

# **Dr. David L. Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 30, An Exegesis of Eph2 and Revelation 21 and 22 in Light of NT Theology**

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session number 30, An Exegesis of Ephesians 2 and Revelation 21 and 22 in Light of New Testament Theology.

So, what we've done up until this point is to examine what I think are the most significant biblical-theological themes in the New Testament from my own reading and study of the New Testament but also look at other New Testament theologies and the themes that they seem to highlight over and over again.

We've looked at those themes in terms of how they have their roots in the Old Testament, especially often the creation narrative, how they get developed in the New Testament or the Old Testament in preparation for how they find their fulfillment in the New Testament in Christ and his people and then how they find their fulfillment ultimately in the consummation in the new creation. What I want to do now in our last session is look at two New Testament texts instead of just looking at themes now that we've done that is now go back to two New Testament texts that we've dealt with numerous times and have seen played a key role in our treatment of different New Testament theological themes and go back and look at those texts again in detail in light of biblical New Testament theology. What I want to do is demonstrate, number one, once more how these themes coalesce in these passages and how they contribute to these biblical theological themes but to look at these passages in terms of how they themselves contribute to the ongoing development of biblical theology through the Old and New Testament.

Much of what we're going to say is not necessarily new at this point. Much of what we're going to say will simply be bringing together several strands that we've talked about in relationship to these passages before but now focus on them in terms of exegesis or analogy of these passages, not a detailed exegesis of every part of it, but again particularly focusing on how to read these passages from a biblical theological standpoint. In my opinion, ultimately, when we interpret a text in the Old or New Testament, first of all, yes, we want to exegete it and study it in light of its original intention, in light of its original context, what the author was saying to the people of God at that point, but I think ultimately at some point we do have to ask how that fits within the broader canon of Scripture, how that fits within the broader redemptive historical development of God's plan as testified across the canon of the Old and New Testament.

I think, in a sense, the final stage of the study of any passage is to have one eye on its contribution to the overall development, the overall storyline of Scripture, the overall development of biblical theology and how it contributes to that and how it is illumined and understood in light of biblical theology. So I want to examine two texts, and that is Ephesians chapter 2:11-22 is the first one, and then the last one will be Revelation 21 and 22, and again, we'll look at those in terms of how they develop a biblical New Testament theology, how they contribute to it, how an understanding of those passages is illumined by and how the interpretation makes sense when seen in the light of biblical theology or New Testament theology. So the first passage is Ephesians 2, 11-22, and I won't read the passage in its entirety. We will read sections of it, but placing it within its broader context in chapter 2:1-10 we find Paul describing how God has rescued his people from bondage to death and sin. They were dead in their trespasses and sins; they were also in bondage to the powers of evil, and God has rescued and saved them by making them alive in Christ and raising them and seeding them in union with Jesus Christ, and this is all to demonstrate God's grace as Paul says in this age and in the coming age to demonstrate the incomparable riches of God's grace and mercy.

Now, when one gets to chapter 2:11-22 of Ephesians, one finds that salvation in chapter 2, 1-10 also means that we have become part of a new humanity by rescuing us from bondage to sin and death and bondage to evil powers and saving us and uniting us with Christ, that also means that Jew and Gentile have been united together into one body, into one humanity in Christ so that our salvation has corporate implications. I hesitate to say that chapter 2:1-10 is individual, and it seems also to have corporate dimensions to it as well, but certainly the rescuing of God's people in chapter 2 then results in God joining them together into one new humanity, joining Jew and Gentile into one body or one humanity in Christ. Now, part of doing biblical theology in any New Testament text, part of doing New Testament theology is to trace the Old Testament antecedents.

Part of the clue, I think, to the main theological themes and developments of any New Testament text is tracing the Old Testament allusions, the Old Testament quotations behind that that inform the author's thinking and that contribute to the theology of the New Testament author. So interestingly, in chapter 2, verses 11-13, the author begins with the Old Testament. In Ephesians chapters 2 and 11-13, the author begins with the Old Testament by reminding his Gentile readers of their former condition apart from Christ.

So, he says, therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called uncircumcised by those who themselves are the circumcision, remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, you were excluded from the citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise. We talked about the covenants before without hope and without God in the world.

