

Thinking about biblical theology (with 2 case studies)

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[0 : 00] And so this is exactly what biblical theology is. It starts at the very beginning and it goes through to the very end. And it tries to see the whole story of the Bible as one story floating through. So that is in one sense biblical theology that you've been done.

So that in one sense is just simply biblical theology. We're tracing the unfolding narrative as God kind of communicates to us. The other thing is it's a plane of redemption.

So Pastor Brian and I have talked about, we call this salvation history because it's the history of God's salvation. And so it leads to redemption in Jesus, but it passes through these phases and patterns and understanding.

So what I want to do today though is say that biblical theology is first of all a story, which is what you've been doing. So you've been learning the story of the Bible.

But it's a story that has some assumptions behind it. So when we are doing this, we're assuming things about the Bible straight away. And let me mention one, two, three, four, five, seven assumptions that we talk about when we do biblical theology.

[1 : 26] The first assumption is that God works in history. And so what we're doing here is we're looking at the history of the nation of Israel, particularly from the figure of Abraham.

We're looking at the history of the nation of Israel as it unfolds through history. In other words, this is not just a story, but it's his story. It's God's story, it's history. And of course includes going into the New Testament.

These events actually happened. And what we're looking at is how God works in history to bring about his plan. The second assumption is that the Bible is a unity, that it tells one story across the two testaments.

And this is probably one of the main areas where biblical theology is so helpful, particularly in the interpretation of the Old Testament.

So when we get our Bibles, we have basically two thirds is the Old Testament and one third is the New Testament. And for a lot of us, the Old Testament can be a bit of a mystery. Lots of interesting stories.

[2 : 35] What does it mean? Okay. And if you look at most Bibles, it'll be a little bit like fine. You can see where I do all my reading in the last third. But that's where it's all, you know, it's the New Testament and a lot of Bibles are like that.

But we believe that in biblical theology is that there is one story all the way through. So some people think Old Testament, bad God, New Testament, good God.

And lots of different kind of patterns that are trying to play. But biblical theology says there's one story that goes from creation to the new creation, as you've got.

And then on the way, how does that happen? We understand that's there. So God works in history. The Bible is a unity. The third assumption is that the details matter.

That every detail along the way is important. So you've looked at the story of Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Exodus.

[3 : 38] All of these characters, all of these people, all of these details matter. We can look at the very finest level of the Bible. We can look at the big picture.

But all of it matters that we get. And so biblical theology is looking very carefully at the details. And I'll show you how that works out. Because we can even look at a single word or a concept and see how important it is on the way through.

The fourth point that we understand, or the fourth assumption of biblical theology, is that the revelation of God is progressive. It moves from stage to stage to stage.

So it starts in creation. Then comes the fall. Then comes the promises to Abraham. And then that progresses to the story of the Exodus.

Exodus goes to the story of the conquest. Then we're into the story of the history of Israel. Finally, the history of the exile.

[4 : 42] And then into the New Testament. So there's a progression through time. And there's also a progression in what we would call theology.

And this takes us to the next point. As things progress, certain elements of the story are fulfilled. And some of the times change.

And the biggest point where that happens is the New Testament area. When this story is progressing all the way through. And then Jesus comes and gives the climax or the fulfilment of that story.

And then things start to change. Some things change. Some things stay the same. But there's a progression on the way through. So one very simple example.

And we'll talk about this with the temple. We have no temple. Then we have a tabernacle. Then we have Solomon's temple. And then we have, well, what do we have in the New Testament?

[5 : 44] So there's a progression from tabernacle to temple. To something in the New Testament. And into the book of Revelation. We'll look at that as a saying. In a little bit more detail.

Another example of progression in this story. Is when you do Leviticus and Numbers.

There's a whole bunch of food wars. About things that can be eaten and can't be eaten. As part of the story of Israel. When Jesus comes. Food wars are gone.

So there's no unclean and clean foods. Jesus declares all foods clean. So that's a progression in God's revelation. So, for example, that's why Christians are usually comfortable to eat pork or seafood.

Jewish people aren't. Jewish people haven't progressed. Christians have progressed. And this happens all the time. Particularly when Jesus comes.

[6 : 44] Someone described the coming of Jesus once like a prison. You know, when you put a beam of light through a prison. It turns it into all the different colours.

And so this is kind of what happens when the light of the Old Testament meets Jesus. And then it turns into the different colours. Different things are carried on.

Different things are not. So that happens as it goes. The fifth assumption is something. Sorry. The sixth assumption is something we've already mentioned.

And that is that this is a history geared towards salvation. Salvation. And the salvation is the salvation of the world. And the restoration of creation.

Not just the Jewish people. But Gentiles as well. And that's a feature of the story. All the way through. That God is working to save his people.

[7 : 39] And to recreate his world. After the disaster of the creation and the fall. And then the seventh assumption. And I don't know whether you've talked about this.

And this is not an assumption so much as an investigation. Is there a central concept that we can organise all this thinking about? So if someone said to you, what is the Bible about?

