

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN FOCUS



*The Eastern Gate of Jerusalem and the ancient "Mount of the House."
Future site of the Millennial Temple of the LORD and of Messiah's throne*

“The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. **They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom** and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations” (Psalm 145:8-13).



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Preface: Bringing the Intangible into Focus

“All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. **They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom** and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. **Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom**, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations” (Psalm 145:10-13).¹

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18, ESV).

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23).

Cameras, binoculars, microscopes, telescopes... they all use knobs, buttons, or wheels of some sort to help the operator dial the object into focus. If it was only as simple for intangible, theological concepts.

How blurry is your “*visualization of concept*” when you read or hear the phrase “Kingdom of God”?

What does the Bible mean by the “Kingdom of God”? The phrases “Kingdom of Heaven” and “Kingdom of Christ” also refer to the same concept that differs greatly in the understanding of scholars, ministers, and laity alike. The Gospel in the New Testament is called the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The disciples of Jesus are commanded to seek the Kingdom as first priority and to pray for its soon coming.

For over a century, modern scholarship has wrestled with the concept of the “Kingdom of God.” From Albert Schweitzer’s apocalyptic understanding,² to C. H. Dodd’s “realized eschatology” of the radically present Kingdom,³ to the existential views of Rudolph Bultmann,⁴ to George Eldon Ladd’s view of both

¹ All scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Albert Schweitzer, *Das Abendmahl im Zusammenhang mit dem Leben Jesu und der Geschichte des Urchristentums* (Stassburg: Tubingen und Leipzig, 1901). See also: Johannes Weiss' *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (1892).

³ C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments: Three Lectures with an Eschatology and History: Three Lectures with an Appendix on Eschatology and History*. New York: Harper, 1935.

⁴ Rudolph Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1948).

present and future Kingdom reality,⁵ scholarly discussion has done little to help the grasp of this vital concept for the average Christian in the pew.

How can a believer in Christ bring the Kingdom into clear focus? Is “the Kingdom” merely personal, internal, heavenly, or simply eternally spiritual? Is it confined to the visible church or churches? Long ago in the west, “Christendom” was the understanding of the Roman Church. Augustine thought of the “City of God” as eternally a heavenly reality, spiritual and mystical.⁶ Today many Christians think in terms of bringing in the kingdom by social reform. Some liberals think in terms of “symbol” and “myth.”⁷ But the actual, biblical revelation of the Kingdom is far greater than any of these interpretations.

Patrick Schreiner wrote of his discovery of the importance of the theme of “the Kingdom” as he studied the Gospel of Matthew:

Although my life up to this moment had been filled with good Bible teaching, I felt misplaced in a foreign land when I came to the language of kingdom. I knew the basics of the Gospel message, but I could not figure out how the kingdom of God related to it or why Jesus spoke so often of it. My view of the good news had been abstracted, and I had overlooked the narrative that stood beside and underneath the glorious doctrines of Christianity.⁸

While **Systematic Theology** is better known to most who are interested in theology, the discipline of **Biblical Theology** is helpful in bringing the “Kingdom of God” into focus for believers. **Systematic Theology** is a discipline through which one systematizes truth without respect of time. It is like standing in time at the end of the last book of the Bible and, while looking back at the completed revelation of all the Bible, systematizing truth about God, man, sin, salvation, etc. The method of **Biblical Theology** is to study the Bible as if moving through time while considering the progressive revelation of God’s truth. This will be the approach used through these pages.

In the Old Testament there are many allusions to the King and His Kingdom:

Exodus 15:18 "The LORD shall **reign** forever and ever"

Numbers 23:21 "the shout of a **king** is among them"

Isaiah 6:5 "for mine eyes have seen **the King, the LORD of hosts**"

Isaiah 43:15 "I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, **your King**"

2 Kings 19:15 "thou art the God, even thou alone, **of all of the kingdoms of the earth**"

Jeremiah 46:18 "As I live, saith **the King**, whose name is the LORD of hosts"

⁵ G. E. Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974).

⁶ In Augustine’s *City of God* (Latin title, *Dē civitāte Deī contrā pāgānōs*), he conceived of the “City of God” as entirely heavenly, spiritual, and mystical for eternity. After Rome was sacked by the Visigoths, many struggled to understand why God would let this happen to Rome—the city of God in the estimation of most Christians and also of the pagans. In separating the material city of Rome from the heavenly City of God, Augustine placed the true City of God out of the reach of the pagans for the purpose of his arguments. Though he believed in the bodily resurrection, he did not understand the future continuity and joining of the throne of David with the throne of God. Jerusalem, not Rome, would be made new and joined with the heavenly realm.

⁷ According to Pheme Perkins, “Taking a clue from Ricoeur, Norman Perrin proposed that the symbol, ‘Kingdom of God,’ evokes the larger ‘myth’ of God’s rule as expressed in post-exilic Judaism. However, Jesus’ use of the expression seemed less to confirm an established mythic reading of reality than to challenge his hearers’ perceptions of the present.” Pheme Perkins, “The Rejected Jesus and the Kingdom Sayings,” ed. Charles W. Hedrick, *Semeia* 44 (1988): 80.

⁸ Patrick Schreiner, *The Kingdom of God and the Glory of the Cross* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018) 13.

Psalm 5:2 "My King and my God"

Psalm 29:10 "the LORD sitteth **King forever**"

Ps 103:19 "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and **his kingdom** ruleth over all"

Psalm 145:11, 13 "They shall speak of the **glory of thy kingdom** and talk of thy power; ¹²To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the **glorious majesty of his kingdom**. ¹³**Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom**, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."

Isaiah 24:23 "when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously"

Daniel 7:14 "And there was given him dominion, and glory, **and a kingdom**, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion ...and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed"

Zechariah 14:9 "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one."

From the earliest pages of the New Testament, John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus proclaim the coming kingdom:

Matthew 3:1-2 "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, ²And saying, Repent ye: for **the kingdom of heaven** is at hand."

Matthew 4:23 "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching **the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

Matthew 6:10 "...**thy kingdom come**; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"

Matthew 13:19 The Sower's seed is the "**word of the kingdom**."

Matthew 24:14 "And this **gospel of the kingdom** shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Matthew 25:34 "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit **the kingdom prepared for you** from the foundation of the world:"

Matthew 26:29 "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in **my Father's kingdom**."

Mark 1:14-15 "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God**, ¹⁵And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Mark 4:11-12 "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know **the mystery of the kingdom of God**: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables"

Luke 1:20 "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt **the kingdom of God** is come upon you."

Luke 8:1 "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing **the glad tidings of the kingdom of God**: and the twelve *were* with him,"

Luke 8:10 "And he said, Unto you it is given to know **the mysteries of the kingdom of God**: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

Luke 9:2 "And he sent them **to preach the kingdom of God**, and to heal the sick."

Luke 9:11 "And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of **the kingdom of God**, and healed them that had need of healing."

Luke 9:27 "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see **the kingdom of God**."

Luke 9:60 "Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and **preach the kingdom of God**."

Luke 9:62 "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for **the kingdom of God.**"

Luke 10:9 "And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, **The kingdom of God** is come nigh unto you."

Luke 10:11 "Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that **the kingdom of God** is come nigh unto you."

Luke 11:2 "And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **Thy kingdom come.** Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."

Luke 11:20 "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt **the kingdom of God** is come upon you."

Luke 12:31 "seek ye **the kingdom of God**; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Luke 12:32 "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you **the kingdom.**"

Luke 13:18 "Unto what is **the kingdom of God** like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?"

Luke 13:20 "And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken **the kingdom of God**?"

Luke 13:28 "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in **the kingdom of God**, and you *yourselves* thrust out."

Luke 13:29 "And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in **the kingdom of God.**"

Luke 14:15 "And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed *is* he that shall eat bread in **the kingdom of God.**"

Luke 16:16 "The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time **the kingdom of God** is **preached**, and every man presseth into it."

Luke 17:20 "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, **when the kingdom of God should come**, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation"

Luke 17:21 "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **the kingdom of God** is within you."

Luke 18:16-17 "But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is **the kingdom of God**. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

Luke 18:24 "And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into **the kingdom of God!**"

Luke 18:25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into **the kingdom of God.**"

Luke 18:29 "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for **the kingdom of God's sake,**"

Luke 19:11 "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that **the kingdom of God** should immediately appear."

Luke 19:12 "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a **kingdom**, and to return."

Luke 19:15 "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, **having received the kingdom...**"

Luke 21:31 "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that **the kingdom of God** is nigh at hand."

Luke 22:16 "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in **the kingdom of God.**"

Luke 22:18 "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until **the kingdom of God** shall come."

Luke 22:29 "And I appoint unto you **a kingdom**, as my Father hath appointed unto me;"

Luke 22:30 "That ye may eat and drink at my table in **my kingdom** and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Luke 23:42 “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into **thy kingdom**.”

Luke 23:51 “*he was* of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for **the kingdom of God**.”

John 3:3 “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see **the kingdom of God**.”

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into **the kingdom of God**.”

John 18:36 “Jesus answered, **My kingdom** is not of this world: if **my kingdom** were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but **now** is **my kingdom** not from hence.”

Moving from Genesis through scripture, from the beginning, the seat of the coming Kingdom was a small mountain formed by God in the creation of the world after a heavenly archetype. A small city rose on that mountain, about 2000 BC, and in the days of Abraham and this “city of peace”⁹ had a king who was also priest of the “Most High God”. His name was Melchizedek, meaning “king of righteousness” and he was a type of the future reign of the Priest-King of Righteousness who will one day rule from the New City of Peace over all of heaven and earth.

The Lord prophesied through Moses, about 1406 BC, of **the place where He would set His name** (Deuteronomy 12:11). He later confirmed, about 959 BC, **the place where He would put His name there “forever”** to King Solomon (1 Kings 9:3).

1406 BC, Moses→	959 BC, Solomon→	680 BC, Isaiah and Micah→	AD 90, Apostle John
Deuteronomy 12:11	1 Kings 9:3	Isaiah 2 & Micah 4	Revelation 21:10

The prophets Isaiah and Micah, two witnesses of the same vision, saw the future fulfillment of that place, the mountaintop known as Mt. Moriah where the Jerusalem temple of Solomon was situated, rising above all other mountains (685 BC, Isaiah 2 and Micah 4). The Apostle John also saw the future realization of that place chosen by God and gave much more detail (AD 90, Revelation 21:10).

In the Old Testament through His prophets, God gave prophecies of the “Branch” who was coming and who was the rightful heir to the throne. The prophets foretold the birth of the King, of the Lord Jesus’ ministry, and His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to heaven.

Of the centrality of the theme of the “Kingdom of God” in the Old Testament, Francis Breisch, Jr. wrote:

In choosing a theme for our study it is important that we look ahead to Christ and to the New Testament. We need a theme as a highway to direct our travel through the Old Testament. There are so many side roads we could travel, so many interesting lanes into which we could take excursions. But there we would lose sight of the whole picture which the Old Testament presents. We want to follow one road, and we want to be sure that our road is the main highway that will lead us directly to Christ and the New Testament. We find this highway in the

⁹ “City of peace” is the translation of the ancient name *via* Akkadian, *Uru-Salem*--*Uru* meaning “city” and *Salem* meaning “peace”; hence, Jerusalem means the “City of Peace”.

theme “The Kingdom of God.” We will see in our study how this constitutes the main line of thought in the Old Testament. We will see how every book contributes to this basic theme.¹⁰

In the New Testament the resurrected King Messiah sent His ambassadors throughout the earth to proclaim His salvation, His second coming, and His coming visible reign upon the earth. They preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. The King ascended to heaven and is now our High Priest who is coming to sit on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7), exalt that ancient mountain, and join heaven and earth on that very spot—the new “City of Peace”, the New Jerusalem.

The Lord has reigned as King from eternity past. He reigns from heaven. When a believer dies, the angels take them to be with Christ (see Luke 16:22). When Jesus returns, He will raise all of the saints of old bodily, and in that glorified state they shall be with Him forever. Those believers living when Christ comes will be changed, glorified in an instant, and be gathered to Christ (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The Lord Jesus is coming to earth again and this world will never be the same.

In 1995 my wife and I were standing on Tel Megiddo with Dr. Adrian Rogers and the rest of our tour group. After I got my bearings, I found the distant ridge of the upper city of Nazareth to the east. Then I called Dr. Rogers over and said, “Doc, look, there is the upper city of Nazareth. The Lord Jesus could see it. All the days of obscurity in Nazareth, He could see the place where He is coming in glory.” He could see the final battlefield that He created from the beginning. Megiddo is the place where He will defeat His ancient adversary and begin His visible rule over the nations.

When someone experiences the salvation of God, they turn from their sins and put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. For the Christians at Thessalonica, Paul wrote, “you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). The Apostle Paul knew that “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18, ESV).

My prayer and my hope for you in writing this book is that chapter by chapter, through eyes of faith, your vision of the coming Kingdom of God will come into crystal clear focus. As it does, my prayer is that your excitement and anticipation of the full realization of His second coming and of His Kingdom will grow and motivate you to holy living, and to tell others about the Lord Jesus, our coming King.

In service of the King,

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¹⁰ Francis Breisch, Jr. *The Kingdom of God: A Guide for Old Testament Study* (Grand Rapids: Christian Schools International), 16.



Chapter 1

Introduction: King David's Last Words and His Last Psalm

“Now these are the last words of David: The saying of David the son of Jesse, and the saying of the man raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet singer of Israel: The spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was upon my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'Ruler over men shall be the righteous, even he that ruleth in the fear of God, And as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds; when through clear shining after rain, the tender grass springeth out of the earth.' For is not my house established with God? for an everlasting covenant He hath made with me, ordered in all things, and sure; for all my salvation, and all my desire, **will he not make it to grow?**”
(2 Samuel 23:1-5, JPS)

David's last inscribed Psalm: “The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. **They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom** and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations” (Psalm 145:8-13).

Before backing up to the beginning of the story of the foundations of the Kingdom in Genesis, it will be helpful to glance back at the Kingdom from a time yet future to our own when it will be fully realized. This is possible through the prophetic words of King David.

On his deathbed King David spoke of being conscious of the fact that God spoke through Him. He was a king who was also a prophet of the LORD. He wrote, “The spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was upon my tongue...” (2 Samuels 23:1-2).

The Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost called David a prophet. Preaching to the Pentecost crowd, he pointed to David's prophecy of the resurrection of Christ when he said:

Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch **David**, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. **Therefore being a prophet**, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption (Acts 2:29-31).

In the year 970 BC, as David was dying, he prophesied of the kingdom that God had promised him. He wrote that God had “made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure” (2 Samuel 23:5). This was the covenant of the eternal kingdom prophesied through the ministry of Nathan the prophet (2 Samuel 7:12-14).

His rhetorical question at the end of verse 5 “will He not cause it to grow?” implies that God certainly will “cause it to grow.” The root of “grow” here (*yatsmiach*) is a verb used with a causative form of the stem. The noun that comes from this verb, meaning “green shoot” (“*tsemach*”) would be used by the prophets down through the centuries along with another noun “branch” (“*netser*”). Later allusions to the coming King using these two words are rooted in David’s last words. Down through the centuries BC, the prophets would speak of the coming “shoot” or “branch” on the family tree of David who would be the rightful heir to the throne, the Messiah.

In the same vein, David’s last Psalm had the same focus upon the promised kingdom. The last Psalm with David’s name in the inscription is Psalm 145. Many Christians underestimate the importance of this great Psalm to the whole of the Psalms and to understanding this key theme of the Bible, the Kingdom. The inscription “David’s Praise to God” (*Tehillah leDavid*) is connected to the Hebrew title of the entire scroll of Psalms, known in Hebrew as *Sepher Tehillim* (Scroll of Praises). It is a chiastic (symmetrical) Psalm that begins with David’s praise and ends with his invitation to all to join him in praising God. At the center he put his prophetic thoughts about the Kingdom.

In Psalm 145, at the center of the Psalm, King David prophesied. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote of the saints of God in the future experiencing the realization of the Kingdom in that far off day from his own time. From that future blessed state, David spoke of them looking back across the past from the standpoint of the realization of the visible Kingdom of God:

All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations (Psalm 145:9-13).

Psalm 145 is an acrostic Psalm, going by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Here are the ABC’s of the prophecy of the Kingdom. It is a chiastic (symmetrical) Psalm with the Kingdom framed at the center. David’s last words focused on God’s promise to him of the kingdom. David’s last Psalm prophesied the future full realization of it.

King David’s last words and His last Psalm were both prophetic of the coming King and His Kingdom. This was King David’s living and dying focus 3,000 years ago. Yet to appreciate more fully the enormity of this prophetic hope, one must go back and observe the progressive revelation of God about His Kingdom that was His design before the foundation of the world.



Chapter 2

Before the Foundation of the World...

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast the understanding. Who determined the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who stretched the line upon it? Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof, **When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?**” (Job 38:4-7, JPS).

“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end” (Psalm 102:25-27, KJV).

“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:34-35, KJV).

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24, KJV).

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...” (Ephesians 1:3-6).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world...” (1 Peter 1:18-21, KJV).

“...the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).

In reflecting on the concept of the Kingdom of God, George Eldon Ladd wrote:

The Biblical idea of the Kingdom of God is deeply rooted in the Old Testament and is grounded in the confidence that there is one eternal, living God who has revealed Himself to men and who has a purpose for the human race which He has chosen to accomplish through Israel.¹¹

Before the foundation of the world, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit existed from eternity past in perfect, harmonious fellowship. At some unknown point in the distant past, before the foundation of the world, God made the angels. Hence in Job 38:7, they are depicted as all singing in unison as God laid the foundations of the earth.

Before the foundation of the world the angels watched as the Creator responded in His omniscience to the incipient sin that was hidden in the heart of the most powerful creature that He had ever made. God knew the idolatrous thoughts of Satan.

As the angels watched the Creator lay the foundations of the earth, they saw Him create the fiery internal regions and cover them by the deep, dark waters (Job 38:4-7). Hell was created for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41), *and they watched God form it.*

As they watched, in the heart of one of their own was the sin of rebellious idolatry. This was the time just before the downfall of the fallen angel the Scripture calls the devil. Satan thought that he was equal to or perhaps greater than God.