So I take it that this condition in verses 11-12 then gets reversed in the rest of the chapter. So now Paul goes on and, in verse 13, describes the reversal of that by interestingly alluding to Isaiah chapter 57 and verse 19. Isaiah chapter 57 and verse 19 are within that larger section of Isaiah, where he anticipates a day of restoration.

God will restore his people from exile in the future. God will bring his people back and restore them in a covenant relationship with him. In chapter 57 and verse 19, the author says, creating praise on their lips, peace to those who are far and those who are near, says the Lord and I will heal them.

Now, verse 13 says in Ephesians 2, but now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. So interestingly, in Isaiah chapter 57 and verse 9, the text that Paul alludes to in verse 13, the far were the Israelites who had been in exile, and now they have been brought near. But now, for Paul, it's the Gentiles who have been far; they were separate from Christ, they did not enjoy citizenship with Israel, they did not participate in the covenants of the promise made to Israel, but now they have been brought near through the death of Jesus Christ.

In other words, Paul is already suggesting that in Ephesians 2, we find the fulfillment of Isaiah's promises of the restoration of the people of God. Now, Paul is suggesting that Gentiles are being brought near, and I take it that what they were separated from in verse 12 is now that they enjoy and participate in it. So now they do have Christ, now they do have citizenship, they participate in the citizenship with Israel, now they do participate and enjoy the blessings of the covenant of promises, and they do have hope, and they do have a relationship with God in the world through the person of Jesus Christ.

This is the fulfillment of Isaiah's promises of the restoration and salvation of God's people, as demonstrated by the author's appeal to Isaiah in Chapters 57 and 9. And this all gets accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ, which, as Paul will go on to say starting with verse 14, for he himself is our peace. Notice again the allusion to probably Isaiah 57, but other texts in Isaiah emphasize God's peace and God bringing peace. Later on, we will see in chapter 52 and verse 7 that he preached peace: blessed are the feet of those who bring good news, who preach peace.

So even Christ being our peace is to be seen as a fulfillment of the promises of Isaiah to bring restoration to the people of God. But this is accomplished by the death of Jesus Christ, which Paul is convinced removes the barrier that brought hostility and division between Jews and Gentiles so that Paul can say for himself that Jesus, the last person mentioned in verse 13, himself is our peace who has made the two groups Jew and Gentile one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. In other words, hostility formed a barrier, and he did this by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.

So, Paul, at least here, does not say everything there is to say about the law, but at least here he emphasizes the law's function of dividing Jew and Gentile, of marking off Jews as the people of God and excluding Gentiles and now through the death of Jesus Christ that has been brought to an end. By the way, some have equated the dividing wall with the wall in the tabernacle. I am not convinced that is the case here.

Actually, it is a different word that is used here that suggests more offense. I take it that the law is the fence. The law is the dividing fence or dividing wall that separated Jews from Gentiles, and now Christ, through his death, has brought that to an end and abolished the law as that which divides God's people.

Now, the language of peace, when Paul says Jesus Christ himself is our peace, has brought to an end the hostility. So, peace is to be understood in the context of reconciliation. Jesus Christ has brought reconciliation by exchanging the hostile relationship between Jew and Gentile now for a peaceful one.

Notice how many times the word peace occurs in verse 14. He himself is our peace. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace.

Verse 15. Verse 17. He came and preached peace to those who were far and those who were near.

So, God has exchanged through Christ a hostile relationship has been exchanged for a peaceful one. Once more, verse 17 is seen as a direct quotation from Isaiah in chapters 57 and 9. He came and preached peace to you who are far away Gentiles, and peace to those who are near. Also, this is probably an allusion to Isaiah chapter 52 and verse 7. Isaiah chapter 52 and verse 7. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace and bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion your Lord God reigns.

So once more, the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in exchanging a hostile relationship for a peaceful one through Christ is seen as the fulfillment of Isaiah's promises of a restoration of God's people from exile. Interestingly, we also see that there is both continuity and discontinuity. That both of them are reconciled to God.