The whole Bible. Some people would say it's about the kingdom of God. So we have the kingdom established. The kingdom lost. The kingdom attempting to be regained.

The kingdom lost. The kingdom gained. So we have the story of the kingdom of God. Some people say, no. What this is. The thing that holds all of this together is the promise of God.

So God promises. People fail. God promises. People fail. God promises. People fail. God promises. People fail. God promises.

[8 : 41] Jesus succeeds. And so the promise of God is a way of holding it all together. Some people think that the overall theme is something like maybe the covenant.

So God makes a covenant with creation. He makes a covenant with Abraham. He makes a covenant with Moses. He makes a covenant with David. And you have a new covenant with the Lord Jesus.

So there's another way of holding it all together. And so just to pick out another one. Another person says the theme of the whole Bible is God's glory.

So God's glory revealed. Men fall short of God's glory. God reveals his glory ultimately in the person called the Lord Jesus. So lots of different ways of putting it together.

I personally see the kingdom as the main concept that the Bible is about the kingdom of God. I don't know if you've spoken about this with Ryan. But the idea of the kingdom runs all the way through right to the very end.

[9 : 45] But one of the things to think about is just what holds this whole story together. Is there a concept that comes in? So when we do biblical theology we're thinking about these things.

That's there. Now the next thing I want to say is that biblical theology also not only is it a story as important as that is. But biblical theology is also a method by which we interpret the Bible. And it helps us to understand the Bible. Particularly the Old Testament. And the key point really that biblical theology teaches us is that the whole Old Testament is pointing forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus.

So Jesus is at the centre of the Old Testament as he is at the centre of the New Testament. And so when we're interpreting the Old Testament in whatever story we're looking for how does it point us forward to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so we ask that question. So one of the things that often, one of the exercises we often have a discussion about in a Bible college. Is if you preach a sermon from the Old Testament and a Jewish person is listening and they're happy.

[11 : 06] Have you preached a Christian sermon? Because you haven't shown how it points forward to Jesus. So this is kind of a, it's really just a test to see what we think about that.

But when we preach about Moses, we're not just preaching be wise or it takes 80 years to develop a living or something like that. We're showing how Moses leads to Jesus.

Jesus is like a second Moses. And so this becomes an interpreting principle. A way of understanding and thinking about the Old Testament. When we are reading.

Always asking the question. How is it helping us to understand the movement towards Jesus? And because of all those other things too.

What we can do. Is we can start to trace individual themes through all of this as well. And show how the Bible progressively follows those themes for us.

[12 : 09] And so, and this can play out as we'll see. I'll show you two examples, detailed ones. Let me give you just a very big picture example.

If we took the idea of God's presence with us. Okay. How does that progress through the Bible? So if we think about God being with us.

How does that go through the whole Bible? And I'm going to suggest that it goes in three kind of phases. So in the Old Testament. We have God with us.

Through the word of the prophets. As he speaks to us. So that's fairly clear. I think we see God speaking through the Old Testament.

He promises to be with his people. We have the presence of promise all the way through. But the main way is God speaks through his prophets. And through his word, the law given at Mount Sinai.

[13 : 10] The next phase of God's presence with us is the Lord Jesus. Because Jesus promises to, his name is Emmanuel, which means God with us.

So it's like the Father gives way to the Son. The Son is now with us. And then the third phase. And I think you know where I'm going. At Pentecost.

God is now with us. By the Holy Spirit. Okay. And so if you think about that. It's a progression. We move from Father. To Son.

To Spirit. That's the way that God himself is present with us. And notice also that that moves ever more personally towards us. So God speaks to us through his awe and his prophets.

That's a bit of a distance. A mediator. Then he personally comes in the person of Jesus Christ for that very concentrated period of time. And now the Spirit indwells us.

[14 : 13] And so we can do a biblical theology of God's presence. It starts off with the Father speaking to his people Israel. The Son coming to his people Israel.

The Spirit indwells us all of God's people. Jew and Gentile. And so the progression helps us to see that same God all the way through.

But different modes of being present with us all the way. And so that's just an example of how we can think through the Bible. How that might work.

Let's take another maybe simple example. What about humanity? What does it mean to be a human person? In the beginning God created us.

Man and female. To rule and look after the earth. Amazing. Then we have the thought. Man disobeys. And then we have God's punishment.

[15:11] Coming in God's judgment. And then we have a history of that judgment being worked out in the history of Israel. Where God is promising. Israel is disobeying.

And eventually be punished with the exile. Jesus comes. Provides forgiveness of sins. So then humanity can be renewed and restored. And we get to enjoy the new creation as redeeming and sanctified people.

And so we start to understand what it means to be a human person from this story as well. Now you might say that's kind of like systematic theology isn't it?

Like what it would mean to be human. But there's also a story that's told of a fall. Not just we are now born a symbol. There was a time when humanity wasn't a symbol.

It was created in a way that they could obey God. But that fall is catastrophic. And it will be restored on the way through. So the Bible lends itself to thinking through about all sorts of different things.

