

Jesus' Life

The Story So Far

The Old Testament has now set the stage for us to understand Jesus and the rest of history. In the beginning God made everything good. He set the first man and woman in a beautiful and fruitful garden, gave them the task of multiplying and filling the earth, and enjoyed a perfect relationship with them. Their rebellion marred everything but God was determined to restore his relationship with his people and return his creation to its good state. He chose Abraham and promised him **land**, innumerable **offspring** and an eternal **enjoyment of God's presence**, which would spread out to **all nations**. In each generation one person inherited this promise, and each generation was looking for the **One Offspring** who would fulfil God's promises. But each generation is a disappointment.

God delivers his people from Egypt in the Exodus, and settles them in the promised land and hopes steadily rise until King David. But after his sin with Bathsheba it is all downhill, until finally Israel goes into exile. During Israel's declining years, however the prophets begin to see a larger hope. They foresee a new Exodus into a new **land** which is actually a new creation with resurrection life. God himself will be the **One Offspring** blessing **innumerable offspring** from **all nations** who will **enjoy the presence of God** forever. This is the background story into which the gospels speak.

The New Testament: the time is fulfilled.

The New Testament breathes a different atmosphere from the Old Testament. Indeed we could be forgiven for thinking that the writers are writing a new story. However, as we shall see they all insist that they are recording the continuation, indeed the fulfilment, of the Old Testament story. Crucially the New Testament sets about to demonstrate that in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension and final return, God is fulfilling the promises to Abraham *as they have been re-imagined by the prophets*.

The newness of what Jesus brings requires new language and categories but on closer examination the New Testament writers turn out to be describing exactly what Abraham longed for. In this section we will begin to see this in the gospels.

The Synoptic Gospels: The promises to Abraham are fulfilled in the kingdom of God

At first sight Matthew, Mark and Luke appear to portray a Jesus who is not interested in the promises to Abraham. He ministers primarily to Israel, not the nations, he has only twelve disciples, far from the innumerable number promised, he walks away from the Temple, where God's presence dwelt, and claims no part of the land. It seems that the promises to Abraham are forgotten.

However this is the opposite of the truth. In fact Jesus is redefining every element of the promises to Abraham to show how they are fulfilled in him, and in a global community of faith. This is the kingdom of God.

Matthew - the kingdom of heaven is the fulfilment of the hope of Israel.

As we saw in the first session Matthew begins his gospel by setting out the Old Testament story in the form of a genealogy, following the line of the promise.¹ But the promise was of a king ruling in the land. Matthew sets out to explain how he understands this promise by recording a series of “fulfilment” stories in chapters 1 and 2.

First the virgin birth is a fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy. The angel tells Joseph:

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”²—which means, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:21-23)

We saw in session four that Isaiah 7:14 describes a “son” who is also in some sense “God with us”, thus uniting Abraham’s hope of God’s presence with his hope of the One Offspring. In Isaiah 9 the son reigns “on David’s throne”³ so we might expect the angel to proclaim that he will save his people from their enemies so that they can dwell in peace in the promised land. However in saying “he will save his people from their sins” he is giving us a surprise.⁴ Political foes are not the focus of Jesus’ ministry, the more fundamental curse of sin is.

Matthew then continues by recording that the chief priests and teachers of the law understood that the Christ, as a descendant of David, would be born in Bethlehem.⁵ Joseph is then warned that Herod wants to kill Jesus.

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” (Matthew 2:14-15)

Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1, which, in context, is a recollection of the Exodus. However Hosea 11 goes on to describe how God will again send Israel into exile, but that he cannot “give her up”. He is determined to call her out of her exile again, this time he will “roar like a lion.”⁶ In Jesus’ day it was generally agreed that, though they had returned to

¹ Matthew 1:1-17.

² Isaiah 7:14.

³ Isaiah 9:7.

⁴ Though not a total surprise. See Psalm 51:14, 130:8.

⁵ Matthew 2:6, quoting from Micah 5:2. This expectation was entirely uncontroversial and, as Matthew indicates, universally agreed.

