

# The Bible Jesus Used

**A Gospel-Centered Glance at the Old Testament**

**Bethlehem Baptist Church, fall 2013–spring 2014**  
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# A Biblical Theology of God's Land

- ❖ In accordance with Israel's mission, Ezekiel portrayed Jerusalem as the mission center of the world.
- ❖ Ezek 5:5–8. This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. <sup>6</sup> And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations. . . . <sup>8</sup> And I will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations.
- ❖ Ezek 38:11–12. [Gog will say,] “I will go up against . . . the people who were gathered from the nations, . . . who dwell at the center of the earth.”

❖ Ezekiel also envisioned a day of restoration that would include atonement and the incorporation of once-enemy nations.

❖ Ezek 16:59–63. I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, <sup>60</sup> yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant. <sup>61</sup> Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, but not apart from the covenant with you. . . .  
<sup>63</sup> I will atone for you for all that you have done.

- ❖ In Ezekiel, the restoration to the promised land is portrayed as a return to the garden of Eden.
- ❖ Ezek 36:27–28, 33–35. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. <sup>28</sup> You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. . . . <sup>33</sup> On that day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. <sup>34</sup> And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. <sup>35</sup> And they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.”

- ❖ **John views Ezekiel's vision of Gog and Magog as the ultimate end-times battle.**
  - ❖ **In “the latter years” (Ezek 38:8), God promises a total destruction of Israel's enemies, who are led by “Gog, of the land of Magog” (38:2).**
  - ❖ **John views this vision as depicting God's defeat of all evil in the end, with “God and Magog” standing as a general reference to the nations led by Satan in an effort to thwart God's move to restore creation (Rev 20:7–10).**
  - ❖ **Hints in this direction:**
    - ❖ **Use of seven for completeness: 7 nations, 38:1–6; burning weapons for 7 years, 39:9; cleaning the land for 7 months, 39:12, 14.**
    - ❖ **Cataclysmic day of the LORD imagery (38:20; cf. Isa 5:25; 64:1; Jer 4:23–26; Mic 1:4).**
    - ❖ **Animals sitting at God's dining table feasting on human flesh (39:17–19).**

- ❖ Ezekiel's envisions a temple with detailed measurements (40:5–42:20) that includes a Levitical priesthood (44:15–31) performing sacrifices of atonement for sin (45:15–17) and overseeing worship (chs. 44–46). Are we to expect a literal, physical temple?
- ❖ The New Testament:
  - ❖ Hebrews stresses that Jesus' atoning sacrifice was once-for-all (esp. ch. 10).
  - ❖ Jesus (John 2:19–21) and the church (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:20–21) are God's temple.

❖ Ezekiel's temple is portrayed very much like John's "new Jerusalem":

- ❖ Both Ezekiel and John are taken by an angelic guide with a measuring rod to a high mountain (Ezek 40:2–3; Rev 21:10).
- ❖ Ezekiel's structure is a perfectly square temple, whereas John's is a holy city in the shape of a cube (Ezek 42:15–20; Rev 21:16).
- ❖ Both see a "river of life" flowing from God's throne (Ezek 47:1–12; Rev 22:1–2).
- ❖ But John saw no temple because "its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" (Rev 21:22).
- ❖ This all suggests that John sees Christ and the new heavens and earth somehow fulfilling Ezekiel's vision.



## ❖ Synthesis So Far:

- ❖ God's revealed purpose for mankind was that their imaging of God would expand over the globe, allowing the sanctuary of the garden of Eden to grow.
- ❖ Sin resulted in expulsion from the garden, but God reaffirmed his call for his remnant to fill the earth with his glory and to set Israel apart to serve as the agent of global blessing.
- ❖ The realm of the king would begin in the Promised Land, which was like a new garden of Eden and was portrayed as God's holy mountain.



- ❖ Like Adam, Israel was expelled from their paradise, but God promised a two-fold restoration: (1) return to the land; (2) reconciliation with God.
- ❖ The return would include a new covenant that would include both transformed ethnic Israelites and once-enemy nations.
- ❖ The new land would be analogous to the garden of Eden, with the implication that the global expansion of the sanctuary and blessing to all the world would now occur.
- ❖ Jerusalem would become God's temple that seems to expand so as to include all the restored remnant of the earth.

## ❖ Land Restoration in Isaiah

### ❖ Two stage-restoration:

- ❖ Jeremiah had envisioned a two-stage restoration: (1) return to the land from Babylon and (2) reconciliation with God.
- ❖ Isaiah portrays these two stages being accomplished by distinct agents: (1) Cyrus bringing about the physical return to the land (Isa 44:24–48:22) and (2) the Servant bringing about forgiveness of sins (49:1–53:12).

- ❖ **Isaiah's vision of the restoration includes the temple-mountain of Jerusalem higher than all others with nations streaming to it to hear God's law (2:1–4).**
- ❖ **Isa 2:2–3. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, <sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

- ❖ **Jerusalem will be a place of worship (a temple), overshadowed by a canopy of glory as in the exodus (Isa 4:2–6).**
- ❖ **Isa 4:5. Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy.**
- ❖ **Jer 3:16–17. And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of the LORD.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. <sup>17</sup> At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart.**

- ❖ **A mountain banquet with aged wine where death is swallowed up forever and enemies are no more (25:6–12).**
- ❖ **Isa 25:7–9. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.  
<sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup> It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.”**

❖ Rev 21:1–4. 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. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.”

- ❖ The messianic age is like a garden paradise atop a mountain (Isa 11:1–10) that will include a gathering of the nations through a 2<sup>nd</sup> exodus (11:11–12:6).
- ❖ Wild beasts are present but tame on Yahweh's holy mountain (11:6–9).
  - ❖ Isa 11:6–9. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.



- ❖ Wild beasts are not even present on the highway leading to Zion (35:8–10).
- ❖ Isa 35:8–10. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. <sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
- ❖ Some attempt to explain these texts by positing a future millennium, but Isaiah uses comparable images when speaking of the “new heavens and new earth” (Isa 65:25).

❖ The new creation and new Jerusalem are linked (Isa 65:17–25).

❖ Isa 65:17–25. “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. <sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. <sup>20</sup> No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. <sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. <sup>22</sup> They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. <sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them. <sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. <sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

- ❖ **All these texts portray the future in figurative terms, with absolute peace and security being enjoyed (animals living peaceably together; no animals to cause harm).**

❖ **The NT sees Christ as the focus of all OT hopes.**

❖ **Christ fulfills all the OT and in him every promise is already YES.**

❖ **Matt 5:17. Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**

❖ **2 Cor 1:20. For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.**

❖ **The new creation has been inaugurated already in Jesus:**

- ❖ **2 Cor. 5:17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**
- ❖ **Gal. 6:15. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.**

- ❖ In Christ, even the land promises find their fulfillment.
  - ❖ Gal 3:16. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ.
  - ❖ Gen 17:8. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. Cf. 13:15; 26:3.
- ❖ In Christ, we inherit the world.
  - ❖ Rom 4:13. For 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.

❖ Every spiritual blessing now, as we await the full inheritance (including physical blessing) later.

❖ Eph. 1:3, 13–14. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. . . . <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.