[16:18] And what we're doing when we do that is we try and pay attention to where those things turn up at the various stages of biblical history. Rather than systematic theology, we collect all the Bible verses on a topic and then try and put it all together.

But this is trying to see how it appears through the Bible at various points and times. So that's the difference between biblical theology and systematic theology.

Systematic theology kind of takes a bird's eye view. Biblical theology is kind of walking on the track through the jungle. So I've said a lot there.

And I'm very happy also to be able to ask questions at this point. But it may sound like a new term. But what you've been doing is biblical theology.

You've been learning the story. And that is the raw materials for the method. And so I've heard of the kind of demonstration. Okay. Okay. So any questions about that?

[17:29] What was your fifth assumption? Yeah. Back to the assumption. Sure. Yeah. And you said, what was in the fight? Yeah. So number one, God works in history. Right. Well, history matters.

Number two, the Bible is a unity. One story. Number three, details matter. Number four, revelation is progressive. Number five, as it progresses, some things are fulfilled and some things drop out. Okay. So as revelation progresses, some things continue, some things stop. And then number six, salvation history. And then number seven, is there a central thing?

Okay. Now, when we think about a method, it's helpful to try and think about the different phases of Israel's history and the different stages that come.

So as we think about the Bible, the first phase is creation.

[18:42] So we ask ourselves about, when we come to our theme, what does the creation tell us about this theme?

Okay. And including creation will probably be the idea of the fall. So we're really asking, what is Genesis 1-3?

How does that, where does this thing start, if we can see a start? Then the second phase that we look at is the history of Israel.

From Abraham forward. And where we get the essential promises to Abraham. Anyone remember the promises to Abraham? What are the key elements of the promises to Abraham?

People. People. Yep. People place a blessing. Yep, that's right. Okay. God's people, God's place under God's rule, which is God's blessing. Did mine tell you that when God speaks to Abraham, he mentions blessings six times?

[19:50] Okay. In Genesis 1-3, I think he mentions six times the word blessing occurs. That corresponds to six uses of the word curse in Genesis 1-12.

So there's just a little hint in the Bible that the blessings to Abraham are going to undo the curses that came as a result of God's sin. So the Bible writers are very careful about this kind of thing.

So Israel, yeah. So Abraham kicks off the whole story. So we're looking for God's people in God's place under God's blessing. That story reaches its climax in 1 Kings chapter 10.

When Solomon builds the temple, the Queen of Sheba comes and Israel looks like they're in the land. They're enjoying peace.

It almost looks like that's the kingdom of God. Then in 1 Kings chapter 11, what does the passage say? But Solomon had many wives.

[20 : 55] And it talks about his idolatry. And that leads us into the story of Israel, part two, which is a story of catastrophic failure and eventual exile.

So we're talking here. There's the high point. King Solomon. What's the name of Solomon? So that's Israel, part one.

And then Israel, part two, down here. Where Israel fails. And we have one king after another. This is a reason. I'm going to go down here for number four.

Now, when Israel fails, the prophets come in. And the prophets start talking about what God's going to do in the future.

They start to promise. And what they do, the prophets put back in order to look forward. So the prophets pick up all the history of Israel, or elements of the history of Israel, and they say it's going to be better in the future.

[22 : 07] And they use all the parts of this story to help us to understand the new story that's coming. So Isaiah, for example, one of the big things in Isaiah's book is he talks about a new exodus.

So he looks back to the old exodus, and he says there's going to be a new exodus coming, where you'll be brought back out of Israel. Of course, one of the key figures is the king.

And the prophets talk about a new king, the Messiah, who's going to rule over God's kingdom. A king in the line of David. The next phase is what I'm calling fulfillment.

And that's basically the New Testament. Fulfillment. And that's fulfilling the prophets. It's finishing this story and bringing it to a good climax, and not a sad climax.

And then the final stage, which no one's going to be able to see, we don't have to do it, right? Is what we call consummation. And that's the end of the story.

[23 : 19] The new creation, where God perfects and brings to a completion everything that's happening on the way through. Okay? And so, we can start now.

When we get a topic, or a theme that we want to look at, we can think, okay, how does it appear in these six stages? And we can trace the progress, okay, of the theme through the Bible, and see where it turns out.

Now, all of that is very theoretical. It'll help if we do a kind of work example, okay, that comes into play. So, what I want to do is think about two case studies.

So, first of all, we'll think about the idea of the shepherd. And then we'll think about the idea of the temple there.

So, now, in the beginning, there are no references to the shepherd in the creation. Okay? There's no reference to shepherding or sheep or anything like that.

[24 : 25] But, in Genesis chapter 48, verse 15, we are reminded by Isaac, when he's blessing Joseph, that God is his shepherd.

So, one of the ways in which people understood God was as the shepherd of his people. So, I'm going to say that the first thought, and we can maybe see this in the creation, is that God is a shepherd who provides for his people out of the garden.

And at a couple of points in the Old Testament, particularly Genesis 48, verse 15, Psalm 23, what does David say?