As the angels watched they saw that God was creating things that looked like some of them. The Living Creatures with four faces saw the oxen, lions, and eagles that God made and surely took notice. Then God made man and subjugated all of the beasts of the earth, birds of the air, and fish of the sea to Him. Here was a parable for the heavenly army to behold. Yet in jealousy, one from their midst went out to attack the one creature made in the image of God. What the adversary of God would not do to God's face, he would do to God's likeness.

The LORD God put the trees in the midst of the Garden of Eden that would function like the lure of a trap. God knew that the rebel, His adversary, would be drawn there. ***The earth thus was created with hell inside and the surface was the battlefield for the war to play out.***

Adam and Eve succumbed to the temptation of the adversary of God, to the same sin as the one in the heart of the adversary... idolatry. Satan said, "ye shall be as gods" (Gen 3:5, KJV). His temptation was not to simple disobedience. It was to idolatry. This is why they fell under the same judgment and deserved the same fate as the devil and his angels. And this is also why the first commandment deals with idolatry, which is the original sin. All other sins flow out of it.

With the creation of the world, God made a mountain that was to be the seat of His everlasting Kingdom. It was not the tallest mountain that He chose to be honored in this way. Instead, a small mountain was chosen that He would one day raise higher than all others.

Before the foundation of the world God chose His future children in Christ. While no grace would be extended to the angels that fell (Jude 1:6), the Creator would extend grace to the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. The LORD decreed, "I will show mercy to who I will show mercy" (Exodus 33:19).

¹¹ George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 14.

Cherubim would guard the way back to Eden for the fallen couple were cast out (Genesis 3:24). Cherubim would be embroidered on the veil of the tabernacle warning none to pass into the place of God's glorious presence (Exodus 26:1). Cherubim would be placed on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:19), immortalized as they stared at the lid where seven drops of blood would be placed by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. The seven drops (Leviticus 16:14) anticipated a perfect sacrifice, and better blood than of bulls and goats (Hebrews 10:4). The angels of the Mercy Seat immortalized the desire of all angels to look into the things pertaining to our salvation (1 Peter 1:12).

On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would kneel in the Holy of Holies before the Ark of the Covenant (Leviticus 16). Two lines of seven drops of blood he had carefully placed on the Mercy Seat in the gaze of the silent Cherubim fashioned and fixed on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. Above the heads of the Cherubim was the glory of God. Inside the Ark were the unbroken tablets of the Law. Between God's glory and His holy law were seven drops of blood for the house of Aaron and seven drops of blood for the people. Seven spoke of a coming perfect sacrifice. Seven spoke of better blood than of bulls and goats (Hebrews 10:4-10). On the basis of that blood the high priest would say, "LORD forgive" (for the house of Aaron), and then "LORD forgive" for the people.

As the blood was positionally between the visible glory of God and His holy law in the Ark, God forgave. We have a High Priest who is so much better. We have a sacrifice that is so much better. We are sanctified by blood that is so much better (Hebrews 7:22).

Our High Priest is also our King. The blood of the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the earth" satisfied the wrath of God toward us, reconciled us to God, provided for us access for our prayers, and makes us fit for the Kingdom of Light that was planned by God from the foundation of the world.

The angels watched as God laid the foundations of the earth. The silent cherubim watched the drops of blood fall on the Mercy Seat. The heavenly host witnessed the birth of the King long ago. The heavenly armies will return with the King at the beginning of His visible reign, and all of this was in the heart of God before the foundation of the world.



Chapter 3

2000 BC: The Patriarchs Looked for the City of God

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. **For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God**” (Hebrew 11:8-10, ESV).

“And **Melchizedek king of Salem** brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all” (Genesis 14:18-20).

“He said, ‘Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to **the land of Moriah**, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you’” (Genesis 22:2, ESV).

“Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on **Mount Moriah**, where the LORD had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite” (2 Chronicles 3:1, ESV).

Abraham

Abraham was called by God to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 12). In the 20th century AD an ancient “lament” came to light that was written about events in UR III (as designated in archaeology) during its destruction just before 2000 BC. Certainly, the providence of God called Abraham to depart before the destruction of Ur.

In his translation and commentary of this ancient lament, Piotyr Michalowski preserves for readers in English the death throes of the city of Ur:¹²

- 379. The trees of Ur were sick; the reeds of Ur were sick.
- 380. Laments sounded all along its city wall.
- 381. Daily there was slaughter before it.
- 382. Large axes were sharpened in front of Ur,
- 383. The spears, the arms of battle, were being launched,

¹² Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 61.

384. The large bows, javelin, and siege shield gather together to strike,
385. The barbed arrows covered its outer side like a raining cloud,
386. Large stones, one after another, fell with great thuds.
- 386a. Daily the evil wind returns to (attack) the city.
387. Ur, which had been confident in its own strength, stood ready for slaughter,
388. Its people, oppressed by the enemy, could not withstand (their) weapons.
389. (Those) in the city who had not been felled by weapons, died of hunger,
390. Hunger filled the city like water, it would not cease,
391. (This) hunger contorts (people's) faces, it twists their muscles.
392. Its people are (as if) surrounded by water, they gasp for breath,
393. Its king breathed heavily in his palace, all alone,
394. Its people dropped (their) weapons, (their) weapons hit the ground,
395. They struck their necks with their hands and cried.
396. They sought for counsel with each other, they searched for clarification,
397. "Alas, what can we say about it, what more can we add to it?
398. How long until we are finished off by (this) catastrophe?
399. Ur—inside it there is death, outside it there is death,
400. Inside it we are being finished off by famine,
401. Outside it we are being finished off by Elamite weapons.
402. In Ur the enemy has oppressed us, oh, we are finished!"
403. They take refuge behind it (the city walls), they were united (in their fear).
404. The palace that was destroyed by (onrushing) waters has been defiled, its bolt torn out,
405. Elam, like a swelling flood wave, *left only the spirits of the dead.*

Centuries had passed after the great flood of the time of Noah. The nations had scattered to the respective places of their dwelling due to God's judgment at the Tower of Babel. Out of all of the new nations, God called a man named Abram to be the father of a nation through which He would send His Son. The book of Genesis records in Genesis 12:1-3:

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Reflecting on the faith of Abraham, the writer of Hebrews focused on his sojourning in a tent all his life as he anticipated the city of God by faith:

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God (Hebrew 11:8-10).

It is this same city, this same kingdom that this book has in view by faith.

Melchizedek

In Abraham's day the city of Jerusalem was ruled by a priest-king named Melchizedek. Truly little is known about him. The name of the city of Jerusalem is made up of two words: *uru* means city (as Abraham's home had been simply designated) and Salem means peace. So that Jerusalem means "City of peace." Melchizedek's name is also a compound of two words: *melek* means king and *zedek* means righteousness. So the "City of peace" was ruled by the "king of righteousness." All of this anticipated the coming Kingdom of God by way of type.

In the Old Testament there are 1) direct prophecies of Jesus Christ and there are also 2) types of Jesus that may be seen in the people, places, events, or even objects of the narrative. This is a biblical study that should not be dismissed. *Tupos* (type), *antitupon* (antitype), *hupodeigma* (pattern), *parabole* (figure), and *skia* (shadow) are some of the words from the Greek New Testament that point to the validity of such study (see Hebrews 8:5). God knows the future; and thus, some of these types came by strange instructions directly from God. Through these types that were given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God painted beautiful portraits of His Son's first and second coming in the Old Testament. By way of some of these types we may, by faith, also see the outlines of the coming Kingdom.

The Study of Types

A type has been preordained by God and may involve a person, a place, an event, or an object of the Old Testament that anticipates a person, place, event, or object in the New Testament. In typology, the shadow and the object are called type and antitype, respectively. The type is always in the Old Testament. Types are not allegories. Every little detail does not have some corresponding meaning. Several Greek words that express this definition:

Tupos: figure (Rom. 5:14); pattern (Heb. 8:5); ensample (1 Cor. 10:11); example (1 Cor. 10:6).

Anti-tupon: like figure (1 Pet. 3:21); figure (Heb. 9:24)

Hupodeigma: pattern (Heb. 9:23); ensample (2 Pet. 2:6); example (Heb. 4:11).

Parabole: figure (Heb. 9:9, 11:19)

Skia: Shadow (Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 10:1)

New Testament Mention of Old Testament Types

While many Old Testament types are mentioned in the New Testament, the New Testament is not a full commentary on the Old Testament. Jesus taught His disciples from all the scriptures things about Himself (Luke 24:44). If only the explicit Old Testament prophecies and the types mentioned in the New Testament are considered, large sections of the Old Testament would seem void of anticipation of the Messiah. Certain types of the Messiah, while not mentioned in the New Testament, are mentioned in the Old Testament. And still others were discussed by the Jews in anticipation of the Messiah. While special emphasis should be placed on those types mentioned in the New Testament, other types of Christ in the Old Testament may be appreciated. One important rule for this study is never to look for more detail in an Old Testament "shadow" than what exists in its object that is fully illuminated in the New Testament. "New truth" is not the purpose of the Old Testament shadow, and as such is not to be found in the type. Rather, *expect the shadow to resemble the antitype. Never expect to see more detail (or "new" truth) in the Old Testament shadow than in the New Testament antitype.*

In the book of Genesis, the figure of Melchizedek is quite enigmatic. The Scripture records the patriarch Abraham giving him tithes of all that he brought back from the battle with the raiding party of kings from Mesopotamia. It also records Melchizedek blessing Abraham:

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all (Genesis 14:18-20).

The writer of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament reflected on this event:

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him (Hebrews 7:1-10, ESV).

Although some hold that this was a preincarnate appearance of Christ due to the phrase “without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life,” it is best to understand this as relating to the lack of this information being recorded in scripture. His pedigree was not recorded in contrast to the norm for the Levitical priesthood. There was no record of his birth or of his death. The writer then indicated that Melchizedek resembled the Son of God. This is a type.

Since Levi (one of Abraham’s great-grandsons and father of the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament) was yet unborn when Abraham made his offering to Melchizedek, the argument is made that the priesthood of Melchizedek is older and greater. Therefore, the Messiah was not to be a priest from the line of Aaron who was a descendant of Levi. The Lord Jesus would be a priest according to the older, greater priesthood; for David prophesied, “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4).

In 2000 BC the small city of Mechizedek stood on the southern slope of the mountain. The northern height was barren and would be for a thousand years. It was used as a threshing floor, where the wheat was separated from the chaff. This fact underscores the language of John the Baptist two thousand years later when He prophesied that the Lord Jesus would thoroughly “purge His threshing floor” (Matthew 3:12). While the northern height of the mountain was empty in the days of Abraham (2000 BC), King David would purchase the summit a thousand years later from its Jebusite owner.

2000 BC	Abraham on Mount Moriah with Isaac
1000 BC	King David purchases the threshing floor of Arunah the Jebusite for the Temple
959 BC	King Solomon completes the Temple

Mount Moriah, the Temple, and the City of God

In the 22nd chapter of Genesis, God commanded Abraham to take his “only son” Isaac and sacrifice him on one of the mountains that he would show him in the “land of Moriah”:

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" (Genesis 22:1-2).

Abraham took his “only son” whom he loved to Mount Moriah. When the place came into view, he loaded the wood for the sacrifice on the back of his teenage son. As they walked together up the side of the mountain, Isaac saw the knife in his father’s hand, and he knew that his father also carried the fire source for the offering. Isaac asked his father, “Where is the lamb?” Abraham said that God would provide the lamb.

Isaac was young and strong and could likely have escaped his father’s grasp. But this is a story not just of the love of a father for his son, but also of the son’s love for his father. When the picture was complete, God stopped Abraham. Then Abraham saw a ram, the most expensive sacrifice from the flock, with its horns caught in a thorn bush. It is at this moment that Isaac ceases to be a type of Christ and the ram takes his place. The ram with its crown of thorns pictured the Lord Jesus. Even so, Jesus said, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). Abraham called the name of that place “The LORD will provide,” and Moses, about six hundred years later (1440 BC), said, “as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD **He**¹³ shall be seen” (Genesis 22:14).

A thousand years passed after Abraham and Isaac were there on the summit of Mount Moriah. King David was given two witnesses from God to mark the place where the future temple of Solomon would be built. Gad the prophet and the destroying angel marked the site for King David:

And when **the angel** stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." **And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor** of Araunah the Jebusite. Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house." **And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor** of Araunah the Jebusite." So David went up at Gad's word, as the LORD commanded. And when Araunah looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground. And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people." Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you." But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of

¹³ In Hebrew there is no neuter “it”. Nouns and pronouns are masculine and feminine. In this verse it should read “He” shall be seen.

silver. And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel (2 Samuel 24:16-25).

In the next generation, King Solomon built the temple on the summit of Mount Moriah, for the Scripture says, "Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan [Arunah] the Jebusite" (2 Chronicles 3:1).

The Pattern of Two Witnesses

The prophet Gad and the angel were given by God to King David as two witnesses pointing to the ground he should purchase as the place for sacrifice. This is part of a biblical pattern that was confirmed by God's command in the law of Moses requiring two witnesses (see: Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15, and 2 Corinthians 13:1).

Preflood

Enoch and Noah

In the days of the Patriarchs

Abraham and Melchizedek
The two angels who came to Sodom
Joseph's two dreams when young
Joseph interprets two dreams in prison
Joseph interprets Pharaoh's two dreams

In the days of Moses

Moses and Aaron
The ten plagues: two upon the waters, dry land, creatures, vegetation, and heavens
Moses and Joshua

In the days of the prophets and kings

Samuel and the man of God to the house of Eli
Nathan and Gad
Gad and the angel
Bathsheba and Nathan to David
Elijah and Elisha
Obadiah and Joel
Hosea and Amos
Jonah and Nahum
Isaiah and Micah
Zephaniah and Huldah
Jeremiah and Habakkuk

In the time during and after the exile

Daniel and Ezekiel
Haggai and Zechariah
Ezra and Nehemiah

In the New Testament

The voice of the Father and the Holy Spirit as a dove at Christ's baptism

Verily, verily... Amen and amen..., Truly, truly...

Disciples two by two

Two greatest commandments

Two angels at the tomb

Two who appeared as they beheld Christ's ascension

Peter and John to the Sanhedrin

Paul and Barnabus

Paul and Silas

Barnabas and John Mark

Two witnesses yet to come "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth" (Revelation 11:3).

Mount Moriah was the place where God led Abraham and Isaac one thousand years before David would see the place marked by Gad the Seer and the angel. Abraham had been **"looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God"** (Hebrews 11:10). **Two witnesses—the prophet Gad and the angel—marked the place for David to purchase where the Temple was to be built by Solomon.** As David looked at the threshing floor marked by Gad and the angel, he was looking at the foundations that God had chosen, had made in creation, and now marked.



Chapter 4

1446 BC: Moses and the Lineage of the King

Prophecy of the Line of the King Messiah

The first promise of the Messiah came just after the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. When God addressed His adversary, He prophesied the One who was coming to crush the head of the serpent. Moses recorded in Genesis:

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and **her seed**; He shall bruise [crush] thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel (Genesis 3:14-15).

Who can step on the serpent's head, crushing him, defeating him? This is a prophecy of the coming King Messiah's defeat of the adversary of God. In crushing the head of the serpent, the Promised Seed of the woman (Jesus) would bruise His own heel. God was making a play on the word "bruise," which connects to the prophecy of Isaiah 53:5 where the Scripture prophesied that the Lord Jesus would be "bruised for our iniquities."

Tracing the Promised Seed through the Scriptures of the Old Testament

Genesis 12:7 "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him."

Genesis 13:15 "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

Genesis 15:18 "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates..."

Genesis 17:7 "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

Genesis 17:19 "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him."

Genesis 21:12 "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Genesis 22:18 "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Genesis 24:7 "The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."

Genesis 26:3 "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; ⁴ And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Genesis 28:13-14 "And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Genesis 35:12 "And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land."

Genesis 48:4 "And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an everlasting possession."

Exodus 33:1 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, *and* go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it..."

Deuteronomy 1:8 "Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them."

Deuteronomy 4:37 "And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt..."

Deuteronomy 11:9 "And that ye may prolong *your* days in the land, which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey."

Deuteronomy 34:4 "And the LORD said unto him, This *is* the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither."

Tracing the Promised Seed through the Scriptures of the New Testament

Acts 13:23 "Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus..."

Romans 1:3 "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."

Romans 4:13 "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.... ¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all..."

Romans 9:7 "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Galatians 3:16, 19 "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.... 19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."

2 Timothy 2:8 "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel."

Hebrews 2:16 "For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham."

Hebrews 11:18 "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

The coming King Messiah would be the seed of promise (Genesis 3:15). Jeffrey D. Johnson wrote:

Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. The Lord Jesus fulfills both the unconditional promise and the conditional requirement. This is why Paul made it clear that when God made the covenant with Abraham, the promise was not referring to *offsprings* in the plural form, but to an offspring in the singular (Gal. 3:16). When Christ was born, the unconditional promise was fulfilled. When Christ died, the conditional requirement was fulfilled. Therefore, all of the promises reside in *Christ alone*.¹⁴

The line of King Messiah was prophesied and traced through the Pentateuch and the early books of the prophets from Abraham to Isaac, to Jacob, to Judah, to Jesse, and to David the king. This is why the New Testament begins: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1).

¹⁴ Jeffrey D Johnson, with a foreword by Tom Nettles, *The Kingdom of God: A Baptist Expression of Covenant & Biblical Theology* (Conway: Free Grace Press, 2016) 47.



Chapter 5

1446 BC: Moses and the NAME of the King¹⁵

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **The LORD** God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: *this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*” (Exodus 3:13-15, ESV)

“And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, **I am the LORD**: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, **I am the LORD, and** I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: **I am the LORD.**” (Exodus 6:2-8, ESV)

“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, **The LORD, The LORD** God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped” (Exodus 34:5-8, ESV).

As will be shown in this chapter, God has only one personal NAME revealed in the Bible. The exact pronunciation is unknown. While western scholars often give the impression that they are certain of its pronunciation, the truth is that they do not know for sure.