The fulfillment in Christ brings about a new situation, so not only do we have the fulfillment of Isaiah's promises of restoration, but they are, in a sense, ramped up in a new way where Jew and Gentile now are reconciled to each other but also reconciled to God in a new act of creating a new humanity. So, Israel's promises of restoration in Isaiah are now fulfilled in Jesus uniting Jew and Gentile into one newly created humanity in a peaceful, reconciled relationship.

Interestingly though, no longer in the land of Palestine, but in the person of Christ and in the world. They find the promises of restoration fulfilled. Verse 15, though, also reminds us of further allusions to Isaiah when verse 15 says, By setting aside in his flesh the law and its commands, his purpose was to create in himself one new humanity.

So, notice again this language of creation and newness. Probably once more, we would read this as not only a fulfillment of the restoration of God's people but also the inauguration of Isaiah's new creation, as promised in Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 65. So, it's in the new creation now that we find the reconciled humanity reconciled with each other and reconciled to God.

So, the theme of reconciliation and fulfillment of Isaiah is the theme of a new creation and creating one new humanity. We find Isaiah's promises of the restoration of his people in a new creation now being fulfilled in the person of Christ through his death, creating one new humanity, removing the law that provided a barrier, and bringing Jew and Gentile together into one new humanity in fulfillment of Isaiah's promised restoration. We find then also in this text that here, the true people of God are now restored and renewed.

So that the true people of God now consist of Jews and Gentiles. Again, back in verse 13, Gentiles were excluded from citizenship in Israel. Now I take it that the author is saying that they have been included in citizenship with Israel by being joined together with Jews into one new humanity.

So now we find the true people of God being fulfilled in Christ, reconciling Jew and Gentile into one new humanity. So, once more, there is both continuity and discontinuity. The promises to Israel are expanded to include and embrace Gentiles, but this new humanity Jew and Gentile is not just expanded; it's also renewed because it's not only Gentiles who are reconciled but now both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God.

And now Christ has created them into one new humanity. So, there's a newness, there's a transformation that takes place, and there's a renewal that takes place. So that, what we find here is, yes, the restoration promises made to Israel are now expanded to include Jews and Gentiles, but they are restored and renewed in an inaugurated new creation where both are reconciled to God.

So intriguingly, the true people of God, the promises made to Israel and Isaiah, are now seen to be fulfilled in both Jew and Gentile who come together into one humanity, one new people of God. So, we don't have two separate peoples of God and promises that relate to both of them that are different, but instead, we find one people of God fulfilling the promises made to Israel and Isaiah now consisting of Jew and Gentile being united into one new humanity. And the entire section climaxes

with an important reference in verses 19-22, where the restored and renewed people of God are the true temple where God dwells.

In fulfillment, I think what we find here then is the fulfillment in Christ of God's intention for His people to go back to the garden sanctuary where God would dwell in His midst, which then began to be fulfilled after humanity is... there are now hostile relationships; there's a breach in a relationship because of sin, and there's a breach in the relationship between humanity and humanity and humanity and God because of sin in Genesis chapter 3. Now that it begins to be restored in the tabernacle and in the temple of the Old Testament, we find that being fulfilled, especially the prophetic expectations of a renewed and restored temple, is now fulfilled by God taking up residence in His people's temple. So, the promises of a restored temple are fulfilled not in a physical structure but by the restoration of God's people. And we see in the Old Testament the ultimate goal of the exodus, the ultimate goal of the restoration from exile, which was that God would establish His tabernacle and dwell in their midst.

Now, we find that fulfilled in a new humanity that functions as God's temple, where God dwells through His new covenant spirit. So, the Holy Spirit now through which God dwells is the spirit that God promised He would pour out in fulfillment of Ezekiel 36, Joel 2, and Isaiah 44, and now it is through God's spirit in the midst of His people that God's tabernacle, tabernacling His temple presence and actually His Eden sanctuary presence now resides in His people. The fact that they are being built up, notice verse 21, in Him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

And in Him, you, too, are being built together to become a dwelling where God lives by His spirit. So, you get this picture that the temple is in the process of being built up and has yet to reach completion. But the whole point is now with the coming of Jesus Christ, Jew, and Gentile, especially Gentiles who were separate from, who were alienated from Israel and citizenship and their promises, now through Jesus Christ the promised restoration of Isaiah which promised to bring peace and reconciliation in a new creation has now been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

And now the goal of that restoration from exile, the long-awaited goal from God's intention in the creation and in the tabernacle and temple where God would dwell in the midst of His redeemed restored people, is now being fulfilled in Christ where God dwells through His new covenant spirit in the midst of His temple people. The next text I want to look at and will connect it with that would be Revelation 21 and 22. I think Ephesians 2 is the inaugurated form of the promises of Isaiah and the temple dwelling of God, in which we saw the temple was in the process of being built up, and the individual members that joined it built up the temple.

