BOUND FOR THE KINGDOM:
THE LAND PROMISE IN GOD’S REDEMPTIVE PLAN

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Doctor of Philosophy

by
Oren Rhea Martin
May 2013
BOUND FOR THE KINGDOM:
THE LAND PROMISE IN GOD’S REDEMPTIVE PLAN

Oren Rhea Martin

Read and Approved by:

________________________________________
Bruce A. Ware (Chair)

________________________________________
Stephen J. Wellum

________________________________________
Thomas R. Schreiner

Date____________________________
To Cindy,

my excellent wife and best friend,

you are a daily reminder to me that

God’s grace is stunning, undeserved and freely given.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>The Anchor Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBR</td>
<td><em>Bulletin for Biblical Research</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BECNT</td>
<td>Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>BibSac</td>
<td><em>Bibliotheca Sacra</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BTNT</td>
<td>Biblical Theology of the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Concordia Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTR</td>
<td><em>Criswell Theological Review</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJG</td>
<td><em>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>DOTP</td>
<td><em>Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>DTIB</td>
<td><em>Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>EBC</td>
<td><em>The Expositor’s Bible Commentary</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>EvQ</td>
<td><em>The Evangelical Quarterly</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRLANT</td>
<td>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td><em>Harvard Theological Review</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>IBC</td>
<td>Interpretation Bible Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBS</td>
<td><em>Irish Biblical Studies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Critical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAOS</td>
<td><em>Journal of the American Oriental Society</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td><em>Journal of Biblical Literature</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JCTR</td>
<td><em>Journal for Christian Theological Research</em></td>
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JETS  Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JR  The Journal of Religion
JSNT  Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNTS  Journal for the Study of New Testament—Supplement Series
JSOT  Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTS  Journal for the Study of Old Testament—Supplement Series
JTI  Journal of Theological Interpretation
JTR  Journal for Theology and the Church
NAC  The New American Commentary
NACSBT NAC Studies in Bible and Theology
NCCT  The New Covenant Commentary
NDBT  New Dictionary of Biblical Theology
NIBC  The New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT  The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT  The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC  The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC  The NIV Application Commentary
NSBT  New Studies in Biblical Theology
PNTC  The Pillar New Testament Commentary
SBET  Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology
SBJT  The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology
SBLDS Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SNTSMS Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
TDOT  Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
TMSJ  The Master’s Seminary Journal
TNTC  Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC  Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<table>
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<td>TrinJ</td>
<td>Trinity Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>TynBul</td>
<td>Tyndale Bulletin</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTSup</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBC</td>
<td>Word Biblical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBT</td>
<td>Word Biblical Themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTJ</td>
<td>Westminster Theological Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>WUNT</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZECNT</td>
<td>Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</td>
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That I am even writing this preface is all of God’s grace. I have often reflected on God’s providence in preparing me for this dissertation. It was not long ago that I was a mechanic actively pursuing my dreams of becoming a race car driver. College, or anything else that resembled higher education, was out of the question (it did, after all, involve reading and writing). I was running from God and pursuing what brought me the most joy. But God—like those precious words in Ephesians 2:4—had other plans, and instead of leaving me to my own way, he graciously opened my eyes to see and love the gospel of the glory of Christ. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Though this dissertation bears my name, by no means do I claim sole credit. Many times throughout this process I have wanted to quit, but the Lord has brought countless people across my path to encourage me to persevere. Furthermore, he has provided a wonderful opportunity to spend concentrated time mining the riches of his Word for a crucial theme in biblical theology. In this endeavor I have found much delight in knowing him and his precious and magnificent promises that are yes in Christ. For these blessings I am deeply grateful.

I am most grateful to God for my wife and best friend, Cindy. She is amazing, and more responsible for the completion of this project than any other person on this earth. I am thankful for her changing countless diapers, packing innumerable lunches, editing multiple chapters, encouraging me when I had little motivation, and believing that
I am a much better husband and father than I know I am. Her constant love, encouragement, humility, sacrifice, service, and joy have been to me constant and consistent reminders of God’s love and, more importantly, powerful expressions of her work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 1:3). She is a daily reminder to me that God’s grace is undeserved and dazzling.

Besides Cindy, three of the greatest gifts the Lord has given me are our sons, Jonathan Owen and Benjamin Thomas, and our daughter, Anna Grace. When I began my doctoral studies shortly after two miscarriages, I did not know if we would ever have children. Now to come home to these heart-melting smiles and pattering feet is astonishing. God is gracious indeed, and I am deeply grateful to be their daddy. My hope and prayer for them is that they count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus their Lord.

I am also grateful for my wonderful and loving parents. They always challenged (and threatened) me to excel more, and though I did not heed their advice enough, I never questioned their unconditional love and support. I am deeply thankful to God for the eighteen wonderful years I had with my father and best friend, whose love and joy were a constant source of strength and security. He taught me through his tireless work ethic that “any job worth doing is worth doing right.” He sacrificially gave of himself and of his time to spend with me, and I treasure the years I had with him. Not a day goes by that I do not think of him and wish he were here with us. But God had other plans, and through them William Cowper’s words have proven true: “Behind a frowning providence God hides a smiling face.” I am forever grateful that through my father’s death God brought me to Christ. Likewise, I am grateful for my mother, who has become
to me an invaluable friend. I am thankful for her love and prayers—even through the difficult years following my father’s death—for speaking the truth in love, and for constantly encouraging me with God’s trustworthy Word. It has been a joy to see the Lord’s gracious work in her life, and I am so thankful to be a part of it. I am also thankful for my stepfather, who stepped into an imperfect family during a difficult time with such grace and patience. I am grateful for his friendship, encouragement, support, and generosity. I marvel at God’s grace in his life and to our family in providing him as a husband to my mother, a “Pop” to our children, and a dear friend to me.

Next, I would like to thank my sister, Shiloh, and her husband, Chris, who have been for me a constant source of encouragement and joy. I am grateful that she still puts up with her little brother, makes me laugh like our father always did, and exemplifies a godly wife and mother to her own family. Likewise, I am grateful to Chris for loving my sister as Christ loves the church, being an exemplary father, being the greatest brother-in-law I could ever ask for, and constantly encouraging me in every way. Words cannot express how much I love them both and my nephews and niece.

Besides my immediate family, I am grateful for my grandparents, who have provided unendless love, support, and encouragement. I am especially thankful for Papa and Momo Oren’s financial support through this project, for in these latter years of declining health their sacrificial generosity has been a wonderful example of storing up treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy. I pray that I will consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

Like my own family, my in-laws, Lou and Mary Ann Abshire, have played an invaluable role in my life and this project. Their love has clearly been expressed through
their support, giving of time, many trips to Louisville, joy in our children, and constant encouragement. I am thankful for all they have done and, most importantly, for loving me like their own son.

Countless others have encouraged me to persevere. I am grateful for Clifton Baptist Church, our family throughout our time in seminary and where I now serve as a pastor. I thank God for the countless ways he has used Clifton to increase our love for God’s glory in Christ. Moreover, I am thankful for the men with whom I pastor, especially the staff—John Kimbell, Jeremy Pierre, Tom Schreiner, and Shawn Wright—who, having persevered through dissertations themselves, constantly encouraged me to press on. They are treasured gifts from God.

There are also those friends who have been kind enough to walk closely with me through this process. Ryan Lister has been a tremendous source of encouragement throughout my time at Southern. Over countless Tex-Mex lunches, and now conversations over the phone and collaborative family trips since he has taken a teaching post in a different state, Ryan has been a great help in many ways and, more importantly, in my walk with the Lord, who I will most likely see sooner as a result of consuming large quantities of chips and salsa. He has stuck closer than a brother, and this dissertation would be nowhere near what it is without his invaluable encouragement and input. Likewise, Shawn Wright has been a dear brother from whom I have received much encouragement and counsel. Through being in his small group, meeting weekly for accountability, and serving with him as a pastor, I have seen in Shawn a quest for godliness that has permeated his life, marriage, parenting, and ministry. I am deeply grateful for his friendship.
Furthermore, I am thankful for Providence Baptist Church and Mark and Leigh Lehenbauer for their generous financial support. Mark has been a dear brother who has walked with and encouraged me since our days in college. I am grateful for his constant encouragement, support, and godly example over these many years. Also, many thanks go out to fellow doctoral students and friends who have encouraged me throughout this process and, as a result, have made this work better: J. T. English, Matt Hall, Heath Lambert, Micah McCormick, John Meade, Luke Stamps, and Lee Tankersley.

I would like to offer a special thanks to my dissertation committee. My supervisor, Bruce Ware, embodies a rare combination of unyielding passion for the supremacy of our Triune God, along with a humble and gracious concern for God’s people. More than just an academic supervisor, he has been a mentor and friend who has encouraged me to trust in God who is infinitely wise, loving, good, and meticulously sovereign. He has reminded me that in the end the only thing that matters is faithfulness to our great God and Savior. I am grateful to him for speaking the truth in love, for graciously encouraging and challenging me at appropriate times, and for teaching and modeling what it means to love and live for God and his greater glory.

Thomas Schreiner also graciously agreed to serve on my committee. Along with being a tremendously gifted teacher and preacher, a world-class scholar, and a prolific writer, he is also a warm-hearted pastor who spends countless hours encouraging, praying with, counseling, and serving the members of Clifton Baptist. It is even more remarkable, then, that he is also one of the most humble and others-minded men I have ever known. I have benefited greatly not only from sitting under his preaching and
teaching, but also from his friendship. He has become a dear friend who never ceases to make me laugh and, most importantly, encourage me to magnify God in Christ.

I also want to thank Stephen Wellum. After coming to Southern, I quickly set out to take everything he taught. Through many courses, seminars, and conversations, I have seen that his intellectual gifts are matched by his passion for the truth and love for the church. Furthermore, he is humanly responsible for my writing on this topic, and anything good I have to say is largely due to his investment in me. It is a privilege to say that I studied with him and, even more, to call him a friend.

Lastly, I would like to thank my external reader, Robert Peterson, Professor of Systematic Theology at Covenant Seminary, for the time he spent carefully working through this dissertation. Over the years I have developed an appreciation for him through his writings, and I appreciate him even more for making this project better as a result of his helpful and encouraging feedback.

Finally, and most importantly, I am deeply grateful that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. Those who know me can testify to the truth that the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. This dissertation is not a product of my gifts, but of his transforming grace, and I pray that he receives all the glory for any good that comes out of it, for his glory in Christ and the good of his people.

Oren Rhea Martin

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2013
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The earth is the place of God’s creational kingdom.¹ The relationship between God, man, and the land is an important theme from the beginning.² From the beginning, there is hardly an event where land is not in some way viewed as important. T. D. Alexander notes, “A careful reading of Genesis reveals that the concept of land figures prominently in the thinking of the author.”³ But as scholars have rightly noted, Scripture is a dually-authored text, for “no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (1 Pet 1:21).⁴

¹Although the same Hebrew term (כָּלָה) is translated as “earth” and “land” in many English versions, the use of כָּלָה, especially when used in the formula “heavens and the earth” in Gen 1:1, should be distinguished from the “land” later promised to Abraham, contra John Sailhamer in The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 82. Christopher Wright correctly observes that the phrase “heaven and earth” in Genesis 1:1 “expresses the totality of the created order. As Creator, Yahweh is thus the universal God of heaven and earth.” Christopher J. H. Wright, “כָּלָה (‘eres),” in New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1: 519. See also Victor P. Hamilton, The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 103-18; Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, WBC, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 13-15.

²Others have noted the importance of this triadic relationship in the Old Testament. See, e.g., Daniel L. Block, Deuteronomy, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 40-41; Elmer A. Martens, God’s Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology, 3rd ed. (N. Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 1998), 132; Christopher J. H. Wright, Old Testament Ethics for the People of God (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 19.


⁴That Scripture is the product of both divine and human authorship (i.e., concursive theory), has been upheld by the majority of Christians who affirm the total truthfulness of Scripture. The concursive theory, or double-agency discourse, asserts that “God in his sovereignty so superintended the freely composed human writings we call the Scriptures that the result was nothing less than God’s words and, therefore, entirely truthful.” D. A. Carson, “Recent Developments in the Doctrine of Scripture,” in
Therefore, it can be said that land figures prominently in the thinking of God who inspired all Scripture, for the land he created serves as the arena in which his image-bearers know him, live under his lordship, and fulfill his redemptive purposes from creation to the new creation.

The earth is important fundamentally for theological reasons, not sociological or environmental ones. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1), and God commanded it to “sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth” (Gen 1:11). God created all that is by speaking words, which demonstrates his power and control in

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6 All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.
and over his created order. This beginning emphasizes “the transcendence and sovereignty of God as Creator and as the assumption from which all biblical thinking commences. In the very beginning it is God who provides the explanation of ourselves and our world.”

Bruce Ware notes,

God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and by virtue of being Creator, he has rightful rulership over all that he has made . . . to create is to own, to own is to possess inherent rights to rule, and to rule manifests God’s absolute claims upon the whole of what he has made.

In other words, he is the Lord. But he is also immanent, for he is the covenant Lord.

He sustains the world with his power and is personally involved. He speaks to and

———

7 God reveals himself through his mighty acts in history, and he interprets these mighty acts by his Word. In the Old Testament, the pinnacle of his mighty acts was his deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt (cf. Exod 6:6-7; 13-15). God’s saving acts, then, were recited, both in oral and written form, throughout Israel’s history (Pss 77:11; 78:52; 105:37; 106; Isa 11:16). Similarly, in the New Testament the focal point of Scripture centers around what God has done in Jesus Christ. God performs a greater exodus in Christ, for through his redemption his people experience deliverance from sin (Matt 2:13-15; Col 1:13-14). The New Testament proclaims that what was promised in and anticipated throughout the Old Testament, God has now brought to fulfillment in the life, obedience, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is clear that God’s redemptive acts are never left to speak for themselves. Rather, his redemptive acts are revealed, interpreted, and written in Scripture. For more on God’s speech-acts, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 201-80; idem, The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 63-68; Michael S. Horton, Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 126-35; Gregg R. Allison, “Speech-Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” Philosophia Christi 18, no. 1 (1995): 1-23.


9 Bruce A. Ware, God’s Greater Glory: The Exalted God of Scripture and of Christian Faith (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 62.


11 See, e.g., Frame, The Doctrine of God, 94-118; Ware, God’s Greater Glory, 35-60.
interacts with his creation. As God makes himself known and establishes who he is, he provides the context in which his redemptive purposes will unfold. The earth, then, is the stage for God’s covenantal activity.

Furthermore, the earth is the dwelling place of humanity and is therefore foundational for their existence. Adam and Eve were created in God’s image under his Lordship and given a place to inhabit and subdue, but they failed and thus forfeited the place in which God set them. The curse they incurred from God made their dominion over the land arduous rather than enjoyable. Their children worked the ground, from which they presented offerings to the Lord, but when Cain killed his brother Abel God’s punishment involved suffering hardship from the earth (Gen 4). When the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, he destroyed them with the earth save one man—Noah.

God remembered Noah, his family, all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark, and God promised that never again would he curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart was evil from his youth (Gen 8). Then God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen 9:1). But, like Adam, Noah failed as a result of consuming the fruit of the

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12Bruce K. Waltke, “The Kingdom of God in Biblical Theology,” in Looking into the Future: Evangelical Studies in Eschatology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 18. For helpful treatments on what it means to be created in God’s image, see G. C. Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962); Anthony A. Hoekema, Created in God’s Image (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986); and Richard Lints, Michael S. Horton, and Mark R. Talbot, eds., Personal Identity in Theological Perspective (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006). As human beings created by God to rule the earth as his vice-regents, Bruce Ware notes, “We stand (or better, bow), before God as creatures who owe to God our unqualified allegiance, uncompromising obedience, earnest thankfulness, loving devotion, and adoring worship. We do so because God is our Creator and Lord, as he is the Creator and Lord of all that is. Therefore, his rulership rights are universal, absolute, uncontested, and uncontestable. He is Lord of heaven and earth, and this we must see if we are to understand the God-human relationship correctly.” Ware, God’s Greater Glory, 62-63.
vine instead of a tree. Consequently sin escalated, and as a result God dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth (Gen 11:1-9).

In stark contrast to the Tower of Babel, however, God called Abram, whom he would later rename Abraham, from his foreign country and promised him a land (Gen 12:1-9). Indeed Abraham is promised a commodity in short supply since the fall of mankind into sin—a land to call his own. At each turning point the narrative quietly insists that the role of Adam in the land is perpetuated. Hence, land is important precisely because it provides the place in which man lives and moves and has his being (Acts 17:24, 28).

**Thesis**

The thesis of this dissertation is that the land promised to Abraham advances the place of the kingdom that was lost in Eden and serves as a type throughout Israel’s history that anticipates the even greater land—prepared for all of God’s people throughout history—that will come as a result of the person and work of Christ. In other words, the land and its blessings find their fulfillment in the new heaven and new earth won by Christ. When each place of God’s people is situated within the redemptive historical framework of God’s unfolding plan, the land promised to Abraham is seen to be a progressive fulfillment of God’s kingdom on earth. Subsequently, the land promised to and, on more than one occasion, possessed by God’s people throughout the Old

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14Ibid., 48.

Testament pointed to something greater that his people throughout all time, in relation to Christ, will enjoy in the new creation for eternity. The results of this study will then be applied to systematic theology.

To unpack the land promise in the plan of God, this dissertation will trace the theme of land as it progressively unfolds across the storyline of Scripture. That is, an examination of this theme will take place as it develops from the Old to the New Testament, from promise to fulfillment. This examination will demonstrate that the land promised to Abraham, which was inhabited and lost throughout Israel’s history, is important because it picks up the place of God’s kingdom that was lost in Eden, thus serving as a subsequent place in God’s unfolding plan. Furthermore, from the perspective of Israel’s exile, this place anticipates and prepares the way for the coming of Jesus Christ, who wins a new creation for his people through his obedient life, death, resurrection and ascension. Moreover, those united to Christ by faith in the present era of

16 Concerning this unified and unfolding plan, Willem VanGemeren says, “The Bible begins with the account of creation (Gen 1-2) and ends with a description of a more glorious creation (Rev. 21-22). Between these accounts lies the story of redemption. The movement from creation to restoration is one organic development whereby God works out his plan for the redemption of a new humanity from all the nations (Rev. 5:9; 7:9).” VanGemeren, The Progress of Redemption, 40.

salvation history enjoy every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ as they await their final destiny—the new heaven and new earth—to which the land of promise pointed. The results of this study will then be applied to the theme of land in eschatology.

**Summary of Research**

The theme of land in Scripture is an important component in the biblical framework of promise and fulfillment.  

18 “The land,” according to Rolf Rendtorff, “bridges the various epochs of the biblical history of Israel from its foundation in the time of the patriarchs to the last stages that have been set down in the canonical texts.” 19 It is, therefore, a complex and contested issue because of the competing views of the promise-fulfillment schema. A large focus of the debate centers around two related issues. First, the territorial location of the promise with its fulfillment creates disagreement among scholars. 20 The various accounts seem to give flexible dimensions of the land which make it difficult to locate one fulfillment. Second, theological connections with land present a challenge because they appear to broaden the horizons of the promise. 21 As a result, various conclusions are drawn.


21 For example, God’s presence, tabernacle/temple, seed, blessing, rest, and inheritance.
Some scholars conclude that redactional activity is at work since the geographical aspects of the land are described in various—even irreconcilable—ways.\(^2\) Others conclude that the promises have been fulfilled (at least, to some extent) in Israel’s history or still await their future fulfillment, such as in the millennium.\(^3\) Still others conclude that the New Testament fulfills and/or reinterprets the concept of land found within the Old Testament.\(^4\) These competing conclusions show that the theme of land is important throughout the Old Testament and New Testament.\(^5\) Remarkably, though, it has not received a great deal of attention in terms of a whole-Bible biblical theology.\(^6\)

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\(^3\)See, e.g., Barry E. Horner, *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged* (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 223-52. Walter Kaiser says that “the land of Israel cannot be reduced to a sort of mystical land defined as a new spiritual reality which transcends the old geographic and political designations if one wishes to continue to represent the single truth intentions of the writers of the biblical text.” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Promised Land: A Biblical-Historical View,” *BibSac* 138 (1981): 302. The “single truth” hermeneutic to which he refers comes from E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), especially chap. 1. As one can see from the beginning, the land theme brings in broader hermeneutical issues which will be dealt with throughout this work.


\(^5\)Walter Brueggemann may overemphasize the importance of land when he asserts that “the land is a central, if not the central theme of the biblical faith.” Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge to Biblical Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 3. Likewise, W. D. Davies claims that “of all the promises made to the patriarchs it was that of the land that was most prominent and decisive.” W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 24. Though these statements may exaggerate the importance of land, it is no doubt important in God’s covenant dealings with his people. David Holwerda is more balanced when he states, “Obviously one cannot tell the story of God’s covenant with his people without telling the story of The Land.” David E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 88.

\(^6\)It is for this reason that this dissertation will not devote an entire chapter to a history of research. As will be shown, most treatments of the land are embedded in works that cover much broader topics. Furthermore, these issues often bring in broader hermeneutical issues such as the Israel/church relationship or the relationship between the covenants. See, for example, works on theological systems such as Herbert W. Bateman IV, ed., *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999); Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L.
The interest in land as a theological theme is relatively recent in the church’s history.\(^{27}\) This observation is not surprising given the focus on Israel since the mid-20\(^{\text{th}}\) century. Even so, exegetically-driven, bibliically-robust, and systematically-sensitive theologies of land are relatively few. However, on the interest of land from a socio-political perspective, or on the relationship between land/property and ethics, of books there is no end.\(^{28}\) This section will summarize and briefly evaluate past theological treatments of the land.

The significance of land as a theological theme was described by Gerhard von Rad.\(^{29}\) Following in his wake, several works have been devoted to the theme of land. Two


\(\text{Martens, }\text{God’s Design, 114}.\)


books published around the same time treated land as a more comprehensive biblical-theological theme—Walter Brueggemann and W. D. Davies—and both cited von Rad’s earlier essay. Although these works present comprehensive treatments on the biblical theme of land, both fall short for various reasons. For example, in terms of a “whole-Bible biblical theology,” Brueggemann gives little attention to New Testament texts, which limits his treatment of the development of land across the entire Christian canon. Furthermore, his existential and sociological emphasis influences his understanding of the land. For Davies, when it comes to the nature of Scripture, his work is fraught with a dated form-critical view of the Gospels. Also, he concludes that the New Testament spiritualizes the land and relocates it to Christ. As this dissertation will show, this view does not sufficiently present the New Testament fulfillment of what the Old Testament anticipated.

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30Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977); W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); and, more recently, idem, *The Territorial Dimension of Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1982), which is a summary of his earlier work along with concluding essays by various scholars on the meaning of land and theology in light of current events.

31A “whole-Bible biblical theology” is not merely a theology that is biblical, although it is certainly not less. This phrase picks up on the discipline of biblical theology which, as Carson says, “even as it works inductively from the diverse texts of the Bible, seeks to uncover and articulate the unity of all the biblical texts taken together, resorting primarily to the categories of those text themselves.” D. A. Carson, “Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology,” in *NDBT*, 100; see also Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” 3-11. This is what James Barr calls a “pan-Biblical theology,” in *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 14.

32For example, Brueggemann says, “Biblical faith is a pursuit of historical belonging that includes a sense of destiny derived from such a belonging.” Brueggemann, *The Land*, 3. A similar perspective is found in John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), chap. 2.

33For example, Davies, after examining the NT data, says, “We have discovered in the New Testament, alongside the recognition of the historical role of the land as the scene of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, a growing recognition that the Christian faith is, in principle, cut loose from the land, that the Gospel demanded a breaking out of its territorial chrysalis.” Burge, *The Gospel and the Land*, 336.
Three additional works examine the concept of land from within the Old Testament. First, Moshe Weinfeld contributes a substantive exegetical piece to the discussion of land.\textsuperscript{34} Although helpful in his exegetical work in the relevant Old Testament texts, he fails to synthesize it into a coherent theology. For example, when it comes to the varying views of the borders of the promised land, he detects redactional activity and concludes that they are contradictory.\textsuperscript{35} This lack of coherence is no doubt attributed to his subscription to critical views of Scripture, specifically the documentary hypothesis. Second, Norman Habel identifies six ideologies in the Old Testament regarding land: royal, theocratic, ancestral household, prophetic, agrarian, and immigrant.\textsuperscript{36} But rather than a comprehensive biblical theology, Habel aims to connect the land to economic, social, political, and religious ideas. Finally, and closer to the approach of this dissertation, Arie Leder treats the land as a coherent and progressive biblical theology.\textsuperscript{37} However, he limits his study to the Pentateuch before making application to the church. Thus, a more comprehensive biblical theology of the promise land is needed.

There are also chapters and articles that treat the theme of land within their overall argument. First, some Old Testament theologies isolate the discussion of land to,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} Moshe Weinfeld, \textit{The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
\item \textsuperscript{35} Ibid., chap. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Norman C. Habel, \textit{The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies} (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).
\item \textsuperscript{37} Arie C. Leder, \textit{Waiting for the Land: The Story Line of the Pentateuch} (Phillipsburg, NJ: 2010).
\end{itemize}
at most, a few chapters, which often are limited to Deuteronomy and/or Joshua.\(^{38}\) Other Old Testament theologies integrate land into one of their central themes, thus giving it greater prominence.\(^{39}\) Second, chapters and articles are devoted to one or more aspects of a theology of land from various theological traditions.\(^{40}\) While each of these chapters and articles illumine the theme of land in their own unique way, they are not comprehensive. Finally, G. K. Beale has provided a chapter in his New Testament theology on the relationship of Israel’s land promises to the fulfillment of Israel’s restoration and new


creation prophesies in Christ and the church.\textsuperscript{41} Although similar to the argument of this dissertation, Beale’s treatment of the Old Testament land promises is brief before he shows the fulfillment in the New Testament.

Other, more recent works come closer to the argument of this dissertation. First, William Blanchard has contributed a dissertation devoted to the theme of land.\textsuperscript{42} While incorporating a descriptive treatment of the promise and fulfillment of land across the Old Testament and New Testaments, Blanchard’s primary focus is to examine the hermeneutical issues that affect the transformation of the land in the New Testament, and whether or not the early church was justified in radically reinterpreting or spiritualizing the Old Testament land promises. While incorporating various hermeneutical issues throughout, this dissertation will primarily focus on taking the canonical text on its own terms and letting it speak for itself with regard to the promise and fulfillment of land. Second, an edited volume by Philip Johnston and Peter Walker is similar in some ways to the development of land that will be presented in this work, especially the first two chapters by Paul Williamson and T. Desmond Alexander.\textsuperscript{43} The contributors attempt to provide biblical, theological, and contemporary perspectives on the land of promise,


albeit from different perspectives. The treatment of land, however, is limited due to the contributors’ conflicting views (e.g., Palestinian Christian, Jewish Christian).

Third, a recent work by Gary Burge holds out even more promise when it comes to the nature and breadth of Scripture. Burge seeks to integrate both the Old Testament and New Testament before showing how Jesus and the New Testament reinterpret the land. He argues that Jesus is the “great rearranger” of the land and that all the properties of the holy land are now relocated in him. However, many will dismiss his conclusions because he does not show sufficient Old Testament warrant for his New Testament conclusions.

Fourth, Craig Bartholomew connects the land promised to Abraham to the broader theme of place. Through a biblical, theological, philosophical, historical, and practical investigation, he alerts his readers to the importance of place for humanity as they seek “playmaking” in their cities, gardens and homes, and a myriad of different types of places. However, the primary purpose of Bartholomew’s work is not to examine comprehensively the land promise and its place in redemptive history, but rather to reorient his readers by Scripture and the best of the Christian tradition toward a recovery of place today.

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44E.g., Dispensational, non-Dispensational, Covenantal, and Jewish.


46Ibid., 41, 129.

47For example, he spends only ten pages on the biblical heritage of land in the OT before moving on to intertestamental literature and the NT.


49Ibid., 5; see also Inge, A Christian Theology of Place.
Finally, while nearing the completion of this dissertation, Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum have contributed a *via media* between dispensational and covenant theology that examines God’s overarching plan to bring about his “kingdom through covenant” by unpacking in detail each biblical covenant in its own redemptive-historical context and its relationship to the arrival of the new covenant in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The final chapters summarize and apply the theological ramifications of “kingdom through covenant” to various doctrinal loci, such as the land theme.\(^5\) While this dissertation is in substantial agreement with *Kingdom through Covenant*, it aims to go in much greater depth by restricting its focus to the theme of land.

Some conclusions can be drawn from this brief summary of research concerning the need for further study on the theme of land. First, though there are a variety of books and articles that deal with the topic of land, at many points the theological focus is intertwined with ethics and/or the socio-political Israel-Palestine conflict. Second, though there are various theologies that study the theme of land, most of them are confined to Old Testament theology. Furthermore, Old Testament theologies that treat the theme of land often limit their study to Genesis, Deuteronomy and/or Joshua. Third, because many argue that the New Testament does not explicitly pick up the promise of land, New Testament theology has not, by and large, examined how the theme of land enters into it.\(^6\) Hence, this problem remains for New Testament theology. Finally, further study is needed on the theme of land from the standpoint of a whole-Bible

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biblical theology. This dissertation, therefore, aims to clarify and fill up what is lacking in previous treatments of the theme of land.

**Methodology**

Recent studies in biblical theology have tried to argue that no one center or theme exhaustively captures the rich and multi-faceted message of Scripture.\(^5^2\) Paul House asserts, “[w]e should give up arguing that one theme and one theme only is the central theme of the Bible and highlight major themes that allow other ideas as subpoints.”\(^5^3\) This conclusion finds support given the diversity of the Old and New Testaments. According to James Dunn, a center for NT theology is more easily seen due to its unified focus on Christ and faith in him as Lord, but when the OT is added in the scope of a theological center, the quest for such a single formulation has never been satisfactorily resolved.\(^5^4\) This conclusion is often reached because no single center is

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broad enough to integrate the multitudinous variety of biblical texts.\textsuperscript{55} This does not mean, however, that there is not unity in the diversity. The assumption of an evangelical theological framework, says Richard Lints, “ought to be the unity-in-diversity of the Testaments – with unity being prior to the diversity since it is the one God who manifests himself in the diversity of historical epochs.”\textsuperscript{56} Hence, the continuity between the various parts of Scripture, between OT and NT, can and should be anchored in the one triune God who authored it. With these qualifications in mind, a canonical theology can be pursued.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to summarize and engage the debate over a/the center of biblical theology. If one center is chosen then it is possible that other central themes that arise from the text will be ignored. At the same time, it is defensible that some themes are better than others at explicating the message of Scripture insofar as they are connected to and incorporate other important themes. J. L. McKenzie says that OT theology should be based on those themes that occur most frequently and that appear to be vital in giving OT belief its distinctive identity.\textsuperscript{57} This idea can be broadened to a “whole-Bible biblical theology,”\textsuperscript{58} for just as a NT theme cannot be examined apart from looking at its OT roots, so also an OT theme cannot be examined apart from its NT


\textsuperscript{56}Richard Lints, \textit{The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomena to Evangelical Theology} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 277.


fulfillment. So, themes that progress along the salvation historical storyline of Scripture must be followed to their end(s), which climax in the person and work of Christ. For example, various Old Testament, New Testament, and canonical biblical theologies have been organized around central themes such as God/kingdom of God, covenant, God’s presence, election, Messiah, human vice regency (Gen 1:26-28), and new creation. Others have focused on some multi-themed variation. Entire series are

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65 Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*.

devoted to unpacking a variety of themes traced through the canon. Individual or edited works and series such as these demonstrate that in Scripture there is a unity in diversity—a wholeness in light of the parts—that unfolds the rich contours of God’s inexhaustible Word. There are, as Al Wolters says, “connections between any given part of the Scriptures and the overall biblical story.” Along with these important interconnected themes, there are additional themes arising from a careful reading of Scripture which demonstrate the richness of God’s Word and his redemptive plan in history, a plan that has been inaugurated and will culminate in uniting all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth (Eph 1:10). It is the contention of this dissertation that the theme of “land” is an important theme in Scripture because it shares “in the complex connections of biblical covenants.” This contention is further bolstered by other inter-connected


canonical themes such as the kingdom, covenant, temple, rest, inheritance, and people of God.

It is important to note the multi-faceted nature of the interpretive process in formulating any particular theme or doctrine. Therefore, to defend the thesis of this dissertation, attention must be given to theological method. First, scholars have rightly noted the relationship between exegesis, biblical theology and systematic theology, which will be applied in this dissertation. It is too simplistic to reduce the hermeneutical

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72Michael Horton defines theology as “the church’s reflection on God’s performative action in word and deed and its own participation in the drama of redemption.” Horton, Covenant and Eschatology, 4; cf. Vanhoozer, The Drama of Doctrine, 17-18. Therefore theology, including its method, must be carried out for the glory of God in Christ and the good of his church. Much attention has been given to theological method in light of postmodernism and the rejection of the idea that theology is a science. Kevin Vanhoozer has rightly argued that the language of the Bible should not merely be reduced to fact-stating propositions. This argument, in part, is aimed at theologians such as Charles Hodge and Carl F. H. Henry who, in recent years, have received heavy criticism for their methodology. For example, in the opening chapter of his three-volume Systematic Theology, Charles Hodge describes theology as a science (Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1873), 1:10-11). According to his critics, Hodge’s science analogy fails to account for Scripture’s own theological presentation and runs the risk of methodological naiveté. A more sympathetic reading of Hodge, however, would acknowledge the experiential subjectivism to which he responds, the provision he makes for human bias, and the way he goes about doing theology throughout the three volumes. In other words, his own way of doing theology, which is heavily indebted to covenantal theology in the Reformed tradition, did not exactly measure up to his scientific analogy. Nevertheless, defining theology as science does not seem to be an adequate view of both Scripture and theology. For criticism of theologians such as Hodge and Henry, see Henry H. Knight III, A Future for Truth: Evangelical Theology in a Postmodern World (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997); Stanley J. Grenz and John F. Franke, Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 14; John R. Franke, The Character of Theology: An Introduction to its Nature, Task, and Purpose (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 88-89; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 87. For responses to these criticisms, see Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 183; Stephen J. Wellum, “Postconservativism, Biblical Authority, and Recent Proposals for Re-Doing Evangelical Theology: A Critical Analysis,” in Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times, ed. Millard J. Erickson, Paul Kjoss Helseth, and Justin Taylor (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 174.

73Graeme Goldsworthy writes, “From one point of view, biblical theology is what makes dogmatics necessary. If it were not for the progressive nature of revelation, then all texts would stand in the same general relationship to the believer. Dogmatics is the discipline of saying what the total redemptive and revealing activity of God means for us now. It recognizes that all texts do not stand in the same relationship to us now, but that in view of the unity of revelation they do stand in some identifiable relationship to all other texts and therefore to us. Biblical theology examines the diversity within the unity. . . . The dogmatic basis of biblical theology lies in the fact that no empirical datum of exegesis has independent meaning, and no datum of theology or interpretation has independent meaning.” Graeme Goldsworthy, Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical
process to a series of logical steps (e.g., exegesis → biblical theology → systematic theology). Rather, each discipline informs and checks the others. Second, this process takes into account and is informed by historical theology, for every person approaches the text with certain (confessional) presuppositions. Theological method is neither formulated in a vacuum nor merely theoretical. Neither should methodology impose foreign categories onto the text. Rather, the content of theology ought to shape its methodology by developing its own intrasystematic categories.

This interpretive and theological process is set forth by Richard Lints, in what he calls the three horizons of redemptive interpretation—the textual (immediate context at the grammatical-historical level), epochal (context of the period of revelation), and canonical (context of the entirety of revelation) horizons. That is, equal study must be given to all texts, rightly interpreted within their respective contexts, with careful attention given to literary genre in light of their overall place in redemptive history and the canon to reach sound biblical and theological conclusions.


Osborne, The Hermeneutical Spiral, 265-66.

Horton, Covenant and Eschatology, 19; Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 270-74. Geerhardus Vos helpfully asserts, “The Bible is, as it were, conscious of its own organism; it feels, what we always cannot say of ourselves, its own anatomy.” Geerhardus Vos, Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2004), 16. For Vos, that “organism” was the Bible’s own covenantal consciousness. Nevertheless, the point taken is that the Bible provides its own structure for doing theology. For more on the development and practice of a biblical theology that is covenantal from the nineteenth century onward, see C. N. Willborn, “Biblical Theology in Southern Presbyterianism,” in The Hope Fulfilled: Essays in Honor of O. Palmer Robertson, ed. Robert L. Penny (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 3-25.

Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 293-311; see also Edmund Clowney, Preaching and Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 16.
This theological framework presupposes that Scripture constitutes a unified text with a developing story.77 God’s Word reveals and interprets his redemptive acts that develop across time, from creation to new creation. “Biblical revelation,” says Lints, “progresses because it mirrors the progressive nature of redemption.”78 Theology must keep the redemptive-revelatory and redemptive-historical nature of Scripture in its focus. But not only is God’s revelation redemptive-historical, it is redemptive-historical/eschatological. That is, it has a divine telos. Horton is correct when he says that when reading Scripture “eschatology should be a lens and not merely a locus.”79 This eschatological permeation of Scripture is rooted in a sovereign God who is moving history along to his appointed ends, both for his redemptive purposes for man (penultimate) and his glory (ultimate).80

77Scott Hafemann writes, “[T]he Bible is a unity because it is the word of God, who is unified and a coherent being, and a unified biblical theology should thus span the entire range of the Scriptures because they are all part of the written word of God. To do biblical theology is not merely to survey the contents of the Bible. . . . Instead, biblical theology seeks its content and coherence in the basic propositions and basic ordering of the Old and New Testaments read in their entirety, in their final form, and in concert with one another.” Scott J. Hafemann, “Introduction,” in Central Themes in Biblical Theology, ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 16-17.

78Ibid., 262.

79Horton, Covenant and Eschatology, 5. So also William Dumbrell, who further explicates this idea when he says, “The Bible is a book about the future in light of the human failings of the past and present. In this sense the entire Bible is eschatological, since it focuses upon the ushering in of the kingdom of God, the fulfilling of the divine intention for humanity and society. In very broad terms the biblical sweep is from creation to the new creation. Yet the end is not merely a return to the beginning; for the Bible reveals a great deal more about the divine intention than what is shown at the beginning of Genesis. Regarding eschatology, we must recognize how the Bible develops its theme of God’s purpose from the beginning of Genesis to the end in Revelation” (Dumbrell, The Search for Order, 9).

Another important methodological component for this dissertation is typology, which is an important tool for interpreting Scripture. Typology involves correspondence(s) between certain (typically OT) persons, events, and institutions and later (typically NT) persons, events, and institutions. That is, God’s past dealings with his people serve as patterns, or types, for his future dealings with his people. Robert Plummer writes, “Because God is completely sovereign over history, all Old Testament-era saving events, institutions, persons, offices, holidays, and ceremonies served to anticipate the final saving event, the final saving person, the final saving ceremony, etc.” For example, Old Testament prophets anticipated and looked for a new David, a new Exodus, a new covenant, and a new city of God: the old had thus become a type of the new and important in pointing forward to it. Subsequently, the New Testament authors saw in Christ and his work the fulfillment, or anti-type, of these prophetic hopes.

There are several important components in typology. First, typology pays careful attention to textual and historical/theological correspondences that develop across the canon. These correspondences provide the hermeneutical controls for linking types with their anti-type(s). Second, typology is prospective and prophetic. That is, God

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intentionally planned certain persons, events, and institutions in redemptive history in order that they would serve later redemptive—and Christological—realities. Darrell Bock writes,

Typology, or better typological-prophetic usage, expresses a peculiar link of patterns with movement from the lesser OT person or event to the greater NT person or event. . . . God’s pattern of salvation is being reactivated in a present fulfillment. This fulfillment takes place both in accordance with messianic hope and promise and in accordance with the pattern of God’s activity in salvation.

Third, typology stresses escalation as the OT storyline moves forward to its NT fulfillment. As a result, the OT is incomplete as to the working out of God’s purposes and thus cannot be fully understood apart from its fulfillment in the NT.

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“The Old Testament record of history is prophetic in the sense that it describes a revelation and divine action that are as yet incomplete. And the New Testament points to a consummation of history that now we understand only in part, as through a glass darkly.”

Promises in the OT point forward to their fulfillment(s), and the type is fulfilled and surpassed by its antitype. Finally, these typological connections find their ultimate fulfillment in the person and work of Christ. In making typological connections—types with their anti-types—promises and fulfillments are linked, which are made clear by textual and historical connections that are developed both within the Old Testament itself and then from the Old Testament to the New.

By allowing the textual, epochal, and canonical horizons and the typological connections that develop across the canon to illuminate the theme of land, I will attempt to show how the progressive development and fulfillment(s) of land provide hermeneutical warrant to see its ultimate fulfillment in Christ who brings the blessings of the land to those united to him by faith and who will finally usher in God’s kingdom and

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90 Lints, Fabric of Theology, 309.

91 Scobie, The Ways of Our God, 90.

92 Davidson, Typology in Scripture, 97.

93 Christopher Seitz defines intertextuality (or intratextuality) as “how the Bible relates to itself in its own system of cross-reference . . . it has to do with the way in which parts of the Bible and finally the two Testaments themselves relate to one another.” Christopher R. Seitz, Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 228. There are many examples of these relationships, a few of which will demonstrate a pattern in Scripture. Adam was a type of Christ who was to come, as Paul’s use of Gen 1-2 in Rom 5:12-21 makes clear. Jesus links himself with Moses, the representative prophet in the Old Testament (John 3:14-15, 5:45-46, and 6:32-35). Similarly, from Heb 3:1-6 it is clear that Jesus is the ultimate and final prophet like Moses who was spoken of in Deut 18, for he embodies and speaks God’s Word perfectly. Other examples include Israel, in which “son” language is particularly important (Hos 11:1; Matt 2:15); the role of leaders as prophets, priests, and kings; David, to whom God promised the Messiah and eternal kingship from his line; institutions, such as the Temple, Passover, and the sacrificial system; and events such as the exodus, which served as a type of the greater redemption that would come in Christ. These examples are not to stand isolated from their place(s) in redemptive history. Rather, they can only be fully understood in their respective redemptive historical
new creation where those blessings will be forever enjoyed. This particular way of reading Scripture will hopefully help to overcome the impasse of conflicting conclusions concerning the land. In this way it is hoped that this methodology will serve to formulate a biblical theology of land which then is applied to other areas in systematic theology.

**Scope and Limitations**

“Land” is the fourth most frequent noun in the Old Testament, occurring 2,505 times.\(^94\) It must be acknowledged, therefore, that a comment on every use of the word, even if brief, cannot be undertaken since each occurrence is embedded in a historical, epochal, and canonical context. This study, then, will focus on the texts that trace the development of land so that sound biblical and theological conclusions can be made.

Furthermore, since this dissertation will argue that the Old Testament promise of God’s rule over his people in the land will ultimately be fulfilled in the new creation won by Christ, various issues concerning the nature and timing of the millennium will not be discussed.

**Assumptions**

Before humbly embarking upon the task of a biblical theology of land, theological assumptions supporting this project must first be addressed. There is no such thing as a presupposition-less theology. A positive contribution of postmodernism has been the raising of the theologian’s awareness that there are no neutral approaches to contexts and placement in the canon in relation to the person and work of Christ.

\(^94\) According to BibleWorks 6.0; so also Christopher Wright, “יָרָא (‘eres),” 518; Elmer Martens lists 2,505 times in *God’s Design*, 114.
theology.\textsuperscript{95} It is, therefore, essential to recognize presuppositions and evaluate them under the authority of Scripture. To be sure, to defend each one is beyond the scope of this project; nevertheless, these presuppositions are justifiable because they are grounded in the triune God who has created man in his image, made himself known in his Word, and has graciously and savingly acted on man’s behalf in history through the person and work of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{96} These broader assumptions include the commitment to the inspired, authoritative, inerrant, and infallible Word of God,\textsuperscript{97} the divine and human authorship of Scripture,\textsuperscript{98} the possibility of a “whole-Bible biblical theology,”\textsuperscript{99} and the unity and continuity of God’s saving plan progressively revealed to his people through the Bible’s textual diversity.\textsuperscript{100}

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\textsuperscript{95}See, e.g., Grenz and Franke, \textit{Beyond Foundationalism}.


\textsuperscript{97}See, e.g., Beale, \textit{The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism}; James M. Boice, \textit{The Foundations of Biblical Authority} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983); D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, \textit{Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1986); John D. Woodbridge, \textit{Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982); E. Y. Young, \textit{Thy Word Is Truth: Some Thoughts on the Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965; reprint, 2008). This assumption includes the conviction that the Bible is a coherent and established canon composed of sixty-six books, which should be understood “as a collection of historical texts written over a long period of time, utilizing different literary forms and manifesting diverse perspectives, and as the word of God who spoke and continues to speak through its books.” Schnabel, “Scripture,” 36; also see Roger T. Beckwith, \textit{The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism} (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1985).


Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation is composed of five chapters. Following the introduction, chapter 2 provides the biblical-theological framework from which a theology of land can be canonically understood. More specifically, the framework for understanding the place of God’s people is the kingdom. God’s kingdom on earth begins in Eden. After the fall into sin, God’s kingdom will come through his divinely-initiated covenants with his people living in the promised land. In the end, God will once again make a place—a new heaven and a new earth—for his people through the fulfillment of his covenant promises in Christ, who wins the new creation and reigns in his kingdom forever.

Working out of this framework, the next two chapters trace the theme of land as it progressively unfolds across the canon. First, chapter 3 connects the promise of land to Abraham to the preceding events in Genesis 11-11. Then, the promise of land within the Abrahamic covenant is evaluated, followed by partial fulfillments through Israel’s history under leaders such as Joshua, David, and Solomon. However, each stage of fulfillment is not final, for every fulfillment is followed by covenant failure. Instead, each fulfillment and failure anticipates something greater, which the canonical prophets proclaim.

What begins in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New. Chapter 4, then, demonstrates the inaugurated fulfillment of the kingdom with the coming of Christ and his work. That is, the blessings of the land come now to those who are united to Christ by faith and they await their future, final fulfillment in the new creation.

Finally, chapter 5 summarizes and concludes the overall argument of this dissertation. The argument is then evaluated in light of the two dominant theological systems today, namely, dispensationalism and covenant theology.
CHAPTER 2

THE BEGINNING AND THE END:
SITUATING THE LAND PROMISE IN GOD’S REDEMPTIVE PLAN

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen 1:1)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Rev 21:1-5)

Introduction

“A fundamental fact about the Scriptures,” according to Richard Lints, “is that they constitute a text with a developing story. It is a story that clearly progresses toward the accomplishment of specific goals.”¹ “In the beginning” marks inauguration, but it also anticipates the end.² In this eschatological light, Scripture should be read as a text with a beginning, an end, and a developing story in-between—a “meta-story”³ that moves

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²Kenneth Mathews writes, “‘Beginning’ is often paired in the Old Testament with its antonym ‘end,’ indicating an inclusive period of time (e.g., Job 8:7; 42:12; Eccl 7:8; Isa 46:10). The occurrence of ‘beginning’ in [Genesis] 1:1 suggests that it has been selected because of its association with ‘end.’ If so, the author has at the outset shown that creation’s ‘beginnings’ were initiated with a future goal intended, an eschatological purpose. Thus the prophets and the apostles could speak of the end in terms of the beginnings, ‘new heavens and new earth’ (Isa 65:17; Rev 21:1).” Kenneth A. Mathews, Genesis 1-11,26, NAC, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 126-27. See also Walter Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), 2:110.

³T. Desmond Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem: Exploring God’s Plan for Life on Earth (Nottingham, UK: InterVarsity, 2008), 10. Similarly, Willem VanGemeren says, “The Bible begins with the account of creation (Gen 1-2) and ends with a description of a more glorious creation (Rev 21-22).
toward a goal.⁴ One such goal driving the biblical story forward is the establishment of the kingdom of God. That is, fundamental to the storyline of Scripture is the notion that God, the Creator-King of the cosmos, has a people who live under his reign. This reality was true in the beginning (Gen 1-2) and will be true at the end (Rev 21-22).

The burden of this chapter is to provide a biblical-theological framework for understanding and situating the land promise in redemptive history. More specifically, this chapter will demonstrate how the land promise is canonically situated within the entire biblical storyline, from creation to new creation. Moreover, it will show that the land theme is organically related to both the kingdom of God and the covenants as they unfold and progress across the canon. To substantiate this thesis, then, this chapter will consider Genesis 1-3 and the related themes that subsequently unfold through the rest of

Between these accounts lies the story of redemption. The movement from creation to restoration is one organic development whereby God works out his plan for the redemption of a new humanity from all the nations (Rev 5:9; 7:9). Creation, in a real sense, is the preamble to the history of redemption.” Willem VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 40.

⁴To portray Scripture with a unity of this kind, however, does not minimize its diversity. It only serves to highlight the fact that this unity-in-diversity has common themes that tie it together, all of which are anchored in the gloriously unique triune God who speaks and acts in history as he creates and redeems a people to live in his place under his rule for his glory. Hence, there is progression and diversity as the unified drama unfolds and moves toward the end. Methodologically, Alexander argues that the meta-story comes from an anthology of literature, and that this anthology, “which abounds in intertextual references, provides most of the literary context within which its contents may be understood. There is not a book within the whole collection that can be interpreted satisfactorily in isolation from the rest. Each book contributes something special to the meta-story and, in turn, the meta-story offers a framework within which each book may be best interpreted.” Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 10.
Scripture,\textsuperscript{5} which are essentially eschatological themes that reach their terminus in the new heaven and new earth (Rev 21-22).\textsuperscript{6}

**The Beginning and the End:**
**God’s Eschatological Goal of Redemptive History**

Crucial to understanding why the canon ends with an Eden-like picture of the eschaton is that Eden is depicted as the prototypical dwelling place of God on earth with his people.\textsuperscript{7} In short, God’s original creation is the archetype of a final—and better—creation to come. That is, God’s original creation reaches its eschatological fulfillment in the new heaven and new earth. Put another way, “Eschatology is like protology;”\textsuperscript{8} the end is like the beginning. T. D. Alexander writes, “The very strong links between Genesis 1-3 and Revelation 21-22 suggest that these passages frame the entire biblical meta-story.”\textsuperscript{9} Similarly, Brevard Childs states that “the sense of the end is such that the entire Old Testament has an eschatological quality about it.”\textsuperscript{10}

In short, the beginning of Genesis inaugurates the consummated vision at the end of Revelation. Indeed “The movement

\textsuperscript{5}John Collins suggests different view from the traditional; he sees the break coming between Gen 4 and 5 rather than between 3 and 4 (Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006], 189-90), and Brian G. Toews, who notes that Gen 2:4-4:26 is a structural unit because the phrase “these of the generations of” divides the book of Genesis into its major sections (“Genesis 1-4: The Genesis of OT Instruction,” in Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect, ed. Scott J. Hafemann [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002], 39-40).


\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., 64.


\textsuperscript{9}Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem, 10.

from creation to New Creation is the heart of prophetic, indeed biblical, eschatology.”¹¹
Jonathan Pennington notes, “The entire Bible’s theology is at its core a narrative of God’s work in the world from creation to new creation.”¹² God’s new creation at the end brings to fulfillment his cosmological design from the beginning.

The eschatological outlook of Scripture is integral to reading its storyline, for it permeates the entire message of the Bible. On this point Jürgen Moltmann is correct when he writes,

> From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but is the medium of Christian faith as such, the key in which everything else is set.¹³

Scripture commences with the motif of creation, fall, and redemption (Gen 1-3), a cycle that will repeat itself until the seed of the woman crushes the seed of the serpent. VanGemereren notes, “Creation, in a real sense, is the preamble to the history of redemption.”¹⁴ History will not end until God’s sovereign plan—to unite all things in Christ and to put all things under his feet—is accomplished (Eph 1:10, 22). Thus, God’s purposive plan is creation-rooted and kingdom-focused.

The earth is divinely designed to serve as the place of his kingdom. This purpose was originally localized in Eden, the paradisiacal Garden-Temple of God, where Adam and Eve enjoyed God’s presence, exercised dominion over the created order, and

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were tasked to fill the earth with their descendants. Furthermore, Eden served as a microcosm of what would, in time, expand and encompass the entire world. This process, in turn, is coextensive with the propagation of Adam’s seed until God’s intention for the world, a worldwide paradisiacal temple-city, would be fulfilled (Rev 21-22). By divine design, then, God’s cosmological purposes would reach their eschatological telos when the boundaries of Eden extend to the ends of the earth. Furthermore, the end of the story confirms that, despite the entrance of sin and death into creation, God’s divine design is fulfilled in the new creation to an even greater degree than in Eden, for it is here that there will be no more sin and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever (Rev 22:4-5; 11:15).

While the beginning and end are similar in kind, however, the latter is greater in degree. As VanGemeren points out, the history of redemption “does not begin with a high point only to end up with the new earth as an equally high point. The new creation is better than the first because it will be perfect, holy, and characterized by the presence of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev 21:22).” The triune God will covenantally dwell with his people apart from the presence of sin and full of his presence. Richard Bauckham writes, “God’s creation reaches its eschatological fulfillment when it becomes the scene of God’s immediate presence. This, in the last resort, is what is ‘new’ about the new creation. It is the old creation filled with God’s presence.” In other

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16VanGemeren, The Progress of Redemption, 64.

17Richard Bauckham, The Theology of the Book of Revelation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 140. For an extensive treatment of the presence of God as both the instrument of
words, there is a qualitative advance from the former to the latter, which comes about as a result of the person and work of Christ. Whereas Genesis begins with a potential building site for humanity to exercise dominion and multiply and, consequently, to enlarge the borders of Eden, Revelation ends with a finished city inhabited by people from every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev 5:9). And though God’s good creation was corrupted by the entrance of sin and death, Revelation ends where “death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Rev 21:4). But crucial to observing the (dis)continuity between the historical bookends is the historical line that connects them.

Perhaps one of the most prominent features of the beginning and end of the story is the concept of God’s kingdom. Kenneth Barker writes, “It is significant that the Bible begins (Gen 1:2) and ends (Rev 19:12) with royal motifs.” Jesus’ declaration that “the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15) reveals the Old Testament anticipation of the fulfillment of God’s saving promises that reach back to Eden when God promised to undo the effects of sin by triumphing over the serpent. Furthermore, the importance of the

redemptive history as well as its eschatological objective, see John Ryan Lister, “The Lord Your God is in Your Midst”: The Presence of God and the Means and End of Redemptive History” (PhD. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010).

...Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem, 14; idem, From Paradise to the Promised Land, 311.

From the standpoint of biblical theology, the kingdom of God must not be limited merely to word studies. Graeme Goldsworthy comments, “It matters not at all that the actual phrase ‘kingdom of God’ is not used in the Old Testament. We are not conducting a word study but are primarily interested in the theological concepts that give coherence to the Bible. The kingdom is a key concept that gives this coherence.” Graeme Goldsworthy, Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 51. See also B. S. Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” in NDBT, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 6-9.

kingdom in Jesus’ teaching is apparent by the location of the sayings about the kingdom. When he begins his ministry, Jesus’ proclamation of the arrival of the kingdom serves to highlight the fact that it is central to the biblical storyline, for he saw in his ministry the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. Mark demonstrates this fulfillment with the announcement, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15). Clearly Jesus did not present a comprehensive biblical theology of the kingdom set within salvation history. However, it is clear from the gospels that Jesus saw himself acting within and bringing to fulfillment the whole process of salvation history. Indeed God’s saving promises were being fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus, which included his incarnation, obedience, death, and resurrection. Bruce Waltke writes, “Although the expression ‘kingdom of God’ never occurs in the Old Testament and its equivalents are relatively rare and late, the concept informs the whole.” Thus, the pattern of God’s kingdom provides a conceptual approach that spans history from beginning to end.

Although there has been considerable debate and literature devoted to defining the kingdom of God, this concept, when defined with sufficient elasticity, consists of

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25For example, considerable debate has surrounded the nature of the kingdom (e.g., external and physical and/or internal and spiritual; reign and/or realm) and the timing of its coming. Concerning the latter, some have tried to propose that the kingdom is fully present (i.e., “realized eschatology”); see, e.g., C.
three important components: king/rule, people, and place. But to avoid abstraction, the
kingdom of God must be tethered to history. God’s rule over his people in his place is
found on the beginning pages of Scripture and, through many twists and turns, extends to
the end. In other words, the kingdom of God is central to the storyline of Scripture.

H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* [London: Nisbet, 1935]), or wholly future, (i.e., “consistent
eschatology”; see, e.g., Johannes Weiss, *Jesus’ Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* [Philadelphia:
Fortress, 1971, first published in 1892]; Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* [New
York: Schocken, 1914, first published in 1901]). The position favored in this dissertation as most consistent
with the New Testament fulfillment of the Old is “inaugurated eschatology,” which allows for both a
present and future, an already but not yet, dimension to eschatological fulfillment. See, e.g., George Eldon
Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
1959); idem, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998); Herman
helpful summary of the debate, see Wendell Willis, ed., *The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation*
(Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987). Furthermore, according to Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson
(introduction, in *The Kingdom of God*, 20-21), the Kingdom of God has emphasized God’s action in the
world and, therefore, “has tended become a cover-phrase for varied understandings of that action in the
world” by groups such as classic liberalism, the social gospel, liberation theology, Christian
reconstructionism, and postmodern evangelicalism.” For a response that seeks to capture a fuller
understanding than any one of these aforementioned conceptions, see Christopher W. Morgan and Robert

Graeme Goldsworthy aptly describes the kingdom of God as “God’s people in God’s place
under God’s rule.” Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom* in *The Goldsworthy Trilogy* (Waynesboro,
GA: Paternoster, 2000), 53-54. Similarly, Bruce Waltke describes the kingdom in the OT when he says, “A
nation consists of a common people, normally sharing a common land, submissive to a common law, and
having a common ruler” (emphasis mine). Bruce Waltke, “The Kingdom of God in Biblical Theology,”
*Looking to the Future: Evangelical Essays in Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 18. That is, the
kingdom consists of a people, a place, and a ruler/king.

A large focus in the debate over the meaning of “kingdom” is whether it primarily
emphasizes God’s rule/reign or realm. Scholars such as George Eldon Ladd have shown that it primarily
emphasizes God’s saving rule, which has already arrived in the person and work of Christ but will be
ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); idem, *The Presence of the Future*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdman,
1974); idem, “The Kingdom of God—Reign or Realm?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81, no. 3 (1962):
230-38. However, the primary emphasis on God’s saving rule does not exclude the concept of the realm
where he rules. Concerning this secondary emphasis, Ladd writes, “That we are not shut up to choosing one
or the other of these two meanings is shown by the fact that both meanings of malkuth are found in the OT
describing political affairs. Malkuth can be either a monarch's kingship, his reign, or it can be the realm
over which he reigns. It is our thesis that both meanings are to be recognized in the teachings of Jesus, and
that the primary meaning is the abstract or dynamic one, for it is God's kingly act establishing his rule in the
world which brings into being the realm in which his rule is enjoyed.” Ladd, “The Kingdom of God—
Reign or Realm?,” 236. Other scholars have also noted the importance of realm/place in their discussion of
the kingdom. A few examples will suffice. Eugene Merrrell says, “By definition a king must have a realm
and subjects if he is to have any legitimate claim to the title.” Merrrell, *Everlasting Dominion*, 278.
According to Dempster, “The earth is created for human dominion and rule, which reflects the divine rule.
Therefore, for the purpose of this dissertation, the land promise must be situated in a kingdom-oriented biblical-theological framework. That is, the land promised to Abraham and his descendants recovers the place of the kingdom that was lost in Eden, thus serving as a subsequent place in redemptive history of God’s rule over his people. This place looks back to what was lost in Eden and anticipates and prepares the way for the coming of Jesus Christ, who ushers in the kingdom and in whom all of the blessings of the land are found. Moreover, those united to Christ by faith in the present era of salvation history await their final place with God, the new creation, to which the land of promise ultimately pointed. Thus, God will rule over his people in the new creation won by Jesus Christ.

For human beings to function as the image of God they need a territory, a domain to rule over. And to have the land without human beings is also pointless, for the kingdom needs a king, the dominion a dynasty.” Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 62. Ridderbos notes that “in the nature of the case a dominion to be effective must create or maintain a territory where it can operate. So the absence of any idea of a spatial kingdom would be very strange.” Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1962), 26. Finally, J. C. O’Neill, arguing against Gustaf Dalman (*Die Worte Jesu mit Berücksichtigung des nachkanonischen jüdischen Schriftums und der aramäischen Sprache. Band I: Einleitung und wichtige Begriffe* [Leipzig: J. C. Hmnch'sche Buchhandlung, 1898; repr., 1930], 77; idem, *The Words of Jesus Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language. I: Introduction and Fundamental Ideas*, trans. D. M. Kay [Edinburgh: Τ&Τ Clark, 1902], 94), who writes, “[t]here can be no doubt whatever that in the Old Testament and in Jewish literature the word מלוכה when applied to God always means ‘kingly rule’ and never means ‘kingdom,’ as if to suggest the territory rule by him.” However, writes O’Neill, “The important thing to note, which Dalman tries to deny, is that the reign is over a realm. The word βασιλεία may well mean ‘the right to reign as king’ in the parable about the nobleman who went away to receive a kingdom (Luke 19:12), but the right to reign is the right to reign over a designated realm. The word group always refers to kingly power that is effective, and the effectiveness of the power is always thought of as power over land and subjects.” J. C. O’Neill, “The Kingdom of God,” *Novum Testamentum* 35, no. 2 (1993): 130-31. Hence, although scholars such as Ladd and Dalman have shown that kingdom primarily emphasizes God’s saving rule, a wedge should not be driven between his rule and realm, or people for that matter, for since the beginning of creation God has ruled over his people in his designated place.
In the Beginning:  
Creation and God’s Worldwide Design

Genesis is about beginnings: the beginning of creation, the world, humanity and the nations, civilization, relationships between God and man, sin and death, and God’s plan in history to make and bless a people for his glory. As the beginning of the story, Genesis introduces the reader to the background, context, main character(s), and themes of the story that will develop. This is, as Dempster says, “the writer’s chance to indicate what the subsequent content – the middle – will be about.” Furthermore, Craig Bartholomew writes that Genesis “canonically sits at the outset of the drama of Scripture and in this respect it is foundational. It contains the early acts in the great drama that unfolds, and without it the drama simply cannot be understood.” Thus, Genesis is the fountainhead of the ensuing biblical story.

Creation and the King of the Kingdom

Genesis 1:1-2:3 and 2:4-25 provide complimentary accounts of and a theological framework for God’s rule over his creation in general and his people in particular. Genesis 1:1-2:3 provides the arena for God’s activity and portrays him as

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28 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 45.


30 Wenham comments that the majority of modern scholars hold that the opening section of Genesis ends with 2:4a, not 2:3. He recognizes, however, that it is most anomalous to end a section with
the cosmic Creator from whom all that exists comes into being through his powerful, life-creating word. Alexander writes, “With remarkable brevity and skill the narrator conveys a picture of total harmony between God, the creator, and the world, his creation.”

Genesis 2:4-7 has a more anthropocentric feel and portrays God as the personal self-sufficient life-giver who forms man from the dust and breathes life into his dependent being. Moreover, Genesis 2:8-25 portrays God as the master gardener who plants the Garden in Eden, into which he places man to work and keep it.