¹⁵ The custom is to use all capital letters as a symbol for God's name in Hebrew (eg. LORD, NAME).

This may sound unusual to you. After all, there are many studies of the “names” of God. However, there is only one name—all the rest are epithets for God, appositives, descriptors used in place of the divine name out of reverence. They are important as well, but the NAME of God is to be distinguished from them and held in reverence.

I do not pronounce the personal name of God for three reasons: 1) no one knows the pronunciation for certain; 2) there is an extremely old tradition of showing reverence to the NAME often by avoiding its pronunciation; and 3) it greatly offends Jews and also some Jewish believers in Jesus. We should also be very careful with the use of the name of Jesus, for the name of Jesus is made up of the holy name of God used with the verb “to save” and signifies “The LORD saves.”

The NAME of God is preserved in the Hebrew Bible with the following four consonants:

יהוה

The equivalents in English are YHVH (or YHWH, *Vav* may have been closer to English “W” in antiquity).

Here are some examples of Hebrew words, compounds, and phrases used in reverence for divine NAME replacement:

Adonai: This word conveys a double idea of owning and ruling. The Greek equivalent as evidenced in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) is the word *Kurios*. The Hebrew word *Adonai*, the Greek equivalent *Kurios*, and the English word *Lord* all convey the concepts of owning and ruling. As applied to God it captures His ownership and rule of all things.

Elohim: (a masculine plural form of *Eloah* that was paired with a masculine singular verb). **This is not a proper name.** It is the generic word “God” written in Hebrew in the masculine plural, sometimes referred to as a majestic plural, and providentially anticipating the mystery of the triune nature of God.

El + a characteristic or quality of God. Examples include *El Shaddai*, *El Elyon*, *El Gibbor*, *El Olam*, *El Roi*.

YHVH + a characteristic or quality of God. Examples include *YHVH Jireh*, *YHVH Rapha*, *YHVH Sabaoth*, *YHVH Shalom*, *YHVH Shammah*, and *YHVH Tsidkenu*.

haShem: This literally means “The NAME.”

Kurios: This is the equivalent in Greek of the Hebrew word *Adonai* and the English word *Lord*. It was used as the main divine NAME replacement in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint (abbreviated as LXX related to the tradition of seventy translators, about 250 B.C.). This was done so that those who were not in covenant with God would not use His holy NAME or take His NAME in vain. It was *Kurios* who made the world, delivered them from Egypt, led them into the promised land... and this was clear to the early Greek speaking Christians who confessed “Jesus is *Kurios*.”

Exodus 3: The Meaning of the NAME of God

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **The LORD** God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: **this is my name for ever**, and this is my memorial unto all generations” (Exodus 3:14-15).

The name of God, rendered as the LORD in English Bibles, is distinguished from all the epithets and descriptive phrases used of Him in Exodus 3. The word that Moses is emphasizing is the word in verse fifteen that is in all capital letters (LORD). Printers of Bibles have used that convention for centuries to indicate where the NAME of God occurred in the text of the Old Testament. That word, capital “L,” capital “O,” capital “R,” and capital “D” is not technically an English word. It is a symbol for God's holy NAME. That is the word (LORD) that God was making a play on when He said to Moses “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14). “I am” begins with the Hebrew letter *Aleph*, indicating first person singular pronoun (I) while God's NAME begins with the Hebrew letter *Yod* indicating third person pronoun “He.”

“I am that I am” in verse 14 is a play on God's NAME found in verse 15. What is the sense of this play on words? “I AM” and the NAME of God come from the same Hebrew verbal root. With “I AM” God was pointing to His eternality, the fact of His existence, and the lack of any requirement on His part to offer any explanation. His NAME, however, points to His role as the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

According to William Foxwell Albright, who was one of the foremost linguists of the twentieth century in Ancient Near Eastern languages, the sense of the NAME of God comes from the causative idea of the verb “to be.”¹⁶ Taking the third masculine singular initial letter *Yod* as “He” together with the sense of the stem indicated by the “a” vowel that is the only vowel known for certain... together with the idea of the verb... yields “He causes to be.” God's NAME points to His act of creating all things and His continued power of sustaining all creation.

“For by him **were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, **and by him all things consist**” (Colossians 1:16-17).

“And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: **for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created**” (Revelation 4:9-11).¹⁷

¹⁶ William Foxwell Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (Baltimore: Johns-Hopkins, 1940) 258-60. See also: William Foxwell Albright, “Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 42, 370-78; David Noel Freedman, “The Name of the God of Moses,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 79, 15-56.

¹⁷ This is the Byzantine Majority Text/Textus Receptus reading here (εἰσιν) for “they are” as found in the KJV, NKJV, CSB and the HCSV.

Exodus 6: God Links the Essence of His Name to His Judgments

“And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, **I am the LORD**: 3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. 4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. 5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. 6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, **I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments**: 7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: **I am the LORD**” (Exodus 6:2-8).

What we see in Exodus 6 is on the heels of Moses and Aaron feeling like everything is coming undone. But the LORD was just getting started. While God made a play on His NAME in chapter three to Moses, now He begins to fill His NAME with meaning that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had never experienced. He was about to demonstrate that He created all things and sustains them by His power.

God first stated His NAME in Exodus 6:2, “I am the LORD.” He would conclude this audience with Moses with the same phrase, “I am the LORD.” But in the middle of this passage, God linked His NAME to what He was about to do. In verse six, the LORD said, “**I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments.**” Through the plagues He would demonstrate the significance of His NAME. God was about to show Moses, Israel, Pharaoh, and all Egypt that “He causes to be”—that He is the Creator, the Sustainer of all of creation, and the Judge to whom all creation is accountable.¹⁸

The phrase in verse six “and with great judgments” was God’s dramatic emphasis on what He was about to do. He was about to fill His NAME with meaning in a way that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never experienced. At the birth of the nation the LORD was going to demonstrate the significance of His NAME. Then at Mount Sinai, the entire camp of the Israelites at the foot of the mountain heard God say, audibly, “I am the LORD thy God.” And He went on to declare in Exodus 20 that in six days, He made the heavens, the earth, and the seas, and all that is in them.

First, by the plagues, God did. Then He taught. He never changes. In Acts Chapter one, Luke wrote to Theophilus, “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach...” (Acts 1:1). That was also the case long before in Exodus. First, God did. And then from the top of Mount Sinai, He taught. He is the One who created all things in six days and rested on the seventh day. He causes to be.

¹⁸ Robert Kirk Kilpatrick, *Against the gods of Egypt: An Examination of the Narrative of the Ten Plagues in the Light of Exodus 12:12*. Dissertation, May 1995.

Exodus 33-34: God Links His Nature and His Glory to His Name

The psalmist wrote that the LORD, “made known **His ways** to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel” (Psalm 103:7). This Psalm captures God’s self-revelation in the book of Exodus. His mighty works from the Nile, to the Red Sea, to the descent at Sinai were known to the newly formed nation; but His ways were the special interest of Moses.

In the book of Exodus the name of the mother of Moses is given as Jochebed (יֹכֶבֶד, *Yohchaved*) meaning “the LORD of glory.” Long after the time of Moses’ youth, his birth-mother’s influence was strong in his life. Moses’ request, at eighty years of age, to see the glory of God seems too great a coincidence. In Exodus 33:12-19, during one of his audiences with God at Sinai, Moses asked the LORD, “Show me now Your way that I may know You... Please, Show me Your glory.” The LORD replied, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

The text goes on to say:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. 2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. 3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. 4 And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed,

The **LORD**, The **LORD** God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O **Lord**, let my **Lord**, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance. 10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. 11 Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite (Exodus 34:1-11).

Here is a further analysis (*next page*):

Exodus 34:6-7

*God says His name twice followed by exactly 30 words in Hebrew...
This points to His holiness and the absolute necessity of atonement.*

יהוה

Adonai

אל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן

God of mercy and grace;

אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֻנָה:

longsuffering and great of covenant faithfulness
and truth;

נֹצֵר חֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים

keeping covenant faithfulness for thousands;

נִשָּׂא עוֹן וּפְשָׁע וְחַטָּאת

lifting up [forgiving] iniquity, and transgression,
and sin

יהוה

Adonai

וְנִקָּה לֹא יִנָּקֶה

but who will surely not clear [*the guilty*]:

פָּקֵד עוֹן אֲבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the
children,

וְעַל־בְּנֵי בָנִים עַל־שְׁלִשִׁים

even upon the children's children unto the
thirds,

וְעַל־רְבָעִים:

and unto the fourths [*generations*].

*Flowing out of the nature of God:
Justifier (Romans 3:26)*

First fifteen words in Hebrew:

Grace and Mercy

The Tabernacle

First Coming of Christ (See Isaiah 61:1-2a)

Office of High Priest

Jonah Quotes (Jonah 4:2)

*Flowing out of the nature of God:
Just (Romans 3:26)*

Second fifteen words in Hebrew:

Judgment and Wrath

The Law

Second Coming of Christ (See Isaiah 61:2b-3)

Office of King

Nahum Quotes (Nahum 1:3)

Moses grew up in Egypt, and there the names of gods and pharaohs in hieroglyphs were often arranged within a double or dual cartouche. An actual representation of the name of an Egyptian god, goddess, pharaoh, or queen would include verbiage praising the false deity; so, the cartouche below is empty of hieroglyphs:



The two-part structure of the passage in Exodus 34 may be seen from the double pronouncement of the NAME to the balanced presentation of the 30 words that presented the nature of the LORD. After the double-pronouncement of the name, which occurs only here in all of the Hebrew Bible, the LORD used 15 words to describe His mercy and grace, and another 15 words to describe His justice and wrath—or by letter count, 55 letters given to grace and 51 to justice.

The proclamation of the NAME of the LORD, the words describing the nature of the LORD, and the effect of His glorious presence resulted in Moses bowing down with his face to the earth and then responding by using the term *Adonai* twice (Exodus 34:9, see “Lord” twice versus “LORD”). This appears to mark the beginning of the ancient custom of divine name replacement with *Adonai*.

This statement was in response to Moses’ request to know the LORD’s “way” (Exodus 33:13). The LORD revealed Himself as both a God of mercy and grace, and as a God of justice and wrath. Taken together, this appears as the best definition of “Holy”— meaning “set apart” by His wonderful nature. In this way the seraphim (Isaiah 6:3) and the Living Creatures (Revelation 4:8) praise Him round the clock as “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

Yet, in considering the two parts of the proclamation, there is an apparent contradiction in the passage. The God who desires to forgive declares He will not acquit the guilty. The two parts of the proclamation appear mutually exclusive, presenting an enigma for those desiring to understand the nature of God. However, it is a contradiction in appearance only when context is considered. How can God “lift up” sin, transgression, and iniquity—effectively clear the guilty—while at the same time not clearing the guilty? This apparent problem is resolved when it is considered that the answer is by atonement—and that this passage stands between the two sections of Exodus where the description of the tabernacle is given.

Two things were given at Sinai: The Law (Exodus 20-23) and the Tabernacle (Exodus 25-31 and 35-39).

The Tabernacle was the place for atonement to satisfy the gracious nature of God, and the Law was the reflection of God’s perfect justice. In Romans 3 Paul wrote of the Lord’s desire to forgive. Paul declared God’s actions in the death of Christ were such “that he might be **just**, and the **justifier** of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:26). Three times as many chapters were given in Exodus to the

Tabernacle design and completion than to the Law (consisting of the commandments in Exodus 20 and His Judgments in Exodus 21-23).

Leviticus 16: God's NAME Called Upon for Forgiveness

When it comes to atonement, the holiest day of the religious calendar stands at the center of the Torah. Instructions for the Day of Atonement were given in Leviticus 16. The book of Leviticus stands at the center of the Pentateuch.

Leviticus may be divided into 37 parts based on the structural marker, "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying." Wilfried Warning pointed out in his excellent work *Literary Artistry in Leviticus*, that God gave the book of Leviticus to Moses through 37 audiences over 30 days at the foot of Sinai.¹⁹ The text of 18 audiences with God were preserved on one side and 18 audiences on the other side of the chapter that gives the service of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement, literally "atonements," stands at the heart of the Torah; and the mercy-seat on the Ark of the Covenant was the focal point for atonement on that day. The LORD is holy, and atonement is the basis for His wrath to be propitiated and for His forgiveness to be extended to the penitent.

The high priest would enter the holy of holies only on the Day of Atonement. There was no lamp or light source for this inner room of the Tabernacle. So, the high priest would enter by way of the dim light that came from the hot coals taken from the brazen altar that were glowing in the shovel he held. These coals were sanctified by the blood of the offerings for the priests and for the people. As the high priest kneeled before the Ark of the Covenant, he sprinkled the holy incense that represented the prayers of the people on the hot coals placed before the Ark. As the incense rose, the glory of God began to illumine the Holy of Holies.

The high priest would carefully place two lines of seven drops of blood on the mercy seat. Seven drops of blood from a bull (offering for the priests) and seven drops of blood from a goat (offering for the people) were placed in view of the cherubim on the golden mercy-seat. Above the heads of the bowed cherubs was the *Shekinah* glory of the LORD. Beneath the drops of blood in the Ark were the unbroken tablets of the Law.

The High Priest would then twice repeat the name of the LORD in that holy setting at that holy moment, calling on the LORD to forgive while the people quietly prayed for the same outside. Between the visible presence of the LORD and the tablets of His law were the seven drops of blood. As the high priest called upon the NAME of the LORD, the blood of the offering was the satisfaction for the divine nature. God desired to clear the guilty, but He could in no way clear the guilty—without atonement.

This ceremony pointed to the need for the propitiation of God's wrath. God was reconciled with His people, and the scapegoat symbolically removed the sin of the camp. Christians believe the LORD intended these things to anticipate better blood than that of bulls and goats, eternal reconciliation made possible with the LORD, and the removal of sin and guilt through the Messiah, the suffering Servant, who would be High Priest, the sacrificial Lamb of God, and the King of kings. In Romans 3:21-26, the Apostle Paul wrote:

¹⁹ Wilfried Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a **propitiation** by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

As Paul reflected on God's desire to be both the Just One and Justifier, which is the very presentation in Exodus 34:6-7, he referred to "propitiation" (Romans 3:25), using the term that in the *Septuagint* used to refer to the mercy-seat on top of the Ark of the Covenant. As in Exodus 34:6-7, Paul described God's desire to justify together with His firm commitment to never clear the guilty. And as in Exodus and Leviticus, in his letter to the Romans Paul pointed to the only remedy: atonement.

As I stated earlier, I do not pronounce the personal name of God (the LORD, יהוה) for three reasons: 1) no one knows the pronunciation for certain; 2) there is an extremely old tradition of showing reverence to the NAME often by avoiding its pronunciation; and 3) it greatly offends Jews and also some Jewish believers in Jesus. Great care should also be taken with the name of Jesus, for the name of Jesus is made up of the holy name of God used with the verb "to save" and signifies "The LORD saves." He was God who came in the flesh and paid the penalty for our sins by His atoning blood.

The Name

On every page and line
the echo of the Name--
To listen for a sign
To see a plan in frame.
A tiny scarlet thread
woven between each line
Not just the letter read
the Spirit ear inclined.
Whispered is the voice
Sometimes shouting loud
that leaves for us the choice
to choose against the crowd.
On every page and line
the echo just the same...
and to my ear it's fine
for Jesus is the Name.

K. Kilpatrick, 10-28-1982



Chapter 6

1406 BC: Moses and the Place of the King's Name

Prophecy of the Scepter of the King

"Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand *shall be* on the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. ⁹ Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? ¹⁰ **The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.** ¹¹ Binding his foal unto the vine, and his donkey's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: ¹² His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk" (Genesis 49:8 -12).

In the book of Genesis Moses preserved the blessings given by Jacob (Israel) to his sons just before his death (18th century BC). Judah is singled out with references to the future kingship and to Messiah the King. The symbol of the lion would be associated with Judah from the lions of Solomon's court to the poetic name of Jerusalem (Ariel, Lion of God), to the Lion of the tribe of Judah in Revelation 5. The scepter in Jacob's prophecy pointed to kingship. The reference to the donkey pointed to judgment, for the judges rode on donkeys during the period of the Judges. The vine was a symbol of the nation. While God was their King, in some mysterious way from the vantage point of those early times, the prophecies of the patriarchs and of the prophets would supernaturally herald that the King was also coming.

Prophecy of the Coming King and Kingdom

¹⁴ **"When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;** ¹⁵ Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. ¹⁶ But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. ¹⁷ Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. ¹⁸ And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: ¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: ²⁰ That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the

commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel” (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

The book of Deuteronomy (written near the end of the wilderness wandering, 1446-1406 BC) is the address of Moses to the elders of Israel in the day of his death, which occurred in the month of February 1406 BC. During this address, Moses made several important prophecies. Although he is often thought of primarily as the mediator of the Law, Moses was also a prophet. Among his most important prophecies, is the prophecy of Christ in Deuteronomy 18:18-19. **In the verses above from Deuteronomy 17**, Moses prophesied the events that would unfold in 1051 BC when the nation would demand a king in the days of Saul. Although God was their King, the LORD God gave prophetic instructions through Moses about the qualifications for the future king. All of this anticipated the line of the kings and of the coming of King Messiah.

Moses’ Prophecy of the Place of the King’s NAME

“For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you. But *when* ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and *when* he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; **Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there;** thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD...” (Deuteronomy 12:9-11).

Alongside the prophecy of the Messiah in Deuteronomy 18 is a lesser appreciated prophecy, even though the implications of it are vast. *It is this prophecy that is quite central to the argument of this book.* While most who write about the Kingdom focus on discussion of covenant, the understanding that there was a series of prophecies that dealt with a specific place helps to bring the progressive revelation about the Kingdom into better focus.