The Lord is my shepherd. And so, God is known as the shepherd of his people there. So, that's the very first point as we think about the development of the theme of the shepherd.

And then, if we think about the history of Israel, so let's turn to Numbers chapter 27. Verses 15 to 17.

[25 : 46] Numbers chapter 27. This is Moses appointing Joshua to be the leader of his people as they go into the Promised Land.

Moses said to the Lord, may the Lord, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community, to go out and to come in before them.

One who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd. And then, verse 18. So, the Lord said to Moses, take Joshua, son of Nun, a man in human spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him.

He will be the leader. But did you see the language? So, now the next leader of Israel after Moses is called, basically he's referred to as a shepherd.

He's going to lead the people out and in. So, the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd. He's going to lead them out of the Promised Land. He's going to lead them into the Promised Land.

[27 : 01] I don't know where what the outer thing is. But he will lead them and bring them so that the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd. So, Joshua is called a shepherd, or he's depicted as a shepherd who will lead Israel.

The next figure we jump to is King David 2 Samuel 5, verse 2.

And so, this is where David is recognised as a king. All the tribes of Israel came to David and Hebron and said, We are your own flesh and blood.

In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the Lord said to you, you will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.

And so, the Davidic king, David, is known as a shepherd of his people. The rulers of Israel, the kings, are known as shepherds.

[28 : 16] So, we've got Joshua, we've got David. David, of course, was literally a shepherd before he became a king. And then he was recognised as a king. And we also know that, in terms of history, that often shepherd was a name for a ruler of a kingdom anyway.

But other kings in the ancient Near East were also known as shepherds. So, all of this is looking good. So, we've got God as the main shepherd.

He's now appointing shepherds to look after his people, Israel. And so, that's our first two steps.

This is looking very promising. And, of course, under King David, Israel starts to prosper.

They are free from their enemies. They get all their territory. Under his shepherding, this looks like the fulfilment of God's plan.

But, in Israel part two, and here we're talking after the reign of Solomon, what happens to the kings of Israel?

[29 : 25] What's the description of them as leaders and rulers? So, we've got that. We've got one after the other. If you look through the kings of Israel and Judah, are there any good ones?

I think one. Josiah. Josiah's a good one. Maybe he's a good one. All right. No good kings in Israel. They're all terrible. They're all like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. And they're all idolaters.

So, here we see the failure of the shepherds of Israel. And Israel goes into exile partly because of her poor leadership.

But the leaders of Israel aren't working out here. So, we're starting to build up an understanding here, a catastrophic failure of shepherding on the way through.

Now, that leads us to a major passage. And here we're starting to talk about the prophets. So, Ezekiel chapter 34. And so, I want you to do a little bit of work now.

[30 : 35] So, we're going to do a little bit of work. Maybe in twos or threes, let's just take 10 minutes, read through Ezekiel 34 just with someone else and see what it says.

We'll see what the Lord says about the shepherds of Israel and what he's going to do. So, this is the prophets talking about shepherding. This is the longest passage on shepherds.

But Jeremiah says similar things and so does Isaiah. But this is a major passage. So, as I said, just get into groups of two or three. Read through these passages together and see if you notice about the language of shepherds as you read that.

It's a long-inch passage, so I'll give you a try. Maybe, sorry, just go up to this... Oh, no, mate, that's a little bit of a whole message.

Okay. Here we go. Go ahead and change to have a look through that. Okay. What are some of the points that Ezekiel makes about shepherds?

[31 : 44] What do people... What stood out for the people? They take care of the sheep. Yeah.

They have or they haven't? They haven't. Yeah, it's okay. So, the first one is judgment against the shepherds of Israel that haven't taken care of the sheep.

So, it's quite a... It's a promise. A big judgment, right? They haven't done what they're supposed to do. And you understand the shepherds of Israel could be the leaders of Israel. So, the leaders who have failed as shepherds.

Yeah. What else does the Lord promise here? He's going to remove the shepherds.

That's right. So, there's going to be judgment. Yeah. Excellent. Yeah. Good. Yeah. And what else does the Lord say? Yeah. He himself is going to become a shepherd.

Yeah. Okay. So, God himself said he will step in and shepherd his people, Israel. And so, because it's a prophecy, we wonder how can that be? Yeah. What does that mean?

[32 : 44] Yeah. What else? So, we've got judgment, the Lord himself. Anything else? God promises David. Yeah. David will be the shepherd.

Now, how can David be a shepherd when it's Ezekiel talking? That's 300 years after. So, he must be talking about the promise to David of a king who will be in David's line. In other words, the Messiah will be the shepherd of God's people.

So, he's going to, when he talks about David at this point, I will place over the one shepherd of my servant, David. I think that's a reference back to the promise to Samuel chapter 7 where there will be a king in the line of David over the house of Israel later known as the Messiah.

So, David is going to be the shepherd of his people. Yeah. Great. Anything else? Anything else, people? What happens? God will judge this and sheep. Yeah.