Scripture begins with the words, “In the beginning God created.” He is the grammatical subject of the first sentence and the thematic subject throughout the creation account. In fact, God is mentioned 35 times in the first chapter alone. From this opening verse God’s control over creation is asserted. Kenneth Mathews rightly says that “the creation account is theocentric, not creature centered. Its purpose is to glorify the Creator


Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 147.

The verbs “work” (ℵאֶב) and “keep” (אַלָּב) appear together later in Israel’s history and either refer to the Israelite’s serving and keeping God’s Word or, more often, to priests who serve God and guard the temple from unholy things/people entering it (Num 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chr 23:32; Ezek 44:14). More will be discussed on Eden as a Garden-Temple below.

For discussion of and arguments for this traditional translation, see Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 11-13.


by magnifying him through the majesty of the created order.”

God’s power and rule are demonstrated in the repeated refrain, “And God said . . . And it was so” (Gen 1:6-7. 9, 11). Peter Vogt notes,

The portrayal of God in Genesis 1 is radically countercultural. The insistence that this God is able to speak and create everything—and to set limits even on those things (such as sun, moon, and stars) that were worshipped as gods in other ancient Near Eastern cultures—points to the sovereignty and supremacy of God.

God is king over creation because, as the Genesis narratives show, the heavens and the earth depend on God for their existence, not vice versa.

Furthermore, the entire universe is the geographical beginning of God’s reign in history, for he is the Creator and Ruler of all. For this reason, the rule of God (i.e.,

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37 Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*: 26, 113. This theocentricity, however, does not deny the crucial place of mankind in creation, as will be shown below. As VanGemeren writes, “The theocentric interest correlates with the anthropocentric concern.” VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption*, 51. Moreover, concludes Dempster, “The goal of creation is anthropological.” Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 57. In other words, God is the center around whom mankind orbits, deriving his identity and purpose from his Creator.


39 VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption*, 59. God’s Lordship both over and in all that is created brings into focus the correlative doctrines of divine transcendence and immanence. God’s transcendence often connotes that God is far “above” his created order. In doing so, however, the impression is given that his “other-ness” is limited to spatial categories. But, as John Frame argues, it is not entirely biblical to assert that God is located somewhere far away. He writes, “That may be part of the thrust of the terms ‘Most High,’ ‘exalted,’ and ‘lifted up,’ but there must be more to it . . . We should, I think, see these expressions primarily as describing God’s royal dignity . . . The expressions of transcendence refer to God’s rule, his kingship, his lordship.” John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 105. But God’s transcendence must be tethered to his immanence, for he is no abstract or impersonal deity who is removed from and uninterested in his creation. Rather, he is simultaneously transcendent and immanent, distinct/separate yet personal, and specially, or covenantally, present with his people. Both of these realities are affirmed in a single verse when Isaiah declares, “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (Isa 57:15), or when Paul speaks of “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:6).

40 Michael Horton writes, “It is clear that creation comes into being as a history; or, to put it differently, creation and history come into existence together through God’s ex nihilo speech. The world is not a given, but a gift, and it is there as the theater for the covenantal drama: ‘He formed it to be inhabited’ (Isa 45:18).” Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand
kingdom) provides a conceptual approach to the commencement of creation. As Merrill writes,

The kingdom story begins with the first sentence of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” By this simple but majestic affirmation, both king and realm are introduced; and in the six days that follow, the citizens of the kingdom, inanimate and animate, appear in their course until mankind, the crowning glory of the Creator, takes center stage. . . . The stage has been set, the players are ready, and the drama may now begin.

And, as Scott Hafemann comments,

The establishment of the kingdom of God at creation reaches its climax when God rests on the seventh day, thereby declaring the glory of his sovereign rule as demonstrated in the sufficiency of his provisions—there is nothing more to provide. For God to sit serenely on his throne in his own sanctuary, rather than having to go out to do battle against the enemies that threaten his people, is the posture of the king at rest (cf. God’s corresponding promise to David in 2 Sam 7:1-16 and God’s taking up his resting place in the temple in Ps 132:7-8, 13-14).

God is the self-existent and self-sufficient creator of and ruler over everything that exists, and creation’s finitude is displayed in its dependence upon him.

God’s kingship is asserted from the beginning in that his first word to his people is a command. They must be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, and have dominion over creation (Gen 1:28). Moreover, they must not eat of the tree of the

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41 VanGemeren, The Progress of Redemption, 59.


knowledge of good and evil, or else there would be disastrous results (Gen 2:17).

Therefore,

in a certain sense, it might be said that God had always behaved as a King. After bringing Adam and Eve into existence, He gave them a land which he had prepared, and delegated authority to them. God held the power of life and death, of judgment and blessing. He commanded and expected obedience. As they complied, they enjoyed his presence, and He theirs. After the fall in sin, they came under his judgment but held the hope of a future redemption.45

Through God’s commands, promise of blessing and judgment, life and death, and the right and ability to execute judgment upon mankind’s disobedience to him, God is unequivocally demonstrating his rule over creation, especially those created in his image.

From a broader redemptive historical perspective, Scripture unequivocally affirms that God is creator and king. Psalm 95 summons its readers to worship the Lord, the great God and great King above all gods who owns all that is, “for he made it” (Ps 95:1-5). God sits enthroned as king over creation and his people are to ascribe to him alone glory and strength; indeed, at the sound of his voice creation bursts with life (Ps 29). Psalm 89 says that all of creation, and especially his people, are to praise the Lord, for he without comparison performs praiseworthy wonders and rules and stills the raging sea (Ps 89:5-13). Furthermore, he owns the heavens and earth and all that is within them, for he founded them (Ps 89:11). Thus, he dwells in the heavens (Deut 26:15; 1 Kgs 8:43; Isa 57:15) and does whatever pleases him (Pss 115:3; 135:6). And finally, God’s reign is most fully understood canonically, for Christ shares in this creative and ruling activity—an activity that only God can perform—as he reigns through and over creation under his

Father’s ultimate authority (John 1:1-3; 1 Cor 15:24-28; Rev 22:1, 3; cf. Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:1-2).  

Creation and the People of the King(dom)

“As creation speaks to us of the king,” says Goldsworthy, “so Eden speaks to us of the kingdom of God.” In the prologue of Genesis 1:1-2:3, the people of Israel learn that their God, who delivered them from slavery out of Egypt, is not like the other so-called gods of the nations. Rather, he is the Creator of the universe, the Maker of all people(s), the only true God, the King over all. He is the Great King, and creation is designed to be his kingdom.

Here, in the beginning, is God’s people in his place under his rule. This “pattern of the kingdom” repeatedly emerges in each epoch of salvation history and reaches its consummation at the end of history. It is not accidental, then, that in the beginning God’s people is Adam and Eve, and at the end it is the people of the Second Adam from every tribe and language and people and nation. From history’s inauguration to consummation, God rules through his people over his world.

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46 That Christ reigns with God implies that he is included in the identity of God. For more on this argument, see Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).


49 Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 86-88.

50 Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, 110. Goldsworthy goes on to note that ‘people’ in Hebrew is a collective singular that refers to a nation or race, or in this case Adam and Eve, as a single entity. Thus, the awkward English grammar serves to highlight the solidarity of the first human couple. Ibid., 110n4.
The cosmological purpose of mankind has a teleological aim. More than just a place of existence, God created the first human couple, Adam and Eve, and placed them in Eden as his royal representatives where they would rule the earth, beginning with their idyllic garden, and fill it with their progeny. Furthermore, as their offspring spread, the geographical boundaries of Eden would extend to encompass the whole earth. In this sense, then, Adam’s calling was an eschatological one. Under the Lordship of Yahweh, Adam and Eve are created and commanded to reign and rule in Eden until the whole earth is filled and subdued.

In the opening narrative, the climax of creation is humanity. In the beginning of the Genesis narrative, God’s creative work shifts from the cosmological to the

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51 Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 81.

52 The term ‘ādām in Scripture has multiple usages which has caused translation challenges, especially in light of (evangelical) feminism. It is used to refer to (1) humanity in the generic sense, (2) man as the first human being created by God, and (3) Adam as the personal name of the first created man. See, for example, Richard S. Hess, “Splitted the Adam: The Usage of ‘ADAM in Genesis i-v,,” in *Studies in the Pentateuch*, ed. J. A. Emerton, VTSup 41 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 1-15. This dissertation will frequently use the terms ‘man’ or ‘mankind’ because of the flexibility in the original text, though this in no way minimizes the fact that all humans, both male and female, are created in the image of God and, therefore, equally endowed with worth and value before God and one another.

53 Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 57. The importance of humankind in the divine design does not minimize the theocentric focus of creation. Mankind finds his existence and role in the created order only in relation to his Creator. Numerous literary links support the assertion that humanity is the crown of creation. First, the successive movement through creation follows an escalating order of significance that leads to the creation of humanity on the sixth day. Second, there is a noticeable change in style. This creative act is the only one that comes about through divine deliberation (“Let us make” in v. 26). Furthermore, v. 27 is arranged in a poetic chiasm, which highlights the fact that man is specially created. Third, the verb ‘create’ is used three times in v. 27. J. V. Fesko comments, “This repetition most likely indicates the superlative, namely that man is the apex of God’s creation.” J. V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis 1-3 with the Christ of Eschatology* (Ross-Shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2007), 51. Fourth, humanity alone is created in the image of God. Fifth, mankind is commanded to have dominion over creation. Sixth, the definite article (ה) used on the number six is significant. Scholars differ on what the addition of the article precisely means, but at the very least it signifies the uniqueness of the sixth day, especially since it is the only day described as “very good” (see David A. Sterchi, “Does Genesis 1 Describe a Chronological Sequence?” *JETS* 39, no. 4 (1996): 529-36). Seventh, the verb “create” (אָרֵב) occurs three times in v. 27. Finally, the significant increase of the number of words allotted to the sixth day demonstrates that the creation of humanity is the “grand finale” of creation (on this last point, see Dempster’s helpful graph in *Dominion and Dynasty*, 57).
anthropological. Just as God creates and rules over the heavens and the earth, so also God creates and rules over his people. Mankind, though, is related to yet distinct from the rest of God’s good creation. No other created thing, inanimate or animate, has God’s own breath breathed in to give it life. Man received breath from God and became a living creature set apart from the rest of creation.

The rare use of “image” (מִדְבָּר) and “likeness” (רִאשׁוֹן) to describe humanity constitutes it as unique among the created order. Much has been written about these terms, but as Dempster notes, “it is clear that they indicate that humanity is uniquely related to both God and the created order.” In relation to God, mankind is endowed with a unique status and commanded to have dominion over every living thing that moves on the earth (Gen 1:28). Given the commission to govern all living things in creation, God set humanity apart from and gave them a regal standing among all other creatures. Alexander writes, “By repeating this point twice within three verses, the author of Genesis 1 underscores the divine delegation of authority to humankind to rule over the


55More specifically, God rules over his people by his word. For example, God’s first word to Adam and Eve is a command. They must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. “That famous tree,” says Waltke, “symbolized the ability to discern good (i.e., what advances life) and evil (i.e., what hinders life). Such knowledge belongs to God alone. . . . However, finite humanity in Adam and Eve refused to accept their limitation and transgressed the established boundary. Tempted by Satan to doubt God’s goodness and the truth of God’s word, they ate the forbidden fruit, making themselves their own lawmakers apart from God.” Waltke, “The Kingdom of God in Biblical Theology,” 18-19.


58Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 58.
In this sense, then, mankind images God by acting as his representatives on earth. Richard Middleton writes,

The writer of Genesis 1 portrays God as king presiding over ‘heaven and earth,’ an ordered and harmonious realm in which the creature manifests the will of the creator and is thus declared ‘good.’ Humanity is created like this God, with a special role of representing or imaging God’s rule in the world.

To be made in the image of God, then, is to be endowed with a kingly status.

Adam and Eve’s image-bearing, though, involves more than just existing as God’s vice-regents. That is, it entails both what ‘ādām is and what the man and woman

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59 Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 76.

60 The royalty that underlies the expression “image of God” was common in the ancient Near East. This phrase was commonly linked to kings, for the king was the living image of a god. For example, consider how King Ramses II gives an account of his status: “Utterance of the divine king, Lord of the Two Lands, lord of the form of Khepri, in whose limbs is Re, who came forth from Re, whom Ptah-Tatenen begat, King Ramses II, given life; to his father, from whom he came forth, Tatenen, father of the gods: ‘I am thy son whom thou hast placed upon thy throne. Thou hast assigned to me thy kingdom, thou hast fashioned me in thy likeness and thy form, which thou hast assigned to me and hast created. I shall do again every good thing that thou desirest, while I am sole lord, as thou wast, to settle the affairs of the land. I have created Egypt for thee anew, I have made it as at the beginning, I have wrought the gods’ forms from thy limbs, even to their color and to their bodies; I have equipped Egypt according to their desire, I have built it up with temples.” James Henry Breasted, ed., *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. 3, *The Nineteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 181. That Ramses II was fashioned in the “likeness” and “form” of the gods indicates that images of gods or kings were looked upon as representatives of the deity or king. In other words, the king’s rule is a reflection of the divine rule. Furthermore, this idea is strengthened by taking into consideration the oldest use of the terms למות תַּלָּאֵת and תָּמוּנָה from the ninth century in an Aramaic inscription from Tell Fakhariyeh to describe the statue of King Haddu-yisi. P. E. Dion, *Image et ressemblance en araméen ancien* (Tell Fakhariyeh), *Science et Esprit* 34 (1982): 151-53. However, this similarity does not mean equality, for the biblical presentation of humanity as image-bearers is unique. Gordon Wenham writes, “Other cultures saw their kings as representing the divine, thus legitimating their rule, but Genesis democratizes this outlook, making every human an image of the divine.” Gordon J. Wenham, “Hearing the Pentateuch,” in *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God’s Address*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew and David J. H. Beldman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 237. Hence, not only is humanity as a whole unique, but every individual is special and endowed with the responsibility to rightly image God according to his revelation.


62 D. A. Carson notes six implications of being made in the image of God: (1) The image of God can be teased out inductively, (2) humanity is important and dignified, (3) humanity is accountable before God, (4) human beings cannot escape this truth, they can only suppress or deny it, (5) the image of God grounds responsibility toward the rest of creation, and (6) Adam made in the image of God anticipates the last Adam who is the image of the invisible God. D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 204-12.
do. More specifically, mankind’s ontological status (i.e., image of God) results in ruling the world for God, for they are his sons. Adam and Eve share a unique role and relationship to the rest of creation. With their royal status, Adam and Eve are to subdue and have dominion over the earth. The earth, and particularly Eden, was not only their home but also their place of work. This role is often cast in terms of the creational mandate or commission. Given the task to subdue and have dominion, Adam and Eve have a God-given authority over the rest of creation.

The commission to subdue and have dominion over the earth carries with it the idea of authority and power. In Genesis 1, Adam is to rule over “the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Gen 1:26, 28). For example, this prerogative of man is seen in his naming of the animals and his care of the garden. This ruling function, though greatly affected, is not lost after the entrance of sin. In Numbers 32:22

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65Bernhard Anderson writes, “Just as a human being is God’s representative and thus the sign of God’s rule on earth, so the son is the representative of the father, one in whom, in some sense, the father appears.” Bernhard W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1994), 128. Image/likeness and sonship come together in Gen 5:1-3 and Luke 3:38. Concerning this correlation, Dempster says, “By juxtaposing the divine creation of Adam in the image of God and the subsequent human creation of Seth in the image of Adam, the transmission of the image of God through this genealogical line is implied, as well as the link between sonship and the image of God. As Seth is a son of Adam, so Adam is a son of God.” Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 58; see also Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 170-71.

and 29, Yahweh subdues (יָבֹעֵל) Israel’s enemies so that they in turn will drive them out and possess the land (cf. Deut 9:1-3). In Joshua 18:1, Israel subdues the bountiful land of Canaan before possessing it. Moreover, Israel was commanded to rule (יָדַע) over their servants, though not harshly (Lev 25:43), and Solomon had peace-encompassing dominion (יָדַע) “over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphsa to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates” (1 Kgs 4:24; cf. 4:21). In other words, this function anticipates, proleptically, a post-lapsarian context and infers that this mandate was to be a process whereby man was to extend this kingship until the entire creation was under the sphere of his rule. Moreover, as the storyline progresses this task takes on eschatological tones and anticipates a day when God will do a new covenant work to finally subdue his people’s sins (Mic 7:19) and, with Yahweh’s help, they will subdue their enemies (Zech 9:15). This task will ultimately come about through an ideal, greater-than-David messianic king who will come from Israel, exercise rule over the kingdom(s), and vanquish all of his enemies until his rule is established to the ends of the earth (Gen 49:10; Num 24:17-19; Pss 72:8; 89:25, 36; 110:1-2; Zech 9:9-10; cf. Gen 3:15).

67 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 59.


69 Interestingly, Dempster notes that one possible translation of Zech 9:15 is that ‘they will consume and subdue with sling-stones’ (emphasis mine), which is how the NIV translates it. Concerning this translation, he says, “The general context favors this translation (cf. the Septuagint). There seems to be a Davidic thrust (cf. Zech 9:9-10 with Ps 72:8). Moreover, Israel is God’s flock, and he will save them like a flock of sheep and exalt them as stones in a crown lifted high over the land (Zech 9:16). Just as David once became king through the use of a slingshot, so Israel will experience the same destiny at the end of time.” Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 60n7.
Furthermore, Adam’s role extends beyond just being and serving as a king. As Williamson observes, “Adam is portrayed as a priest in Genesis 2, just as he is portrayed as a king in Genesis 1.” The words that describe Adam’s work in the garden in Genesis 2:15 (עַבֵּד and שׁמַּר) are the same words used to describe the priests work in the temple later in the life and worship of Israel. Wenham writes,

“to serve, till” is a very common verb and is often used of cultivating the soil (Gen 2:5; 3:23; 4:2, 12, etc.). The word is commonly used in a religious sense of serving God (e.g., Deut 4:19), and in priestly texts, especially of the tabernacle duties of the Levites (Num 3:7-8; 4:23-24, 26, etc.). Similarly, “to guard, keep” has the simple profane sense of “guard” (Gen 4:9; 30:31), but it is even more commonly used in legal texts of observing religious commands and duties (Gen 17:9; Lev 18:5) and particularly of the Levitical responsibility for guarding the tabernacle from intruders (Num 1:53; 3:7-8). It is striking that here and in the priestly law these two terms are juxtaposed (Num 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-6), another pointer to the interplay of tabernacle and Eden symbolism.

Likewise, Beale comments,

The two Hebrew words for ‘cultivate and keep’ are usually translated ‘serve and guard [or keep]’ elsewhere in the Old Testament. . . . When these two words (verbal [‘ābad and šāmar] and nominal forms) occur together in the Old Testament (within an approximately 15-word range), they refer either to Israelite’s ‘serving’ God and ‘guarding [keeping]’ God’s word (approximately 10 times) or to priests who ‘keep’ the ‘service’ (or ‘charge’) of the tabernacle (see Num 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chr 23:32; Ezek 44:14).
So, when assessing Adam’s role within the wider context of the canon, “his task included more than mere spadework in the dirt of a garden.” That is, his responsibilities in the garden of Eden are cast in a priestly light. When the law is given and the priesthood is established in Israel, then, it is easy to see how “Adam should be regarded as an archetypal Levite.” Therefore, Adam’s dominion over the land presents him as a type of priest-king, a concept used later to describe God’s people as a kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6; Deut 7:6; 1 Pet 2:5-9; Rev 1:6; 5:10). And so, against this backdrop and throughout the narrative, humanity—and specifically Adam—“is functioning as a type of priest-king, mediating God to the world and the world to God.” As a result, Adam is to bring the presence God to the rest of creation.

Finally, Adam and Eve were commanded to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:28). Though Adam and Eve uniquely stand as the forerunners to the rest of humanity, it is significant that they cannot fulfill the creation mandate alone. The expansion of Adam’s geographical dominion is connected to the proliferation of his offspring. Adam and Eve’s cosmological task will be carried on and fulfilled through their descendants. As Beale writes, “Because Adam and Eve were to subdue and rule ‘over all the earth,’ it is plausible to suggest that they were to extend the geographical

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74 Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 69.


77 Lister, “The Lord Your God is in Your Midst,” 84.

78 Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 62.

79 Lister, “The Lord Your God is in Your Midst,” 84.
boundaries of the garden until Eden covered the whole earth.” Through time, then, the whole earth would become a garden-city filled with image-bearing priest-kings, and the earth would be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

**Creation and the Place of the King(dom)**

The third facet of the kingdom triptych is God’s place. As Dempster writes, “Genesis establishes a domain over which humans are to realize their humanity.” The creation of humanity in the beginning is closely bound up with the relationship between Adam and the land. Merrill notes,

> Land is essential to any meaningful definition of dominion and nationhood. The very creation of the heavens and the earth, in fact, was to provide a locus in which the reigning purposes of God for mankind would be carried out. The Garden of Eden then became the microcosmic expression of kingdom territory.”

Though the idea of kingdom primarily emphasizes God’s rule or reign, God’s rule in history includes geographical boundaries. That is, God’s rule is expressed through the exercise of dominion over and in creation, in which his vice-regents participate. Dempster comments, “The earth is created for human dominion and rule, which reflects the divine rule. For human beings to function as the image of God they need a territory, a domain to rule over.” This domain is Eden.

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81 Dempster, * Dominion and Dynasty*, 48.

82 One way this close connection with the land is seen is in the word play between ‘man’ and ‘ground,’ ʿādām and ʿādāmā. See Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 59.


84 Ibid., 62.
The place of the prime habitat for the first human couple is a garden *planted* by the Lord God.⁸⁵ Within this sacred space Adam and Eve are to be fruitful and multiply, subdue and have dominion over the earth, and enjoy God’s bountiful blessing (Gen 1:28-30). This serves as the ideal place for humanity to dwell with and under their Lord God as his vice-regents over creation. It is here in the garden where the themes kingdom and place are closely intertwined. Dempster writes,

> The earth is created for human dominion and rule, which reflects the divine rule. For human beings to function as the image of God they need a territory, a domain to rule over. And to have the land without human beings is also pointless, for the kingdom needs a king, the dominion a dynasty.⁸⁶

This sacred space is the archetypal place where God dwelled with his people and, through the proliferation of priest-kings, God’s glorious presence and rule would expand across the earth.

In Genesis 2, the geographical aspect of creation is limited to a garden in Eden (Gen 2:8). The importance of Eden does not rest primarily on it being the dwelling place of man, but on it being the place where God dwelt on earth in a unique way and where he had fellowship with his image-bearers.⁸⁷ It is, as Ezekiel says, the garden of God (Ezek 28:13; cf. Isa 51:3). Gordon Wenham writes,

> The garden of Eden is not viewed by the author of Genesis simply as a piece of Mesopotamian farmland, but as an archetypal sanctuary that is a place where God dwells and where man should worship him. Many of the features of the garden may

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⁸⁵Dempster notes that the term “plant” is a rich theological term used to describe something that God produces to give life to and to nourish its surroundings. The garden overflows with life and bountiful provision that provided life and nourishment to the earth surrounding it. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 62.

⁸⁶Ibid., 62.

also be found in later sanctuaries particularly the tabernacle or Jerusalem temple. These parallels suggest that the garden itself is understood as a sort of sanctuary.\(^88\)

Likewise, Meredith Kline comments,

Man’s homesite was hallowed ground. The garden of Eden was not only the original land flowing with milk and honey, it was the original holy land. Paradise was a sanctuary, a temple-garden. Agreeably, Ezekiel calls it “the garden of God” (28:13; 31:8ff.) and Isaiah, “the garden of the Lord” (51:3).\(^89\)

Eden is the inaugural place where God dwells with his people. To put it another way, the Garden of Eden should be considered as the archetypal tabernacle/temple/sanctuary, a temple-garden, where God dwells with man.\(^90\) There are multiple textual and theological reasons for this assertion.\(^91\)

First, there is a lexical link that connects God’s presence with the beginning of creation and the tabernacle/temple later in the history of Israel. The same Hebrew verbal form used for God’s walking in the garden (Gen 3:8), נָחַל (nachal), is the same form used to describe God’s presence in the tabernacle (Lev 26:12; 2 Sam 7:6-7).\(^92\) In the beginning pages of Scripture Adam walked and talked with God (Gen 2:16-17, 18; 3:1, 3, 13).

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\(^{90}\)Lioy, Axis of Glory, 5-6; Waltke, Genesis, 85; Fesko, Last Things First, 57-75; John H. Walton, The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 79-85.


\(^{92}\)Beale also lists Deut 23:14 [15], but this text is not as clear as in its reference to the tabernacle. Beale, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation,” 7.
8). God was present with them and they enjoyed unique fellowship with one another with no sinful hindrance of any kind. In a similar way, the tabernacle/temple that would later become central in the life and land of Israel was the special place of God’s presence (1 Kgs 6:12-13). However, the destructive effects of sin greatly limited the access to God’s presence, and then only with specific conditions. Nevertheless, the temple represented God’s presence with his people.

Second, God put Adam in the garden of Eden “to work it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). The two Hebrew words for “work and keep” (דָּבֶר and רָמַן) are usually translated “serve and guard.” When these two words appear together later in the OT, in every case they carry the same meaning and either refer to the Israelite’s serving and keeping God’s Word or, more often, to priests who serve God and guard the temple from unholy things/people entering it (Num 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chr 23:32; Ezek 44:14). Thus, there is a parallel between the role of Adam in the beginning and the role of the priests in the temple. In other words, Adam is cast as a priest who mediates God’s presence to the world. Adam failed, however, in his priestly role both by not serving, trusting, and obeying God and by not guarding his God-given domain from the devastating effects of sin. As a result, the Lord God “sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen 3:23-24). This role of the cherubim would be recapitulated later in the

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94 Waltke, Genesis, 87.
tabernacle (Exod 25:18-22) and Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 8:6-7). These cherubim likely served to remind the people of guarding the temple from unclean things, something which Adam failed to do (cf. Ezek 28:13-16).

Third, the interior atmosphere of the temple was a visible reminder of a garden-like space. In 1 Kings 6-7, Israel’s temple is described with garden-like and botanical imagery. The wood from floor to ceiling would give it a garden-like feel (1 Kgs 6:15-16). Furthermore, they were to be carved with designs in the form of gourds and open flowers (1 Kgs 6:18), pomegranates (1 Kgs 7:18-20), and lilies (1 Kgs 7:22). Ten lampstands were configured in the shape of trees with blossoms (1 Kgs 7:49). The inner-sanctuary was overlaid with pure gold, which was present in the garden (Gen 2:11-12; Exod 25:7, 11, 17, 31). Likewise, the eschatological temple is described in Isaiah with imagery reminiscent of Eden and the temple in the land of Israel (Isa 60:13, 21). Hence, from Eden to the land of Israel to the eschatological temple, images of a plush and bountiful space are given to describe the place where God dwells with his people.

Fourth, the entrance and location of Eden, the temple, and the eschatological temple/dwelling place of God bear remarkable similarities. Eden and the later sanctuaries faced and were entered from the east (Gen 3:24; Exod 25:18-22; 26:31; 36:35; 1 Kgs 6:23-29; 2 Chr 3:14; Ezek 47:1). Furthermore, Scripture describes Eden as being situated on a mountain (Ezek 28:13-16). Israel’s temple was on Mt. Zion (Exod 15:17), and the eschatological temple is to be located on a mountain (Ezek 20:2; 43:12; Rev 21:10).

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95 Alexander comments, “There are about one hundred references to gold and seven to onyx in the Exodus account of the building of the tabernacle. Various precious stones are also associated with Eden in Ezek. 28:13.” Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem, 23n22.
Finally, the river flowing from Eden in Gen 2:10 is similar to the post-exilic temple (Ezek 47:1-12) and eschatological temple (Rev 21:1-2). Indeed Ezekiel clearly describes the eschatological Mount Zion in ways reminiscent of Eden. Just as Adam was satisfied with every good thing God created, so in the latter days God’s people will be abundantly satisfied with his bountiful provision.

In addition to a garden-sanctuary, the paradigmatic place where God first dwelled with man was nothing short of paradise. Commenting on Genesis 2:8, Wenham writes, “‘garden’ is an enclosed area for cultivation (cf. Gen 2:5, 15): perhaps we should picture a park surrounded by a hedge (cf. Gen 3:23). This seems to be the understanding of the early versions which translate ֵ as ‘paradise,’ a Persian loan word, originally meaning a royal park.”

These idyllic conditions are further supported in connection with Eden. Waltke writes, “The likely etymology of the word is a Hebrew term meaning pleasure, delight, or lush fecundity.” Although etymology may not always provide sure footing when it comes to the meaning of words, the idea of pleasure and delight is present when Eden is associated with its homonym (2 Sam 1:24; Jer 51:34; Ps 36:9). Furthermore, later when Eden is mentioned in Scripture it is described as a fertile area, a lush oasis with vibrant life bursting from it (Isa 51:3; Ezek 31:8-9, 16, 18; 36:35), a desirable piece of real estate in the arid region. “This lush fecundity,” says

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96Beale, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation,” 8-9. Also see Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem, 23.

97Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 61.

98Waltke, Genesis, 85.

Wenham, “was a sign of God’s presence in and blessing on Eden.”\textsuperscript{100} When the evidence is cumulatively considered, the Garden of Eden is presented as the place in which God’s presence is experienced and enjoyed.

Moreover, it seems likely that over time God’s garden-sanctuary would grow in structure. Through the propagation of Adam’s offspring, the boundaries of the garden would extend to fill the whole earth. Kline writes, “The goal of his kingdom commission was not some minimal, local life support system. It was rather maximal, global mastery.”\textsuperscript{101} Alexander suggests that this global mastery would include constructing structures to accommodate population growth. That is, when Eden is understood in the light of Ancient Near Eastern practices,\textsuperscript{102}

An increasing population would create a city around the temple. Throughout time, the whole earth would become a holy garden-city. While Genesis 2 merely introduces the start of this process, the long-term outcome is the establishment of an arboreal temple-city where God and humanity coexist in perfect harmony.\textsuperscript{103}

It appears, then, that had sin not entered creation with its devastating effects on humanity and the world, the teleological objectives of Eden would look similar to the picture of the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21-22.

\textsuperscript{100}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{101}Kline, \textit{Kingdom Prologue}, 70.

\textsuperscript{102}For ancient Near Eastern parallels to the cosmos as a city and temple, see Jeffrey J. Niehaus, \textit{Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology} (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 83-137.

\textsuperscript{103}Alexander, \textit{From Eden to the New Jerusalem}, 25-26. Similarly, Kline states, “Human culture would take city form. This was inevitable because the city is nothing but the synthesis of the several elements already present in the cultural program that man was directed to carry out. The couple in the garden was to multiply, so providing the citizens of the city. Their cultivation of the earth’s resources as they extended their control over their territorial environment through the fabrication of sheltering structures would produce the physical architecture of the city. . . . The cultural mandate given at creation was thus a mandate to build the city and it would be through the blessing of God on man’s faithfulness in the covenanted task that the construction of the city would be completed.” Kline, \textit{Kingdom Prologue}, 163.
Conclusion

The worldwide fulfillment of the Lord’s teleological design—God’s people in his place under his rule—was to emanate from the paradisiacal garden-sanctuary in Eden. God’s plan was not limited to the small geographical area of Eden, for humanity was commissioned to fill the earth with their progeny. As Alexander writes, “The opening chapters of Genesis enable us to reconstruct God’s blueprint for the earth. God intends that the world should become his dwelling place.”

It is here—in the beginning—where the stage is set for Eden to universally expand into the cosmological reality that it was divinely designed to be.

The End of the Beginning

The blissful scene at the end of Genesis 2 is followed by the all-too-familiar tragic events of Genesis 3. Rather than fulfill his role as God’s servant priest-king, fill the earth with his descendant priest-kings, and expand the garden-temple of Eden to the

104 Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem, 26.

105 The theological doctrine of “the Fall” has fallen on hard times in critical scholarship. Brevard Childs writes, “Some have seen the story as a primitive account of the effects of the growth of human civilization (Wellhausen). Others have interpreted the story as a type of parabolic explanation of human existence as one of limitation and restriction (Westermann). Finally, these chapters have been interpreted philosophically as an ontological description of frailty and finitude which is constitutive of human existence (Tillich).” Brevard S. Childs, Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 571. Despite these objections, he says, the traditional terminology of the “Fall” should continue to be used because “both in form and function chapter 3 is at pains to stress the full anthropological and cosmological effects of the disobedience. The aetiological form of the curses makes clear that the events were not simply regarded as entertaining stories from the past, but rather offered a theological interpretation of man’s miserable condition, both in the world and before God. Moreover, chapters 2-3 are carefully linked literarily to the larger primeval history of Genesis (1-11), and indeed provide the key for their interpretation.” Ibid. Scholars such as James Barr, to whom is owed much gratitude for his work in sound lexical semantics, also denies the description of primeval disobedience because the term ‘sin,’ or other related terms, are not found anywhere in the story (James Barr, The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 6). This denial is, as John Collins says, an astonishing claim because he should know “that the existence of the referent or concept is not limited to the presence of certain vocabulary. Indeed, God’s question in Genesis 3:11 . . . could hardly be improved upon as a description of ‘disobedience.’” Collins, Genesis 1-4, 155.
ends of the earth, Adam rebelled against his Lord and forfeited his teleological commission. Instead of ruling creation as God’s vice-regent, “Genesis 3 presents us with man as the image snatching at deity.”

Merrill writes, “The serpent (i.e., Satan) usurped the role of the man—who after all named him!—and man, having succumbed, usurped the role of God.” This rebellion was nothing less than, in the words of Dempster, a “‘cosmic tragedy’ . . . The flagrant rebellion against the divine word by the pinnacle of creation, which has just been invested with the divine rule, is a heinous crime against the cosmos and its Creator.” It appears intentionally ironic that Adam, who was originally commissioned to guard (אָדָן) Eden (Gen 2:15), was not only expelled from the garden but also relieved of his guard, for now at the east of the garden of Eden God “placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard (םַמְלָאכִים) the way to the tree of life” (Gen 3:24). Even more, as the storyline moves forward it becomes clear that “the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden is the archetype of all subsequent exile.”

Paradise gained was now paradise lost.

Furthermore, the place God designed for his people to live and work under his rule now became a curse rather than blessing. The sacred realm of Eden had become a defiled place. Instead of the land yielding abundant blessing it would yield hardship and pain. Instead of subduing the land man would be subdued by it. Instead of harmonious

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106 Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning*, 180. In contrast, Christ the perfect image of God, the true obedient Son, refused to grasp after divine status (Phil 2:5-11).


108 Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 66.

relationships between man and nature and man and woman, conflict would now rule (Gen 3:17-19). As a result, the creation project was compromised and the global end for mankind to live in God’s place under his rule would now have to await its fulfillment by other means.

Against this background, the rest of the biblical storyline is interested in how God’s kingdom will be restored and extended throughout the entire earth.\footnote{Alexander, \textit{From Eden to the New Jerusalem}, 79.} Will the kingdom of the world ever become again the kingdom of the Lord? Will he ever reign again over his people in his place? The end of the story presents a glorious picture of the restored rule of the sovereign king of the universe who sits on his throne while the enemy has been subdued and dethroned. But for now, the eschatological outcome would depend on a theological response.

\textbf{The Promise of a New Beginning}

But amid the judgment and announcement of curses, God folds mercy into the middle.\footnote{James M. Hamilton, Jr., \textit{God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology} (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 76.} Literally, there is a “seed of hope for humanity”\footnote{Dempster, \textit{Dominion and Dynasty}, 68.} found in the promise of the serpent’s destruction by the “seed”\footnote{Debate centers around whether the text speaks of a specific offspring (singular) or offspring in general (collective) as well as who this offspring is. Collins argues that the offspring should be taken as singular, for “in Biblical Hebrew the key signal for a singular or collective offspring is the grammatical number of pronouns that refer to the word: if the author had a specific offspring in view he would have used singular pronouns, and if he meant posterity in general, he would have used plural pronouns. In this text we have two singular pronouns that refer to the woman’s offspring, “he shall bruise . . . bruise his heel.” Thus we are entitled to join the Septuagint in seeing an individual as the referent here.” Collins, \textit{Genesis 1-4}, 156. See also Jack Collins, “A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman’s Seed Singular or Plural?” \textit{TynBul} 48, no. 1 (1997): 139-48; T. Desmond Alexander, “Further Observations on the Term ‘Seed’ in Genesis,” \textit{TynBul} 48, no. 2 (1997): 363-67; and James M. Hamilton, “The Skull-Crushing Seed of
different judgments will befall the man, woman, and serpent, but only the serpent will be
handed a fatal blow. Though the same word is used to describe the combatants’ parallel
action (הֹלֵךְ), “the location of the blow distinguishes the severity and success of the
attack.” The serpent will deliver a strike to the heel, but the offspring of the woman
will deliver a crushing blow to the head.

The subsequent story in Genesis, and the rest of Scripture, is concerned with
resolving this genealogical conflict between the offspring of the woman and the
serpent. Dempster writes,

This battle will determine who will have dominion over the created order – the
human or the serpent. The man and the woman have already been told to be fruitful
and multiply and to have dominion over the earth. In the immediate context it is
clear now that, though this is not a present reality, it will be the future destiny of
their progeny. Once the contextual scope is widened, not only to the book of
Genesis but to the literary horizon of the canon, there remains no doubt whatsoever
of the importance of this genealogical hope for the human race. The seed of the
woman will restore the lost glory. Human – and therefore divine – dominion will be
established over the world. The realization of the kingdom of God is linked to the
future of the human race.


114 This promise has often been referred to as the protoevangelium, or the first gospel
proclamation. It is a gracious, eschatological promise that God will act for the benefit of mankind by finally
defeating the deceitful serpent. For a helpful and concise discussion on why Gen 3:15 should be understood
as a protoevangelium, see Collins, Genesis 1-4, 155-59.

115 Mathews, Genesis 1-11:26, 245. The imperfect verb translated as “bruise,” Wenham
explains, is iterative. “It implies repeated attacks by both sides to injure the other. It declares lifelong
mutual hostility between mankind and the serpent race.” Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 80. This promise,
therefore, is eschatologically-charged in that it anticipates a long struggle between good and evil, over
which mankind will ultimately triumph.

116 Thomas Schreiner comments, “We can fairly say that the OT is animated with an
eschatological hope. Genesis 3:15 forecasts a day when the seed of the woman will triumph over the seed
of the serpent. . . . The future character of the promise is evident, for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not
have a multitude of children, nor did they possess the land of promise, and worldwide blessing was far
from being realized.” Thomas R. Schreiner, New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ (Grand

117 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 69.
The subsequent history of redemption will be an unfolding of the contents of this conflict and promise. From this point, all of OT revelation looks forward, points forward, and eagerly awaits the promised redeemer.  

### A New Beginning: Reestablishing the Kingdom through Covenant

From a canonical perspective, the eschatological promises completed at the end of history commence in the Garden of Eden. The earth is designed to serve a more magnificent purpose than the mere habitation of his creatures. It was designed to be a divine residence, for here God is present with his people. It is his throne and footstool (Isa 66:1), his cosmic structure “built as a habitation for the Creator himself,” and his “residence-garment” (Ps 104). Furthermore, creation was the place where Adam and Eve enjoyed the unmediated presence of their Lord. Eden, the inaugural microcosm of creation, was the place where God ruled and dwelled with his people. That is, Eden is the prototypical kingdom.

However, God’s plan was interrupted by the disobedience of mankind and, as a result, sin and death entered the world and mankind was separated from God. But the beginning did not end, for God made an eschatological promise that would, in time, undo

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121 Beale points out that just as Israel’s temple was the place where God’s presence was experienced, so also Eden was the place where Adam walked and talked with God. The same Hebrew verbal form (הָלַךְ) (hithpael) used for God’s ‘walking’ in the Garden (Gen 3:8), also describes God’s presence with his people, especially in the tabernacle/temple (Lev 26:11-12; Deut 23:14; 2 Sam 7:6-7). Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66.
the effects of sin. As Beale understands it, “The goal of all redemptive history is to return to the primal condition of creation from which humankind fell and then go beyond it to a heightened state, which the first creation did not reach.”\textsuperscript{122} Hence, the drama that unfolds focuses on how the kingdom—that is, God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule—will be reestablished.\textsuperscript{123}

One of the most important ways God reestablishes his kingdom is through the biblical covenants, for they form the backbone of Scripture and are crucial for understanding its overarching story, from creation to new creation.\textsuperscript{124} That is, covenant charts a course for the unfolding kingdom drama.\textsuperscript{125} Beale writes,

\textit{Covenant} is a penultimate means to accomplishing the new creation, whether one has in mind the purported covenant of creation made with Adam, or the covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and then the new covenant promised in Jeremiah and inaugurated in the New Testament.\textsuperscript{126}

Furthermore, the covenants serve as a unifying theme through which God establishes and maintains relationships with his people.\textsuperscript{127} Scott Hafemann points out,

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\textsuperscript{123}As Alexander explains, “The first earth is designed to be a divine residence, for here God intends to coexist with his people. However, the divine plan for this first earth is soon disrupted when the human couple, due to their disobedience, are driven from God’s presence. The complex story that follows centres on how the earth can once more become a dwelling place shared by God and humanity.” Alexander, \textit{From Eden to the New Jerusalem}, 14.

\textsuperscript{124}I am grateful to Peter Gentry for the biblical-theological category of “kingdom through covenant.” For a more exhaustive treatment than this chapter offers, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants} (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012); cf. Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 16-42. For a similar connection between kingdom and covenant, see Dumbrell, \textit{Covenant and Creation}, 206, and Goldsworthy, \textit{Gospel and Kingdom}, 51-57.

\textsuperscript{125}Scott R. Swain, \textit{Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation} (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 20.


\textsuperscript{127}Gentry argues that “covenants are key to the inner-literary structure of the Bible as a book,
God’s relationship with the world and his people is not a theoretical abstraction, nor is it fundamentally a subjective experience. Rather, with salvation history as its framework, this relationship is expressed in and defined by the interrelated covenants that exist throughout the history of redemption. This leads to the apostle Paul being able to refer to the various covenants throughout Israel’s history (cf. Rom 9:4; Eph 2:12), as well as to references to the ‘old’ or ‘new’ covenant as the two epochs of salvation history.\textsuperscript{128}

For this reason, every covenant in some measure involves and advances the promise of God’s rule, people, and place.\textsuperscript{129} Thus, it is crucial to see how the covenants unfold and relate to one another.\textsuperscript{130}

\textbf{Covenant}

Defining the term “covenant” is debated. A covenant involves international treaties, clan/tribal alliances, personal agreements, loyalty agreements, marriage, and legal contracts,\textsuperscript{131} and has been defined in such terms as “a bond in blood, sovereignly


\textsuperscript{129}In this section, the focus will be primarily limited to the existence and advancement of God’s rule and relationship with this people as they progress through the covenants across the canon. Chapters 3 and 4, then, will focus on the land promise and the place of God’s people after Eden.

\textsuperscript{130}There has been and continues to be much debate over how the covenants should be defined, described, and understood both as a system and in relationships to each other. For example, Jeffrey Niehaus says, “It is time to abandon the notion of a ‘theologically constructed covenant’ as inappropriate to biblical studies, and to replace it with a model that is both true to the genre of covenant, and more powerfully descriptive of God’s actual covenant making procedure throughout history.” Jeffrey J. Niehaus, “An Argument Against Theologically Constructed Covenants,” \textit{JETS} 50, no. 2 (June 2007): 273.

\textsuperscript{131}Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 16.
administered;”132 a “solemn commitment, guaranteeing promises or obligations undertaken by one or both parties, sealed with an oath.”133 For heuristic purposes, covenant will be defined as “an enduring agreement which defines a relationship between two parties involving a solemn, binding obligation(s) specified on the part of at least one of the parties toward the other, made by oath under threat of divine curse, and ratified by a visual ritual.”134 Of most importance is the covenant(s) between God and man. Therefore, covenant is crucial for defining the Creator-creature relationship.

Scripture presents numerous covenants at crucial times in salvation history, all of which serve to reverse the curses of Eden and bring about “the escalated reestablishment”135 of the universal expansion of God’s kingdom. Each covenant serves, then, as a (re)new(ed) beginning, a divinely orchestrated means by which the ordained end—a consummated kingdom—will come about.


133 Williamson, Sealed with an Oath, 43.


135 Lister, “The Lord Your God is in Your Midst,” 98.
The Kingdom and the Covenant
at Creation

When we turn to Genesis 1-2, it is not improper to see it in a covenantal context, though caution should be taken. First, the creation account is framed within a covenantal pattern or framework. That is, there is a title/preamble (1:1), historical prologue (1:2-29), stipulations (1:28; 2:16-17a), witnesses (1:31; 2:1), and blessings/curses (1:28; 2:3, 17). Second, although the term for “covenant” (חָרֵם) is not contextually found, the essential relational elements of a covenant are present. Hafemann writes, “Whether we call the relationship between God and Adam and Eve at creation a ‘covenant’ relationship or not, since the specific word ‘covenant’ is not used in Genesis 1-3, the point to be made is that humanity did not initiate this relationship.” God is clearly committed to his image-bearers, even after they disobey him. Third, the presence of a covenantal relationship can be shown from later texts. In supporting a covenant with creation, William Dumbrell argues that the way in which the Noahic covenant is introduced in Genesis 6 shows that a previous covenant with Adam was established. In

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136 There has been much debate over whether a covenant exists between God and Adam/creation. A large focus of the debate centers on the use of the word “covenant” (חָרֵם), since it is not explicitly used in Gen 1-2 and does not appear until Gen 6. It should be noted, however, that concepts, not merely words, should be looked for in tracing themes through the canon of Scripture. In the past, the study of the Bible’s theology has sometimes been reduced to word studies, and in so doing important concepts have been overlooked and missed. The “word study” method of studying the Bible’s theology has been criticized in recent days. Rosner writes, “Word studies alone are a shaky foundation upon which to base theology. . . . Sometimes a biblical author will pursue the same concept as another author but with his own vocabulary. Concepts rather than words are a surer footing on which to base thematic study such as that involved in biblical-theological synthesis. In most cases the concept is in fact far bigger than the words normally used to refer to it, even when the words in question appear frequently.” Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” 6.


four places God speaks of confirming (יהוה ישימוע) a covenant with Noah (Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17), not cutting a covenant (יהוה יכרוך). Therefore, the covenant with Noah was not initiating something new, but rather confirming for Noah and his descendants God’s prior commitment to humanity previously initiated at creation.

However, the absence of the term “covenant” in Genesis 1-2 has caused some to doubt the existence of a covenant relationship. This objection is unsuccessful once a sound lexical and biblical-theological method is employed. To begin with, it is incorrect to conclude that a covenant cannot be present simply because the term is not explicitly used. For example, in 2 Samuel 7 God makes a promise of an everlasting dynasty, but by the principle of this objection it cannot technically be considered a covenant because the term does not contextually appear. Yet, when Psalm 89 recounts this promise, it repeatedly uses the term covenant (Ps 89:2, 28, 34, 39). Second, the absence of the term is possibly due to the reality that this time is prior to the entrance of and fall into sin.

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142 Interestingly, while acknowledging the absence of the term “covenant” in 2 Sam 7, which is the reason why he rejects a covenant in Gen 1-2, Williamson still argues for a covenant based on the presence of covenantal concepts and terminology (e.g., loyalty, a father-son relationship, protection from enemies, promise of curse). Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 120-21. Unfortunately, Williamson fails to see a covenantal relationship in Gen 1-2 despite the presence of the same concepts.

In other words, it was not necessary at this point in God’s relationship with Adam and Eve to demonstrate his commitment to them, for by virtue of his unhindered presence, relationship with, and provision for them as their Lord in Eden, his commitment to them was clearly evident. Third, it is important to note that this covenantal context is an original and unique situation that involved, especially in light of the rest of Scripture, Adam in a representative role on behalf of the human race. Henri Blocher writes, “The relationship of humankind with God is first determined by the Eden Charter, the creational covenant, made ‘in Adam.’” Moreover, the person and work of Adam establish categories for the person and work of the last Adam, Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15). The entrances of Adam and Christ at unique and pivotal points in creation and redemptive history, then, have massive effects on them and their posterity. Hence, this relationship is foundational to all other relationships that follow. Finally, the Noahic covenant clearly alludes to creation themes that were present in Genesis 1-3. For example, In Genesis 8-9:17 there is a “re-creation” of the earth, birds, animals, and creeping things, as well as re-establishment of the creation mandate and dominion of man over the land that was originally given to Adam and Eve. In other words, Noah now carries on the role of Adam and thus fulfills God’s purposes in the world. Stephen Dempster writes,

The covenant with creation after the flood uses language extremely similar to that of Gen 1-2, even though the word ‘covenant’ does not occur there. The ‘new’ covenant with creation is not quite like the old, as there are significant flaws in the post-flood world. It is clearly a post-fallen world, which is graciously preserved from further judgment in spite of human sin.

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145 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 73n34.
Therefore, given the context of Genesis 1-3 and the covenantal clues therein, seeing a covenantal relationship with Adam/creation is warranted from the beginning.

However, as noted above, this relationship was deeply marred as a result of the Fall, which plunged the entire human race into sin. But God’s commitment to humanity after the Fall shows that he is not done with his anthropological and cosmological purpose. He does not completely eradicate the human race and begin anew. Rather, he

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146 Two additional passages help to support a covenant at creation. Jer 33:25-26 says, “Thus says the Lord: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them” (cf. Jer 33:20). The Lord’s forward-looking eternal covenant with David is compared to the past covenant with day and night, a reference most likely to creation. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 147. Similarly, Hos 6:7 likely points to a covenant with creation. “But like Adam [Israel and Judah] transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me.” Collins comments, “Hosea describes the northern kingdom of his own day, thus tracing their unfaithfulness back to their first father.” Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 113; cf. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 147.

147 Similarly, Jeffrey Niehaus adduces multiple lines of evidence in support of an Adamic covenant: (1) the apparent conformity of narrative elements in Gen. 1:1-2:3 to the pattern of a second millennium BC international treaty; (2) the parallelism between Gen. 1:28 and Gen. 9:1-3; (3) by presenting God as the Creator, Gen. 1:1 also implies that he is Suzerain over all, since creator gods in the ancient Near East were understood to be universal suzerains, from whom all other heavenly and earthly authority derived; (4) the Sabbath ordinance and its root in the creation account (Exod 20:11) and the concomitant idea that Israel is a new creation by covenant (we note that the Sabbath ordinance is also rooted in Israel's deliverance from Egypt, parallel to the Exodus creation roots, in the renewal covenant, Deut 5:15); (5) the covenantal terminology echoing Gen. 1 in Jer. 33:20, 25, 31:35-36; (6) there seems to be a parallelism between the first Adam (as covenant mediator) and the Second Adam (as covenant mediator); 7) the parallelism of the original heaven and earth (Gen 1:1) and the new heaven and earth (2 Pet 3:3, Rev 21:1), the latter being a work and a result of the new covenant mediated by the Second Adam; and lastly, 8) Hos 6:7, which stands as evidence in spite of—and even because of—its ambiguity, and in spite of its many detractors. From these points he concludes that “it should be clear that Gen 1:1-2:3 (and 2:17) and other data (e.g., Ps 47:2, Mal 1:14) display the following facts about God: he is the Creator and Great King over all in heaven and earth; he has provided good things in abundance for those he created; he made the man and woman royalty ("subdue," "rule over") and gave them commands; he blessed them; and he pronounced a curse on them should they disobey his commands. These facts are the essence of covenant: a Great King in authority over lesser rulers, with a historical background of doing good to them, with commands and with blessings, but also a curse in case of disobedience. These facts about the Genesis creation material are the stuff of covenant, and primordially so. Some may not want to say that they constitute a covenant, but the creation data does tell us just what, later in history, would form the constituent elements of a suzerain-vassal treaty in the ancient Near East, and of a divine-human covenant in the Bible. Such things are expressions of God's nature, as that nature comes through to us in the creation data. We know the workman by his work (cf. Rom 1:19-20). God, then, from the beginning showed a nature that could appropriately be called covenantal, and he entered into relationships that could appropriately be called the same.” Jeffrey J. Niehaus, “Covenant: An Idea in the Mind of God,” *JETS* 52, no. 2 (2009): 231-33.
calls out one faithful man to continue the line of humanity and thus fulfill God’s redemptive purposes on the earth. It is precisely out of this human race that the last Adam, when the fullness of time had come, took upon himself humanity in order to bring redemption and deliver his people to a new place, to the kingdom of the beloved Son of God (Col 1:12-13). All subsequent covenants flow from Eden, and out of fallen humanity God will make a new people with whom he will dwell forever (Rev 21-22:5).

After the Fall, sin increases with each generation. One cannot read Genesis 4-5 without an awful sense of God’s judgment. Bartholomew writes that “the effects of sin gather momentum until they become a virtual tsunami in Genesis 6:5.” Indeed, death reigned. An increasing existential awareness of sin and divine judgment escalates from the Fall to the time when “the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart” (Gen 6:5-6). So the Lord judged mankind in the land in which he was created to know and serve God. But one man found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Thus, in the middle of universal judgment is the hope of a new beginning.

The Kingdom through the Noahic Covenant

The initial sign in the biblical storyline of God reversing the curse is the entrance of Noah. The context is saturated with God’s divine promises in the midst of judgment against human rebellion and sin. The initial sin in the garden spread into global rebellion against God. In this context, however, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

148Bartholomew, Where Mortals Dwell, 32.
(Gen 6:8) and God established a covenant (יִרְשָׁבָה) with him (Gen 6:18; 9:9-17).\(^{149}\) Noah is the blameless one who will restore God’s creation and thus fulfill humanity’s role on the earth. Williamson writes, “The climax of the flood narrative is best understood in terms of a ‘recreation’ covenant--a restoration of the divine order and God’s visible kingship that had been established at creation.”\(^{150}\) God promises that the divine intention of creation will not be lost. He solemnly promises that humanity’s creational mandate (Gen 9:1-7; cf. 1:26-30) will never again be interrupted by a suspension of the natural order. The earth will be inhabited with life, and human beings will know the Lord in an intimate way. In other words, there will come a “new creation.”\(^{151}\) This covenant is described as “everlasting,” a term that, in context, appears to signify at least as long as the earth remains (Gen 8:22). And, the promises given to Noah and his offspring point back to God’s prior promise of a ‘seed’ who would come and reverse the effects of sin and the Fall.

The Noahic covenant “reaffirms God’s original creational intent, which the flood had placed in abeyance and which humanity’s inherent sinfulness would otherwise continue to place in jeopardy.”\(^{152}\) God is still committed to his fallen creation, especially

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\(^{149}\) In this context the term “covenant” (יִרְשָׁבָה) is met for the first time.

\(^{150}\) Williamson, Sealed with an Oath, 60-61.

\(^{151}\) Dempster rightly argues that the repeated phrases, “These are the generations of” serve as headings in the flow of Genesis which signal to the reader that God is doing something new (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2). They appear at key places within the storyline of Genesis and indicate that the Covenant Lord is not finished with his creation. Rather, as God’s image-bearers he is committed to work out his new/renewed redemptive purposes for his glory. Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 55. For further study on the role of the “toledot” formulas in Genesis and the Pentateuch, see Matthew A. Thomas, These Are the Generations: Identity, Covenant, and the ‘Toledot’ Formula (New York: T&T Clark, 2011).

to those who are created in his image. It is crucial to see this covenant in light of the overall (post-fall) storyline of Scripture. “Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). Adam enjoyed God and his provision in the land but forfeited it. Nevertheless, God will restore through Noah what was lost by Adam. This new beginning demonstrates advancement in God’s redemptive purposes. Noah, like Adam, functions as God’s representative on earth who is commissioned to rule the earth, be fruitful and multiply, and bring God’s blessing to the world. “The biblical story, then, moves toward a new age and a new humanity.”

But just as Adam failed, so also does Noah (Gen 9:18-29). Sin and death continue to reign, and once again God judges the nations in the Tower of Babel (Gen 11). Yet, God keeps his promise by calling out another man to fulfill his purposes.

The Kingdom through the Abrahamic Covenant

The introduction of Abram into the story highlights God’s plan to begin anew. To highlight this new beginning, Dempster observes, “Just as Adam to Noah was ten generations, so is Noah to Abraham. After the arrival of Abram on the scene, a new genealogical formula begins a narrative devoted to this man named Abram, who is described as such an inauspicious bearer of promise.”

Against the miserable background of the Table of Nations and the debacle of Babel, the entrance of Abraham is

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153 Anderson, From Creation to New Creation, 161.

154 Strom points out this recurring pattern of sin, judgment, and grace in Gen 1-11. Strom, The Symphony of Scripture, 24-26.

155 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 75.

God’s dealings with Abraham must be set in the overall context of Genesis 1-11, especially as they point back to the representative roles of Adam and Noah. That is, Abraham and his family are understood as the Creator’s means of dealing with the sin of Adam,\footnote{N. T. Wright, \textit{The New Testament and the People of God} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 262; Arie C. Leder, \textit{Waiting for the Land: The Story Line of the Pentateuch} (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010), 24.} and Noah and his family are understood as the means of bringing about a new creation. Likewise, just as God in Genesis 1 brings into existence things that are not, so also God in Genesis 12 speaks to Abraham and brings into existence a new world order out of the chaos of Babel.\footnote{Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 225; Michael D. Williams, \textit{Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption} (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005), 101.}

Blaising and Bock write,

Like the Noahic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant stands in contrast to the judgments of God on human sin and presents anew the plan of creation. This can be seen in the way that important elements in the creation of human beings are repeated in the blessing to Abraham: the multiplication of human beings, the provision of a
special dwelling place on earth, and a peaceful relationship between God and humanity.\textsuperscript{161}

Whereas fallen humanity sought to make a ‘name’ for itself with the tower of Babel (Gen 11:4), God now promises to make a great ‘name’ for Abraham (Gen 12:2).\textsuperscript{162}

But unlike the story with Noah, God does not destroy creation with universal judgment. Instead, God allows the nations to exist and then calls out Abram from them.\textsuperscript{163} From this point in the biblical narrative, “Abraham will provide the redemptive center for those who will be reached through him and his descendants.”\textsuperscript{164} The Abrahamic covenant, then, clarifies the way in which God will fulfill for humanity both the blessing promised to Noah for all creation and the promise of a victorious “seed” (cf. Gen 3:15). Through God’s covenental dealings with and through Abraham, Adam’s curse would be removed, dominion would be restored, and universal blessing would come to the nations.\textsuperscript{165} At this major turning point in the story, “The narrative quietly insists that Abraham and his progeny inherit the role of Adam and Eve.”\textsuperscript{166} With Abraham, then, the divine telos for mankind—and indeed all creation—finds a new beginning, and with him God begins a process “whose climax is in the distant future.”\textsuperscript{167}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[163] Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 631.
\item[164] Dumbrell, \textit{The Search for Order}, 33-34.
\item[165] For example, the promises God gave to Abraham are passed down to Isaac and Jacob (e.g., Gen 22:17-18; 26:3-4; 28:13-15).
\end{footnotes}
After the dreadful events which transpired from Genesis 3, Abraham is promised what had been lacking since Eden. To accomplish his teleological purposes, God enters into covenant\textsuperscript{168} with Abraham and promises land,\textsuperscript{169} seed/offspring,\textsuperscript{170} and worldwide blessing.\textsuperscript{171} To begin, God promises Abraham land to reinstate the eschatological objectives of Eden. The significance of this aspect of the promise to Abraham must not be minimized. After the fall, Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden and sin escalates resulting in the judgment of a worldwide flood. “And when Abraham arrives on the historical scene,” says Dempster, “he is promised a commodity that has been in short supply for human beings: a land to call his own.”\textsuperscript{172} This land would be the

\textsuperscript{168} The promises throughout the Abrahamic narrative will be treated together, albeit progressively. However, some scholars argue that Gen 15 and 17 present two different covenants between God and Abraham. For example, writes Williamson, “The suggestion that [chaps. 15 and 17] are simply two stages of the one covenant is seriously undermined by the inexplicable gap of some thirteen years between them, and by the consistent projection of the covenant in Genesis 17 into the future. . . . Both of these anomalies, as well as the significant differences between the two covenant chapters, suggest a more plausible synchronic explanation: these chapters focus on two distinct, but related covenants.” Williamson, \textit{Sealed with an Oath}, 89; idem, \textit{Abraham, Israel and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and Its Covenantal Development in Genesis}, JSOTS 315 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); cf. Alexander, \textit{From Paradise to the Promised Land}, 174-79. But Williamson fails to take into account the twist in the storyline between the two chapters. The thirteen-year gap between Gen 15 and 17 is supplied by chapter 16, the story of the attempt by Abraham and Sarah to achieve the fulfillment of God’s promise through their own (i.e., human) effort. They doubted God and his promise and, therefore, God’s confirmation of the promise in chapter 17 becomes all the more important for the continuation of the story. A better way to understand the flow of these chapters, then, is to see God’s giving of the promise (chap. 12), God’s making of the promise (chap. 15), Abraham’s (and Sarah’s) doubting of the promise (chap. 16), and God’s confirmation of the promise (chap. 17). I am grateful to Peter Gentry for this insight into the Genesis narrative. Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 275-80. For a similar view, see Gordon J. Wenham, \textit{Genesis 16-50}, WBC, vol. 2 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 16; Bruce K. Waltke with Cathi J. Fredricks, \textit{Genesis: A Commentary} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 263; Strom, \textit{The Symphony of Scripture}, 32. For further discussion of this issue as it relates to the promise of land, see chap. 3.


\textsuperscript{171}Gen 12:2; 15:1; 17:7; 18:18; 22:17; cf. 26:3; 28:3, 15; 35:11; 48:3.

\textsuperscript{172}Dempster, \textit{Dominion and Dynasty}, 48.
place of blessing where Abraham could exercise dominion and be fruitful and multiply. That is, this land would, in time, become the new place of God’s people.\textsuperscript{173}

The rest of the book of Genesis, as in the Abraham narrative itself, focuses primarily on the promise relating to Abraham’s “seed.”\textsuperscript{174} This does not, however, lessen the other aspects of the promise. It simply highlights that the promise of “seed” is of foundational importance at this point in the storyline.\textsuperscript{175} This genealogical focus makes sense, for without descendants there is no need for land.\textsuperscript{176} Initially, the promise of offspring is set against the background of Sarah’s inability to have children. As the narrative shows, the barrenness of this situation is fertile soil for God to powerfully work. However, after the Lord convinces Abraham that he will have a son of his own (Gen 15) and, through his son countless descendants, his wife Sarah persuades him to invoke other means by going through his maidservant Hagar (Gen 16:1-4). Despite Abraham’s failure, God is faithful to his promise and as a result the initial steps of the fulfillment of God’s teleological purposes for the world are accomplished. That is, through Abraham (Gen 15:5), Isaac (Gen 26:3-5), and Jacob (Gen 28:13-14), God is fulfilling his genealogical promises.

The last strand of God’s promise is that through Abraham would come worldwide blessing. No longer is the focus exclusively on a national entity stemming from Abraham, but is international in scope. That is, the focus of blessing is transferred to

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\textsuperscript{173}This aspect of the promise to Abraham and its fulfillment(s) will be examined in chap. 3.