According to Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, God’s Kingdom does not have a certain location in view:

As the New Testament begins, this Old Testament background serves as the basis for its teaching on the kingdom. In the Gospels, and the entire New Testament, the *kingdom* refers primarily to *God’s kingly and sovereign rule*, and it is especially tied to God’s *saving reign* that has broken into this world in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus. It does *not* primarily refer to a certain geographic location; the phrase tells us more about God (the fact that he reigns) than about anything else.²⁰

However, Moses prophesied (Deut. 12:11) that there would be a place that God would choose “to cause His name to dwell there.” This chosen place would be where He would set His name forever (1 Kings 9:3). From eternity past God’s throne was set in heaven; but He would one day join the heavens and the earth. This place that He would choose “to cause His name to dwell there” would be the future place for the throne of His everlasting Kingdom.

²⁰ Peter J. Gentry and Steven J. Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015) p. 246.

As the Kingdom comes into view in the books of Moses:

- 1) In Genesis, in the narratives of Melchizedek (Genesis 14) and of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) anticipate the coming kingdom by way of prophetic type.
- 2) In Genesis, the patriarch Jacob/Israel prophesied that the future king would come from his son Judah's line (Genesis 49:10).
- 3) In Exodus 14, at the Red Sea, they rejoiced and sang the song of Moses "The LORD shall reign forever and ever."
- 4) In Exodus 19:6, the LORD promised that He would make Israel a "kingdom of priests."
- 5) In Numbers 23:21 Balaam noted, about the LORD's presence in the camp of Israel, that "the shout of a king is among them." Yet in Numbers 24:17, Balaam prophesied the future birth of the King.
- 6) In the day of his death, 1406 BC, Moses prophesied (Deuteronomy 17:14f) that there would come a day when they would desire to have a king as the nations around them, and God gave instructions for the king's selection and guidelines for his welfare.
- 7) In the day of his death Moses also prophesied that there would be a place where the LORD would choose "to cause his name to dwell there" (Deuteronomy 12:11). The LORD was their King; thus, this would be the place for the name of the King.

That place marked by Moses prophecy where the LORD would "cause His name to dwell there" would be Mount Moriah. That was the place where, on the southern slope of the mountain, Melchizedek's "city of peace" was located. The northern height was barren in 2000 BC and had been where God led Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22, 2 Chronicles 3:1). These events in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham happened a thousand years before David would choose Mount Moriah for his capital city, also known as Jerusalem, Zion, and "the city of David." After David's reign, Solomon would build the temple there. Mount Moriah would be the place of the crucifixion of the "King of the Jews"; and it will be the place where He will one day "sit on the throne of His father David" (Isaiah 9:6-7). This was and is the place where God set His NAME forever.



Chapter 7

1004 BC: David, Mount Zion, and the Promise of the Kingdom



David and Mt. Zion

“Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David” (2 Samuel 5:7).

“Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2:6, KJV).

“Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion...” (Psalm 9:11).

“A song and Psalm for the sons of Korah. “Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, *in* the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge” (Psalm 48:1-3).

Early in the conquest of Canaan Joshua defeated Adoni-Zedek, the Jebusite king of Jerusalem (Joshua 10). When the tribes received their inheritances in the land, the city was divided as the inheritance of Benjamin (Joshua 18:28). However, the tribe of Benjamin could not expel the Jebusites fully, and they dwelled with them for centuries (Judges 1:21). A seven-year civil war followed the death of King Saul of Benjamin (1011 BC). After the civil war, the tribe of Benjamin, together with the Jebusites, tried to keep the newly anointed King David out of the city of Jerusalem. However, king David took the city and made it his capital about 1004 BC (2 Samuel 5). David moved his headquarters at Hebron, that he had fortified during the civil war, to Jerusalem and made it the “city of David.” He called it Zion.

Verses for Reflection on Mount Zion in the Psalms

*"A Psalm of Asaph. The mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. **Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.** Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah"* (Psalm 50:1-6).

*"Oh that the salvation of Israel **were come** out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, **and** Israel shall be glad"* (Psalm 53:6).

"For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein" (Psalm 69:35-36).

*"But thou, O LORD, shalt endure forever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise, **and** have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory"* (Psalm 102:12-16).

*"A Song of degrees. They that trust in the LORD **shall be** as mount Zion, **which** cannot be removed, **but** abideth forever"* (Psalm 125:1).

*"The LORD hath sworn **in** truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. **For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.** I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for **mine anointed**. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish"* (Psalm 132:11-18).

*"As the dew of Hermon, **and as the dew** that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, **even** life for evermore"* (Psalm 133:3).

"Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 135:21).

*"The LORD shall reign forever, **even** thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD"* (Psalm 146:10).

Verses for Reflection on Mount Zion in the Prophets

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call” (Joel 2:32).

“The LORD also shall roar out of Zion and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her anymore” (Joel 3:16-17).

“And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones *that are* on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, *as* prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously” (Isaiah 24:21-23).

“For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody (Isaiah 51:3).

Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy *shall be* upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; *and* sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isaiah 51:11).

“Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, the holy people, the redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken” (Isaiah 62:11-12).

“And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever” (Micah 4:7).

“Therefore, they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all” (Jeremiah 31:12).

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD” (Zechariah 2:10).

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9, ESV).

Verses for Reflection on Mount Zion in the New Testament

“Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, **‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob’; ‘and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’** As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Romans 11:25-29, ESV).

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel” (Hebrews 12:22-24, ESV).

David, Mount Zion, and the Promise of the Kingdom

After David’s conquest of Jerusalem, he began to consolidate his reign. During this period, he built a palace and had time to reflect on all the blessings of the LORD.

According to Chronicles 29:29, 1 Samuel 15 through 2 Samuel was completed during the ministries of Gad and Nathan. **In 2 Samuel 7 the prophet Nathan related the story of God’s covenant with David.** King David had just finished building his palace. As he sat in a new palace with ceilings of cedar, he thought about the contrast between his palace and the Tabernacle of the LORD. It was then that David expressed to the prophet Nathan his desire to build a temple to the LORD.

The LORD’s response to David came by way of a play on the word “house.” Nathan the prophet revealed by the word of the LORD that David would not build a “house” (in the sense of temple) for the LORD, but that the LORD would build an eternal “house” (in the sense of dynasty) for David.

It was this promise that he held on to throughout his life, even through the darkest chapters of it. And it was this promise, of an everlasting kingdom, that David made the focus of his last inscribed Psalm. The inscription of the Psalm *Tehillah leDavid* means “Praise [to God] ascribed to David.” It is the only Psalm so inscribed. From this inscription came the title for the whole book of Psalms in Hebrew, *Sepher Tehillim*, the Scroll of Praises. David placed his thoughts of the promised Kingdom at the heart of the Psalm:

All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations (Psalm 145:10-13).

In addition to being the focus of David's last inscribed Psalm, the promised Kingdom was also the expression of David's faith and hope in his last words. On his deathbed David looked toward this promise that the LORD had made to him of the everlasting Kingdom (quoted below in the JPS and the NAS):

Now these are the last words of David: The saying of David the son of Jesse, and the saying of the man raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet singer of Israel: The spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was upon my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'Ruler over men shall be the righteous, even he that ruleth in the fear of God, And as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds; when through clear shining after rain, the tender grass springeth out of the earth.' For is not my house established with God? **for an everlasting covenant He hath made with me, ordered in all things, and sure; for all my salvation, and all my desire, will he not make it to grow?** (2 Samuel 23:1-5, JPS)

Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel, 2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. 3 "The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God, 4 Is as the light of the morning *when* the sun rises, A morning without clouds, *When* the tender grass *springs* out of the earth, Through sunshine after rain.' 5 "Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, Ordered in all things, and secured; **For all my salvation and all my desire, Will He not indeed make *it* grow?** (2 Samuel 23:5, NAS)

His rhetorical question in verse five concerning the future of his throne ("For all my salvation and all *my* desire, Will He not indeed make *it* grow?") calls for the unreserved affirmative response, "Surely He will!" It is the root of the word "cause it to grow" (יַצְמִיחַ / *yašmiyah* from the root צָמַח / *šāmāḥ*) in Hebrew that lays the foundation for the messianic allusion of the psalmist (132:17) and of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. In one of these allusions to this messianic vein of prophecy, Isaiah used the word *nēšer* (*netser*), meaning branch, shoot, sprout to refer to the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1).

The everlasting Kingdom promised to David was not only the frequent meditation of King David, but it was also the meditation of other saints of the Kingdom. In the Psalm inscribed to Ethan the Ezrahite (Psalm 89), the psalmist lamented the current conditions of the Hebrew people while looking back to God's promise to David. He then looked forward in faith toward their restoration.

Thus, David thought on the everlasting Kingdom promised to him in his last inscribed Psalm and on his deathbed, while other believers who knew about this covenant also called it to mind. This was a covenant known among the redeemed and treasured by them, just as David clung to this promise through his reign. As recorded by the psalmist Ethan the Ezrahite, it was the everlasting covenant that God had made with King David that gave the psalmist hope in dark times. Over and over in Psalm 89, the psalmist emphasizes "forever":

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite. I will sing of the mercies of the LORD **forever**; to all generations will I make known Thy faithfulness with my mouth. For I have said: '**Forever** is mercy built; in the very heavens Thou dost establish Thy faithfulness. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish **forever**, and build up thy throne **to all generations**. Selah. And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? *who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him. O LORD God of hosts, *who is* a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine: *as for* the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name. Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, *and* high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou *art* the glory of their strength: and in thy favor our horn shall be exalted. For the LORD *is* our defense; and the Holy One of Israel *is* our king. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him **for evermore**, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make *to endure forever*, and his throne **as the days of heaven**. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure **forever**, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established **forever** as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah" (Psalm 89:1-37).

In David's vision of the crucifixion of Christ in Psalm 22, he mentioned the Kingdom. He prophesied that all nations would worship before God's throne because of the work of Christ:

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom *is* the LORD'S: and he *is* the governor among the nations (Psalm 22:27-28).

The kingdom of David would be everlasting because of the Anointed One who would be born to the genealogical line of David. Christ would come the first time to redeem us and to provide salvation to be

proclaimed among all nations. As Isaiah prophesied, Christ will come the second time to sit upon the throne of David and rule over all nations:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, **upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom**, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6-7).



Chapter 8

959 BC: Solomon and the Eternal Place of the King's NAME

"And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me: **I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever**; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (1 Kings 9:1-3).

The scroll of 1-2 Kings was not just history, but history written by the hand of a prophet. Nearly every chapter in 1-2 Kings contains either a prophecy given, a prophecy fulfilled, or the description of the ministry of a prophet. The books of 1-2 Kings form the historical framework into which most of the writing prophets fit. While the role of the prophet is often in view, the underlying story of 1-2 Kings is a history of worship during the kingdom period that points to the importance of purity in worship and morality, as well as the regular need for revival.

It is a tale of two temples: the temple of the LORD built by Solomon, and the temple of the golden calf built by Jeroboam. Both temples are built in 1 Kings and then destroyed in 2 Kings. Along the way, five of the seven great revivals of the Old Testament are described by Jeremiah, the traditional author.²¹ The prophet participated in the greatest of these revivals in the days of the young King Josiah. Josiah was prophesied by name in 1 Kings 13 long before his birth, and long before the reforms he carried out that were recorded in 2 Kings during the life and ministry of Jeremiah.

AN OVERVIEW OF 1-2 KINGS

From the death of King David and ascension of Solomon to the fall of the Southern Kingdom in 586 BC, the author presents the Kingdom of Israel fracturing in relation to the prophetic word in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 (see 1 Kings 10:1-25, wealth; 10:26-29, horses; 11:1-3, wives; and 1 Kings 11:9-13). Of 1-2 Kings, Paul R. House wrote, "These books boldly state that history and theology are inseparable. History gives theology a context, while theology gives history meaning."²²

²¹ *Baba Bathra*, 15a provides the oldest tradition that, "Jeremiah wrote the book which bears his name, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations."

²² Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, in the *New American Commentary* series, 8 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman) 73.

This is history written by a prophet and focused upon the ministry of prophets who called the people to single-hearted devotion and worship of the Lord—and who warned them of judgment if they departed from the Lord. Rabbi Israel Slotki wrote:

The account of the rise and fall of Solomon drives home in an impressive manner the lesson that so long as a man walks in the path of righteousness all is well with him; but no sooner does he deviate therefrom than he becomes subject to Divine retribution. This is true of a king as well as of a common man. The sinfulness of idolatry in all its forms, the duty of wholehearted devotion to the laws of God, the maintenance of His worship in purity and the restriction of the sacrificial ritual to the central sanctuary in Jerusalem are fully illustrated; and, as with the individual, a people's obedience to God is rewarded by national security and prosperity while disobedience is punished by national calamity.²³

The rabbi's observations, though written in the mid-twentieth century, are certainly relevant today. One of the reasons that history should be studied is to avoid making the same mistakes of the past. After the fracturing of the Kingdom of Israel, God sent revival at intervals over centuries. When there was revival, there was deliverance. Without the consuming fire of revival, the destroying fire of judgment fell. This message is timeless.

Worship, Revival, and the Place where God Set His NAME Forever

The approach to God must be prescribed by God. The Law was their schoolmaster to bring them to the gate of the tabernacle in the days of Moses, just as it is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ who was pictured in the Tabernacle. But centuries before David would make Jerusalem his capital, the LORD spoke prophetically through Moses of the future temple site at Jerusalem:

Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD (Deuteronomy 12:11).

Ultimately, the exact spot was marked in the time of David by two witnesses: the angel of the LORD and Gad the seer (prophet). The chronicler wrote, "Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (1 Chronicles 21:18). God ordained the worship at Jerusalem from the temple being built there (2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles 21:18); to the make-up of the priesthood that would serve there (Deuteronomy 21:5, Numbers 17:8); to the festivals to be celebrated there (Exodus 23:14-17, Deuteronomy 16:16).

King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple at Jerusalem (1 Kings 8 and 2 Chronicles 6) was marked by seven conditional structures that contain both protasis and apodosis (If... then hear from heaven):

1. Petition regarding supernatural justice in response to prayer (1 Kings 8:31-32).
2. Petition regarding national sin and defeat in warfare (1 Kings 8:33-34).

²³ Israel W. Slotki, *Kings: Hebrew Text & English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (London: Soncino, 1950), xi.

3. Petition regarding national sin and drought (1 Kings 8:35-36).
4. Petition regarding individual and/or national repentance (1 Kings 8:37-40).
5. Petition regarding the gentile who prays toward the Temple (1 Kings 8:41-43).
6. Petition regarding the prayers of soldiers from a distant battlefield (1 Kings 8:44-45).
7. Petition regarding national sin, captivity, and the prayer of captives (1 Kings 8:46-51).

In immediate response to this prayer, the fire of God fell from heaven (see 2 Chronicles 7:1 and Leviticus 9:23-24), receiving the sacrifices and starting the fire for Temple worship (used for the sacrifices, burning incense, and lighting the lamps). As the cloud of glory moved past the Holy of Holies, past the veil, it was visible at the door of the holy place, thus providing an excellent example of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

It is the private response that God gave to Solomon that provides the prescription for revival. The LORD appeared to Solomon by night (1 Kings 9:1-9 and 2 Chronicles 7:12-22) and answered Solomon's earlier prayer with the words so familiar to believers who study revival (2 Chronicles 7:12-14):

And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Thus, the worship of the LORD at Jerusalem was linked to the need for revival from the foundation of the temple at Jerusalem. The LORD's response was a call to turn from the sins of pride, prayerlessness, self-sufficiency, apathy, idolatry, and the toleration of every other "wicked way." Without such genuine humility and repentance there would be no revival—and no deliverance.

During Solomon's audience with God, The LORD said:

I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, **to put my name there forever**; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually (1 Kings 9:3).

Even though some wicked kings would rule over Judah long after the days of David and Solomon, the Chronicler pointed to the faithfulness of God to the covenant that He had made with the house of David:

Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons forever (2 Chronicles 21:7).

In 1406 BC, the LORD had revealed to Moses that there would be a place where He would cause His NAME to dwell forever. In 959 BC, God revealed to Solomon that the place where he would put His NAME forever was Jerusalem, the pinnacle of Mount Moriah, the Holy of Holies on Mount Zion.



Chapter 9

700 BC: Isaiah, Micah, and the Mountain of God

“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:1-4, KJV)

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Micah 4:1-3, KJV)

In the account of the martyrdom of Isaiah,²⁴ the prophet is said in the days of King Manasseh to have gone down to Bethlehem shortly before his death in the company of the prophet Micah and others. It was there in Bethlehem that I believe the prophet Isaiah finished his manuscript (likely writing much of chapters 40-66 by way of vision, and chapters 1-4 by way of preface).

I believe that it was at Bethlehem where Micah wrote the incredible prophecy of the birth of Christ:

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

The context of Micah's prophecy contrasted the "tower" city of Jerusalem (Micah 4:8) that would be without a king with the tiny town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) where the future king would be born. In the shadow of the tower the King would be born. This King would enter time at Bethlehem--but He existed

²⁴ See Charles, R. H. “The Martyrdom of Isaiah” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* Oxford: Clarendon, 1913. This appears to be connected to the mention in Hebrew 11:37, “sawn asunder.”

before it! The One who was born at Bethlehem was the Lord Jesus Christ. The angel said to call Him Jesus because "He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). His name means Savior. His disciples called Him Lord. This was the word used in the Greek Old Testament for the name of God. Thus, when they said, "Jesus is Lord!" they were declaring "Jesus is God!" Lord means "owner/ruler." He owns and rules everything. They called Him Christ, which means "Anointed One/Promised One." The Gospel, as it is given in the Bible is that Christ "died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The Christ (Greek) or Messiah (Hebrew) was the One who would fulfill the promises of God.

There at Bethlehem, I also believe that both Isaiah and Micah received the same vision, recorded in Isaiah 2 and in Micah 4:

The Mountain of the LORD's House in the Last Days

Isaiah 2:1-4

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Micah 4:1-3

But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Isaiah saw it. Micah saw it. God gave two witnesses because of the sureness of the vision's future realization. In the days of Isaiah and Micah, Jerusalem had fallen into apostasy; but the LORD blessed them by showing to them the glorious future of the city before the martyrdom of Isaiah.