So, there's going to be judgment as well. So, part of the role of the shepherd is not only to take care but also to exercise some kind of judgment on the sheep. Yeah. He's going to judge between the sheep.

[33 : 48] Yeah. Okay. All right. So, there's a lot of detail in there but I think they're the main points. Failure of the shepherds of Israel. Judgment of the shepherds of Israel.

God himself through his Messiah and that will mean both care and judgment. So, that's kind of a little mini picture of the whole Bible contained.

And one of the things biblical theology shows us is that the Bible keeps telling the same story over and over again. And so, if we get a message that's clear out of that.

Okay. One of the... David talks about judgment on the flocks. Yeah. Yeah. On the flock itself. By the flock itself. Yeah. Between the fact sheet and the other sheet.

Excellent. Okay. Now, let's think about then we'll jump forward to a full fill bit and I'm going to get you to flip forward in your Bibles down to John chapter 10 verses 1 to 21.

[34 : 46] and... same exercise.

I'm going to read... Actually, I'll just start at verse 11 where Jesus says he's the good shepherd. So, I'm going to read this out and as we read it out let's listen to echoes of the story that's going on before.

Okay. So, in verse 11 Jesus says I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep.

So, when he sees the wolf coming he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man who runs away because he has a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep.

[35 : 50] I have other sheep that are not of this sheep and I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is I lay down my life only to take it up again.

No one takes it from me but I lay up hand on my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and take it up again this commander or a servant of my Father. And then a little while a little bit further in the passage Jesus tells the people who do not believe him in verse 26 You do not believe because you are not my sheep.

My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. So, hearing that what echoes do we hear of Ezekiel?

What does it mean that Jesus is a good shepherd? He comes to serve. He comes to serve. Yep.

Yep. Okay. And relating in fact to Ezekiel he is why is he the good shepherd and not the true shepherd?

Because he takes care of the sheep. Because he is not a bad shepherd. So, good and bad is the comparison. He takes care of the sheep whereas the previous shepherds didn't take care of the sheep and he does it by serving and giving his life.

[37 : 09] Were there any other what kind of a claim is Jesus making when you hear him say I am the good shepherd when you've got Ezekiel 34 back in your mind?

What are the implications of that claim? He's claiming to be the one that was preached in Ezekiel. Yeah, correct. Okay. And who's going to shepherd God's people according to Ezekiel 34?

David's line. David's line and God himself. Yeah. So, he's making a double claim. He's claiming to be the Messiah and David's line and he's also claiming to be Yahweh. So, he's claiming to be the divine Messiah. So, it's a very strong line of fulfillment as Jesus comes to be the good shepherd.

And there's a little bit of the other language. I did mention this if you look in chapter 10 verse 4. Sorry, in verse 10.

[38:11] Jesus says, I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. And that's picking up the language of Joshua in Numbers 27 who will lead the people of Israel in and out and he takes them into the promised land.

So, we get a little bit of echoes of the previous stories all the way through and it's helping us to see that Jesus is the fulfillment of the good shepherd motif.

We also know that Jesus uses the language of shepherd elsewhere in the New Testament. Matthew chapter 9 he looks around and he sees that the people are like a sheep without a shepherd and so he has compassion on them.

And then of course he also tells the parable of the lost sheep which talks about a shepherd going out and seeking and finding sheep that are lost. So, I think Jesus has in his mind this idea of the shepherd very much helping him to think about his ministry.

But it ties into this longer story that's already there. Now, it doesn't stop there because if we go forward to John 21 when Jesus is talking to Peter they're on the beach they just recognize that Jesus is there.

[39:41] when they finished eating Jesus said to Simon Peter Simon son of John do you love me more than these? Yes, Lord.

He said you know that I love you? Jesus said feed my sheep. Second time Jesus asks verse 16 take care of my sheep. And then third time Jesus asks in verse 17 Jesus says feed my sheep.

So now what's he doing? He's appointing Peter as a shepherd. And so the theme of the shepherd now flows into ministry in the church. So we've got a line that's going from the Lord as one shepherd to the shepherds of Israel the promise of the shepherd the good shepherds coming and now Peter becomes a shepherd of God's sheep.

This gets picked up further in the New Testament so Acts chapter 20 verse 28 where Paul is talking to the Ephesian elders and he says keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers or elders the shepherds of God's church.

So again the shepherd becomes a symbol of leadership in God's church. So he's talking to the Ephesian elders who are looking after a congregation they are to the shepherds as well.