I think we can find the completion of that process in Revelation 21 and 22. Here is the climax of the book of Revelation, the climax of the New Testament biblical theology, and the climax of the entire Bible. And what I want to do in examining this text from a biblical theological standpoint, I want to organize it around the theme of newness.

That is Revelation 21, one begins by saying, and I saw a new heavens and a new earth. So, I want to organize our brief discussion of Revelation 21 and 22 around the theme of newness. So first of all in Revelation 21 and 22 we find a new creation and a new Eden.

21.1 John says then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first one had passed away, and there was no more. This is a clear allusion to Isaiah chapter 65, where the prophet anticipates a new creation, and God says I am about to create a new heavens and a new earth. Now John sees that fulfilled in the new heavens and new earth of Revelation chapter 21.

But Isaiah 65 itself and John's wording in 21.1 go ultimately all the way back to Revelation, the creation account in Genesis 1, where we read in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. But that was ruined and corrupted because of sin in chapter 3. And now we find in Isaiah 65 God's intention to restore his creation in a new heavens and a new earth. Now, we see John picking up on that with his vision of the consummation of those promises.

John saw a new heavens and a new earth. In chapter 22 and verses 1 and 2, we find clear connections to the Garden of Eden, where John sees a river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. And on each side of the river stood the tree of life from the Garden of Eden in Genesis chapter 2. John is also here alluding to Ezekiel 47, which itself goes back to Genesis in the garden of Eden, where Ezekiel sees a river of life flowing from the temple.

Now, John has it flowing from the throne. We'll see why in a moment. But he sees a river flowing from the temple and trees with fruit on each side of it.

Now, John draws from that. But John also goes not only to Ezekiel but all the way back to the garden of Eden and draws in that language of the Tree of Life. A single tree of life.

So, John sees the ultimate goal of creation and prophetic anticipations of a new creation now reaching its climax in a new heavens and a new earth. He sees a new Garden of Eden in his final vision. So, a new creation, a new Eden.

We also find a new Jerusalem. Chapter 21 and verse 2 of Revelation. John says, And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully adorned for her husband.

Once more, if you go back to Isaiah chapter 65, after the anticipation of a new heaven and a new earth in Isaiah's prophecy, you go on and read and he says, But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to become my delight, and that people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people.

The sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more. So now John also in fulfillment of Isaiah 65 also sees a new Jerusalem. But clearly the new Jerusalem is identified with the people.

I think if you read Revelation 21 carefully, the new Jerusalem technically does not refer to a physical city. That's not to say that John doesn't think there will be a physical city or cities. It's just that very consistently with how we find building imagery used throughout the rest of the New Testament is John takes building imagery and now applies it to the people itself.

So, the new Jerusalem is a metaphor for the people. The reason for saying that is it is equated with the bride. The new Jerusalem is the bride which John makes clear in Revelation 19-21 that the bride is the people.

The people themselves are the bride of Christ. If you go back to Ephesians chapter 5, we find that the bride of Christ is the church, the people themselves. So the new Jerusalem finds its fulfillment, the new Jerusalem of Isaiah 65 finds its fulfillment in the renewed restored Jerusalem, the people themselves in a new creation.

So, there is a new creation and Eden, a new Jerusalem, a new covenant, a new covenant. There are two places where I think we find this emphasized. Number one, I've chosen to include the bride and marriage imagery under this because in the Old Testament, I think an Old Testament professor, scholar, and pastor in Boston, Massachusetts named Gordon Hugenberger has written a book on marriage and covenant demonstrating the relationship between marriage and covenant in the Old Testament.