Behind them Jerusalem had fallen into the days of wickedness and apostasy that would mark the reigns of Manasseh and his son Amon. Yet before them, by way of validated, repeated vision was the glorious future of the mountain of the LORD's house, the place where His NAME would dwell forever.



Chapter 10

700 BC: Isaiah and the Missions of King Messiah

Messiah as Priest and King in the Hebrew Bible

While prophets, priests, and kings were all anointed in biblical times, priests and kings in Judah were chosen from carefully traced genealogical lines. The priests were from Aaron. The kings descended from David. The “son of David” was anointed by the priest upon ascension to the throne as the rightful heir of David. As David was a warrior, a king, and a judge, so this “son of David” would share these traits. As David lay dying, he spoke of his hope of the promised Kingdom:

Now these are the last words of David.

“David the son of Jesse declares,
The man who was raised on high declares,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel,

The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.
The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me,

'He who rules over men righteously,
Who rules in the fear of God,
Is as the light of the morning *when* the sun rises,
A morning without clouds,
When the tender grass *springs* out of the earth,
Through sunshine after rain.'

Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, Ordered in all things, and secured; **For all my salvation and all my desire, Will He not indeed make *it* grow?**

But the worthless, every one of them will be thrust away like thorns, Because they cannot be taken in hand; But the man who touches them Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, And they will be completely burned with fire in *their* place."

[2 Samuel 23:1-7, NAS]

Salvation and judgment were in David's last words that focused on the promised Kingdom. This focus was messianic. As noted earlier in this book, David's rhetorical question in verse five concerning the future of his throne ("For all my salvation and all *my* desire, Will He not indeed make *it* grow?) calls for the unreserved affirmative response, "Surely He will!" It is the root of the verbal "cause it to grow" (*yatsmiach*) in Hebrew that lays the foundation for later messianic allusions by way of the noun *tsemach* and its partial synonym *netser*. Through the centuries the Branch prophecy would grow with each successive prophecy. The psalmist in 132:17 and the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah all contributed to the development of this important motif. In one of these allusions to this messianic vein of prophecy, Isaiah used the word *netser*, meaning "branch, shoot, sprout" to refer to the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1).

In Isaiah 6:13, as the Lord called the prophet Isaiah, He indicated that the kingdom of Judah would be cut down like a tree, leaving only a stump of what once was a much greater kingdom. The hope then was the birth of a future son of David, described as a coming Branch, the rightful heir to the throne. In the ninth chapter four epithets were given: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. The enigma presented was of a child who would be both king (counselor and prince as synonyms of *melek*, King) and God.

Isaiah's contemporary, Micah, left a similar mystery, one dealing with time, regarding the one to be born at Bethlehem whose goings forth were from the "days of eternity" (Micah 5:2). The Branch would come from Jesse; yet, the Branch (*netzer*) would also be the root (*shores*) of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1, 10); thus leaving again the enigma, "How can the descendant of Jesse also be the source of Jesse?"

Messiah as Priest and King: The "Acceptable Year" and the "Day of Vengeance"

Isaiah 61:1-9

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; **To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God;** to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien *shall be* your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: *men* shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame *ye shall have* double; and *for* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they *are* the seed *which* the LORD hath blessed."

In this this beautiful passage, Isaiah 61, there is One anointed by the LORD sent on a mission described with seven infinitives: 1) to preach good news, 2) to heal the brokenhearted, 3) to proclaim liberty to the captives, **4) to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God**, 5) to comfort all who mourn, 6) to console those who mourn in Zion, and 7) to give them beauty for ashes. At the center of seven infinitives, the phrase “to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God” is the reflection of this section. Here is prophesied both an “acceptable year of the LORD” for salvation and a “day of vengeance” for the justice and wrath of God to be displayed. According to this passage, one Messiah was to announce and to accomplish both salvation and judgment.

The verb “*Nasa*” and the “Acceptable Year of the Lord”

Nasa (the Hebrew word that literally means “to lift up” and by extension means “to forgive”) is the key verb in the first fifteen words of God’s self-revelation in Exodus 34:6-7. The lifting up of sin required a priest and a sacrifice. In Isaiah 61, the “acceptable year of the LORD” speaks of a time that the LORD may be approached for forgiveness. In the context of Isaiah, the noun *ratson* carries the idea of an acceptable time and is often found in contexts dealing with deliverance or of acceptance of persons or acceptance of sacrificial offerings:

Thus saith the LORD: In an acceptable time have I answered thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages... (**Isaiah 49:8**).

Salvation and judgment are frequent themes in the Bible. As noted earlier in chapter five on the NAME of God, God related His nature to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7. He spoke His NAME twice, then God spoke exactly 30 words in Hebrew: 15 words speak of grace and mercy while the next 15 words spoke of judgment and wrath. Flowing out of the nature of God is the Law (judgment and wrath) and the Tabernacle (grace and mercy).

In the context of the whole book of Exodus, the judgments of the LORD upon Egypt and Pharaoh led to the salvation of His people. Anticipating this deliverance, the LORD joined His NAME to what He would accomplish in Egypt:

Therefore say to the children of Israel:
 “I *am* the Lord;
 I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,
 I will rescue you from their bondage,
 and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm
 and with great judgments” (Exodus 6:6).

Thus, as the LORD judged the Egyptians, He saved the Hebrew people.

Among the minor prophets, concerning Nineveh, Jonah quoted Exodus 34:7a, while a century later Nahum quoted Exodus 34:7b. Like the balance of 15 words between the two halves of the passage in Exodus 34, the books of Jonah and Nahum are nearly the exact same length. Jonah ends with a question dealing with grace, while Nahum ends with a question that alludes to the wrath of God.

The holy nature of the LORD is revealed as encompassing both salvation and judgment. The verb *nasa* ("to lift up, to forgive") is not only used with relation to sin, transgression, and iniquity in Exodus 34, but it also comes into view in Psalm 32 where David reflects on the blessed state of those who have been forgiven:

Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is forgiven* [*nasa*], *Whose sin is covered*. Blessed *is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit* (Psalm 32:1).

In Isaiah chapter one, the nation of Israel is depicted in need of a national day of atonement. Sin, transgression, and iniquity are all used in the opening verses to describe the nation's condition. The spiritual condition of the nation is likened to a donkey or an ox that is sick, in rebellion to its owner, and has been beaten, bruised, and has untreated sores. All of these words return in Isaiah 53. But in this chapter a chorus sings about someone who had done no violence and was innocent as He took upon Himself the griefs, the stripes, the wounds, bruises, sins, transgressions, and the iniquity of those who sang in chorus in Isaiah's vision.

In Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the verb *nasa* is used at the beginning, near the middle, and at the end of the section. In 52:13 the future, exalted state of the Suffering Servant is prophesied by the Word of the LORD to be "high and lifted up" with the same description that Isaiah used in his vision in chapter six of the LORD Himself. Then, in 53:4, He is depicted "lifting up" the griefs of the singing remnant. Sin, transgression, and iniquity are all dealt with by this Servant. This raises the question that begs asking, "Who is this Servant who lifts up sin... only God can lift up sin?" Finally the Servant is said in 53:12 to "lift up the sin of many."

The verb *nasa* also appears to be behind an obscure play on words in the New Testament. In Mark chapter two a paralytic is let down through a rooftop for Jesus to heal him. In response Jesus looks at the man and at his friends and says to the lame man, "Your sins are forgiven." Upon this statement, those in the audience began to reason and murmur as they considered this potential blasphemy because they knew that the Scripture said that only the LORD could forgive sin. Jesus responded:

Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw *anything* like this!" (Mark 2:8-12)

The play on words in this section does not make the connection in Greek that it does in Hebrew. By including the literal sense of *nasa*, the play on words connects:

Which is easier to say... "your sins are lifted up" or "Arise, lift up your bed and walk"? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to lift up sins—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, arise, lift up your bed, and go to your house" (Mark 2:9-11).

The verb *Naqah* and the “Day of Vengeance”

Naqah is the key verb in the second part of God’s self-revelation in Exodus 34:6-7; and in this context it signifies “leaving unpunished.” The LORD revealed Himself as the Just Judge who would surely not allow the guilty to go unpunished. In Numbers 14:18 this thought is repeated:

The LORD is slow to anger, and plenteous in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation (Numbers 14:18, JPS).

Nahum quoted from Exodus 34:7 using *naqah* regarding Nineveh:

The LORD is long-suffering, and great in power, and will by no means clear the guilty; the LORD, in the whirlwind and in the storm is His way, and the clouds are the dust of His feet (Nahum 1:3).

The Gospel of Luke records a significant moment in the ministry of Jesus as He returned to His hometown after word of His miracles had spread throughout Galilee. His choice of reading and especially His chosen place to stop reading are quite interesting:

Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. **And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written :**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” (Luke 4:14-22)

According to this text they waited for Jesus’ sermon upon reading the text from Isaiah and they were not treated to a lengthy discourse. As interesting as His assertion was about that time, it is hard not to notice that he did not include the rest of the phrase connected to the infinitive. The Anointed One was to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD and the day of the vengeance of God.

Most who think of Jesus think of a meek carpenter who went around doing good. The description in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 is quite different. There Paul wrote of the Second Coming of Jesus:

... and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The presentation of the Second Coming of Jesus in the book of Revelation (chapter 19) is the same as the description by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1.

Thus, the **two missions** of the Messiah may be traced to Exodus 34:6-7 as flowing out of the nature of God. The Messiah Jesus came the first time to “lift up/forgive” (*nasa*) iniquity, transgression and sin. He is coming the second time to judge the world in righteousness for the Holy One will not acquit (*naqah*) the guilty.

And the two missions of the Messiah may be seen throughout the prophecies of Isaiah. As He wrote 700 years before the birth of Christ “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given—**and the government shall be upon His shoulder...**

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, **upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.** The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 61 was read by the Lord Jesus when He came to His hometown of Nazareth. He read to the fourth of seven infinitives and stopped in the middle: “to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD...”. But all of it is about Him. The next phrase is: “and the day of vengeance of our God.” He came the first time—for us and for our salvation—to be both our sacrifice and High Priest. He is coming again as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to judge the world in righteousness.

Isaiah prophesied the two missions of the Messiah seven centuries before the birth of Christ. This chapter is in no way an exhaustive treatment of the interchanging themes of salvation and judgment in Isaiah’s marvelous message. Nor does this chapter capture the many facets of the portraits of Messiah as High Priest and Messiah as King in Isaiah’s prophecy.

In Exodus, the Tabernacle and the Law flow out of the nature of God. In Isaiah, the acceptable year of the LORD (*nasa*) flows out of the nature of God. The day of wrath (*naqah*) flows out of the nature of God. The offices of our great High Priest and King flow out of the nature of God. Salvation and judgment flow out of the nature of the God Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.



Chapter 11

700-586 BC: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Coming Branch

“In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel” (Isaiah 4:2).

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:1-4).

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness” (Jeremiah 33:14-16).

When King David was on his death bed, he spoke of the focus of his desire for the future. This focus was messianic. His rhetorical question in verse five concerning the future of his throne ("For all my salvation and all *my* desire, Will He not indeed make *it* grow?") calls for the unreserved affirmative response, "Surely He will!" It is the root of the word "cause it to grow" (יַצְמִיחַ / *yašmiyaḥ* from the root צָמַח / *šāmāḥ*) in Hebrew that lays the foundation for the messianic allusion of the psalmist (132:17) and of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. In one of these allusions to this messianic vein of prophecy, Isaiah used the word *nēšer* (*netser*), meaning branch, shoot, sprout to refer to the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1).

נֶצֶר // *NeTSeR*

Jesus the Nazarene does not signify "Nazarite"—because it is not a "z." The Greek equivalent to "z" (ζ) leads us at first to think of Hebrew "z" = ז (*zayin*). While Hebrew has a "z," Greek did not have a "ts"

consonant. Therefore, in Greek they rendered the Hebrew (צ) "ts" as the Greek "z" (ζ). Hence, we read in English, "He shall be called a Nazarene" when it should be understood, "He shall be called Natsarene [i.e. "the Branch"]."

Isaiah 4:2	The Beautiful Branch
Isaiah 6:13	The Branch from the stump of the felled tree of Judah
Isaiah 11:1	(The Branch from Jesse's household (On the community of the Branch see also Isaiah 60:21 and 61:3))
Jeremiah 23:5-6	The Righteous Branch
Jeremiah 33:15-16	The Righteous Branch
Ezekiel 29:21	The horn that will "sprout"
Zechariah 3:8	My Servant the Branch
Zechariah 6:12	The man whose name is The Branch
Psalms 132:17	The horn of David that will "sprout"
Matthew 2:23	He shall be called a Natsarene
Acts 24:5	The sect of the Natsarenes

Far from being a recent discovery, this apparent relationship between *netser* and Nazareth was proposed by Eusebius' (260-341 AD) *Onomasticon* and Jerome's (345-420 AD) *Ad Marcellam*, Epist. 46:13. From Jerome's Letter XLVI, PAULA AND EUSTOCHIUM TO MARCELLA, Paragraph 13: "If only you will come, we shall go to see Nazareth, as its name denotes, the flower of Galilee."

In the New Testament the motif continues. Matthew made the connection with these prophecies when he noted that it was written that "He shall be called a *Natsarene*" (2:23); while in Acts 24:5, Luke referred to the way that the early Christians were called the "sect of the *Natsarenes*." Far from being a recent discovery, this apparent relationship between *netser* and Nazareth was proposed by Eusebius (260-341 AD) in his *Onomasticon* and was also mentioned by Jerome (AD 345-420).²⁵

The Branch and Isaiah 53

Of whom does Isaiah speak? He speaks of the Messiah, as many ancient rabbis concluded. The second verse of Isaiah 53 makes it crystal clear. The figure grows up as "a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground." The shoot springing up is beyond reasonable doubt a reference to the Messiah, and, in fact, it is a common Messianic reference in Isaiah and elsewhere.

The Davidic dynasty was to be cut down in judgment like a felled tree, but it was promised to Israel that a new sprout would shoot up from the stump. The Messiah was to be that sprout. Several Hebrew words were used to refer to this undeniably Messianic image. All the terms are related in meaning and connected in the Messianic texts where they were used.

Isaiah 11, which virtually all rabbis agreed refers to the Messiah, used the words "shoot" (*hoter*) and branch (*netser*) to describe the Messianic King. Isaiah 11:10 called Messiah the "Root (*shoresh*) of Jesse," Jesse being David's father. Isaiah 53 described the suffering servant as a root (*shoresh*) from dry ground, using the very same metaphor and the very same word as Isaiah 11. We also see other terms

²⁵ *Ad Marcellam*, Epist. 46:13. From Jerome's Letter XLVI, PAULA AND EUSTOCHIUM TO MARCELLA, Paragraph 13: "If only you will come, we shall go to see Nazareth, as its name denotes, the flower of Galilee."

used for the same concept, such as branch (*tsemach*) in Jeremiah 23:5, in Isaiah 4:2 and also in the startling prophecies of Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12.

Rabbi Moses Maimonides: "What is the manner of Messiah's advent.... there shall rise up one of whom none have known before and signs and wonders which they shall see performed by him will be the proofs of his true origin; for the Almighty, where he declares to us his mind upon this matter, says, 'Behold a man whose name is the Branch, and he shall branch forth out of his place' (Zech. 6:12). And Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he shall appear, without father or mother or family being known, *He came up as a sprout before him, and as a root out of dry earth, etc....* in the words of Isaiah, when describing the manner in which kings will harken to him, *At him kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived.*"²⁶

²⁶ From the "Letter to the South" (Yemen), quoted in *The Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters*, Ktav Publishing House, 1969, Volume 2, pages 374-5.



Chapter 12

600 BC: Daniel and the Stone that Grew into a Great Mountain

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This image, which was mighty, and whose brightness was surpassing, stood before thee; and the appearance thereof was terrible. As for that image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them; **and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.** This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.... And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; nor shall the kingdom be left to another people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, but it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure” (Daniel 2:31-45, JPS).

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the Ancient of days, and he was brought near before Him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14, JPS).

Daniel was a teenager from the tribe of Judah and was dwelling at Jerusalem when Prince Nebuchadnezzar brought the Babylonian army into Judah. During the siege preparation for Jerusalem, Crown Prince Nebuchadnezzar received word that his father Nabopolassar had died. He took a series of horses and chariots quickly back to the capital where he was crowned as the new king.

Captives from Judah were brought to the newly crowned king at Babylon. Ten thousand choice young captives from Jerusalem were marched to Babylon. Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who would be renamed upon arrival in Babylon. As the book of Daniel relates, “Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of

the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.”

God rewarded the obedience of these four young men by blessing them spiritually. These spiritual blessings caused them to stand out and brought advancement in the service of the king:

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm (Daniel 1:17-20).

Daniel 2 relates events around a dream that was given to Nebuchadnezzar by God. It is in this dream that we see the messianic allusions to the Stone that would grow into a Great Mountain.

Nebuchadnezzar claimed to have forgotten the dream and demanded that his pagan magicians and astrologers relate to him the forgotten dream or he would not believe their interpretation. When they could not, the king sought to kill them all. Daniel and his three friends sent word that they would answer the king. While they prayed that night, God showed the dream of the king to Daniel in a vision. In the morning, Daniel stood before the king:

The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But **there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.** Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible. This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. **Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.** Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: **and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.**

This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and **it shall stand forever**. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure (Daniel 2:26-45).

Six hundred years before the birth of Christ, God gave this dream to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The king of Babylon is a type of the Adversary of God (See Isaiah 14). This dream terrified the king because it is likely that he understood even before Daniel gave him the interpretation that it did not portend good things for his kingdom.

I suspect that the multi-metaled image with a head of gold looked like Nebuchadnezzar, for Daniel said, "Thou *art* this head of gold." As if to shake his fist toward heaven while looking for the source of the "silver" rebellion, in chapter three Nebuchadnezzar makes an image—all of gold—and makes the rulers from all his provinces bow to it. It reminds me of the words of Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens' classic tale when addressing the ghost of Christmas yet to come, "Are these shadows of things that must be, or can these shadows change?" Nebuchadnezzar surely wanted to foil the revelations from the dream. But God rules from heaven.