[41:12] And then 1 Peter chapter 5 verses 1 to 4 So this is Peter talking to church leaders again to the elders among you I appeal as a fellow elder and witness of Christ's suffering who will share the glory to be revealed these shepherds of God's of God's of God's of God's flock and being examples of the flock and when the chief shepherd appears you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

So again another example of the leadership of God's people being referred to as shepherds but notice they're under the chief shepherd so obviously that's Jesus so we have chief shepherds and under shepherds but shepherding becomes an image of the way through all of this under the fulfilled Jesus comes as a good shepherd and appoints shepherds to the power of his church now what about consummation so let's have a look at revelation and see whether that mentions anything about shepherding and it does in two places so revelation chapter 7 verses 14 to 17 this is a great multitude who are around the heavens and an elder speaks to John and says this about the people who wash their robes and they serve they are before the throne of God they serve him day and night in his temple and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence never again will they hunger never again will they thirst and some will not beat down them nor any scorching heat for the lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd and he will lead them to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes so Jesus is also the shepherd in the final revelation of God and he does exactly what a shepherd should do feeds protects waters his flock and so the theme goes from God is the shepherd of Israel to Jesus is the shepherd in the new creation and it flows through that whole story we can see one final verse in revelation chapter 19 verse 15 and this is an image of judgment we have a white horse in verse 11 which rightly is called faithful and true and this is a reference to Jesus coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations now my translation

NIV says he will rule them with an iron sector now the word for rule is the word shepherd he will shepherd them with an iron sector and so right at the very end we have this note of judgment that we also saw back in Ezekiel where the lamb will be the shepherd who will not only look after his people but he will also judge the enemies of God and instead of having a wooden shepherd a wooden staff to pop the shepherd around he's got a staff of iron so that's a sign of power that's there so the shepherd image at the very end points to Jesus as both the saviour of his people and the judge of God's enemies on the way through as he does so that's an example of how we can trace a theme through we can look for it in terms of creation in the history of Israel in the prophets in the fulfilment and in the conservation and because the bible is telling one story we can trace that through the whole story and we get a richer picture and it helps us to understand when Jesus particularly says I am a good shepherd it's got all this history bearing on it and it believes into the new testament implications does that make any sense does it make sense it's almost like a literary thing it's treating the bible almost like a novel where you're trying to trace a thing through but it's not a novel of course because these things have occurred in

God's history and they help us to understand in the end it helps to understand the person who work of Jesus in terms of shepherding and then the role that flows from that in the new testament that's there any questions or comments about that let's try one more thing and this is the theme of the temple now I notice here you've got the promise of the new temple here already so you started looking at this theme so this might be revision but let me just take us through thinking about the temple that's there now in the beginning is there a temple God didn't create a temple in the garden but the interesting thing is that when we look at the temple when it's built it's got a lot of imagery that looks like the garden it's got lots of foliage around it's got a tree the menorah the lamp stand with seven branches and things like that when we look at the accounts of the temple and the tabernacle and when we understand how the ancient world looked at it what we start to see is in fact that Eden and the creation itself is almost like a temple where God himself will dwell in other words the whole earth is God's temple

[47 : 39] Eden is created as a temple let me give you some examples there when the temple is built it's meant to be built on a mountain the garden of Eden is on a mountain the temple is meant to face east the temple is Eden faces east and so that's just another little detail so the temple when they're built Adam and Eve when they're told to go to the garden they're told to work and take care of it the same words exactly the same words in Hebrew are used of the priests who are supposed to guard and take care of the temple so Adam and Eve if we look backwards they are like priests in the garden who are to work and take care of it to be the place where God will dwell as we said the lamp stand in the temple the seven branches that may be a reference to the tree of life there in the garden that's there later the later temple was decorated with garden motifs and out of

Eden flowed rivers and then when Ezekiel 40-48 talks about the end times temple what flows out of a river bringing life to the nations so all this imagery later points backwards to an understanding of the garden or Eden as a temple in other words the whole cosmos where God dwells where he is to be and where his image bearers Adam and Eve are like his priests who are taking care of the garden and the temple now the problem of course is that because of the fall Adam and Eve were thrown out of the garden they go each to the they're thrown away so the temple is lost and there is a sense in which God is we know that God is the king but he no longer recognises the king in his creation and so we can start to think of the rest of the

Bible as an attempt to get back to this original temple and this understanding the temple is very closely tied with the presence of God when you go to a temple you go to meet with the God of the temple and do business with him and that's where he dwells now in Israel before Moses Abraham Isaac and Jacob they create altars and tents and God comes to meet with almost little mini temples on the way through but the big advance is when Moses at the exodus receives the plan for the tabernacle which is a kind of a portable temple that accompanies Israel on the way through as they get to the promised land where is the temple located where is it meant to be built when they erect where do they build the temple in terms of the nation of Israel and the people

Jerusalem Jerusalem Jerusalem that's the temple but I'm talking the tabernacle at this moment so when Moses and the Israelites are moving through the wilderness where is the tabernacle in relation to the people it moves but when they stop where do they build it they just build it anything they build a tent but it's right in the centre of Israel all the tribes camp around the tabernacle the tabernacle is in the very centre of the people so that's symbolic of God being in the centre of his

people and then the tabernacle as we say picks up all the language of creation in its ornaments and its furnishings and it becomes a model of the creation that is there now if you think about the temple it's got three kind of parts it's got an outer court then it's got an inner court and then it's got the holy of holies so there's a three part movement in the tabernacle that three part movement is also reproduced in the temple an outer court and then an inner court and then the holy of holies itself and that matches the geography of these where you've got the garden leader in the centre and then that flows out and then it goes out to the rest of the world so you've kind of got this three-part structure as well so again the tabernacle the portable temple and then the temple that Solomon builds the solid temple all reflect a picture of creation of God at the centre represented by the ark of the covenant and the knowledge of God flowing from the temple out to the people around and so we have the tabernacle and then that becomes the Jerusalem temple same structure much more impressive of course exactly the same structure that is there so we start to see these temples being built and symbolising God's presence with his people all the way through when Solomon dedicates the temple he says a really interesting thing he says this temple cannot hold God he acknowledges that it's inadequate but at the same time he celebrates it as the symbolic presence of God amongst his people so he's not saying that