\textsuperscript{174}Williamson, \textit{Sealed with an Oath}, 91.

\textsuperscript{175}Alexander says, “Viewing Genesis as a whole, it is apparent that the genealogical structure and concept of ‘seed’ are closely linked in order to highlight the single distinctive family lineage.” Alexander, \textit{From Paradise to Promised Land}, 136-37.
an international community to whom Abraham will mediate blessing.\footnote{Ibid., 91.} This international dimension is “the first allusion to the concept of universalism inherent in Israel’s faith, which would subsequently be developed in the teaching of the prophets.”\footnote{Ibid., 83.} This blessing, however, is contingent upon the nation’s relationship with Abraham.

Genesis 12:3 says that God will bless him who blesses Abraham, and he who dishonors him God will curse, and in Abraham all the families of the earth shall be blessed.\footnote{U. Cassuto, \textit{A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: From Noah to Abraham: Genesis VI 9- XI 32}, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), 2:315.} It is

\footnote{\textit{\textsuperscript{176}}Ibid., 91.} \footnote{\textit{\textsuperscript{177}}Ibid., 83.} \footnote{\textit{\textsuperscript{178}}U. Cassuto, \textit{A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: From Noah to Abraham: Genesis VI 9- XI 32}, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), 2:315.} \footnote{\textit{\textsuperscript{179}}Scholars have noted the disputed Hebrew form of “bless” (תָּבֹא) in Gen 12:3, which permits the passive (“will be blessed”) or reflexive voice (“will bless themselves”). Victor Hamilton states the problem when he writes, “The stem used here is the Niphal, which is primarily reflexive but often passive. The problem is compounded by comparing 12:3 with 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; and 28:14, all of which deal with the nations being blessed or blessing themselves in Abraham (and in his seed). Three of these passages use the Niphal (12:3; 18:18; 28:14); the remaining two (22:18; 26:4) use the Hithpael, the thrust of which is reflexive or reciprocal. Because the Hithpael does not connote a passive sense (except in rare instances), and because the Niphal may express both the passive and the reflexive, most modern versions of the Bible opt for ‘shall bless themselves.’” Victor P. Hamilton, \textit{The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17}, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 374. Furthermore, Kenneth Mathews presents a third possibility: “Taken in the middle voice, the verb is rendered ‘shall find blessing in you.’ This translation focuses attention on the discovery of blessing, not the means (agent).” Kenneth A. Mathews, \textit{Genesis 11:27-50:26}, NAC, vol. 1B (Nashville: B&H, 2005), 117. This variation may seem minimal, but if the verb has a passive meaning then Gen 12:3 presents the divine promises as having a ultimate end, namely, international blessing. Opting for the passive, Mathews concludes that it “probably suits the context of the passage best, since God is the source (‘I will’ [6x]) and Abraham is the channel (‘you will be a blessing,’ v. 2d). It is also consistent with the idea of the divine plan, which the tenor of the entire book conveys by the motif of an exclusive family (chosen).” Ibid., 117. This decision is further supported by the thorough analysis of Chee-Chiew Lee, who argues that (1) the variations of the passive and reflexive are intentional and bear a slight difference in nuance (e.g., the link between Gen 12:3b with Gen 1-11, especially Gen 10-11; the formation of Gen 12:3b and Gen 28:14 as \textit{inclusios}), and (2) the patriarchal narrative describes how other people are blessed or cursed by God in relation to Abraham and his descendants (e.g., Abimelech, Laban, Pharaoh, and Egypt). Chee-Chiew Lee, “תָּבֹא in Genesis 35:11 and the Abrahamic Promise of Blessings for the Nations,” \textit{JETS} 52, no. 3 (September 2009): 472. Furthermore, Hamilton agrees with the passive and doubts the reflexive when he asks, “What is the meaning of ‘bless oneself’? How is that done? One may bless God, or bless another, but how does one bless oneself? . . . In view of all these factors, it is best to retain the passive force of 12:3, and to see in this last of seven phrases, with its emphatic perfect, the culmination of this initial promise of God to the patriarch.” Hamilton, \textit{Genesis 1-17}, 375. Hence, the passive meaning better suits the linguistic and contextual data. Of course, the interpreter does not have to choose one over the other. But in either case, according to Waltke, “God mediates his blessing to the nations through Abraham.” Waltke, \textit{Genesis}, 206; so also Claus Westermann, \textit{Genesis 12-36: A Commentary}, trans. John J. Scullion, CC (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 152.}
significant to observe, then, that Genesis 12:1-3 focuses on the national blessing to Abraham and the international blessing through Abraham. Abraham’s role of serving as an agent of international blessing depends on Abraham being nationally blessed. That is, for the world to be blessed Abraham must first receive God’s blessing. Thus, it depends not on Abraham who works but on God who blesses. Furthermore, the climactic phrase positioned at the end of the speech indicates that

the primary motive behind the call of Abraham is God’s desire to bring blessing, rather than cursing, upon the nations of the earth. The promise that Abraham will become a great nation, implying both numerous seed and land, must be understood as being subservient to God’s principal desire to bless all the families of the earth.  

Thus, while God’s purposes begin with Abraham and are transferred to his descendants, ultimately they have a much wider concern—“all the families of the earth.” Simply put, God’s national purpose (i.e., Israel) was always subservient to his universal purpose, his plans for all the nations. At the heart of the promise to Abraham, then, is God’s intention to once again bless humanity and so reverse the effects of the divine curses out of which Abraham was called.

180 Alexander, From Paradise to the Promised Land, 176.
181 Williamson, Sealed with an Oath, 84.
182 Ibid., 84.
183 Alexander, From Paradise to the Promised Land, 152.
The Kingdom through the Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic covenant\(^{184}\) demonstrates God’s determination to advance his kingdom on earth through his people.\(^{185}\) This covenant furthers the programmatic agenda of the promises given to the patriarchs,\(^{186}\) for it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who delivers his people from the tyrannical rule of Egypt (Exod 3:6; cf. 2:24-25; Deut 4:36-38; 1 Chr 16:15-19; 2 Kgs 13:22-23). Therefore, “as the biblical meta-story moves from creation blueprint to the final reality, the establishment of Israel as a nation ruled over by the Lord God is an exceptionally important development.”\(^{187}\) God’s deliverance of and covenant with Israel is an advancement of his reestablishment of the Edenic purposes, for through the exodus of the nation his creational plan for the world moves forward. That is, “in the promised land, as in Eden, the direct presence of God will be encountered in a way which would parallel the condition of man in Eden.”\(^{188}\) Likewise, Horton writes, “Like the covenant servant in Eden, Israel must resist the temptation of autonomy and serve only the living God.”\(^{189}\) This significant advance in God’s plan explains the repeated mention of the Mosaic covenant throughout the Old Testament.\(^{190}\)

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\(^{184}\) This covenant is also described as the Sinaitic covenant, but it seems best to refer to it as the Mosaic covenant since, as Merrill says, “it appears in two different forms and on two different occasions, one immediately following the Exodus and the other some thirty-eight years later in Moab on the eve of the conquest of Canaan.” Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 326.

\(^{185}\) The Mosaic covenant was established originally in Exod 19-24 and then renewed in Exodus 35, Deuteronomy, and Josh 24.


\(^{187}\) Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 80.

\(^{188}\) Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 101.

\(^{189}\) Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology*, 133.

\(^{190}\) Dempster writes, “The [divine-human covenant] established between Yahweh and Israel at
God will fulfill what he had promised and, as a result, his cosmological and eschatological objectives for his kingdom in Eden, extended through Noah and promised to the patriarchs, direct the Sinai covenant towards its goal.

The narrative framework of Exodus provides the context of God’s covenant with Israel and underlines its significance.\textsuperscript{191} Exodus begins where Genesis ends and continues the story of how God’s people will once again live in his place under his rule.\textsuperscript{192} First, Exodus advances how God will fulfill his promise to Abraham and make a people for his own possession. In Genesis, the Lord promised Abraham multitudinous offspring who would be afflicted for 400 years as sojourners in a foreign land (Gen 15:13), yet in the end God would bless his people and bring judgment on their captors (Gen 15:14). The opening of Exodus demonstrates God’s faithfulness to the patriarchs to increase the nation of Israel, for through Joseph the Lord brought seventy people into the land of Egypt who became numerous (Exod 1:1-6). In language that clearly echoes Genesis 1 and the promise to Abraham, “the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them” (Exod 1:7).\textsuperscript{193} God’s commission to and blessing on his people were once again flourishing. Abraham’s descendants, however, were slaves in Egypt and feeling far from

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\textsuperscript{191}Scobie, \textit{The Ways of Our God}, 476.

\textsuperscript{192}Waltke writes, “The book of Genesis ends with the sons of Israel, numbering seventy (Gen 46), sojourning in Egypt, and its sequel, the book of Exodus, self-consciously begins with the sons of Israel in Egypt, numbering seventy.” Waltke, \textit{An Old Testament Theology}, 346.

\textsuperscript{193}Dempster, \textit{Dominion and Dynasty}, 93; Williamson, \textit{Sealed with an Oath}, 95n3.
blessed. But “God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew” (Exod 2:24-25). These words set the stage for God to deliver his people and thus fulfill his promises.

Up to this point, Abraham’s descendants were slowly becoming the people-nation that God had promised. However, for this to become a reality God needed to act on their behalf. As the story progresses, the stage is set for the deliverance promised in Genesis 15:13-14 (Exod 3:16-22; 6:2-8; 7:1-5; 11:1-3). Williamson observes,

The Exodus event constitutes the fulfillment of the preliminary stage of the prospect held out in the covenant of Genesis 15: the prospect of nationhood. The ‘great nation’ promised by God to Abraham is about to emerge on the world stage. Indeed, this is the very purpose of the exodus event: to bring to birth the nation with whom God will establish a special relationship.

Exodus, both as the book and the event, shows that the Lord is faithful to his covenant promises. God, through a series of plagues intended to show that there is none like the Lord in all the earth (Exod 9:14), will deliver his people and demonstrate that he is the sovereign Lord over against the Egyptian’s so-called gods. That is, God, not Pharaoh,

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194 The use of words to describe the entity of Abraham’s descendants/Israel is important. Merrill writes, “The sociopolitical and theological significance of Israel’s transition from a people to a nation is a matter of great importance. The Abrahamic covenant consistently describes the descendants of the patriarch as a nation (gôy) rather than a people (’am) (Gen 12:2; 17:4-6, 16; 18:18; 25:23; 35:11; 46:3) whereas Israel in Exodus is called a people scores of times and a nation only three times and then never prior to the establishment of Israel as the covenant nation (Exod 19:6; 32:10; 33:13). . . . The distinction between them in the accounts of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants respectively cannot be ignored. Israel as a people was a temporary phase on the way to nationhood, and only as a nation could the full extent of the kingdom promises made to the fathers be realized. The semantic thrust therefore is not so much ethnic as it is sociopolitical. Israel as a nation would be the channel of world blessing and not Israel as a [Jewish] people. The eschatological implications of this truth are indeed profound.” Merrill, Everlasting Dominion, 254-55.

195 Williamson, Sealed with an Oath, 96.

196 Taking into account the act of creation illuminates our interpretation of the plagues. Peter Enns writes, “The plagues are an undoing of creation, a series of creation reversals, at Egypt’s expense; beasts harm rather than serve humanity; light ceases and darkness takes over; waters become a source of
is the true ruler of his people, which is the foundational sign of his kingdom. And in a mighty act echoing the separation of the primordial waters at creation (Gen 1:9-10), the Lord parted the Red Sea and delivered his people from the oppression of Egypt. The King of creation reenacted the scene of his earliest triumphs of nature by now displaying his sovereignty over human forces hostile to his creational kingdom design. The point is that God will make a people for himself; indeed, he will be their God, and they will be his people (Exod 6:7).

Second, the Mosaic covenant bestows upon Israel a royal and priestly status. Although humanity’s failure in Genesis 3 corrupted their ability to function as his vice-regents, God’s plan of redemption would create a people for his own possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Gen 19:5-6) who would mediate his rule and presence to the nations. “Their role thenceforth would be to mediate or intercede as priests between the holy God and the wayward nations of the world, with the end in view not only of declaring his salvation, but providing the human channel in and through whom that salvation would be effected.” This mediatorial role is significant, “for the

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death rather than life; the climax of Genesis 1 is the creation of humans on the last day of creation, whereas the climax of the plagues is the destruction of humans in the last plague. The plagues do not run rampant, however; they eventually cease, and each cessation is another display of God’s creative power. He once again restores order to chaos as he did in the beginning: the waters are restored; the troublesome insects and animals retreat; light once again comes out of darkness. Each plague is a reminder of the supreme power of Yahweh, the creator. The one who will save Israel is also the one who holds chaos at bay, but who, if he chooses, will step aside and allow chaos to plague his enemies.” Peter E. Enns, “Exodus,” in NDBT, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 148.

197 Ibid., 264.

198 Childs comments, “For Wellhausen, this formulation of Yahweh as the God of Israel and Israel as the people of God was the essence of Israel’s religion.” Childs, Biblical Theology, 421.


200 Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, 80.
opening chapters of Genesis reveal that the fulfillment of God’s creation project requires the existence of priest-kings who will extend God’s temple-city throughout the earth.”  

The designation of the nation as priest-kings, then, indicates that God’s cosmological purposes for humanity are advancing through Israel.

Third, Exodus continues the storyline of how God’s people will once again live in his place. Since the time of the patriarchs, it had been the hope of Israel to live in a land of her own. Genesis ends with Joseph’s final declaration to his brothers that, “God will visit you and bring you up out of his land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” (Gen 50:24). However, between the time of Joseph’s death and the beginning of Exodus, it appeared that Joseph’s prophetic words had died with him. The Exodus narrative, however, reveals that God’s divine promise becomes the basis for an expectation of deliverance from Egypt (Exod 3:8), a deliverance (Exod 14) which constitutes the beginning of a great journey undertaken by a redeemed people to relocate to a new land, one described as “flowing with milk and honey” (Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3).  

VanGemeren comments,

Israel’s expulsion from Egypt is a return to God’s favor, presence, and blessings! The Exodus event forms a contrast to Adam’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden, which signified removal from God’s presence and hence from the immediacy and abundance of God’s favor and blessings. Adam and Eve were condemned to live in a state of alienation. The Exodus is God’s concrete act of reconciliation. . . . God had placed Adam in the garden (2:8) and expelled him (3:24). But he was free in placing Israel in the land of Canaan, whose fertility, productiveness, and richness in natural resources was a reminder of the Garden of Eden.

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201 Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem, 80.

202 Stuart, Exodus, 38.

203 VanGemeren, The Progress of Redemption, 81.
In other words, Israel’s homeland recaptures the idyllic conditions of Eden. This point is powerfully illustrated in Exodus 15:17: “You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.” At the end of the song sung by Israel after crossing the Red Sea, “the establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan is pictured as the planting of a tree in a mountain sanctuary, exactly the picture of Eden presented in Genesis 2 and Ezekiel 28.”

God is faithful to his promise, for he will once again dwell with his people, Israel (Exod 25-31; 35-40), in their rightful place, ruling over the nations as God’s vice-regents.

It did not take long, however, for Israel to prove that they were descendants of Adam. Separating the description of the sanctuary (Exod 25-31) and its construction (Exod 35-40) is Israel’s idolatry (Exod 32-34). Their sin, though, should come as no surprise. Waltke writes, “If Adam and Eve, created in the image of God, do not keep the single command in a paradise, how can the Israelites, marred by original sin, expect to keep a host of commandments in the moral cesspool of Canaan?” There is thus imbued in the text a hermeneutic that points to a fundamental problem in humanity that must be remedied another way. And indeed it will, for God will be faithful to his covenant

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promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and will restore his rule and creation blessing through an obedient one.\textsuperscript{208}

The Kingdom through the Davidic Covenant

The next major covenantal development in the outworking of God’s redemptive plan is the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17; cf. Ps 89; 110; 132).\textsuperscript{209} “The chief interest in the rise of the kingdom,” says Childs, “focuses without a doubt on David.”\textsuperscript{210} This covenant, like the Mosaic, is built upon the Abrahamic promise that establishes God’s people in his place under his rule and blessing.\textsuperscript{211} In fact, the chapters

\textsuperscript{208}One significant way this future rule and blessing is seen is through the narrative of Num 22-24. For example, Num 24:17-19 says, “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be dispossessed; Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed. Israel is doing valiantly. And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities!” Dempster comments, “The Balaam oracles envision a king emerging from Israel to destroy its enemies. In language identical to the blessing of Judah in Genesis 49, he is like an invincible lion (Num 24:5-9). Similarly, in the next oracle of Balaam, a star and a scepter arise from Israel to smash the heads of the Moabites, who represent he enemy of Israel (Num 24:16-24). The genealogical line of descent is lucid (Gen 3:15; 12:3; 49:10). . . . The Balaam oracles show conclusively that the patriarchal promises remain intact (24:9) despite Israel’s sins.” Dempster, \textit{Domination and Dynasty}, 117.

\textsuperscript{209}The Davidic covenant resembles a royal grant covenant, though not perfectly. For example, it consists of promises to David that are unconditional (e.g., God’s promise to raise up a descendant). God’s intention to fulfill this promise is repeated in the subsequent history of the Davidic kings despite many acts of disloyalty on their part (cf. 1 Kgs 11:11-13, 34-36; 15:4-5; 2 Kgs 8:19; 2 Chr 21:7; 23:3). However, the element of a continuous, uninterrupted reign of a Davidic king is not unconditional (see 1 Chr 28:5-6; 1 Kgs 2:2-4). This is why it is difficult to classify it merely as an unconditional covenant. Certainly sin can bring disaster on the future offspring reigning on David’s throne, as will be seen from Solomon, his offspring, and the future division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Yet, this disaster will not ultimately demolish the ‘house’ (i.e., dynasty) of David. Again, like the Abrahamic covenant, 2 Sam 7 emphasizes the need for obedience by David and his sons, yet the foundation of the covenant is God’s unwavering faithfulness to bring about his promises. It becomes clear as the story progresses that although God makes his promises known, the precise details of how he will fulfill them will be revealed later.

\textsuperscript{210}Childs, \textit{Biblical Theology}, 153.

(2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17) in which the establishment of the covenant is described are full of allusions to the promises given to Abraham and Moses. For example, David is promised a great name (Gen 12:2; 2 Sam 7:9), a special place (Gen 12:1; Exod 3:8; 2 Sam 7:10), victory over enemies (Gen 22:17; Exod 23:22; 2 Sam 7:11), a special relationship between his offspring and God (Gen 17:7-8; Exod 4:22; 2 Sam 7:14), and offspring through whom (international) blessing will come (Gen 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; Ps 72:17).

Dumbrell writes,

> What God has in store for David is reminiscent of what was promised to Abraham. The establishment of the Davidic empire will set the ideal borders of the Promised Land, which the promise to Abraham had foreshadowed (cf. 2 Sam 7:10 and Genesis 15:18; note that these borders are defined in Deut. 11:24 as Israel’s “place”). At the same time, the foundation of the empire will bring David the Abrahamic great name (cf. 2 Sam 7:9 and Gen 12:2).²¹²

Moreover, Beale rightly observes the connection between the construction of the temple and Eden. He writes, “Second Samuel 7 (cf. 1 Chr 17) closely links the need to build a temple (7:12-13) with the following aspects of Genesis 1:28: (1) ruling and subduing (7:9-16), and (2) a blessing on God’s kingly vice-regent (7:29).”²¹³ Through his commitment to David and his dynasty, then, God plans to accomplish his kingdom purposes set forth in the previous covenants, and ultimately reaching back to Eden; namely, to plant his people in his place under his kingship.²¹⁴

Furthermore, in what Dempster describes as one of the most important chapters in the Hebrew Bible, 2 Samuel 7 links together the related themes of people and place, for “from this one location in world geography and this one location in world

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²¹² Dumbrell, *The Search for Order*, 70.


genealogy will flow blessing to the entire world and its inhabitants. This is the theme that reverberates throughout the rest of the Bible.” More specifically, God will make for David a great name (2 Sam 7:9), appoint and plant his people Israel in a place where they will have rest (2 Sam 7:10; cf. Gen 12:1),\textsuperscript{215} bless David with offspring through whom God would establish his kingdom (2 Sam 7:11-16), and be a father to David’s offspring to whom he will be covenantally loyal as a father to a son (2 Sam 7:14-16).\textsuperscript{216} Moreover, subsequent passages clarify that God will dwell with his people, through whom blessing would flow to the nations (Pss 2:8; 72:8; 132:13-14). In other words, through the Davidic promises God will accomplish his cosmological purposes set forth in Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Israel. That is, God will restore his Edenic purposes through the Davidic covenant and his people will live in his place under his rule.

It appeared that in David and his offspring, particularly in Solomon, God was fulfilling his covenant promises to reestablish his kingdom (1 Kgs 8:56). His people dwelled peacefully in the land—with God dwelling at the center—under the wise leadership of the divinely anointed king (1 Kgs 1-2). Israel, like Adam, subdued the nations and enjoyed rest from her enemies (1 Kgs 8:56). For instance, “The narrative describes the uniqueness of this new Israelite king and his superlative wisdom to solve social problems (1 Kgs 3), to promote justice and righteousness (1 Kgs 3:16-28) and to explore and name his Creator’s world, in much the same way that Adam did in the garden

\textsuperscript{215}Dumbrell notes that “‘place’ is the distinct term in Deuteronomy for the Promised Land, particularly as outlined in the promise to Abraham (cf. Deut. 11:24 with Gen. 15:18).” Dumbrell, \textit{The Faith of Israel}, 87. This connection will become more important in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{216}Daniel Block argues that the covenant formula is replaced in the Davidic covenant with the adoption formula, “I shall be his father, and he will be my son” (2 Sam 7:14; cf. Ps 89:27-28 [Eng 26-27]. Daniel I. Block, \textit{The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48}, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 419.
of Eden (Gen 2:19-20; 1 Kgs 4:32-33 [MT 5:12-13])." In other words, dominion had been regained. Moreover, in fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, Israel dwelled securely in her land, was a multitudinous nation, experienced God’s blessing and presence as well as the blessing of the nations. And, finally, in fulfillment of the Mosaic covenant, Israel enjoyed her status as God’s treasured possession, a kingdom of priests who mediated God’s rule and presence to the world. At last, it seemed, the Lord was finally fulfilling his teleological objectives through his promise of a Davidic son who would come as God’s vice-regent to exercise royal rule over God’s people in his promised land, and thus extend God’s rule, presence, and blessing to the nations.

Israel’s Adam-like status, however, was short-lived as sin devastated David’s dynasty until the united kingdom came to a tragic end. And, as a result of the kings’ repeated failures, there grew an expectation among Israel of the need for God’s saving righteousness and of a messianic figure who would deliver the nation from its foreign rulers and usher in God’s blessings. VanGemeren writes,

From [David] onward the faithful remnant looked for a messiah of David with whom God would be present and by whom he would extend his peace, justice, righteousness, and wisdom to his people. Only a few kings that followed David and Solomon responded positively to God’s challenge. Such kings helped to bring in the kingdom of God among the people. Unfortunately, those periods were like oases in the desert of Judah’s history. After the exile, the faithful continued to look for the fulfillment of the promises based on God’s oath to David.

Hence, prophetic anticipation was building for a new work that would fundamentally change Israel’s relationship with God and her place and status in the world.

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217 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 147.


The Kingdom through the New Covenant

Among the expectation of the prophets living during the exile(s) is the coming of a new covenant. The new covenant would have a purpose similar to the Mosaic covenant, that is, to bring the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant back into the present experience of Israel. In some sense, then, the “previous divine covenants culminate in the new covenant, for this future covenant encapsulates the key promises made throughout the OT era (e.g., a physical inheritance; a divine-human relationship; an everlasting dynasty; blessing on a national and international scale).” Hence, there are certain elements of continuity between the prior covenants. For example, it is made to the “house of Israel” and “house of Judah,” that is, with the whole people of Israel (Jer

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220 Many scholars recognize the difficulty in presenting a full systematic development of the new covenant, for many texts allude to it but few employ its specific terminology. For example, Paul Williamson writes, “Although the concept of a ‘new covenant’ is especially associated with Jer 31:31-34 (the only passage in the OT that specifically mentions a ‘new covenant’), several other texts allude to an everlasting covenant that will be established between God and his people in the future (see especially Jer 30-33; Ezek 34, 36-37; Isa 40-66; cf. Isa 42:6, where covenant language is applied to the enigmatic ‘servant of Yahweh’, a figure whose mission closely parallels that of the ‘seed’ of Abraham and David). For this reason, and because of the future, visionary character of this covenant as described in the OT, drawing the various thread of the OT witness is rather more difficult in this case than with the earlier covenants.” Paul R. Williamson, “Covenant,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 426. See also Tiberius Rata, “Covenant,” in *DOTP*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 103. For additional biblical texts, see Ezek 11:19-20; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; Deut 30:6; Jer 32:39-40; Isa 32:15; 44:3; 55:3; 54:13. The new covenant is also referred to as the covenant of peace (Isa 54:1-10; Ezek 34:20-31; 37:15-28) and the everlasting covenant (Jer 32:36-41; 50:2-5; Ezek 16:59-63; 37:15-28; Isa 24:5; 55:1-5; 54:13). For a helpful analysis of the new covenant in biblical theology and history, see Mark R. Saucy, “Canon as Tradition: The New Covenant and the Hermeneutical Question,” *Themelios* 36, no. 2 (2011): 216-37.

221 Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 151. This statement should not be taken to minimize or deny the discontinuities between the old and new covenants. Rather, it serves to highlight some measure of continuity between them. As Williamson rightly says, “Jeremiah clearly states that this new relationship between God and his people will differ radically from the old one—the relationship that was formally ratified by the national covenant at Sinai. . . . Yet one of the striking features of this ‘new covenant’ is the measure of continuity it seems to reflect: it encompasses the same people (Israel and Judah); it involves the same obligation (Yahweh’s law); and it serves to secure the same objective (a divine-human relationship) expressed by the same covenant formula.” Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 152-53.

it emphasizes obedience (Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:25-27; Isa 42:1-4; 51:4-8), it focuses on offspring (Jer 31:36; 33:22; Ezek 36:37)—particularly on a royal seed (Jer 33:15-26; Ezek 37:24-25; Isa 55:3)—and, in the end, it will fulfill the repeated covenant refrain: “I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer 31:33; 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 21:1; 32:38; Ex 29:45; Lev 26:12; Ezek 11:20; 37:23, 27). Therefore, though it introduces something radically new in God’s purposes for his people, it must not be viewed in opposition to the previous covenants.

223 J. A. Thompson, Jeremiah, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 580. Dumbrell comments, “The twin reference to the existing geographical divisions of Israel and Judah in v. 31 recognizes the realities of the present national position or the position as it has existed since the division of the united kingdom into two entities after the death of Solomon. The New Covenant will heal this breach and we thus have here a parallel to the view of Ezekiel (Ezek 37:15-28). Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, 176.

224 Similarly, Ezek 36:25-27 prophesies that Yahweh will give his people a new heart and put his Spirit within them. He will remove their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh, and this Spirit-wrought work will result in their obedience. For more on the indwelling of the Spirit in the new covenant, see James M. Hamilton, Jr., God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments, NACSBT (Nashville: B&H, 2006), 48-54.


226 O. Palmer Robertson, The Christ of the Covenants (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980), 281. An argument of Covenant theology is that the new covenant is not entirely new, but rather a renewal of the previous covenants. Peter Leithart writes, “[T]he new Davidic dynasty is not a replacement of the old, but a transformation of it. The same is true of the new covenant in relation to the old. It is not as if God changed his mind about how He would structure His relations with His people. God still make promises, requires obedience, and threatens sanctions against the disobedient. The new covenant is simply the old covenant transformed by the death and resurrection of the covenant Head, Jesus Christ.” Peter J. Leithart, The Kingdom and the Power: Rediscovering the Centrality of the Church (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1993), 160-61. Likewise, Hafemann, who follows Christoph Levin (Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes in ihrem theologisch-historischen Zusammenhang ausgelegt, FRLANT 137 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985)), argues that the covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34 “is ‘new’ in the sense that it is a radical break with the past, but it is not new in its structure, content, or purpose. In this latter case it is a ‘renewal.’ Hafemann, “The Covenant Relationship,” 50n67; see also Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, 180-81, 199; idem, Search for Order, 98, 325. However, Jason Meyer has shown that Hafemann, who also follows Dumbrell, “fails to account for the christological newness of the new covenant and its corresponding relationship to the pneumatological dimension of the new covenant.” Jason C. Meyer, “Paul, the Mosaic Covenant, and Redemptive History” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007), 123-28; idem, The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology, NACSBT (Nashville: B&H, 2009), 71-72. For a concise discussion of the newness of the new covenant, see David G. Peterson, Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 29-35.
Despite its continuity, however, it is not like the previous (Mosaic) covenant (Jer 31:32). For example, discontinuity is exegetically demonstrated in that Yahweh will “cut” (חֵרֶם) this covenant (Jer 31:31). Dumbrell comments,

Yahweh will “cut” (i.e., initiate) a covenant. (Note that the word cut preserves the traditional language of the beginning of a covenantal arrangement.) And [Jeremiah] describes the covenant as “new,” an adjective that carries both qualitative and temporal nuances. Though the word used in the Septuagint connotes qualitative newness, perhaps we should retain both nuances in the Hebrew. That is, the new covenant, while having continuity with the past, will be both a qualitative advance upon the Sinaitic and Davidic covenants and a temporal advance in the course of salvation history.  

Moreover, the new covenant will secure the transformation of the heart from the inside out (Jer 31:33a; Ezek 36:26), 228 a more intimate relationship with God than ever before, for they shall all know Yahweh (Jer 31:33b; Ezek 36:27), 229 and an infrangibility unlike the Mosaic covenant (Jer 31:32). 230 All of these new covenant blessings will come

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228 See for example Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 48-54. Von Rad insightfully comments, “If we understand Jeremiah correctly, the new thing is to be that the whole process of God’s speaking and man’s listening is to be dropped. This road of listening to the divine will had not led Israel to obedience. Yahweh is, as it were, to bypass the process of speaking and listening, and to put his will straight into Israel’s heart. . . . [E]very page of Deuteronomy insists on an obedience which springs from the heart and conscience. It is at this very point, however, that Jeremiah goes far beyond Deuteronomy, for in the new covenant the doubtful element of human obedience as it had been known up to date drops out completely. If God’s will ceases to confront and judge men from outside themselves, if God puts his will directly into their hearts, then, properly speaking, the rendering of obedience is completely done away with, for the problem of obedience only arises when man’s will is confronted by an alien will. Now however, the possibility of such confrontation has ceased to exist, for men are to have the will of God in their heart, and are only to will God’s will. What is here outlined is the picture of a new man, a man who is able to obey perfectly because of a miraculous change of his nature.” Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2: 213-14. With the problem of his perceived perfectionism aside, von Rad’s point of a radical transformation of the heart is clearly taken.

229 Thompson comments, “The verb know [in v. 34] probably carries its most profound connotation, the intimate personal knowledge which arises between two persons who are committed wholly to one another in relationship that touches mind, emotion, and will. In such a relationship the past is forgiven and forgotten.” Thompson, *Ezekiel*, 581.

230 Dumbrell writes, “What is ‘new’ is the avoidance of the fallibility of the old covenant. That covenant was breachable by Israel (‘my covenant which they broke’). The pathetic national response to the reforms of Josiah is living testimony to this fact in the minds of Jeremiah’s hearers. But it is not possible to
because God will provide full and final forgiveness of sin (Jer 31:34; Ezek 36:29, 33).\textsuperscript{231}

Through the new covenant, therefore, God will fulfill his promises and secure his eschatological purposes for his people and the world.\textsuperscript{232}

The new covenant makes clear, then, that God is determined to finish what he began in the previous covenants, namely, to make a people for himself. This aspect of the covenant promise, described in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, is primarily national (Jer 31:36-40; 33:6-16; Ezek 36:24-38; 37:11-28). However, both allude to its international significance (Jer 33:9; Ezek 36:36; 37:28), and its universal scope is depicted most clearly in Isaiah (42:6-7; 49:6; 55:3-5; 56:4-8; 66:18-24). Furthermore, the new covenant projects the

breach the New Covenant, Yahweh had maintained his fidelity to that earlier commitment in spite of Israel’s unceasing provocations. In the new arrangement both parties would be loyal.” Dumbrell, \textit{The End of the Beginning}, 90.

\textsuperscript{231}Robertson comments, “Jeremiah anticipates the day when the actual shall replace the typical. Instead of having animal sacrifices merely represent the possibility of a substitutionary death in the place of the sinner, Jeremiah sees the day in which sins actually will be forgiven, never to be remembered again. The continual offering of sacrifice to remove sin not only provided a symbolical representation of the possibility of substitution. It also inevitably functioned as a very real reminder that sins had not yet been forgiven. By saying that sins would be remembered no more, Jeremiah anticipates the end of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament.” Robertson, \textit{The Christ of the Covenants}, 283; see also Williamson, \textit{Sealed with an Oath}, 156. Though Robertson may overstate his point, it nevertheless remains a powerful one.

\textsuperscript{232}Williamson, “Covenant,” 427. Stephen Wellum is even more specific in describing the newness of the new covenant. First, he says, there are \textit{structural} changes (Jer 31:29-30). The previous covenants were structured in such a way that the leaders were representatives of the people (e.g., prophets, priests, and kings). So, when the leader sinned the people also shared in his guilt (see, e.g., Achan’s sin and Israel’s corporate guilt in Josh 7; Josh 9:18). But now “everyone will die for his own sin” (v. 30). The point is that it will no longer be mediated through human prophets, priests, and kings. Rather, each person will have direct access to God through a mediator. Second, there are also changes in \textit{nature}. They will \textit{all} know the Lord, from the least to the greatest (v. 34), for \textit{all} will experience the forgiveness of sins and the law written on their hearts. This reality is different than the previous covenant promises because not everyone in the covenant was regenerate. That is, “Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel” (Rom 9:6-7). But in the NC \textit{all} covenant people are regenerate because \textit{all} will experience forgiveness of sins and will have new hearts regenerated by the Holy Spirit (cf. Jer 31:33; cf. Ezek 11:19-20; 36:26-27; Is 59:21). The law will be written on their hearts (cf. circumcision of the heart; Deut 30:6; 10:16; Jer 4:4; 9:25), and this new heart will lead them to the fear of the Lord. Moreover, they will not turn away from their God (Jer 32:39-40). Thus, the scope of the covenant has changed – everyone will have a circumcised new heart. Stephen J. Wellum, “Baptism and the Relationship Between the Covenants,” in \textit{Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ}, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 142-44. For similar comments on the “tribal” structure the Old Covenant, see Hamilton, \textit{God’s Indwelling Presence}, 45.
ultimate fulfillment of the divine promises to make a worldwide people for God onto a suffering servant—an “ideal Israel”—in a new heavens and new earth (Isa 65:17; 66:22). For example, Isaiah 42:6-7 says that the Lord will give his servant as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. J. Alec Motyer comments,

The servant will be a covenant, i.e., the means through whom people will come into a covenant relation with the Lord. In [Isa] 49:8 the servant’s covenant work is directed to Israel (‘the people’ in a narrower technical sense), but here the context is a world-wide covenantal task. The people of verse 6 are those of verse 5 as the parallelism of people and Gentiles/nations (6) indicates. The covenant was Israel’s distinctive privilege, from its inception in Abram (Gen 15; 17) to its climax in Moses (Ex 2:24; 24:7-8). It is God’s free decision to take and keep a people for his own possession, drawing them to himself (Ex 6:2-7), constituting himself as their God and Redeemer (Ex 20:3ff.). The covenant, however, originated in Noah (Gen 6:17-18), and its extension to the whole world is thus not a violation of its nature but rather its release to be true to itself in a world-wide salvation.  

Furthermore, Ezekiel 37:26-27 reveals, “Yahweh will multiply the nation, an expression that alludes to the promises of Abraham to multiply his descendants as the stars of the sky, the grains of the sand on the seashore, and the dust of the earth.” Thus, the new covenant is presented as the climactic and ultimate fulfillment of the covenants that God established with the patriarchs, the nation of Israel, and David/David’s son (Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Jer 23:5-6; 33:14-26; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-28) to multiply and fill the earth with his people, both Jew and Gentile. This fulfillment would come through a covenant enacted on better promises because of the One—the obedient Son—who will fulfill it (Heb 8-10).

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The new covenant also promises a place for God’s people. For example, Isaiah brings into focus God’s cosmological intentions for his new creation just as he had designed in the garden of Eden. Isaiah 65:17, for instance, reveals that God will “create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.” This prophetic declaration is nothing short of a profound hope of a return to an Edenic paradise. Commenting on this passage, Dempster writes,

The ‘container’ of this earlier prophecy (11:1-10) is exploded in superabundance. The figure who brings this about is eschatological and unmistakably linked to royalty. Jehoiachin – genealogy – may be down, but he is certainly not out. From his line will come someone presiding over a new world order, in which the serpent will be rendered completely harmless, thus ending the cosmic battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the snake. Even geography will be transformed.\textsuperscript{235}

Furthermore, the ensuing picture of the new heavens and new earth reads like a reversal of the devastating effects brought into creation by Adam’s sin: there will be no more weeping (v. 19) and no more death (v. 20), they will subdue the land the enjoy the fruit of its bountiful provision (v. 21), exercise dominion (v. 22, 25) and fill the earth with their descendants (v. 23). Likewise, in Hos. 2:16-23 God will forge a new relationship with his people who were formerly “Not my people” (v. 23), and creation will be renewed where his people will know him and experience eternal peace.\textsuperscript{236} This picturesque world apprehends both the former splendor of Eden as well as the restored and expanded future reality of the new creation that will “remain” forever.\textsuperscript{237} Thus, the new covenant will

\textsuperscript{235}Dempster, \textit{Dominion and Dynasty}, 182-83.


\textsuperscript{237}Lister, “The Lord Your God is in Your Midst,” 125-26.
“edenize” the entire earth and will serve as the means through which God will bring his people back into his kingdom forever.

Epilogue: A Disappointing End and Hope of a New Beginning

The everlasting covenant with David demonstrated that worldwide blessing would come through his descendant. But the story of Israel and Judah, not to mention their kings, greatly disappointed. After Israel’s fall to Assyria, Judah also spiraled downward until carried away into Babylonian exile. This exile echoes the fall of Adam, for just as Adam had been cast out of the garden, Israel was exiled because they broke God’s covenant.  

In the midst of exile, however, there was still hope because God is faithful to his promises. For example, the book of 2 Kings ends with Judah in exile and gives an account of the last member of the Davidic dynasty, Jehoiachin. The narrative of Kings opens with the hopeful beginning of Solomon’s reign and ends with a glimpse of hope for the future. In the thirty-seventh year of exile, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, son of

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239 The end of Kings can be cast as the dark ending of a history full of sin and judgment. However, Dempster points out that this view suffers from “exegetical shortsightedness” because it fails to situate Kings within its canonical context. If read in the context of the Davidic covenant and his promised royal dynasty, then the end of Kings points to a future pregnant with possibility and hope, for “the lifting up of Jehoiachin’s head, the speaking good things to him, the exaltation of his throne above the other kings in Babylon, the changing of his garments and the provision of food for him all have modest significance in the literary context, but in the context of the Text these events are earthshaking. A David still has a throne! The lamp has not been extinguished.” Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 155-56; also see Stephen G. Dempster, “The Servant of the Lord,” in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 153; T. D. Alexander, “Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings: Their Importance for Biblical Theology,” *TynBul* 49 (1998): 191. For an exhaustive treatment of Jehoiachin, viewing his release as a signal of hope for the Davidic covenant, see J. Critchlow, “Looking Back for Jechoniah: Yahweh’s Cast-Out Signet” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Edinburgh, 2004), referenced by Dempster, “The Servant of the Lord,” 153n82.
Nebuchadnezzar, freed Jehoiachin from prison (2 Kgs 25:27). Evil-merodach spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon (28). Additionally, Jehoiachin was not required to wear prison clothes, every day of his life he dined regularly at the kings’ table, and he received an allowance for his work (29-30). In other words, Jehoiachin lived like a king even in exile.²⁴⁰

Furthermore, God promised through the prophets the dawning of a new covenant (Jer 31:31-34), a coming kingdom (Obad 21), a rebuilding of David’s fallen booth (Amos 9:11-15), a new day for Jerusalem and Zion (Joel 3:15-21; Zeph 3:15-20), a pouring out of God’s Spirit (Joel 2:28), a day when the Lord would give his people a new heart and Spirit so that they would obey him (Ezek 36:26-27), a new exodus when God would liberate his people once again (e.g., Isa 43:5-9), and even a new creation (Isa 65:17; 66:22).²⁴¹

The exile, then, while certainly difficult, was a “productive and creative stage” for the believing remnant who reflected on God’s faithfulness in the past and hope for a new era in the future, which renewed in them a devotion to Yahweh and his Torah.²⁴²

However, the return from exile under the Persian king Cyrus did not yield the longed for kingdom of God, that is, when God would restore his people to their rightful place in the world. As Dumbrell points out, the prophets of the postexilic period were faced with the failed materialization of the “extravagant promises” of the preceding prophets.²⁴³ In other words, life in the era of transformation, of the progression of God’s kingdom, was disappointing in comparison with the glorious visions of the prophets.²⁴⁴

²⁴²VanGemeren, The Progress of Redemption, 284.
²⁴³Dumbrell, The Search for Order, 127.
The prophets, though, met this failure by denouncing the sin of the people, proclaiming God’s judgment, and casting their future in an eschatological-apocalyptic light. For example, there would come one like a son of man who receives a never-ending kingdom from the Ancient of Days and shares it with his people forever (Dan 7:13-14, 18, 22). This one would reestablish God’s kingdom and bring his blessing and universal rule back into the experience of his people.


246Commenting on Dan 7:13-14, Paul House writes, “In 2 Samuel 7:16 the Lord’s initial promise to David includes an eternal kingdom. Isaiah 9:6-7 and 11:1-10 claim that the Davidic king will rule endlessly over a dominion that is free from strife. Isaiah 53:1-12 presents one who dies to redeem the people. Jeremiah 23:1-8 says that righteousness will be restored when a Davidic descendant whose name is ‘the Lord Our Righteousness’ leads the faithful. Ezekiel 37:1-28 envisions the coming Davidic ruler governing the people after the Spirit of God has raised them from the dead. Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 foresee the Lord giving the kingdom to the chosen one. . . . Canonical readers may justifiably think that the son of man’s description in 7:13-14 must of necessity apply to the same person referred to in the previous passages. No one else is ever given the kingdom of God. The same is true of [Daniel] 9:24-27. No other figure is cut off and still able to redeem the people from sin. No one else is said to transform, judge and inspire all at the same time. By this point in the canon, it is almost as if it is understood that the David Messiah is meant in 7:13-14 and 9:24-27.” House, *Old Testament Theology*, 509.

247Dan 7:13-14 has generated much controversy, some of which centers on whether the figure is an individual or a corporate entity, and whether he is human or divine. A convincing case can be made that the son of man is an individual who represents the people and who is both human and divine. With regard to the former, just as the four kings represent the four kingdoms they each rule over (7:17), so also the son of man may refer to Israel as the people of God while simultaneously representing them as an individual. Andrew Steinmann comments, “[T]he Messiah himself receives the kingdom for the sake of the saints and then gives it to them. Moreover, the saints are a separate entity from the son of man. This can be seen in 7:21-22, where the little horn wages war against the saints and defeats them until the coming of the Ancient of Days, and then the saints receive the kingdom.” Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel*, CC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2008), 356. Concerning the latter, there are indications of the son of man’s humanity and deity. Schreiner writes, “The Aramaic verb for ‘serve’ (*plh*) in Dan. 7:27 is used elsewhere of service and worship of God (Dan 3:12, 14, 17, 18, 28; 6:17, 21; 7:14). Further, coming on the clouds of heaven in Dan. 7:13 suggests deity, for elsewhere in the OT only God rides on the clouds of heaven. Indeed, the son of man does not grasp rule through military conquest by which he brutally rules over other human beings. He is given the kingdom by God himself, and thereby he fulfills the role for which human beings were created (Psa 8).” Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 216. See also Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, NAC, vol. 18 (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 206-10; Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, 308; House, *Old Testament Theology*, 508-11; Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 146-47; Tremper Longman III, “The Messiah: Explorations in the Law and Writings,” in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 27.
The King(dom) of God is at Hand:  
The Beginning of the End

When Jesus arrives on the historical scene, the great promises of God sworn to Abraham and confirmed to David had not yet been fulfilled.\textsuperscript{248} What the NT writers repeatedly demonstrate, however, is that God’s eschatological promises have reached their fulfillment.\textsuperscript{249} More specifically, the history of God’s dealings with his people has reached its decisive turning-point in the coming of Jesus.\textsuperscript{250} Waltke notes,

As the OT concludes, judgment of sin and exile become the signature dilemma for [Adam and Eve and Israel], and both stories await resolution. Who will crush the serpent, the embodiment of Satan, and restore humanity to its true home, the Garden of Eden? Who will cleanse the heart of God’s people and restore the kingdom of Israel? The “way of Judaism” piled on more laws; “the Way of the NT” provides the empowering presence of God in Jesus Christ and his Spirit.\textsuperscript{251}

In other words, what begins in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New. Indeed all of God’s promises come to a head in Jesus Christ, who fulfills all of God’s covenants.\textsuperscript{252}

John Bright comments,

The [Old Testament] is a story whose Author has not yet written the ending; it is a signpost pointing down a road whose destination—and surely its destination is a city, the City of God (Heb 11:10, 16)—lies out of sight around many a bend. It is a noble building indeed—but it lacks a roof! . . . That roof, by its own affirmation, the New Testament supplies: in announcing in Christ the fulfillment of the hope of Israel it stands as the completion of the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{253}

\textsuperscript{249} Goldsworthy, \textit{Gospel and Kingdom}, 108.
\textsuperscript{251} Waltke, \textit{Old Testament Theology}, 151.
\textsuperscript{253} John Bright, \textit{The Kingdom of God} (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), 192.
For example, Luke records Jesus quoting Isaiah 61:1-2 at the beginning of his ministry:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus then declares that the time of fulfillment for Isaiah 61 is now when he says, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

Comparing these words with Jesus’ announcement in Mark 1:14-15, Darrell Bock writes,

Whereas Mark 1:14-15 puts Jesus’ message in terms of the nearness of the kingdom, Luke stresses the nature of the time in the nearness of the person. However, the two ideas are related and are very similar, since with the king comes the kingdom (Luke 11:20; 17:21). Jesus is saying to his hometown audience, “The time that all people faithful to God have been waiting for is now here and it is found in me.”

Hence, the centrality of the kingdom in the NT signals that the time of the long-awaited fulfillment has definitively begun. It is clear, then, that “no view of Christ’s person and work which is separated from the context of the Kingdom [of God] can claim to reflect a biblical mode of thought.”

254 Ladd comments, “Here was an amazing claim. John had announced an imminent visitation of God which would mean the fulfillment of the eschatological hope and the coming of the messianic age. Jesus proclaimed that this promise was actually being fulfilled. This is no apocalyptic Kingdom but a present salvation. Jesus did not promise his hearers a better future or assure that they would soon enter the Kingdom. Rather he boldly announced that the Kingdom of God had come to them. The presence of the Kingdom was a happening, an event, the gracious action of God. . . . This was no new theology or new idea or new promise; it was a new event in history.” George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 111-12.


The signs that the kingdom of God\textsuperscript{258} had arrived in the person and mission of Jesus are numerous. For example, Jesus cast out demons (Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20), demonstrated victory over Satan (Luke 10:18),\textsuperscript{259} performed miracles (Matt 11:2-5),\textsuperscript{260} bestowed forgiveness (Mark 2:10; cf. Isa 33:24; Mic 7:18-20; Zech 13:1), and proclaimed that the eschatological promises of the kingdom had come (Matt 11:5; Mark 1:15).\textsuperscript{261} In fact, the position of Mark 1:15 within the structure of the letter indicates that the proclamation of the kingdom of God was at the heart of Jesus’ preaching.\textsuperscript{262} Luke teaches the presence of the kingdom when he recounts how the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming. Jesus responds by saying, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for

\textsuperscript{258}Classic Dispensational thought often made a distinction between “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven,” but in recent years more have attributed Matthew’s use of the “kingdom of heaven” as a reverential circumlocution for God such that “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” are functionally synonymous. However, Jonathan Pennington has shown that “heaven” in Matthew is part of a highly developed discourse of heaven and earth language to highlight the tension that exists between heaven and earth or God’s realm and ways versus humanity’s, while anticipating its eschatological resolution. This resolution will come as a result of the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jonathan T. Pennington, \textit{Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew} (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

\textsuperscript{259}Anthony Hoekema points out that “[i]t remains to be said that this victory over Satan, though decisive, is not yet final, since Satan continues to be active during the subsequent ministry of Jesus (Mark 8:33; Luke 22:3, 31). What did occur during Jesus’ ministry was a kind of binding of Satan (see Matt. 12:29 and cf. Rev. 20:2)—that is, a restriction of his activities.” Anthony A. Hoekema, \textit{The Bible and the Future} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 46.

\textsuperscript{260}For example, Jesus gave sight to the blind, enabled the lame to walk, cleansed lepers, opened deaf ears, and raised the dead (Matt 11:5). These descriptions recall the words of Isaiah (e.g., Isa 26:18-19; 29:18-19; 35:5, 6; 53:4; 61:1)

\textsuperscript{261}Schreiner notes that Jesus’ work reveals that God is fulfilling his promises in Jesus. “The new exodus and return from exile promised by Isaiah are a reality for those who respond to Jesus’ message—the good news of the gospel is being proclaimed. And yet Jesus himself recognizes that the fulfillment astonishes. He says, ‘Blessed is the one who is not offended by me’ (Matt. 11:6). The prophesies of Isaiah are beginning to be fulfilled, but they are not yet fulfilled in their totality.” Schreiner, \textit{New Testament Theology}, 57.

\textsuperscript{262}C. C. Caragounis, “Kingdom of God/Heaven,” in \textit{D/JG} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 426.
behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (Luke 17:20-21). Instead of looking for spectacular outward signs of the presence of a primarily political kingdom, Jesus is saying that the Pharisees ought to realize that the kingdom of God is presently in their midst, in the person of Jesus himself, and that faith in him is necessary for entrance into it.263

Outside of the gospels,264 the New Testament also confirms the arrival of the kingdom. In Acts, argues Alan Thompson, though “there are not a large number of references to the kingdom of God, their strategic placement and contexts indicate an importance that outweighs the number of occurrences of the phrase” (Acts 1:3, 6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).265 For instance, the references to the kingdom at the beginning and end (1:3, 6; 28:23, 31), the emphasis on the comprehensive teaching of the kingdom attached to these references, the explanation of the kingdom by Jesus to his disciples, and the fact that Luke ends on the subject of the kingdom of God, collectively

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263 Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 48. Waltke states it more strongly when he writes, “Jesus Christ so embodied the kingdom that to enter it, one must break through and seize the kingdom by trusting one’s entire life to him, a trust so radical that it entails becoming his disciple.” Waltke, *Old Testament Theology*, 145.


show that these verses frame the entirety of Acts and serve as a hermeneutical lens through which to interpret it. Likewise, Paul demonstrates the in-breaking of the kingdom as a result of the “rule and reign of the risen and redeeming Christ” (e.g., Rom 4:17; 1 Cor 4:19-20; 15:20-28; Col 1:13-14), and that those who inherit the kingdom will evidence it in the present (e.g., 1 Cor 4:20-21; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5). Furthermore, Paul’s emphasis on the new creation fits with the already-not yet tension. Believers in Christ are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), which has broken into the present as a result of the cross of Christ (Gal 6:14-15), yet they live in the present evil age (Gal 1:4; Rom 8:18-25) and await the resurrection of their bodies in the future (2 Cor 5:1-10). In Hebrews, believers have presently received the kingdom that cannot be shaken, but a day is coming when things on earth and heaven will be shaken and removed, and the consummation of God’s purposes will be complete (Heb 12:26-28).

It appears throughout the New Testament, then, that God’s kingdom had finally arrived in the person and finished work of Jesus, through whom blessings for the

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266 Ibid., 47.

267 For a helpful article on the kingdom of God in Paul, see Brian J. Vickers, “The Kingdom of God in Paul’s Gospel,” *SBJT* 12, no. 1 (2008): 52-67. He concludes, “For Paul, salvation is grounded in the crucified and risen Christ who, as a result of his resurrection, sits enthroned as King in majesty and will return to bring his kingdom to its appointed fulfillment. For Paul, those who believe in the King will inherit that fulfilled kingdom. In the meantime, their citizenship in the kingdom must be evident in the present. The true inheritors of the kingdom will manifest the kingdom in their lives and behavior. For Paul, the present reality of the kingdom means suffering in ministry and for the sake of the Gospel. We can see the kingdom in precisely the ways Jesus taught it in the experience of Paul. For Paul, like Jesus, the kingdom means the cross and suffering as the only way to glory. From this it is safe to say that Paul is not far from the kingdom of God” (65).


nations come. Yet, the fulfillment takes place in a surprising way, for God’s saving promises are inaugurated but not yet consummated. That is, the kingdom of God is “already but not yet.” George Ladd writes,

The Kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish his rule among human beings, and that this Kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver people from its power, and to bring them into the blessings of God’s reign. The Kingdom of God involves two great moments: fulfillment within history, and consummation at the end of history.271

For example, in Matthew 6:10 Jesus prays to his Father, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” In other words, Jesus is asking “that the great prophecies of the manifestation of God's powerful saving rule will come to pass.”272 Also, those who do the will of God will enter into the kingdom (Matt 7:21), but the ones who do not will enter into judgment (Matt 7:22-23).273 The parables of the sower, mustard seed, and leaven (Matt 13; cf. Mark 4; Luke 8) are explicitly presented as revealing a mystery, and how Jesus’ kingdom teaching encompasses more than a single catastrophic event. It is here, writes Darrell Bock,

that Jesus makes his distinctive contribution by foreseeing a long-running program that was declared and initiated in his teaching and work, but that will one day culminate in a comprehensive judgment. It is to this goal that the kingdom is always headed. Thus the emphasis in the kingdom teaching of the Gospels is always aimed toward this fully restorative future.274

270 Lee, “םי in Genesis 35:11,” 482.


The kingdom is present because the King-Messiah is present, but his reign is not fully established until his second coming.²⁷⁵

Likewise, Paul depicts the kingdom both as present and future. He was confident that the Lord would ultimately rescue him and bring him safely into his kingdom (2 Tim 4:18). He also believed that the unrighteous would not enter the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9). The future tense of the verbs in both of these passages indicates that Paul is referring to the future kingdom.²⁷⁶ In 2 Peter 1:11 the readers are exhorted to cultivate godly qualities so that “there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” And finally, while the already character of the kingdom is not absent from Revelation, the focus is on the not yet, “though we must see that the ‘not yet’ has been secured by Christ’s death and resurrection, so that complete confidence in final victory is taught.”²⁷⁷ Revelation looks forward to the end of history when Christ will return, reward the faithful, and punish the disobedient. Therefore, Christians should be challenged and encouraged to live faithfully in the present (2:1-3:22) and run with endurance, even in the face of persecution (1:9; 13:10; 14:12).


²⁷⁶Hoekema, The Bible and the Future, 50.

²⁷⁷Schreiner, New Testament Theology, 37.
The New Testament message of the inaugurated yet not finally consummated kingdom as a result of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is crucial in connecting the beginning with the end. VanGemeren writes,

Jesus’ inauguration of the kingdom is a stage in the progression of the kingly rule of God, set in motion from the time of Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the garden. Through the revelation to Israel—the covenants, promises, and mighty acts of the Lord—he extended his kingly rule. Through the prophets he encouraged his people by saying that he would extend his kingdom from heaven to earth. The election of Abraham, the Exodus, the Conquest, the Davidic monarchy, the temple, and the restoration from exile marked the highlights in the progression of the kingdom. With the coming of our Lord, God more dramatically and effectively stirs the earth to receive his kingly rule.278

It is easy to see, then, why the kingdom is a consistent and unifying theme throughout the biblical storyline. The kingdom God created in Eden, and, as a result of sin, advanced through each gracious covenant response, had finally arrived in the person and work of Jesus. At the same time, this kingdom awaits its final fulfillment when the kingdom of the world would become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever (Rev 11:15). It is to this end that we now turn.

**In the End: The New Creation and God’s Eschatological Kingdom**

The Bible begins with creation (Gen 1:2) and ends with a description of a more glorious creation (Rev 21:22). Between these two accounts lies the history of redemption.279 The correspondence between the beginning and the end is staggering. Not only is eschatology like protology, but also eschatology escalates protology.280 That

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279 Ibid., 40.

is, the end will echo the beginning—creation as God originally designed it to be—but the end will also bring something qualitatively better.\textsuperscript{282} In the description of the new heaven and new earth, “almost every sentence is related to creation and corresponds to something in the primal history, Genesis 1-11. No one can fail to see that here primal time and end time correspond to each other. The end time is described as creation made whole again.”\textsuperscript{283} The book of Revelation vividly reveals God’s consummated teleological objectives he set out to accomplish from the beginning. To see these consummated objectives, Revelation 21-22 gloriously describes the end of history and God’s eschatological goal.

Revelation 21-22 presents a grand picture of the climax of redemptive history. John’s vision captures the consummation of all of God’s redemptive purposes, which began in Eden, was anticipated in the Old Testament, was inaugurated by the person and work of Christ at his first coming, and will be consummated at his final return. That is, John’s vision beautifully captures the new creation won by Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{284} G. K. Beale writes, “The portrayal of the new covenant, new temple, new Israel and new Jerusalem affirms the future fulfillment of the main prophetic themes of the Old Testament and New Testament, which all find their ultimate climax in the new creation. The new creation

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 209.
\item Scobie, \textit{The Ways of Our God}, 170.
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Itself is the most overarching of these themes, of which the other four are but facets.\textsuperscript{285} Likewise, Dumbrell notes,

The New Jerusalem appears to encompass people (the redeemed), place (New Creation), and presence (the immediate Being of God) and thus to be identical with the kingdom of God. It is the renewed world, a paradise, a holy city, a temple, the cosmic mountain joining heaven and earth, the eschatological expectations of the whole Bible now realized.\textsuperscript{286}

These themes collectively pull together the threads of the kingdom that have developed through the storyline of Scripture. Bauckham notes, “The role of Christ in Revelation is to establish God’s kingdom on earth: in the words of 11:15, to turn ‘the kingdom of the world’ (currently ruled by evil) into ‘the kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah.’”\textsuperscript{287} That is, the new heaven and new earth present the final state of God’s rule, people, and place.

John describes the divine \textit{telos} of God’s cosmological and eschatological plan when he writes,

\begin{quote}
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Rev 21:1-5)
\end{quote}

In John’s final vision, the Jerusalem from above is now the symbol and center of the new creation. It is the place of God’s people where all of their enemies are defeated and sin and death will be no more. Furthermore, the nations come within its gates and the waters

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\textsuperscript{286} Dumbrell, \textit{The End of the Beginning}, 344.

\textsuperscript{287} Bauckham, \textit{The Theology of Revelation}, 67.
\end{flushright}
of paradise flow from the throne of God and of the Lamb through its streets. In other words, the new creation is a new and better Eden, for what was lost by Adam is gained by the last Adam, Jesus. Finally, God’s kingdom has come on earth as it is in heaven.

**New Creation and the King(dom)**

In the consummative vision of Revelation, John draws attention to the divine throne:

> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. (Rev 22:1-3)

The divine throne emphasizing God’s reign is a central theme throughout Revelation, appearing in a number of visions throughout the book (e.g., Rev 1:4; 3:21; 4-5; 7:9-11; 14:3; 19:4-5).  

Perhaps the most comprehensive description of God’s rule is found in chapters 4-5, where 17 of the 34 references in the book occur. In fact, Beale calls this glorious vision of God’s throne room the “theological heart” of Revelation. This emphatic cluster testifies to the centrality of God’s sovereign rule for which he is climatically given glory in 4:9-11 and 5:12-13. In these two chapters, a crucial observation to make with regard to God’s divine rule is the inclusion of Christ, for Christ clearly shares in the identity of God. In other words, there is progression from the...

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288 Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 75.


290 Beale, “Revelation (Book),” 357.

291 For example, in Revelation the self-declaration, “I am the first and the last” (1:17-19),
beginning of the biblical storyline to its end, for by virtue of Christ’s blood-bought victory he now shares in his Father’s rule. Bauckham writes,

The worship of God by the heavenly court in chapter 4 is connected with the acknowledgement of God as the creator of all things (4:11). In chapter 5 the Lamb, Christ, who has triumphed through his death and who is seen standing on the divine throne (the probable meaning of 5:6; cf. 7:17), now becomes in turn the center of the circle of worship in heaven, receiving the obeisance of the living creatures and the elders (5:8). Then the circle expands and the myriads of angels join the living creatures and the elders in a form of worship (5:12) clearly parallel to that offered to God (4:11). Finally, the circle expands to include the whole creation in a doxology addressed to God and the Lamb together (5:13). It is important to notice how the scene is so structured that the worship of the Lamb (5:8-12) leads to the worship of God and the Lamb together (5:13). John does not wish to represent Jesus as an alternative object of worship alongside God, but as one who shares in the glory due to God. He is worthy of divine worship because his worship can be included in the worship of the one God.292

Certainly, Yahweh has set his King, the obedient Son par excellence, to rule over the nations (Ps 2:6-12). The establishment of God’s eternal rule, signified by the prominent presence of his throne, is the fulfillment of God’s design from the beginning.

However, God’s kingship is not new for those familiar with Genesis 1-2. After all, belief in the Creator presupposes the revelation that he alone is King.293 The consummation of God’s rule in light of the universal history of human failure, though, only serves to highlight what has been restored. God’s ruling presence will fill the city, for “the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it” (Rev 22:3). Furthermore, those who enter the city will serve and worship him (cf. Rev 7:15). Humanity, then, will once again

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293 VanGemeren, The Progress of Redemption, 56.
function as God’s kingdom and priests (Rev 1:6), whom Christ has put in service to his Father, which is to be for his Father’s eternal glory and dominion. 294 Therefore, the consummation of God’s rule in Christ at the end is qualitatively better than the beginning, for in the new creation no one or no thing will be allowed to challenge his rule, and there will no longer be anything accursed (Rev 22:3). The King has come, and the Kingdom has been restored.

**New Creation and the People of the King(dom)**

The new creation is the fulfillment of God’s original intent for humanity and the world, which comes through the redemption of Christ. To fulfill his teleological agenda, God creates a new heaven and new earth for his people to dwell. The sequence of the creation of God’s people and place is important. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1), and then placed man into it (Gen 2). At the end, however, God places people from every tribe, language, people, and nation whom he has made throughout history, and then creates a place for them to dwell. 295 A significant part of the new creation that John focuses on, then, is the redeemed saints. 296

In Revelation, John teaches that the Lord has in fact created an international community of people who will inhabit his new creation (Rev 21:24, 26; 22:2; cf. Rev 294–1041.