I think you find that same connection here in Revelation chapter 21 where the marriage is seen now as the completion and part of the completion of the new covenant relationship between God and His people. So, within the context of the covenant, we find that the marriage is now complete. The bride in all her splendor and glory is now presented to God and the Lamb as complete.



The marriage is now complete and is in fulfillment of God's relationship with His people in the Old Testament. Go back to the Old Testament and God's relationship with His people, often a very tumultuous one and troubled one where Israel keeps going astray and plays the role of an adulteress. But the relationship of God and His people in the Old Testament is portrayed as a bride, as a husband and wife, and then in Ephesians 5 where the relationship between Christ and the church, also in fulfillment of the Old Testament, is likewise portrayed as the relationship between a husband and his wife, now reaches its consummation in God's relationship to His people in the new creation.

So, in a sense, one could say the long period of engagement found in the rest of the New Testament has now come to an end, and the bride is presented in fulfillment of what we see in Ephesians 5, that Christ's intention was to present her blameless before Him. Now, Christ's bride is presented as blameless and perfect and holy in the ultimate consummation of the marriage in Revelation chapter 21. And that's probably at least at one level how we should understand some of this precious jewel language in Revelation 21.

The fact that all the foundations are made of a precious jewel, the fact that it shines like crystal and is a precious jewel, all of that suggests now the bride adorned in all her splendor stands complete and perfect in the final marriage, the consummation of the marriage relationship between God and His people in fulfillment of the Old Testament and in fulfillment of also what we find in Ephesians 5, where now Christ and His church are the husband and wife. But the New Covenant also finds its fulfillment in the New Covenant formula in chapter 21 and verse 3, where John switches from vision to audition, that is, the audition, what he hears, and the voice he hears will interpret what he saw. So, John says, and I heard a loud voice from the throne, this is 21:3 of Revelation. Look or behold, God's dwelling place is now among His people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them, their God.

That is the embodiment, the final embodiment of the Covenant formula. Here, John is clearly drawing on Ezekiel 37, perhaps also Leviticus 26, both iterations of the Covenant formula, but perhaps other mentions of the Covenant formula, which at the heart of it is, I will be their God, and they will be my people so that we can find the ultimate fulfillment of God's intention to dwell in a covenant relationship with His people.

Now, in a new creation with the Covenant formula once again being reiterated, the final goal of salvation history is reached with God dwelling in a Covenant relationship with His people. Now, He is their God, and they are His people. So new creation, new Eden, new Jerusalem and then new Covenant in fulfillment of Old Testament text and also new temple.

We find the ultimate goal of the temple and the tabernacle finally fulfilled in the new Jerusalem. Now, of course, it is almost impossible to separate all of these themes. As we saw the whole goal of the Covenant relationship, I will be their God and they will be my people, is that God would dwell in their midst.

Again, read the Covenant formula in 21:3, look God's dwelling place, His tabernacle, His temple presence is now among His people and He will dwell with them. That is a language not just of taking up residence but that is the language of tabernacle presence, tabernacling presence, or temple dwelling with His people. So the ultimate goal of the tabernacle, the temple, has now been reached in the new Covenant relationship, the completed consummated new Covenant relationship between God and His people.

Now, what the temple was pointing to has now been realized with God dwelling with His people. We will see that there are also connections with the Exodus, but there are clear connections with the Garden of Eden. In our discussion of the temple, we saw that the Garden of Eden was God's original sanctuary and temple.

It is where God dwelled with His people. Later on in the Old Testament, the tabernacle and the temple were meant to recall God's original sanctuary. The tabernacle and temple were, in a sense, miniature Garden of Eden as God began to restore His intention to dwell with His people in their sanctuary.

Now we see John picking up on this temple language, but what we have already seen is that for John, what is unique is that in the new creation, in John's vision, there is no separate physical temple. John says I did not see a temple in the city because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple. In other words, the goal of the temple, what the temple was anticipating, that is, what was true in the Garden of Eden of God dwelling directly in the midst of His people, has now been realized.

Now that a new creation has arrived, now that the old creation is plagued by sin and sorrow and death, which is what required a temple in the first place, now that that has been removed, chapter 21, verse 1, God can dwell directly with His people without the need of a separate physical temple. So, John says, God and the Lamb are the temple. What the temple was pointing to has now been realized.