[53 : 54] God only appears at the temple but he's saying that God is his presence is focused in the temple and that's a fine distinction but God says heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool why do I need a house but so the temple is a model of something bigger it's a model of the whole creation that's there now when the nations come in in the exile of the judgment of Israel what do they do they destroy the temple and take everything away and that is symbolic of God leaving his people and then sending them off into exile so we have an original plan attempts to at least look forward to that something can happen the temple itself being destroyed and there are prophets coming particularly

Ezekiel again Ezekiel is getting a good run today I don't know if you've read Ezekiel but the last eight chapters kind of boring lots of detail but kind of exciting as well because it's talking about an end times temple that is where God is going to dwell and where the water is going to flow out and bring life to the nations so again the prophets pick up a symbol from Israel's past and they use it to talk about Israel's future and the temple is the key future that is there now when Israel returns from exile they actually start to rebuild the temple and people think that this might be the fulfilment of God's promises but do you remember the people's reaction when the temple is there in Israel they build the temple and then they're kind of dedicated or it's half built a whole bunch of old guys start crying but it's not the same it's not the glory of God's temple it's a partial fulfilment and they realise this that they're not the people of

God they ought to be and they haven't got the temple they ought to be but the prophetic hope as I say through many of prophets is of a rebuilt temple to which the nations will come and spread the fulfilment is again the person of Jesus so John 1.14 the word became flesh and dwelt amongst us now the Greek word dwelt can be translated pitched his tent or tabernacle amongst us it's a word that refers back to the Old Testament tabernacle under the rule of Moses and so some translations will actually say tabernacle amongst us I think the Old King James said that most translations now say dwelt but a freer translation will say

Jesus came and pitched his tent amongst us to try and pick up the image of the tabernacle and so John is showing us that Jesus is starting to fulfil the theme of the temple on the way through then in John chapter 2 when Jesus cleanses the temple he says the Jewish leaders come to him and they say what side do you give for your authority to do this do you remember what Jesus says he says destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days and they think he's talking about the physical temple but John tells us that Jesus is talking about the temple of his body and so Jesus himself says he is the temple so in tabernacles amongst us he is the temple in John chapter 4 Jesus and the woman at the well start arguing about the place where

God is to be worshipped is he to be worshipped at the temple that's in Jerusalem or is he to be worshipped at the temple that's on Mount Horizon in Samaritan territory Jesus answered at the moment you worship in Jerusalem but time is coming when you will worship at neither Jerusalem nor Mount Horizon you will worship in spirit and truth and so what Jesus is saying is if you will worship because of me you won't need a temple because of who I am I am the new temple and then in John chapter 7 in the middle of the temple he gets up and talks about I think water flowing out of his bed he once again is the replacement of the temple so Jesus on a number of occasions

says whatever function the temple had it's now being replaced by me knowledge of God access to God forgiveness of sins sacrifices all of this is going to be fulfilled by [59 : 18] Jesus and he dies and rises to become the new temple of God and what about the rest of the new testing well in 1 Corinthians 3 16 Paul talks about how a building is being built by him and Apollos and others 1 Corinthians 3 16 he said from verse 10 by the grace God has given me I lay the foundation as a wise builder someone else is building on it it should build with care no other foundation than Jesus Christ if anyone builds on this foundation using gold silver etc the work will be shown verse 16 don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and God's spirit dwells within you the building the metaphor that Paul is using is building a temple in which

God's spirit will dwell and that's talking about the confirmation of God's people and so the church of God now gets described in temple terms not because it's in a building place where God dwells and meets Paul says the same thing in Ephesians chapter 2 verses 20 to 22 where he says consequently you are no longer foreigners and strangers he's talking to the Ephesians that you are fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone in him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the

Lord so once again Paul describes the local congregation as the temple of God built by God himself and in him you two are built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit so God no longer dwells in a temple or a tabernacle he lives amongst his people by the spirit as they meet together and 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 5 makes exactly the same point and I will just read that Peter says as you come to him as Jesus the living stone rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him you also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ so Peter and Paul use the image of the temple to refer to the Christian congregation to the group that's there Paul will also use it to describe the individual Christian in 1 Corinthians 6 he says your body the individual is a temple of the Holy Spirit and so the Holy Spirit dwells within us personally as a temple and amongst us collectively as the temple of God's people that's there so God's presence is with us by his spirit and we are his temple final consummation let's have a look at Revelation 21 verses 1 to 3 so here we have John seeing a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and first earth had passed away and there was no longer any seed I saw the holy city the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying look