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294 G. K. Beale, *Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 194,

295 As will be shown in chap. 4, the relative absence of “the land” in the New Testament has presented challenges for a New Testament biblical theology that seeks to incorporate the land motif from the Old Testament. This great reversal, however, may be one reason why the New Testament does not focus on the land/place of God’s people until the end. That is, God’s priority in the New Testament is to make a people for himself, and when his purposes are complete only then will he make a place for them to dwell.

This picture demonstrates the climatic fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises (Gen 12:1-3; 15:5; 17:4-6; 18:18; 22:17-18). The divine oath to Abraham contributes to the larger narrative that Genesis anticipates a future offspring (singular) who will play a central role in establishing God’s blueprint for the earth. Now, this seed—Christ (Gal 3-4)—mediates God’s covenant blessings to the nations (Rev 21:24; 22:2). For example, John declares, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God” (Rev 21:3). This declaration echoes the oft-repeated covenant formula sounded throughout the Old Testament (Gen 17:17; Exod 6:7; 29:45; Lev 26:12; Num 15:41; Deut 29:13; 2 Sam 7:24; Ezek 36:28; 37:23, 27; Zech 8:8).

All the promises of God’s covenants with men, then, are at last brought to full realization in the new creation populated by the nations.

Furthermore, the presentation of the new Jerusalem at the end of Revelation includes in its symbolism the new people of God. For example, John describes that on the gates of the new Jerusalem the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed” (21:12), and “the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (21:14). In this description, “the

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298 Furthermore, Beale and McDonough comment that “The reference to ‘inheriting’ the blessings promised in the Davidic prophecy of 2 Sam. 7:14 shows a hint of further inspiration from the promise of Isa. 55:1-3, where God promises those who ‘thirst’ (55:1) that he will make with Israel ‘an everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David’ (55:3).’” Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” 1151. For more on the “sure mercies of David,” see Peter J. Gentry, “Rethinking the ‘Sure Mercies of David’ in Isaiah 55:3,” *WTJ* 69 (2007): 279-304.


history of both Israel and the church comes to fulfillment in the new Jerusalem.”  

That is, both the Israel of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament have their place as the people of God in God’s final establishment. To consummate God’s teleological plan, then, the new creation is established in order to accommodate God’s multinational people.

**New Creation and the Place of the King(om)**

“The central theme of the book of Revelation,” according to Ladd, is “the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth.”  

Edenic imagery saturates the description of the new creation. As the final place of God’s people, the new Jerusalem is at once a paradise, holy city, and temple. At the end of Isaiah, God declares, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind” (Isa 65:17), and this new creation will remain before him forever (Isa 66:22). In contrast to Greek dualism, which emphasizes the escape from physicality, redemption involves the whole man and finally places him on a redeemed earth. In N. T. Wright’s terms, this final state is “transphysical.”

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303 Ibid., 161.


306 N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 477. In describing this mode of embodiment, Wright points out that the early Christians envisaged a body which was “still robustly physical but also significantly different from the present one.” Ibid., 478.
dwelling place of God that had become separated from creation due to sin, “comes down”  
out of heaven in a dramatic image of restored unity and harmony between the Creator and  
what he has created.\(^{307}\) The new creation, then, is a restoration of Eden, for the kingdom  
of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign  
forever and ever (Rev 11:15).

**Conclusion**

From a canonical perspective, the kingdom of God is a central theme in the  
Lord’s redemptive plan of establishing his kingdom on the earth. That is, the beginning,  
middle, and end of the biblical story describe the teleological design of *God’s people* in  
his *place* under his *rule*. Moreover, the biblical-theological structure of the covenants as  
they unfold across the canon shows how his divinely ordained means will reach his  
divinely ordained end. For the purpose of this dissertation is the question of how this  
eschatological goal is accomplished with regard to God’s place for his people. In other  
words, how do we get to the new Jerusalem from Eden? To this question we now turn in  
the next two chapters.

\(^{307}\) Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our  
Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 208.
CHAPTER 3

THE LAND PROMISE IN GOD’S REDEMPTIVE PLAN:
PART 1—THE OLD TESTAMENT

Introduction

Place matters. Just as Genesis begins with God creating and preparing a realm in which humans are to realize their humanity,¹ so Revelation ends with a glorious vision of a consummated new heaven and new earth where God dwells with his people. But the historical development between the beginning and the end is crucial to observe, for the journey from Eden to the New Jerusalem proceeds through the land promised to Abraham. In other words, the promised land occupies a special place for God’s people after the exile from Eden because it is the place where they will once again live under his lordship and experience his blessed presence. This ideal “land,” according to Bruce Waltke, “is the place where I AM chooses to be uniquely present to provide for and protect his people.”² The promised land, therefore, connects the beginning and the end. Just as Eden is presented as the inaugural kingdom—that is, God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule—so also is the New Jerusalem presented as the consummated kingdom where the kingdom of the world is the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ (Rev 11:15; 21:1-22:5). It is no surprise, then, that the Old Testament

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“focuses the in-breaking of God’s kingdom on Israel’s land and particularly on its capital, Jerusalem.”

God’s program with and through Abraham is to restore the original conditions of God’s creational kingdom described in Genesis 1-2, which will not finally be accomplished until the former things have passed away and all things are made new (Rev 21:4-5). Thus, the intersection of land and kingdom that commences in Eden will be consummated in the New Jerusalem, but between these historical bookends God will re-establish his kingdom on earth through Abraham and his seed living in the land of promise.

This chapter will argue from the Old Testament that the land promised to Abraham begins the process of recapturing and advancing the place of God’s kingdom that was lost in Eden. That is, in God’s redemptive plan the promised land is a type throughout Israel’s history that anticipates, in Edenic terms, an even greater land—a new creation. Although the territorial promise relates initially to Israel’s settlement in the land of Canaan, by divine design it also encompasses a much larger area. Thus, the land promised to and, on more than one occasion, possessed by God’s people throughout her history is a transitional stage in the outworking of God’s ultimate purposes for his people. To be sure, God’s promise is initially fulfilled by the nation of Israel in their settlement of Canaan, conquest of and rest from pagan opposition, and construction of the Temple. However, by divine design his promise still awaits its final fulfillment. So, the ultimate fulfillment of the patriarchal promise will be when all of God’s people are finally

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3Ibid., 534.

4Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 79.
delivered from exile into the final place of God’s kingdom—a new creation won by and through the vicarious victory of the Messiah.

To substantiate this thesis, I will explore four areas that are crucial for the development of the theme of land in the OT. First, I will consider the importance of Genesis 11-11 for the entrance of Abraham into God’s redemptive plan. Second, I will examine the Abrahamic covenant and the promise of land. Third, I will look at the advancement and fulfillment(s) of God’s promise of land throughout Israel’s history. Finally, I will examine the loss of land in exile and the prophetic anticipation of an international and universal restoration. Ultimately, the promises to Abraham are refracted through the prophetic anticipation of a servant of Yahweh who will bring about a new covenant and new creation. It will be shown, then, that Israel’s land is typological of a greater land that will come through Abraham’s seed and a Davidic son, who will triumphantly bring God’s people into a new creation.

The “Problem” of the Promised Land

The topic of land has been a complex and contested issue in biblical studies. Many agree that the theme of land is important in Scripture, for it is an important test case in how God fulfills his promises. For example, land is a central theme in Genesis

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5Walter Brueggemann may overemphasize the importance of land when he asserts that “the land is a central, if not the central theme of the biblical faith.” Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge to Biblical Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 3. Likewise, W. D. Davies claims that “of all the promises made to the patriarchs it was that of the land that was most prominent and decisive.” W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 24. Though these statements may exaggerate the importance of land, it is no doubt important in God’s covenant dealings with his people. As David Holwerda says, “Obviously one cannot tell the story of God’s covenant with his people without telling the story of The Land.” David E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 88.

through Kings—the Pentateuch through the Former Prophets—and because of their respective emphasis on land they can be read as complementary parts to the same story.\(^7\) Paul Williamson states that no other topic highlights the fact that the Pentateuch and Former Prophets belong together and should be read as a unified narrative.\(^8\) In this narrative, the promise and fulfillment of land occupies a crucial role. For example, it is a central thread of the triptych promise to the patriarchs. It forms the backbone of the exodus of God’s people from Egypt. It provides motivation for the Israelites to reach their divinely promised destination, even if it means wandering through the wilderness. It is the territory conquered under the leadership of Joshua and allotted to the tribes of Israel. It plays a crucial role in the checkered saga of Judges. It rests at the center of the kingdom ruled by David and Solomon. And, finally, exile from it is the tragic note on which Israel’s history is brought to its sad conclusion. The prophets, however, hold out hope that God’s people will once again return. Thus, land plays a crucial part in the promise-fulfillment schema of God’s redemptive plan.\(^9\)

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\(^7\) T. D. Alexander writes, “Two main plots, which are themselves closely related, link together Genesis through Kings: 1. the promise of land and 2. the promise of a royal deliverer.” T. D. Alexander, “Genesis to Kings,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 115.


\(^9\) Martens, *God’s Design*, 114. Since, according to Martens, the term “land” is the fourth most frequent noun or substantive in the OT, occurring 2,504 times, a comprehensive exegetical study of each occurrence is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Ibid., 114. This chapter, therefore, will be similar to Tremper Longman and Daniel Reid’s work on the divine warrior theme in Scripture. They write, “We do not intend to discuss or cite every passage that is relevant to the image of the divine warrior. Such a study is inconceivable, given the incredible pervasiveness of the theme. It is our hope to lay a bare outline of the biblical-theological development of the theme and in this way provide a grid for the reader to understand other passages and texts.” Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 27. As a result, there will be books and sections of the Old Testament that will not be
Two related issues contribute to the contested discussion of land. To begin, the precise geographical location of the promise and its fulfillment(s) present disagreement among scholars. That is, the various accounts seem to give flexible—or contradictory—dimensions of the land, which make it difficult to locate the fulfillment(s). Moreover, various theological connections with land appear to broaden the horizons of the promise. Many conclude, then, that because of these apparent problems either the land promises were fulfilled at some point within the Old Testament or the promises still await future fulfillment, such as in the millennium. Walter Kaiser, for example, states,

“The land of Israel cannot be reduced to a sort of mystical land defined as a new spiritual reality which transcends the old geographic and political designations if one wishes to continue to represent the single truth intentions of the writers of the biblical text. . . . The mark of God’s new measure of grace, not only to Israel as a nation but also to all the nations and Gentiles at large, will be Israel’s return to the land and enjoyment of it in the millennium.”

However, one does not have to opt for either an “old geographic and political designation” or a “mystical land defined as a new spiritual reality.” In other words, if there is textual warrant to argue that the old anticipates and is fulfilled in the new—which are both physical realities—then there is hermeneutical ground to assert that this conclusion represents the divine intention of the dually-authored text. Therefore, this

addressed in detail. This includes the wisdom literature as well as Ruth and Esther. This is not to say, however, that these books do not speak to the theme of land, for they often depict lives of blessing in it, albeit indirectly. Waltke has a similar view when he asserts that humankind, not the land, is the focus of the Wisdom literature, though he may overstate it. Waltke, An Old Testament Theology, 535n6.

See, for example, God’s presence, tabernacle/ Temple, inheritance, rest, and seed/offspring.


The dual authorship of Scripture provides a hermeneutical lens for the reader to interpret Scripture canonically. Scott Swain writes, “The presence and operation of the Spirit’s sovereign lordship in

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chapter will examine the land promise as it unfolds across the textual/historical, epochal, and canonical horizons of Scripture\textsuperscript{13} in order to see the historical and eschatological nature of its fulfillment.

**Genesis: Making the Promise of Land**

**Genesis 1-11: The Preface to the Promise of Land**

Theological discussions of central themes in biblical theology rightly see the importance of the Abrahamic narrative. Gerald Bray writes, “The question of the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12-24 has always occupied a place of central importance in the thinking of any student of the Scriptures.”\textsuperscript{14} This place of central importance is true both for covenant and dispensational scholars. For example, covenant theologian John Murray states that the Abrahamic covenant “underlies the whole subsequent development of God’s redemptive promise, word, and action.”\textsuperscript{15} Likewise, and perhaps even more forcefully, progressive dispensationalists Craig Blaising and

\begin{quote}
the production of Holy Scripture does not lead to the suppression or overruling of God’s human emissaries in their exercise of authorial rationality and freedom. Rather, his sovereign lordship leads to their enlivening and sanctified enablement. The Spirit who created the human mind and personality does not destroy the human mind and personality when he summons them to his service. . . . The truth is that because the Spirit is fully active in the production of Holy Scripture therefore its human authors are fully active as well.” Scott R. Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 67. Likewise John Webster, commenting on 2 Peter 1:21, states, “Being ‘moved’ by the Spirit is not simply being passively impelled; the Spirit’s suggestio and human authorship are directly, not inversely, proportional; the action of the inspiring Spirit and the work of the inspired creature are concursive rather than antithetical.” John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 38-9.
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{15}John Murray, *The Covenant of Grace: A Biblico-Theological Study* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R,
Darrell Bock state that “to understand the Bible, one must read it in view of the Abrahamic covenant, for that covenant with Abraham is the foundational framework for interpreting Scripture and the history of redemption which it reveals.”

Certainly “many routes to the unity of Scripture exist, but none dare neglect Abraham’s role in that unity.” All agree, therefore, that the Abrahamic covenant is crucial for understanding the unity of Scripture as a whole as it unfolds across history.

However, while discussing the foundational importance of Abraham, Genesis 1-11 can often be overlooked or disconnected. On one hand, emphasis is placed on the promises to Abraham to such an extent that the history of Israel really begins at Genesis 12.

For example, John Bright does not incorporate Genesis 1-11 before picking up the history of Israel beginning with Abram, and it is not until the end of the book that he connects the “whole race of mankind” to the people of Israel. Another example is the idea that Genesis 1-11 presents the primeval or prologue to history, whereas the entrance of Abram in Genesis 11:27 marks the beginning of the history of salvation. What is lost, then, is the significance of Adam and the following narrative for the formation of God’s

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people, which provide the foundation for the calling of and promises to Abram.\textsuperscript{21} The events of Genesis 1-11, then, “are more than simply a prologue to the story of Israel. In many ways these events become paradigmatic in that they reflect the movement from sin to exile to restoration,”\textsuperscript{22} all of which cycle through the rest of Genesis, the Pentateuch, and the Old Testament as a whole.

On the other hand, Abram is viewed as a new beginning with little attention given to the events leading up to his calling. For example, David Clines asserts that the promise to Abraham represents “an (re)affirmation of the primal divine intentions for humanity.”\textsuperscript{23} While this affirmation is true—and Clines briefly attempts to connect Genesis 1-11 to the theme of the Pentateuch\textsuperscript{24}—it does not sufficiently demonstrate how the storyline advances from Genesis 1-11 to Genesis 12. In other words, there is progression in the role and experience of humanity from the first human couple to the introduction of Abraham as a result of what takes place in creation, the fall, and the events that unfold. Stephen Dempster writes,

> The world is created by the command of God; the garden of Eden becomes the prime habitat of human beings until their exile from it. Humans are expelled from the earth with the judgment of the great deluge. The postdiluvian human community is dispersed across the face of the earth at Babel. And when Abraham arrives on the historical scene he is promised a commodity that has been in short supply for human beings: a land to call his own.\textsuperscript{25}


\textsuperscript{22}Pate et al., \textit{The Story of Israel}, 29.

\textsuperscript{23}D. J. A. Clines, \textit{The Theme of the Pentateuch}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., JSOT 10 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1997), 30, 85.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 84-86.

\textsuperscript{25}Dempster, \textit{Dominion and Dynasty}, 48.
Likewise, William Dumbrell points out that Genesis 1-11 is “critical for the development of a biblical worldview and thus a biblical theology. Genesis 3-11 perceptively analyzes the human predicament. God’s response to this situation unfolds in the patriarchal narratives, preeminently in the call of Abram from Ur of the Chaldeans.” Thus, any study of the promise of land should first examine and incorporate Genesis 1-11 into it.

The call of Abraham, then, provides the blueprint for redressing the universal problem that dramatically escalates to this point in the Genesis narrative. Gary Burge rightly points out that “Abraham is God’s answer to a problem that emerges from Adam.” Similarly, Larry Helyer writes,

The call of Abraham represents a decisive moment in the unfolding history of redemption. The great question of Genesis 11 concerning the scattered nations begins to receive an answer. The Lord will bless these nations through the offspring of Abraham. Thus Genesis 1-11 stands over against Genesis 12-Revelation 22 in the relationship of problem to solution. God’s saving plan, remarkably, comes down to this: it is through the one that the many will be reached. The one is the promised seed of Abraham (Rom 5:12-21).

The promises to Abraham, then, address the curse of the ground (Gen 3:17-19) and Adam’s expulsion from Eden (3:23) brought about by sin. In fact, it is reasonable to suggest that “Genesis 3-11 demonstrates the necessity for the kind of saving activity that is given its initial expression in God’s covenant with Abraham. . . . The fact of salvation

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is illustrated with Noah but not its pattern. It is surely with Abraham that the new beginning is presented.”\(^{30}\) And a new beginning it is.

The escalation of sin and death from Adam to his posterity is graciously interrupted by God through the calling of Abram and his descendants, whom God promises to bless.\(^ {31}\) According to Rendtorff, “the election of Abraham is regarded as the second fundamental act of God after creation.”\(^ {32}\) In Genesis 11:27-32, the important theme of offspring is introduced, not only in reference to Sarai’s barrenness (v. 30), but also by the inclusion of only eight names in a genealogy that normally should include ten.\(^ {33}\) Sailhamer observes that “thus far in Genesis the author has followed a pattern of listing ten names between important individuals in the narrative. This short list gives only eight names. . . . It is only as the narrative unfolds that the ninth and tenth names are shown to be the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael (16:15) and Isaac (21:3).”\(^ {34}\) But not only does God bring into existence a new line of humanity, he also blesses them. This blessing is significant given the storyline up to this point. Kenneth Mathews comments, “The word ‘bless’ occurs five times in the call of the patriarch (12:1-3); this was the gracious counterbalance to the five ‘curses’ against fallen creation and humanity (3:14, 17b; 4:11; 5:26; 6:13; 9:2).

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\(^{30}\)Goldsworthy, Christ-Centered Biblical Theology, 117.


\(^{34}\)Sailhamer, The Pentateuch as Narrative, 137.
With the call of Abraham, then, “the ideals of Genesis 1-2 are resurrected.” Furthermore, the calling of Abram out of Ur begins the reversal of the theological motif of exile. In Genesis, Adam and Eve experience various aspects of exile as a result of their disobedience (3:6): shame (3:7), conflict with God (3:8) and the land (3:17-19), and expulsion from their homeland (3:24). Goldsworthy points out that “outside Eden there is an important sense that God’s people are always in exile. The dimensions of this exile are clarified by the promise of a land that reflects the reality of Eden.” Along these same lines, Dumbrell writes,

From the fall onward, this hoped-for restoration is an ingredient in the biblical expectation for the end. The hope for the removal of the curse upon the ground is to some degree symbolically met by Israel’s gift of the Promised Land, but the hope continues and is addressed precisely in the post-exilic doctrine of the new creation.

As Adam and Eve receive the promise of restoration in the programmatic prophecy of Genesis 3:15, so the promise to Abraham clarifies the means through which God will bring his people back from exile into a new creation.

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The promise of land to Abraham becomes even more significant when viewed against the curses brought into creation in Genesis 3. Just as “the curses of Genesis 3 are directly confronted once the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 have traced the descent of the seed of the woman down to Abram,” so also the exile from the land of Eden is directly confronted by the promise of land to Abraham and his seed. Dumbrell comments that Genesis 12:1-3 “recovers the ultimate divine purpose, namely, a kingdom of God to establish God’s rule and to unite human beings with their world.” The universal scope of Eden, in light of the fall, temporarily narrows to the land of Canaan, which would then expand with the proliferation of Abraham’s offspring. No longer would humanity be left to sin’s rule; rather, God would once again bring his kingdom through a redeemed humanity.

Furthermore, the promise of land in God’s commitment to redeem humanity from its fallen condition provides an idyllic setting from which Adam and Eve had fallen. “As Adam and Eve had known God’s blessing in Eden, so God would bless his people in a new land. This idea of restoration to Paradise provides the proper biblical context for understanding God’s promise of land to Abraham.” But this land is not merely a change

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42 Strom says, “Abraham would receive the very things for which the people at Babel had grasped: he would have a great name; he would father a great nation; and he would become a source of blessing throughout all the earth. In other words, the Lord would maintain his purposes for creation and humanity through Abraham and those who followed him” (Strom, The Symphony of Scripture, 26). See also Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 48.

43 Dumbrell, The Faith of Israel, 28.

44 Anthony A. Hoekema, Created in God’s Image (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 276-78.

45 O. Palmer Robertson, “A New-Covenant Perspective on the Land,” in Land of Promise, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 125; also see James McKeown,
in location. God’s gracious response to the sin and downward spiral of Genesis 3-11 is so
dramatic and outstanding that it is expressed in language similar to that of a new
creation.\(^{46}\) So, writes Dumbrell, “as in Gen. 1:3, the form of 12:1 is that of a divine
speech which includes a virtual imperative, calling a new phase of history into being, just
as the words of Gen. 1:3 had called existence itself into being.”\(^{47}\) Similarly, Köstenberger
and O’Brien write, “the divine speech and command at Genesis 12:1 are structurally
similar to the speech and implied command at the beginning of creation.”\(^{48}\) Through
Abraham, then, not only would God restore and dwell with his people once again as their
Lord, he would also restore and dwell with his people in his place—a new creation
kingdom on earth.

**Genesis 12-50: The Abrahamic Covenant and Promise of Land**

The covenant with Abraham promises to reverse the curse of Adam and to
bring back into reality the advancement of God’s kingdom on earth. Of special
importance is how God’s people will live in his place under his blessing. For Abraham,
this place is the land (Gen 12:1), and this promise “runs like a scarlet thread through the
whole of the story of the patriarchs.”\(^{49}\)

\(^{46}\) Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical

\(^{47}\) W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*
(Carlisle, CA: Paternoster, 1984), 58.


\(^{49}\) Rendtorff, *Canonical Hebrew Bible*, 22-23.
The story of Abraham begins with God calling him to leave his home to the land that God will show him (Gen 12:1). Although Genesis 12:1-3 does not specify which land Abraham will possess, the promise that God will make of him a great nation “contains within it an implied promise of the land.”

Peter Gentry notes,

Now, you cannot have a great nation without land, without territory, without a place for a large number of people to live and call home. So the idea of land is implied in this promise, and the Lord makes this explicit in verse 7. . . . The promise of land is also implicit in the first command: “Go from your country!” One cannot become a great nation and inhabit territory without first becoming distinct from the land and nation where one starts out.

The Lord confirms his promise to Abraham (Gen 15:7; 17:8; cf. 22:17) and also to his offspring, Isaac (Gen 26:3-4) and Jacob/Israel (Gen 28:4, 13-15; 35:12). Furthermore, the story of Joseph provides an essential link between the patriarchal promises and the account of the exodus from Egypt, for through it the conflict of his exile to Egypt awaits resolution. And although Abraham would merely taste some of the reality of being personally in the land, the full reality is delayed 400 years as he and his offspring live as sojourners and servants in a land that is not theirs (Gen 15:13-16). But there is hope, for

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51Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 235. More generally, Daniel Block writes, “Of all the elements which distinguish one nation from another, none seems more obvious than the territorial aspect. One may conceive of a nation that is heterogeneous ethnically, whose government is not monarchical, or which shares a language or other cultural features with another, but it is difficult to imagine either (1) a nation which does not occupy a land that it calls its own, or (2) a nation which shares its territory with another.” Daniel I. Block, “The Foundations of National Identity: A Study in Ancient Northwest Semitic Perceptions” (Ph.D. diss., University of Liverpool, 1983), 298. See also H. G. M. Williamson: “It is a moot point to what extent one can speak of a nation in isolation from its territory.” H. G. M. Williamson, “The Old Testament and the Material World,” *EvQ* 57, no. 1 (1985): 7.

52The anticipation of this resolution is reflected, for example, in God’s promise to Jacob that he will surely bring him back again (Gen 46:4), as well as the burial of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 49:29-50:14) and Joseph (Gen 50:24-25) in Canaan, not Egypt.

Abraham’s purchase of his burial site guarantees the down payment of his inheritance to come (Gen 23; 25:9-10; cf. 49:29-50:26).

The story of Abraham and his descendants demonstrates the importance of land within the Genesis—and Pentateuchal—narrative. Bruce Reichenbach notes, “Although the kingdom of God extends throughout the universe (the heavens and the earth), the primary focus in the Pentateuch is on the land.”54 From the call of Abraham in Genesis through Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch narrates the story of the patriarchs and their descendants, none of whom enters the land to possess it.55 This emphasis is why David Clines argues that the governing theme of the Pentateuch is the partial fulfillment—and partial non-fulfillment—of the promise to Abraham.56 To explore how this theme is developed, important components of the Abrahamic covenant—namely its unconditional/conditional, national/international, regional/global, and temporal/eternal dimensions—will be examined.57 This examination will show that the land promised to Abraham is presented within the Old Testament as a type or pattern of a future and greater reality.


56Clines, The Theme of the Pentateuch, 30. In the second edition, Clines adds an “Afterword” in which he deconstructs his earlier position and admits that he has moved in a postmodern direction. For example, now he would not be speaking of “the meaning” of the Pentateuch or the theme that “encapsulates the meaning of the work” (131). This shift is because “texts do not have meaning in themselves, and that what we call meaning is something that comes into being at the meeting point of text and reader” (131). For a better alternative to Clines’ postmodern conclusions, see Kevin Vanhoozer who writes, “Let us henceforth think of meaning not as something that words and texts have (meaning as noun) but rather as something people do (meaning as verb). Better said: a word or text only has meaning (noun) if some person means (verb) something by it.” Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 202.

57These categories have been adapted from Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 15-34.
Unconditional and conditional. Crucial to the discussion of Israel’s relationship to the land is the nature of the Abrahamic covenant. More specifically, how is the possession and fulfillment of the land affected by Abraham’s—and by extension his descendants’—(dis)obedience? Williamson notes,

While some texts in the Pentateuch appear to pledge the land to Abraham and his descendants unconditionally, in other passages possession of the land is qualified with certain provisos, thus raising the vexed question: is the territorial promise unconditional or provisional in nature?

According to Williamson, one way scholars answer this question is by holding to various critical views of the text. However, he rightly notes,

All such theories ultimately come up against the insuperable problem of why redactors would wish to combine two antithetic traditions, or to qualify the tradition of an unconditional promise on such a selective basis themselves. In any case, if the final redactor was somehow able to harmonize the unconditional and provisional passages, this must also be possible for those who wish to understand the text in its final form. Significantly, even those today who affirm the permanent, unconditional

58 Chap. 2 examined the Abrahamic covenant in relation to God’s purposes in establishing his kingdom. This section, however, will examine the Abrahamic covenant as it specifically relates to the promise of land.


61 Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 22-23.

nature of the territorial promise\textsuperscript{63} have little difficulty in reconciling this premise with the passages that qualify the promise in some way.\textsuperscript{64}

At this point it should be noted that Williamson avoids this dilemma by arguing for two Abrahamic covenants. As chapter two briefly discussed, however, Williamson’s proposal does not make the best sense of the biblical data when the covenant is situated in its textual, epochal, and canonical horizons. That is, Williamson fails to see the development—a significant development, no less—in God’s covenant with Abraham as the storyline progresses and escalates beginning in Genesis 12. Evidence of this progression and escalation is seen throughout the Abrahamic narrative.

To begin, Genesis 17 consolidates and advances the promises in Genesis 12 and 15.\textsuperscript{65} Wenham comments that Genesis 17 is “a watershed in the Abraham story. The promises to him have been unfolded bit by bit, gradually building up and becoming more detailed and precise, until here they are repeated and filled out in a glorious crescendo in a long and elaborate divine speech.”\textsuperscript{66} Despite Abraham’s attempt to circumvent God’s means to obtain a child, God answers Abraham’s sin by reiterating his promise. God will not only multiply Abraham, but he will multiply him “greatly” (Gen 17:2). Moreover, Genesis 17 does more than consolidate God’s previous promises, it also extends them.


\textsuperscript{64}Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 23.

\textsuperscript{65}Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, 74.

\textsuperscript{66}Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 16-50, WBC, vol. 2 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 16. Interestingly, in a later work it is unclear whether Wenham holds to one or two covenants in Genesis 15 and 17, for in one place he writes that Genesis 15 and 17 are “two covenant ceremonies,” yet later he writes, “the next covenant [in Genesis 17] has a different focus [than Genesis 15].” Gordon J. Wenham, Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 42, 43.
Williamson and Alexander are correct in pointing out the national focus of chapter 15 and the international focus of chapter 17. Rather than viewing them as separate covenants, however, chapters 15 and 17 develop the promises given in Genesis 12. In fact, chapters 15 and 17 develop the promises in the same order in which they were given. Gentry notes, “Genesis 15 and Genesis 17 correlate respectively with the first three promises and the second three promises of Genesis 12:1-3.” Thus, through the nation of Abraham’s descendants (Gen 15) will come a multitude of nations (Gen 17). Dumbrell writes,

In verses 1-3a there is a general recollection of Genesis 12:1-3, though the resemblances between chapters 15 and 17:1-8 are closer. Like chapter 15, Genesis 17 begins with a divine appearance to which there is an appropriate response by Abraham (17:1-3a; cf. 15:2-3). The substance of the promise of descendants and their significance is then repeated (17:4-6; cf. 15:4-5), while the covenant is then confirmed between the parties, including Abraham’s descendants, with particular reference to the land (17:7-8; cf. 15:7-12). The stipulation of circumcision (17:9-14) is the new item, while 17:15-21 and 22-27 support earlier material of the chapter.

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67 Williamson, Sealed with an Oath, 89-91; Alexander, From Paradise to the Promised Land, 176-79.

68 Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 279; Birch et al., A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 79. See also Byron Wheaton, who demonstrates from analyzing Genesis 12-15 and 17-22 “the presence of two sections or panels in the narrative with balanced episodes. God's promised solutions to the problems confronting his redemptive action that are introduced in 11:27-32 are given in programmatic fashion in ch. 12. These promises of land and seed are then individually highlighted in the remaining narrative. The land theme is foregrounded in the first half of the cycle, where Abraham's faith is matured and tested, culminating in a divine oath that it will be possessed by the seed. The seed theme, which is foregrounded in the second half of the cycle, traces the development of Abraham's faith in this promise, and it too culminates in an oath that God will fulfill this promise to Abraham. In each case, the oath is the response to a sequence of specific behaviors on Abraham's part to which the promise of land and seed are linked. Each of these sequences climaxes in a noteworthy divine event or word that secures the future. In Abraham, God has created a person who, in the moment of trial, trusts God's Word for his future as it relates both to land and seed. This distinguishes him from his ancestor Adam who through unbelief forfeited the land and corrupted the seed. God's unconditional commitment to Abraham indicates that he can serve as the father of the elect community through whom blessing will come to the world.” Byron Wheaton, “Focus and Structure in the Abraham Narratives,” TrinJ 27, no. 1 (2006): 161-62.

69 Ibid., 268.

70 Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, 75.
Hence, it will be through Abraham and his descendants that blessing to the nations will come.

Furthermore, Genesis 22:17-18 adds another layer to the thread of promises.

Kenneth Mathews comments,

This culminating passage gathers descriptions of the Abraham promises from earlier narratives and expands upon them: (1) ‘I will surely bless you’ adds ‘surely’ to the first occasion of the pledge in 12:2; (2) ‘the stars in the sky’ recalls Abram’s night vision (15:5) but here includes ‘and [I will surely] make your descendants as numerous’ (cf. also Hagar, 16:10; Eve, 3:16); (3) the motif of immeasurable ‘sand’ ($hôl$), echoing the Abraham-Lot separation (13:16, ‘$āpâr$, ‘dust’) appears in conjunction with the stars only here in Genesis (cf. Jer 33:22; Heb 11:12); and (4) ‘possession of the cities [lit. ‘gate’] of their enemies’ (v. 17) is new to the promise, though it will appear in the familial blessing for Rebekah (24:60b).

As a result, writes Gentry,

Genesis 22:17 deals a decisive blow to Williamson’s proposal that Genesis 15 and 17 represent distinct and separate covenants, the former unilateral and the latter bilateral, since this verse specifically connects the promise that Abraham’s seed will be as myriad as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore with Abraham’s obedience. . . . The focus on seed in Genesis 22:16-18 is similar to Genesis 17, but the promise of seed as numerous as the stars connects specifically with Genesis 15. Thus there is only one covenant, and one cannot simplistically say that this covenant is unilateral. The traditional terminology of conditional versus unconditional covenants needs to be overhauled. One must pay careful attention to the flow of the plot in the Abraham narratives. In Abraham’s roller-coaster of faith, just as the events of Genesis 16 motivate the covenant confirmation in Genesis 17, so the abysmal sellout of his wife Sarah in Genesis 20 precipitates the need for the test and the affirmation by mighty oath in Genesis 22.

In other words, God again answers Abraham’s failures and questions with bigger promises that advance the certainty of God’s plan to bless Abraham and the world through him.

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72 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 286.
Finally, Waltke provides warrant from Nehemiah—a later epochal horizon—when he writes, “Nehemiah treats the covenants of chapters 15 and 17 as two aspects of the Abrahamic covenant, connecting the land grant of chapter 15 with the change in Abraham’s name in chapter 17, and regards the Abrahamic covenant as having been fulfilled (Neh 9:7-8)”.

Furthermore, in light of the canonical horizon, the New Testament never refers to God’s relations with Abraham as ‘covenants’—*in the plural* (see, e.g., Rom 4; Gal 3).

Hamilton, then, helpfully summarizes the flow of these chapters:

The narrative in ch. 17 is not a duplicate of that in ch. 15, but rather is a reconfirmation by God to Abraham of his promises, especially on the heels of the less-than-happy results of Abraham’s cohabitation with Hagar in ch. 16. This reassuring word, sequential to an Abraham debacle, recalls another reassuring, reconfirming word to Abraham (13:14-17) after another debacle (12:10-20). Abraham is still not even a father of the son of promise! . . . There is more here, however, than reconfirmation. Two new items enter the covenant promises in ch. 17. In the first place, Abram becomes Abraham. Only one verse, 17:5, is devoted to this shift. This new name universalizes Abraham’s experience with God. He is to be ‘the father of a multitude of nations.’ The second new item is the introduction of circumcision. This particularizes Abraham’s experience with God. He is to be the father of Jews.

Hence, Williamson’s approach to the Abrahamic covenant(s) is problematic in light of all the biblical data. Another explanation, then, should be given to better account for this divinely-intended tension in the text.

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73Waltke, *Genesis*, 263. Likewise, Gentry notes, “Williamson’s approach is flawed because later texts in both Old and New Testaments never refer to God’s dealings with Abraham as ‘covenants’—*in the plural*. Never in all the historical summaries in the Old Testament (e.g., Neh 9) is there a reference to the Abrahamic covenants. There is only one covenant with Abraham, confirmed to Isaac and Jacob.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 280.

74Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 280.

One common solution is to appeal to the Abrahamic covenant as unconditional.\(^{76}\) However, this distinction is not quite accurate, for both unconditional and conditional elements exist. In one sense the Abrahamic covenant was conditional, for Abraham’s obedience was necessary. For example, the inaugural giving of the promise, “Then Abram went” (Gen 12:4) fulfills the divine command to “Go from your country” (Gen 12:1).\(^{77}\) Alexander notes, “By commanding him to leave his homeland and be a blessing, God places the onus on Abraham to obey in order that the promises concerning land, descendants, and the blessing of others may be fulfilled.”\(^{78}\) From the outset, then, “God obligates himself to Abraham while assigning him a task. God’s commands are fulfilled in Abraham’s obedient faith.”\(^{79}\) To be sure, God’s gracious promise provides the basis of future fulfillment, but Abraham’s response is also necessary in order to bring it about. Paul House comments,

Obviously [Abram] must act in faith to gain this particular blessing. Thus both the divine promise and human obedience make the blessing occur. Since all subsequent blessings are dependent on this initial faithful response, none of the promises are unconditional in the sense that Abram need do nothing to inherit them. Though the

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\(^{77}\)Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 278.

\(^{78}\)Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 175.

realization of this promise requires several centuries, as will be seen, from this point forward Abram and his progeny believe the land is theirs by divine right.⁸⁰ God’s promise “engenders the capacity to embrace it by faith,”⁸¹ but Abraham also shows himself to be an obedient servant when he follows God’s commands.⁸² Already in Genesis 12, then, a tension exists between God’s commands and Abraham’s obedient response.

Genesis 17 also emphasizes the necessity of Abraham’s obedience when the Lord commands him to “walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly” (17:1-2). Hamilton rightly notes that this encounter is not the first time Abraham has received a divine imperative (cf. 12:1).⁸³ Furthermore, circumcision is added to the condition of membership within the covenant community.⁸⁴ It is important to note, however, that these obligations come after the repetition of the promises and making of the covenant in Genesis 15. That is, they “did not constitute a covenant relationship but presupposed one already in place.”⁸⁵ The storyline leading up to this moment is important to consider. Gentry states,

The circumstances of chapter 16 are important motivation for the covenant confirmation in chapter 17. Genesis 17:2 begins with the verb wĕ’ ettĕnâ, a form almost certainly to be identified as a first person singular modal, which in direct sequence with the commands of the previous verse marks a purpose or result clause:

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⁸⁰House, Old Testament Theology, 72.
⁸³Hamilton, Genesis 1-17, 461.
⁸⁴Matthews, Old Testament Turning Points, 47.
“Walk before me and be blameless so that I may make my covenant between me and you.” Obedience is expected of Abram in the covenant relationship. Already in Genesis 12, when Yahweh called Abram and gave him such great promises, there were commands: “Go” . . . and “Be a blessing!” Chapter 15 reiterated the great promises and enshrined them in a covenant. Abram has not demonstrated full integrity [in Genesis 16], and so, in chapter 17, God comes to confirm/uphold his covenant and emphasize, among other things, the need for an obedient son in Abram’s Adamic role.  

Likewise, Wenham comments, “Whereas inaugurating the covenant was entirely the result of divine initiative, confirming it involves a human response.” In other words, divine grace precedes commands. Indeed God’s grace is evident when, after Abraham and Sarah sinfully attempt to fulfill the promise through Hagar (chap. 16), chapter 17 begins with the Lord saying, “I am God Almighty” (17:1). This name, “El Shaddai,” is associated especially and particularly with the lives of the patriarchs and, according to Wenham, “evokes the idea that God is able to make the barren fertile and to fulfill his promises.” Gentry writes, “It seems that this name was given to encourage faith because of the disparity between the covenant promises and the reality of the situation in which [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] found themselves at the time.” The fulfillment, then, would not finally depend on Abraham’s ability, but on God who was able to do what he had promised.

Perhaps the clearest text that underscores the conditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant is Genesis 22:17-18 (cf. 26:3-5).

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86 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 263.
89 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 259.
I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.

This text specifically states that the blessings were given to Abraham “because” he obeyed the Lord’s voice. Wenham holds God’s promise and Abraham’s obedient response in tension when he writes, “It could be said that the original promises made in chapter 12 have now been turned into guarantees thanks to Abraham’s faithful obedience.” Victor Hamilton comments,

The novel element in this catena of promises is the emphasis on conditionality—that human behavior determines God’s response. These promises are uttered and shall be fulfilled because Abraham has done the appropriate thing. The same emphasis appears again in 26:5. Isaac receives the promises because his father was obedient to Yahweh. Is it not interesting that not until God’s last spoken word to Abraham—which is what 22:15-18 is—is an explicit connection made between performance and promise? . . . The postponement of the announcement of this cause and effect relationship clearly subordinates performance to promise, works to faith, and merit to grace. In addition, these promises affirm that because of Abraham’s obedience, the blessing of Yahweh will extend far beyond faithful Abraham.

Though Abraham’s obedience is necessary for the fulfillment of God’s oath, it does not function as the basis for God’s gracious blessings. This subordination of performance to promise leads to the other aspect of the Abrahamic covenant.

Genesis 15 powerfully illustrates a clear and profound unilateral-unconditional emphasis as God invokes a curse upon himself if he does not keep his covenant and fails

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92 Only four passages in Genesis mention God swearing an oath (Gen 22:16; 24:7; 26:3; 50:24), three of which refer to land (24:7; 26:3; 50:24) and one to the promise of descendants (22:16).
Indeed God will fulfill his promise concerning Abraham’s future seed, and Abraham receives God’s promise by faith (Gen 15:6). House notes,

Certainly [Abram’s] earlier acts of faith help him believe now, yet this instance is all the more impressive because it occurs years after the original promise is tendered and because it continues to have no evidential basis other than God’s word and God’s character.  

Thus, God counts it to Abraham as righteousness and then focuses on the land to be possessed (15:7). With the promise of land and offspring in place, then, it appears that in Abram “the divine goal for history is being worked out.” Nevertheless, Abraham wants to know how he will possess the land (15:8). The remainder of the chapter is devoted to God’s covenant ceremony with Abram that guarantees the promise. Hamilton writes,

After Abraham arranges the animal remains in parallel columns, God himself passes between the two rows in fiery manifestation. The intent of the ritual could hardly be more daring. God is unilaterally obligating himself to Abraham and his seed to the degree that God places himself under a potential curse. Should this God of promise prove to be unreliable, then may his fate be dismemberment, as with these animals (on the significance of cutting animals in two as part of covenant ritual, see Jer 34:18).

Regarding this ritual, Waltke notes,

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93Waltke, *Genesis*, 245; cf. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 332. Also note, though, the imperatives for Abraham to “look” and “number” (Gen 15:5).


95Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 80.

According to extant ancient Near Eastern texts, passing between the slain animals is a ritual that invokes a curse on the participants if they break the covenant. To walk between the carcasses is to submit oneself to the fate of the slaughtered animals as a penalty for covenant breaking.\textsuperscript{97} Note that only God walks between the carcasses, signifying that the covenant is not conditioned upon Abraham’s future action, but based on Abraham’s past faithfulness.\textsuperscript{98}

The fact that only God passes between the pieces—as represented by the smoking fire pot and a flaming torch\textsuperscript{99}—is astonishing because it shows that the fulfillment of the promise rests on him and him alone.\textsuperscript{100} To be sure, God will unconditionally and unilaterally fulfill and meet the conditions of his promise.

Some conclusions can be drawn from above. To begin, the Abrahamic covenant consists of both unconditional and conditional elements and, therefore, “is not reducible to one of those features alone.”\textsuperscript{101} Thus, the common distinction between unconditional and conditional covenants is not quite accurate. Genesis 15 forcefully shows that God will unilaterally fulfill the promise and conditions of the covenant even if it means taking the curse upon himself. God will keep his promise regardless of what Abraham does, and Abraham receives God’s promise by faith (Gen 15:6). Mathews

\textsuperscript{97}See, e.g., an eighth-century BC Assyrian text from North Syria that includes the following clause: “This head is not the head of a lamb, it is the head of Mati’lu. If Mati’lu sins against this treaty, so may, just as the head of this spring lamb is torn off . . . the head of Mati’lu be torn off, and his son.” Erica Reiner, “Treaty between Ashurniari V of Assyria and Mati’lu of Arpad,” in The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 211. Jeremiah also makes reference to the same ritual: “The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces” (Jer 34:18). For other parallels, see Weinfeld, Promise of Land, 251-58; Waltke, An Old Testament Theology, 319n13.

\textsuperscript{98}Waltke, An Old Testament Theology, 319.

\textsuperscript{99}Waltke, Genesis, 244.

\textsuperscript{100}Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 251.

\textsuperscript{101}Ibid., 634.
comments, “Abram can do nothing to enter into the promise; he can only rely on the Lord.”

Moreover, the incentive to believe was certainly the promise of the Lord. However, this unconditional emphasis does not remove the necessity of Abraham’s obedience. Genesis 17:2 and 22:17-18 demonstrate that God requires an obedient partner in the covenant relationship. God promised the covenant blessings to Abraham, but these blessings are reserved for people who trusted and obeyed the Lord. In other words, the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant is grounded in God’s promises, but the means of fulfillment will come through Abraham’s—and his descendants’—obedience. David Baker notes,

> It is sometimes thought that the covenant with Abraham was unconditional, but the fact that circumcision is the only obligation specified in this text does not mean there were no other conditions. To accept the Lord as God surely implies obligations of worship, obedience, and faithfulness, even if the details are not elaborated. Genesis 17 begins with an ethical imperative (‘walk before me, and be blameless,’ v. 1) and ethical implications are referred to later in the Abraham story (Gen 18:19; 22:18; 26:5).

Similarly, Blaising and Bock state that God’s commandments to Abraham “function as the conditions for Abraham’s historical experience of divine blessing, for as he obeys God, God blesses him more and more. But these obligations do not condition the fundamental intention to bless Abraham. They condition the how and when of the blessing.” This conditionality, therefore, is instrumental to the reception and

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105 Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 133-34; italics original.
fulfillment of the promises. This tension between God’s promise and the necessity of an obedient partner in the covenant relationship becomes clearer and stronger as the storyline progresses.

Ultimately, the grace of God—not the obedience of Abraham or his descendants—remains foundational. To be sure, God will see to it that the demands of the covenant are fulfilled. But if sin is native to fallen humanity, then it is safe to say that the fulfillment of the covenant and, thus, the covenant blessing of land, will be brought about by an obedient one who lies beyond Abraham’s—and Israel’s—horizon. O. Palmer Robertson writes,

Now it is quite appropriate to speak of the certainty that the conditions of the covenant would be fulfilled, so that the intended blessings would come. But the covenants of God still had conditions. Recognizing this fact, the student of Scripture must look forward to One who would fulfill the conditions of the covenant perfectly on behalf of his people.

This tension is crucial for understanding the nature and progression of the covenants as they reach their telos in Christ, who inaugurates a new and better covenant in his own blood. That is, when the larger canonical storyline is considered, the conditions are met by God himself when he sends his obedient Son—the true seed of Abraham and Son par excellence—to fulfill the demands of the covenant. Indeed all of God’s promises find their yes in Christ (2 Cor 1:20), who will win the blessing of a new creation for all of Abraham’s offspring.

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National and international. Another important aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is whether it is intended to be national (Gen 12:2, “nation”) or international (Gen 17:4-6, “nations”). Williamson considers Genesis 15 as a covenant made between God and Abraham and his “seed,” while the covenant in Genesis 17 creates a broadening of the category of “seed.” Furthermore, God changes Abram’s name to Abraham, for God made him “the father of a multitude of nations” (Gen 17:5).\(^\text{108}\) An intended ambiguity exists in the text, then, for Abraham’s “seed” both encompasses a multitude of nations (Gen 17) and relates to an individual descendant (Gen 22:17b) who will mediate blessing to all the nations of the earth.\(^\text{109}\)

When these texts are put together, then, the ultimate inheritors of the patriarchal promises are not restricted to a national entity but extend to an international community. That is, God’s programmatic agenda for humanity after Eden begins with the formation of a nation through Abraham and ends with an international people. Claus Westermann notes, “God’s action proclaimed in the promise to Abraham [in Gen 12:3] is not limited to him and his posterity, but reaches its goal only when it includes all the families of the earth.”\(^\text{110}\) This international component, for example, comes into focus in the latter prophets. It is difficult to see, then, how the territorial promise could be

\(^{108}\)Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 19.


exhausted by any political borders, whether Israelite or otherwise, for the multiplication of descendants naturally expands the territorial borders until the earth is filled.

**Regional and global.** Another issue brought to the fore is whether the land promised to Abraham is restricted to a single geographical plot or is expanded also to include a much broader area. Put another way, from the beginning it seems that the geographical boundaries occupy a considerably larger area than the land of Canaan that would eventually encompass the whole earth as God makes Abraham’s offspring as countless as the stars (Gen 15:5) and into nations (Gen 17:6). After close examination, then, the land promise(s) may actually support a global—not strictly a regional—fulfillment.

The promise to Abraham involved land, but not just any land. This land would be given by God. The boundaries of the land are broad (Exod 3:8) and there is some flexibility to its geographical dimensions. John Goldingay suggests that there are at least three ways of determining its boundaries: first, Canaan, the land west of the Jordan, is Israel’s heartland (Gen 11:31; 12:5; 17:8; Exod 6:4; Lev 14:34; 25:38; Num 13:2, 17); second, a territory broader than the land west of the Jordan, which includes land east of the Jordan (Num 21:24, 35; Num 32:39; Josh 22:9, 13, 15, 32); and third, a territory broader than the first two that includes land north and east of Canaan that will be part of the area that Israel controls, but not part of its actual land. Specific geographical

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112 Ibid., 20.
boundary markers are given in a number of texts,114 and the extent of the promised land is not identical in each (e.g., the boundaries in Deut 11:24 are significantly broader than those in Num 34), which has led some scholars to detect redactional activity.115 However, Williamson has rightly noted a weakness in this view, stating, “the fact that no steps were taken to impose uniformity suggests an element of flexibility difficult to harmonize with rigidly defined territorial borders.”116 Therefore, the interpreter must seek another explanation for the varying accounts of the geographical boundaries.

The various texts that map the territorial borders of the promised land indicate that the land was not conclusively defined with geographical precision.117 One solution is put forth by Goldingay, who says that the boundaries of the land in the Old Testament “reflect political realities of different periods rather than having significance in their own right.”118 Or, perhaps Williamson is correct when he notes that it can be reasonably inferred that “the map of the promised land was never seen as permanently fixed, but was

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117 Martens, God’s Design, 117.

118 Goldingay, Old Testament Theology, vol. 1, 519.
subject to at least some degree of expansion and redefinition.” For Williamson, such a conclusion is bolstered by texts where the territorial inheritance more generally describes the pre-Israelite occupants, the geographical location of the beneficiaries, and texts which, at the least, implicitly point to a further expansion of the territorial promise. Of particular importance is Genesis 26:3-4, where the unique plural “lands” (הלך הארץ), when juxtaposed with Genesis 22:17-28, reveals that Abraham’s seed will possess or inherit the gate of his enemies. One can already see that Paul is not spiritualizing texts when he says that “the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith (Rom 4:13). Rather, Paul is reaching sound exegetical and theological conclusions when he puts all


120 For example, a list of ten nations is found in Gen 15:19-21, whereas most of the other lists in the Pentateuch and Former Prophets contain only six nations (e.g., Exod 3:8, 17; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Deut 30:17; Josh 9:1; Judg 3:5). Furthermore, there are some lists that add the Girgashites, making a total of seven nations, (Deut 7:1; Josh 3:10; 24:11) and others that have only five (Exod 13:5; 1 Kgs 9:20). For more texts, see Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 21.

121 For example, there are various references to “this land,” “the land that you see” (Gen 13:14), “the land of your sojourning” (Exod 6:4), and “the land on which you are lying” (Gen 28:13).


123 Contra Louis Berkhof, who writes, “The covenant with Abraham already included a symbolical element. On the one hand it had reference to temporal blessings, such as the land of Canaan, a numerous offspring, protection against and victory over the enemies; and the other, it referred to spiritual blessings. It should be borne in mind, however, that the former were not coordinate with, but subordinate to, the latter. These temporal blessings did not constitute an end in themselves, but served to symbolize and typify spiritual and heavenly blessings.” Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938; repr. 1996), 296. On the other end of the spectrum, Robert Saucy notes that “this universal range is not found in the Old Testament promise, which did not extend beyond the land for the nation Israel (cf. Gen 12:2; 13:14f., 17; 15:7, 18-21; 17:8),” even though he later concedes that “the universality of blessing contained in the promise to Abraham, along with the predicted worldwide extent of the reign of the Messiah, lead easily to this conclusion.” Robert L. Saucy, The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-DISPensational Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 51.
three elements of the covenant together, for he now sees Abraham inheriting the world as all people—both Jew and Gentile—come to faith in Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{124}

Therefore, while the promised land was primarily a specific territory, there is sufficient biblical warrant to conclude that it was also something more. Williamson writes,

\begin{quote}
The fact that the promised land was of more than political significance has often been overlooked, especially by those who still anticipate some sort of future, national fulfillment of the territorial promise. When the global significance of the promised land is taken on board, a future fulfillment in a narrow, regional sense appears largely redundant, and indeed somewhat anticlimactic.\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

Because the land is not described with geographical precision, then, one might say that it was to some degree an idea\textsuperscript{126}—yet it was a territory\textsuperscript{127}—and this territory would expand with the increase and expansion of its inhabitants.

\textbf{Temporal and eternal.} The last issue to observe concerning the nature of the Abrahamic covenant is whether the territorial promise is temporal or eternal. An important issue in the promise and fulfillment of land is whether to locate its fulfillment in the past—that is, in Israel’s history—or in the future. As stated above, God’s promise and purpose for Abraham is a reversal of the recurring pattern in Genesis 1-11. The land, seed, and blessing forfeited by Adam is answered with God’s promise of land, seed, and


\textsuperscript{125}\textsuperscript{Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 22.}

\textsuperscript{126}\textsuperscript{Holwerda, }\textit{Jesus and Israel,} 90.

\textsuperscript{127}\textsuperscript{Martens, }\textit{God’s Design,} 117.
blessing to Abraham (Gen 1:28; 9:1; 17:2, 6). The international scope of the covenant and global dimensions of geography in God’s promise suggest that God’s solution to humanity’s plight is not ultimately limited by physical, geographical, or temporal restraints. Moreover, God’s promise to Abraham is said to be everlasting (Gen 13:15; 17:8; 48:4; cf. Exod 32:13; Josh 14:9). Although the term “everlasting” (Heb. נְשָׂיָה) may not always mean a limitless duration of time, its connection to the blessing of land(s) and nation(s) suggests that the promise will at least be as everlasting as the covenant itself, “a covenant which relates primarily to the blessings of the nations through Abraham’s royal seed.”

A further indication that the territorial promise is of an enduring nature is its association with rest. This link to rest becomes clearer as the storyline progresses (e.g., Exod 33:14; Deut 3:20; 12:9-10; 25:19; Josh 1:13) and is grounded in the divine rest at the beginning of creation (Gen 2:2-3; Exod 20:11; Deut 5:15; Heb 3:7-4:11). It is at this point that the anticipatory, or typological, aspect of the promised land comes into focus. So again, while the promised land includes the territory occupied by Israel

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128 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, chap. 2; Alexander, From Paradise to Promised Land; Dumbrell, Search for Order, 33-35; Hamilton, “Seed,” 260.


130 Rest will be dealt with in more detail.

131 Although at one point Williamson speaks of the promise-fulfillment schema of land in terms of typology (“Promise and Fulfillment,” 27), at another point he says that it “speaks metaphorically of something greater” (25). However, metaphor should be distinguished from typology. Although both make connections between two or more things, persons, or events, the difference is found in how and what kind of connections are made. Paul Hoskins defines typology as “the study which traces parallels or correspondences between incidents recorded in the Old Testament and their counterparts in the New Testament such that the latter can be seen to resemble the former in notable respects and yet to go beyond them.” He further elaborates on this definition by saying that “First, the ‘correspondences’ involved in typology are drawn between ‘persons, events, and institutions, within the framework of salvation history.’ Second, it is often noted that typological correspondences can already be seen in the Old Testament, especially in works of prophecy like Isaiah and Ezekiel.” Paul M. Hoskins, Jesus as the Fulfillment of the
throughout her history, it also encompasses something greater. Such a conclusion grows out of the ways the Abrahamic promise of land, seed, and blessing are fulfilled through redemptive history. Thus understood, one finds exegetical basis for the New Testament claim that Abraham looked forward to something greater, “for he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (Heb 11:10).

Conclusion

Some conclusions can be drawn from above. First, the promise of land in the Abrahamic covenant should be understood in light of what preceded it, namely, Eden as the prototypical place of the kingdom. The land, then, advances through Abraham the place of the kingdom that was lost in Eden. Second, the flexibility of the geographical boundaries indicates that, although the boundaries initially delimit territory, the territory anticipates something more. That is, although it begins as a localized geographical plot, its rich theological associations and eschatological horizons actually extend beyond the territory itself. As a result, the patriarchal promise of land anticipates something greater and, therefore, the promise will not ultimately be fulfilled until Abraham’s “seed” fills and occupies the world. The land promised to Abraham, then, is presented as a type

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Temple in the Gospel of John (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 19. So, there are identifiable historical and textual connections between the type and antitype that derive from the various texts. Furthermore, typology stresses escalation as the storyline moves forward. Leonhard Goppelt stresses the importance of escalation between type and antitype when he writes, “If the antitype does not represent a heightening of the type, if it is merely a repetition of the type, then it can be called typology only in certain instances and in a limited way.” Leonhard Goppelt, Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 18. Connections such as these show that the working out of God’s purposes are incomplete until they reach their ultimate fulfillment in Christ and his work.

132 For example, themes associated with creation, Eden as a garden-temple sanctuary, and rest.
or pattern of a greater reality with international and worldwide dimensions. This pattern will continue through the rest of the Old Testament and into the New.

Exodus–Deuteronomy: Advancing the Promise

Exodus: Bound for the Promised Land

The book of Exodus, aptly named for its key event, resumes and carries the Genesis storyline forward as it opens with language pointing back to the creation mandate and the promises to Abraham. For example, the people of Israel were fruitful (חרו), and they multiplied (רבו) and filled (מלא) the land (יјא). Concerning its important place in the Old Testament, Irwin Reist writes that “Exodus provided the historical, unifying basis for the Old Testament writers to put together a connected history from creation to the monarchy.”

Stephen Dempster, commenting on the canonical-shaping language that stems from the exodus, notes,

Exodus language becomes the grammar used to express future salvation. Whether it is Hosea speaking of Israel going up from the land (Hos 1:11 [2:2 MT]), Isaiah of leading the people through the sea again (Isa 11:15), Micah of Yahweh leading an exodus of crippled and outcasts (Mic 4:6-7), Jeremiah of a new covenant (Jeremiah 33), Terence E. Fretheim, “Exodus, Book of,” in DOTP, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 249. Further evidence that Exodus resumes the storyline of Genesis is by its opening conjunction (“and”). Peter Enns comments, “English translations routinely leave this word untranslated, perhaps for stylistic reasons. . . . The presence of ‘and’ at the very beginning of the book is striking. Moreover, Exodus 1:1 as a whole cements the connection to Genesis: ‘These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt.’ This verse is essentially a repetition of Genesis 46:8, which announces Israel’s journey to Egypt. The same words are now used to announce Israel’s departure from Egypt. The fact that Exodus 1:1, including ‘and,’ repeats Genesis 46:8 indicates that the story of Israel’s departure from Egypt must be understood as a continuation of a story told in Genesis. Israel’s presence in Egypt is no product of chance. The Israelites in Egypt are to view their present suffering and oppression in the light of God’s larger, unchanging picture. God chose a people for himself and brought them down to Egypt. He will bring them out again.” Peter E. Enns, “Exodus (Book),” in NDBT, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 146-47.

the Exodus language of salvation is the way Israel construed its understanding of the future.\textsuperscript{135}

It is difficult, then, to overestimate the crucial role that Exodus plays both in the fulfillment of the land promise and the salvation of God’s people.\textsuperscript{136}

The promise of a recaptured kingdom would be secured through the covenant made with Abraham (Exod 6:4, 8)—a covenant that promised land, seed, and universal blessing—and Exodus “marks the initial step towards the realization of the inheritance of the Promised Land by Abraham’s descendants”\textsuperscript{137} by showing an increasing Israelite clan “bound in a covenant federation”\textsuperscript{138} moving toward a land to call their own. Thus, “the promise to Abraham and the deliverance from Egypt are the determinative factors for Israel’s destiny; they mean that exile from the land cannot be the end.”\textsuperscript{139} Exodus, then, may be considered the center of the Pentateuch, especially in view of God’s spectacular and course-altering deliverance of his people from foreign rule.\textsuperscript{140} Indeed, God will ensure that his people will live in his place under his rule.

\textsuperscript{135}Stephen G. Dempster, “Exodus and Biblical Theology: On Moving into the Neighborhood with a New Name,” \textit{SBJT} 12, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 4.

\textsuperscript{136}Rikki Watts writes, “There are over 120 explicit references to Exodus in law, narrative, prophecy and psalm. . . . As the preeminent saving event in their history (Deut 4:32-40), the Exodus profoundly shaped Israel’s social structures, calendars, remembrance of the ancient past, and hopes of future restoration.” Rikki E. Watts, “Exodus,” in \textit{NDBT}, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 478. For helpful figures showing the significance of the exodus throughout the rest of the Old Testament, see Victor H. Matthews, \textit{Old Testament Turning Points: The Narratives that Shaped a Nation} (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 66-71.


\textsuperscript{140}Fretheim, “Exodus, Book of,” 249.
Furthermore, the multiplication of a people and movement toward inhabiting a place to live under God’s blessing is rooted in his original blessing on humanity. The promises to Israel to plant them in the land are “reiterations of a former promise.”¹⁴¹ This connection is forcefully illustrated in Exodus 15:17: “You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.” At the end of the song sung by Israel after crossing the Red Sea, “the establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan is pictured as the planting of a tree in a mountain sanctuary, exactly the picture of Eden presented in Genesis 2 and Ezekiel 28.”¹⁴² Israel, then, picks up the role of Adam in a new Eden-like land.¹⁴³ Thus, Exodus demonstrates that this band of brothers is the means by which God will fulfill his worldwide purposes.¹⁴⁴ Israel’s redemption is an act of recreation.¹⁴⁵

By the end of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus, however, fulfillment of the patriarchal promises of offspring had hardly progressed. This suspension of the storyline is clearly demonstrated in Exodus 1. Genesis ends with the sons of Israel under Joseph numbering 70 people (Gen 46:27), and Exodus begins with the same fledgling number as they come into Egypt (Exod 1:5). Also, there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph and who enslaved Israel under the harsh oppression of the

¹⁴¹Martens, God’s Design, 171.

¹⁴²Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 227.


¹⁴⁵Enns, “Exodus (Book),” 147.
Egyptians (1:9-11). Furthermore, when Pharaoh saw that the people of Israel were “too many and too mighty” for them (1:9), he commanded his leaders to afflict Israel to keep them from increasing. “Pharaoh, with serpent-like cunning (1:10a), embarks on a policy resulting in hard service, pain in childbearing, and death, all of which are associated with life outside the garden of Eden (Gen 3:16-19).” But if these obstacles are not sufficient enough to restrain them, more drastic measures are taken to stop the multiplication of the Israelites when the Egyptians order the liquidation of all Israelite male infants (Exod 1:8-22). These realities serve as vivid illustrations that God’s kingdom on earth had not yet come. His people were not living in his place under his rule. Rather, they were living as captives of a heathen king whose rule was opposed to God.

This background sets the scene for God to powerfully intervene on behalf of his people. As the narrative unfolds, it is clear that nothing or no one is able to thwart God’s plan. But before Israel’s course is drastically changed, there is a sharp turn in the narrative that occupies the next four chapters that focus on one man, Moses (chaps. 2-5). Goldsworthy writes, “The account of Moses, his birth, preparation and commissioning to lead God’s people out of captivity, signals the promise of a new start.”

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147 Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty,* 93. It is interesting to note the ironic tension between the increasing population and suffering of the people under the Egyptians. The text is worded in such a way to point out that suffering did not increase as a result of population growth. Rather, the population grew as a result of their suffering, which has the effect of “dramatizing the need of Israel, and thus increasing the reader’s concern that something must be done.” John I. Durham, *Exodus,* WBC, vol. 3 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 6.