⁶ Hosea 11:10. The fact that Hosea warns that they will again be exiled to Egypt (v.5) as well as Assyria and then return from Egypt and Assyria (v.11), indicates that he sees the second exile as typologically linked to the first. Matthew is therefore extending a pattern that Hosea has already established to include the exile of Jesus.

the land, they still lived as exiles. Jesus' flight into Egypt is one more sign of their exile.⁷ But he will return from Egypt, as Israel did before. This time perhaps the Abrahamic promises will be realised.

The massacre of the innocents in Bethlehem is then described as a fulfilment of Jeremiah's cry of anguish at the exile.

Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

"A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more." (Matthew 2:17-18)⁸

Jeremiah 31 is not mainly about the anguish of the exile, rather it is about a future return. Matthew is here telling us that the agony of the exile is still ongoing but that it is "fulfilled." We should perhaps read on to the next verse in Jeremiah

This is what the Lord says:

"Restrain your voice from weeping
and your eyes from tears,
for your work will be rewarded,"
declares the Lord.

"They will return from the land of the enemy." (Jeremiah 31:16)

To complete the fulfilment texts in Matthew 1-2 we need briefly to observe that Jesus is more vaguely said to have fulfilled what was said in "the prophets" that "He will be called a Nazarene." The best explanation of this seems to be that Nazareth was a despised place,⁹ and so Matthew is indicating that the prophets expected the One Offspring to be despised and rejected.¹⁰

Matthew is thus signalling that the promises to Abraham, as they are visualised by Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah and indeed "the prophets" were being fulfilled in Jesus, albeit in surprising ways. The exile is coming to an end, but how will Jesus fulfil Abraham's promises?

Matthew takes us a step further when he introduces us to John the Baptist. John's message is that "the kingdom of heaven is near,"¹¹ and he is specifically described as the fulfilment of Isaiah's expectations.

⁷ Hosea calls the nation God's "son" here but it was also common to call the king God's "son" (e.g. Psalm 2:7). The king represented the nation, acquiring the status that belonged to the nation. In quoting Hosea 11:1 Matthew is asserting that Jesus is representing the nation just as the king was called to do.

⁸ Quoting Jeremiah 31:15.

⁹ John 1:46.

¹⁰ This is clear in various texts not least Isaiah 53:2-3 (See also Psalm 22, 118:22).

¹¹ Matthew 3:2. Matthew characteristically uses the term "kingdom of heaven" while elsewhere we find "kingdom of God". This is generally assumed to be a Jewish circumlocution to avoid using the name of God, but more recently Jonathan Pennington has convincingly argued the "kingdom of heaven" is used by Matthew to emphasise that it is a kingdom according to God's ways, as opposed to the "kingdoms of the world" (e.g. Matthew 4:8). See Schreiner, T. R. (2008). New Testament theology : magnifying God in Christ. Grand Rapids, Mich., Baker Academic. Pp.46-47.

This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:
“A voice of one calling in the desert,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’” (Matthew 3:3)¹²

In making this connection Matthew is asserting two things. Firstly when Jesus arrives, God arrives. Isaiah was anticipating the arrival of God, but John the Baptist proclaims the arrival of Jesus. As Isaiah had predicted,¹³ the arrival of Jesus is the arrival of God. But secondly we must remember that Isaiah was predicting a new exodus with the reestablishment of the nation of Israel. John the Baptist, however, announces the kingdom of heaven. The hope of Abraham has become the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew then continues to show us how Abraham’s hopes of land and numerous offspring from all nations, ruled by one offspring and enjoying the presence of God, have become the kingdom of heaven, led by Jesus, who is God.

In Matthew 3 and 4 Jesus clarifies the nature of the kingdom, in which God will miraculously “raise up children for Abraham” by the Spirit,¹⁴ and in which Jesus is the Son¹⁵ who lives according to God’s ways, not the world’s.¹⁶ This is to fulfil Isaiah’s expectations of a renewed kingdom of David¹⁷ which has now come near as the kingdom of heaven.¹⁸

In Matthew 5-7 Jesus imitates Moses by going “up on a mountainside”¹⁹ but here Jesus digs deep into the implications of the law, explaining the characteristics of those who belong to the kingdom of heaven, and demonstrating his authority.²⁰

In Matthew 8-9 Jesus asserts by deeds his authority in the kingdom of heaven where Abraham dwells.²¹ Matthew ties Jesus’ ministry to Isaiah’s suffering servant, declaring that his healing miracles anticipate his final substitutionary suffering.