The kingdoms of Babylon (gold), Medo-Persia (silver), Greece (bronze), and Rome (iron) are all predicted here by way of Daniel's explanation of the meaning of the dream. It is a timeline. The Stone, who is the Messiah as seen in the parallel in chapter seven (Daniel 7:1-14), strikes the image at the feet. This is a prophecy of the "latter days" (Daniel 2:28).

The Stone grows into a Great Mountain and fills all the earth. So, when the Stone strikes, the kingdoms of this world fall—marking the start of the millennial reign of Christ. The Great Mountain is the result as the Mount of the LORD's house, of the LORD's throne, will be raised high above all others at the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ. And He will reign forever and ever.

Prophecies of the Mountain through Time

700 BC, Isaiah 2:1-4

"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains*, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to **the mountain of the LORD**, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

700 BC, Micah 4:1-3

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains*, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to **the mountain of the LORD**, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

600 BC, Daniel 2:34-35

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: **and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.**"

AD 90, Revelation 21:10

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a **great and high mountain**, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...."



Chapter 13

580 BC: Ezekiel and the Angel Cast Out of the Mountain of God

“Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God....’” (Ezekiel 28:11).

Outside of the narratives about the Garden of Eden and the spiritual warfare in the book of Job, there are two passages in the Old Testament that deal with the Adversary of God at length: Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. While Isaiah’s prophecy addresses the devil indirectly by way of the type of the king of Babylon, Ezekiel’s prophecy addresses the fallen angel directly and mentions the holy mountain of God in heaven.

Speaking to His adversary through the prophet Ezekiel, the LORD says:

Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. **Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth**; and I have set thee so: **thou wast upon the holy mountain of God**; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise, they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and **thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub**, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never *shalt* thou *be* any more (Ezekiel 28:13-19).

The LORD announced His immutable resolve to punish this rebel according to this judgment oracle preserved in the scroll of Ezekiel. The LORD spoke of the past and of the future. The angel was in an exalted position until his sinful dealings were exposed by God. Upon discovery, **God cast this angel out of the “mountain of God” (Ezekiel 28:16)**. This is not Zion below, this was Zion above. The holy mountain of God existed before the creation of the world.

Zion Above and Zion Below

In the Bible there is Zion above and there is Zion below. Sometimes the biblical writer is speaking of the earthly city of Jerusalem when he mentions Zion, as when David captured the city, “Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David” (2 Samuel 5:7). But sometimes the biblical writer is speaking of heaven when he mentions Zion:

But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel (Hebrews 12:22).

In keeping with the imagery of the writer of Hebrews, the apostle John in the book of Revelation makes clear that there is a temple and a mountain in the supernatural world where God dwells:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name (Revelation 3:12).

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail (Revelation 11:19).

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the **mount Zion**, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads (Revelation 14:1).

And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle (Revelation 14:17).

And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. (Revelation 15:5).

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done (Revelation 16:17).

Solomon dedicated the newly finished temple to the LORD in 959 BC. King Solomon recognized this truth of Zion above and below in his prayer when he asked in prayer, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? (1 Kings 8:27). This was in keeping with the message of Psalm 11, “The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men” (Psalm 11:4).

Linguistic note: In keeping with the mysterious relationship between Zion above and below, there is an interesting phenomenon when it comes to the word “Jerusalem” in Hebrew. In Hebrew nouns may be singular, plural, or dual. Things which naturally occur in pairs are often referred to using the dual ending in Hebrew. Strangely, the Hebrew name for the city of Jerusalem (“*Yerushalayim*”) has a dual ending.

The Holy Mountain of God before Creation

The angels watched as God laid the foundations of the earth (see Job 38:1-7). The heavenly army surely noticed when God made creatures of the dry land, of the waters, and of the skies that looked like them (consider Ezekiel 1:10). In addition to these likenesses, yet hidden from the angelic host, God made a small mountain and fashioned it after the form of what existed in the heavenly realm with springs of water running to the top of it.

After his temptation of Eve and Adam, Satan was cast out of the holy mountain of God that existed before the creation of the world. Satan had lied and he had killed. He was cast down to the world that God had made to deal with this rebellion.

God made the surface of the earth as a battlefield; and He made it a fiery prison within. Since all the angels watched the LORD as He laid down earth's foundations (Job 38:4-7), they must have seen the formation of hell itself. Even God's adversary the devil saw hell's formation.

Above was the ancient mountain of God in heaven. Below there was a small mountain hidden from His adversary. God would one day join these two mountains. The antitype would meet the type as the New Jerusalem would descend and that small mountain would be raised higher than any other.

Zion's Past, Zion's Future

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*" (Hebrews 12:22-24).

Eternity Past (heavenly Mount Zion): Assembly area on southern side, Temple in the northern height (See Revelation 14:1 & 15:8).

Satan rebels: "thou wast upon the holy mountain of God" (Ezekiel 28:14).
 "I will sit . . . in the sides of the north (Isaiah 14:13).
 "I will cast thee . . . out of the mountain of God" (Ezekiel 28:16).

1. **Creation:** God creates Mount Moriah after the form of the heavenly original; yet He hides it by its lack of a temple and its modest elevation (to be exalted in due time).

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills..." (Isaiah 2:2).

2. **Blessing:** Melchizedek receives Abram's tithe (Gen. 14) and blesses him [*circa* 2000 BC].
3. **Curse:** Jebusites defile the Mount with the worship of the "gods" and "goddesses" of Canaan (after the days of Melchizedek).

4. **Preparation for Worship:** Moses receives the pattern of the Tabernacle at Sinai (after the heavenly prototype, Exodus 25:40, Hebrews 8:5). The Temple at Jerusalem will one day be patterned after the tabernacle (*circa* 1446 BC).

5. **Conquest:** David takes "Zion" (2 Samuel 5:6-7).

"And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. 7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David. 8 And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain*. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. 9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. 10 And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him" (2 Samuel 5:6).

"A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" (Psalm 110:1).

"For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired *it* for his habitation. 14 This *is* my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psalm 132:13-14).

6. **Triumph:** David brings the Ark to Zion (2 Samuel 6:17).

"And they brought in the **ark** of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD" (2 Samuel 6:17).

7. **Demarcation:** The Temple site is marked by the Angel of the LORD and by Gad the prophet (1 Chronicles 21:15-18).

8. **Realization and Occupation:** The Temple is built by Solomon (who is a type of Christ as "son of David," 2 Chronicles 3:1, *circa* 966-959 BC). The *Shekinah* appears.

"Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which *is* Zion" (1 Kings 8:1).

9. **Profanation:** Manasseh and Amon profane the Temple with idolatry and sorcery (7 century BC).

10. **Destruction:** The king of Babylon (a type of satan, Isaiah 14) destroys the Temple (586 BC).

11. **Rebuilding:** The Temple is rebuilt by Zerubabel (516 BC) and later renovated and expanded by Herod the Great (and the Herods who followed, *circa* 19 BC-AD 60).

12. **Visitation:** Jesus comes to the Temple and foretells its destruction by Rome.

13. Destruction and Profanation: Rome destroys the city and the Temple in AD 70. Then after the subsequent revolt in the second century (under Shimon bar Kochba), the Romans build a temple to Zeus/Jupiter on the site of the holy of holies (*circa* 130).

14. Restoration and Eternal Realization: At the Second Coming, the Temple will be restored for the millennial reign. After the thousand years, however, the New Jerusalem will descend from heaven to the recreated earth and settle on the highest of mountains, so permanently joining antitype and type, joining the heavens and the earth forever.

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel" (Hebrews 12:22).

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1).

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:10).



Chapter 14

520 BC: Zechariah, Joshua, and the Branch

“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH” (Zechariah 3:8).

“And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:12-13).

The prophecies of the Branch that began with the scroll of Isaiah (700 BC) had their roots in the dying words of King David. Of the Kingdom that God had promised, David posed the rhetorical question that demanded a strong affirmative response. David said, “Will He not cause it to grow?” (in the sense of sprout and come to fruition). This is the background for all the “Branch” prophecies. The Branch would be the rightful heir to the throne, the Branch on the family tree of King David. This is why the New Testament begins with a genealogy that points back to King David (Matthew 1:1).

Prophecies of the Branch

Isaiah 4:2	The Beautiful Branch
Isaiah 6:13	The Branch from the stump of the felled tree of Judah
Isaiah 11:1	The Branch from Jesse's household
Jeremiah 23:5-6	The Righteous Branch
Jeremiah 33:15-16	The Righteous Branch
Ezekiel 29:21	The horn that will "sprout"
Zechariah 3:8	My Servant the Branch
Zechariah 6:12	The man whose name is The Branch
Psalms 132:17	The horn of David that will "sprout"

As noted in the chapter on Isaiah and Jeremiah's prophecies of the Branch, in the New Testament the motif continues. Matthew made the connection with these prophecies when he noted that it was written that “He shall be called a *Natsarene*” (Matthew 2:23); while in Acts 24:5, Luke referred to the way that the early Christians were called the “sect of the *Natsarenes*.” This relationship between *netser*

and Nazareth was proposed by Eusebius (260-341 AD) in his *Onomasticon* and was also mentioned by Jerome (AD 345-420).²⁷

The Prophet Zechariah and the High Priest Joshua

Zechariah 6:9-13

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Take of *them* of the captivity, *even* of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

Zechariah seated the high priest Joshua on the throne and put on his head the crown of the high priest and the crown of the king. Joshua is the Old Testament form, the Hebrew form, of the name Jesus. This is the culmination of the Branch prophecies announcing that the rightful heir to the throne, the Branch, the prophesied descendant of king David, would be both king and high priest.

How could this be? It was no doubt an enigma intended by God, for the high priest must come from the line of Aaron but the king came from the line of David. The enigma is solved by understanding the prophetic pronouncement of Psalm 110 by King David together with revelation in the New Testament that the priestly line of Messiah would be after that of Melchizedek:

Psalm 110, A Psalm of David.

"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head."

In Zechariah chapter six, the High Priest Joshua was crowned and brought into the succession of "Branch" prophecies functioning by announcement and illustration as a type of a future Priest-King. In the distant past, in the days of the patriarch Abraham, a priest-king had ruled in Jerusalem. Melchizedek was both priest and king of the Most High God.

²⁷ *Ad Marcellam*, Epist. 46:13. From Jerome's Letter XLVI, PAULA AND EUSTOCHIUM TO MARCELLA, Paragraph 13: "If only you will come, we shall go to see Nazareth, as its name denotes, the flower of Galilee."

As noted earlier, these two aspects, priestly and royal, meet in the nature of God. In Exodus 34:6-7 the LORD desires to lift up sin, transgression, and iniquity. Yet He remains the righteous, King-Judge who will not clear the guilty. Atonement is the only resolution to this apparent contradiction in His nature and is in view in the surrounding chapters that describe the construction of the Tabernacle.

As a High-Priest is crowned in Zechariah 6, so in Isaiah 61 a single Anointed-One is prophesied to proclaim both the “acceptable year” of the LORD and His “day of vengeance.” These two elements that follow a single infinitive align well with priestly and royal commissions.

Zechariah and the LORD’s Reign over all the Earth

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9, ESV).

“And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon” (Zechariah 12:9-11).

“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” (Zechariah 13:1).

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” (Zechariah 14:1-4).

“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zechariah 14:9).

Zechariah prophesied that the Branch would be both king and high priest in chapter six. He prophesied the triumphal entry of Jesus in 9:9 that described the future event from the time of Zechariah (520 BC), using language that would have brought to mind the same kind of reception given to Solomon on the day that he was crowned king long before Zechariah’s time in 970 BC (1 Kings 1:30f).

Zechariah also prophesied the second coming of Christ and the battle of Armageddon (Zechariah 12 and 14). He then prophesied the result of that battle, writing: “And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zechariah 14:9).



Chapter 15

450 BC: Malachi and the Messenger of the King

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:1).

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*” (Isaiah 40:3-5).

The book of Malachi provided the last prophetic witness before the 400 years of the silence of the Intertestamental period. While the book of Malachi (450 BC) prophesied the messenger, who would “prepare the way” before the LORD, Malachi’s message was an echo of the earlier prophecy of Isaiah (700 BC) that spoke of the same herald who would proclaim, “Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” Here are the two witnesses who prophesied the ministry of John the Baptist.

When the delegation from Jerusalem went out into the wilderness to ask John who he claimed to be, John told them that he was not the Messiah. When they pressed him, he declared, “*I am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah” (John 1:23).

The name “Malachi” means “My messenger.” Often in the books of the prophets, the prophets would make plays on their own name or the names of their children regarding their prophecies. The book of Malachi followed this tradition making plays on the word “Malachi” at least three times. One of these is in chapter two: “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he *is* the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 2:7).

The *Targum of Jonathan* attributed the book of Malachi to Ezra the priest. There is no father’s name given for “Malachi” and the *Septuagint* seems to indicate that the first verse should be read as the word of the LORD by the “hand of his messenger.” Though the majority of commentaries hold to Malachi

being the name of a prophet, Ezra was certainly qualified, having been used of the LORD to write nearly as much of the Old Testament as Moses.²⁸

Regardless as to the solution of this mystery (that reminds me of the controversies surrounding the book of Hebrews), we shall know fully the answer when Christ comes.

The next plays on the word “Malachi” come in the third chapter:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts (Malachi 3:1).

The LORD is speaking when the verse begins. God says “I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.” This is the LORD’s messenger, the messenger who would go before the LORD of hosts, the King of Israel. While it is true that John the Baptist was prophesied in this passage to be the forerunner for the Messiah, this passage makes clear (harmonizing with the other witness in Isaiah 40) that John the Baptist was the forerunner for the LORD, the King of Israel. That is who Jesus is.

Next, as an appositive to the “Lord whom ye seek” who comes to His temple, is the phrase “the Messenger of the Covenant.” In this passage we see the mystery of the Trinity. The LORD begins to speak and then speaks of the “Lord” (*Adon*) whom you seek. This is connected to the same mysterious relationship that may be seen in Psalm 110 written by King David:

A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool (Psalm 110:1).

The Lord Jesus is the “Messenger of the Covenant.” At His last supper, He took the cup and announced, “this is my blood of the new testament”—the New Covenant. Malachi 3:1 was the prophecy of the coming of the messenger/herald of the LORD (John the Baptist) who would prepare the way before the Messenger of the Covenant (the Lord Jesus).

²⁸ Ezra is the traditional author of 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah (which was one scroll until the fifteenth century AD); and, in addition to bringing the Old Testament cannon to a close, he was credited with the arrangement of many of the Psalms, especially Book 5.



Chapter 16

Anno Domini (AD): The Angels and the NAME of the King

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favored, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women. And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:26-33).

“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20-21).

“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!’” (Luke 2:8-14, ESV)

The Angel’s Message to Mary

The angel Gabriel was the angel who gave to the prophet Daniel the timeline that announced the events that would mark the countdown to the coming of the Messiah (nearly six hundred years before the birth of Christ). When the time had come, the LORD sent Gabriel to announce to Mary the birth of God’s Son.

The angel told Mary the name for the child, Jesus, and that He would be called the “Son of the Highest.” Gabriel announced that she would be the mother of the future King who would sit on David’s throne and reign forever (Luke 1:26-33).

The Angel’s Message to Joseph

Angels are not allowed by the LORD to preach the Gospel. But when the Bible records the generally short messages delivered by the angels, those messages are incredibly full.

In Matthew 1, the angel gave a message of comfort to Joseph. The heavenly messenger gave to Joseph the name of the child to be born of Mary. Revealing much in so short a sentence, the angel said, “... call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). The name “Jesus” is made up of two parts in Hebrew. The “J” is part of the name of God. The rest of the name is from the Hebrew verb “to save.” Normally in a Hebrew sentence the verb comes first. When the subject/noun comes first, as in the name “Jesus,” there is emphasis. The angel was saying call His name “the LORD saves” for He [“the LORD”/referring to the child] will save His people from their sins.

Even though angels are not allowed to preach the Gospel, in that short sentence the angel told Joseph that the child was the LORD from heaven.

The Angel’s Message to the Shepherds

The angel who appeared to the shepherds outside of Bethlehem delivered another short but full announcement: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

In the announcement the angel gives a hint as to the name of the child, “Savior,” for Jesus means “the LORD saves.” He also attached two titles to the child: Christ and Lord. Christ means “Anointed One” — the Hebrew form is Messiah. The word Lord was the word used in reverence as divine name replacement. In other words, by this title, the angel was announcing the deity of the child.

Suddenly the sky was filled with the heavenly army. Their Commander and King was below in the manger. In the book of Joshua, the Lord Jesus was standing outside of the city of Jericho and identified Himself to Joshua as the “Ruler of the Army of the LORD” (Joshua 5:13-15). The Lord Jesus led the army on many occasions (see Micah 5:2, “whose goings forth are from of old...”).

The message of the angels, who were arrayed above the shepherds, swelled in powerful chorus proclaiming glory and peace in two directions, two locations, toward God and certain people. If you study this chorus carefully, you will see that it is no weak wish. It is a statement of fact: “Glory to God in the highest [place], and on earth peace in men on whom His favor rests!”²⁹ (Luke 2:14).

Their chorus was sent out to echo “glory to God” in heaven’s holy of holies and “peace” in the holy of holies of the hearts of men on whom the grace of God rests. Glory belongs only to God. Peace on earth exists only in the hearts of God’s children.

²⁹ The author’s translation of Luke 2:14.

In the announcements of the angels, they heard about the fulfillment of the message of the prophecies of the Branch, of the rightful heir to the throne who was born, and of the King who had come and whose Kingdom shall never end.



Chapter 17

Anno Domini (AD): Nazareth & Megiddo... View from the Town of the Branch

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named **Nazareth**, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary” (Luke 1:26-27).

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of **Nazareth**, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child” (Luke 2:4-5).

“And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city **Nazareth**. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:39-40).

“And he came and dwelt in a city called **Nazareth**: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a **Nazarene**” (Matthew 2:23).

Sometime after the Babylonian captivity (500 BC), some of the descendants of King David settled along the rim of the valley of Megiddo. Their new city, Nazareth (“Town of the Branch”), was no doubt connected to the prophecies of the coming Branch, the Messiah. Looking out from their upper city they could see the valley that was famous for so many ancient battles.