148 Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology,* 120.

149 Ibid., 120. Connecting Moses’ entrance into the biblical storyline to previous themes, Dempster states that Moses “escapes disaster by being placed in an ark in the River Nile (Exod 2:1-10). Moses’ salvation from the water echoes backwards and forwards in the text; backwards to the salvation of humanity from the judgment of the flood by Noah (Gen 6-8), and forwards to the Israelite’s future escape from the waters of the Reed Sea (Exod 14).” Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty,* 94.
The story of Moses’ birth is also told in creation language. When his mother looked at the child after his birth, she saw that he was ‘good’ (tōb; 2:2). The entire Hebrew phrase is ki tōb, which is an echo of the refrain in Genesis 1 where God pronounces what he has created ‘good.’ The birth of Moses is not merely about the birth of one man, but represents the beginning of the birth of the people. The savior of the people is born, and it is through him that God’s people will be given a new beginning. Their slavery will end and their savior will bring them safely into their rest, the Promised Land. 150

This focus on genealogy will set the stage for a change in geography.

But before Israel is delivered, a massive obstacle remains before Israel’s eyes: Pharaoh. In Exodus 2:23 the cry of the people went up before God. In chapter 5:15, however, the cry of the people is before Pharaoh. “It is as if the author wants to show that Pharaoh was standing in God’s way and thus provides another motivation for the plagues which follow.” 151 In response to Israel’s cry (2:23-25; 3:7, 9; 6:5), God commits to deliver Israel from the hand of the Egyptians to a land flowing with milk and honey (3:8, 10; 6:6-8). As a result of Pharaoh’s ordained and willing opposition to God and failure to let his people go, God sends signs that culminate in the death of the Egyptian firstborn (chaps. 7-12). 152 Whereas Pharaoh set out to exterminate Israel’s firstborn, this great reversal from Exodus 1 reminds the reader that the salvation of God’s son (Exod 4:22-23) will come at the cost of the Egyptians’ sons. That is, salvation comes through substitution.

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150 Enns, “Exodus (Book),” 147.

151 Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 250.

152 T. D. Alexander rightly says, “While [the signs and wonders performed in Egypt] are often described as ‘the ten plagues’, this is not an entirely satisfactory designation. First, although the biblical text refers to a few of them individually as ‘plagues’ (9:3, 14, 15; 11:1; cf. 8:2), as a whole they are more frequently designated ‘signs’ (7:3; 8:23; 10:1, 2) or ‘wonders’ (4:21; 7:3; 11:9, 10; cf. ‘miracle’ in 7:9). Secondly, there are in fact eleven miraculous signs recorded in Exodus 7-12. The first of these, the episode of the staff becoming a snake (7:8-13), is generally not included in the list of ‘plagues’. T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012). See also Stuart, *Exodus*, 184-86.
Then, in what Elmer Martens calls the programmatic text of the Bible, God says,

I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD (Exod 6:6-8).

Indeed Israel will now know their Creator by a new name—Yahweh (Exod 6:3). Through the miraculous act of the exodus (chap. 14), an event pregnant with creational overtones, God delivers his people through the chaotic waters of judgment and brings them out as a new creation, free from foreign rule. Though Pharaoh and his men change their minds about freeing Israel and make one last stand against their rival deity, they finally come to know the one true God when they experience total destruction and death in a “watery grave.” God will get the glory over Pharaoh and all his host so that

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154 Scholars have noted the problem with God’s revelation as Yahweh in Exodus 6:3, for God previously made himself known by that name to the patriarchs (e.g., Gen 12:7-8; 22:14). For example, H. H. Rowley notes, “Obviously it cannot be true that God was not known to Abraham by the name Yahweh (Exod 6:3) and that he was known to him by that name (Gen 15:2, 7). To this extent there is a flat contradiction that cannot be resolved by any shift.” H. H. Rowley, The Biblical Doctrine of Election (London: Lutterworth, 1950), 25. However, Ross Blackburn rightly argues that when Exodus 1:1-15:21 is situated canonically, what is new is an interpretation of the divine name, not the name itself. More specifically, it is “the revelation of the Lord as Redeemer, the God who, being supreme over all creation, is willing and able to deliver his people. . . . The name that was unknown to the patriarchs, then, was not the label, but rather the character of the Lord as the supreme redeemer, a characteristic of the Lord that Israel had not known, and could not have known apart from being delivered from bondage.” W. Ross Blackburn, The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 26-28, 60-61.

155 For more on the divine warrior theme or the mythological triumph over chaos, see Frank Moore Cross Jr., “The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth,” JTC 5 (1968): 1-25, and Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, God is a Warrior (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

they will know that he is Yahweh (Exod 14:4). Afterward, Moses and the people celebrate in a salvation song affirming Yahweh’s lordship and praising him for his unrivaled power and awesome name, for he has become their salvation (chap. 15). At last, Yahweh “has delivered his people and promises to bring them and plant them in the mountain of his inheritance, where he will live with them as their great king forever!” Now that they had been delivered out of bondage, they had only to go into the land of promise.

The exodus is a momentous event for the fulfillment of God’s promises to his people. God’s promises to the patriarchs form the basis of his liberating work for and on behalf of Israel, and the exodus was the means to bring it about. Waltke notes, “Enslaved Israel needs a mighty deliverer to set them free to make pilgrimage to serve I AM in the Sworn Land.” This earth-shattering migration constitutes the beginning of a great journey to relocate to a new land, a land described as “flowing with milk and honey” (Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3). Israel, it seems, is God’s blessed new humanity destined for a new creation from where and through whom blessing to the world will come.


158According to Hamilton, “it is fitting in this litany of praise in Exodus 15 that God is addressed primarily as Yahweh. Ten times the Tetragrammaton is used: vv. 1, 3 (2x), 6 (2x), 11, 16, 17, 18, 21. One time there is an abbreviated form of Yahweh, yāh (v. 2), one time the use of adōnāy (v. 17), and two times ēl (v. 2). The hymn is, then, an affirmation of God’s lordship.” Hamilton, Handbook on the Pentateuch, 172.

159Ibid., 12.


161Waltke, Old Testament Theology, 389-90.
Deuteronomy: The Gift of Land

While the promised land occupies a less dominant role in the previous books of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy presents the “first full-scale summary of Israel’s story” and “brings to a climax the theme of Yahweh’s promise and gift of land.” Gary Millar writes, “In Deuteronomy, to speak of the fulfillment of promise is, in essence, to speak of the land.” As a result, Deuteronomy “presents a highly developed theology of land.”

The idolatrous and unbelieving first generation delivered by Yahweh in the exodus from Egypt failed to enter and settle into the land which God had given them. The initial attempt to enter the land of promise proved unsuccessful and, as a result, the exodus generation was sent away into the wilderness. Throughout the Pentateuch, however, the promise of land to the patriarchs continued to form the backbone of God’s faithfulness to his people (Deut 4:31; cf. Lev 26:40-45). In Leviticus the land “was understood as a trust from the divine landlord, who is pictured as living in relationship with the Israelites in the land in the same way that he walked with Adam and Eve in the garden (Lev 26:12).” An inherited problem exists, though—which the provisions of the sacrificial system and the Day of Atonement presuppose—and the only hope for the wilderness generation is the covenant with Abraham (Lev 26:42). Likewise, “Numbers

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164 J. Gary Millar, Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 55.

165 Daniel L. Block, Deuteronomy, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 40.

166 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 109.
establishes from its very beginning the thematic element of the land as the end to which everything drives, and its matter and movement are consistently oriented toward that goal.”

However, the theme of failure continues as the people repeatedly break covenant with Yahweh.

Now, after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, a new generation stands before Moses as he preaches to them, commissioning them to enter the land and giving instruction on how they should live in it. Gerhard von Rad writes, “Deuteronomy is dominated from the beginning to the end by the idea of the land which is to be taken into possession.”

At this crucial point in Israel’s history—looking back at the failure of the former generation and forward to the land God had given them to possess—the promised land becomes a great means of motivation. Gary Millar notes, “In Deuteronomy, partial fulfillment has already taken place. Yahweh has assured Israel that the land is theirs. In his grace, he has already handed over the deeds to them. This should act as an

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167 Clines, The Theme of the Pentateuch, 93.

168 For example, the people complained against the Lord (chap. 11), there were sinful problems within the leadership (chap. 12), spies were sent into the land and instead of trusting God they feared man (chap. 13), and the people grumbled (chap. 14) and revolted (chap. 16) against Moses and Aaron. As a result, concludes Dempster, “Within the overall structure of the text there is thus a hermeneutic that points to the failure of Israel to keep the Sinai covenant and to the virtual inevitability of exile on these terms. The kingdom of priests mediating creation blessing to the nations does not seem possible for this firstborn son. The sentence of exile that is passed on the great Moses, the one whose face shone with the glory of God, seems to make this point in dramatic fashion.” Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 113.


encouragement to them to go in and possess it.\textsuperscript{171} Thus, Deuteronomy narrates the paradox between the Lord’s commitment to his people, his prior actions on their behalf, and their response.\textsuperscript{172}

The promised land is described in a number of ways to Israel. First, the land is a gift that Yahweh owns.\textsuperscript{173} Although God had every right to destroy Israel for her willful disobedience and idolatry (Exod 32), Deuteronomy is clear that the land is a gracious gift from him. In fact, variations of the phrase “the land that the Lord our God is giving” occur nearly thirty times in Deuteronomy and three in Joshua.\textsuperscript{174} Put another way, the land is not earned by Israel. It is neither because of their righteousness that they inherit the land, nor is it for other nations’ wickedness that they do not possess it. Rather, God gives it to them in order that “he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” (Deut 9:5). Simply put, God’s gift of land was tied to his unconditional election of Israel (Deut 7:6-11).

But in order to keep Israel from receiving the land with closed fists, God reminds them that it ultimately belongs to him.\textsuperscript{175} As Christopher Wright notes, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{171}Millar, \textit{Now Choose Life}, 61.
\item \textsuperscript{172}J. Gordon McConville, \textit{Law and Theology in Deuteronomy}, JSOTS 179 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1994), 17.
\item \textsuperscript{175}Habel, \textit{The Land is Mine}, 37.
\end{itemize}
Israelites “possess the land (they occupy and use it); but the LORD owns the land.”

Since God is Creator of the whole earth, the land is first and foremost his land. Thus the people who are Yahweh’s inheritance have Canaan as their inheritance (Deut 4:20-21). God possesses the land, but he has granted the use and enjoyment of it to Israel (Deut 6:10-11; cf. Exod 19:5; Lev 25:23; Josh 22:19). In other words, his gift comes with conditions, for life in the land requires obedience to God’s commands. Their obedience, however, affects their occupation of the land, not their reception of it (Deut 4:1, 5, 14, 45; 5:31; 6:1-3; 12:1). Waltke writes, “Paradoxically, Israel’s role in participating in this gift [of land] is conditioned upon their trusting I AM to keep his promises to give them the Land against contrary evidence (Deut 6:18; 8:1; 11:8-9). . . . Here we see the tension of God’s prior election of Israel and Israel’s subsequent faith-obedience.”

Some scholars have tried to drive a wedge between the conditional and unconditional components in the land promise. But the presence of unconditionality does not necessarily exclude conditions, for “unconditionality and conditionality simultaneously

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176 Christopher J. H. Wright, Old Testament Ethics for the People of God (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 94; italics original.

177 Goldingay, Old Testament Theology, 1:517.


exist in many relationships, particularly in sonship (Deut 14:1; cf. Exod 4:22-23; Hosea 11:1).\textsuperscript{182}

Second, the land is described as a new paradise.\textsuperscript{183} That is, the almost other-worldly description of the land is reminiscent of Eden and holds out promise of a return to Eden-like bliss. This imagery would likely bring to remembrance both the pre-fall creation and a new creation.\textsuperscript{184} Waltke calls these vivid descriptions of the land “metonymies of effect.”\textsuperscript{185} For example, the land is described as being (very) good,\textsuperscript{186} having luxurious pasturelands and flowers,\textsuperscript{187} and containing abundant fruit.\textsuperscript{188} The fruit of the womb and the fruit of the livestock will be blessed,\textsuperscript{189} and no male or female

\textsuperscript{182}Wright, \textit{God’s People in God’s Land}, 15. One can see how this plays out in the NT in places where the reality of who God’s people are in Christ (i.e., indicative; e.g., Rom 6:1-11; Col 3:1-4) ground God’s commands for them to obey (i.e., imperatives; e.g. Rom 6:12-14; Col 3:5-17). Thomas Schreiner and Ardel Caneday capture this tension by stating that “biblical admonitions and warnings imply nothing about earning or meritng something from God. Rather, the unconditional promise grounds both the conditional promise and the conditional warning in God’s grace, for the biblical testimony is that God’s grace and love precedes and creates all human faith and obedience (Eph 2:10).” Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday, \textit{The Race Set before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 206.


\textsuperscript{184}It is difficult to decide whether to label this motif a new or renewed creation. In later OT texts (Isa 65:17; 66:22), eschatological references to creation refer to a “new creation,” but the full redemption of creation seems to be in view (see Rom 8:20). For more on this theme, see Carl B. Hoch, Jr., \textit{All Things New: The Significance of Newness for Biblical Theology} (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 147-67. Richard Bauckham states that “God’s creation reaches its eschatological fulfillment when it becomes the scene of God’s immediate presence. This, in the last resort, is what is ‘new’ about the new creation. It is the old creation filled with God’s presence.” Richard Bauckham, \textit{New Testament Theology: The Theology of the Book of Revelation} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 140.

\textsuperscript{185}Waltke, \textit{Old Testament Theology}, 512 n2.

\textsuperscript{186}See Deut 1:25, 35; 3:25; 4:21, 22; 6:18; 8:7, 10; 9:6; 11:17. This language harkens back to God’s “very good” creation in Genesis 1:31. See also Josh 23:13, 15, 16, and Num 14:7, which also describe the land in a very similar way to Gen 1:31.

\textsuperscript{187}Millar, “Land,” 623.

\textsuperscript{188}Deut 7:13; 28:4.
among the people or among the beasts will be barren.\textsuperscript{190} The prospect of a rich land in which the people will flourish and multiply suggests a return to Eden-like conditions. At this point in history, then, the second generation stood before God on the edge of a luxuriant and bountiful land that offered the nation rest, security, and abundance.\textsuperscript{191}

Third, Deuteronomy contains numerous references to the creational mandate given to Adam. This task, however, is now passed down to Israel. For example, they will “multiply” in the land,\textsuperscript{192} eventually resulting in their filling the earth, which echoes God’s teleological design for Eden. Furthermore, the Lord will subdue the land and they must subdue it (Deut 9:3). Hence, the original mandate given to Adam in creation and passed down to Abraham and the patriarchs appears again.\textsuperscript{193} “The promise of land,” says Miller, “guarantees the restoration of intimacy with God in terms which recall the description of Eden.”\textsuperscript{194}

Fourth, recurring themes of “life” and the “prolonging of days” allude back to Eden and the life Adam enjoyed before the fall.\textsuperscript{195} This blessed and prolonged life is

\textsuperscript{189}Deut 7:13; 28:3-5, 11.


\textsuperscript{192}Deuteronomy 6:3; 7:13; 8:1, 13; 13:17; 30:16. Deut 1:10-11 asserts that “the Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are today as numerous as the stars of heaven. May the Lord, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are and bless you, as he has promised you!” This language is the same used in Gen 15:5.


\textsuperscript{194}Millar, “Land,” 623; Strom makes a similar point, \textit{The Symphony of Scripture}, 28.

likewise connected to obeying God in the land. Hence Israel, like Adam, must obey God’s word in order to live in his place under his rule. And, in a very important passage, Israel must hold fast to Yahweh, “for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them” (Deut 30:20). Although this text should not be pressed too far, it is safe to say that, whereas the blessing throughout Deuteronomy is often connected to the land, it is also Yahweh himself. Truly Yahweh is their life.\footnote{This passage is significant because, as one will see when reading the NT, particularly the Gospels, Jesus is presented as the resurrection and the life (John 11:25; 14:6; cf. Col 3:4); also, in him is rest (Matt 11:28). In other words, the life and rest that are often linked to the land will one day be linked to a person, Jesus Christ. These themes will be explored in more detail in chap. 4.}

Fifth, inheritance and rest become important aspects of the promise of land.\footnote{McComiskey, The Covenants of Promise, 43.}
The occupation of the land is associated with rest, adumbrated by the tabernacle while it traveled with the people through the wilderness (Exod 33:14).\footnote{Dana M. Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews: The Appropriation of the Old Testament Inheritance Motif by the Author of Hebrews” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2009), 57; J. McKeown, “Land, Fertility, Famine,” in DOTP, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 489.} In Deuteronomy, these connections converge in the land.\footnote{See, e.g., Deut 12:10; cf. 3:20; 25:19.} Indeed outside the מְנַעְצָם the people will not experience מָנָעְטָם (Deut 28:65).\footnote{Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews,” 57.} Each family’s inheritance had been given to them by God and was to be protected.\footnote{See, e.g., Lev 25:23-28; Num 36:6-8; Josh 19:51.} Inheritance did not, however, exist only between individual families and God. Land was an inheritance of the entire people,\footnote{See, e.g., Deut 4:21, 38; 15:4; 19:10; cf. Josh 13:1-7.} which

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demonstrates that God views Israel as a son.\textsuperscript{203} In other words, land possession was connected to sonship.\textsuperscript{204} For example, the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 describes Israel’s relationship with God in father-son terms.\textsuperscript{205} Inheritance language, according to Millar, “invests the occupation of the land with greater significance; occupation involves the enjoyment of a filial relationship with God; it is not merely the possession of a piece of real estate.”\textsuperscript{206} As in Exodus, the themes of covenant, land, and sonship come together. It is because Israel is Yahweh’s first-born son (Exod 4:22) that the land is given as an inheritance.\textsuperscript{207}

Moreover, land and rest are mentioned together and are described as gifts from God (Deut 3:20; 12:9-10; 25:19; Josh 1:13-15; 21:43-44). God’s gift of rest stands in stark contrast to the experience of Israel while they were slaves in Egypt, as well as the subsequent period in the wilderness due to their disobedience. This rest, according to McKeown, “is not just understood in the negative sense of no longer needing to wander, but also denotes security and safety from one’s enemies (Deut 25:19).”\textsuperscript{208} Rest means freedom from the oppression of their enemies and enjoyment of peace.\textsuperscript{209} However, rest

\textsuperscript{203}See, e.g., Deut 1:31; 8:5; 14:1; 32:5-6, 18, 19.

\textsuperscript{204}Millar, “Land,” 625-26.

\textsuperscript{205}Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews,” 42. Furthermore, the story of Naboth’s vineyard in 1 Kings 21 demonstrates that the family patrimony was not free to be distributed to just anyone (21:3). Rather, it was to be passed on to succeeding generations.

\textsuperscript{206}Millar, “Land,” 626.

\textsuperscript{207}Wright, God’s People in God’s Land, 20; cf. von Waldow, “Israel and her Land, 497.

\textsuperscript{208}McKeown, “Land, Fertility, and Famine,” 489.

is not merely a coincidental by-product of living in the land. Rather, it is a divine gift in its own right (Exod 33:14; Deut 3:20). 

Finally, the themes of inheritance and rest come together in Deuteronomy 12:9-11, which pulls together previous threads. When the people of Israel have possessed the land, rest will ensue. As Harris points out, “The rest that the land offers is both rest from enemies, and rest for God’s presence.” That is, rest provides the opportunity for Israel to worship in the place God has chosen to dwell with his covenant people. On this note, Alexander rightly points out that it is impossible to consider the concept of rest without noting its association with the Sabbath. Despite differences in wording, the Decalogue in both Exodus and Deuteronomy associate these two concepts. Whereas in Exodus 20:11 there is an explicit connection between the divine institution of the Sabbath and the seventh day of creation, Deuteronomy highlights God’s deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians (e.g., Deut 5:15). Alexander concludes, “This suggests that the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt and their subsequent settlement in the promised land were viewed as in some manner paralleling God’s rest following the completion of his creative activity.” This connection indicates that the rest offered in the land may legitimately be tied to the rest of God in creation prior to the fall. “The acquisition of the Promised Land,” says McKeown, “while not explicitly described as a

210 Alexander, “Beyond Borders,” 36-37. This divine gift of rest will become especially important when Joshua is examined.

211 Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews,” 57; italics original.

212 I am grateful to John Meade for his insights into the connection between Sabbath and rest.


214 Ibid., 38-39.
return to Edenic bliss, gives Israel the rest and security that was endemic to paradise.”

As a result of possessing and inheriting the land, then, Israel would enjoy the gifts of creation in a way that they were originally designed to be enjoyed. “Understood in this light, securing possession of inheritance of the promised land typifies entering into God’s eternal rest, of which the land of Canaan was merely a symbol.”

The book of Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses, a unique prophet in the history of Israel (34:10). Despite the fact that Deuteronomy does not close with the patriarchal promises fulfilled, there is a prospect of hope. The great prophet Moses passes on the role of leadership to his servant Joshua—a man full of the Spirit of wisdom (34:9)—and Moses’ last words are given to a people poised to enter the promised land.

Joshua – Kings: (Partially) Fulfilling the Promise

Joshua: The Possession of the Land

The book of Joshua begins where Deuteronomy ends. It is important, therefore, to see how the theme of land progresses. A major portion of the book of Joshua is devoted to detailing the allotment of inheritances to families and tribes (chaps. 13-21). Divorced from its canonical context, these chapters are viewed as an unfortunate break in an otherwise exciting literary narrative that progresses from crossing into the land (chaps. 1-5) to taking the land (chaps. 6-12) to finally worshiping God in the land (chaps. 22-24).

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216 Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, 121-22.

217 Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 27.
However, these chapters clearly demonstrate the fulfillment of the land promises in substantial ways.\textsuperscript{219}

Three important themes emerge from the text. To begin, there is indication in Joshua that the initial conquest of the land resulted in the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. While Deuteronomy anticipates rest from enemies, Joshua concludes with it having been achieved.\textsuperscript{220} For example, Joshua 11:23 and 14:15 state that “the land had rest from war.” This rest was in accordance with all that the Lord had spoken to Moses (11:23). Furthermore, the Lord gave rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies (Josh 21:44-45; 22:4; 23:1). Thus, the fulfillment of the promises appear to be complete, for “not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass” (Josh 21:45; cf. 23:14-15). It appears that God’s promise of land has finally been fulfilled.

However, there are signposts throughout the book of Joshua that indicate otherwise.\textsuperscript{221} That is, while some texts speak of conquest and rest, others indicate that the land was not fully and finally possessed (chaps. 13:1, 6-7; 15:63; 24:4-13).\textsuperscript{222} Thus, writes Williamson, “the rather idealistic statements of complete fulfillment are tempered with the more realistic picture presented elsewhere.”\textsuperscript{223} From a broader perspective, then,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{218}David M. Howard, Jr., \textit{Joshua}, NAC, vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 52-57.
  \item \textsuperscript{219}Ibid., 57.
  \item \textsuperscript{220}Alexander, “Beyond Borders,” 37; Howard, \textit{Joshua}, 258-59.
  \item \textsuperscript{221}T. A. Clarke, “Complete v. Incomplete Conquest: A Re-Examination of Three Passages in Joshua,” \textit{TynBul} 61, no. 1 (2010): 89.
  \item \textsuperscript{222}Howard also lists Josh 11:22; 14:12; 16:10; 17:12-13; 18:2-3; 19:47; 23:4-5, 7, 12-13 (Howard, \textit{Joshua}, 259). For a similar list see Dempster, \textit{Dominion and Dynasty}, 129.
  \item \textsuperscript{223}Williamson, “Abraham, Israel, and the Church,” 113-14.
\end{itemize}
there was substantial victory over the Canaanites that broke their power and gave Israel
the initiative to inhabit the land. However, the details of the conquest concerning every
last city and person were left open.\textsuperscript{224}

Thus, two “parallel realities”\textsuperscript{225} in Joshua regarding the nature and scope of
Israel’s occupation of Canaan are simultaneously presented, which Waltke labels as both
already and not yet.\textsuperscript{226} Simply put, a degree of fulfillment had been achieved under
Joshua’s leadership, yet at the same time it was not finally fulfilled. Walter Kaiser writes,

[The] promise of the “seed” to Abraham is “fulfilled” when Isaac is born and the
promise of “a place” is “fulfilled” when Joshua takes Canaan. Fulfilled, yes, but
only as “pledges” of the one who can gather up all of the manifold parts of the one
promise in himself in their ultimate fulfillment.\textsuperscript{227}

As a result, writes Waltke, “Israel’s possession of the Land and rest are expandable
themes, for the land was taken ‘little by little’ (Exod 23:30) but never consummately
(Heb 4:1-11; 11:39-40).”\textsuperscript{228} Furthermore, as one moves from Joshua to Judges, it
becomes clear that the comprehensive rest did not last long. Judges describes how the
enemies of Israel regain power, bringing an end to the rest that was temporarily achieved
under Joshua.\textsuperscript{229} Thus, as long as there were pockets of resistance there could be no final

\textsuperscript{224}Howard calls this “a stylized summary of sorts.” Howard, Joshua, 259; see also Dumbrell,
The Faith of Israel, 75; Strom, The Symphony of Scripture, 75.

\textsuperscript{225}F. J. Mabie, “Geographical Extent of Israel,” in Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical

\textsuperscript{226}Waltke, Old Testament Theology, 525.

\textsuperscript{227}Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Eschatological Hermeneutics of ‘Evangelicalism’: Promise

\textsuperscript{228}Waltke, Old Testament Theology, 525.

\textsuperscript{229}Alexander, “Beyond Borders,” 37; Millar, “Land,” 625; Williamson, “Promise and
Fulfillment,” 30.
rest. Waltke makes an insightful observation regarding the already-not yet fulfillment presented in Joshua when he writes,

Future generations must play their part (Judg 3:1-4). The Chronicler (1 Chron 13:5) uses Joshua 13:1-7 to present David as greater than Joshua because he rules from Shihor of Egypt to the entrance of Hamath. . . . At any given point along the continuum of fulfillment, it can be said that God fulfilled his promise. Moreover, each fulfillment was a part of the ultimate fulfillment and could be reckoned as such. Isaiah saw the fulfillment of the ideal limits in the messianic age (Is 11:12-16). The New Testament presents the same tension regarding the kingdom of God: it is here “already” but in its fullest sense “not yet.”

It seems, then, that there remains a greater fulfillment of the promise in the future.

Finally, although the second generation did not obtain ultimate fulfillment of the promise, the text does present their conquest and settlement as an advancement of the Edenic mandate (cf. Gen 1:28). As some scholars have noted, the structure of Joshua is largely about taking dominion of a piece of land, and in this structure Joshua 18:1 is a central text: “Then the whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them.” This verse brings together two important themes: the subdued land and the building of the tent of meeting. It is important to observe in this passage the relationship between rest and the

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232 J. Gordon McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 101-2. McConville is drawing from a dissertation by H. J. Koorevar, *De Opbouw van het Boek Jozua* (Heverlee: Centrum voor Bijbelse Vorming Belgie, 1990). He observes that four leading words signal the basic structure of the book: (1) chaps 1-5 (נַע); (2) chaps. 6-11 (נִשְׁגַּה); (3) chaps. 12-22 (נַע); (4) chaps. 23-24 (נַע). For others who have picked up on this work, see Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 126-27; Howard, *Joshua*, 358-60.

tabernacle. The dwelling place of God is set up after rest had been achieved. Beale insightfully notes,

God’s rest both at the conclusion of creation in Genesis 1-2 and later in Israel’s temple indicates not mere inactivity but that he had demonstrated his sovereignty over the forces of chaos (e.g., enemies of Israel) and now has assumed a position of kingly rest further revealing his sovereign power. Similarly . . . the building of a shrine for divine rest occurs only after the powers of chaos have been defeated.  

Thus, if the tabernacle is patterned after Eden, signaling another installment of God dwelling with his people, then Joshua 18:1 and subsequent fulfillments recall the original Edenic bliss. That is, the setting up of the tent signifies not just the fulfillment of the promise to Israel that God would dwell with them in the land, but also the recovery of the Edenic mission. Israel, then, as God’s son, assumes the role of Adam in exercising dominion over creation in fulfillment of the function of the image of God. Thus, this event is a significant fulfillment in the fulfillment of God’s purposes for his people.

In conclusion, the promises to Abraham respond to the failures of Genesis 11. Abraham’s “seed” will reign over the earth as God’s vice-regent, thereby reversing the curse(s) of Genesis 3. Deuteronomy and Joshua significantly define the promise of land and mark how it will be fulfilled. Deuteronomy first defines the land as gift, a new

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234 Beale, The Temple in the Church’s Mission, 62.

235 McKeown, “Land, Fertility, Famine,” 489; Pate et al., The Story of Israel, 53-54.


edenic paradise, inheritance, and rest. Joshua then stands in continuity with Deuteronomy and marks a new beginning that results in conquest, occupation, and possession of the land. These results demonstrate further fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises and anticipate a greater fulfillment that will bring Eden-like rest. This fulfillment, therefore, presents and reiterates a pattern of partial fulfillment, followed by dispossession and subsequent repossession. In other words, God fulfills his promises, but the need for further (re)possession indicates that there was still much work, or obedience, to be done.

**David and Solomon: Dwelling in the Land**

A significant advance in God’s purpose to establish his people in the land is the arrival of his anointed king, David (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17; cf. Pss 89; 110; 132). Indeed “David is seen as the solution to all the problems of Israel’s rebellious ways. This can only express an eschatological hope.” In a climactic scene in the book of Samuel after the ark had been brought to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 7 opens with David in his house enjoying “rest from all his surrounding enemies.” It was this aspect of the promise “that provided a key link between the end of the book of Numbers and the time of David.”

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240 Dempter insightfully notes, “Residence in the land will depend upon obedience, and disobedience will mean expulsion from the land, just as it was in the garden of Eden at the beginning.” Dominion and Dynasty, 129.


discussed in the previous chapter, God’s covenant with David involves giving him a great name on an international scale (7:9), appointing a place for his people and securely planting them in it (7:10), and giving him rest from all his enemies (7:11). Furthermore, God promised David a future offspring whose kingdom he would establish (7:12-13) and who would be to him a son (7:14). In sum, “the Davidic covenant contains a total of ten blessings: three fulfilled in David’s lifetime, four in the lifetime of his son Solomon, and three in his remote future.”

These “numerous parallels” between the Abrahamic promise and 2 Samuel 7 demonstrate that “the Davidic covenant is linked to the Abrahamic covenant in goal and purpose.” At this point in Israel’s history, then, it appears that God’s kingdom is beginning to centrifugally irrupt from the nation of Israel and her land through David and his dynasty.

Furthermore, the exaltation of David as king and the blessing of Israel under his rule marked significant progression in the possession of the land. In fact, for the first time under David “Israel appeared to be the people of the Lord, living under his lordship in the land.” In other words, through David “God was continuing to lead his people into the future.” For example, 2 Samuel 7:1 echoes the rest God promised to give the second generation (Deut 12:9-10) and the rest given to Israel under Joshua (21:44; 22:4; 23:1). Moreover, David’s final charge to Solomon, like Moses’ charge to Joshua, to be


faithful to Yahweh reminds the reader that with David there is a return to—as well as a
development beyond—the Mosaic era. Hence, the era of David recapitulates that of
Joshua. In fact, David “appears in the role of a second Joshua who will finally defeat
Israel’s enemies and give the people rest in the promised land.”

Through God’s servants God’s people inherit the land; through David they enjoy peace and prosperity in the Land of Promise. It appeared, therefore, that Israel would finally dwell in the land.

However, the succeeding narrative “blazes a sordid trail of sin and internecine fighting within the Davidic house.” David did not have comprehensive rest from his enemies, for he continued to conquer and drive out enemies that remained (2 Sam 8).

Furthermore,

David’s adultery with Bathsheba and the treacherous removal of her husband Uriah (2 Sam 11), David’s confession of his sin (ch. 12), the intrigues surrounding the Davidic succession, his flight, Sheba’s rebellion (chs. 12-20)—in all this hardly anything is evident of the divine blessing that was spoken of in the prophecy of Nathan and the prayers of David that follows it.

Nevertheless, David’s desire to build a house for God is significant because it follows the attainment of rest. In David, then, there is a further advancement and escalation of the fulfillment of the land promises. These promises will find eventual fulfillment in the Davidic dynasty, which Solomon inaugurates. Hence, an important question is raised

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250 Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 143.

concerning the fulfillment of God’s promises after David: Will shalom (שלום) come with the arrival of Solomon (שלום)?

Without question, the succession of Solomon to the throne covers “the golden age” of Israel, which marked a more comprehensive fulfillment of the territorial promise. To begin, there was a superior quality to Solomon’s kingship that “provides an interesting picture of the kind of rule which God intends to establish throughout the promised ‘seed’ of Abraham.” Furthermore, promissory threads from the Abraham narrative are picked up in Solomon. For example, Solomon’s dominion encompassed the boundaries of the land promised to Abraham, and Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea (1 Kgs 4:20-25; cf. Gen 13:16; 15:5, 18-21; 22:17). Dumbrell points out that the promised land is secure in Israelite hands, with the “very small” exceptions of Tyre and Sidon. The prosperity of God’s people (I Kgs 4:20), together with the growth of the kingdom (1 Kgs 4:21), illustrate Solomon’s reign as an ideal fulfillment of the very promises to Abraham.

Moreover, in Solomon there is a recovery and advancement of the Adamic commission. When Solomon assumed the throne of his father David, “his kingdom was

252 Kaiser, The Promise-Plan of God, 129.
254 Alexander, From Paradise to the Promised Land, 92.
257 Simon J. De Vries, 1 Kings, 2nd ed., WBC, vol. 12 (Nashville: Nelson, 2003), 72. For example, in 1 Kgs 4, the depiction of Israel as numerous as sand alludes to Gen 22:17 and 32:12, and Israel’s boundaries allude to Gen 15:18 (cf. Josh 1:2–4). Furthermore, the expression “from Dan even to Beersheba” stresses the unity of Judah and Israel (cf. Judg 20:1; 1 Sam 3:20; 2 Sam 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 15).
firmly established” (1 Kgs 2:12). Solomon possessed superior wisdom, for the Lord gave him “a wise and discerning mind” according to his request (1 Kgs 3:11-12). In contrast to Adam, he did not want to know good and evil in order to become like God (Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-7). Rather, he had a “proper desire for wisdom, to discern an already existing reality (not to create it) for the purpose of fulfilling the human task of subduing and controlling the creation (Gen 1:26-28”). In other words, he desired to govern the people of God in order to do justice (1 Kgs 3:9, 16-28). Moreover, the image of vines and fig trees (1 Kgs 4:25) further suggests that Solomon’s empire represents a restoration of Eden. Lastly, Solomon acknowledges in his dedication speech that “not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant” (1 Kgs 8:56). Similar to Joshua 21:44-45, then, these fulfillments show that there was still further advancement of the promises from the time of Joshua to Solomon.

Furthermore, evidence for comprehensive fulfillment of the land promises is seen in Solomon’s use of “rest.” First Kings 8:56 says, “Blessed be the Lord who has given rest (משום) to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word (דבר) has failed of all his good promise (דבר), which he spoke by Moses his servant.” Under the kingship of the Davidic son, the nation of Israel had achieved rest in the land sworn to the fathers, spoken of through Moses, and advanced in Deuteronomy, Joshua, and David. David desired to build God a house, purchased the site and built the altar, but Solomon executed the plan and built the Temple. Just as the building of the tabernacle involved meticulous detail, so also did the building of the Temple (1 Kgs 6:1-38; 7:13-

258 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 147-48.

259 Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews,” 64. See also De Vries, I Kings, 72; Richard
51). But the importance of the Temple went beyond the national borders of Israel. Solomon declared that it was designed to be a place where “all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name” (1 Kgs 8:43). That is, this Temple was to be a conduit of blessing to the entire world (cf. Gen 12:3).  

Finally, the Temple was a permanent and visible reminder that the presence of God was in their midst, which demonstrates advancement since Eden. The connection between creation and the Temple should not go unnoticed. In fact, Ezekiel explicitly calls Eden the first garden-sanctuary because it was the archetypal Temple that would later become central in the life of Israel (28:13-14, 16, 18). Brian Payne writes,

These two entities share an interest in rest as the consummation of the developments that produced them. In the case of creation, God “rested” on the seventh day, after he had completed his labors (wayya ḥaH, Exod 20:11), and he commands his servants to rest in imitatione Dei in comparable language. Interestingly, the same root (nwH) describes his experience in the Temple as well: “For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place. This is my resting place (münkûHâtî) forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it” (Ps 132:13-14). Adding to this intrigue is that the book of Chronicles goes so far as even to declare that Solomon, and not David, would build the Temple because the former is a “man of rest” (münkûHâ) and of peace (šälôm), as his name (šülömò) would imply (1 Chron 22:9).


Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 149.


The correlation between the land and the tabernacle/Temple is important, for the latter is depicted as the dwelling of God “in a more intensive sense.”264 Thus, the cleansing or defilement of one corresponds to the cleansing or defilement of the other (e.g., Num 35:33-34).265 For Solomon, the temple represents a new Eden for the kingdom of God. The subdued land under his reign typifies the incomplete task of Adam to subdue the earth in Genesis 1-3 and the advancement of the Abrahamic promises. Therefore, the achievement of the construction of the Temple and, consequently, rest, indicate significant advancement of God’s promises to dwell with his people in his place.266


265 Ibid., 70.

266 It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the important place that Jerusalem/Zion and the temple play throughout Israel’s history, especially at the end. However, it is important to briefly note their significance in relation to the land as the biblical storyline progresses. William Blanchard notes that Jerusalem/Zion “became the political and religious center for The Land.” William Maurice Blanchard, Jr., “Changing Hermeneutical Perspectives on ‘The Land’ in Biblical Theology” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986), 27. The establishment of this religious center was due not only to Solomon’s building of the temple but also because his father David had brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6; 15:29; 1 Chr 13-16; cf. Ps 132). As a result, “Jerusalem became the place where the Sinai covenant was remembered and cultivated,” which secured the connection between Zion and Sinai. P. W. L. Walker, “Jerusalem,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 589. Furthermore, “the city of Jerusalem, the institution of the monarchy, and the temple of Yahweh were transformed into political and religious icons for the people of Judah.” Matthews, *Old Testament Turning Points*, 152. It seemed, then, that Jerusalem/Zion was invulnerable precisely because it was a visible sign of God’s presence and a guarantee that they were God’s people. Hence, it is understandable that after the devastating experience of exile, the reaction to Jerusalem’s destruction was lament (Ps 79; Lamentations). However, “the hope of the Jewish nation had been nurtured by the conviction, drawn from the prophetic writers within the Hebrew Scriptures, that God would one day restore Jerusalem’s fortunes.” P. W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), ix-x. For example, “Isaiah’s vision (1:1) concerned Judah and Jerusalem, but to a major extent his preoccupation is the city, with the fate of the whole kingdom bound up with and settled by what happens in Jerusalem. Likewise, the future is dominated by the prophet’s expectations of a restoration and renewal of the city.” J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 27. Indeed, one day the word of the Lord would go out from Jerusalem (Isa 2:3) and God’s new work would usher in a new age (Isa 65:18-19). This city of hope also becomes important in the book of Ezekiel, who devotes a large portion of his prophecy to a restored temple in a renewed city, for the hope of the land is the promise that “the Lord is there” (Ezek 48:35). It is vital, therefore, to see the connection between the land, temple, and Jerusalem/Zion as the biblical storyline progresses. Holwerda writes, “The promise of the land looms large on the pages of the Old Testament, but as the exile approaches and actually occurs the hopes for the land comes to be focused on the city. The lament over the destruction of the land and the exile of Judah is
Life After Solomon: Decline and the Dispossession of the Land

However, troubles soon broke out after the prestige and glory of the reigns of David and Solomon. The narrative immediately moves from the construction and dedication of the temple to Solomon’s turn from the Lord (1 Kgs 11). Moreover, the place where Yahweh had chosen to put his name is no longer part of the story. Hamilton writes,

Eighteen chapters with no mention of the temple is all the more startling when we realize that the dedication of the temple, with the glory of God filling the temple just as it had done the tabernacle, was the apex of Israel’s national prowess. The author takes the reader to the summit of a great mountain at the dedication of the temple, only to drop the reader down the sheer precipice of Israel’s plummet into idolatry.”

To be sure, the history of the monarchy in Israel had some high points, but on the whole it was short-lived.

The picture that the book of Kings provides of Solomon “is to see him as an Adam figure who on the one hand typifies a fulfillment of aspirations for a restored Eden, while on the other hand being responsible, through his disobedience, for the second expressed in Lamentations as a lament over Jerusalem. The people are identified as the daughter of Jerusalem, the virgin daughter of Zion. Jerusalem has become the essence of the land and the symbol of the people of God because it is in Jerusalem that God dwells.” Holwerda, Jesus and Israel, 96. When the prophetic testimony is taken together, “Zion becomes a witness to God’s universal dominion in creation” and “a rich theological symbol that depicts the reign of God over his creation in time and eternity. Zion becomes a symbol of new creation and redeemed humanity that lives before God without sin, death, or pain because God rules in its midst (cf. Is. 2:2-4; 65; Micah 4:1-7).” Heath A. Thomas, “Zion,” in Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 912-13. For further treatment of Jerusalem/Zion, see P. W. L. Walker, ed., Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God, rev. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) and Matthews, Old Testament Turning Points, chap. 7.

Anderson, The Unfolding Drama of the Bible, 39.


Bartholomew, Where Mortals Dwell, 81.
expulsion from the sanctuary-land and the end of the monarchy.” The subsequent chapters of Kings demonstrate “echoes of exodus,” for stunning victory is followed by the idolatrous act of setting up golden calves (1 Kgs 12:25-33). It appears, then, that the path was paved for one of the most traumatic events in Israel’s long history.

The death of Solomon and the effects of his disastrous sin eventually lead to the rupture of the kingdom into two parts. In narrative terms, the move from unity to division takes all of one chapter (1 Kgs 12:16-20). Christopher Wright states, “In the centuries after Solomon the land becomes the focus of constant struggle between the forces of dispossession, greed, exploitation and land-grabbing on the one hand, and the protest of the prophets on the other” (e.g., 1 Kgs 21). As the rest of First and Second Kings recount, Israel repeatedly disobeys Yahweh’s commands and as a whole is characterized by covenant failure. Furthermore, just as the nation is characterized by unrighteousness, so also do the majority of her kings, with few exceptions, show themselves to be covenant-breakers. The focus of these books, therefore, “shifts from the glories of David and Solomon to the free fall into depravity orchestrated by their

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270 John A. Davis, “Discerning Between Good and Evil: Solomon as a New Adam in 1 Kings,” WTJ 73 (2011), 40. Davis shows numerous lexical and theological links that warrant viewing Solomon as a new Adam figure (e.g., the commission “to work,” the charge of both men “to keep” or “guard,” garden imagery). Ibid., 41-44.

271 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 148.


273 Ibid., 313, 316.

274 Wright, Old Testament Ethics for the People of God, 81.
progeny.” This vexing problem is what makes the writings of the prophets so important in the fulfillment of God’s promises.

**Fulfilling the Promise? Exile and the Prophets of an Eschatological Hope**

The Pentateuch makes clear that the land is “the place of blessing but also provides the potential place of judgment.” The Latter Prophets, then, provide an explanation of Israel’s history against the backdrop of God’s faithfulness and his people’s unfaithfulness to his covenant. Theologically the prophets proclaim the word of Yahweh in the context of the covenant, primarily as defined by Deuteronomy, and Israel’s disobedience “brings to a conclusion the covenantal curses” (e.g., Lev 26; Deut 28:15-68). Dempster writes, “The Latter Prophets provide commentary on the grand

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275 John Ryan Lister, “‘The Lord Your God is in Your Midst’: The Presence of God and the Means and End of Redemptive History” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 238.


277 Waltke, Old Testament Theology, 805; cf. House, Old Testament Theology, 273; Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 159. In the Hebrew canon, the section of the Old Testament referred to as the Prophets falls into two parts, the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets. “The Former Prophets consist of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, which continue the Torah narrative from the conquest to the exile in Babylon. . . . The Latter Prophets, which begin the second half [of the Hebrew Bible], comprise Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and the Twelve, which are largely anthologies of prophetic speeches delivered mainly during the time described in the latter part of the book of Kings.” Stephen G. Dempster, “Geography and Genealogy, Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible,” in Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 75.


279 McConville, “Restoration in Deuteronomy,” 12. Emphasizing the point from passages such as Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 that Israel’s persistent disobedience would eventually result in portentous consequences for both the land and Israel’s existence in it, Kaiser notes, “Naturally no nation or individual has the right to interpret any single or isolated reverse or major calamity in life as an evidence of divine love which is seeking the normalization of relationships between God and man. Yet Israel’s prophets were bold to declare with the aid of divine revelation that certain events, especially those in related series, were indeed from the hand of God (e.g., Amos 4:6-12 and Hag. 1:4-7).” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Promised Land: A Biblical-Historical View,” BibSac 138 (1981): 308.
narrative from creation to exile, showing the just judgment and gracious mercy of God.\textsuperscript{280} Israel—like Adam in Eden—dwelt in Yahweh’s place as priest-kings to serve and worship him, yet failed to obey his commands and forfeited her covenantal blessings. Thus, “the exile marks Yahweh’s judgment upon the great wickedness of both Israel and Judah, against which he had repeatedly warned them through his servants the prophets.”\textsuperscript{281}

Furthermore, the writing prophets mark “an epochal onward movement in Old Testament revelation”\textsuperscript{282} offering both sobering commentary on Israel’s present status and promise of her glorious future. They make a major contribution on the subject of expulsion and return to the homeland.\textsuperscript{283} The era of David and Solomon provided a conceptual model for the prophets who predicted the messianic kingdom, but this eschatological kingdom is cast in even more glorious terms.\textsuperscript{284} VanGemeren notes,\textsuperscript{285}

On the one hand, the era of the divided kingdom brings to a climax the history of Israel’s rebelliousness in the final judgment of God: the exile. On the other hand, this period raises a new hope, focused on God’s promises to the prophets. In an era of restoration he will establish his kingdom with a new people, ruled permanently by a Davidic King and richly blessed and restored by the Spirit of God.

The prophets, then, offer hope for the future establishment of God’s kingdom.

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\textsuperscript{280}Demspter, \textit{Dominion and Dynasty}, 191.

\textsuperscript{281}VanGemeren, \textit{The Progress of Redemption}, 242.


\textsuperscript{283}Von Waldow, “Israel and her Land,” 507.

\textsuperscript{284}Ibid., 239.

\textsuperscript{285}VanGemeren, \textit{The Progress of Redemption}, 243.
The promise of restoration that goes far beyond what was previously experienced is described in astonishing realities, for it includes not only the nation of Israel but also the nations, and not only the boundaries of the promised land but also the entire earth. The universality stressed in the latter prophets revives the consciousness of the worldwide significance of the Abrahamic promises.\textsuperscript{286} As a result, Beale views the prophetic expansion of both Israel’s land and God’s people as indicators that the words of the prophets have “no doubt been refracted through the Abrahamic promises.”\textsuperscript{287} Moreover, “the prophetic vision of the restoration merges the righteous king and shepherd image of the Davidic covenant with the promise of blessings on all the nations of the Abrahamic covenant.”\textsuperscript{288} The “robust hope” of the prophets,\textsuperscript{289} then, advances the covenant promises that extend to “something far greater and more extensive” than the land of Israel, geographically speaking.\textsuperscript{290}

This section will present the unified witness and variegated purpose of the prophets.\textsuperscript{291} This witness and purpose is seen through a recurring pattern in the prophetic

\textsuperscript{286}Berkhof, \textit{Systematic Theology}, 292.


\textsuperscript{288}Pate et al., \textit{The Story of Israel}, 96.

\textsuperscript{289}Michael W. Goheen, \textit{A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story} (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 66.

\textsuperscript{290}Williamson, “Abraham, Israel, and the Church,” 99.

\textsuperscript{291}Given the amount of prophetic literature, the following survey will primarily focus on synthesizing the three major prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—though support from the Twelve will be given. Furthermore, more space will be devoted to Isaiah since, according to Oswalt, “Of all the books in the OT, Isaiah is perhaps the richest. Its literary grandeur is unequalled. Its scope is unparalleled. The breath of its view of God is unmatched. In so many ways it is a book of superlatives. Thus it is no wonder that Isaiah is the most quoted prophet in the NT, and along with Psalms and Deuteronomy, one of the most frequently cited of all OT books.” Oswalt, \textit{Isaiah 1-39}, 3. Furthermore, it seems best to treat the Minor Prophets as a whole. For example, Gordon McConville writes, “There are certain features of the
corpus as a whole—specifically, the latter prophets—as well as within each prophetic book. More specifically, the writing prophets proclaim how Israel had broken the covenant, call her to repentance, and pronounce judgment on her as a result of her covenant-breaking and failure to repent, the outcome of which is exile. But in God’s word is hope. Rather than a dismal ending, God promises through the prophets restoration to the land that includes both national and international results. This eschatological resolution will be accomplished by the work of a future Messiah—a Davidic king who comes as the servant of the Lord—whose death will inaugurate a

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1292 J. Gordon McConville, “Prophetic Writings,” in Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 629. In addition to this broad structure, it is also the case that these themes are repeated in sequential order within many of the prophetic books.

1293 Pate et al., The Story of Israel, 93, who cite three major types of indictments against Israel: idolatry, social injustice, and religious ritualism. Ibid.


new covenant and usher in the age of the Spirit, extend his kingdom to the ends of the earth, and finally bring about a new creation.

**Disobedience and the Judgment of Exile**

Although the exile occurs relatively late in Israel’s history, the theological concept is experientially present from the beginning. For example, Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the land is “the archetype of all subsequent exile” (Gen 3:17-19, 24), and Abraham (Gen 23:4; cf. Heb 11:8-10), Jacob (Gen 31), Joseph and his family (Gen 39-Exod 1), and the wilderness generation (Num 14) all knew the pain of living away

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297 This new age of the Spirit is seen in two ways. First, the Messiah will have the Spirit in full measure. Just as different leaders in the Old Testament had the Spirit in various ways, so there is anticipation that the Spirit will be upon the Messiah in full measure to do a saving work on behalf of his people. This becomes clear in Isaiah’s presentation of Servant of the Lord, who will be endowed with the Spirit. He will be from the house of David (Isa 11:1), the Spirit will rest on him (v. 2) and, according to Graham Cole, he will have the character, competency, and effectiveness (vv. 3-10) unlike any other previous leader in Israel. Graham A, Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 133. The New Testament authors pick up on this presentation, for Jesus has the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). As J. Alec Motyer says, “The Old Testament has the same general revelation of the Spirit of God as the New: personal qualities (Is. 63:10; Eph. 4:30), distinctness (Is. 63:11; Mk. 1:9-11), divine presence (Ps. 139:7; Jn 14:16-17, 23), indwelling (Is. 63:11; Hg. 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:16).” J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 122n1. Motyer’s view of the continuity of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and New Testament has not gone unchallenged. For a work on the Holy Spirit that emphasizes more discontinuity than Motyer, see James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old & New Testaments*, NACSBT (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006). Nevertheless, the Spirit plays a unique role in his conception (Luke 1:2; cf. Matt 1:18-24) and uniquely anoints him for ministry, which can be seen in his baptism (Luke 3:21-22; par. Matt 2:13-17; Mark 1:9-11). Furthermore, John the Baptist predicts that Jesus will pour out the Spirit upon his people (Matt. 3:11-12; par. Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:15-17; John 1:29-34; cf. Pentecost in Acts 2). When these various threads are pulled together, the Messiah is the perfect and final prophet, priest, and king who does a qualitatively better work for his people (see, e.g., Hebrews). This work is tied to his obedience, life, death, and resurrection, so that he alone is qualified to dispense the Spirit. Second, the new age ushered in by the Messiah will be the age of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32). The era of Israel’s judgment and woe will give way to an era of justice and security (Isa 32:16-20). This new age will dawn when the “Spirit is poured upon us from on high” (Isa 32:15). Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 433. This age is when God says to his people, “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Ezek 36:26-28).

298 Duguid, “Exile,” 475.
from their homeland. However, none of these examples compared in magnitude to the devastations and loss that occurred when the northern and southern kingdoms went into exile, respectively. For this reason, the prophets shared a common prophetic message, though the message is far from uniform.

Throughout Isaiah, and the prophets as a whole, judgment for Israel’s sin is a prevalent theme. John Oswalt observes that Israel’s rebellion is “illustrated graphically by the fact that the book begins and ends on this note.”

“Judgment takes many forms: natural disaster (24:4-5), military defeat (5:26-30), or disease (1:5-6). But all of these are from the hand of God (43:27-28).” Isaiah opens by criticizing and rebuking the nation for its rebellion so that they might return to live under his word. Yahweh, the Creator, calls heaven and earth as witnesses of Israel’s covenant breaking (1:2). There is a scandal to be proclaimed to the entire world, and this scandal is Israel’s egregious sin.

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299 Although the northern tribes of Israel were exiled over a century before Judah (and Benjamin) in the south, it is the sixth century exiles in Babylon who provide the most vivid image of and commentary on the exile. Blanchard writes, “It is difficult for us to comprehend the depth of [the exiles’] pathos as they attempted to deal with their shattered existence, alienated from all of the forms which give meaning to their lives: outside the Land and without kingship and temple.” Blanchard, “Changing Hermeneutical Perspectives on ‘The Land,’” 59-60.

300 Willem A. VanGemeren, Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 44. VanGemeren notes, “The prophetic message is diverse, depending on the individual personality of the prophet, the temporal context, the needs of the people, and the content of the revelation.” Ibid.

301 Robin Routledge notes that in Isaiah “Israel” often refers, not to the northern kingdom, but to the whole people of God as they once were and how they can be again. Robin Routledge, “Is There a Narrative Substructure Underlying the Book of Isaiah?” TynBul 55, no. 2 (2004): 188n16.


303 Oswalt, Isaiah 1-39, 40.


305 House, Old Testament Theology, 276.
against God. Instead of mirroring to the community and world the character of Yahweh in social justice, Israel is characterized by social injustice. One thing is certain: obedience is necessary in order to enjoy God’s blessing in the land (Isa 1:19). The problem of Judah and Jerusalem, however, is that they have forsaken the Lord and have become foolish (1:3-4; 5:1-30). Clearly Judah has become God’s disobedient son (1:4; cf. Deut 14:1). Furthermore, chapters 13-27 demonstrate God’s rule over all the


307 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 436; see also Thomas L. Leclerc, *Yahweh is Exalted in Justice: Solidarity and Conflict in Isaiah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001); Pate et al., *The Story of Israel*, 94-45.


309 Hosea and Amos, contemporaries of Isaiah, provide commentary on a similar situation as they focus attention on the northern kingdom. In chapters 4-14, Hosea paints a prophetic picture full of doom and hope. Thomas McComiskey comments, “The catalog of sins is imposing. Oath-taking was false and insincere, people made sworn oaths they did not intend to keep; the society was rampant with killing and theft; adultery was practiced extensively; eruptions of violence took lives with startling frequency. . . . No wonder God has a controversy with this people!” Thomas McComiskey, “Hosea,” in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 57. Similarly Amos, after pronouncing judgment on Israel’s neighbors (including Judah) with strategic and rhetorical geographical precision, he then sets his sights on Israel. As C. J. H. Wright says, the effect is “to throw a kind of geographical noose around Israel and thus to make the climatic accusation against her even more devastatingly powerful.” C. J. H. Wright, *Living as the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984), 123. For more on the rhetorical strategy of Amos, see Karl Möller, *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003). It appears imminent, then, that the punishment of exile would come to the house of Israel and Judah. But even in exile, writes Donald Gowan, “there will be no escape from divine judgment.” Donald E. Gowan, *Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 28. Yet, according to Samuel Terrien, instead of assimilating themselves to their pagan environment, many of the exiles saw in the catastrophe the manifestation of Yahweh’s presence in judgment, not his complete absence. Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 262.

310 Concerning Israel as a disobedient son, Dempster writes, “The echoes of Deuteronomy are loud and clear. Heaven and earth were called as witnesses to the covenant that was made with Israel (Deut 30:19; 31:28). Moreover, disobedient children were to be disciplined, punished and, if need be, executed if they persisted in rebellion against parental authority (Deut 21:18-21). The pain of Yahweh is profound. He has raised children who do not even acknowledge him anymore, having sunk beneath the level of a beast. The text proceeds to describe their immorality—‘a sinful nation, loaded down with guilt, corrupt children with corrupt parents’ (Isa 1:4). Their father has tried everything, disciplining them until they have become black and blue, and asking them in frustration, ‘Why will you be punished again? Why do you keep on rebelling?’ (Isa 1:5). Then the national disaster of an Assyrian invasion is described, in which a remnant living in Jerusalem was spared ‘like a hut in a cucumber field’ (Isa 1:8). God in mercy did not exercise the
nations, “and when his ‘day’ comes he will exert his rule alike over heaven and earth, but
at the center of all his operations lies his compassion for his own people.”\textsuperscript{311} Later texts
in Isaiah speak already from the situation of the ruined and forsaken land that is
anticipated at the beginning (e.g., 49:17; 54:13).\textsuperscript{312} Therefore, because of their
disobedience (1:15-16, 19-20; 2:5-9; 3:8-9; 5:7) sin must be judged (1:5-6; 24-25; 2:10-
11; 3:11; 5:29-30). And indeed it will be, for “the land will be filled with woe, and the
chosen people will be exiled at the hands of a fierce, unsparing foe (5:8-30).”\textsuperscript{313} Whereas
in Isaiah 1:8 the vineyard was associated with the Lord’s preservation of a remnant of
Zion, now the vineyard is the place where “the Lord asks if there is anything more he
could have done.”\textsuperscript{314} Consequently, Isaiah cries out, “How long, O Lord?” (6:11). John
Oswalt comments, “The answer to his cry is not comforting. There will be no reprieve for
Judah. God’s justice will be carried out to its full extent until the land is empty. So the
prophecies of Deuteronomy would come to fulfillment (Deut 28:21, 63; 29:28).”\textsuperscript{315} The
coming desolation appeared certain.

Moving forward, “both exilic prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, are full of
condemnation for the virtual apostasy of Israel that has led to this catastrophe.”\textsuperscript{316}

\textsuperscript{311} Motyer, \textit{Isaiah}, 18.
\textsuperscript{312} Rendtorff, \textit{The Canonical Hebrew Bible}, 467.
\textsuperscript{313} House, \textit{Old Testament Theology}, 277.
\textsuperscript{314} Motyer, \textit{Isaiah}, 69.
\textsuperscript{315} Oswalt, \textit{Isaiah}, 190.
\textsuperscript{316} Goldsworthy, \textit{Christ-Centered Biblical Theology}, 131.
Rendtorff notes, “Especially in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, contemporaries of the fall of the kingdom of Judah, the end of the undisturbed life in the land is one of the dominant themes.” Jeremiah offers a glimpse of the most volatile time for Jerusalem, Judah and the surrounding nations. He proclaims the word of the Lord to the people concerning their past failures, which result in utter disaster (2:1-3:5; 5:20-31). They have abandoned the bountiful life-giving blessings of their covenant Lord and instead gone after things that do not satisfy (2:13). Dumbrell writes,

This prophet from Anathoth challenges the prophetic institution of his day, charging it with false prophecy, as in his clash with Hananiah, who is pictured in chapter 28 as a blind advocate of the Zion traditions. The nation has failed to recognize, according to Jeremiah, the temple as a point of reference for the exercise of Yahweh’s authority over Israel and her world. Instead, the people view the temple as a guarantee of the divine presence and as a talisman warding off destruction. Jeremiah’s message comes across clearly through a play on the word *place*, which in 7:3 connotes the temple and in 7:7, the Promised Land: Judah’s failure to relate properly to the temple means her failure to secure the Promised Land. Right action at the center would have secured the whole. But it is not to be. Condemning temple sacrifices and all the cultic trappings, Jeremiah anticipates their end.

Just as Israel had sinned against Yahweh and was punished, so also Jeremiah named Judah’s sin for what it was—covenant treason (Jer 11:1-8) and their failure to know God (4:22). Citing Deuteronomy, the Lord proclaimed a curse on those who did not “hear the

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319 Dumbrell, *The Search for Order*, 98.
words of this covenant” (Jer 11:3-5; cf. Deut 27:26; 28:15). Therefore, Judah was in danger of following in the footsteps of her sister and therefore suffering her same fate.

Ezekiel, from an exilic perspective, is called to proclaim God’s message to the rebellious people of Israel, both the segment that had already been carried away into Babylonian exile and the survivors who still remained in Jerusalem (2:1-3:11). In two graphic pictures, Ezekiel 16 and 23 portray Israel as an abandoned girl whom the Lord had found in an open field, compassionately cleansed and purified her, and brought her into covenant with himself (16:4-14). Yet she rejected the covenant care and provision of her Lord and entered into adulterous religious practices (16:15-34; 23:1-21), thus proving that she is no better than the pagan nations. Likewise, Judah is no better than her older sister Samaria and her younger sister Sodom (16:46). In fact, she is worse (16:47-52). She has become an object of reproach to all those around her (16:57). This powerful and tragic picture describes the pollution that precipitates Yahweh’s judgment. As a result, God has abandoned the temple in Jerusalem (10:1-22), the land is defiled (6:1-7:1-27), and his glorious presence has departed (11:22-25).

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320 J. A. Thompson argues that “this covenant” refers to the Mosaic covenant, not the Josianic covenant “which was so prominent in the minds of Jeremiah’s hearers,” for “the pronoun ‘this’ points forward to vv. 4-5, which deal with the Sinaitic covenant at the beginning of Israel’s history.” J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 343.


322 Ibid., 541.


324 Pate et al., note that “the old Mosaic covenant as defined in Deuteronomy probably comes to an end with the departure of Yahweh’s presence in Ezekiel 10.” Pate et al., *The Story of Israel*, 93-94.
The latter prophets repeatedly demonstrate that God’s punishment for Israel’s disobedience to the covenant—and, more importantly, her covenant Lord—was exile and the loss of land. This did not, however, negate the prophets’ call to repentance (Isa 1:16-17; Jer 7:3; 18:11; 26:3; 35:15; Ezek 2-3; 14:6; 18:30-32; cf. Amos 5:1-17; Zech 3:1-4). Nevertheless, neither Israel nor Judah as a whole did repent, and the prophets acknowledge their obstinacy and proclaim the certain judgment of exile away from the land and away from Yahweh’s presence. Perhaps none saw, expressed, and lamented this land loss more than Jeremiah, “the poet of the land par excellence.” VanGemeren writes,

> Jeremiah loved God’s people and wanted to intercede for them (14:7, 20), but his was a mission of death. He had to speak of starvation, death, exile, and alienation. The prophet could not escape experiencing the pangs of exile before it happened…Jeremiah’s loneliness was heightened by the prohibition against marriage (16:2-4).