This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:
“He took up our infirmities
and carried our diseases.” (Matthew 8:17)²²

¹² Quoting from Isaiah 40:3. See also Mark 1:3, and Luke 3:4-6.

¹³ See the section on the prophets.

¹⁴ Matthew 3:9, 11.

¹⁵ Matthew 3:17. God’s words echo Psalm 2:6 and also Isaiah 11:2, 42:1, 61:1 in which a Spirit-anointed servant ruler will rule the world.

¹⁶ The temptations in Matthew 4:1-11 are all dealt with by quoting Deuteronomy (specifically Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16, 6:13.)

¹⁷ Matthew 4:14-16 quotes from Isaiah 9:1-2.

¹⁸ Matthew 4:17.

¹⁹ Matthew 5:1. For a scholarly exploration of Jesus as a new Moses in Matthew see Allison, D. C. (1993). The new Moses : a Matthean typology. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark. My own view is that the Isaianic references are so prominent that we should always view the Moses theme through the lens of Isaiah, who explicitly states that the new Exodus will be led by a son of David (e.g. Isaiah 11:1) not actually a new Moses of the tribe of Levi. Therefore we need to exercise caution in calling him “Moses.”

²⁰ Matthew 7:29

²¹ Matthew 8:11.

In Matthew 11 a crisis occurs. John the Baptist has doubts about Jesus, perhaps because he does not seem to be the all-conquering hero he had expected. Jesus' reply is significant.

Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." (Matthew 11:4-6)

Jesus is alluding to the expectations of Isaiah. Isaiah expected that the new Exodus would result in the blind seeing,²³ the lame walking²⁴ and unclean being cleansed,²⁵ the deaf hearing,²⁶ the dead being raised²⁷ and the good news being preached to the poor.²⁸ All this was happening. Once again Jesus describes this era of fulfilment as the kingdom of heaven.²⁹ Each of the passages alluded to in Isaiah also contains warnings of judgment, but Jesus carefully does not mention this.³⁰ He has come to inaugurate the blessings of the new Exodus but the full blessings - and with them final judgment - must wait. The kingdom of heaven is partly "now", but its fullness is "not yet".

In chapter 12 Matthew again explains that Jesus' refusal to conquer his enemies by raw power is entirely to be expected. He is the Servant of Isaiah 42, whose gentle ministry will bless the nations.

This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:
"Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
He will not quarrel or cry out;
no-one will hear his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he leads justice to victory.
In his name the nations will put their hope." (Matthew 12:17-21)

Chapter 13 is parables of the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven will grow to fill the whole world, but it comprises God ruling individual lives. The emphasis moves from geography to community.

Chapters 14-17 focus on Jesus as the leader of a new Exodus. The feeding of the five thousand echoes the provision of manna in the desert, but this time the personal authority

²² Quoting Isaiah 53:4.

²³ See Isaiah 29:18, 35:5, 42:7, 42:18 (and Isaiah 61:1 in the LXX).

²⁴ Isaiah 35:6

²⁵ Isaiah 35:8.

²⁶ Isaiah 29:18, 35:5, 42:18.

²⁷ Isaiah 26:19.

²⁸ Isaiah 29:19, 61:1.

²⁹ Matthew 11:11-12.

³⁰ He also does not mention the release of prisoners in Isaiah 61:6. This is perhaps one of John's chief disappointments. Jesus is indicating that the full blessings of the kingdom are not yet here.

of Jesus is emphasised, rather than God's provision. When Jesus walks on the water he is consciously imitating God who led his people through the waters at the Exodus.³¹ Peter's great confession that Jesus is "The Christ the son of the living God"³² draws together much of what we have already seen. Jesus is the One Offspring in all the richness that this has come to imply. As Isaiah foresaw he is both the royal descendant of David – the Christ – and the earthly personification of God – the son of God.³³ Peter's surprise, however, is that he must be killed.³⁴ He has not yet seen that the royal son of Isaiah is also his suffering servant. It is Jesus and the gospel writers who make the connection crystal clear.