God's dwelling place is now among the people and he will dwell with them they will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God so the final picture is of God once again coming from heaven to earth we don't go to heaven God comes from heaven to us to live in the new creation and it's like the fulfilment of that picture in creation now he's living with his people in the new creation everything is a temple and just to make sure we get this verse 22 I did not see a temple in the city this is the city of Jerusalem New Jerusalem because the Lord Almighty and the Lamb are his temple so no need for a temple anymore because God himself is a temple we see him face to face and we know him so again the movement from creation as a temple lost because the bad priests were thrown out then foreshadowed in the tabernacle foreshadowed in Solomon's temple and God being with his people there the judgment is the removal of the destruction of the temple

[64 : 40] Jesus then there's a promise of a new temple Ezekiel chapter 40 verses 40 to 8 fulfilled in Jesus who becomes the temple for us the church becomes the temple of God individual believers are also described as a temple then finally in the new creation no need for a temple because the Lamb and God are our temple so again we can see how that's progressively unfolded and some things are in and some things are out what's out is a physical temple we no longer need a physical temple we have a beautiful building you can meet but if we all met under a tree we would be God's temple we don't need a building in order to do that so we've just had an example of how biblical theology is a theme through the bible with the theme of the shepherd and with the theme of the king the king the exodus the covenant and the temple you can do similar things with each of these ideas so when we think about kings or the exodus sometimes it won't be quite so strong in one part or the other but these things will all flow through into the fulfilment of the

Lord Jesus and then other things besides lots of different ways of thinking about this because as soon as you start seeing the bible as a unity you can start to trace themes all the way through and

one really good exercise is to I know I had a friend once who did a sermon on trumpets he did a biblical theology of trumpets where he looked at how trumpets occur in different stages you can do a biblical theology on the river of life or the tree of life because that that's a theme that goes across the bible so lots of different ways to do this but they're all predicated on the fact that the bible is a unity that is telling the story of God's engaging with his people a salvation history which is climaxing in the person the Lord Jesus Christ and I think it's always a pity with these diagrams there's no other way you can do it you've got all of this and you get a tiny little mention of Jesus at the end I really feel that should be a lot bigger or somehow it should be in the centre but this all is very important because there's so much of it that's the tip and even in your classes

I think you do what eight classes on the Old Testament then you do one class on Jesus in the New Testament and it kind of is that all but that's the climax is there so we're going into an hour of space that does not equal importance as we kind of think about it but it's there but God has worked patiently through history and brought us to this kind of place what does biblical theology do for our faith well I hope it increases our faith because we see that God is working patiently from the creation to bring about his plan and none of his promises have failed it's taken a long time 1500 years but none of his promises have failed that means in the new covenant we can also be sure that none of his promises will fail we're no longer looking forward to a saviour we've got a saviour we're looking forward to the second coming of Jesus but if we know this then we know that this will happen this is a good thing and then as I say the second thing is I hope it gives us confidence in our scriptures that they're telling that story and helping us and helping us to read the scriptures those little details are important just that word temple all the way through following that can help us to understand

God and his plans and his purposes bigger as we go and I think you've got one more chapter to go anyway so maybe Brian will probably pick up a bit of this stuff but that's a kind of feeding into your glasses so I hope that was helpful and as I say if you've got any questions or comments I'll be happy to begin with that and I'll pack the answer those now otherwise things to apply to suggest about all I love this course because a lot of people in Sydney when they do this they suddenly realise the first time the Bible fits together rather than just in bits and it's kind of exciting and when you see a theme flow through hopefully that reinforces that kind of sense of I get this and certainly a whole bunch of stuff has meaning where maybe it didn't have before that's okay all right well I'm going to pray to finish and we can go to the rest of the days as well

Father we thank you for your word and thank you for the word that testifies to your activity in the world from creation through to new creation and Father we pray that as we look at the scriptures and see how it fits together in unity tells that unfolding story of progressive revelation that you'll just help us to grasp the big ideas and feed that into our own reading and understanding of your word Father we pray that that will help us to read our Bibles better and see them as pointing to Jesus in the ways that we've been thinking about thank you that Jesus is our good shepherd thank you that Jesus is our temple and that we can trace the history of those ideas and we get the depth and understanding but even more important we thank you that Jesus is a good shepherd who laid down his life for us who knows us calls us by name leads us in and out brings us a pastor even in the new creation thank you that he is the temple where we have knowledge of you where we can do business with you where we can draw back into a right relationship with you and that because he is the temple he is always with us by his spirit we worship him in spirit and truth and we enjoy your presence and fellowship with his spirit by the spirit as well as he has been in that temple so thank you for all this thank you for all this class and the opportunity we have to study together and I pray that you would be in a blessedness group and help them to grow in the knowledge of you and help me lead to great blood for you and great service in your name amen thank you