Although he announced the same message of doom as his prophetic predecessors, he “identified with his message and with his people in a more personal way than any other prophet.” In the prediction and experience of exile, then, the “comfortable words” of Israel’s and Judah’s past hope and election are called into question by the prophets’ certain message of inevitable judgment.

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As a result, the period of the exile was the most traumatic in the nation’s history. There were various reactions among those who went into exile. Some prospered materially, adapted and assimilated themselves to their new environment, and even intermarried and lost their covenant identity. Others repented and were devoted to the Lord, and even though they were away from the land and the Temple, they drew near to the Lord and remembered his promises. God’s judgment, then, did not necessarily imply his total absence. However, the grief of exile was profound and is reflected in certain Psalms such as Psalm 137, where “every line is alive with pain” and the people could only weep for Jerusalem when their captors taunted them to sing the songs of Zion.

If the glorious part of Israel’s history is her reception of the land, the tragedy of Israel’s story is that this gift was forfeited. In Israel’s history, then, just as the exodus served as the paradigmatic event of redemption, so the exile represented the paradigmatic event of judgment. But rather than moving the nation’s experience of redemption

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330 VanGemeren, Progress of Redemption, 293-95.

331 Lister distinguishes “the presence of God to judge and separate the rebellious people from his covenant blessings” from his “discipline through distance.” Lister, “The Lord Your God is in Your Midst,” 245-46; cf. Terrien, The Elusive Presence, 262.

332 Derek Kidner, Psalms 73-150, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 459.


334 Martens, God’s Design, 231.

forward, expulsion from the land appeared to call into question all the gains made up to this point.\textsuperscript{336} At this point in the story, it appears that the end of Israel in the land had come. Bartholomew and Goheen write,

For the Israelites being marched off as slaves to Babylon, it certainly must seem like the end. What has come of God’s great promises to Abraham, of his covenant with Israel at Sinai, of his vow that David’s house would go on forever? The house of the Lord himself has been destroyed! Where was the Lord while Babylon triumphed over Israel? Have God’s purposes for his family run into the sand. Worse, have God’s purposes to redeem the creation through Israel failed?\textsuperscript{337}

Likewise, Gowan comments,

The forceable loss of one’s homeland, in the midst of terror and suffering inflicted by those enemy armies, must have been a profoundly shattering experience for all those displaced persons of the eighth to sixth centuries, but for Israel and Judah it struck at the very heart of their religion. They believed in a God who had promised them that land, and now they had lost it.\textsuperscript{338}

So it seemed that Israel has walked the path of the promise of the land, through its fulfillment and on to its loss.\textsuperscript{339}

The Eschatological Hope of the Prophets

Nevertheless, God’s last word is not judgment. Throughout the prophetic message, comfort and hope often break through even in the midst of covenant discipline.\textsuperscript{340} Routledge notes, “The theme of the prophetic books is the death and rebirth of Israel: death, in the form of defeat and exile; rebirth in the return from exile,


\textsuperscript{337} Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, \textit{The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story} (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 104.

\textsuperscript{338} Gowan, \textit{Theology of the Prophetic Books}, 16.

\textsuperscript{339} Rendtorff, \textit{The Canonical Hebrew Bible}, 467.

\textsuperscript{340} Michael D. Williams, \textit{Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption} (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005), 203.
resettlement in the land and the recovery of Israel’s status as a nation." **341** In fact, “Of the sixteen canonical writing prophets, ten (Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Zechariah, Joel) write about a future restoration of Israel.” **342** This message “softens the harshness and transforms judgment into hope. The effect of this ‘happy ending’ is to transform [the prophets] from prophets of doom to prophets of hope.” **343** Thus, according to Rendtorff, “judgment and salvation are the two great poles between which the prophetic proclamation moves.” **344** Amazingly, God not only promises to restore the faithful exiles (Jer 24:1-10; 29:10-14; Ezek 36:8-15; Isa 40), he will also be a “scaled-down sanctuary” for them in the midst of it (Ezek 11:16). **345** Indeed the exile was “God’s fatherly process of selecting a remnant for himself” **346** who will inherit the promises (Isa 1:9; 11:10-12, 16; 46:3-4; Jer 23:1-4; 31:7-8; Joel 2:32; Mic 2:12; 4:6-7; Zech 8:11-13). **347** Brian Payne writes,

This hope brings with it a new dimension to the theology of the people of God, particularly with Amos, Isaiah, and Micah—that is, even when Israel or Judah were at their worst, there was always a remnant **348** who ‘could provide a bridge to

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**348** Isa 11:11, 16; 28:5; 37:31-32; Mic 4:7; 7:18; Amos 5:15; 9:12.
forgiveness and restoration. It was these people, the true people of God as it were, in whom God would work his eschatological resolution.”

Thus, a thread of hope remained.

The ground of this hope is God and his gracious promises that look back to Eden, Abraham and David. According to Richard Schultz, the “prophetic depictions of the future are richly intertextual in nature and warrant close textual comparisons, while offering a further illustration of the integral relationship and striking continuity between the Torah, the Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets, and the New Testament.” As a result, God will crush the enemy through the seed of the woman and bring about the

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350 For example, John Bright shows how the latter chapters of Isaiah offer a threefold hope: (1) God rules history and controls events for his purposes, (2) God has acted in the past for his covenant people Israel for the sake of his redemptive purposes, and (3) history is moving forward to its divinely-appointed goal of God’s rule over all peoples and all the earth. John Bright, “Faith and Destiny: The Meaning of History in Deutero-Isaiah,” Interpretation 5, no. 1 (January 1951): 22.

351 Richard Schultz, “Hearing the Major Prophets: ‘Your Ears are Open, but You Hear Nothing’ (Isa. 42:20),” in Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God’s Address, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew and David J. H. Beldman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 354. Beale notes, “[Intertextuality’s] original meaning and its ongoing typical definition is the synchronic study of multiple linkages among texts that are not the result of authorial intent but are considered often only from the readers’ viewpoint. Accordingly, intertextuality associates at least two texts (and their contexts), which creates a new context in which to understand a text (often the earlier text); this also means that texts are open to the influence of past texts and to the contexts of present readers. According to many, intertextuality entails that the reader and the reader’s new context are what give the most meaning to these linkages. . . . In biblical studies, “intertextuality” is sometimes used to refer to the procedure by which a later biblical text refers to an earlier text, how that earlier text enhances the meaning of the later one, and how the later one creatively develops the earlier meaning. In this respect, ‘intertextuality’ may be seen as a procedure of inner-biblical or intrabiblical exegesis, which is crucial to doing biblical theology and for understanding the relation of the OT to the NT. . . . Therefore it may be better to use the phrase ‘inner-biblical exegesis’ or ‘inner-biblical allusion’ instead of ‘intertextuality,’ since the former two nomenclatures are less likely to be confused with postmodern reader-oriented approaches to interpretation, where the term ‘intertextuality’ had its origin.” G. K. Beale, Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012). See also Kevin Vanhoozer, Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998); Paul E. Koptak, “Intertextuality,” in DTIB (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); Richard L. Schultz, The Search for Quotation, JSOTS 180 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); idem, “The Ties That Bind: Intertextuality, the Identification of Verbal Parallels, and Reading Strategies in the Book of the Twelve,” in Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve, ed. Paul L. Redditt and Aaron Schar (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 27-45; and idem, “Intertextuality, Canon, and ‘Undecidability’: Understanding Isaiah’s ‘New Heavens and New Earth’ (Isa 65:17-25),” BBR 20 (2010): 19-38.
Abrahamic covenant blessings of land, seed, and blessing. Moreover, God will bring these blessings through a Davidic son who will accomplish a greater exodus for his people. To be sure, “just as God had fulfilled his promise in the past, so he would do in the future also.” These themes resound throughout the prophets.

To begin, if Isaiah opens by confronting the sinful nation, within this same context of judgment a glorious future is also predicted. Dempster notes, “Juxtaposed to such bleak images of land and people is the temple mount, which grows to be the highest mountain, dominating the landscape of not only Israel but the world (2:1-5). Zion has become Everest.” This “alternation of motifs” throughout Isaiah presents a glorious vision of return for the believing remnant within unbelieving Israel in terms of a restored and renewed city of Jerusalem/Zion. Barry Webb observes,

The vision of the book moves, in fact, from the historical Jerusalem of the eighth century (under judgment) to the new Jerusalem of the eschaton, which is the center of the new cosmos and symbol of the new age. To this new Jerusalem the nations come (66:18-21; cf. 60:1-22) so that ultimately the nations find their salvation in Zion.

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352 Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 31. Martin Selman notes, “Threats to Israel’s presence in the land are regarded as a challenge to God’s declared purposes. . . . The greatest threat was the course of exile.” Martin J. Selman, 1 Chronicles, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 56.

353 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 173.

354 Dumbrell, The End of the Beginning, 6.

355 Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah, 30; see also Christopher R. Seitz, Word without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 210; Blanchard, “Changing Hermeneutical Perspectives on ‘The Land,’” 30. Dumbrell notes, “In its positioning as responsive promise to the threat of the first chapter, the prophecy of 2:1-4 is critical and its detail unfolds the eschatological direction in which the book will move.” Dumbrell, The End of the Beginning, 10.

But crucial to Isaiah’s vision is the development within the book concerning this transformation.357

Isaiah’s prophecy358 describes Israel’s return from exile in both imminent and distant ways. This return is cast in language resembling the exodus, so that it will result in an ideal community established under messianic leadership, followed by a transformed new age established by a new and greater exodus (e.g., 11:1-16; 35:1-10; 51:9-11; 52:11-12).359 The first return from exile is a physical release and return to the land (42:18-43:21) that will be accomplished by Cyrus, who will permit enslaved Israel to return to their homeland (44:24-45:1; cf. Ezra 1:1-3).360 This restoration of Israel to the land was a sign of the renewal of the covenants.361 But although this return is another (partial) fulfillment of God’s promised restoration, it in no way compares to the prophets’ final

357 Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 468. According to Sawyer, this transformation can be seen in chapters 24-27, which “in a way is a microcosm of the whole book.” That is, “the progression from ‘the city of chaos’ in 24:10 to the ‘New Jerusalem’ in 27:12 [sic] echoes the progression from the hideous scenes of desolation in chapter 1 to the vision of the New Jerusalem in chapters 65-66.” Sawyer, Prophecy and the Biblical Prophets, 90.


360 Martens, God’s Design, 300.

361 VanGemen, The Progress of Redemption, 284.
vision.\textsuperscript{362} That is, the announcements of return suggest developments on a larger scale than represented by the “diminutive colony” in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{363}

A deeper captivity kept Israel from being fully restored. Oswalt comments, “as deliverance from physical bondage demanded the servant Cyrus, so deliverance from spiritual bondage calls for the Servant, One who will be what Israel is not, so that she may have the possibility of becoming what she is to be.”\textsuperscript{364} To put it another way, though the people are taken out of Babylon, Babylon needs to be taken out of the people.\textsuperscript{365} Just as Isaiah’s reference to Babylon “goes beyond the historical empire as a symbol of the epitome of collective human glory and pride in opposition to the purposes of God,”\textsuperscript{366} so also Isaiah’s reference to Israel’s glorious restoration extends beyond the nation and includes an international community. In other words, the restoration involves the remnant and the nations; all who trust in Yahweh and his promises of salvation. Therefore, a subsequent—and greater—return will be when they are fully and finally forgiven of their sin (43:22-44:23). This deliverance will be accomplished by God’s servant-king who will bring back Israel so that God’s salvation may reach the nations (49:1-53:12).\textsuperscript{367} That is, forgiveness will come through Yahweh’s (individual) servant who will deliver his

\textsuperscript{362}VanGemeren notes that the returning remnant was far from the holiness that the Lord promised would come with the filling of the Holy Spirit, for “they did not give freely to the priests but kept for themselves whatever they could; they failed to give the best sacrifices to the Lord (Hag 1; Mal 1). Even the priests were not fully devoted to the Lord, for they did not teach the full implications of the law (Mal 2:1-9).” Ibid., 305.

\textsuperscript{363}Martens, \textit{God’s Design}, 302.

\textsuperscript{364}Oswalt, \textit{Isaiah 1-39}, 59.

\textsuperscript{365}Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 437-38.

\textsuperscript{366}Saucy, \textit{The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism}, 224.

\textsuperscript{367}The sequence of redemption is important, for it marks the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise that through Israel the nations would be blessed (Gen 12:1-3).
(corporate) servant Israel (42:1-9; 49:1-6), suffer with his people (7:14-17), redeem his people (9:2-7), rule over his people (11:1-5), and atone for sin by suffering, dying and taking the punishment that they deserve upon himself (42:1-9; 49:5-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). Moreover, Oswalt rightly notes that the Lord’s “task of restoring Israel to himself is not a large enough task for the Servant. He is of such a nature, calling, and preparation that he should be given a larger task: saving the world!” Indeed this one is “Yahweh’s servant par excellence.”

The servant’s substitutionary atonement, in effect, will initiate a new covenant (55:1-5) that offers life and enjoyment of the blessings of both the Abrahamic and

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368 Concerning Israel as God’s servant, Routledge writes, “Whilst implicit in Isaiah 1–39, Israel’s call to be God’s servant is made explicit in chapters 40–55 (e.g. 41:8-9; 44:1-2; 45:4; 48:20). In most cases this description is intended to encourage Israel that, even in exile, God has not forsaken them and that his purpose for them still stands.” Routledge, “Narrative Substructure of Isaiah,” 189. More can be said, however, concerning the identity of the servant. While there has been much debate over whether the servant is an individual or the nation/remnant of Israel, Gentry rightly states, “What clinches the argument for the servant king being an individual is the fact that in Isaiah 49:6 the servant delivers the nation and in Isaiah 53 the detail is so rich that it could not be anyone but an individual. Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 440n10. See also Peter J. Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12),” SBJT 11, no. 2 (2007): 20-47; Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah, 388-89; T. D. Alexander, The Servant King: The Bible’s Portrait of the Messiah (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 1998), 108-10; Blaising and Bock, Progressive Dispensationalism, 188. Likewise, Oswalt comments that the status of the servant is of such a nature that “neither collective Israel nor any human prophet could perform such a task.” Oswalt, Isaiah 40-66, 294.

369 Oswalt, Isaiah 1-39, 41.

370 Oswalt, Isaiah 40-66, 293.

371 Goldingay and Payne, Isaiah 40-55, 55.

372 According to Dempster, “Echoing the new covenant that Jeremiah announced, declaring that Israel’s sins would be forgiven and that everyone would know the Lord, Isaiah states that all Israel’s children will be taught by the Lord. Just as the new covenant was more secure than the covenant made with creation during the time of Noah (Jer 31:35-37), so the servant’s work has made a covenant equally secure, for it is the same one (Isa 54:9-10). This covenant is further described as an everlasting Davidic covenant in which ‘all who are thirsty’ (Isa 55:1) can drink at the Davidic fountain and dine at the Davidic table. In fact, says the Lord, ‘I will cut with you an everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David. For I have appointed him as prince and leader and commander of the peoples. Look, a nation you did not know will call, a nation that does not know you will run to you on account of Yahweh your God’ (55:3-5). . . . But who can this David be? He cannot be the historical David, who is long since dead. He is none other than the David promised in the first half of Isaiah, Jeremiah’s righteous scion, and Ezekiel’s ‘my servant David.’
Davidic covenants for Israel and the nations (54:1-55:13; cf. 19:19-25). It appears, then, that the reverse of the curse of the nations in Genesis 10-11 will give way to the universal blessings promised to Abraham. Pate et al., write,

The prophets will take the two parallel biblical stories—the story of the nations (Gen 3-11) and the story of Israel (Gen 12 through 2 Kings 25), both categorized by sin, exile, and restoration—and merge these together into one story. Thus, as the prophets preach judgment on Israel and Judah due to sin and rebellion, they will also preach judgment on the Gentile nations that surround Israel and Judah (Egypt, Cush, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, Edom, Assyria, Babylonia) for their sin as well (idolatry, rebellion against Yahweh, oppression of Yahweh’s people). However, the prophets in general, and Isaiah in particular, then include the foreign nations in their picture of future messianic restoration. They paint a picture of a multiethnic group mixed together with the remnant of restored Israelites streaming to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh. In the second half of the book of Isaiah, the prophet connects the coming Messianic Servant to this picture of restoration, stating that the task of being a “light to the nations” and of bringing salvation to all the peoples of the earth is assigned to the Messianic Servant of Yahweh (Isa 42:6; 49:6). . . . The use of nation, language, and gathering in Isaiah 66:18 suggest that the prophet is painting an eschatological picture in which the coming Messiah reverses the division in Genesis 10-11 and brings about the promised blessing of Genesis 12:3 by gathering the peoples of the world to him in true worship.

This also clearly echoes the Davidic hope that he would some day be appointed head of the nations and that ‘a people whom I do not know will serve me’ (2 Sam 22:44). It is this new David who has fulfilled the covenant requirements, made atonement and established an everlasting covenant with all who accept his free offer to partake of his covenant meal (Isa 55:1-2). It is he who will be a witness to the peoples, and their leader and commander. He will bring the knowledge of the Torah and of the covenant to the nations (cf. 42:4-6). Consequently, it is no accident that the exiles are urged to repent, and this grace cannot be fathomed” (55:6-13). Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 176-77; see also Peter J. Gentry, “Rethinking the ‘Sure Mercies of David’ in Isaiah 55:3,” WTJ 69 (2007): 279-304. Zechariah buttresses these themes when he discloses a sanctifying fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This Davidic king shall speak peace to the nations, rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth, and bring reconciliation through his death to God and his people (Zech 9-14).

The result that “your offspring will possess the nations” (Isa 54:3) appears to advance the promise to Abraham that his “offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies” (Gen. 22:17). John Van Seters notes, “The resettlement and broad expansion in the land (54:1-3) is described in terms of the great fruitfulness of the barren woman, with details that are reminiscent of the patriarchal stories: ‘Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; . . . For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your descendants will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.’” John Van Seters, Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 241-42.

Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 176-77.

Pate et al., The Story of Israel, 97-98. For a more extensive discussion of the prophetic texts
Such an international plan “had been the program and intention of God all along since Abraham had received the word.” Moreover, a Davidic king will bless and rule the nations because Yahweh has made him leader and commander of the peoples (55:4-5), which Gentry connects “to the Servant king in Isaiah 53 whose offering of himself as an ‘āsām and whose resurrection enable him to bring to fulfillment the promises of Yahweh in the Davidic covenant and is at the same time the basis for the New or Everlasting covenant.” Astonishingly, not only is the remnant called the Lord’s servants (Isa 65:13-25), so also are foreigners. Gentry writes,

Already in chapter 54, where the sacrificial death and suffering of the Servant King results in a new and everlasting covenant, we see in verse 17 that those who are joined to the servant as the new covenant community are also referred to as servants. More astonishing is 56:6, which makes plain that individuals from the nations are included as the servants of the Lord.

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that describe the international aspects of salvation by the Messiah, see J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 105-39.


377 Concerning the inclusion of the nations in Isaiah 55:3-5, Bruce Ware writes, “The everlasting covenant spoken of here is specifically said to be an expression of God’s love promised to David. Israel will have its leader and commander, as promised long ago to David. But there is an additional element in this text, for this new David, who rules under a new everlasting covenant, will also summon nations and peoples Israel does not know. So while the new covenant is uniformly (here and elsewhere in the Old Testament) directed to the nation of Israel, we see from this text that the new covenant made with Israel includes a host of Gentile participants, not directly addressed as God’s covenant partners.” Bruce A. Ware, “The New Covenant and the People(s) of God,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 73. Likewise, Amos anticipates the coming of a Davidic king who will “raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name” (vv. 11-12). In other words, this restoration and rebuilding will not be limited to the divided kingdom of Israel, but will extend to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 15:15-17). God’s restoration of his people—both Jew and Gentile—will then give way to planting them in the land, which is described in new creational and Edenic language (vv. 13-15). See Kaiser, “The Davidic Promise and the Inclusion of the Gentiles,” 97-111.


Furthermore, in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, the Lord will give his *name* and *blessing* to his servants in the land (65:13-16; cf. Gen 12:3; 17:5; 22:18; 26:4). The result of the Servant’s saving work, then, creates *servants.* And all—Israel as well as foreigners and eunuchs—will go to Jerusalem as God’s holy mountain in a pilgrimage of worship (Isa 2:2-4; 27:13; cf. Mic 4:1-5).

But Isaiah does not stop with the emergence of a Davidic king who ushers in a new age. Instead, “the text proceeds to describe more clearly the result of this new order of things” and the glories awaiting the Lord’s servants. Isaiah 65:17-66:24 “is a succinct summary of the eschatological themes that occur throughout the entire book of Isaiah” and elaborates on the hope of restoration to the city of Jerusalem and the land in otherworldly language that describes astounding realities (cf. 2:1-4; 4:2-6; 9:1-16; 11:1-10). Motyer comments,

> Like all visionaries Isaiah largely furnished the future from the present. But his development of the ‘city’ theme shows that he was consciously thinking beyond the geographical Zion/Jerusalem to the ideal it embodied. Thus, for example, in 11:6-9 the Lord’s ‘holy mountain’ has become the whole redeemed creation; also in 65:17-

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382 Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning,* 5; Clements, “Law and Promise,” 170. Commenting on Isaiah 27:12-13, Motyer writes, “The reference to *in Assyria* and *in Egypt* is to people living within Gentile boundaries, a different picture from verse 12. This is the ingathering of the people of the world to Jerusalem. *Perishing* (née‘abád) is used in Deut. 26:5 of pre-redemption Israel: so there will be Gentiles awaiting the great trumpet heralding their full atonement. . . . The gathered Gentiles will *worship the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.* They will be united to the Lord in worship, full participants in the holy community and welcomed in Jerusalem as members of the strong city itself (cf. Eph 3:6).” Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah,* 225-26.

383 Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty,* 181.

384 Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah,* 528.

the easy way the prophet moves from the ‘new earth’ to the newly created Jerusalem speaks to the same point. In the Bible the ‘city’ began (Gen 11:4) as humankind’s attempt to achieve its own salvation without reference to God, and when Isaiah looks forward to the End, he sees the fall of the ‘city’ humankind has built (24:1-10), Babel on a worldwide scale. . . . In a word, Isaiah’s vision is of the Mount Zion to which the redeemed have already come (Heb 12:22) and which is also yet to be revealed from heaven (Rev 21:2).  

These eschatological themes have appeared throughout Isaiah. In fact, “the ‘container’ of this earlier prophecy (11:1-10) is exploded in superabundance.”  

But what is new “is the joining of them together in one concluding oracle. The radical formulation of 65:17-18 is repeated, but now in such a way as to provide an interpretation of the earlier promises as part of the one eschatological goal: the creation of new heavens and new earth.”  

When the various strands are drawn together concerning Israel’s return—and, in turn, the nations—Isaiah’s vision of final restoration involves a new heavens and new earth (65:17; 66:22), a new Jerusalem (65:18-19; cf. 4:2-6), and a holy mountain, Zion (65:25; cf. 2:1-4; 4:2-6). Moreover, in fulfillment of the promises to and covenant with Abraham, God will give them a new name and they will receive blessing in the land by the God of truth ( Isa 65:15-16).  

Finally, this new creation city-mountain calls to mind Eden, “the holy mountain of God” (cf. Ezek 28:13-14), where his people dwelt in his presence and worshiped him.  

By the end of Isaiah, then, this temple-mountain-city is

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386 Motyer, Isaiah, 27.

387 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 181.

388 Childs, Isaiah, 542.

389 Ibid., 528-29; Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 465-66.

390 Beale, The Temple and the Church’s Mission, 75, 146; cf. Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 469. For more intertextual connections in Isaiah 65:17-25, see Schultz, “Intertextuality, Canon, and ‘Undecidability,’” 19-38.
coextensive with the new heavens and new earth. They are one and the same. The final vision resounds with astonishing realities cast in terms of God’s kingdom coming to and filling the earth. VanGemeren writes,

The notion of progression or process is inherent in the prophetic and apostolic word: God’s goal is not only the salvation of the Jews but the full establishment of his kingdom on earth. The progression began with Cyrus, who was called by the Lord to free [God’s] people so that they might rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Isa 44:28; see also 44:26-45:13). The work of the Servant must continue “till he established justice on earth” (42:4). Progression is inevitable because the scope of redemption is the whole earth and not just the Jewish people in Palestine.

Thus, God will save his people through the work of the servant-king and make the place where they will live. The order is crucial, for it is reversed from that in the old creation. In the old creation, God first created the place (the heavens and the earth; Eden) and then made and set his people there to live. In the new creation, however, God first makes his people and then will make the new creation where they will live.

Complementary pictures of a hopeful restoration to the land emerge in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Though Jeremiah announces that Israel has become God’s “stubborn and rebellious” son (5:23; cf. Deut 21:18, 20) and, as a result, will be uprooted from the land (4:23-26; 24), there is still hope for a renewed people in a

391 Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 468.
392 Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem, 54.
393 VanGemeren, The Progress of Redemption, 311.
395 Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 467-68.
396 R. K. Harrison, Jeremiah and Lamentations, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973; repr. 2009), 81.
renewed place.\textsuperscript{397} Yahweh promises to take back his people—but only if they repent—and if they return to Yahweh, “then nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory” (4:1-2). The reference to the nations blessing themselves in him “indicates that the promises to Abraham would be realized (cf. Gen 12:3) if Israel would repent and glorify Yahweh.”\textsuperscript{398} Like Isaiah, then, the nations are in view in the restoration of Israel and Judah, and this cosmological and teleological goal is in fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises.\textsuperscript{399} Furthermore, Jeremiah proclaims that Israel will return from exile in terms of a new exodus (16:14-15). In fact, this exodus will be so great that the former exodus will no longer be spoken of.\textsuperscript{400}

\textsuperscript{397}Thompson lists several significant passages which indicate Jeremiah’s hopeful views when he writes, “When [Jeremiah] purchased the field of his cousin Hanamel in Anathoth, with the Babylonians already overrunning the land having only recently lifted the siege of Jerusalem and with every prospect of renewing it, he wanted to demonstrate his faith in Yahweh’s plans for future restoration. ‘Thus says Yahweh of hosts the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land’ (32:15). Again, his letter to the exiles in Babylon (ch. 29) contains a promise that when seventy years had been completed Yahweh would visit his people and bring them back to their land and restore their fortunes. Part of that vision saw Israel seeking Yahweh with all their heart (29:10-14). Other passages appear in 31:2-6, 15-22, both of which seem to have been directed to Northern Israel, possibly from the early years of Jeremiah’s career. These views breathe a spirit of hope.” Thompson, \textit{Jeremiah}, 112-13. He also lists other passages where hope for the future is expressed, though some are disputed by scholars (cf. 3:15-16; 4:9-10; 12:14-17; 16:14-15; 23:3-4, 7-8; 30:8-11, 16-24; 31:1, 7-14, 23-28, 35-40; 33:6-26). Ibid., 113n12.

\textsuperscript{398}Hamilton, \textit{God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment}, 215; see also Wenham, \textit{The Prophets}, 53; Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 487.

\textsuperscript{399}Also see Jer 12:14-17, which speaks of an exile, not just for Judah but also for God’s evil neighbors “who touch the heritage that I have given my people Israel to inherit” (14). Astonishingly, “according to verse 15, each land and people will have a return from exile. And when all the exiles are brought home, if the nations learn from Israel to swear by the God of Israel, then they will be ‘built up’ or established in the midst of the restored Israel. If they do not, each will be permanently eradicated as a nation.” Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 488.

\textsuperscript{400}Interestingly, Yahweh compares the regathering of his people to the work of fishermen who will go out and catch his people (16:16). Clearly, there is an allusion to this verse when Jesus chooses his disciples and makes them “fishers of men” (Matt 4:19). Gentry comments, When Jesus says to Peter and Andrew that he will make them “fishers of men,” he is referring directly to Jeremiah 16:16, and he is saying that he will use his followers to bring the exiles home. We saw earlier that the return from exile entails two stages: (1) (physical) release from Babylon and (2) (spiritual) release from sin, condemnation, and death. The second stage of return from exile is inaugurated with the coming of Jesus and his ministry. This is substantiated from the many passages in the Gospels that indicate that the new exodus has begun in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 490; see also Watts.
Then, in Jeremiah 30-33, the Book of Consolation, Jeremiah unfolds the great promises of salvation and offers hope beyond the exile that will come in the form of a new covenant\textsuperscript{401} and return to the land.\textsuperscript{402} Of particular importance is 31:38-40, which concerns the rebuilding and expansion of Jerusalem. In addition to the restoration of Davidic leadership (30:8-11), priesthood (31:14), and people (31:31-34), the restoration of the city brings to completion the glorious reversal of Jeremiah’s pronouncements of judgment.\textsuperscript{403} Though the city had been destroyed, “the future age of redemption will see its restoration \textit{and more}\textsuperscript{404}” (emphasis added). Derek Kidner comments,

> In [31:38-40] the promise is ‘earthed’ not merely in this planet but in the familiar details of Israel’s capital, naming rubbish dumps and all . . . As for these details, the prophecy is again using the known and the near to project an image of the ultimate. The city would indeed be rebuilt, and we read in Nehemiah 3:1 of the tower of Hananel as situated near the starting-point of that operation, as Nehemiah’s account works its way westward from the northeast corner, turning south at presumably the Corner Gate, eventually to come northwards up the east side, via the Horse Gate

\textit{Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark.}

\textsuperscript{401}Jeremiah is the only text in the Old Testament that specifically mentions the new covenant. However, Walter Kaiser is correct in seeing the concept of the new covenant in other passages despite the omission of the exact phrase. He writes, “Based on similar content and contexts, the following expressions can be equated with the new covenant: the ‘everlasting covenant’ in seven passages [Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26; Isa 24:5; 55:3; 61:8], a ‘new heart’ or a ‘new spirit’ in three or four passages [Ezek 11:19; 18:31; 36:26; Jer 32:39 (LXX)], the ‘covenant of peace’ in three passages [Isa 54:10; Ezek 34:25; 37:26], and ‘a covenant’ or ‘my covenant’ which is placed ‘in that day’ in three passages [Isa 49:8; 59:21; Hos 2:18-20]—making a grand total of sixteen or seventeen major passages on the new covenant.” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Old Promise and the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34,” \textit{JETS} 15 (Winter 1972): 14.

Concerning the nature of the new covenant, David Peterson highlights how “radically different” it would be, for God’s people will be renewed in heart, have a new knowledge of God, and definitive forgiveness of sins. David G. Peterson, \textit{Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 29-35. Similarly, though with more emphasis on the \textit{newness} of the new covenant, Ware emphasizes (1) a new mode of implementation (the internalization of the law; v. 33), (2) a new result (faithfulness to God; v. 34), (3) a new basis (full and final forgiveness of sins; v. 34), and (4) a new scope (covenant faithfulness characteristic of all covenant participants; v. 34). Ware, “The New Covenant,” 75.

\textsuperscript{402}McConville, \textit{The Prophets}, 60.

\textsuperscript{403}House, \textit{Old Testament Theology}, 319.

(Neh 3:28) to complete the circuit. But the vision outruns that exercise, in scale and in significance. *The measuring line shall go out farther* (39), not turning at the Corner Gate; and the places that were once unclean *shall be sacred to the Lord* (40). Added to these things, the promise that the city would never again be overthrown (40c) is a further sign that we must look beyond ‘the present Jerusalem’ to ‘the Jerusalem above’ (Gal 4:25-26): the great company of saints and angels which is already our home city, as seen in, e.g., Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 21:1-22:5.  

Therefore, the new Jerusalem will be both different and expanded from the old, and the rebuilt city will become the center of God’s presence among his people (3:14-18; cf. Isa 65:17; 66:12; Rev 21:3).  

Like Isaiah (40-66) and Ezekiel (37; 40-48), Jeremiah describes the restoration of both people and place in the future and pins these hopes on a Davidic leader, a righteous branch, who, interestingly, in Jeremiah is a combination of both king and priest (33:14-18; cf. Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 53:1-3). This king-priest will secure a new covenant for his people as certain as Yahweh’s covenant with day and night, make them dwell securely in the land, and multiply the offspring of David as numerous as the immeasurable sands of the sea in fulfillment of his covenant with Abraham (33:14-26).

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406 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 516.


408 According to Kaiser, this Branch “would be the culmination of several ancient promises: (1) the Noahic covenant on the perpetuity of the seasons; (2) the Abrahamic covenant on the innumerable seed; (3) the covenant with Phinehas on the perpetuity of the priesthood; and (4) the Davidic covenant on the everlasting reign of his seed. In every case these had been declared ‘everlasting’ or ‘eternal,’ and so they were in Jeremiah’s predictions.” Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God*, 199.

409 Williamson argues that this passage refers to the covenant with Noah rather than creation when he writes, “While some scholars have pointed to Jeremiah 33:20-26 for further support [that Jer 31:35-37 refers to Genesis 1-2], the references here to a covenant with inanimate created things seem to allude more to dimensions of the Noahic covenant reflected in Genesis 8:22-9:13 (esp. Gen. 8:22) than to an implicit ‘covenant with creation’ in Genesis 1-3. Admittedly, the somewhat similar analogy drawn in Jeremiah 31:35-37 may indeed allude to the fixed order established at creation, although this appears to
Moreover, Jeremiah 31:35-40 “hints that a new covenant would necessarily operate within the contours of a new creation, as Isaiah and Ezekiel also make clear. Accordingly, Jeremiah looks for an idealized return to the land.”

However, subsequent history proved differently. The postexilic return to the land failed to live up to its promise. Yet it marks the inauguration of the biblical eschatological program. When would Yahweh “build and plant” his people in the land? Jeremiah describes the return in eschatological language of “latter days,” but he also describes Israel as having to spend seventy years in exile before Yahweh will rebuild and replant it on the land (29:10; cf. 25:11-12). Dempster rightly notes, “While not giving a precise timeline for the working out of all the individual details of the future complex of eschatological events, the expression ‘seventy years’ is certainly important. The end of exile would be the sign that building and planting would begin.”

Dumbrell, The Faith of Israel, 150.

According to Martens, the terms “build and plant” (e.g., Jer 24:6) are “theologically colored,” for they “attempt to present salvation history in picturesque language and to capture the familiar tones of Yahweh’s saving acts. One should add more specifically the expression deals with land.” Martens, God’s Design, 302. Likewise, Dempster comments on the final appearance of these terms in the prophets in Amos 9:11-15. He notes that “these verbs have to do not only with geography but also with genealogy. God is going to rebuild not only the nation of Israel and the world but also the house of David. From these reconstructions will come the reconstruction of humanity and of the world.” Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 161n1.

Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 167. For a concise discussion of the various interpretations of Jeremiah’s seventy years, see Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas J.
exile—aimed at Israel and Judah—will also include the nations who “shall be built up in the midst of my people” (Jer 12:16), and they shall dwell securely in the new Jerusalem whose borders encompass the land.

Similarly, Ezekiel contains glorious prophecies of restoration. Alongside hopes of ingathering are prophesies that the renewed people will be purified in heart and spirit, and they will be one flock under a new David (34-37). Dempster notes,

Even the divided kingdom of exiles is reunited under a new leader, who is said to be ‘my servant David’ (37:24-25; cf. 34:23-24). But he is also described as one who will come to power through relative obscurity. In a remarkable allegorical passage, a Davidic descendant is compared to a tender shoot (yōneqet) plucked from a tall tree, taken to Mount Zion and planted there to grow into a huge tree, bearing fruit and providing shade for all the birds of the forest (17:22-24). Thus all the trees of the forest (peoples of the world) will know that ‘I the LORD lower the tall tree and raise the low tree. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish’ (17:24). Later, this ‘David’ who will come to power is remembered for his humble origins as a shepherd (34:23); he will provide true leadership, as opposed to past leaders, who are symbolized as corrupt and destructive shepherds. Both these motifs of Davidic rule (a tender shoot and a shepherd) echo Jeremiah’s prediction of a ‘plant growth’ from the line of David, which will bring good shepherds—justice for the nation (Jer 23:1-8). Ezekiel states that it is during this period of time of future Davidic leadership that a covenant of shalom will bring a flourishing prosperity and fertility to the land (34:23-31), which will be a new Eden (36:35).

As a result, “the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever” (37:28). Whereas Yahweh had been a sanctuary to the exiles “for a little while” (11:16), Yahweh’s presence will be with them forever. Thus, “Yahweh’s


415 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 170-71.

sanctuary in the midst of his people will finally convince the nations of his sanctifying power.”

Furthermore, the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah will return from exile through a new exodus and be joined together once again as one people (36:24-38; cf. 37:15-23). God will make a new covenant (36:16-38), which will deal with their sin and finally fulfill his covenant so that he can say, “They will be my people, and I will be their God” (37:23, 27). In order for this restoration to come, however, “Yahweh must create a holy people from nothing.” And to be sure, he will accomplish his new creation. Indeed “Ezekiel uses the language of resurrection to illustrate the promise of Israel’s return to a new life in her own land from the deathlike existence of the Babylonian exile.” In other words, the restoration to the land is related to the resurrection motif. The dead shall be brought to life so that they too may participate in the restoration. But Ezekiel’s vision of restoration does not stop with Israel, for other nations are included in Yahweh’s everlasting covenant (16:59-63). Gentry notes,

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419 Concerning this covenant relationship, Gentry notes that “Ezekiel uses both the term ‘covenant of peace’ and the term ‘everlasting covenant,’ showing that these are two ways of referring to the same covenant. The former term is employed especially in contexts emphasizing reconciliation between Yahweh and his people, so necessary because of their disloyalty through idolatry and violation of his covenant instructions. The latter term is employed to stress that the problem in the Israelite covenant (and indeed in earlier covenants) of the faithless human partner will be permanently addressed: Israel will be truly holy, i.e., committed, devoted, and faithful to the Lord.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 480.


Careful readers will draw the conclusion from what has preceded in Ezekiel 16 that the renewed Israel is no longer based on ethnic parameters, but defined by those who are reconciled to the Lord and believing in him: “Jerusalem will be given both Samaria and Sodom, but not on the basis of the Israelite Covenant” (16:61). In the New Covenant, the old divisions in Israel are healed and the Gentiles are included. Only faithful human partners (i.e. believers) constitute the covenant community. And the Davidic Messiah is ruler over all.\footnote{Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 481.}

Hence Ezekiel 16:61, like similar passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah, indicates that the restoration will have international significance.

Ezekiel continues with his program by envisioning a rebuilt temple with revitalized worship in chapters 40-48.\footnote{House, \textit{Old Testament Theology}, 342.} That is, a new humanity is (re)created (chap. 37) and then placed in a new Eden.\footnote{Dempster, \textit{Dominion and Dynasty}, 170.} The climactic vision in chapters 40-48 describes the fulfillment of the promises of chapters 1-39.\footnote{Jon Douglas Levenson, \textit{Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48} (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 112.} Taylor comments,

> These chapters have links with the vision of the profanation of the temple and the departure of the glory of the Lord from Jerusalem (8:1-11:25), for they picture the rebuilt temple to which the glory of the Lord returns (43:5). They are therefore to be thought of not as a completely independent composition, only loosely tacked on to the end of the main body of Ezekiel’s work, but as a real climax to this thought as it has been maturing through twenty years of prayer, meditation and ministry.\footnote{Taylor, \textit{Ezekiel}, 244.}

In a significant passage, Ezekiel 37:25-28 pulls together various strands of the new place for God’s people and prepares the way for even more glorious promises in chapters 40-48.\footnote{Allen, \textit{Ezekiel 20-48}, 196; Block, \textit{Ezekiel 25-48}, 418; Taylor, \textit{Ezekiel}, 234.}
They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.

Beale notes, “That both passages are part of the same promise is apparent from noticing that twice in 37:25-28 and twice in 43:7, 9 occurs the phrase ‘I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever’ (with minor variations in wording).”429 It is significant, then, that Ezekiel ends with a vision of a purified land with boundaries situated around a new temple complex.430

Moreover, from another angle Ezekiel 47:1-12 contains a “profusion of Edenic imagery” and describes a paradisiacal temple that extends to encompass the entire land.431 It can be said, then, “that the New Temple produces the New Creation by restoring the consummate state of Paradise.”432 Taylor comments,

The commentator is justified in looking for parallels to and antecedents for this kind of symbolism, and most turn to the creation narrative in Genesis 2. The former paradise which was watered by the four-streamed river (Gen 2:10) is here paralleled by the new creation which also has its rivers and its trees (7). If we add to this the fact that Ezekiel [in 28:1-19] seems to have known of a paradise tradition linked to a ‘holy mountain of God’ (28:14, 16) as well as a ‘garden of God,’ the parallel to our present passage is almost complete.433

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429 Beale, The Temple in the Church’s Mission, 329.
430 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 171; Beale, The Temple in the Church’s Mission, 350.
433 Taylor, Ezekiel, 270-71; cf. Block, Ezekiel 25-48, 696-701. Symbolism should not be equated with spiritualizing, for “the Lord retains his interest in the physical environment . . . and when the human race is finally reconciled to him, all of creation will reap the benefits (Rom 8:18-25).” Block,
Significantly, Ezekiel uses the same language as Jeremiah regarding a measuring line extending the boundaries outward (Ezek 47:3; Jer 31:39; cf. Zech 2). Thus, the promise concerning the renewed Israel living in the land under a new David is fulfilled in the vision of Temple, “recreating an Edenic context,” the boundaries of which are coterminous with the land. From a canonical perspective, then, Revelation presents this worldwide temple as the new heaven and new earth—the new Jerusalem—in light of the fulfillment of Christ, the true temple. According to Walker, for the New Testament

434 Block, Ezekiel 25-48, 692n53; Thompson, Jeremiah, 583.


436 It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a detailed discussion of all the allusions of Ezek 40-48 in Rev 21:22. Nevertheless, a brief overview is in order. Admittedly, there is some discontinuity between the visions of Ezekiel and John. Daniel Block contends that Ezekiel’s temple is not fulfilled in Rev 21 for these reasons: First, the two cities have different names (“Yahweh is there” [Ezek 48:35]; “the new Jerusalem” [Rev 21:2]). Second, Ezekiel’s city is square and composed of common stones, whereas John’s is cubic and composed of precious stones. Third, Ezekiel’s temple is at the center of everything, whereas the temple’s existence is denied in Rev 21:22. Fourth, Ezekiel portrays a parochially Israelite city, whereas Rev 21 describes a cosmopolitan place of Jews and Gentiles. Fifth, sacrificial animals are at the heart of Ezekiel’s temple, whereas the sacrificial Lamb is at the heart of John’s temple. Finally, in Ezekiel’s temple the clean and unclean are distinguished, whereas John makes no such distinction. Block, Ezekiel 25-48, 503. Nevertheless, Beale provides a satisfying response to Block’s criticisms. First, the concepts of both names are true of both cities. In fact, Rev 21:2 develops 3:12 and recalls Ezek 48:35, where the names are mentioned together, which actually bolsters the links between Ezekiel and John. Second, Ezekiel’s square and John’s cube is a matter of perspective, for both are similar in shape and John even uses the word “four-square” in 21:16, which combines Ezekiel’s vision with an allusion to the cubic shape of the holy of holies from Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 6:20). Furthermore, Ezekiel does not comment on the kind of stones making up the foundation and walls. Third, John does not deny the temple’s existence, only its physical existence. The true temple, that is, God and the Lamb, is now central (Rev 21:22), which comes close to the essence of Ezekiel’s temple that culminated in the Lord’s glorious presence (Ezek 48:35). Fourth, Ezekiel does picture Gentiles in the new Jerusalem (47:22-23), though this probably would have been understood as Gentiles who convert to the faith of Israel. Actually, Revelation depicts Jews and Gentiles who have been made one people—kingdom-priests—by the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of earth (1:5-6). Fifth, a solution to Ezekiel’s animal sacrifices and John’s living sacrificial Lamb is a matter of perspective. In other words, Ezekiel’s vision employs language and imagery in terms that the Jews of that day would understand. This picture is not, however, a spiritualization of the promises, for the sacrifice of Christ was no doubt the physical fulfillment of the sacrificial system. Both the Old Testament promise and the eschatological fulfillment are physical, and hence literal, but “the form of the sacred containers” is different. What appears in Ezekiel to be animal sacrifices, which formerly could give only incomplete and temporary covering for sin, find escalated fulfillment in Christ’s sacrifice, which provides eternal covering for sin. Therefore, to say that Christ typologically fulfills Ezekiel’s sacrifices as
writers “this prophecy became a brilliant way of speaking pictorially of what God had now achieved in and through Jesus. Paradoxically, therefore, although Ezekiel’s vision had focused so much upon the Temple, it found its ultimate fulfillment in that city where there was ‘no Temple,’ because ‘its Temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb’ (Rev 21:22).”

Similarly, notes Duguid,

[The New Testament shows] how Ezekiel’s themes look when viewed through the lens of fulfillment in Christ. This is perhaps most evident when the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22 is compared with Ezekiel’s heavenly temple. The points of contact are numerous and detailed, but key emphases have shifted because with the coming of Christ the final temple has changed and taken on flesh.

Ezekiel, then, in line with the prophets’ manifold message of restoration, describes astounding hope for the future that includes transformed land and human nature—a new Eden “that has been enlarged to include the entire land of Israel with one immense river of life and many trees of life. The transformation of the Dead Sea into a body of water teeming with vitality shows the radical impact of God’s presence in the land (Ezek 48:35).”

the Lamb sacrificed for sin is not a figurative or spiritualizing use of the Old Testament, but the eschatological reality to which the sacrificial system pointed (Heb 8-10). Finally, in response to Block’s critique concerning Ezekiel’s ongoing need to distinguish between the clean and unclean, Beale’s answer is that Ezekiel depicts an inaugurated but not yet consummated eschatological temple. Paul understands the inaugurated temple described in Ezek 37:26-28 to be the church, yet there is still the ongoing need “to touch no unclean thing” (2 Cor 6:17) and to cleanse oneself “from every defilement of body and spirit” (2 Cor 7:1; cf. 1 Cor 6:18-19). Yet, in the consummated city-temple, sin and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Rev 21:4). Therefore, Revelation 21-22 further interprets the yet-future fulfillment of Ezekiel by collapsing temple, city, and land into one end-time picture, and describes the fulfillment of God’s covenant promises. Beale, The Temple in the Church’s Mission, 348-53.

437 Walker, Jesus and the Holy City, 313.


439 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 171.
Conclusion

The prophetic texts interpret Israel’s exile in light of prior promises of judgment and blessing. Instead of ending on a note of judgment, however, the prophets end on a note of hope in language “which becomes increasingly extravagant.” ⁴⁴⁰ God will make a new covenant and renew the people and the land—and indeed all nature. Jerusalem will become the center of the world, the highest mountain, where all the nations will go to receive blessing. Through the substitutionary work of a Davidic servant-shepherd-king, God will make a new creation that is reminiscent of the idyllic conditions of Eden for his people to dwell securely. The land, writes Wellum, “will be God’s temple sanctuary and its borders, like the rule of the king, will extend to the entire creation (Ps 72:8-11, 17-19).” ⁴⁴¹ It appears from the prophets, then, that the long-awaited kingdom lies just over the horizon.

Concluding Summary

The promised land in the Old Testament—when situated within the kingdom and covenantal framework of Scripture as it progressively unfolds—was designed by God to serve as a type or pattern of a greater, future reality. Every fulfillment is followed by failure and, although the promise is fulfilled at various points, it anticipates a greater and final fulfillment. That is, the fulfillments under Joshua, David, Solomon, and the return from exile demonstrate that, although Israel enjoyed blessing and rest at each point, there still remained a greater fulfillment and final rest for the people of God.


⁴⁴¹ Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 712-13.
Therefore, the promise of land to the nation of Israel is understood within the broader context of God’s programmatic agenda that begins with Adam, progresses from Abraham through Israel, and culminates in an international community living in a new creation. In other words, the national dimension involving the geographical territory of Israel should be viewed as a transitional stage in the outworking of God’s redemptive plan, a plan that spans from creation to new creation and ultimately includes people from every nation filling the entire earth. This goal seems apparent since Abraham’s multitudinous descendants require a much larger territory than Canaan. Indeed Abraham’s offspring will inhabit the earth and, thus, fulfill the Adamic commission. But “the history of Israel shows that for God’s promises to be fulfilled, a new humanity is necessary; and for a new humanity, we need a new Adam.”

As a result, the inheritance of the land of Canaan was designed to recapture what was lost in Eden, a temple-mountain-city where God would dwell with his people. In other words, the land of promise aimed to be God’s local manifestation of his kingdom. This was hardly the picture of Israel in exile. However, Israel did return under Cyrus, who gave permission to the people to return to the land. Furthermore, under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the words from prophets such as Haggai and Zechariah, the temple was rebuilt and God promised prosperity and peace (Zech 1:16ff; 8:1-13).

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442 Thomas R. Schreiner, Paul: Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 152.

443 Wayne O. McCready, “The ‘Day of Small Things’ vs. The Latter Days: Historical Fulfillment or Eschatological Hope?” in Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 226. Walter Kaiser notes, “If [the return from the 70 years of captivity in Babylon completely fulfills what God had promised], then why was the prophet Zechariah (Zech 10:8-12) still predicting this return to the land once again as late as 518 B.C., some 18
The temple, however, lacked the glory it once had prior to its destruction and the exile. Its “less-than-glorious construction helped to galvanize the tattered Jewish remnant into a surviving religious community.” Moreover, the postexilic accounts of temple reconstruction (e.g., Ezra, Haggai) do not mention the return of Yahweh’s presence to the temple and the people do not enjoy the promised peace and rest. Rather, they were slaves once again in their own land (Neh 9:36). The relative safety and peace they did enjoy lasted only as long as their masters permitted it.

Therefore, what was ultimately needed to return from exile was obedience that flowed from new hearts (e.g., Deut 30; Jer 31; Ezek 36). That is, righteousness was needed for Israel to enjoy God’s covenant blessings (Ezek 33:12). As a result, the prophets advance the typological trajectory of God’s promise by portraying the return from exile in various ways and stages, including both a physical and spiritual return with national and international results. That is, not only will there be a return to the land, but the people will also return in heart through God’s gracious work in the new covenant brought about by his Davidic servant-king. Furthermore, this return will include incredible realities that transcend the old covenant forms. That is, this return is so glorious that it is described as a new Jerusalem coextensive with the new creation that is filled with the people of God from every nation.

However, the Old Testament ends with none of these realities in place. Gordon Thomas writes,


444 Pate et al., The Story of Israel, 100.
The corporate sanctification of Israel is expected to lead to the corporate sanctification of the nations, and therefore to a universal state of righteousness, justice and peace. Sadly, Israel fails to live up to her privileges and responsibilities as the servant of YHWH and, as the New Testament reveals, the eschatological hope of holiness comes to depend on Messiah for its fulfillment.  

The Old Testament ends with the hope that God will fulfill his promises. But how and when would these blessings come? The New Testament answers these questions.

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446 N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 724-25. Wright notes, “The question of god lay at the heart of second-Temple Jewish life. Each affirmation, each act of worship, contained the question: not Who? (they knew the answer to that), nor yet Why? (again, they knew: because he was the creator, the covenant god), or particularly Where? (land and Temple remained the focus), but How? What? And, above all, When? How, they wanted to know, would YHWH deliver them? What did he want them to be doing in the meantime? And, *When would it happen?* The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth provided the early Christians with a new, unexpected and crystal clear answer to these three questions; and, by doing so, it raised the first three in a quite new way.” Ibid.
CHAPTER 4

THE LAND PROMISE IN GOD’S REDEMPTIVE PLAN:
PART 2—THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction

According to Bruce Waltke, “The trajectory of the land motif into the New Testament is the most difficult biblical motif to track.”¹ This is so because the term “land” is rarely found in the New Testament.² Naim Ateek notes, “In the Old Testament the word or words designating the ‘land’ appear more than 1,600 times, but in the New Testament fewer than fifty times.”³ Elmer Marten broadens his count by including other words associated with land when he writes, “[In contrast to the OT], NT words such as gē ‘land,’ chōra, chōrion ‘region,’ and agros ‘field’ are found in the NT some 325 times.”⁴

Another problem arises when discovering how the land promise is fulfilled, or begins to be fulfilled, in the New Testament. G. K. Beale writes, “When Christ comes and performs his saving and restorative work, he does not return believing people to a


physical land as a mark of their redemption.” Moreover, there is no mention of Christians going to live in Israel’s land. It appears, then, that the New Testament is silent when it comes to the promised land.

However, despite the relatively rare occurrences of the term “land” in the New Testament, Gary Millar rightly notes that “the formative influence in biblical theology of the relational ideas associated with land must not be underestimated.” It is for this reason that concepts, not just words, will be examined to synthesize the biblical data into a coherent theology of land, for in most cases the concept is “far bigger than the words normally used to refer to it.” As a result, the New Testament demonstrates the fulfillment of land in ways that are both similar and dissimilar to those found in the Old Testament.

Furthermore, it is not quite accurate to conclude that the New Testament has little to say about the “land.” Stephen Wellum writes,

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6 It is generally assumed that the New Testament has very little if any concern for the promised land and the restoration of Israel to its territorial borders. This consensus is found in the more recent works of W. D. Davies, The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), David E. Holwerda, Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), N. T. Wright, Jesus and the Victory of God (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), and many New Testament commentaries.


8 Brian S. Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” in NDBT, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 6. Rosner writes, “Word studies alone are a shaky foundation upon which to base theology. A study of the biblical words for love, for example, does not fairly represent the Bible’s teaching on love, since it ignores numerous narratives and parables, such as the Good Samaritan, which do not mention the word ‘love’ but are nonetheless highly relevant.” Ibid.

First, the order in producing the new creation is reversed from that used in producing the old creation. In the old creation, God first made the place where we live, and then he made the creatures to live there. In the new creation, however, God first will make his new people, and then he will make the home where they will live. The priority of the New Testament is on how God is making a new people, and the land theme is secondary to this, even though it is clearly taught, especially in Revelation 21-22. Second, once the subject of land is placed within the larger discussion of the covenants, the New Testament has much more to say about the land than some may think.  

A final reason is that the primary focus of the New Testament is on Christ and the inauguration of the kingdom. If the New Testament is centered on the fulfillment of God’s saving promises in which “the Lord would reign over the whole earth, the son of David would serve as king, and the exile would be over. . . . The Lord would pour out his Spirit on all flesh, and the promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed, to the ends of the earth, would become a reality,” then it helps us to understand the focus on the king who brings this kingdom. Since the message of the New Testament “does not come to us in a vacuum but is the focal point of the great story of the Bible,” the kingdom is in fact the focus from the beginning. John the Baptist “had announced an imminent visitation of God which would mean the fulfillment of the eschatological hope and the coming of the messianic age. Jesus proclaimed that this promise was actually being fulfilled. This is no apocalyptic Kingdom but a present salvation.” The New Testament makes clear from the beginning that God’s promises in the Old Testament

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reach their *telos* in Christ. Therefore, notes Walker, “A Christian approach to the land that somehow bypassed Jesus Christ would be a contradiction in terms.”14 To derive a New Testament theology of land, then, one must also examine the general nature of the fulfillment of God’s promises in Christ.

This chapter will examine the most relevant passages in the New Testament and argue that it presents an already—not yet fulfillment of the promised land in the Old Testament.15 More specifically, the New Testament presents the land promised to

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15Although each New Testament book contributes in its own unique way to the fulfillment of God’s promises and the inaugurated, yet not consummated, arrival of the kingdom, each does not explicitly link this fulfillment with the promised land. Therefore, only selected texts from various New Testament books that contain clear, exegetical connections will be examined. For a different approach see Gary Burge, *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to “Holy Land” Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010). For example, Burge suggests that Matthew’s use of γῆ (“earth,” “land”) 25:14-30 “could refer to the soil or the ground; but for some, it may refer to the land. If this is the case, it refers to the cautious, preservationist instinct in first-century Judaism to preserve the land in a world rapidly overwhelmed by pagan life. Rather than risk investments, the third servant hid his money inside the land.” Burge admits that this interpretation is speculative, for “such an interpretation is far from certain since it requires an allegorizing of the story that is foreign and arbitrary to the story itself. This may be an innocent account of a man putting money in the ground.” Ibid., 39; ital. original. Furthermore, Burge and R. T. France argue that Jesus’ relative silence concerning, or negative view of, historically important cities like Jerusalem and that Jerusalem “is now superseded by the kingdom of heaven” (R. T. France, “Matthew and Jerusalem,” in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008], 126). France writes, “The negative view of Jerusalem which is implied by the Marcan dichotomy between Galilee and Jerusalem is adopted and strongly enforced by Matthew. Jerusalem—the city, its leaders, its people and its temple—represents for him the opposition. . . . Matthew expresses this theology in his own way, but it is not difficult to see its likeness in other parts of the NT, particularly in the ‘supersessionist’ theology of the Letter to the Hebrews, with its vision of a heavenly Mount Zion as the counterpart to the terrors of Mount Sinai (Heb 12:18-24), in Paul’s vision of a new, inclusive Israel, an olive tree with wild olive grafts (Rom 11:17-26), and of a ‘Jerusalem above’ which, unlike ‘the present Jerusalem,’ is ‘the mother of us all’ (Gal 4:25-26), and in Peter’s metaphor of a temple made up of the ‘living stones’ of this predominately Gentile readers who now constitute the ‘chosen race,’ who once were no people, but now are the people of God (1 Pet 2:4-10). This is of a piece with the general pattern of NT reference to the nation, the land, the city and the temple, whereby their former literal place in the purposes of God is transcended by a new Jesus-centered perspective, within which the people becomes a community of all nations, the land becomes a symbol for the kingdom of God, the earthly city is overshadowed by the heavenly Jerusalem, and the physical temple gives way to a temple not made with hands.” Ibid., 126-27. See also P. W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). Although Burge and France are correct in observing a shift in focus to a “Jesus-centered perspective,” a better solution would be to view the ultimate fulfillment—not replacement or supersession—of the nation, land, city and temple in a consummated new (physical) city-temple inhabited by an international people, the new creation which, as will be shown, the rest of the New...
Abraham and his offspring to be finally fulfilled physically in the new creation as a result of the person and work of Christ. At this time in salvation history, however, the fulfillment is focused primarily on Christ, who himself has inaugurated a new creation through his physical resurrection and has made new creations out of those united with him. In Christ—the true and final Temple (John 1:14-18; 2:13-22)—God’s covenant presence is found, and those united to him by faith in his death and resurrection—temples of the living God in whom the Spirit dwells (1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Cor 6:16)—receive their inheritance, rest, and indeed every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in him (Eph 1:3), while living as exiles (1 Pet 1:1; 2:11) between the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom and anticipating the final fulfillment and enjoyment of the new heavens and new earth won by him (Rev 21-22).

**Fulfillment in Matthew**

The canonical shape of the New Testament provides a helpful link regarding the relationship between the Old Testament expectation of restoration and its fulfillment. Hamilton writes, “From the beginning, Matthew’s genealogy and narratives

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16 I came to this thesis on my own in a paper for a doctoral seminar on eschatology (Spring 2010), but later found it substantiated in Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 751. Beale writes, “This ‘two-stage fulfillment’ can be termed an ‘installment fulfillment,’ wherein the initial spiritual stage is ‘literal’ in that the OT promise also had a literal spiritual dimension. For example, the promise of resurrection in the OT includes a person’s spirit also being resurrected along with the body, though the NT sees this spiritual resurrection occurring first. Accordingly, the land promises and their fulfillment are a crucial part of the storyline dealing with Jesus’s resurrection as the already—not yet end-time new creation.” Ibid.

17 Roy E. Ciampa, “The History of Redemption,” in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 292. Stephen Dempster argues that the structure of the Tanakh (Law, Prophets, and Writings) parallels the structure of the New Testament, in that the Gospels and Acts are story (cf. Pentateuch), the Letters/Epistles are commentary (cf. Prophets), and Revelation is story insofar as it carries the storyline begun in the Gospels to a conclusion (cf. Writings). Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the*
of the early life of Jesus establish connections between Jesus and the story of Israel at both prophetic and typological levels.” Matthew begins, “The book of the genealogy (Βιβλος γενεσεως) of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (1:1). Matthew’s genealogy is significant because the phrase Βιβλος γενεσεως (Heb. הַקְרֵיָה הָרְאָם) is found in only two other places in the Old Testament LXX (Gen 2:4; 5:1). Thus, “Matthew starts off by deliberately hooking his own plot into the larger plot, the story of the people of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” The function of Matthew’s genealogy is the same as those found in Chronicles, the last book in the Hebrew Old Testament, which show “the link with Israel and the human race, and also incorporates in chapter 1 all the


19 There is some debate as to how this verse should be translated and how it functions in Matthew. The debate revolves around the phrase Βιβλος γενεσεως. Dale Allison points out that most translations consistently render this phrase as “book of genealogy” or some equivalent. Dale C. Allison Jr., Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 158. This seems simple enough until one gets into the vast amount of literature. The common views are that Matt 1:1 introduces (1) the genealogy only (1:2-17; e.g., Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 1-13, WBC, vol. 33a [Waco, TX: Word, 1993], John Nolland, The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005]), (2) all of chap. one (e.g., David L. Turner, Matthew, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008]), (3) the infancy narrative (1:2-2:23; e.g., D. A. Carson, Matthew in vol. 8 of EBC, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995]), (4) the first main part of the gospel (1:2-4:16), (5) the heading for the entire gospel, and (6) a combination of all of the options listed above, which is Allison’s view (Studies in Matthew, 158-59). For a good survey of these views, see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew 1-7, vol. 1, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2004) and Ulrich Luz, Matthew 1-7, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 69-70. After surveying the various options, J. C. Fenton concludes that Matthew intended his words to have more than one evocation: “1:1 is telescopic: it can be extended to include more and more of what Matthew is beginning to write about. First, it can cover the genealogy which immediately covers it; then, it can refer to the account of the birth of Jesus; thirdly, it can mean “history” or “life story;” finally, it can refer to the whole new creation which begins at the conception of Jesus and will be completed at his second coming.” J. C. Fenton, The Gospel of St. Matthew, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 36.

genealogical data of Genesis.” These two occurrences in the biblical storyline, then, are important to consider in order to understand Matthew’s use of Βίβλος γένεσις in 1:1.

Genesis 2:4 gives the account of God’s creation of the heavens and the earth, and Genesis 5:1 begins a “new genealogical tree” after the fall that emphasizes the continuation of humanity and a re-creation through the Noahic covenant. Thus, it is momentous that Matthew 1:1 is only the third place in the canon that this phrase is used. Beale rightly notes,

That Matthew is, indeed, alluding to Genesis 2 and 5 is enhanced by observing that these are the only two places in the entire Greek OT where the phrase Βίβλος γένεσις occurs. Matthew’s point in using this phrase is to make clear that he is narrating the record of the new age, the new creation, launched by the coming of Jesus Christ and ending in his death and resurrection.

In other words, Matthew connects Jesus to the first creation, the post-fall re-creation where the image of God is proliferated, and now to the commencement of the new creation. This point leads Davies and Allison to translate Matthew 1:1 as “Book of the

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21 Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty, 225.
22 Ibid., 71-73.