Matthew 18 then focuses once again on the characteristics of the people of the kingdom, while chapters 19-25 portray the contrast, hostility and ultimate complete separation between the children of the kingdom of heaven and the leaders of Israel. Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, as a king of a different kind, just as Zechariah predicted.³⁵ He comes to restore the temple as Isaiah predicted.³⁶ He will be rejected and killed by the leaders of Israel but he will inherit a different kingdom.

To summarise, Matthew has described the arrival of Jesus as beginning of the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham but now in the new form anticipated by the prophets. This is the kingdom of heaven which begins now but awaits the return of Christ for its final consummation. Abraham's hope of **land** has lost its geographical reference and now focuses on God's rule amongst his people. The promise of **numerous offspring** and blessing for **all nations** has been anticipated in stories such as the Magi³⁷ and the Roman Centurion,³⁸ but still awaits fulfilment. The promise of **God's presence** has become bound up with the arrival of Jesus who is Emmanuel³⁹ and who himself is greater than the temple.⁴⁰

Mark – the Warrior of the Exodus

Mark has a similar view of Jesus though he presents Jesus more dramatically and dynamically. Instead of a genealogy and birth narrative Mark simply asserts that he is "Jesus Christ the Son of God."⁴¹ Mark also uses the term "gospel" to describe his work,

³¹ See Psalm 77:19, Job 9:8, Habakkuk 3:15, Isaiah 43:16.

³² Matthew 16:16.

³³ For Peter the title "son of God" may not have meant anything more than "the Christ" since he is called this for instance in Psalm 2. However, all the gospel writers see a greater significance in the title which they repeatedly hint at.

³⁴ Matthew 16:21.

³⁵ Matthew 21:1-11. See Zechariah 9:9

³⁶ Matthew 21:13 cf Isaiah 56:7.

³⁷ Matthew 2:1-12.

³⁸ Matthew 8:5-13.

³⁹ Matthew 1:21.

⁴⁰ Matthew 12:6

⁴¹ Mark 1:1.

drawing on Isaiah's use of the term as a proclamation of God's warrior-like arrival and victory in the new Exodus.⁴² At most other points Mark follows Matthew though with his own emphases. In particular Mark often describes Jesus as travelling "the way."⁴³ This is an allusion to Isaiah's vision of a highway for God's people when they enjoy their new Exodus.⁴⁴ Mark does not often explicitly refer to fulfilment of the Old Testament but the Old Testament hope that all the promises to Abraham will be fulfilled through a new Exodus, is very much central to his understanding.⁴⁵

Luke – the Saviour of the Poor

Luke is writing as a gentile for a gentile audience, but he goes to extravagant lengths to emphasise that Jesus fulfils the promises to Abraham. In the first two chapters, writing in Old Testament language, he records Mary's assertion that

He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants for ever,
even as he said to our fathers." (Luke 1:54-55)

Also Zechariah says that

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago) (Luke 1:69-70)

Luke's particular emphasis is that God is the God of reversals. Mary's humble status has been reversed

for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed (Luke 1:48)

This theme finds its larger expression in the inclusion of the poor and other outsiders, and particularly the nations. Luke sets Jesus' genealogy in the context of the whole world by tracing his lineage back to Adam.⁴⁶ Jesus' ministry is announced using the great promise of reversals in Isaiah 61.⁴⁷ Prisoners are to be freed, the blind receive sight, the oppressed are released and the good news is preached to the poor. But Luke also goes on to use the stories the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian⁴⁸ to make it plain that

⁴² See esp. Isaiah 40:9, 52:7 and the previous section on Isaiah.

⁴³ E.g. Mark 8:27, 9:33, 34, 10:17, 10:32, 46, 11:8.

⁴⁴ See on Isaiah in a previous study. For a detailed defence of this see Watts, R. (1997). Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark, Baker Academic.

⁴⁵ For a scholarly exploration of the Exodus theme in Mark see Ibid.. For the theme of God as a warrior see Reid, T. L. I. D. (1995). God is a Warrior. Carlisle, Paternoster Press.

⁴⁶ Luke 3:23-38.

⁴⁷ Luke 4:18-19.