Kings of Egypt had fought there. Kings of the Syrians, of the Assyrians, of the Hittites, of the Amorites, and many other nations had fought there.

Barak with his 10,000 men fought below in that valley (Judges 4-5). The clouds swiftly passed over Mount Tabor as the LORD went out before Barak to defeat the enemy. As in Enoch’s prophecy of the second coming (Jude 14) when he mentioned the Lord coming with “ten thousands” of His holy ones... so Barak, whose name means lightening, stormed down into the valley with his 10,000 men.

Gideon fought with his army of 300 soldiers just below the town of Nazareth (Judges 6-7). The invaders were from the east and were without number. Seven years they had oppressed Israel. The Israelites had hidden in the dens and caves of the rocks. There was the trumpet blast, and a shout, and the sword of the LORD. This is why Isaiah uses this reference in His prophecy of the battle of Armageddon in Isaiah 9:4 just before the more familiar passage in Isaiah 9:6-7.

These battles all anticipated the ultimate battle of Armageddon that is to come.

During all the quiet years that the Lord Jesus spent in Nazareth growing up, He could look out on the valley where He will one day come in glory! He looked past the suffering to the glory that was to come (see Hebrews 12:1-2 and Romans 8:18).

He would become known as “Jesus of Nazareth”—fulfilling prophecy! It would be written above His head on the cross. His followers would be called “Nazarenes,” literally meaning “branches.” As He was the Branch, so they were His branches. As He was the Christ, so they would be called, in disdain, Christians (literally, “little christs”, see Acts 11:26).

Revelation, Hosea, and Nazareth

Nazareth’s connection to the valley of Megiddo points to the city having a connection to last things. In Revelation 19:11-21, after the apostle John wrote of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven, he wrote about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus to the Battle of Armageddon:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men, both* free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Before the Tribulation, the saints of old testament times and those down through the centuries since will be raised bodily from the dead first, quickly followed by the rapture of those living believers. There are two hints in the book of Revelation as to when the rapture will occur: 1) the Menorah and 2) the 24 elders.

In Revelation 1, the first symbol in a book full of symbols is the golden lampstand, the Menorah. While the Lord Jesus says that the seven lamps “are the seven churches,” this was the symbol in the Old Testament of the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:1-6). In the Old Testament, Zechariah saw the heavenly archetype of the Menorah in heaven and the Lord spoke of it as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In

Revelation 1, John saw this symbol on earth, and the Lord Jesus revealed that it was a symbol of the churches. Between Zechariah 4 (520 BC) and Revelation 1 (AD 90) was the Day of Pentecost. On that day, the Holy Spirit came to indwell all of those who make up the churches. In Revelation 4, before the Tribulation begins, the Menorah is before the throne of God and the redeemed from all nations are around the throne of God.

The 24 elders in Revelation 4 are likely made up of the Patriarchs and the Apostles. In the book of Chronicles, King David divided the Aaronic priesthood into 24 divisions. They only gathered when all Israel gathered. Hence, Revelation chapter 4 is a gathering. In Revelation 1 the Apostle John wrote that the Lord Jesus has made us a “kingdom of priests” to His Father. The trumpet that John heard in Revelation 4:1 was a preview of the Rapture.

After the seven-year Tribulation, with those martyred during the Tribulation already assembled with the rest of the heavenly gathering, there will be one large group left for the Lord Jesus to bring together. The remaining descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob according to the flesh will be gathered just as the Lord promised:

Moses, 1406 BC

“When thou art **in tribulation**, and all these things are come upon thee, **even in the latter days**, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them” (Deuteronomy 4:30-31).

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then **the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed**, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deuteronomy 30:1-6).

Ezekiel, 590 BC (Prophecy of the result of the battle described in chapters 38-39)

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made *them* afraid. **When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands**, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; Then shall they know that I *am* the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: **but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them anymore there. Neither will I hide my face any more**

from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 39:25-29).

Matthew’s Gospel, Olivet Discourse about the Kingdom given by the Lord Jesus

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: **and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake”** (Matthew 24:7-9).

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. **And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors” (Matthew 24:29-33).

In Matthew’s Gospel as the Lord Jesus gave the Olivet Discourse, He spoke of the gathering of God’s ancient people after the Tribulation. His use of “elect” in this passage is not the same as used in the book of Romans, for He was speaking to Jewish disciples about the Jewish Temple, and buildings, and of the consummation (See Matthew 24:1-3).

The Lord Jesus said that His second coming would be “like lightning from the east to the west” (Matthew 24:27). Nazareth is on the east side of the valley of Megiddo. When this is put together with the prophecy in Hosea 1, Nazareth seems to be the place. The Lord Jesus will descend until He is just above the city of Nazareth when He destroys the armies in the Valley of Megiddo. Then He will send His angels out to gather his ancient people (Matthew 24:30-31 and Hosea 1:10-11).

The meaning of the names of the children of Hosea prophesied God’s dealings with Israel.³⁰ Jezreel, his firstborn son, was named for the valley of Jezreel where Israel’s armies would be defeated in 722 BC. The next child born to Hosea’s wife was Loruhamah, meaning “not shown mercy”—for the Lord would not show them mercy in the coming destruction by the Assyrians. The third child was Loammi, literally “not my people,” indicating God’s rejection of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in their day of judgment.

³⁰ The phrase “children of whoredoms” in Hosea 1 should rightly be understood as children (at least two of them) who were products of adultery. The children did not commit adultery; they were products of adultery. In like fashion, the phrase “woman of whoredoms” is unique to the book of Hosea. It should not be understood that she was herself an adulteress before she married Hosea, but a product of an illicit relationship. Gomer’s parent’s name given in the book is Diblaim, which signifies “two compressed fig cakes”—likely related to cult prostitution. Diblaim was more likely Gomer’s mother and a cult prostitute. Thus, Gomer’s birth would be as the product of an illicit relationship—and the phrases “children of whoredoms” and “wife of whoredoms” would match in resultant meaning. As a prostitute’s daughter, Gomer would be predisposed to the possibility of a similar lifestyle. By pedigree she would normally be unmarriageable. And this further connects to the type of Israel that she portrayed in the book. For Israel had nothing to commend themselves to God before He chose to deliver them from slavery and to enter into covenant with them at Sinai.

Though some think in terms of Israel being replaced by the church and finished, that was not the end of Hosea's prophecy about the northern tribes. Israel's regathering had been prophesied long before by Moses. The names of Hosea's children would be used again at the end of Hosea 1 to speak of God remembering His covenant with the Patriarchs. They would be shown mercy. They would be proclaimed the people of God. And It would all happen at Jezreel, also known as Megiddo.

Hosea, 760 BC

"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together*, and appoint themselves **one head**, and they shall come up out of the land: **for great shall be the day of Jezreel**" (Hosea 1:10-11).

All the silent years of the Lord Jesus, until He was 30 years of age, He could look out from the upper city of Nazareth, the town of the Branch, and see the Valley of Megiddo where He would one day come in glory. He could see the place where He would gather His ancient people and where they would be converted. And in that day and from that place, the Lord with all the saints and angels will move up the central highland ridge until the Lord Jesus' feet come down on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:1-9, Acts 1:1-12). He is coming to sit upon the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7) as High Priest and King of Kings. His Kingdom will never end.

Most students of Scripture, who do not study the New Testament carefully through the lens of the Old Testament, miss the significance of Nazareth. Keeping in mind the earlier material in this book, here are New Testament references that underscore the importance of Nazareth as a connection to the Old Testament prophecies of the Branch.

"And it came to pass in those days, that **Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee**, and was baptized of John in Jordan" (Mark 1:9).

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, 'We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, **Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.**' And Nathanael said unto him, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip saith unto him, 'Come and see'" (John 1:45).

"And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou **Jesus of Nazareth?** art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:23-24).

"And he came to **Nazareth, where he had been brought up**: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias [Isaiah]. And when he had opened the book, he found the

place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.' And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'" (Luke 4:16-22).

"And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was **Jesus of Nazareth**, he began to cry out, and say, 'Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:46-47).

"And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that **Jesus of Nazareth** passeth by. And he cried, saying, 'Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.' And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, '*Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me'" (Luke 18:35-39).

"And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?' And the multitude said, 'This is **Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee**'" (Matthew 21:10-11).

"Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, 'Whom seek ye?' They answered him, '**Jesus of Nazareth.**' Jesus saith unto them, 'I am *he*.' And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them" (John 18:3-5).

"And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, 'This *fellow* was also with **Jesus of Nazareth**'" (Matthew 26:71).

"And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, 'And thou also wast with **Jesus of Nazareth**'" (Mark 14:67).

"And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, '**JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.**' This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin" (John 19:19-20).

"And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were afraid. And he saith unto them, 'Be not afraid: Ye seek **Jesus of Nazareth**, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him'" (Mark 16:5-6).

"And he said unto them, 'What things?' And they said unto him, 'Concerning **Jesus of Nazareth**, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we

trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not” (Luke 24:19-24).

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; **Jesus of Nazareth**, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:22-24).

“Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth** rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6).

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ‘By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, ‘Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it” (Acts 4:5-14).

“Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God.’ And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, ‘This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this **Jesus of Nazareth** shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.’ And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” (Acts 6:9-15).

“The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by **Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)** That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began

from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed **Jesus of Nazareth** with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:36-43).

“And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ And I answered, ‘Who art thou, Lord?’ And he said unto me, ‘**I am Jesus of Nazareth**, whom thou persecutest’” (Acts 22:6-8).

“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of **Jesus of Nazareth**. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*” (Acts 26:9-10).



Chapter 18

Anno Domini (AD): The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel’” (Mark 1:14-15).

“And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. And he said unto them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.’ And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee” (Luke 4:42-44).

“And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, ‘Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables’” (Mark 4:10-11).

“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1-2).

“And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, ‘With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, **until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**’ And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, ‘Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come’” (Luke 22:14-18).

The word “Gospel” occurs 98 times in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Mark and in the letters of the New Testament, it is often referred to as the **Gospel of Christ** (Mark 1:1; Romans 1:16, 15:19, 15:29; 1 Corinthians 9:12, 9:18; 2 Corinthians 2:12, 4:4, 9:13, 10:14; Galatians 1:7; Philippians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:2). In 2 Thessalonians Paul used the more full phrase, **Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ** (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Paul and Peter also use the phrase **the Gospel of God** (Romans 1:1, 15:16; 2 Corinthians 11:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 8, 9; 1 Timothy 1:11; 1 Peter 4:17) interchangeably with the Gospel of Christ.

Other phrases in the New Testament used to characterize the same message are: **Gospel of peace** (Romans 10:15, Ephesians 6:15), **Gospel of the grace of God** (Acts 20:24), **the Gospel of your salvation** (Ephesians 1:13), and the **Everlasting Gospel** (Revelation 14:6).

However, the earliest characterization of the Gospel used of the preaching of John the Baptist and of the Lord Jesus was **the Gospel of the Kingdom** (Matthew 4:23; 9:25; 24:14; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 8:1; Acts 20:25 and 28:30-31). This phrase conveys the same idea as “Gospel of Christ” since the Messiah/Christ was prophesied to be the rightful King of the anticipated everlasting Kingdom. This phrase, **Gospel of the Kingdom**, connects best to the centuries before the birth of Christ, to the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah being the greater Son of David who was coming to sit on His throne, to rule over all of the nations forever.

The “**Kingdom**” mentioned is mentioned 129 times in the Gospels and Acts. The phrase “**kingdom of God**” is used 71 times in the New Testament (including Ephesians 5:5, “kingdom of Christ and of God”) while the phrase that was preferable for a Jewish audience, “**kingdom of Heaven**,” was used 33 times.

George Eldon Ladd commenting on the Kingdom, wrote:

“According to the testimony of the first three Gospels the proclamation of the kingdom of God was Jesus’ central message. Matthew summarizes the Galilean ministry with the words, “And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people” (Mt 4:23). The Sermon on the Mount is concerned with the righteousness that qualifies men to enter the kingdom of God (Mt 5:20). The collection of parables in Mark 4 and Matthew 13 illustrates the “mystery” of the kingdom of God (Mt 13:11; Mk 4:11). The establishment of the Lord’s Supper looks forward to the establishing of the kingdom of God (Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25).

The NT reports two different forms of the expression: “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of the heavens.” The latter is found only in Matthew; but Matthew also has “the kingdom of God” four times (12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43). “The kingdom of the heavens” is a Semitic phrase that would be meaningful to Jews but would clash on the Greek ear. The Jews, out of reverence for God, avoided uttering the divine name, and contemporary literature gives examples of substituting the word “heaven” for God (1 Mc 3:18, 50; 4:10; see Lk 15:18). The plural, “heavens,” is used because the corresponding Semitic word is in the plural.”³¹

Here is a selection of verses from the Gospels and Acts that illustrates the earliest characterization of the Gospel as “the Gospel of the Kingdom”:

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, **and preaching the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23).

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and **preaching the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matthew 9:35).

NT New Testament

³¹ George E. Ladd, s.v. “Kingdom of God (Heaven),” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 1269.

“And **this gospel of the kingdom** shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God**, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel**” (Mark 1:14-15).

“And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing **the glad tidings of the kingdom of God**: and the twelve *were* with him...” (Luke 8:1).

“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and **speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God**: And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, **they asked of him, saying, ‘Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?’** And he said unto them, ‘It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth’” (Acts 1:1-8).

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone **preaching the kingdom of God**, shall see my face no more” (Acts 20:25).

“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, **preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ**, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (Acts 28:30-31).

Often Christians turn to the classic expression of the Gospel given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, but too often they do not follow through the same chapter to see the Apostle Paul’s emphasis on the Kingdom:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether

it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. **Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;** when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death" (1 Corinthians 15:1-26).

So, in the same context of the classic statement of the Gospel, Paul writes of the Kingdom.

Paul's Kingdom emphasis may be seen in his description of the conversion of those at Thessalonica. Paul wrote of their mode of living day by day looking for the return of Christ. Paul wrote of their conversion and daily focus saying, "...how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; **And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus,** which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10). They were living their lives looking for the coming of the King and looking forward to His coming Kingdom.

The New Birth and the Kingdom of God

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see **the kingdom of God**" (John 3:1-3).

When one of the members of the Sanhedrin came to the Lord Jesus by night, he had questions in his heart about the Kingdom. The Lord, knowing Nicodemus' thoughts, went straight to the point. He told him that a new birth was essential. In making a play upon the word for wind and the word for spirit (which are the same in Hebrew as in Greek), the Lord indicated that the Source of this new birth was the Holy Spirit of God:

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, 'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.' Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**' Nicodemus saith unto him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into **the kingdom of God**. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it

listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus answered and said unto him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you *of* heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:1-21).

The Apostle Peter points to the ministry of the Word of God in the moment of the new birth, as he writes of “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23). The new birth occurs in that moment when the Word of God touches the heart as the Holy Spirit breathes life into the soul. As our first fleshly birth is a miracle of God, so the second birth is a greater miracle still.

The Kingdom of God will be thoroughly permeated with and marked by the very nature of God. Only those transformed from the inside out will be made fit for the Kingdom. The Apostle Paul spoke of the believer’s new birth as being translated into the Kingdom of God:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; **Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son”** (Colossians 1:9-13)

What God does is perfect. The new birth is a perfect translation of the believer out of the kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of Light.

Thus, the Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians, describes the result of the new birth as producing a new creation of God:

“Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Children and the Kingdom of God

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*. But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: **for of such is the kingdom of God**. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive **the kingdom of God** as a little child, he shall not enter therein.’ And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them” (Mark 10:13-16).

Humbling oneself before God is part of the blessed moment of salvation that is joined in that instant to repentance and faith. That instant—all of it due to the work of God—is the gift of God:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

Not only must we be born into the Kingdom of God spiritually by becoming like little children, humbling ourselves before God; but heaven itself is full of redeemed children.

There is a passage in the biblical account of King David’s life that is often cited to comfort a young mother who has suffered the death of her child. David knew the pain of the death of an infant; yet David, who was also a prophet, made a wonderful prophecy concerning his child:

“And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, ‘Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?’ But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, ‘Is the child dead?’ And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, ‘What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.’ And he said, ‘While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? **I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me**” (2 Samuel 12:18-23).

Just as Peter mentioned David being a prophet on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:29-31), David’s last words indicated that he was aware of being a prophet (2 Samuel 23:1-2). The test of a prophet is 100% accuracy. There is much needed comfort in his prophecy of his child.

Yet in Matthew 18, the words of the Lord Jesus are even stronger than that of King David. With little children all around Him, the Lord Jesus announces that He has come “to seek and save that which was lost.” He then goes on to speak of the will of God:

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to

save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. **Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish**" (Matthew 18:10-14).

The Lord Jesus certainly knows the will of God.



Chapter 19

Anno Domini (AD): Daily Prayer: “Thy Kingdom Come”

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen” (Matthew 6:9-13).

I often refer to the Lord’s prayer as “Christianity 101.” As part of the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, it provides a daily model prayer that points us to our eternal relationship to God (“Father”), to the need for reverence (“hallowed be thy name”), to the coming Kingdom, and to the believer’s daily needs of food (physical and spiritual), and daily forgiveness (as we also are to forgive others daily). After the lengthy, reverential address in the prayer (“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name”), the Lord taught his disciples as **the first order of business in the prayer to pray for the coming of the Kingdom**. This matches the Lord Jesus’ clear emphasis that it should be the utmost priority for His disciples.

Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But **seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:31-34).

The Lord Jesus calls His disciples to daily pray in anticipation of His Kingdom’s full manifestation. Believers will serve the Lord Jesus forever in glorified bodies throughout His millennial reign and into eternity future. The dead in Christ will rise first and then those believers living at the time of the Rapture will be changed in an instant, glorified, and swept up to be with Christ forever. Paul spoke of the mystery of that moment in his letters to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians as well:

“Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; **We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this

corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:50-58).