The Garden of Eden has now been renewed. And notice again in chapter 22, verses 1 and 2, we find clear Garden of Eden imagery. The new Jerusalem vision, the new creation vision of Revelation 21 and 22, is a restored Garden of Eden.

As I just glanced at my NIV, I noticed that the title above it is Eden Restored. But again, Eden was the original temple, the original sanctuary where God dwelled. Furthermore, the other text that John draws on, Ezekiel 47, is in the context of both the Garden of Eden and the temple.

So, Ezekiel himself combined the temple and Eden language. Now John does so as well, by alluding to Ezekiel 47, but also going back to the Tree of Life imagery in verse 2 that we saw that comes out of Genesis 2. So, the new temple, John's vision of God's people is to be seen as a new temple. But what John does is, although he says, I saw no temple, because God and the Lamb are the temple, interestingly, consistent with what we found in other New Testament texts, such as Paul, temple language is now applied to the entire new Jerusalem people.

John takes the imagery from Ezekiel 40-48, which is Ezekiel's vision of a measuring of the temple, and now he applies it, not to a physically separate temple somewhere in the Jerusalem creation, but now he applies it to the entire new Jerusalem and to the entire people. So, what gets measured is the new Jerusalem, not a separate temple. Where the water comes out not from the temple but from the throne of God in the middle of the new Jerusalem, in the middle of the new creation.

Furthermore, the new Jerusalem is in the shape of a cube, which was the shape of the Holy of Holies in 1 Kings 5-7. The entire city is overlaid with gold, and, when you read the accounts of the tabernacle and the temple in the Old Testament, everything was overlaid with gold; now, the whole city is overlaid with gold. We also saw that gold played a role in Genesis 2 as one of the precious metals in the environs of the original Garden of Eden.

So now, by saying that the entire city is made of gold in chapter 21, the author is clearly linking it with the tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament. It's another way of saying that the people of God are themselves the tabernacle, the temple dwelling of God. I think here we find the consummation of what Paul was describing in Ephesians 2 verses 20-22.

The entire temple of God is being built up, and the individual members are now being built up into a holy dwelling where God dwells with the Spirit. Now we see the consummation of that process in the final, ultimate eschatological temple in the new creation of Revelation chapter 21. To further substantiate this, demonstrate the temple language and context of this vision is in, for example, in chapter 21, verses 19-20, the list of the 12 stones, the 12 precious stones in 19-20 actually are a clear allusion to the stones on the breastplate of the high priest in the Old Testament.

For example, Exodus chapter 28. We also find the people functioning as priests in chapters 22, 23, and 24. So it says, No longer will there be any curse.

The throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him, and they will see His face and His name, which is the goal of worship, and His name will be on their foreheads just as the priests carry the name of God on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of the lamp in

the temple to give it light because God Himself, God's glorious presence, will be the light of the entire New Jerusalem new creation.

So, there is no need for a lamp like the one found in the temple. So, in the New Jerusalem, John's vision of chapter 21 of Revelation is the consummation, the ultimate fulfillment of God's intent to dwell with His people. His original intention with the sanctuary garden, His intention beginning to be restored with the tabernacle and the temple, and the prophetic anticipation of a restored temple now find their fulfillment in the new temple of Revelation 21, which takes place without the need of a separate temple structure instead the entire creation is now a place infused with the life-giving presence of God, the tabernacle temple dwelling of God, which is co-extensive with the entire people and with the entire creation.

So now, the presence of God is no longer restricted to a high priest who enters a specific location, the Holy of Holies. Now, all of God's people function as priests, and all of them have equal access to God in the new creation. A fifth important thing that is new is that there are new people. And so, what we find in Revelation 21 is a new people of God consisting of Jews and Gentiles living in a new creation.

In chapter 21 and at the start of verse 12, John describes the new Jerusalem, and again, I want you to always keep in mind that the new Jerusalem is symbolic of the people themselves. So, the new Jerusalem had a great and high wall, the new Jerusalem people, a great and high wall with 12 gates, and with the 12 angels at the gates, on the gates were written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. So, the 12 gates symbolize the nation of Israel, the 12 tribes.