⁴⁸ Luke 4:24-27.

this ministry of good news to the poor will go well beyond the borders of Israel.⁴⁹ In Luke's hands Abraham's hope of blessing for all nations becomes fused with God's determination that the One Offspring will "give decisions for the poor of the earth".⁵⁰

John: the promises to Abraham become life through Christ.

In John's gospel we see a fascinatingly distinct portrayal of Jesus but the promises to Abraham are still John's central concern. John uses the language of kingdom very sparingly⁵¹ but in place of this the idea of life is enormously prominent.⁵² Just as Israel was delivered at the Exodus into the land, so John describes how we can now be delivered in a new Exodus to eternal life.

First John describes Jesus as somehow "God made man;" describing him as the eternal "Word" who was with God and yet was God.⁵³ He then tells us:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

This verse has multiple allusions to God's dealings with Moses in Exodus. When John says that the Word "made his dwelling amongst us" he uses a word for dwelling which could literally be translated "tabernacled."⁵⁴ At the Exodus God dwelt amongst his people in the tabernacle⁵⁵ so John is telling us that now, in Jesus, God is once again dwelling amongst us. The reference to seeing his glory clearly also alludes to the moment when Moses asked to see God's glory, and saw his back.⁵⁶ At that time God proclaimed that he was "abounding in love and faithfulness." When John says that Jesus was "full of grace and truth" he is alluding to this,⁵⁷ but now applying it to God's "One and Only" who displays God's character. The **presence of God** that Moses enjoyed at the Exodus is now enjoyed by those who saw Jesus, because in Jesus, God has come to achieve a new Exodus.

Having declared Jesus' identity John then goes on to describe a series of miraculous signs, each of which reveals Jesus as the bringer of blessings associated with the new Exodus.⁵⁸ John also records Jesus speaking of himself as "I am" seven times.⁵⁹ This is

⁴⁹ Stories such as the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and the ten healed of leprosy (Luke 17:11-19) etc all emphasize the inclusion of the nations.

⁵⁰ Isaiah 11:4 cf Luke 6:20, 7:22 etc.

⁵¹ See John 3:3, 4, 18:36. Kingdom seems to be used in these places because it is language which the hearer will understand.

⁵² The noun 36 times, the verb 17 times (16 and 18 times in the synoptics put together).

⁵³ John 1:1-2.

⁵⁴ Greek: σκηνόω (*skēnoō*). For a discussion of the Old Testament allusions in John 1 see Carson, D. A. (1991). The Gospel According to John. Leicester, Apollos..

⁵⁵ Exodus 25.

⁵⁶ Exodus 33:12-34:8.

⁵⁷ See Carson, D. A. (1991). The Gospel According to John. Leicester, Apollos.p.126

⁵⁸ e.g. Wine – John 2:1-11 cf Isaiah 25:6, 55:1, Jeremiah 31:12. The lame healed John 5:1-15 cf. Isaiah 35:6. Food for the hungry John 6:1-15 cf. Isaiah 49:10, 55:2. Sight for the blind John 9:1-7 cf Isaiah

the way that God sometimes referred to himself in the Old Testament to emphasise his uniqueness so it is deeply significant that Jesus uses the same phraseology. In addition Jesus speaks of himself as being “lifted up” three times.⁶⁰ The central of the three “lifted up” statements coincides with the central of the seven “I am” statements.

So Jesus said, “When you have *lifted up* the Son of Man, then you will know that *I am* the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. (John 8:28)

Thus John skilfully weaves together strong statements about Jesus’ deity with predictions of his death.

To clarify the picture still further in John 12, stimulated by the arrival of “some Greeks”⁶¹ Jesus declares that the moment has come for him to be glorified.⁶² He has already revealed his, and God’s, glory through the signs,⁶³ but now his full magnificence must be revealed. This is described enigmatically as being “lifted up.”

