinforcing that Jesus Christ is the true Davidic king who comes to fulfill the covenant with David. Interestingly, in Matthew 1, David's father, Joseph, is addressed as the son of David, and Jesus Christ is addressed as the son of David elsewhere.

Matthew picks up Davidic language and texts all over to make clear that here is the promised Davidic king. Here is the one who will restore and fulfill the eternal dominion, the eternal kingdom promised to David. Now, what we'll do in the next section is start once more with the gospel evidence.

We'll simply look very briefly at a handful of texts that demonstrate that the kingdom of God that Jesus proclaims is both present and future at the same time.

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 16 on the Image of God, Part 2, and An Introduction to the Kingdom of God.