There were three gates in the east, three in the north, three in the south, and three in the west, though John does not tell us which tribes go on which of the directions of the gates. He then says the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and on them were the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb. So you see, what John has done is the new people now consist of both God's people, Israel, and his new people, the church, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

And so, it's interesting that the apostles, which was intriguing in Ephesians chapter 2, built the temple upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Once more, we see the completion of that, where the entire structure is built on the foundation of the 12 apostles of the Lamb. So once more, God's history of dealing with his people, God's intention to create a people, now finds fulfillment not in national Israel but in the universal people of God consisting of Jew and Gentile together, signified by the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

Now, we find the fulfillment of the one people of God. So, Paul's vision of the restoration of God's people in terms of God creating one new humanity from Jew

and Gentile once more finds its ultimate fulfillment, its ultimate completion in John's vision in Revelation chapter 21. We also see here a new exodus.

That is the goal of the exodus from the book of Exodus from God redeeming his people out of Egypt, and the new exodus anticipated in prophets such as Isaiah now reaches its ultimate goal. The ultimate goal of God redeeming his people out of Egypt was to bring them into their land, where God would set up his tabernacle and his dwelling in their midst. The reason God would restore them is that once God's people Israel went off into exile, the Old Testament prophets, especially Isaiah, anticipate a restoration from exile to the land with a rebuilt temple, God dwelling in their midst as a new exodus.

And so, we find the exact same thing happening, the exact same movement here in the book of Revelation. God redeems his people from slavery and bondage to the world to sin for the first readers, the Roman Empire. Now he brings them back to their land, a new creation, and sets up his temple tabernacling presence in their midst.

The whole goal of the exodus in the first place. So, we find here the goal of the exodus and the fulfillment of a new exodus promised by the prophets, who are now reaching their consummation. I think I suggested to you before that we should probably read John's reference to the sea being no more in verse 1 as part of the exodus motif.

The sea, as most commentaries will tell you, the sea was emblematic of chaos and evil, that which was hostile to God and his people, that which was threatening. It's the home of the beast. The sea was often seen as the home of the demonic beast.

Earlier in Revelation, you find the beast in chapter 13 coming up out of the sea to persecute God's people, to try to thwart God's purposes to oppose God and his people. And now that sea is removed. Interestingly, in Isaiah chapter 51, we said Isaiah is one of the texts that, more than any other, conceives of God's deliverance of his people in the future as a new exodus.

In chapter 51, and here's verse 9, in describing that new exodus, Isaiah says, Awake, awake, arm of the Lord, clothe yourself with strength. That's language from the book of Exodus. Awake as in the days gone by, as in the generations of old.

That is the exodus. Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, who pierced that monster through? So, there's your dragon; there's your beast, and there's your dragon beast-type figure that opposes God's people. Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over? So interestingly, notice that the Red Sea in Isaiah 51 is associated with Rahab.

That is, when did God defeat the monster Rahab? When did he pierce the sea monster? When he divided the sea. As I think I said before, interestingly, the Targum, the Aramaic paraphrase, the Targum of Isaiah 51:9, actually equates Rahab and the monster with Pharaoh. So, in Isaiah 51:9 conceives of the parting of the Red Sea as a defeat of evil, as a defeat of the powers of chaos and evil resident in the sea.

Now I think what's going on in Revelation 21:1 is when John says the sea was no more, is the eschatological Red Sea that formed a barrier to the people enjoying their inheritance that was hostile to God's people, symbolic of evil and chaos, the home of the sea monster, which opposes God's people, which is hostile and threatens them, which causes pain and death and suffering, has now been removed and dried up so the people can cross over and enter their inheritance, which is the new creation, the land, with God now dwelling in their midst, which was the goal of the Exodus in the first place. So, a new creation, a new Eden where God dwells with his people in a new creation in fulfillment of Revelation, I'm sorry, Genesis chapter 1 and prophetic expectations in Isaiah 65. A new Jerusalem, again in fulfillment of Isaiah 65, where the new Jerusalem now is identified with the people.

A new covenant with the consummation of the marriage and the fulfillment of the covenant with Ezekiel 37. We find the new covenant reaching its climax. A new temple.