Fascinatingly the blindness of the Jews is then explained by alluding to two familiar passages in Isaiah. John quotes from Isaiah 53 where the suffering Servant is “high and lifted up” but not recognised⁶⁴ and Isaiah 6 where it is God himself who is “high and lifted up” but not recognised.⁶⁵ John concludes his explanation by saying

Isaiah said this because he saw [his]⁶⁶ glory and spoke about him. (John 12:41)

Thus for John the glory of God in Isaiah 6 and the glory of the Servant in Isaiah 53 are one and the same. Indeed Isaiah had already hinted at this when he described both God in the Temple and the suffering Servant as “high and lifted up.”⁶⁷ John is declaring that

29:18, 35:5, 42:7, 42:18 (and Isaiah 61:1 in the LXX). Walking on the water (John 6:16-21) draws on Exodus imagery itself whilst life for the dying and the dead (John 4:4-54, 11:1-44 cf. Isaiah 26:19) is the ultimate blessing of the new Exodus.

⁵⁹ John 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8. Strictly speaking this is nine sayings but 18:6, 8 are mere repetitions of the statement in John 18:5. According to Bauckham (see below) this corresponds to the sevenfold use of “I am” (ʾānī hū) in the Old Testament with two uses of the intensive (ʾānokī hū).

⁶⁰ John 3:14-15, 8:28, 12:32-34.

⁶¹ John 12:20. Thus the approach of the nations becomes a key in John, surely building on the promises to Abraham.

⁶² John 12:23. This is a key theme in John introduced to us in John 1:14.

⁶³ The first sign reveals his glory (John 2:11) whilst the climactic sign of Lazarus reveals God’s glory (John 11:4, 40).

⁶⁴ John 12:38 quoting Isaiah 53:1.

⁶⁵ John 12:40 quoting Isaiah 6:10.

⁶⁶ NIV here says “Jesus’ glory” but the Greek just says “his glory”. The ambiguity by John is on purpose. The glory described is both the glory of God in Isaiah 6 and the glory of the Servant in Isaiah 53. They are not two kinds of glory but the same.

⁶⁷ See Isaiah 6:1 and Isaiah 52:13 and also section four of these studies. To complete Isaiah’s picture the third time in Isaiah when “high and lifted” is used is Isaiah 57:15. “For this is what the high and lofty One says— he who lives for ever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.” Thus in the third great section of Isaiah (Isaiah 56-66, the first two sections being 1-39, and 40-55) the fullness of

in Jesus we have the fulfilment of Abraham's promise of **God's presence** and the **One Offspring** just as Isaiah foresaw.⁶⁸

Summary of Jesus' Life

All four of the gospels see Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament hopes, in particular they see him fulfilling the promises to Abraham of **land, innumerable offspring, enjoying the presence of God, and blessing to all nations** through the ministry of **One Offspring**. However that hope has been transformed from its original simple and concrete form by the prophets, particularly Isaiah. The gospel writers follow the prophets in seeing Jesus as the leader of a miraculous new Exodus, into the non-geographical "**land**": the kingdom of God, where we find rest for our souls and ultimately every other blessing imaginable, even resurrection life itself. In his ministry he anticipates the final **innumerable offspring from all nations**, but the fullness of that blessing is still to come. Most especially all the gospel writers assert that the **One Offspring** is, in some mysterious way also God, so that to know Jesus is to **enjoy the presence of God**.

Exercise

Chose either Luke 9:28-36, John 10:1-21 or Matthew 21:1-11 and show how the gospel writer portrays Jesus as the fulfilment of the cumulative hopes of the Old Testament.

Questions

1. How is the hope of land fulfilled and not fulfilled in the story of the life of Jesus?
2. Luke emphasises "reversals" in his gospel. Show how Luke does this in a few passages of his gospel.
3. Are all the gospels interested in the nations? Show how each deals with this theme.
4. In the first Exodus God comes down (Exodus 3:8) and reveals his name (Exodus 3:14) before defeating Israel's enemy Egypt. How does the story of Jesus develop this theme?
5. What themes in the gospels are not picked up by examining land, offspring (the One and the many), God's presence and all nations?
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Allison, D. C. (1993). The new Moses : a Matthean typology. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark.

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Watts, R. (1997). Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark, Baker Academic.

God's character is revealed as both the high and lifted up one, and also he who dwells with the lowly. Isaiah has given us a wonderfully complete picture of God and John portrays that in his gospel.

⁶⁸ Much of this material is set out at slightly greater length in Bauckham, R. (1998). God Crucified, Paternoster..

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