24 Bruce Waltke notes, “This Son of Adam (Luke 3:23-38) and of Abraham (Matt 1:1-17) traces his genealogy back to the beginning when he who is God was with God (John 1:1-2). Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 207-08. Paul also identifies the Son’s involvement in the original creation (1 Cor 8:6) and as the sustainer of the creation (Col 1:16-17). As the firstborn, he is in the process of bringing everything back under his rule, which will be brought to completion in the new creation (1 Cor 15:24-28; Eph 1:10; Heb 2:9).
New Genesis wrought by Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.” This wording would certainly have a profound effect on readers familiar with the Old Testament. R. T. France writes, “The effect on a Jewish reader is comparable to that of John’s opening phrase, ‘In the beginning.’ . . . The theme of the fulfillment of Scripture is signaled from the very start, and these opening words suggest that a new creation is taking place.” In effect, writes Luz, “Matthew sets out with a new ‘book of origins’, with a new Heilsgeschichte, or history of God’s actions in the world and in mankind’s salvation. It is as if he were writing the Bible anew.” Through his genealogy, then, it appears that Matthew pulls together key threads from the Law, Prophets, and Writings, weaves them together, and continues the story begun in the Old Testament. Matthew advances new creation themes through the genealogy of the Messiah and indicates that the fulfillment of the Old Testament has been inaugurated through the historic event of the incarnation. His genealogy is, in effect, a survey of the history of God’s people from the beginning to the end.

25Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:153.
26France, Matthew, 28.
However, Matthew does not include an exhaustive list of Jesus’ genealogical history, and the fact that Matthew is making Jesus’ history “fit” into this pattern “indicates that for the author this is not so much a statistical observation as a theological reflection on the working out of God’s purposes. It shows that the period of preparation is now complete, and that the stage is set for the dawning of the time of fulfillment in the coming of the promised Messiah.” Consequently, it should be read as “a theological retelling of the history of Israel, a recapitulation of Israel’s story through a teleological and narratological genealogy.” Pate writes,

The genealogy of Jesus can be reduced to two key connections—he is the son of David and the son of Abraham. His direct connection to Abraham, the father of Israel’s faith and the recipient of God’s promise of blessing to himself and to the multitudes of all following generations of Abrahamic faith (Gen 12:3), yields credence to Matthew’s description of Jesus as the fulfillment of all God’s promises. His direct connection to David, the messianic king of old Israel—a man after God’s own heart—who brought the promise of the Abrahamic covenant as close to fulfillment as Israel had ever known it, allows Matthew’s readers to understand Jesus as God’s messiah sent to establish God’s kingdom among the people.

The rest of Matthew will demonstrate that God has remembered his covenants and will bring his promises to fulfillment.

Furthermore, Matthew paints a complete picture, from the beginning of Israel’s history to its end, or goal, by the way he frames his genealogy of the Messiah in three balanced periods of fourteen generations each. Davies and Allison comment,

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30 France, Matthew, 29; see also Nolland, Matthew, 72.


32 C. Marvin Pate et al., The Story of Israel: A Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 119-20.

33 France, Matthew, 29. The three sets of fourteen generations have generated much debate. There are several suggestions for why Matthew structured his genealogy in this way. The most common proposals are that (1) fourteen is the numerical value of David in Hebrew, (2) three sets of fourteens equals 225.
The “Jesus Christ” of 1:1 is surrounded by three word pairs, “book of genesis,” “Son of David,” and “Son of Abraham.” These give us the three major points of the title. First, the occurrence of “genesis,” whether dependent upon Genesis 2:4 and 5:1 or intended to recall the OT’s first book, relates the story of Jesus to the primeval history. This means, according to the principle that the end will be like the beginning, that the gospel concerns eschatology: it recounts the fulfillment of hope for a “new creation.” Then, secondly, the phrase ‘Son of David’ represents Jesus as the king of Israel, the rightful heir of the Davidic promises. This too pertains to eschatology: the Messiah has come. Lastly, the “son of Abraham” probably implies not only that Jesus is a true Israelite, but also—for reasons given above—that with his appearance God’s promise to the patriarch has been realized: all the nations of the earth (cf. 28:19) have been blessed.34

Hence, Matthew points his readers to the arrival of the Messiah who has come in fulfillment of the Davidic promises of a kingdom and the Abrahamic promises of international blessing (cf. also Matt 3:9; 8:11).35 Moreover, Matthew goes further and includes the unexpected: the exile. Wright notes,

This is not so regular a marker within Jewish schemes, but for Matthew it is crucial. . . . Until the great day of redemption dawned, Israel was still ‘in her sins,’ still in need of rescue. The genealogy then says to Matthew’s careful reader that the long story of Abraham’s people will come to its fulfillment, its seventh seven, with a new David, who will rescue his people from their exile, that is, ‘save his people from their sins.’ When Matthew says precisely this in 1:18-21 we should not be surprised.36

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six sets of sevens, and the sequence of six sevens anticipates the seventh seven, which is understood to be the climax of history, and (3) the intentional omission of some kings and addition of others highlight the royal Davidic dimension, which finds its culmination in the coming of Jesus. Carson, Matthew, 68-69; also see Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007). In any case, the common denominator is that kingship is highlighted in such a way that points to the goal of all that preceded in Israel’s history: the coming of the promised Messiah. In other words, Matthew is presenting this greater Davidic king, as will be demonstrated throughout the rest of his gospel. France, Matthew, 32-33; Hagner, Matthew, 7. Schreiner notes, “Any Jewish reader would discern the significance of Jesus as David’s son. If he is David’s son, then he qualifies to be the Messiah, the anointed king promised in the OT. That Jesus is the son of David is surely the emphasis of the genealogy.” Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 170-71.

34Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:159-60.

35Carson, Matthew, 62.

It appears that the long-awaited return from exile has dawned.\(^{37}\)

It is difficult to imagine, then, that for Matthew and his audience the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, David, and return from exile do not include the land. Joel Willitts notes, “When one has references to the kingdom of God and \textit{Eretz Israel} contained in a context that stands within the [Davidic/Israelite] restorative stream of tradition, it is likely that the hope for the restoration of the Promised Land is not far off.”\(^{38}\) Therefore, Matthew’s references to the kingdom of God and the land should be seen within the “Land-Kingdom” motif.\(^ {39}\)

The first connection with land is found in Matthew 2:15, a quotation from Hosea 11:1. In the context of Hosea, God is recalling the history of Israel, God’s son (Exod 4:22-23), when he delivered them out of Egypt.\(^ {40}\) This was in fulfillment of God’s

\(^{37}\)The Gospels in particular and New Testament in general speak of a return from exile in a variety of ways which indicate both an already inaugurated and not yet consummated restoration from exile. After a survey of the restoration from exile theme in the Gospels, Douglas McComiskey writes, “Full restoration of Jews from exile is accomplished gradually by entry into the kingdom of God by faith response to the call of Jesus, who is both the salvific personage of Isaiah and the ‘Son of Man’ of Daniel who reigns eternally over the kingdom. . . . Full restoration from the Babylonian (and Assyrian) exile (a loss of kingdom) is a process that began at the return from captivity under Cyrus, spans a plurality of earthly kingdoms, and is completed at the consummation of the kingdom of God.” Douglas E. McComiskey, “Exile and Restoration from Exile in the Scriptural Quotations and Allusions of Jesus,” \textit{JETS} 53, no. 4 (December 2010): 695-96.


\(^{40}\)In the context of Hosea, some have observed an allusion to Numbers 23 and 24 (Hos 11:10-11), which focuses on Israel’s future eschatological return from Egypt. For example, G. K. Beale says that the two Numbers passages together with Hosea 11:11 are the only two places in the OT where there is the combined mention of (1) God bringing Israel “out of Egypt”; and (2) of either the deliverer or the delivered being compared to a lion. He writes, “It is unlikely the Numbers texts are allusions in Hos. 11:1, but perhaps they stand as echoes behind Hos. 11:1, which anticipate the clearer allusion to Num. 23:22, 24 and 24:9 in Hos. 11:10.” G. K. Beale, “The Use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15: One More Time,” \textit{JETS} 55, no. 4 (2012): 701. See also Duane A. Garrett, \textit{Hosea, Joel}, NAC, vol. 19A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 229; John H. Sailhamer, “Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15,” \textit{WTJ} 63 (2001): 87-96. France, however, in view of the possible allusions, contends that “there is no specific allusion to those texts here, even
promises of calling out a people and giving them their own land. But Hosea 11:2-7 goes on to lament how Israel has wandered away from the Lord and to predict the future return to exile (11:5). In other words, another exodus was needed. This exodus event became central in the life of Israel, to which later revelation would attest. As God’s revelation progressed through Israel’s successes and failures, an even greater exodus began to be anticipated (Isa 43:16-21; 51:9-11; Jer 16:14-15; 31:31-34; Hos 2:14-15; 11:10-11).

Within this typological milieu, then, Hosea is looking for a saving visitation from the Lord. Derek Bass writes, “The passage flows from retrospect to prospect, recalling the first exodus to the promise of new exodus, To be sure, the Exodus from Egypt forms the type or pattern of the promised salvation to come.” This point is important, for “what Matthew sees was already something seen to some degree by Hosea himself.” That is, Matthew is not reading into Hosea what is not there; rather, he is rightly putting together God’s organic and progressive revelation in chronological order to demonstrate that God’s true Son has arrived to accomplish a greater exodus in fulfillment of his promises. Carson notes,

Hosea, building on existing revelation, grasped the messianic nuances of the “son” language already applied to Israel and David’s promised heir in previous revelation so that had he been able to see Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1, he would not have disapproved, even if messianic nuances were not in his mind at the time.

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42Derek Drummond Bass, “Hosea’s Use of Scripture: An Analysis of His Hermeneutics” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 218.
44Carson, Matthew, 92; so also France, Matthew, 81.
As a result, Matthew now sees Jesus as the locus of true Israel, which he goes on to show in Jesus’ testing in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11; cf. Exod 4:22-23), the giving of a “new law” in the Sermon on the Mount, and his further application of “son” language to Jesus.

It is at this point that one comes into contact with typology in Matthew. Blomberg notes, “That Israel had been delivered from Egypt, that Israel would again be exiled there but again restored, and that the child believed to be the messiah also had to return to Israel from Egypt formed too striking a set of parallels for Matthew to attribute them to chance.” Jesus is the typological fulfillment of Israel, for he is the true Israel who fulfills the promises made to Abraham and David. Hence the Messiah, God’s obedient Son, has come to perform a new and greater exodus for the people of God and restore them from exile (Hos 11:10-11). In this greater exodus, God will bring his

45 Beale, “The Use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15,” 699; so also Blomberg, “Matthew,” 8. Again, it is important to note that typology is not merely retrospective, for Matthew “sees” with clarity what had been already anticipated, albeit dimly, by Hosea, the prophets, and Abraham himself. This prospective component of typology is important for seeing the final fulfillment of the land promises in the new creation won by Christ, which the rest of this chapter will show.


47 Schreiner, New Testament Theology, 70-75. See also Hamilton, God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment, 364; idem, “The Virgin Will Conceive: Typological Fulfillment in Matthew 1:18-23,” in Built Upon the Rock: Studies in Matthew, ed. John Nollan and Dan Gurtner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 228-47. This fulfillment, however, does not mean that there is no future for ethnic Israel. Schreiner writes, “Paul identifies the church of Jesus Christ as the true Israel (e.g., in Galatians), and at the same time he posits a future salvation for ethnic Israel (Rom 9-11). However, this future salvation for ethnic Israel is obtained only through faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, those ethnic Jews who believe become part of the true Israel—the church of Jesus Christ. By reversing the expected order and saving the Gentiles first and then Israel, God showers unexpected mercy upon human beings, so that no one can claim that salvation is a right to be grasped.” Schreiner, New Testament Theology, 860-61.

48 Bass, “Hosea’s Use of Scripture,” 224. Payne points out that it is not only Jesus who uses such ideas. Paul’s understanding of a new exodus brought about by Jesus and the inheritance believers have in him is mentioned in places such as Colossians 1:12-14. Thus, “for the apostles, the people of God are recipients of a new exodus (Col 1:12) having been delivered from the dark power, not Egypt (Exod 6:6; 12:27; 14:30), but from the rule of the prince of darkness. In this new exodus, believers are transferred into a new land, that is, the kingdom of his beloved son.” Brian Keith Payne, “The Summing Up of All Things in Christ and the Restoration of Human Viceregency: Implications for Ecclesiology” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 284. For new exodus typology in the Gospel of Mark, see Rikki E. Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).
people out of bondage to sin and he will also bring them into the abundant blessings of his Son, something which Israel did not permanently enjoy. Whereas Israel made it out of Egypt, they did not permanently enter into the land of blessing. Unlike the exodus under the leadership of Moses, then, through the liberating work of Jesus God definitively brings his people out of captivity and into the place of redemptive blessing.\textsuperscript{49} This new locus of blessing becomes clearer through the rest of Matthew’s gospel.

The first appearance of “land” is in Matthew 5:5, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (γῆ).” The verb “inherit” in the Old Testament (Hebrew יָרָה; LXX καλημονομέω) is often linked to Israel’s entering into and possessing the land (e.g., Deut 4:1; 16:20; Isa 57:13). In this context, the specific reference is to Psalm 37:11 (see also vv. 3, 9, 11, 18, 22, 29), “But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.” A few things are important to observe in interpreting Matthew 5:5 and his use of Psalm 37. To begin, Psalm 37 is eschatologically oriented (vv. 18, 29).\textsuperscript{50} In Psalm 37, according to Leslie Allen, “the ancient motif of inheriting the land is projected forward and given afresh as an ultimate hope to those ‘who wait for the Lord’ and obey him (v. 34). Verses 3, 9, 11, 18, 22, and 29 illustrate the pervasiveness of this motif in the psalm, to which appeal is made as a longed-for ideal.”\textsuperscript{51} This eschatological orientation is further confirmed by the fact that Psalm 37 was already recognized as messianic in Jesus’

\textsuperscript{49}Blomberg, “Matthew,” 14, 100; In support of the idea that Matthew typologically depicts Jesus as a new Moses who accomplishes a new exodus, see Dale C. Allison, The New Moses: A Matthean Typology (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); France, Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher, 186-89.

\textsuperscript{50}France, Matthew, 164; Craig L. Blomberg, Matthew, NAC, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 99.

\textsuperscript{51}Leslie C. Allen, Psalms, WBT (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 111.
Likewise, the beatitudes are framed within the eschatological context of the kingdom, which is both already and not yet. This inaugurated eschatology is evidenced by the repetition of the present blessing in vv. 3 and 10 (“for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”) and the future blessings that are framed between these bookends (“for they shall” in vv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). France comments, “The tension between ‘now’ and ‘not yet,’ so familiar from much of the rest of the NT, may appropriately be seen as running also through the promises of Matthew 5:3-10.” Therefore, it is safe to conclude that Matthew is picking up and advancing the eschatological trajectory of Psalm 37.

Therefore, it is unlikely that Jesus is referring strictly to the geographical territory initially promised to Abraham. That is, he appears to be interpreting the eschatological land inheritance of the psalm through the lens of the other universalized texts in the Old Testament. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the Old Testament anticipation of entering into the land “ultimately became a pointer toward entrance into the new heaven and new earth (cf. Isa 66:22; Rev 21:1), the consummation of the messianic kingdom.” It is understandable, then, that Jesus interprets the fulfillment of these land promises in an eschatological light.

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52 Carson, *Matthew*, 133.

53 Nolland notes that the phrase “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” in vv. 3 and 10 “invites the reader to identify all the coming benefits mentioned between as also aspects of the coming kingdom of heaven, and which also focuses special attention on the beatitudes in vv. 3 and 10.” Nolland, *Matthew*, 197.

54 France, *Matthew*, 164.


57 Contra Burge, who concludes that Jesus “reinterpreted the promises that came to those in his kingdom.” Burge, *Jesus and the Land*, 35. Rather, Jesus correctly interpreted the stream of texts in the Old Testament, which progressed and escalated through time, that reached their fulfillment in him and his work.
However, the fulfillment should not be spiritualized into some kind of non-territorial space. For example, France writes, “There is a general tendency in the NT to treat the OT promise about ‘the land’ as finding fulfillment in nonliteral ways, and such an orientation seems required here too.” Rather, for Matthew the culmination of God’s promises will result in the renewal of all things. This “transformed physicality” is confirmed in Jesus’ response to Peter’s question concerning a reward for the disciples, Jesus replies, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (19:27-28). The word translated “new world” or “renewal” (παλιγγένεσις) is used only other time in the New Testament (Titus 3:5), and here it has to do with the consummation of the kingdom. Jonathan Pennington writes,

The great Christian prayer is that God’s (heavenly) kingdom would come to earth (6:9-10); the Christian hope is not for an ethereal, heaven-located existence, but the consummation of the heavenly realities coming into effect on the earth; not for a

58France, Matthew, 166-67; see also W. D. Davies, The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 362. Interestingly, Nolland also heads in the same direction when, after affirming that the beatitudes weigh in favor of Matthew’s intending γῆ to refer to Israel as the land of covenant promise, he comments, “This, of course, is in the first instance a judgment about imagery and not about a literal referent.” Nolland, Matthew, 202.

59This language comes from N. T. Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003). In applying it to resurrection bodies, he writes, “Transphysical is not meant to describe in detail what sort of body it was that the early Christians supposed Jesus already had, and believed that they themselves would eventually have. . . . It merely, but I hope usefully, puts a label on the demonstrable fact that the early Christians envisaged a body which was still robustly physical but also significantly different from the present one.” Ibid., 477-48; see also idem, Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church (New York: HarperCollins, 2008). Similarly, then, the renewed earth will still be robustly physical but also significantly different than the present one.


destruction of the earth and a kingdom that exists only in heaven, but for a παλιγγενεσία, a new genesis (19:28).  

Turner comments,

Cosmic eschatological renewal is linked to Jesus’s previous stress on the priority of the created order in Matt. 19:4, 8. The moral disorder of the present world is contrary not only to God’s past creation but also to God’s future renewal of that creation. The end will renew the beginning; eschatology restores protology.  

Similarly, Donald Hagner notes,

The “earth” (τῆν γῆν) originally referred to the land of Israel, i.e., what was promised to the Jews beginning with the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Gen 13:15). However, in the present context of messianic fulfillment, it connotes the regenerated earth (19:28; cf. Rom 4:13, where κόσμος, ”world,” replaces γῆ), promised by the eschatological passages in the prophets (e.g., Isa 65-66).

Hans Dieter Betz, then, is correct when he writes, “Matthew, who has a far more developed apocalyptic worldview, clearly speaks of a new earth.” Thus, the earth “has an obstinately territorial connotation and the beatitudes have an unmistakable eschatological dimension.” Samuel Terrien notes, “The ‘earth’ transcends the geographical limitations of the ‘promised land’ and encircles the eschatological reality of a renewed nature and of a reborn universe.” To be sure, the “blessed” will inherit the

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63 Turner, *Matthew*, 475. See also Nolland, who surveys the various uses of παλιγγενεσία in extrabiblical literature and concludes that the use of this Greek term “locates this material in a Hellenistic context, but the idea of a remaking of the world is well rooted in the OT (Isa 65:17; 66:22).” Nolland, *Matthew*, 799.


earth (5:5)—the kingdom of heaven (vv. 3, 10)—the promised land whose borders will extend to the new creation.68

In a passage laden with Old Testament imagery, Jesus lays claim to what was experienced, albeit temporarily, in Israel’s life in the land. Matthew records Jesus saying, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (11:28-30). Jesus has chosen by his Father’s gracious will to reveal his kingdom truths, not to the wise and understanding of the world but to little children, the unlearned (vv. 25-26). Furthermore, he offers an invitation to the “all-inclusive ‘all’ (πάντες)” who come to him, which “must encompass recalcitrant Israel as well as the world, yet only to those among the ‘wise’ who cease to center on their man-made wisdom and learning and become like children.”69 Even more astonishingly, however, is his gift of rest (ἀναπαύω). Rest, once promised and given by God to obedient Israel in the land, is no longer centered in a geographical territory. Rather, it is now bound up in and given by Christ, which testifies to his divine identity.70

Furthermore, the “rest” promised to David (2 Sam. 7:11; ἀναπαύω, LXX) that was

68 Others have noted the connection between Matthew 5:5 and Isaiah 60:21; 61:7. See, e.g., Luz, Matthew 1-7, 195n94; Nolland, Matthew, 201n40; France, Matthew, 166; Beale, New Testament Biblical Theology, 757. Blomberg points out that “the poor mourners of Isaiah 61:1-2 are also described as inheriting the earth in 61:7, at least in the LXX.” Blomberg, “Matthew,” 20. Also, notes Beale, “In the context of Isa. 60:21, the ‘land’ refers to the ‘city of Zion’ (v. 14), its ‘gates’ (vv. 11, 18), and the ‘land’ of Israel (v. 18). Isaiah 65:17-18 and 66:20-22 inextricably link end-time Jerusalem with the coming new creation. That Israel will ‘possess the land forever’ (in the second line of Isa. 60:21) must refer to the initial mention of the ‘world to come’ and not merely the localized promised land.” Beale, New Testament Biblical Theology, 757.

69 Osborne, Matthew, 441.

70 France notes, “‘You will find rest for your souls’ echoes the Hebrew text of Jer. 6:16, where it is the reward Yahweh offers to those who find and walk in the good way.” France, Matthew, 450. For more on the divine identity of Christ, see Richard Bauckham, Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified
experienced under the Temple-constructing reign of his son Solomon (1 Chr 22:9; ἀναπαύω, LXX)—only to be forfeited as a result of sin—is now given under the yoke of the true Davidic son. It is now Jesus who invites others to enjoy his gift of rest.  

France comments,

That Jesus now issues the same promise [of rest] under his own authority says much for the Christology underlying this extraordinary pericope. As in the beatitudes of 5:3-10, there is no doubt an eschatological dimension to the rest which Jesus offers, but that does not mean that the offer has no relevance to the problems encountered by disciples in this life; it is for the present as well as for the future, just as the “sabbath rest which still remains for the people of God” in Hebrews 4:1-11 is nonetheless one which its readers are exhorted to enter into “today.”

Similarly, writes Turner, “Jesus takes on the role of God in fulfilling the promises of rest, based on God’s rest after creation as the model for Israel’s rest on the Sabbath (Gen 2:2; Exod 20:10-11; 31:15; 35:2).” To the citizens of the kingdom of God belongs the rest, both present and future, that Jesus promises.

Now, at last, the burden and toil experienced in the Garden after the fall (Gen 3:17-29), under Israel’s slavery in Egypt (Exod 6:6), and presently under the demands of Rome are now relieved under “the gentle Revealer” to whom the Old Testament rest pointed. Furthermore, in light of Matthew 23:4, the difficult burdens the scribes and Pharisees put on the people, that they themselves are not willing to bear, is given “an

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71 Jesus’ invitation also echoes the invitation in Isaiah 55.
72 France, Matthew, 450.
73 Turner, Matthew, 305. It is no coincidence that immediately following this passage is another where Jesus is shown to be greater than David, the Temple, and Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-14).
74 Ulrich Luz, Matthew 8-20: A Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 174; Osborne, Matthew, 442.
75 Carson, Matthew, 278-79; cf. also France, Matthew, 450-51;
anti-Pharisee accent by the evangelist.” This “rest” is and will be given to those who are related to Jesus (cf. Heb 3-4; Rev 6:11; 14:13). Hence, the land is linked typologically in relation to Christ, who will give his rest in his eternal kingdom to those who come to him.

The end of Matthew (28:18-20) returns to the theme “introduced at the very beginning (1:1)—that the blessings promised to Abraham and in him to all peoples of the earth (Gen 12:3) are now to be fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah.” As a result of Jesus’ definitive work, he now exercises his authority, given by his Father, in heaven and on earth by sending his disciple-making disciples “as an eschatological marker inaugurating the beginning of his universal mission.” Turner comments,

This universal mission has cosmic implications. When people from all nations are discipled, a new obedient humanity begins to be formed. Thus obedience to the mission mandate turns out to fulfill, as a by-product, the original creation mandate that God gave to humanity’s first parents in the garden of Eden. Adam failed the first test, but Jesus successfully resisted the devil (4:1-11). The renewal of the world (19:28) has begun.

In fulfillment of God’s covenant promises, then, the disciples will enjoy the Lord’s presence in their mission to possess all the nations of the earth, for Jesus will be with them always, “to the very end of the age” (v. 20). In other words, Jesus is Lord over the land and his people.

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76 Luz, Matthew 8-20, 172.
77 Ibid., 278.
78 Payne, “The Summing Up of All Things in Christ,” 284-85; also see Osborne, Matthew, 442.
79 Carson, Matthew, 596.
80 Ibid., 595.
81 Turner, Matthew, 691.
Fulfillment in John

According to Gary Burge, John 15:1-6 is the “most profound theological relocation of Israel’s holy space.” Scholars have noted the prominence of the fulfillment motif in John, which permeates his gospel leading up to this text. For example, Jesus is now the true dwelling “place” (σκηνόω) of God (1:14; cf. Exod 25:8-9), where “God has chosen to dwell amongst his people in a yet more personal way, in the Word-become-flesh.” He is the true Temple (ναός), so that now “the risen Lord is the ‘place’ where the glory of God is revealed, where his forgiveness and renewal are experienced, and where fellowship with God is grounded and forever maintained.” Andreas Köstenberger notes, [John’s] fulfillment Christology entails the recognition that physical locations of worship are inadequate (esp. 4:19-24) and leads to the conclusion that Jesus is now the focus of worship (9:38; 20:28). As the proper focus of worship, Jesus replaces any temple, implying that the Jerusalem temple is obsolete (11:48-52; 13-21). The silence regarding the temple in John 13-21 is a rhetorical device pointing to Jesus as its permanent replacement.

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86 Andreas J. Köstenberger, A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters, BTNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 424-25.
Furthermore, Jesus fulfills the Jewish Feasts (e.g., Tabernacles, Dedication, Passover).\footnote{Köstenberger notes, “Jesus’ fulfillment of the symbolism inherent in several major Jewish festivals constitutes a major structural and theological plank in John’s gospel, particularly in the Festival Cycle, which spans from John 5:10 and extends to the transitional chapters 11 and 12.” Köstenberger, \textit{A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters}, 413.}

Hoskins notes,

> Jesus’ fulfillment of the Jewish Feasts and the Temple dwells upon and nature and content of God’s provision for all his people. Jesus is and gives the true food and true drink that delivers believers from thirst and hunger. He demonstrates this by offering his flesh and blood for the life of the world and sending the Spirit to enrich believers with the salvific benefits of his sacrificial death.\footnote{Hoskins, \textit{Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple}, 181.}

He is also the true shepherd, in contrast to God’s unfaithful shepherds, “whose role is patterned after God’s ‘good shepherd’ par excellence, David (1 Sam 17:34-36).”\footnote{Andreas J. Köstenberger, \textit{John}, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 305.}

Simply put, Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s saving promises and he is now the “new holy space where God can be discovered.”\footnote{Burge, “Territorial Religion, Johannine Christology, and the Vineyard of John 15,” 388-89.}

Now, in John 15, Jesus says, “I am the true vine” (v. 1). Vineyard imagery was common in the ancient world, and one familiar with the Old Testament would certainly understand the connection Jesus was making.\footnote{See, e.g., Isa 5:1-7; 27:2-6; Ps 80:8-16; Jer 2:21; 12:10-13; Ezek 15:1-8; 17:1-21; Hos 10:1-2. The Old Testament background is strongly favored by the majority of commentators because of the number of Old Testament references, allusions, and recurrences of the replacement/fulfillment motif. See, e.g., Carson, \textit{John}, 513; Raymond E. Brown, \textit{The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI} (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1970), 669-72; Ridderbos, \textit{John}, 515; Leon Morris, \textit{The Gospel According to John}, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 593.} The vineyard or vine was a symbol for Israel, God’s covenant people, and consistently stressed Israel’s disobedience and failure to bear fruit no matter how much God tended to and cultivated her. Thus, God would
judge Israel by the hands of other nations (Isa 5). 92 Surprisingly, though, in this “extended metaphor” it is not a nation or people that fulfill Israel’s purpose; it is Jesus. 93 Beasley-Murray comments,

It is striking that in every instance when Israel in its historical life is depicted in the OT as a vine or vineyard, the nation is set under the judgment of God for its corruption, sometimes explicitly for its failure to produce good fruit (e.g., Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21). . . . It seems likely therefore that the description of Jesus as the true vine is primarily intended to contrast with the failure of the vine Israel to fulfill its calling to be fruitful for God. That the vine is Jesus, not the church, is intentional; the Lord is viewed in his representative capacity, the Son of God—Son of Man, who dies and rises that in union with him a renewed people of God might come into being and bring forth fruit for God. 94

Indeed Jesus is the true vine—the true Israel—and his disciples are now the branches, participants in Jesus. 95

For John 15, according to Carson, “perhaps the most important Old Testament passage is Psalm 80, in that it brings together the themes of vine and son of man.” 96 This psalm is a prayer for the restoration of Israel, a vine that God brought out of Egypt and planted and blessed in the land (vv. 8-9). 97 Just as God had delivered and planted his

92 Köstenberger, John, 449-50.
93 Carson, John, 513.
94 Beasley-Murray, John, 272. So also Brown, John, 670; Carson, John, 514; Morris, John, 593; Ridderbos, John, 515.
95 Köstenberger, A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters, 502-03.
96 Carson, John, 513. See also Köstenberger, John, 450.
97 The date of this psalm is uncertain. Because the psalmist mentions “Israel,” “Ephraim,” “Benjamin,” and “Manasseh,” one view is that Israel had not yet fallen to Assyria. Another view, however, is that the post-exilic psalmist from the southern kingdom is familiar with the events of the northern kingdom and, therefore, prays that the same events would come to them. In either case the theme is the same, for the psalmist’s lament is for God’s restoration to come in light of his judgment of exile. For further discussion, see Marvin E. Tate, Psalms 51-100, WBC, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 312-13; Willem VanGemeren, Psalms, in vol. 5 of EBC, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 611-12.
people in the past, so the psalmist is praying for salvation in the future, which certainly included restoration to the land. However, John 15 indicates that a redemptive-historical shift has taken place. The true vine now is not apostate Israel but Jesus himself, and the place of blessing is in him. Now, if exiled Israel wants to be restored, then they must be rightly related to Jesus and planted in him. Gary Burge notes, “[The people of Israel] cannot be rooted in the vineyard unless first they are grafted into Jesus. . . . Branches that attempt living in The Land, the vineyard, which refuse to be attached to Jesus will be cast out and burned (John 15:6). . . . God the Father is now cultivating a vineyard in which only one life-giving vine grows. Attachment to this vine and this vine alone gives the benefits of life once promised through The Land.”

Thus, the answer to the psalmist’s lament to be delivered and replanted has come through the true vine. Whereas blessing once flowed from the land, now blessing flows from Jesus, who enables his people to bear fruit and who goes to prepare a place for them (John 14:2).

**Fulfillment in Paul**

The fulfillment of the land promise in relation to Christ is further confirmed in Paul. One clear text, for example, is found in Romans 4:13. Romans 1:18-3:20 demonstrates the solidarity of humanity in sin and the inevitability of judgment on the basis of God’s righteous character. All people are guilty because, although they have a knowledge of God based on his revelation in nature, they “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (v. 18), “exchange the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles” (v. 23), “exchange the truth about God

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for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator” (v. 25), and “do not see fit to acknowledge God” (v. 28). In 2:5-16 Paul describes the day of judgment, when God will judge every man according to his works (2:6). The standard of this judgment is God’s law, which is either explicit in the Torah for Jews or implicit in the conscience of Gentiles (2:12-25). The result, then, is that only the law-keepers will be justified in God’s sight (2:7, 10, 12ff.).

However, herein lies the problem: there is no perfect law-keeper—neither Jew nor Gentile—for every person is under the power of sin and no one is righteous before God (3:10-18). The prospect for humanity, then, is universal judgment, for Torah-breaking Jews are no more acceptable to God than conscience accusing or excusing Gentiles. As a result, all are doomed and no one will be justified by the works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin (3:20).

But now,100 in Romans 3:21-26, Paul takes a sharp turn in his argument by presenting the solution to the universal plight of humanity. Simon Gathercole notes, “The

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100 The adverbial expression that begins Rom 3:21-26 indicates a sharp contrast in the flow of Paul’s argument, which began in 1:18. νῦν ἀλλά may indicate a logical connection (cf. 7:17), but here it most likely denotes a temporal one (cf. 6:22; 7:6). In other words, whereas God’s judging righteousness was primarily manifested under the old era (Rom 1:18ff.), his saving righteousness is now manifested in the advent of the person and work of Christ. In other words, there is now a salvation-historical shift that marks the solution to the problem revealed in 1:18-3:20. This solution has now been manifested “apart from the law.” Most commentators agree that this is a salvation-historical shift in the flow of Paul’s argument. See, e.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1975), 201; James D. G. Dunn, Romans 1-8, WBC, vol. 38 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988) 164; Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 173; Douglas J. Moo, The Epistle to the Romans, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 221; Thomas R. Schreiner, Romans, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 180; contra Contra Paul Jewett, Romans: A Commentary, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 272. Also see Brendan Byrne, Romans, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 123 and 129n21; and John Murray, Epistle to the Romans, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 108, who take it as both logical and temporal but emphasize primarily the temporal. However, D. A. Carson is correct in stating that this temporal contrast should not be pressed too far, as though the era under the old covenant should be characterized as only consisting of condemnation, but the era under the new
whole context of 3:21-26 is of course how people are saved through the work of Christ from this divine decree of death and divine action of judgment.”

Paul proclaims that the righteousness of God has now been revealed apart from the law through faith in the covenant is one only of grace. He notes, “just as the portrait of God as a God of justifying grace is ratcheted up as one moves from the old covenant to the new, so the portrait of God as a God of holy wrath is ratcheted up as one moves from the old covenant to the new. Moreover, in this very paragraph, the earlier period is characterized as the time of God’s forbearance. Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” in The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, & Practical Perspectives, ed. Charles E. Hill & Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 122.


102 In context, the “righteousness of God” should not be understood as God’s moral attribute of being righteous, but rather his justifying activity. So Murray, Romans, 30; Morris, Romans, 103; Moo, Romans, 222; Schreiner, Romans, 180. Furthermore, intense debate surrounds the meaning of this phrase. The righteousness of God is most commonly understood to mean either the believer’s status before God and/or God’s saving power. In other words, it is viewed as either forensic (i.e., God declares one to be innocent or guilty), transformative (i.e., God makes one innocent or guilty), or both. Schreiner, Romans, 63. For the sake of simplicity, I opted for Schreiner’s summary of the positions. Moo describes three options: (1) an attribute of God; (2) status given by God; and (3) an activity of God. Moo, Romans, 70-71. These positions have come to be divided into either forensic or transformative categories. Moo opts for a forensic understanding of righteousness, while Schreiner opts for a both/and view in his commentary on Romans but has since changed to a forensic view. Compare Schreiner, Romans, 62-67, with Paul: Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 192-217. Paul’s use of the “righteousness of God” is pregnant with meaning given its usage in the Old Testament (see, e.g., Judg 5:11; 1 Sam 12:7; cf. Mic 6:5; Ps 98:2-3; Deut 25:1; cf. 2 Sam 15:4; 1 Kgs 8:31-32; 2 Chr 6:23; Prov 16:15). This phrase, in light of its context and other places where Paul uses it, is best understood as forensic (see, e.g., 1:17, 21, 22; 4:3, 5, 6, 9; 9:30; 10:3, 4, 6; Phil 3:9). Schreiner, Paul, 203-209. It predominately refers to God who justifies, declares righteous and acquits the guilty, and to human beings who have this action pronounced on them (the only exception is in 1 Tim 3:16 where Paul says that Christ was “vindicated by the Spirit”). In the context of Romans, this righteousness is seen as God’s “vindicating act of raising Christ from the dead for us.” Mark A. Seifrid, Christ, our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 47. Seifrid also points out that “the biblical themes of God’s deliverance of the oppressed, his vindication of his Servant, his faithfulness to Israel and his salvation of the world are implicitly present.” Ibid. Furthermore, there are other places in Romans that help clarify Paul’s understanding and use of “righteousness” (see, e.g., Rom 2:13; 3:20, 24, 26, 28, 30; 4:5; 5:1; 8:33-34; see also “account” or “reckon” [λογίζομαι] language: 3:28; 4:3-6, 8-11, 22-24; 9:8; cf. Gal. 3:6).

103 The “law” without the article (χωρίς νόμου) most likely refers to the Mosaic covenant, which failed because of man’s inability to keep it (Lev 18:26; 19:37; 20:22; Deut. 4:1-2). The adverbial phrase χωρίς νόμου modifies πεφανέρωται, which most take as another way of saying εξ  ἐργῶν νόμου (3:20), meaning “apart from doing the law,” “apart from the works of the law,” or modifying the law-covenant, which would reiterate the salvation-historical shift in Rom 3:21. See, e.g., John Calvin, Commentaries on The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, vol. XIX, trans. and ed. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 134; Murray, Romans, 110; Cranfield, Romans I-VIII, 201; Schreiner, Romans, 180; idem, The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 41-42. This phrase, then, emphasizes the new era inaugurated by the work of Christ in which God justifies sinners. So Schreiner, Romans, 180; Moo, Romans, 223; Carson, “Atonement,” 123.
Jesus Christ\textsuperscript{104} for all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile. All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory, but God is patient and merciful. Indeed he has fulfilled his saving promises of redemption\textsuperscript{105} to those who place their faith in him by judging sin in the bloody death of his Son,\textsuperscript{106} whom he set forth publicly as a propitiation, or sacrifice of atonement.\textsuperscript{107} In this way, then, God demonstrated his justice even in justifying the one who has faith in Jesus.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{104}There has been much debate in recent years concerning how the phrase πίστεως ἸησοῦΧριστοῦ should be understood. Two representatives for the subjective genitive reading are Richard B. Hays and Luke Timothy Johnson. Their most compelling arguments are (1) the subjective reading is more consistent linguistically; and (2) it makes better sense in context, namely, that it avoids the redundancy of what immediately follows (i.e., “faith in Christ . . . to all who believe”). Richard B. Hays, “Πίστες and Pauline Theology: What is at Stake?” in Pauline Theology, Looking Back, Pressing On, vol. 4, ed. E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 46-47; Luke Timothy Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus,” Catholic Biblical Quarterly 44 (1982): 77-90. See also Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 114-16. Most scholars agree that a choice cannot be made on the basis of linguistic evidence alone. Therefore context is crucial in deciding which of these options is more faithful to the text. Schreiner sets forth four lines of evidence in support of the objective genitive reading: ‘Paul often refers to the faith of believers, he never refers to the faith of Christ, he writes specifically of Christ as being the object of the believers’ faith, and the flow of thought in Rom. 3-4 supports the idea of faith in Christ.’ Schreiner, Romans, 181-86; so also Moo, Romans, 224-26. Furthermore, two additional arguments can be offered. First, chap. 4 follows 3:21-26, where the emphasis is not on Christ’s obedience but on Abraham believing. Second, the “redundancy” of εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας (“for all who believe”) emphasizes something very important, namely, the universality of God’s righteousness for all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile, “for there is no distinction” (v. 22b). This theme is very important for Paul in Romans (1:16; 2:10).

\textsuperscript{105}There has been much debate surrounding the λατε-in word group. Paul can describe redemption in various ways to denote adoption (Rom 8:23), forgiveness of trespasses (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14), and a ransom or price paid. This context supports the idea of a price paid. But not only does it denote a price paid, it also looks back to the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians and of exile from the Assyrians and Babylonians. In agreement with the Gospels, then, Israel’s liberation has ultimately come through the finished work of Christ, to those who believe in him (cf. Isa 35:10; 51:11). So Schreiner, Romans, 189-90; Moo, Romans, 229-30; Carson, “Atonement,” 128. See also the classic works by Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross, 3\textsuperscript{rd} rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 11-64; idem, The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 106-31.

\textsuperscript{106}Most likely ἐν τῷ αἵματι ἀλληλουϊα modifies ἁλαστήριον, so that Christ’s blood is the means by which God’s wrath is propitiated. It is through the blood, or death of Christ that salvation and its benefits come to the individual by faith (Rom 5:9; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col 1:20). So Schreiner, Romans, 194; Moo, Romans, 236-37; Murray, Romans, 120-21; Morris, Romans, 182.

\textsuperscript{107}There is debate over the meaning of propitiation (ἀλαστήριον). The most common view is that it means (1) expiation, (2) propitiation, or (3) mercy seat. However, one does not have to opt for an either/or answer. The terms “blood,” “righteousness,” “sins,” and “set forth publicly” demonstrate the
In Romans 3:27-31, Paul draws some conclusions from verses 21-26. First, because righteousness is based on faith in what God has accomplished in Christ (vv. 21-26), and not on human obedience, boasting is excluded (vv. 27-28). Second, the oneness of God demands that every person, whether Jew or Gentile, is justified in the same way: by faith (vv. 29-30). And third, Paul concludes that faith does not nullify the commands of the law, but rather obedience will flow from those who have faith in Christ (v. 31). As confirmation that righteousness is attained only through faith, Paul introduces Abraham in Romans 4 to demonstrate that justification is by faith alone, not by works, and that this salvation promise is for all people who believe (vv. 1-25).

Romans 4:13, then, builds on Paul’s previous argument, defines the content of the promise to Abraham, and explains what it is, namely, that Abraham would “inherit” (κληρονόμον) the world. The Old Testament demonstrates that “inheritance,” which was almost exclusively connected to the land, was a fundamental part of Israel’s expiatory, propitiatory, and sacrificial aspects of Christ’s atonement. The idea of substitution is also brought into the picture since this concept was clearly in the Old Testament and anticipated the coming Messiah (e.g., Isa 52:13-53:12). Therefore, the sacrifice and substitution of Christ on behalf of sinners includes both the removal of sin and the satisfaction of God’s wrath.

108 I take the καὶ joining the last two phrases (αὐτῶν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιούντα τὸν) as concessive. So Schreiner, Romans, 198; Moo, Romans, 242; Cranfield, Romans I-VIII, 213.

109 Schreiner, Romans, 200.

110 Murray, Romans, 131; Moo, Romans, 251-52.

111 Schreiner, Romans, 208. Schreiner comments, “The idea is not precisely that the law is fulfilled by faith in Christ (contra Moo, Romans, 257), but rather that those who have faith in Christ will keep the law.” Ibid.

112 Moo, Romans, 255; Schreiner, Romans, 209.

113 Moo, Romans, 273-74; Schreiner, Romans, 227; Murray, Romans, 142.
understanding regarding their covenant relationship with God. Burge notes that the land is a “by-product of the covenant, a gift of the covenant. It is not a possession that can be held independently.” Schreiner rightly observes that while there is no explicit statement in the Old Testament that Abraham would become heir of the world, the idea is there. That is, while the land initially promised to Abraham and his (national) descendants extended to the borders of Canaan, both the typological pattern and trajectory of the Old Testament show that as his (international) offspring multiplied and filled the earth, so also would the boundaries of the land encompass the earth. Of particular importance is Genesis 26:3-4, where the unique plural “lands” (הארחים), when read in conjunction with the oath to which it alludes in Genesis 22:17-18, makes

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115 Burge, Jesus and the Land, 4.

116 Schreiner, Romans, 227; so also Moo, Romans, 274. Contra Cranfield who argues, “Nowhere in the OT is the promise to Abraham couched in terms at all close to το κληρονόμον αυτον είναι κόσμου. What is promised in the various Genesis passages is a numberless progeny, possession of the land of Canaan, and that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (or shall bless themselves) in Abraham or his seed. But Judaism came to interpret the promise to Abraham as a much more comprehensive promise.” Cranfield, Romans I-VIII, 239.

117 N. T. Wright compares the land to the law in Paul’s thinking when he writes, “The land, like the Torah, was a temporary stage in the long purpose of the God of Abraham. It was not a bad thing done away with, but a good and necessary thing now fulfilled in Christ and the Spirit. It is as though, in fact, the land were a great advance metaphor for the design of God that his people should eventually bring the whole world into submission to his healing reign. God’s whole purpose now goes beyond Jerusalem and the Land to the whole world.” N. T. Wright, “Jerusalem in the New Testament,” in Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God, ed. P. W. L. Walker (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 67. So also Hoekema, The Bible and the Future, 277-78; Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 18. Elmer Martens also uses the terminology of “metaphor,” which “is a form of analogy with an initial appeal to the imagination.” Elmer A. Martens, “O Land, Land, Land: Reading the Earth Story in Both Testaments,” in The Old Testament in the Life of God’s People: Essays in Honor of Elmer A. Martens, ed. Jon Isaak (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 27. While Wright and Martens are essentially correct, “type,” not “metaphor,” is a better way to describe the relationship between the land and the new creation, for it emphasizes the historical and progressive nature of promise and fulfillment.
clear that Abraham’s seed will possess/inherit the gate of his enemies.\textsuperscript{118} This, together with Genesis 22:17, “provides a firm exegetical basis for Paul’s assertion that Abraham would inherit the world.”\textsuperscript{119} Furthermore, according to Dunn, “Already before Paul the concept had been broadened out from Canaan to embrace the whole earth. . . . Our passage therefore is a good example of the extent to which Paul’s own thinking reflects ideas which were widespread in other strands of Jewish theology at that time (cf. Matt 5:5; Heb 1:2).\textsuperscript{120} Paul, then, is demonstrating sound biblical exegesis, informed by Scripture’s redemptive-historical storyline, by putting all three elements of the covenant together.\textsuperscript{121} Therefore in light of Christ—Abraham’s (singular) seed (Gal 3)—Abraham and his (corporate) offspring will inherit the world as people, both Jew and Gentile, come to faith in Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{122}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[120] Dunn, \textit{Romans}, 213. Dunn lists Sir 44:21; \textit{Jub}. 17:3; 22:14; 32:19; \textit{1 Enoch} 5:7; Philo; \textit{Som}. 1:175; \textit{Mos}. 1:155; cf. \textit{4 Ezra} 6:59; \textit{Ap. Const}. 8:12:23; rabbinic references in \textit{Str}-B, 3:209; the world to come—\textit{2 Apoc. Bar}. 14:13; 51:3. Ibid. See also Burge, \textit{Jesus and the Land}, 15-24; Moo, \textit{Romans}, 274n18. Burge argues that the dispersal of Jewish life into non-Jewish cities in the Roman Empire raised questions about the integrity of Jewish identity. How would Jewish life and identity remain intact outside of the land? Burge’s answer is Israel’s commitment to their identity markers (e.g., Sabbath, dietary laws, circumcision, the Temple). In other words, they were ceremonially committed to the land while separated from it. The result was a redefinition of the land, such that for many the reality of life in the land took on eschatological tones. For others, such as Philo and Josephus, the land was allegorized or completely neglected. Thus, this entire redefinition of land deeply influences the formation of Christian thinking in the New Testament. It should be noted that this “redefinition” or “allegorizing” raises important methodological questions for a theology of land. For example, how and to what extent should extrabiblical literature be consulted and incorporated into theological formulation? Although Paul was certainly familiar with the literature, what remains to be proven is what he derived from these texts that he did not derive from the Old Testament itself. In other words, when the various texts are put together from the Old Testament to the New, redefining or allegorizing the land promises is unnecessary, for the Old Testament points to Abraham “inheriting the world” and the New Testament reveals both how and when it is fulfilled.
\item[121] Schreiner, \textit{Romans}, 227.
\item[122] Moo, \textit{Romans}, 274; Schreiner, \textit{Romans}, 227; Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 22;
\end{footnotes}
However, this conclusion does not mean that Paul is spiritualizing the Old Testament promise. For example, Louis Berkhof writes,

The covenant with Abraham already included a symbolical element. On the one hand it had reference to temporal blessings, such as the land of Canaan, a numerous offspring, protection against and victory over the enemies; and the other, it referred to spiritual blessings. It should be borne in mind, however, that the former were not coordinate with, but subordinate to, the latter. These temporal blessings did not constitute an end in themselves, but served to symbolize and typify spiritual and heavenly blessings.”

The physical/spiritual distinction is not accurate, for “these promises have begun spiritually and will be consummated physically in the final new creation.” Though Dunn is closer to the mark in interpreting the promise, he still focuses on the spiritual aspect when he comments,

Paul takes up the enlarged form of the promise, of course, not because it implies Israel’s worldwide dominance, but presumably because it sets the narrower strand of salvation-history centering on Israel within the larger scheme of creation: the blessing promised to Abraham and his seed (including “the nations”) is the restoration of God’s created order, of man to his Adamic status as steward of the rest of God’s creation; over against a more nationalistic understanding of the promise, Paul’s “interpretation of the promise is a-territorial,” fulfilled “in Christ.” Elsewhere Paul places the concept within an eschatological framework, with the

James D. Hester, *Paul’s Concept of Inheritance: A Contribution to the Understanding of Heilsgeschichte* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1968), 77-78. The same could be said of Ephesians 6:2-3, “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” In the Old Testament, the promise relates to a long life in the promised land that God gave to Israel. Does it follow, then, that Paul sees no significance in the promise to live long in the land? No. Schreiner writes, “If we understand Paul’s theology, we know that the inheritance promised to Abraham has become the world (Rom 4:13). Paul does not restrict the inheritance to the land of Palestine. He understands the inheritance to refer to the future glory awaiting believers (Rom 8:17). The promise of long life in the land, in Paul’s view, relates to our heavenly inheritance. In other words, those who obey their parents will receive an eschatological reward—the inheritance promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. . . . How Paul handles the command to honor one’s parents is paradigmatic. The injunction to honor parents is fulfilled rather straightforwardly in the new covenant, but the promise to live long in the land no longer relates in the same way. The land now becomes the future world that belongs to the people of God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:26). The land promised in the Old Testament anticipates and is fulfilled in the eschatological inheritance awaiting the people of God.” Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ*, 328-29.


Spirit as the first installment and guarantee (see further on 8:17). As with other related covenantal terms—“promise” (Gal 3:14) and “seal” (see on 4:11)—Paul sees the eschatological fulfillment in terms of the Spirit given to faith.\textsuperscript{125} While Dunn is correct in seeing the fulfillment of God’s promises in Christ within an eschatological framework, his (and Davies’) “a-territorial” understanding misses the mark. That is, while those who believe are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee or down payment of their inheritance until they acquire possession of it (Eph 1:13-14), it is nevertheless a “down payment.” What awaits them, then, is the ultimate fulfillment of the promise “in a consummated order of the new heavens and the new earth”—a (physical) new creation.\textsuperscript{126} Hans LaRondelle notes, “In order to understand Paul, one must view the land of Palestine as a down payment, or pledge, assuring Israel as a nation the larger territory necessary to accommodate the countless multitudes of Abraham’s offspring.”\textsuperscript{127} Indeed Paul “envisions a future salvation that will engulf the entire cosmos and reverse and transcend the consequences of the fall” (Rom 8:18-25).\textsuperscript{128}

Also important for understanding Paul’s view of the promise and fulfillment of land is his use of inheritance, which has already appeared in Romans 4:13. Inheritance in the Old Testament commonly refers to the land allotted to Israel. For Paul, his use of this

\textsuperscript{125} Dunn, \textit{Romans 1-8}, 213; Davies, \textit{Gospel and the Land}, 179.

\textsuperscript{126} Murray, \textit{Romans}, 142.

\textsuperscript{127} Hans K. LaRondelle, \textit{The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation} (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 139.

\textsuperscript{128} Schreiner, \textit{Romans}, 437. Moo notes, with the majority of commentators, that the creation (\( \kappa \tau \iota \omicron \omicron \)\( \zeta \)) here “denotes the ‘subhuman’ creation. Like the psalmists and prophets who pictured hills, meadow, and valleys ‘shouting and singing together for joy’ (Ps 65:12-13) and the earth ‘mourning’ (Isa 24:4; Jer 4:28; 12:4), Paul personifies the subhuman creation in order to convey to his readers a sense of the cosmic significance of both humanity’s fall into sin and believers’ restoration to glory.” Moo, \textit{Romans}, 514. So also Schreiner, \textit{Romans}, 435.
term is “a natural extension of that meaning.”

That is, the promise to Abraham and his offspring finds fulfillment in their inheritance of the world. This interpretation of inheritance is warranted, for in other places Paul speaks of those who will inherit the kingdom of God. George Ladd writes,

In a number of places, God’s kingdom is an eschatological blessing that is to be “inherited” (1 Cor 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal 5:21). Jesus had also spoken of the kingdom as an eschatological inheritance (Matt 5:5). The background of this idiom is the prophetic idea of inheriting the promised land (Isa 57:13; 60:21; 61:7; 65:9), and in the New Testament the inheritance is equated with the eschatological salvation of the Age to Come.

Thus, the entire world will become God’s kingdom and his people’s inheritance. An important link is forged, then, between inheritance, the promised land, and the kingdom of God. However, more can be said concerning Paul’s understanding of the believer’s inheritance. In Colossians 1:12, Paul tells the Colossian believers that God the Father has qualified them “to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.” Because of the combination of terms such as inheritance, deliverance, and transfer, scholars have rightly read this passage against the backdrop of the exodus. Moo comments, “In a move

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131Brian Vickers rightly observes that a dichotomy should not be made between Jesus, who commonly speaks of “entering” the kingdom, and Paul, who speaks of “inheriting” the kingdom, for (1) in the Old Testament the Israelites both inherited and entered the land, (2) there are examples in both the Gospels and in Paul’s letters where the typical words are not used (e.g., Matt 25:34; 1 Thess 2:12). Brian J. Vickers, “The Kingdom of God in Paul’s Gospel,” SBJT 12, no.1 (2008): 62. See also David Wenham, Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 76.

typical of the New Testament ‘christifying’ of the Old Testament ‘land’ theme, Paul applies this language to the spiritual privilege enjoyed by God’s new covenant people—including, in a particularly significant salvation-historical development, the Gentiles, such as the Colossians.”\(^{133}\) Thus, there is an eschatological reward for believers that has escalated from the Old Testament inheritance of the promised land to the New Testament inheritance of final salvation.

Another feature of inheritance in Paul is the connection with sonship. That is, Paul forges an inseparable link between adoption as sons and the believer’s inheritance.\(^{134}\) Of particular importance for understanding this connection is the redemptive-historical progression of sonship and inheritance, for the Old Testament demonstrates that God’s son is Israel (Exod 4:22) and the inheritance is the land. In the New Testament, however, Paul understands all God’s people—both Jew and Gentile—to be sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and if they are Christ’s then they are Abraham’s offspring, inheritors according to the promise (Gal 3:26, 29; cf. Gal 4:7; Rom 8:17). Since Christ is God’s Son par excellence, then those who are in Christ receive their inheritance in him as they await the final fulfillment of God’s promises. Moreover, they are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of their inheritance until they acquire possession of it (Eph 1:13-14).\(^{135}\) This is the promised Spirit “in the sense

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G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 841-70.

\(^{133}\) Moo, Colossians and Philemon, 101.


\(^{135}\) τὸς κληρονομιάς is best taken as a partitive genitive since the Spirit is the initial down payment that guarantees a much fuller set of blessings in the future. So Harold Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 243; Clinton E. Arnold, Ephesians, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 92.
that he was promised to Israel (see Ezek 36:26-27; 37:14; Joel 2:28-30).” Thus, the Christian’s inheritance looks to the not yet. Andrew Lincoln comments, “In a down payment, that which is given is part of the greater whole, is of the same kind as that whole, and functions as a guarantee that the whole payment will be forthcoming. The Spirit then is the first installment and guarantee of the salvation of the age to come with its mode of existence totally determined by the Spirit.” The consummation of the Spirit’s work is cast in terms of the resurrection of the body (2 Cor 5:5), but ultimately it will result in freeing this present creation from the effects of sin and making a new creation (Rom 8:18-25). Dan Barber and Robert Peterson note,

The body of Christ, who is “the firstfruits” of the resurrection (1 Cor 15:20), was not annihilated and re-created, but his own body was raised from the dead (John 2:19-22; 10:17-19). . . . Just as we will not be destroyed but renewed, so it is with God’s creation. We are a microcosm of the creation. Even as we long for God’s final salvation, the creation personified as an expectant mother does the same. The creation is eager to “be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom 8:21). The creation longs, so to speak, for removal of the curse (vv. 20-22). This is not destruction and re-creation but great renovation of the present cosmos.

The Spirit “connects our ‘already’ with our ‘not yet,’ making ‘the hope of glory,’ though unseen, as certain as if it were already ours—which, in a sense, it is (cf. ‘glorified’ in v. 30).” The inheritance, then, is future oriented and will culminate not in the annihilation of this present creation, but in the transformation of it. That is, this present corrupt

136 Arnold, Ephesians, 92.
139 Moo, Romans, 530.
140 Ibid., 517; Schreiner, Romans, 437-38.
earth will give way to a new heavens and new earth—the kingdom of God—as an inheritance for God’s people.¹⁴¹

Two summarizing observations can be made concerning Paul’s use of inheritance. First, inheritance in the Old Testament is inextricably linked to the Abrahamic promises. The constellation of related themes became fused with other theological concepts such as union with Christ,¹⁴² God’s presence,¹⁴³ and the Temple.¹⁴⁴ Thus, inheritance language enables Paul to draw upon the overlap that occurs between promise and fulfillment. The second observation is that a future orientation is inherent within the idea of inheritance. Initially, this future orientation was present in the transmission of the promise from Abraham to his offspring. Eventually, however, the future orientation of the promised inheritance (i.e., land) is expressed through the typological correspondences that unfold within the Old Testament. Moreover, by picking up and advancing the inheritance motif in light of the fulfillment of Christ, Paul is able to

¹⁴¹Hoehner argues that the believers’ eternal inheritance is “their gain of heaven.” Hoehner, Ephesians, 243. This is true insofar as heaven is not merely a spiritual reality, but a spiritually transformed physical new creation.

¹⁴²Blaising and Bock write, “[The Pauline blessing of union with Christ] is a covenantal term combining the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, in which the latter functions as the means for the fulfillment of that former.” Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, Progressive Dispensationalism (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 190. See also Constantine R. Campbell, Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012); Robert Letham, Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2011).


trace these typological trajectories to their ultimate fulfillment in the consummation of
the eschatological promises yet to come—a new creation.

**Fulfillment in Hebrews**

Hebrews’ presentation of land continues the pattern of fulfillment in the NT
with the arrival of Jesus Christ and his finished work. Perhaps the clearest presentation of
the land theme is found in 3:7-4:13 and in chapters 11-13. This section will provide
context before delving into the exegesis of these passages.

In Hebrews 1 the author presents Jesus, the radiance of the glory of God and
the exact imprint of his nature (vv.1-4), as God’s final and supreme revelation. He has
inherited a name that is more excellent than angels, for he is superior as God’s Son (vv.
5-14). Therefore, the people of God must pay closer attention to the message of
salvation (2:1-4) because Jesus, God’s authoritative Son, now is the founder of a greater
salvation, though his people still wait for everything to be put in subjection to him (2:5-
8). Nevertheless, Jesus is seen as exalted because of his humiliation (2:9-10). Indeed
Christ assumed a human nature because the children share in flesh and blood, so that he

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145 John Webster makes eight assertions about the Son, from pre-temporal eternity to
glorification, that are “expansions and reiterations” of what is contained in Jesus’ more excellent name.
First, God appointed him the heir of all things (1:2). Second, through him God created the world (1:2).
Third, he is the effulgence of God’s glory (1:3). Fourth, he bears the stamp of God’s very nature (1:3).
Fifth, he upholds all things by his powerful word (1:3). Sixth, he made purification for sins (1:3). Seventh,
he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (1:3). And finally, he has obtained a more excellent
name (1:4). John Webster, “One Who is Son: Theological Reflections on the Exordium to the Epistle to the
Hebrews,” in The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand
Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 81-93.

146 Barnabas Lindars writes, “One way of expressing the superiority of the Christian teaching is
to show the superiority of Jesus over the angels. It also suggests the finality of the new teaching and its
absolute effectiveness in relation to God’s plan of salvation. The angels are merely ministering spirits
(1:14), unlike the Son of God, who is eternal (1:8-13), and the Law similarly has only a subordinate role in
the history of salvation.” Barnabas Lindars, The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews (Cambridge:
will destroy the devil (2:14), deliver his brethren (2:15-16), and help his people by serving as their sacrificial substitute before God (2:17-18). Lindars notes, “The real humanity of Jesus is essential for the argument of Hebrews, because the whole argument turns on the saving efficacy of his death. . . . For the solidarity of Jesus with humanity makes him a representative figure.”

Hence, it is imperative that God’s people consider Jesus who is greater than Moses, for Jesus is faithful over God’s house as God’s Son (3:1-6a). And Christians are God’s house by virtue of their relation to the Messiah, which makes perseverance all the more necessary (3:6b). Now, in light of the contrast between Moses and Jesus (3:1-6), the author of Hebrews offers a warning to Jesus’ followers to not be like the wilderness generation who did not enter God’s rest.

Hebrews 3:7-4:13 provides a warning and a promise grounded in Ps. 95:7-11. The author’s use of Psalm 95 presupposes both the Abrahamic promise of land and

147 Ibid., 40. It should be noted that it is not merely his death that is important for the achievement of salvation, but also his whole obedient life. For more on the obedience of Christ, see Micah J. McCormick, “The Active Obedience of Jesus Christ” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), and Brian J. Vickers, Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Imputation (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006).

148 There has been much speculation concerning the background of rest in Hebrews. Proposals include Platonic philosophy and Philo, Alexandrian Gnosticism, apocalyptic eschatology, and the Old Testament. Harris rightly concludes that the author of Hebrews has the Old Testament in mind because (1) the convergence of themes such as land, God’s presence, worship, and rest that was initially associated with the tabernacle and later localized in the Temple, (2) the ways that both the tabernacle and Temple point back to creation as well as the Edenic rest that resulted from the construction of the tabernacle (Num 10:33-36) and Temple (1 Kgs 8:56), and (3) the associations between rest, sanctuary, and the Sabbath. Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews,” 167-73. See also Harold W. Attridge, “Let Us Strive to Enter that Rest—The Logic of Hebrews 4:1-11,” HTR 73 (1980): 279-88; Peter Enns, “Creation and Re-creation: Psalm 95 and Its Interpretation in Hebrews 3:1-4:13,” WTJ 55 (1993): 255-80; Randall C. Gleason, “The Old Testament Background of Rest in Hebrews 3:7-4:11,” BibSac 157 (2000): 281-303; Gerhard von Rad, “There Remains Still a Rest for the People of God: An Investigation of a Biblical Conception,” in The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 94-102.

the well-established link between the land and rest (Deut 12:8-10). The author asserts that God’s people are his house if they endure to the end (3:6). This is especially important given the wilderness generation’s miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians. They were delivered out of Egypt but failed to enter into the promised land because of their unbelief and disobedience. It is astonishing that the people who were led by Moses and delivered by God out of Egypt by signs and wonders were the very same ones who grumbled and rebelled (3:16-19). Thus, there is an important warning to heed: to be saved out of bondage is incomplete unless they are saved into something greater. But the author does not end with a warning. Rather, he holds out a promise of hope.

The argument now shifts to the rest/land theme as the author connects his audience to the wilderness generation of the past. In contrast to the former generation, O’Brien says, “The emphasis falls upon the Christian community as the heir to the promise of entering God’s rest.” This is a promise of hope for the present recipients. The reason the wilderness generation failed and the message did not benefit them was because “they were not united by faith with those who listened (4:2). But now in 4:3,

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150 Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews,” 176.