God now dwells with his people. His original intention in the garden of Eden and the establishment of a tabernacle and temple now finds its fulfillment with God dwelling in the midst of his people so that the entire new Jerusalem, the entire people, is a temple, a holy of holies, where God dwells, and they are all priests who worship and serve God. A new people.

A Jew and Gentile are now brought together as a new people of God, as the consummated perfected people of God in the new creation. And then God has accomplished this in a new exodus. The goal of the first exodus, the goal of the prophet's anticipation of a new exodus, is reached with God drying up the eschatological Red Sea of chaos and evil and hostility so the people can now cross over and inherit the land, the new creation, where God now dwells in their midst in a tabernacle temple that is co-extensive with the entire people of God.

And then, finally, there is a new reign and a new rule. Chapter 22 and verse 5 of Revelation. There will be no more night.

They will not need the light of the lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever. If you go back to chapter 20 in the millennial passage, it says the people of God were raised, and they reigned with

Christ for a thousand years. That is but a preparation for what we read in Revelation 22 and verse 5. Now, they reign as kings forever and ever.

But what I want to emphasize is this is exactly what Adam and Eve were supposed to do in the first creation as God's image bearers. Yet, they failed to do so because of sin. They were to reign over the entire earth.

They were to spread as God's image bearers and representatives. They were to spread God's reign and rule and presence over the entire earth. And now we find humanity doing that and accomplishing that by reigning over the earth.

That is over the new creation in chapter 22 of Revelation. So, they will reign forever and ever in fulfillment of God's original intention for humanity. But this is probably to be seen as well in terms of God fulfilling his purposes through Israel.

If you remember in accomplishing his purposes for Adam and Eve they would reign over all creation and rule over all creation. God chose Israel to be a kingdom of priests, but more specifically, he chose David. He instituted the monarchy and David, particularly as king, through whom God's intention for Israel and ultimately for all humanity to rule over all creation would be fulfilled.

And you recall some of the Psalms in Psalm chapter 2 and elsewhere where the ends of the earth would be given to David's son as his possession. Now we find that fulfilled with God's people reigning over the entire earth that is the new creation. Intriguingly, we find a reference to the Davidic covenant in chapter 21 and verse 7. Those who are victorious will inherit all of this.

All of what? The new creation that John just described in 21. One and following. They will inherit this, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

John's rendition of the Davidic covenant formula from 2 Samuel and elsewhere. I will be their father, and they will be my children or my sons in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant promises. Perhaps then we should see that in the same way that David was to inherit the entire earth, the ends of the earth would be given as his possession.

Now, we find God's people in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant as well. In addition to fulfilling God's intention for Adam and Eve, we find all of God's people as heirs of the Davidic promises, as sons of God, and as the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant that is now ruling over the entire earth. We said this is one of the only places in addition to 2 Corinthians chapter 6. This is the other place in the New Testament where the covenant formula given to David is applied now to the people themselves.

To add a couple of these themes up, notice that in chapter 22, verses 4 and 5, we have God's people functioning both as priests; they will see his face, and his name

will be in their foreheads, and also as kings. They will reign forever. So that God's people would now fulfill God's intention for Israel in Exodus 19.6, which was that they would be a kingdom of priests.

So, we find a new creation, a new Eden, we find a new Jerusalem, a new covenant, a new temple, a new people, a new Exodus, and a new reign and rule. We could summarize that by saying what we find here is God now establishing, restoring, and renewing his people in a new covenant relationship with him and bringing them into a new creation through a new Exodus where they are a new Jerusalem, and now they reign and rule. They are a new kingdom, and God inaugurates a new reign and rule, all in fulfillment of God's promises throughout the Old Testament and into the New Testament.

If you follow me carefully, you will notice this is incidental, but there were seven of those new things that are new. That is obviously consistent with the book of Revelation and the key role that the number seven plays. But to summarize, what we then find in Revelation 21 and 22 is now the long-awaited climax, the long-awaited climax, and goal of God's redemptive-historical story now reaches its fulfillment with God's people dwelling on a new creation with God and the Lamb living in their midst.

This is Dr. Dave Matthewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session number 30, an exegesis of Ephesians 2 in Revelation 21 and 22 in light of New Testament theology.