152 O’Brien, Hebrews, 156.

153 There is some textual difficulty with this verse that concerns the participle “joined” (συγκεκραμένους). One textual variant that better agrees with the theme of faith throughout Hebrews has “joined” agreeing with the “word” (trans. “the word/message was not joined with faith), but the best-attested reading has the participle agreeing with “those/them” (trans. “they [the Israelites] were not united in faith with those who listened”). The identity of those who did listen most likely includes Joshua and Caleb, although it could also extend to the faithful remnant of future generations. On either reading the point remains the same: the good news must be accompanied with faith, for only genuine faith perseveres. For further discussion see O’Brien, Hebrews, 162; William L. Lane, Hebrews 1-8, WBC, vol. 47A (Dallas: Word, 1991), 98; contra Donald Guthrie, Hebrews, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 112.
all who believe (“we”) enter into that rest (κατὰ παύσιν). The author’s point is understood only if his argument concerning rest is followed through the Old Testament.

The connection of rest with Canaan is given in 3:16-19 and 4:8, but the future promise of rest points to something greater. The author links Psalm 95 to Genesis 2:1-3 by the use of “My rest” (κατὰ παύσιν μου). Psalm 95 in context refers to the land of Canaan, but it also looked beyond the rest in Canaan to a future, final place of rest. Moreover, the author demonstrates this “pre-existing” rest by bringing in Genesis 2:1-3. O’Brien comments, “Within a salvation-historical time frame, Psalm 95:11 and Genesis 2:2 are joined by an exegetical argument . . . to prove that the rest cannot simply be identified with the land of Canaan – it was not final (v.8).” “Canaan, therefore, was not an end in itself; it pointed forward to the new earth which was to come.” Consequently, the conclusion is drawn in 4:6-7,

Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day,

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The present tense of Εἰσερχόμεθα has been taken several ways. Some view it as a true present, with the result that believers are already entering into that rest and enjoy the rest referred to in Ps 95. See, e.g., A. T. Lincoln, “Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament,” in From Sabbath to Lord’s Day, ed. D. A. Carson (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1982), 211-12; Lane, Hebrews 1-8; F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 73n17). D. A. deSilva suggests that viewing it as a progressive or continuous present might be a better way to take it, for believers are “crossing the threshold into the ‘better promised land’, but still must ‘strive earnestly to enter.’” This option makes better sense of the already-not yet tension. D. A. deSilva, “Entering God’s Rest: Eschatology and the Socio-Rhetorical Strategy of Hebrews,” TrinJ 21 (2000): 32. Still others take it as solely future, denoting the consummation of rest. If it is an (solely) eschatological rest that is in view, then Christians resting from their works parallels God’s rest. When God completed his work of creation, he rested; so his people, having completed their service on earth, will enter into his rest. O’Brien, Hebrews, 165-66; Frank Thielman also implies this view in Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 674. However, one is not forced to accept an either/or decision so long as it is understood that there are both present and future aspects involved, which fits with the inaugurated eschatological nature of the New Testament.

Schreiner, New Testament Theology, 494.


Hoekema, The Bible and the Future, 279.
"Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

Thus, centuries after the denial of the promised land and rest offered to the first generation, God through David appoints a new day of opportunity, “Today.” Attridge notes that this word “highlights the contemporary relevance of the text” and is essential to the author’s argument. The second generation, like the first, did not experience final rest under Joshua, for if they had then God would not have spoken of another day later on (4:8). If this were not the case then what need was there for the exhortation in Psalm 95? The author of Hebrews, then, demonstrates good exegesis, for he shows what was already developed within the Old Testament itself, namely, the incomplete character of rest in Canaan and the future-oriented, final rest of God. The earthly land of Canaan was

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158 Lane, Hebrews 1-8, 100-01. “When it comes to who is speaking,” notes Daniel Trier, “it is striking that 4:7 is Hebrews’ only direct reference to biblical texts’ human authorship. However, while the focus is on divine speech, Hebrews’ argument depends on a historical construal that locates the texts within the sweep of human action. ‘David’ may not be the significant speaker when it comes to establishing the authority of the text or our accountability to God, but the activity of ‘David’ is significant as an interpreter of Scripture and his times. Only thus do we have the witness of Ps. 95, that Israel had not yet achieved their hoped-for rest, which remained promise instead of reality and in fact a promise that also constituted a warning. Hebrews did not exclusively practice ‘historical-critical,’ or even what has been called ‘historical-grammatical,’ exegesis, yet this passage demonstrates that the text’s human properties were important to the author in certain ways.” Daniel J. Trier, “Speech Acts, Hearing Hearts, and Other Senses: The Doctrine of Scripture Practiced in Hebrews,” in The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 339.


160 The assumption in Heb 4:8 that the people under Joshua did not experience rest has presented interpretive difficulties. The statement is a 2nd-class condition which indicates “the assumption of an untruth (for the sake of an argument),” Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, 694. The previous chapter demonstrated that under Joshua’s leadership some level of rest was experienced. Hence, one solution to this apparent problem is to make a distinction in kind when it comes to the notion of rest. That is, Joshua did not give them eternal rest but rather temporal rest. However, this proposal introduces extra-biblical categories that do not arise from the text itself. Therefore, the solution opted for in this dissertation is to make a typological distinction in light of later revelation, especially in light of the other typological patterns established in the Old Testament (e.g., rest, tabernacle/Temple). The type—rest under Joshua—anticipated its antitype—rest under Jesus—which is made clear within the book of Joshua and later in Ps 95 and Heb 3-4. Hence, there is escalation in rest from the people under Joshua to the people under Christ. See Lane, Hebrews 1-8, 100-1; O’Brien, Hebrews, 169-70.
a type of the eternal rest which still remains. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God (4:9). This leads the author to conclude with a vital exhortation: “Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience” (4:11).

Two conclusions can be drawn from Hebrews 3:7-4:13. First, the rest in Canaan functions as a type of God’s heavenly rest in Genesis 2 and Psalm 95, that is, entering the presence of God on the last day. The rest that came with the possession of the land was achieved in some measure under Joshua. This rest reflected the rest enjoyed at creation, but it was lost in the fall. However, it still left something to be desired. This rest, then, anticipated the eschatological rest for the people of God, which David announced in Psalm 95. As the Old Testament demonstrated, rest in the land was no longer a possibility. But God’s rest is available for all who believe and obey. As long as it is called today, then, God’s people are not exhorted to return to the type of rest in the land of Canaan. Rather, they are exhorted to enter God’s eschatological rest that comes through a newfound relationship with Christ (3:6). Second, the already-not yet and faith-obedience tensions seen in Deuteronomy stand parallel in important ways to the audience of Hebrews. There are both present and future realities that serve as motivations to obey and persevere, yet they stem from the unshakable grace that is shared in Christ. Therefore, the recipients must heed to the message of Hebrews, for God still speaks and his word is powerful and lays open those who are accountable to him (4:12-13).

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161 Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 278.


Hebrews goes on to argue that Jesus is a greater high priest (4:14-7:28), a mediator of a better covenant (8:1-13), a greater tabernacle and sacrifice (9-10), and provides a greater redemption. The author then returns to concepts associated with land in chapters 11-12, employing terms such as τόπον (11:8), κληρονομίαν (11:8), γῆν τῆς ἔπαγγελίας (11:9), πόλιν (11:10, 16), πατρίδα (11:14), Σιών ὀρέω (12:22), Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐπουρανίῳ (12:22; 13:14). These chapters are consistent with the overall message of Hebrews which, as will be shown, present the land in the Old Testament as a type of the greater land to come.

In Hebrews 11:8-22, the author shifts the focus to Abraham the patriarch, the greatest example of faith in the OT. He begins by briefly recounting the story of Abraham by focusing on two events in his life. First, the author emphasizes Abraham’s obedient response to God to go to a place (τόπον) that he would receive as an inheritance (κληρονομίαν) (vv.8-10). The second is the faith of Abraham and his barren wife Sarah to have children (v.11). The focus on Abraham and the land, however, will only be examined. Verse nine says that “by faith [Abraham] went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.” The image of the patriarchs living in tents stresses the fact that mere entry into the land did not result in the attainment of the promised inheritance. Then immediately it says that “he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (v. 10). The logical relationship between verse 9 and 10 is important to

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166 The imperfect tense form of ἐξεδέχετο emphasizes Abraham’s “continuous expectation.”
note. Abraham looked for the land of promise because \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) he was looking to the city with foundations. The pointed contrast between “the land of promise” and “a foreign land” serves to show the unsettled life of Abraham. That is, “Entrance into the promised land had brought no settlement.”\(^\text{167}\) Hence, Abraham looked beyond his present fleeting scene to the unseen blessing, for the land “pointed beyond itself to a more excellent consummation.”\(^\text{168}\) According to the author, then, the patriarchs knew that the land of promise was not the ultimate fulfillment since they were dwelling as strangers and exiles (11:13). Lane comments, “Abraham’s status as an immigrant and alien in the land had the positive effect of indicating that Canaan was not, in the final sense, the promised inheritance. It served to direct his attention beyond Canaan to the established city of God as the ultimate goal of his pilgrimage” (cf. 11:13-16).\(^\text{169}\) This point is reiterated in verse 16, “But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”\(^\text{170}\) Harris notes,

Perhaps the most relevant OT passage is Isa. 54:1-17, from which the Author appears to have drawn numerous allusions. In Isa. 54:1-17, Zion, initially portrayed as a barren woman (στειρά; cf. Heb 11:11), is exhorted to enlarge the place of her tent (τὸν τόπον τῆς σκινής σου, v. 2; cf. Heb 11:8-9). The foundations (πάντα θεμέλια, v. 11; cf. Heb 11:10) of restored Zion (next pictured as a city) are likened to precious jewels. The indescribable beauty and security of the city are the κληρονομία of the servants of the Lord (v. 17; cf. 11:8).\(^\text{171}\)

\(^{167}\)Lane, Hebrews 9-13, 350.

\(^{168}\)Phillip E. Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 468-69.

\(^{169}\)Lane, Hebrews 9-13, 351. So also O’Brien, Hebrews, 414.

\(^{170}\)Walker, Jesus and the Holy City, 214.

\(^{171}\)Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews,” 220.
The background of Hebrews 11:8-16 suggest that Isaiah 54 was important in the author’s understanding of the eternal city of God to which Abraham looked.

That the land of Canaan was not ultimately the fulfillment of the promise is confirmed in that the patriarchs died there without receiving the things promised (11:13). However, the land of Canaan was not merely a rest stop. Rather, it was the promised land—the land Abraham and his descendants received as their inheritance. From there they continuously waited for the appearance of the city of God, of which they were already members by virtue of God’s call and promise.172 This city is later referred to as the heavenly homeland (11:16), the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem (12:22), the unshakable kingdom (12:28), and the abiding city that is to come (13:14).173 The patriarchs, notes Walker, “were looking forward, not so much to the day when their descendants would inherit the physical Land, as to the day when they themselves would inherit the heavenly country which the physical Land signified.”174 Indeed “they looked beyond Palestine to a new heaven and earth, and to a new Jerusalem.”175 Again, the promise of land typologically pointed to something greater.

172 Lane, Hebrews 9-13, 351.

173 O’Brien, Hebrews, 414; Lane, Hebrews 9-13, 352. Concerning the nature of the city, Lane comments, “There has been a strong tendency to interpret the notion of the heavenly city in Hebrews from the perspective of the Platonic tradition as mediated by Philo. In Philo, however, there is no concept of a heavenly city prepared by God that will be made visible in the new age. Philo concentrates on the etymology and the symbolism of the name ‘Jerusalem’ rather than speaking of the city itself. This is the decisive difference between the Greek philosophical treatment of the heavenly city and the biblical realism that informs the formulation of this theme in Hebrews. In Hebrews the heavenly city is a transcendent reality that faithfully reflects the realism of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition as represented in 4 Ezra and 2 Apocalypse of Baruch. There is nothing abstract or contingent about this city in 12:22a, which differs fundamentally from the philosophical concept in Philo.” Lane, Hebrews 9-13, 467. So also O’Brien, Hebrews, 484.

174 Walker, Jesus and the Holy City, 212.

Two conclusions can be drawn from Hebrews 11:8-22 that contribute to the land motif in Hebrews. First, this passage underscores the relationship between the Abrahamic promises and the promised inheritance. Second, this passage advances the argument that the promised inheritance was not finally fulfilled in the land of Canaan, but rather in the city of God, the heavenly homeland, that was greeted from afar. In this way, it shows “that the land is not only a type of promised rest, but also a type of the city of God.”\(^{176}\) Thus this passage offers an important stage in the unfolding typological trajectory of the land in Hebrews.

The epilogue in Hebrews 11:39-40 provides an appropriate summary of and conclusion to the list of examples of faith in chapter 11 and a transition to the call of Hebrews 12:1-13.\(^{177}\) This conclusion is important for the entire argument in chapter 11. The author says that all those celebrated in chapter 11 were commended for their trust in God to do what he had promised. However, they did not obtain what was promised. This failure was not due to any fault of their own. Instead, it was due to the gracious, meticulous providence of God, “since God had provided something better for us” (v. 40). Thus, the reason given is redemptive-historical. The “something better” is Jesus and his work. God in his providence deferred the conferral of the final reward until the advent of Christ, his sacrificial death, and the enacting of the new covenant.\(^{178}\) Therefore, New Testament believers are all the more exhorted to run the race with endurance, looking to Jesus (12:1-13).

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\(^{176}\) Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews,” 225.

\(^{177}\) O’Brien, Hebrews, 446; Lane, Hebrews 9-13, 392; Guthrie, Hebrews, 247.

\(^{178}\) O’Brien, Hebrews, 447; Lane, Hebrews 9-13, 393.
The final references to city are found in Hebrews 12-13. In 12:18-24, a contrast is made between the wilderness generation under the old covenant (18-21) and New Testament believers, specifically as they relate to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant (22-24). Moreover, a contrast is made between Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion. Attridge notes that the omission of “Sinai” (vv. 18-21) deliberately puts the focus on Zion. The seven features that describe the encounter with God at Mt. Sinai are set against the seven images that create a glorious vision of Mt. Zion, the heavenly city of God. New covenant believers have not come to Mt. Sinai, which was a holy terror to the old covenant people. Rather, they have come to Mt. Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Believers have access to God through Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant (24a). This is a joyful, celebrative access, not a terrifying one (22), for Jesus’ sprinkled blood speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (24b). Indeed there is a better speaking, for this speech is not accompanied with judgment but with mercy. That is, this speech is to encourage believers to persevere in faith in order to obtain eschatological rest, for greater responsibility comes with greater revelation.

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179 It is best to understand this section as an exposition which summarizes the main points and themes throughout the theological sections of Hebrews. See O’Brien, Hebrews, 478.

180 Ben Witherington notes, “[The author of Hebrews] has perhaps learned this contrast from Paul (see Galatians). It is the heavenly city, the better country that Abraham saw from afar, that they have now drawn near to. Is our author envisioning his audience being raptured into heaven, into the presence of the angels and the living God, or simply dying and going to heaven? In fact he is not. Like the author of Revelation he envisions a corporate merger of heaven and earth—or, perhaps better said, a replacement of this current world, both heavens and earth, that is wasting away, with an eternal form of heaven and earth, which when Jesus returns and the dead are raised will become heaven on earth.” Ben Witherington III, “The Conquest of Faith and the Climax of History (Hebrews 12:1-4, 18-29),” in The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 435.

181 Attridge, Hebrews, 372.

182 O’Brien, Hebrews, 478.

183 O’Brien, Hebrews, 491; Lane, Hebrews, 460-1.
The last reference is found in Hebrews 13:14, where the author speaks explicitly about the earthly Jerusalem. Because Jesus suffered in order to sanctify the people with his own blood (13:12), believers are to exemplify his suffering and they are to “go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured (v.13). The basis (γὰρ) for this exhortation is that “we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come” (v.14). Whereas in other places believers are reminded of what they do have (e.g., a better sacrifice, mediator, covenant), here they are reminded of what they do not have. That is, “Here on earth, in contrast to heaven, they do not possess an enduring city.” Hebrews aligns itself with the message of the Old Testament concerning land: no earthly place, land, or city can provide ultimate rest and security, for the earth itself will be shaken by the voice of our fire-consuming God (12:25-29). The only place that will


185 In contrast to 2 Peter (3:10-13) and Revelation (21:1), Hebrews does not explicitly mention a new heaven and a new earth. From this absence, interpreters such as Paul Ellingworth (The Epistle to the Hebrews, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 688) conclude that the created order with its materiality will be obliterated from existence and believers will inhabit a realm that is heavenly and non-material. Edward Adams, however, rightly argues that the author of Hebrews looks forward to a new creation. He writes, “In Heb. 1:2, the Son is said to be ‘heir of all things’ (κληρονόμον πάντων), which implies that at the eschaton there will be a cosmos for him to inherit. In 2:6-8, the writer cites Ps. 8:4-6, interpreting it as a statement of Christ’s (future) universal reign, in fulfillment of the destiny God intended for humanity within the created order.

In Hebrews 2:5, the author in fact indicates that the ideal state of things envisioned in Ps. 8:4-6, to be fulfilled when Christ reigns supreme, will be manifested in ‘the coming world’ (τὴν οἰκουμένην τῆν μέλλουσαν). . . . The expectation of a new earth would fit well with the reference to ‘the city that is to come’ (13:14; cf. 11:10). That formulation suggests a future ‘earthly’ manifestation of the city that currently exists as a heavenly reality (12:22). In the book of Revelation, the new Jerusalem descends from heaven to take its place in the new earth (Rev. 21:9-22:5). A similar theme may be implied here. Thus, although the author does not explicitly speak of a new creation to follow the demise of the old, there is sufficient evidence to deduce that this is indeed what he expects.” Edward Adams, “The Cosmology of Hebrews,” in The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 137-38. See also Jon Laansma, “The Cosmology of Hebrews,” in Cosmology and New Testament Theology, ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough, Library of New Testament Studies 355 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 125-43; idem, “Hidden Stories in Hebrews: Cosmology and Theology,” in A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in its Ancient Context, ed. Richard Bauckham et al., Library of New Testament Studies (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 9-18.
not be shaken is the kingdom of God (12:28). But in the present, believers follow Jesus outside the city and confidently await the place to come.\(^{186}\)

In summary, Hebrews clearly picks up the Old Testament account of land and associated concepts. But for the Author of Hebrews the presentation of land is not unfulfilled, rejected, or ignored. Rather, in light of the coming of Christ and his greater work, God has performed a greater deliverance than that of Egypt (chaps. 8-10). As a result, if they persevere in faith he will bring them into his eschatological rest, the heavenly Jerusalem, their final homeland, and the unshakable kingdom. Therefore, the land theme functions as a type of what will come as a result of Christ and the blood of his perfect sacrifice. Thus, the type is eclipsed by its antitype in light of Jesus, and those trusting in him await the ultimate fulfillment of his promises.

**Fulfillment in Peter**

Peter also employs the language of inheritance to describe what awaits Christians.\(^{187}\) Peter writes to those who are “elect exiles” of the dispersion.\(^{188}\) According

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\(^{186}\)This place is described in Hebrews as heaven (12:23), an eternal inheritance (9:15), a final resting place (4:11), a kingdom (12:28), a country (11:14), a city (11:10, 16; 12:22), Mount Zion (12:22), the heavenly Jerusalem (12:22; 13:14).

\(^{187}\)Most scholars agree that Peter’s recipients were mainly Gentiles. See, e.g., Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 50-51; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 8-9; J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, BNTC (London: Hendrickson, 1969), 4; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 38. For example, they lived in ignorance (1:14) and they were “ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers” (1:18). Moreover, Peter tells them that “the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you” (4:3-4). Hence, Schreiner concludes, “It is difficult to believe that Peter would characterize Jews as indulging in such blatant sins, whereas the vices were typical of the Jewish conception of Gentiles.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 39.

\(^{188}\)Debate surrounds the authorship of 1 Peter. According to Karen Jobes, the most common objections to Petrine authorship rest on four points: (1) the Greek of 1 Peter is too good for a Galilean fisherman; (2) the historical context seems much later than Peter’s lifetime, especially when it comes to the
to Michaels, “The first term points to the indispensible basis of Christian identity and the second to its inevitable social expression.” That is, their status as elect of God is what accounts for their being pilgrims of this world. Furthermore, like “elect exiles,” “dispersion” (διασπορα) is laden with Old Testament imagery. Davids comments,

The Jews had used the term ‘dispersion’ or ‘diaspora’ to refer to their scattered communities outside Palestine ever since the Exile (cf. the Greek form of Deut 28:25; Neh 1:9; and Isa 49:6); it appears several times in the NT with this meaning (see John 7:35; 11:32). Here in Peter we find a natural transfer of one of the titles of Israel to the church, as we will frequently later (cf. 2:5, 9).

presence of suffering throughout the letter; (3) 1 Peter appears to depend on the so-called (deutero)Pauline books and therefore was subsequently written around the end of the first century; (4) the persecution of Christianity in the remote areas of Asia Minor did not happen during Peter’s lifetime. Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 6. Nevertheless, both internal and external evidence strongly favor Petrine authorship. First, although Peter notes that his letter came ἐκ τῆς Σμύρνης (5:12), he still identifies himself as the author (1:1). J. Ramsey Michaels comments, “Although this authority is not made constantly explicit throughout the epistle, it is assumed at the start with the words, ‘Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ.’” J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC, vol. 49 (Waco, TX: Word, 1998), 6. Peter, then, writes as ἀπόστολος Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ, and, therefore, he is an apostle in the technical sense and his words come with apostolic authority, for he was directly called and commissioned by Jesus Christ. Moreover, the tradition of the early church, as early as the end of the second century, also supports Petrine authorship (e.g., Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus). In fact, according to Thomas Schreiner, “there is no evidence that anyone in the early church believed that the letter was written by anyone other than Peter.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 26. Second, Jobes, who affirms Petrine authorship, argues from the level of syntax that Greek was not the first language of the author of 1 Peter. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 6-8, 325-38; see also idem, “The Syntax of 1 Peter: Just How Good is the Greek?” *BBR* 13, no. 2 (2003): 159-73. Moreover, Greek was the language of Galilean commerce, and ordinary people in Israel, particularly in Galilee, would have known Greek. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 32-34. For further arguments along these lines, see J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* Novum Testamentum 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1968). And though it cannot decisively be proven one way or the other, the excellent Greek could be explained by the use of a secretary. In any case, “we must beware of an educational snobbery that refuses to recognize the intellectual and literary gifts of those in business.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 34. Third, both Peter and Paul likely shared a common Christian tradition that was widely transmitted in the church, such as the use of Old Testament texts, Christian doctrine and ethics. So Davids, *1 Peter*, 6; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 34-35. Finally, persecution existed throughout the first two hundred years of Christianity, therefore the historical situation of the letter as it pertains to suffering cannot be precisely known. So Jobes, *1 Peter*, 8-10; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 28-31.

189Michaels, *1 Peter*, 7.


191Davids, *1 Peter*, 46.
The threats of dispersion (Deut 28:15-68) were realized in the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. Many Jews still lived outside of Palestine, who were scattered from their homeland because of their sin and were referred to as being in the dispersion (cf. John 7:35; Jas 1:1). Here, however, Peter uses the word in a metaphorical sense and applies them to his (largely) Gentile readers throughout Asia Minor. From the outset, then, Peter indicates that “the church of Jesus Christ is the Israel of God, his chosen people. He forecasts here the theme of 1 Peter 2:9, where the church is called ‘a chosen people.’”

Peter then praises God for their certain salvation, for through the resurrection of Jesus and because of God’s great mercy they have been “begotten anew” to a living hope (1:3; cf. 1:23), to an imperishable inheritance (1:4), and by God’s power they are kept through faith for the salvation to be revealed (1:5). Schreiner rightly notes that Peter selects the language of “inheritance” (κληρονομία) to describe what awaits Christians.

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192 Jobes understands the framing of the letter with a reference to “Diaspora” (1:1) and “Babylon” (5:13) to invite the Christian “foreigners” of Asia Minor to see their own situation as parallel to the history of God’s people, ancient Israel. Jobes, 1 Peter, 64. Describing them “of the dispersion,” then, signifies both their experience and identity in relation to God’s chosen people Israel.

193 Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 51.

194 Davids, 1 Peter, 8-9; Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 51.

195 Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 50. See also Dan G. McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter” (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 106.

196 Achtemeier comments, “The use of the rare word ἀναγεννάω puts emphasis rather on rebegetting or begetting anew than on being born anew, although of course the subsequent new birth is assumed (e.g., 2:2). Such an emphasis on begetting anew means this phrase has less reference to baptism than has often been asserted. It points rather to the totally new and unique origins of the Christian community, beginning not merely with a new birth but with a new origin altogether. It is by reason of this total newness that Christians are aliens and exiles in the world, and the fact that the situation is due to God’s mercy indicates clearly enough that such status is to be seen as a blessing, not a curse, a point those undergoing persecution would need to hear.” Achtemeier, 1 Peter, 94; so also Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 60.

197 Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 62.
For Peter, like Paul, the background of the idea of inheritance is the Old Testament. Schreiner comments,

In the Old Testament the inheritance is the land God promised to his people (Num 32:19; Deut 2:12; 12:9; 25:19; 26:1; Josh 11:23; Ps 105:11; Acts 7:5). The word is especially common in Joshua for the apportionment of the land for each tribe or family. Peter understood the inheritance, however, no longer in terms of a land promised to Israel but in terms of the end-time hope that lies before believers.

In other words, Peter’s use of the term is understood in light of Christ and his fulfillment. Michaels writes,

Peter’s use of the term is most closely related to NT passages that speak of “inheriting” either “the kingdom” (Matt 25:34; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; cf. κληρονομία in Eph 5:5 and κληρονομοι in James 2:5) or “eternal life” (Matt 19:29; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:18) or an equivalent (e.g., “the earth” [Matt 5:5], “incorruption” [1 Cor 15:50], “salvation” [Heb 1:14], “the promise” [Heb 6:12], “blessing” [1 Pet 3:9], “these things” [Rev 21:7]).

A salvation-historical shift centered in Christ, therefore, meant that the type met its terminus in the antitype. Grudem comments,

The “inheritance” of the New Covenant Christian is thus shown to be far superior to the earthly inheritance of the people of Israel in the land of Canaan. That earthly land was not “kept” for them, but was taken from them in exile, and later by Roman occupation. Even while they possessed the land, it produced rewards that decayed, rewards whose glory faded away. The beauty of the land’s holiness before God was repeatedly defiled by sin (Num 35:24; Jer 2:7; 3:2).

Such could never happen to them again in their new home in Christ’s kingdom, into which they—both Jew and Gentile—have been born anew. Indeed this promised

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198 Davids, 1 Peter, 52. So also Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 62. Michaels notes that the noun κληρονομία occurs almost 200 times in the LXX. Michaels, 1 Peter, 20.

199 Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 62. See also Davids, 1 Peter, 52; John H. Elliot, 1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 336.

200 Michaels, 1 Peter, 20; See also Davids, 1 Peter, 52.

201 Grudem, 1 Peter, 58. So also Jobes, 1 Peter, 86.

202 Jobes, 1 Peter, 86.
blessing (the antitype) is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. That is, no foreign enemies can take this inheritance, because unlike the previous symbol of God’s presence in the land, this one is “kept in heaven for you” (1:4).

The future fulfillment of God’s promise, however, should not be understood as merely spiritual. Schreiner comments, “This hope is still physical, for we learn from 2 Peter that it will be realized in a new heaven and a new earth (2 Pet 3:13; cf. Rev 21:1-22:5). But it transcends and leaves behind the land of Palestine.”

Again, this idea of a transformed eschatological reality is also found in Paul, who casts the same vision with different words (e.g., 1 Cor 15:52-54; Rom 8:18-25). Furthermore, in ways similar to the Revelation of John, Peter looks forward to the promised new heavens and new earth (3:13; cf. Rev 21:1), which reaches back to Isaiah (65:17; 66:22).

Indeed God’s promises will reach their fulfillment, and in contrast with the present world filled with evil deeds (3:10), the new creation will be one in which righteousness dwells (3:13).

203 Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 62. Furthermore, “often in postbiblical literature writers reflect on the new creation that God will institute (Jub. 1:29; 1 Enoch 45:4-5; 72:1; 91:16; Sib. Or. 5:211-13; 2 Apoc. Bar 32:6; 44:12; 57:2; 4 Ezra 7:25).” Ibid.


205 Richard J. Bauckham, Jude, 2 Peter, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 326; Gene L. Green, Jude and 2 Peter, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 334; Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 391. Schreiner notes, “Revelation teaches us that the new heavens and new earth will become a reality with the coming of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-22:5). At the same time we are told that ‘every island fled away and the mountains could not be found’ (Rev 16:20). And, ‘Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them’ (Rev 20:11). The first verse of Revelation 21 bring both themes together, ‘Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea’ (Rev 21:1; cf. Matt 19:28).” Ibid., 392.

206 Green, Jude and 2 Peter, 335. Some scholars have drawn the conclusion from 2 Peter 3:7, 10, and 12 that the present creation will be completely annihilated. See, e.g., R. L. Overstreet, “A Study of 2 Peter 3:10-13,” BibSac 137 (1980): 362-65. Barber and Peterson, however, argue that this view should be rejected for several reasons. First, such an interpretation contradicts Paul (Rom 8:20-21) and John (Rev 22:3), who speak of the removal of the curse, not the extinction and recreation of God’s world. Second, Romans 8:22-23 presents humanity and creation not as annihilated, but as cleansed of sin and transformed. Third, 2 Peter 3:6 says that “the world that then existed [during the flood] was deluged with water and
Fulfillment in Revelation

According to Stephen Wellum, “Given how the biblical covenants unpack the theme of land, it should not surprise us how the entire storyline ends in Revelation 21-22.” Moyer Hubbard writes,

The entire biblical story, from beginning to end, can rightly be described as an epic of new creation. As its prologue opens with Elohim’s creation of heaven and earth, so its epilogue closes with the dramatic appearance of the new heaven and new earth. . . . Creatio originalis gives way to creatio nova as the one seated upon the throne announces, “Behold, I make all things new!” (Rev 21:5).

Chapter 2 argued that the final place of the kingdom—the new creation—described in Revelation 21-22 “appears as the consummation of a complex biblical continuum reaching all the way back to the book of Genesis.” This consummation depicts the new

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207 Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 715. Similarly, Graeme Goldsworthy notes, “If we grant that the overall timeline of the Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 21-22 contains the theme of creation to new creation, it is not surprising that the progressive revelation contains this theme of creation both in repetition and intensification. This is what typology is all about.” Graeme Goldsworthy, Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 169.


heaven and new earth as a paradisiacal new Eden, New Jerusalem, and cosmological temple that is, in the climax of the covenants, filled with God’s presence. Moreover, the end also relates to Israel’s universalized land promises that reach back to Abraham and all the way to Eden. In fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3), ransomed people from every tribe, tongue, people and nation (5:9) are restored to a new creation “with its new Jerusalem evocative of Eden.” In this new creation, the geographical boundaries of “the land” expand to the entire new creation in ways that remarkably reflect the visions of the prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. That is, Revelation 21-22 interprets the future fulfillment of the prophets by collapsing temple, city, and land into one paradisiacal end-time picture portraying the final reality of God’s covenant presence with his people. The final chapters of Revelation describe in glorious detail the culmination of all God’s covenant promises, for his people will live in his place under his rule.

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New Creation as Paradise

Scripture, according to Bruce Waltke, is about God bringing glory to himself by restoring paradise after humanity lost it through rebelling against his rule.215 As paradise, the new Jerusalem is the fulfillment of what Eden was designed to be. For example, both Eden and the new Jerusalem reference the waters of life (Gen 2:10-14; Rev 22:1-2),216 the tree of life (Gen 3:22-24; Rev 22:2),217 precious stones (Gen 2:11-12; Rev 22:18-21; cf. Ezek 28:13), and God’s presence with his people (Gen 3:8; Rev 21:3-5, 22-23; 22:4-5).218 In contrast to Eden, however, this paradise is free from sin, securely


216Both Robert Mounce and George Ladd connect the “water of life” in Rev 22:1 to Ezek 47:1-12 and Zech 14:8, pointing out that it describes the reign and blessing of eternal life in the age to come. Robert H. Mounce, The Book of Revelation, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 386; George Eldon Ladd, A Commentary on the Revelation of John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 286. Beale and McDonough, however, argue that it reaches farther back than these prophecies “to the description of the primeval garden in Gen 2:10: ‘a river was going forth from Eden.’ In association with the first Eden’s river, the ‘gold, the bdellium and the onyx stone’ were features around one of the river’s tributaries, which compares to the precious stones surrounding the river of Rev 22:1 (cf. 21:18-21). The point is that God will make the end like the beginning, though the consummated garden will exist on an escalated scale in comparison to the first.” Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” 1153-54. See also George R. Beasley-Murray, The Book of Revelation (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1974), 330.

217Dennis Johnson notes, “The tree of life stood in the center of Eden, the garden of God (Gen 2:9), and after their foolish rebellion Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden specifically to bar them from access to the tree of life in their condition of spiritual fallenness (Gen 3:23-24). In the new heaven and earth, however, the earth’s peoples will again have access to the tree of life. The seventh and final benediction will show us how this can be: ‘Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the gates into the city’ (Rev 22:14).” Dennis E. Johnson, Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 321.

218Mounce comments, “It is interesting that most recent translations have the plural, peoples (“they shall be his peoples”), rather than the singular, people. Apparently, John modified the traditional concept (Jer 7:23; 30:22; Hos 2:23) and substituted a reference to the many peoples of redeemed humanity. Jesus had spoken of ‘other sheep that are not of this fold,’ which must become part of the one flock (Jn 10:16). It is with the redeemed peoples of all races and nationalities that God will dwell in glory. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God.” Mounce, Revelation, 372. Beale provides further Old Testament warrant for the change to plural “peoples” when he points out that “Zech. 2:10-11 anticipates Rev. 21:3 in its interpretation of the same prophecies concerning God’s final communion with his people, foreseeing an ethnic expansion of the boundaries of true Israel by identifying ‘many nations’ as ‘my people,’ a term always used elsewhere in the OT for Israel.” G. K. Beale, The Book of Revelation, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1047.
protected from evil and the evil one, and permanently filled with God’s presence. Indeed the various correspondences and echoes of Eden, Jerusalem, the temple, the Holy of Holies, and Zion “serve to demonstrate that the present vision is the consummation of all those hopes, lest any detail of OT should have been omitted.” The divine paradisiacal intention of Genesis 1-2 is not merely recaptured in the new heaven and new earth—it is astonishingly surpassed.

**New Creation as Temple**

Perhaps the most surprising element given the centrality of the temple in the life of Israel is that the new creation contains no temple. Revelation 21:22 declares, “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb” (Rev 21:22). Though various prophets had formerly anticipated the whole city as the site of God’s presence (e.g., Ezek 48:35; Zech 14:20-21; Isa 52:1; 54:2-3), as truly his holy mountain, John is the first to eliminate the temple altogether. Instead of the temple being the exclusive place of God’s presence, John declares that the entire “paradisal city-temple of Revelation 21:1-22:5 encompasses the entirety of the newly created earth.” The most evident sign of this city-temple is its perfectly cubic shape (21:16). This glorious description is like no other previous place on earth, but is

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221 G. K. Beale, “Revelation (Book),” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 358. Beale rightly argues from the reference to Isaiah 65:17 in Revelation 21:1 that it is more likely that “the new heaven and new earth” of 21:1 is defined by and equated with the paradisal city-temple of 21:2 and 21:9-22:5.
more akin to the holy of holies (1 Kgs 6:20). Thus, the new earth now serves as the place of God’s presence.

In Genesis 1-2, Adam and Eve were to extend the geographical boundaries of the garden-temple until Eden covered the earth.” Over time, then, the whole earth would become a garden-temple filled with their progeny—little priest-kings—and the earth would be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The same is true for Abraham and the nation of Israel. Revelation, however, presents as accomplished what they failed to do through the triumph of the Lamb. The Edenic imagery in Revelation 21-22, then, shows that the building of the temple, which began in Genesis 2, is complete in Christ and his people will encompass the entire earth.  

New Creation as City (New Jerusalem)

The Bible itself portrays the move from creation to the new creation as movement from a garden (Gen 2) to a city (Rev 21-22). The progression from a garden to a city symbolizes the progression and completion of God’s teleological purposes.

Kline notes,

Human culture would take city form. This was inevitable because the city is nothing but the synthesis of the several elements already present in the cultural program that man was directed to carry out. The couple in the garden was to multiply, so providing the citizens of the city. Their cultivation of the earth’s resources as they extended their control over their territorial environment through the fabrication of sheltering structures would produce the physical architecture of the city. . . The

222Beale, The Temple and the Church’s Mission, 81-82; see also T. Desmond Alexander, From Eden to the New Jerusalem: Exploring God’s Plan for Life on Earth (Nottingham, UK: InterVarsity, 2008), 25.

223Beale, “Revelation (Book),” 359.

cultural mandate given at creation was thus a mandate to build the city and it would be through the blessing of God on man’s faithfulness in the covenanted task that the construction of the city would be completed.\textsuperscript{225}

Furthermore, the symbol of a city is significant. Dumbrell writes,

\begin{quote}
For biblical readers the city is preeminently a symbol of world government. Therefore, the New Testament asserts the fact of final Kingdom of God rule, combining people, place and divine presence. With the advent of the New Jerusalem we have moved to the end. Unlike Ezekiel 40-48 (upon which Rev 21-22 is so much dependent), the new city does not rest upon a cosmic mountain (cf. Ezek 40:2), but “comes down” to earth and turns the whole earth into a paradise by his presence.\textsuperscript{226}
\end{quote}

Through the rich imagery of Revelation, then, John shows that redemptive history in general, and the promises of the Edenic creation in particular, are consummated in a new heaven and new earth as a paradise, temple, and city. In other words, Eden has not merely been regained and the promised land possessed. They have been radically transformed through the life, death, resurrection, and rule of the Lamb who won a new creation for his people.

In John’s final vision, the Old Testament types of Eden, land, temple, and city are, in light of Christ and his work of creating a new people and place, coextensive and fulfilled in their antitype—the new heaven and new earth. And, contrary to popular belief that the consummation is merely a spiritual or ethereal place, Ladd rightly notes, “Biblical thought always places man on a redeemed earth, not in a heavenly realm removed from earthly existence.”\textsuperscript{227}

\textsuperscript{225}Meredith G. Kline, \textit{Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview} (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 163.

\textsuperscript{226}Dumbrell, \textit{The End of the Beginning}, 31.

\textsuperscript{227}Ladd, \textit{A Commentary on the Revelation of John}, 275.
to recapture and advance the idyllic conditions of Eden, now reach their terminus in the new creation. Beale notes,

The original Eden, Israel’s old temple, old land, and old city, never reached the universal goal for which they were designed. As such, they became imperfect typological realities pointing forward to a time when these would again become eschatological realities, whose design would reach their final goal. \(^{228}\)

“Revelation’s depiction of the return to Eden thereby serves as the book’s way of concluding by tying together the redemption of Israel and the rest of the world through Christ.” \(^{229}\) Indeed the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever (11:15). \(^{230}\) God’s people will once again dwell in his place under his rule—forever.

**Conclusion**

This chapter contends that what was promised in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New. God’s highly anticipated Messiah arrived on the historical scene in Matthew and, true to prophetic form, he inaugurated the kingdom that awaits its consummation in the new earth. Thus, the themes associated with land in the Old Testament are now connected to Jesus, fulfilled in light of him and, as seen in John, enjoyed in relation to him. He performs a new exodus and saves his people out of sin and into the place of redemptive blessing—now centered in him. Moreover, he gives rest to those who come to him. Life that once abounded in the land now abounds in him, for he is the vine, the

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\(^{230}\) Beale observes that this text is an allusion to Ps 2:2, 8, which predicted that Israel’s Messiah would inherit the whole world in fulfillment of the original intent of Israel’s land promises. Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 760.
resurrection and the life. Additionally, all the nations are his and he summons his
disciples to go and gather those whom he already possesses (John 10; cf. Matt 28:18-20).

The fulfillment of the land theme continues throughout Hebrews, 1 and 2
Peter, and Revelation. People enter God’s rest through faith in the true and greater Son,
Jesus Christ, and look for a better country. Though Old Testament believers looked
through the land of promise to God’s greater eschatological rest and city, by virtue of
Christ and his work, new covenant believers now look to Jesus and confidently await
their arrival in the new Jerusalem, homeland, unshakable kingdom, and abiding city that
is to come, which is described in the letters of Peter and Revelation as the new heaven
and new earth. In short, the land, which served as a type of this greater reality, now
reaches its telos. And the covenant relationship for which we were created is realized in
the new heaven and new earth where our glorious triune God will dwell with us, and we
will be his people, and God himself will be with us as our God (Rev 21:3).
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Introduction

To conclude, let us now turn to a concise review of the arguments that have been made throughout this examination of the land motif and its place in God’s redemptive plan. Chapter 1 introduces the thesis that drives this dissertation, contending that the land promised to Abraham advances the place of the kingdom that was lost in Eden and serves as a type throughout Israel’s history that anticipates an even greater land—prepared for God’s people—that will come as a result of the person and work of Jesus Christ. In other words, the land and its blessings (type) find their fulfillment in the new heaven and new earth (antitype) won by Christ.

Chapter 2 provides a biblical-theological framework that situates the land promise in God’s redemptive plan. As the beginning and the end show, God’s cosmological purpose is for his people to dwell in his place under his rule. That is, from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22 God’s eschatological goal is to establish his kingdom on earth. However, due to the fall of mankind into sin and death, the accomplishment of this goal is radically marred but not decimated, for God makes a “mother promise” that will providentially guide his redemptive means to their divinely appointed end. In fact, he will reestablish his kingdom on earth through his graciously initiated covenants that reach their telos in and through the person and work of Christ, the Last Adam. As a result, the
kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever (Rev 11:15).

Chapter 3 focuses on God’s promise of land to Abraham and, subsequently, evaluates the progress of God’s fulfillment of his promise in four plot movements across the Old Testament. First, I consider the importance of Genesis 1-11 for the entrance of Abraham into God’s redemptive plan. Second, I examine the nature and scope of the Abrahamic covenant and the promise of land. Third, I look at the advancement and fulfillment(s) of God’s promise of land throughout Israel’s history. Finally, I examine the loss of land in exile and the prophetic anticipation of an international and universal restoration brought through a new covenant, which advances God’s cosmological plan from Adam through Abraham, and is cast in terms of an Edenic land, city, and temple—all of which are coextensive. Chapter 3 demonstrates, then, that the land is a type of a new creation that will come through Abraham’s seed and a Davidic son, who will triumphantly bring God’s new covenant people into a new creation.

Chapter 4 analyzes the most relevant passages in the New Testament and presents the land promised to Abraham and his offspring to be finally fulfilled in the (physical) new heaven and earth won by Christ. At this time in history, however, the fulfillment is primarily focused on Christ, who himself has inaugurated a new creational kingdom through his physical resurrection and has made new creations out of those united with him. This united people—both Jew and Gentile—now live between the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom and anticipate the final fulfillment in the new heaven and new earth (Rev 21-22).
This chapter aims to apply the interpretive findings of the previous chapters to eschatology. More specifically, this chapter will evaluate how the land promise is interpreted and fulfilled in the theological systems of dispensationalism and covenant theology in light of the arguments presented throughout this dissertation.

Implications for Eschatology

There are various forms of dispensationalism, which makes it difficult to present a unified theology of land. Nevertheless, it is possible to distill the pillars of dispensational theology into an essential core. That is, all forms of dispensational theology construct their theology of land from an interconnected set of convictions. First, the sine qua non of dispensationalism is the distinction between the nation of Israel and the church. Second, dispensationalists believe that God’s unconditional promise of

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2I have adapted these points from Stephen Wellum in Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 704.

3Ryrie, Dispensationalism, 46; Blaising, “Dispensationalism: The Search for Definition,” 23. Feinberg rightly notes that most theological systems, even covenant theology or systems which most allegorize the OT, distinguish Israel from the church. Therefore, it is the kind of distinction that distinguishes dispensationalism. For Feinberg, “what is distinctive of dispensational thinking is recognition of [the four distinct senses of seed: (1) biological, ethnic, national; (2) political; (3) spiritual; (4) typological] as operative in both Testaments coupled with a demand that no sense (spiritually especially) is more important than any other, and that no sense cancels out the meaning and implications of the other senses. The more one emphasizes the distinctness and importance of the various senses, the more dispensational and discontinuity-oriented his system becomes, for the distinct senses necessitate speaking of Israel ethnically, politically, and spiritually, as well as speaking of the church.” Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” 72-73. Bruce Ware defines this distinction when he writes, “Israel and the church share
land in the Abrahamic covenant must be fulfilled to the nation of Israel in the future, which “includes at least the millennial reign of Christ and for some dispensationalists, extends into the eternal state as well.” Feinberg writes, “If an OT prophecy or promise is made unconditionally to a given people and is still unfulfilled to them even in the NT era, then the prophecy must still be fulfilled to them.” Third, and building off the second point, is a hermeneutical concern: the New Testament does not reinterpret or spiritualize the land promise to Israel. Again, Feinberg writes, “Lack of repetition in the NT does not render an OT teaching inoperative during the NT era so long as nothing explicitly or implicitly cancels it.” Feinberg’s contention applies to types and antitypes and leads to the fourth point, which Wellum says is often not argued but assumed. Wellum writes,

For dispensational theology, the “land” must not be viewed as a type or pattern of something greater. . . . Instead, it is a straightforward (“literal”) promise that reaches its fulfillment only with Christ ruling and reigning in the millennium in the land of Israel. To view the land as a divinely given pattern which looks back to the creation and forward to the greater reality of the new creation is rejected.

This point is demonstrated by Feinberg when he states,

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4 Blaising, “The Extent and Varieties of Dispensationalism,” 21; Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” 68; Walter Kaiser writes, “The mark of God’s new measure of grace, not only to Israel as a nation but also to all the nations and Gentiles at large, will be Israel’s return to the land and enjoyment of it in the millennium.” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Promised Land: A Biblical-Historical View,” BibSac 138 (1981): 311. See also Ware, “The New Covenant and the People(s) of God,” 93-96.


8 Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 704.
My contention is that understanding that both type and antitype must have their own meaning even while bearing a typological relation to the other, understanding the implications of NT reinterpretation of the OT, and realizing that progress of revelation only renders earlier truth inoperative if God says so leads one to see that the meaning of both OT and NT passages must be maintained.9

As a result, dispensationalists reject the idea that the land promised to Abraham and given to Israel serves as a type of the new creation won by Christ for all God’s people.

How, then, does this dissertation differ from the dispensational view? To answer this question is to summarize the biblical-theological arguments set forth in the previous chapters across the three horizons of Scripture.

To begin, appeal to the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant does not prove that the promise of land must be exclusively fulfilled to the nation of Israel in the future. As chapter 3 demonstrated, the common distinction between unconditional and conditional covenants is not quite accurate. On the one hand, Genesis 15 forcefully shows that God will unilaterally fulfill the promise and conditions of the covenant even if it means taking the curse upon himself. However, this unconditional emphasis does not remove the necessity of Abraham’s obedience. Genesis 17:2 and 22:17-18 (cf. 26:4-5) show that God requires an obedient partner in the covenant relationship. God promises the covenant blessings to Abraham, but these blessings are reserved for people who trust and obey him. In other words, the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant is grounded in God’s promises, but the means of fulfillment will come through Abraham’s (and his descendants’) obedience. This conditionality, therefore, is instrumental to the reception and fulfillment of the promises. The tension between God’s promise and the necessity of obedience in the covenant relationship becomes clearer and stronger as the storyline

progresses, and is crucial for understanding the nature and progression of the covenants as they reach their telos in Christ, who inaugurates a new and better covenant in his own blood. That is, when the larger canonical storyline is considered, the conditions are met by God himself when he sends his obedient Son—the true seed of Abraham (Gal 3)—to fulfill the demands of the covenant.

Furthermore, appeal to the Abrahamic covenant supports the view that the land promise is finally fulfilled in a greater way than in the geographical boundaries of Canaan. That is, the Abrahamic covenant itself has both national and international and regional and global dimensions, which is later confirmed through the progress of God’s revelation. This point must be traced across the three horizons of Scripture. First, the calling of and promise to Abraham recovers the universal purpose of Adam in terms of both offspring and land. In other words, the universal scope of Eden temporarily narrows to the land of Canaan, which then expands with the proliferation of Abraham’s offspring. Second, when Genesis 22:17-18 and 26:3-4 are taken together, the immediate context of the Abrahamic covenant already points to a universal expansion of the territorial promise. In other words, the propagation of Abraham’s offspring would result in inheriting the world (cf. Rom 4:13). This interpretation is not reinterpreting or spiritualizing the Old Testament promise. Rather, it establishes the type or pattern that the ultimate fulfillment of the promise would encompass the entire world.

Third, after the exodus from Egypt, Deuteronomy depicts Israel’s imminent entrance into the promise land as a return to Edenic conditions, for they will multiply, subdue, and enjoy blessing in the land. Moreover, when Israel—God’s son—inherits the land, rest will follow. Securing their inheritance of the promised land, then, presents a
pattern, or type, of Israel entering into God’s eternal rest, of which Canaan was the beginning. Fourth, Joshua demonstrates initial fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise and at the same time anticipates a greater fulfillment that will bring Eden-like rest. However, the end of Joshua points to Israel’s future failure and further need for subsequent repossession.

Fifth, a significant advance of God’s promise to plant his people in the land comes with the arrival of David and his son Solomon. David and Solomon, respectively, enjoy expansive and international reigns, and the nation enjoys rest from its enemies. The construction of the Temple and subsequent rest represents a new Eden, for God once again dwells with his people “in a more intensive sense.”

However, while Solomon typifies a return to Edenic conditions, he is responsible through his disobedience for the second expulsion from the sanctuary-land and the end of the monarchy. Subsequently, the united kingdom is divided and exiled. In the midst of judgment, however, the prophets resound with the eschatological hope of restoration that will bring the universal purposes of Eden, Abraham, and David back into focus.

Finally, the prophets advance the pattern of God’s promise by portraying the return from exile in various ways and stages, including both a physical and spiritual return with national and international results. That is, through the new covenant God will make a new people—composed of both believing Jews and Gentiles—and make a new place for them to live. This restoration describes incredible realities that expand the

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original forms. That is, the return is so glorious that it is described as an Edenic city-temple-land, coextensive with the new creation and filled with an international people. Therefore, as the Old Testament progresses and escalates toward God’s fulfillment of his promises, at each stage of redemptive history the numerous textual and historical correspondences present the promised land as a type that will ultimately be fulfilled when the rule of the king will extend to the entire creation (Ps 72:8-11, 17-19).

Before moving to the New Testament, an important observation must be made concerning an Old Testament theology of land. There are exegetical grounds both in the immediate context of the Abrahamic covenant and across the entire Old Testament to argue that God’s original intention for the land was not merely to be limited to the specific geographical boundaries of Canaan. In other words, when situated within the biblical covenants and viewed diachronically, the land functions as a type or pattern of something greater that would recapture God’s original design for creation.\(^\text{12}\) This point is important, for nondispensationalists have been charged with not sufficiently developing a theology of the land on Old Testaments terms.\(^\text{13}\) Feinberg writes,

Dispensational and nondispensational thinkers agree that the NT fulfills the OT and is a more complete revelation of God. But there is disagreement as to what that means for the priority of one Testament over the other. Nondispensationalists begin with NT teaching as having priority, and then go back to the OT. Dispensationalists often go back to the OT, but wherever they begin they demand that the OT be taken on its own terms rather than reinterpreted in the light of the NT.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{12}\)Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 706.

\(^{13}\)Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” 75.

\(^{14}\)Ibid.
While this charge is debatable,¹⁵ there is some warrant that confirms Feinberg’s point.¹⁶

For example, Louis Berkhof writes,

The covenant with Abraham already included a symbolical element. On the one hand it had reference to temporal blessings, such as the land of Canaan, a numerous offspring, protection against and victory over the enemies; and the other, it referred to spiritual blessings. It should be borne in mind, however, that the former were not coordinate with, but subordinate to, the latter. These temporal blessings did not constitute an end in themselves, but served to symbolize and typify spiritual and heavenly blessings.¹⁷

Similarly, Francis Andersen notes,

The prophets who give warning of threatened deportation from Palestine also hold out hopes of redemption by restoration to the promised land. But in the New Testament such a matter is wholly spiritualized; the land of promise is "a better heavenly city" (Heb 11:10, 16), a thought in line with Paul's teaching that Sarah, as the mother of us all, is "Jerusalem which is above" (Gal 4:26). The promised rest continues to remain, then, to the people of God and those who believe in Jesus enter into it (Heb 4).¹⁸

Bruce Walke contributes a substantial chapter developing an Old Testament theology of land, but then argues,

[T]he New Testament redefines Land in three ways: first, spiritually, as a reference to Christ’s person; second, transcendentally, as a reference to heavenly Jerusalem; and third, eschatologically, as a reference to the new Jerusalem after Christ’s second coming. By “redefine” we mean that whereas “Land” in the Old Testament refers to

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¹⁵For example, Wellum contends, “ironically, that dispensational and covenant theology actually follow the same hermeneutic in appealing to the Old Testament, yet they do so in different areas which are central to their theological system.” For dispensationalism the area of contention is the Israel-church relationship, particularly concerning the land promise. For covenant theology the area of contention is also the Israel-church relationship, particularly the genealogical principal—“you and your children.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 117-18.


Israel’s life in Canaan, in the New Testament “Land” is transmuted to refer to life in Christ.\textsuperscript{19}

As a result, dispensationalists such as Blaising and Bock write,

Is it possible that covenantalist approaches to the question of the relationship of Old Testament and New Testament hope are already determined by a traditional structure framed within the linguistic dimensions of the New Testament before the biblical theology of the Old Testament has been properly understood in its historical setting?\textsuperscript{20}

While this question is disputable, this dissertation is in basic agreement in that covenant theology tends to move from the Old Testament to the New too quickly before comprehensively developing the land theme across the Old Testament, both in its historical and epochal horizons. When this process is accomplished, the New Testament demonstrates both when and how the Old Testament is brought to fulfillment in Christ, though in a way that does not reinterpret, spiritualize, or contravene the earlier texts.\textsuperscript{21}

The New Testament demonstrates that what was promised in the Old Testament is fulfilled through the person and work of Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, the son of Adam, the son of God. Jesus—the true Israel—inaugurates the kingdom through his death and resurrection and finally delivers his people from the exile of sin. He interprets the eschatological land promises through the lens of the many

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\textsuperscript{19}Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, \textit{An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 560. G. K. Beale, also a nondispensationalist, rightly criticizes this definition for sounding “a bit too close to allegorization or undue spiritualization, even though Waltke contends that Christ has the authority to redefine the OT divine authorial intent in this manner.” In its place, Beale elaborates on Waltke’s definition in this way: “that the land was a type of the new creation in that its true design was for Israel (as a corporate Adam) to be faithful and expand the land’s borders to encompass the whole earth. Since Israel failed in this, its old land still pointed to this unfulfilled universal consummated expansion into a new creation at some point in the future.” Beale, \textit{A New Testament Biblical Theology}, 769.

\textsuperscript{20}Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, “Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: Assessment and Dialogue,” in \textit{Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church}, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 393.

\textsuperscript{21}Gentry and Wellum, \textit{Kingdom through Covenant}, 116.
typological and universalized texts in the Old Testament (Matt 5:5). He makes a new covenant people—described as new creations and a new temple—with those united to him, the true temple. This new people, the church of Jesus Christ made up of both Jew and Gentile, await their final home, the new heaven and new earth that is cast in terms of a paradisiacal garden-temple-city.\(^\text{22}\) In other words, the variegated realities of the Old Testament promises—the expansive city, temple, and land—overlap with the new creation won by Christ (Rev 21-22). Thus, Israel’s land promises reach the fulfillment of their original design when redeemed people from every tribe, tongue, nation and people fill and inhabit the whole earth.\(^\text{23}\) In this sense, then, what believing Israel obtains is far greater than the land of Canaan, for they—along with the nations—will inherit the whole earth in fulfillment of God’s gracious and irrevocable promises.

The issue of the fulfillment of the land promise in the New Testament presents a crucial issue for a particular view of typology within dispensationalism. Dispensationalists agree that if the land promised to Israel is unconditional, then the ultimate fulfillment must be to the nation of Israel in the future regardless of how the New Testament applies the Old Testament texts.\(^\text{24}\) As a result, Edward Glenny notes that progressive dispensationalists, who agree with revised dispensationalists but go beyond them in their understanding of typology, allow some of the Old Testament promises for

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\(^{22}\) That the church of Jesus Christ is composed of both Jew and Gentile (e.g., Galatians) does not eliminate a future salvation for ethnic Israel (Rom 9-11). However, this future salvation is obtained only through faith in Jesus Christ as a surprising display of God’s faithfulness and grace.

\(^{23}\) Contrary to the notion that this fulfillment is merely ethereal or spiritual, George Ladd is correct when he writes, “Throughout the entire Bible, the ultimate destiny of God’s people is an earthly destiny.” George Eldon Ladd, A Commentary on the Revelation of John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 275.

Israel to find typological fulfillment in the church. However, this initial fulfillment does not annul the original Old Testament meaning for Israel.\(^{25}\) That is, “Even though the church fulfills these Old Testament prophecies, it does not exhaust them.”\(^{26}\) When applied to the issue of land, then, this view maintains that, although some spiritual aspects are applied to the church, the territorial aspects of God’s promise to the nation of Israel will be fulfilled in the future.\(^{27}\) In other words, although the antitype is in a real sense a fulfillment of the type, the fulfillment is only a partial one. Therefore, the original promises to the nation of Israel will still be kept, even if they have partial application to the church.\(^{28}\)

So what are we to make of this approach to the typological fulfillment of the land promise? Although this view should be commended for attempting to apply the inaugurated eschatological nature of the kingdom to its interpretation of the land promise, it does not do full justice to the New Testament presentation of the already-not yet character of the kingdom or the nature of typological fulfillment in Scripture. First, the application of inaugurated eschatology is not accurate \textit{at this point}. That is, while there is an already-not yet nature to the kingdom in the New Testament, this eschatological


\(^{26}\)Ibid., 634-35. Though Feinberg’s overall position more closely resembles revised dispensationalism, his view of typology is similar to progressive dispensationalism. For example, he writes, “Double fulfillment is necessitated by the NT’s application of the passage to the church and by maintaining the integrity of the OT’s meaning, especially in view of the unconditional nature of the promises to Israel,” Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” 77.

\(^{27}\)Ware, “The New Covenant and the People(s) of God,” 94.

\(^{28}\)This both-and approach is tied to the inaugurated eschatology embraced by progressive dispensationalists. That is, the kingdom of God has come partially (i.e., spiritually) in the arrival of Christ and, derivatively, his church, but the final establishment of his kingdom on earth awaits its consummation upon Christ’s final return.
perspective does not merely mean that part of the kingdom is present now in the church and part of it will be present later in the nation of Israel. Instead, the New Testament shows that all of God’s saving promises have already been fulfilled in Christ and that these promises are expanding where Christ is present—in the church now and finally in the new heaven and new earth in the age to come.

Second, Scripture presents the New Testament antitype to fulfill the Old Testament type, for in and through the person and work of Christ all of God’s promises have reached their telos. This point is what distinguishes the view of this dissertation from replacement theology. In other words, it is not that the church replaces Israel and inherits her blessings. Rather, Israel finds its fulfillment not in a community but in an individual Son of God. Richard Davidson demonstrates this typological pattern by examining every New Testament use of “type” and its cognates. The Bible’s use of typology is consistently characterized by an eschatological escalation, or intensification, in the progression from type to antitype and from promise to fulfillment. Furthermore, biblical typology is Christotelic. In other words, Old Testament types do not merely correspond analogically to New Testament types, but were designed by God to be “a shadow of the good things to come” (Heb 10:1). Mark Karlberg writes,


31. This term comes from Peter Enns, *Incarnation and Inspiration: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005). While I do not accept many of Enns’ conclusions concerning the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament, this particular term is helpful because it reminds the reader that Scripture has an eschatological purpose and goal that is realized in and through Christ and his work.

32. E.g., sacrificial system, temple, priesthood.
To be sure, there is still to be at the consummation an antitypical fulfillment of the land promise, a cosmic antitype to typological Canaan-land, such as does not obtain in the present Church-age stage of the new covenant. But genuine typological interpretation rules out any additional literal fulfillment of the land promise in a future restoration of national Israel subsequent to or alongside the messianic fulfillment.\textsuperscript{33}

Indeed all of God’s promises find their ultimate terminus in the person and work of Christ as the culmination of God’s revelation and redemptive plan, which will end in nothing less than a new creation for all of his people \textit{in Christ}.

**Conclusion**

Here at the end, let us be reminded that our great and glorious triune God fulfills his promises. In his ministry, Jesus announced that God was working to fulfill his ancient promises of restoration from exile and the establishment of his universal and international kingdom. In this age, however, we live as sojourners and exiles who seek the city that is to come, whose designer and builder is God (1 Pet 2:11; Heb 11:10; 13:14). We should in faith, therefore, live with this eschatological anticipation in our minds and hearts and in our words to others until that day (1 Thess 4:13-5:11).

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Rev 21:1-5)

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

\textsuperscript{33}Mark W. Karlberg, “The Significance of Israel in Biblical Typology,” \textit{JETS} 31, no. 3 (September 1988): 259-60.
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**Articles**


Dissertations and Theses


ABSTRACT

BOUND FOR THE KINGDOM:
THE LAND PROMISE IN GOD’S REDEMPTIVE PLAN

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Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, states the purpose, and defines the dissertation’s specific goals. Attention is then given to a summary of research before a closing section presents the methodology that is used: a historical-exegetical, epochal, and canonical-eschatological approach to biblical interpretation and theological formulation.

Chapter 2 provides the biblical-theological framework from which a theology of land can be canonically understood. More specifically, the framework for understanding the place, or land, of God’s people is the kingdom. God’s kingdom commences in Eden, and after the fall of mankind into sin God’s kingdom will come through his divinely-initiated covenants with his people. In the end, God will once again create a place—a new heaven and a new earth—for his people through the fulfillment of his covenant promises in Christ, who wins the new creation and reigns in his kingdom forever.

Working out of this framework, the next two chapters trace the theme of land as it progressively unfolds across the canon. To begin, chapter 3 connects the promise of land to Abraham to the preceding events in Genesis 1-11. Then, the promise of land within the Abrahamic covenant is evaluated, which is followed by partial fulfillments
through Israel’s history under leaders such as Joshua, David, and Solomon. However, each stage of fulfillment is not final, for every fulfillment is followed by covenant failure. Instead, each fulfillment and failure anticipates something greater, which the canonical prophets proclaim.

What begins in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New. Chapter 4, then, demonstrates the inaugurated fulfillment of the kingdom with the coming of Christ and his work. That is, the blessings of the land come now to those who are united to Christ by faith and they await their future, final fulfillment in the new creation. Thus, the fulfillment of the land in the New Testament is inaugurated but not yet consummated.

Finally, chapter 5 summarizes and concludes the overall argument of this dissertation. The argument is then evaluated in light of the two dominant theological systems today, namely, dispensationalism and covenant theology.
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