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Gideon: A Lesson in Living and Looking toward the Kingdom

The book of Judges, in chapter 6, says that when God called Gideon, he was 1) “threshing wheat”, 2) “by a winepress.” These two images of judgment foreshadow the judgment of God that was about to fall on the enemies of Israel. Threshing wheat brings to mind the preaching of John the Baptist when he used the image of the winnowing fan that would be in the hand of Messiah. The winepress is reminiscent of the image of the wrath of God in the Day of the LORD (Isaiah 63:1-6 and Revelation 19:15). These are fitting images connecting the judge, Gideon, to Jesus Christ as a type, for God was about to save Israel by Gideon “as one man” (Judges 6:16).

For seven years the Midianites, Amalekites and the “children of the east” had come up in such multitudes that it was written that they were “without number,” beyond counting for the vastness of the multitude. The Midianites and their allies came up against Israel and encamped at Megiddo and plundered the Israelites for seven years. The children of Israel had been hiding in “the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds” (Judges 6:2).

Gideon was afraid too. He had been hiding with the rest of the men of Israel. When the angel of the Lord called Gideon, he said, “The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valor.” This was not true of Gideon’s past or even of the present; but, what the Lord says is true, and it was certainly true of the future.

This is a comforting thought for the redeemed. The Lord knows us not just as we were, or even just in our weakness of the present; but **He knows us as He will make us to be.**

In the darkness, past midnight, Gideon went down into the valley of Megiddo. The hands of his 300 warriors were filled with trumpets, clay pots, and torches, for God had given Gideon strange instructions. The Lord was painting a picture of an event far greater that would happen there in the future. So they blew the trumpets. They shouted, “the sword of the LORD and of Gideon” (Judges 7:18-20). The battle was the LORD’s.

That battle happened in the 14th century BC, long before the little town of Nazareth would be built with its upper city looking down on the site of that ancient battlefield. The future, greatest trumpet blast and shout in the history of the world have a connection to that place.

Believers have been justified by grace through faith. They are being sanctified, daily turning from sin and confessing any sin. At the coming of Christ, all believers will be glorified. We, together with the saints of old, will have glorified, resurrected, changed bodies without the presence of sin.

Since the Lord knows the future perfectly, He already knows us as He will make us to be. He knows us as we will be serving Him in glorified bodies with all of our heart and soul and strength. ***Let us live toward that day.*** Let us not be slaves of our past. Let us not be constrained by the weakness of the present. Let us, by faith, live toward the coming reality of His Kingdom and the encouraging, certain knowledge of the days when we will be unhindered by the presence of sin.



Chapter 20

AD 56: Ambassadors for the Coming King

“Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

The book of Acts recounts the arrival of the Apostle Paul at Corinth in Acts 18. It was not long until many in the synagogue believed in Jesus the Messiah and split from the synagogue to worship the Lord with Paul in the house of Justus (Acts 18: 1-7). Joining the converts from the synagogue was the rabbi (“chief ruler”) of the synagogue named Crispus.

Those who remained at the synagogue brought in a new rabbi, named Sosthenes. The new rabbi was so incensed at what Paul had done that he helped form a mob to drag Paul before the Roman governor, hoping to have him put to death.

A Roman governor has the power of life and death, known as *Jus Gladii* (“Right of Sword”). When seated on his *bema* (“Judgment seat”), the Roman governor could condemn a prisoner to death. However, when Gallio, the Roman Governor, discerned that this was about Jewish law and not Roman law, he “drove them from the judgment seat” (Acts 18:16-17). The Greeks, seeing that the case displeased the Governor, took the new Rabbi, Sosthenes, and beat him severely right in front of the Governor (Acts 18:17).

Paul was released. The Jewish mob fled. Sosthenes lay beaten before the *bema* of Gallio. What happened next? I suspect that the only person available who cared to help Sosthenes up and see to his injuries was Paul. The Lord Jesus said, “Love your enemies.”

After Paul left Corinth, the Apostle would write back to the city together with a new convert: “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother” (1 Corinthians 1:1).

Sosthenes was the second rabbi from the synagogue of Corinth who heard the message of the Messiah proclaimed by Paul and came to saving faith in Jesus Christ. In Paul’s second letter to Corinth in the New Testament, Paul tells the Corinthian believers:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences” (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

The word *bema* occurs in this verse, but this time it is the *bema* of Christ. Paul reminded them of the judgment seat that truly matters in light of eternity. It is with this message of the coming judgment seat of Christ that the Apostle turns toward the ministry of reconciliation:

“Therefore, if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Paul had come to Corinth as the ambassador from the King of Heaven. He pled for souls in the synagogue, in the marketplace, in the house of Justus, and as he bound up the wounds of Sosthenes. In 2 Corinthians 5, the Apostle wants the Corinthian believers, and all believers, to realize the reality and importance of their special mission.

The older spelling for ambassador was with an “e” as in the following entry from Websters, 1828:

EMBAS'SADOR, *noun*. A minister of the highest rank employed by one prince or state, at the court of another, to manage the public concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the power and dignity of his sovereign. Ambassadors are ordinary, when they reside permanently at a foreign court; or extraordinary, when they are sent on a special occasion. They are also called ministers. Envoys are ministers employed on special occasions, and are of less dignity (*Webster's Dictionary*, 1828).

Christians are *extraordinary* ambassadors. We are sent on a special mission by the King of kings to reach out to the lost. Believers are on a mission of reconciliation, imploring the lost to be reconciled to God. All Christians have this mission assignment. Christians are to dress and live in a way that matches our role as an ambassador of the King. We represent Him to the lost.

Of our mission, George Eldon Ladd wrote:

“This must be the spirit of our mission in This evil Age. We are not rosy optimists, expecting the Gospel to conquer the world and establish the Kingdom of God. Neither are we despairing pessimists who feel that our task is hopeless in the face of the evil of This Age. We are realists, Biblical realists, who recognize the terrible power of evil and yet who go forth in a mission of worldwide evangelization to win victories for God's Kingdom until Christ returns in glory to accomplish the last and greatest victory.”³²

³² George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 139.



Chapter 21

AD 57: The Kingdom of God and the Church in Romans

There are those who think that the church has replaced Israel.³³ Paul used the metaphor in Romans of Israel as a cultivated olive tree receiving grafts that depict gentile believers in Jesus Christ. *How can you replace what you have been grafted into?*

To the contrary, as covered in Chapter 17, at the end of Hosea 1 the meaning of the names of Hosea's children are used to speak of the ultimate regathering of the Jews after the battle of Armageddon.

The meaning of the names of the children of Hosea prophesied God's dealings with Israel. Jezreel, his firstborn son, was named for the valley of Jezreel where Israel's armies would be defeated in 722 BC. The next child born to Hosea's wife was Loruhamah, meaning "not shown mercy," for the Lord would not show them mercy in the coming destruction by the Assyrians. The third child was Loammi, literally "not my people," indicating God's rejection of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in their day of judgment.

Though some think in terms of Israel being replaced by the church and finished, that was not the end of Hosea's prophecy about the northern tribes. Israel's regathering had been prophesied long before by Moses. As mentioned in Chapter 17, the names of Hosea's children would be used again at the end of Hosea 1 to speak of God remembering His covenant with the Patriarchs. They would be shown mercy. They would be proclaimed the people of God. And it would all happen at Jezreel, also known as Megiddo.

Hosea, 760 BC

"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, **that in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are not my people*, there it shall be said unto them, *Ye are the sons of the living God*. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves **one head**, and they shall come up out of the land: **for great shall be the day of Jezreel**" (Hosea 1:10-11).**

There is not much in scripture that tells of the years that the LORD spent at Nazareth from His youth until His ministry began. Yet, all the silent years of the Lord Jesus until He was 30 years of age, He could

³³ See: Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010; and Gerald R. McDermott, *Israel Matters: Why Christians Must Think Differently about the People and the Land* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2017).

look out from the upper city of Nazareth, the town of the Branch, and see the valley of Megiddo where He would one day come in glory. He could see the place where He would gather His ancient people and where they would be converted. And in that day and from that place, the Lord with all the saints and angels will move up the central highland ridge until the Lord Jesus' feet come down on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:1-9, Acts 1:1-12). He is coming to sit upon the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7) as High Priest and King of Kings. His kingdom will never end.

Indeed, the Apostle Paul said, "God forbid!" to the prospect of God casting away His ancient people. Paul spoke of a mystery (Romans 11:25-27) connected to God's dealings with the nations that would ultimately turn to the salvation of His ancient people. In Romans 11:26 the "so" should be understood as temporal, not modal.³⁴ And THEN shall all Israel be saved.

In Zechariah's prophecies of the last days, he describes the battle of Armageddon in chapter 12 followed by a fountain being opened for "sin and uncleanness" for Israel (Zechariah 13:1). This is followed by the Messiah's rule over all nations (Zechariah 14:1-9).

The Olivet Discourse and the Regathering of the Jews in the Day of the LORD

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, **Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?** (Matthew 24:1-3).

The context of "elect" in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24 is "elect Israel"—just as the disciples would have understood the Lord when He spoke of being "hated of all nations" (Matthew 24:9). This is an address that has to do with Israel, just as the parable of the fig tree is used and is a symbol of the nation (Matthew 24:32-34).

As described earlier, the Lord Jesus prophesied the time that the regathering of the Jews who survived the Tribulation would occur just after the Tribulation (Matthew 24:29-31, below). This matches Hosea 1:11 that indicates that this regathering happens "in the day of Jezreel" (Megiddo).

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, **and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other**" (Matthew 24:29-31).

³⁴ Pieter W. Van der Horst, "'Only then will all Israel be saved': A Short Note on the Meaning of καὶ οὕτως in Romans 11.26 (JBL 119.3: 521-26, 2000).

Some of the Promises in the Old Testament that spoke of the Regathering of the Jews in the Last Days

Israel is to be regathered. Note that Moses places this “in the latter days” (Deuteronomy 4:30) and also uses the interesting word “fetch” (as Christ describes the angels so doing in the Olivet Discourse). Ezekiel says that the LORD “will leave none of them anymore there; neither will I hide My face any more from them” (Ezekiel 39:25-29). This is not a reference to the regathering from Babylonian captivity. Many of the Jews remained there for centuries. This is a reference to the second coming of Christ.

Moses

“When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you **in the latter days**, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice. For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them” (Deuteronomy 4:30-31).

“And it shall come to pass, **when all these things are come upon thee**, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return **and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:** And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers” (Deuteronomy 30:1-5).

Micah

“I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; **I will surely gather the remnant of Israel**; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of *the multitude of men*” (Micah 2:12).

“In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and **I will gather her that is driven out**, and her that I have afflicted” (Micah 4:6).

“But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: **for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor**” (Micah 4:12).

Jeremiah

“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jeremiah 23:3).

“And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, **and I will gather you from all the nations**, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive” (Jeremiah 29:14).

“Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely” (Jeremiah 32:37).

Ezekiel

“Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel” (Ezekiel 11:17).

“And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out” (Ezekiel 20:34).

“I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen” (Ezekiel 20:41).

“And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country” (Ezekiel 34:13).

“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land (Ezekiel 36:24).

And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land” (Ezekiel 37:21).

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Now will I bring back the captivity of Jacob, and have compassion upon the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name. And they shall bear their shame, and all their breach of faith which they have committed against Me, when they shall dwell safely in their land, and none shall make them afraid; when I have brought them back from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, in that I caused them to go into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them unto their own land; and I will leave none of them any more there; neither will I hide My face any more from them; for I have poured out My spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 39:25-29).

Zephaniah

“Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you *again*, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a

name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD” (Zephaniah 3:19-20).



Chapter 22

AD 90: John's Vision... the Mountain Crowned by the City

The Lord prophesied through Moses, about 1406 BC, of **the place where He would set His NAME** (Deuteronomy 12:11). He later confirmed, about 959 BC, **the place where He would put His NAME there "forever"** to King Solomon (1 Kings 9:3).

1406 BC, Moses →	959 BC, Solomon →	680 BC, Isaiah and Micah →	AD 90, Apostle John
Deuteronomy 12:11	1 Kings 9:3	Isaiah 2 & Micah 4	Revelation 21:10

The prophets Isaiah and Micah, two witnesses of the same vision, saw the future fulfillment of that place, the mountaintop known as Mt. Moriah, where the Jerusalem temple of Solomon was situated, rising above all other mountains (685 BC, Isaiah 2 and Micah 4). The Apostle John also saw the future realization of that place chosen by God and gave much more detail (AD 90, Revelation 21:1-27).

Though jasper is thought of today as red, the "jasper stone" in Revelation 4 and 21 is "clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:11), and it seems to refer to a diamond. John describes the future joining of the heavens and the earth with the city "Having the glory of God: and her light was like **unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.**" **Just as God's glory was likened to the jasper stone in Revelation 4:3, so in Revelation 21:1-27, the city reflects the spectacular glory of God:**

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. **And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;** And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:1-27).

John sees the culmination of the Lord's prayer... "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." He sees the mountain that Isaiah (Isaiah 2) and Micah (Micah 4) also saw more than 700 years before in vision.

At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, John sees Mount Zion below as it rises up to be joined to Zion coming down from above. The archetype meets the type. The place that God chose to cause His NAME to dwell forever is raised high, and the New Jerusalem settles down on that very spot.

In Exodus, God said that He would make them a "kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19:6). Peter writes of God making us into a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). John writes that the Lord Jesus has made us a "kingdom of priests" (Revelation 1:6).

Some verses on the Kingdom in the New Testament

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves

with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

"Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up **the kingdom** to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:24).

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit **the kingdom** of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:50).

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit **the kingdom** of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in **the kingdom** of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5).

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into **the kingdom** of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:12-13).

"And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only *are my* fellow workers unto **the kingdom** of God, which have been a comfort unto me" (Colossians 4:11).

"As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto **his kingdom** and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of **the kingdom** of God, for which ye also suffer" (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5).

"I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and **his kingdom**" (2 Timothy 4:1).

"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his **heavenly kingdom**: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy 4:18).

"But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the scepter of **thy kingdom**" (Hebrews 1:8).

“Wherefore we receiving **a kingdom** which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28).

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of **the kingdom** which he hath promised to them that love him?” (James 2:5).

“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into **the everlasting kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:11).

“... and made us **a kingdom**, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:6).

“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in **the kingdom** and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:9).

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and **the kingdom** of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Revelation 12:10).

The book of Revelation teaches us that our mouth should be singing praises to the Lamb, our eyes should be fixed on the goal of bringing Christ glory in this life, our mind should be focused on holy living, and our feet should be about spreading the Good News of the King and of His coming Kingdom.

Let us worship Him with heart, soul, and strength every minute of every day—for He is worthy.

Joy to the World!

Author: Isaac Watts

Composer: George Frederick Handel

- 1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King.
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,

Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

- 3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,
 Nor thorns infest the ground;
 He comes to make His blessings flow
 Far as the curse is found,
 Far as the curse is found,
 Far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace,
 And makes the nations prove
 The glories of His righteousness,
 And wonders of His love,
 And wonders of His love,
 And wonders, and wonders of His love.³⁵

³⁵ *Logos Hymnal*, 1st edition. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995).



Conclusion: Faith Will Become Sight

"All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations" (Psalm 145:10-13).

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18, ESV).

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof" (Revelation 21:23) .

In the same Psalm quoted above (Psalm 145), King David writes of the LORD saving and keeping His redeemed:

The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and **will save them. The LORD preserveth all them that love him:** but all the wicked will he destroy (Psalm 145:17-20).

This follows the pattern of David's Psalm 22 that prophesied the death of Christ 1000 BC, and David's next Psalm 23 where the LORD is the Good Shepherd leading His sheep through the valley of the shadow of death and on to Zion (Psalm 24). Thus same amazing grace of God that saves us also keeps us forever.

We need to proclaim boldly that Jesus is coming! His coming should not be something fearful for the believer; but it should motivate us to holy living and witnessing. One in every 25 verses in the New Testament refers to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. While there are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in Christ's coming long ago, many more Old Testament prophecies speak of His Second Coming than His first. Just as the prophecies of His first coming were fulfilled, those of His Second Coming will also be fulfilled to the letter.

In the Old Testament in **the song of Moses**, they sang of the LORD as the King: "The LORD shall reign forever and ever" (Exodus 15:18). In **the Psalms** His kingship is mentioned frequently: "the LORD sitteth King forever" (Psalm 29:10); "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Psalm 103:19); "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations" (Psalm 145:11, 13). **King**

Hezekiah praised the Lord, saying of Him, "Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all of the kingdoms of the earth" (2 Kings 19:15).

In the Old Testament, the LORD's Second Coming often comes into view, as when **Isaiah** wrote of the time, "when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (Isaiah 24:23). **Daniel** prophesied that there would be given to the Son of Man, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, ...and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14). **Zechariah** wrote, "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one." (Zechariah 14:9).

God has reigned through eternal ages past. When He came, incarnate, the Good News of His Kingdom was proclaimed. Here on earth its beginning was as a spiritual kingdom, made up of those who were born into it. **The Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus**, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). In Matthew 12:28 Jesus said, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

The Kingdom exists now as Christ Jesus reigns from heaven. Yet the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God will be Christ's Second Coming; just as the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). In Matthew's Gospel it is also recorded, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). At the Lord's table we remember His words to His disciples: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29).

When believers die, the angels are there to take them to be with Jesus in heaven (Luke 16:22). At Christ's coming He will raise their bodies, and they will be incorruptible and immortal (1 Corinthians 15:53). Those who are living at the time of the Rapture will experience their bodies being changed in an instant, glorified (1 Corinthians 15:51-52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The redeemed will be with Christ while the seven-year Tribulation unfolds upon the earth.

Then at the end of the Tribulation, Christ will come back to the earth with all the angels and the saints. He will destroy the armies of Antichrist at Megiddo. He will regather His ancient people there. Then after they are gathered, we will go up the central highland ridge and His feet will come down on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:3-4 and Acts 1:11). He will sit upon King David's throne and reign for a thousand years (Isaiah 9:6-7). At the end of the Millennial reign of Christ, the New Jerusalem will come down to Mount Moriah, raised high to meet it. Like a gemstone being set in its socket, the New Jerusalem will come down upon the place that God chose to set His NAME forever.

The Lord not only knows us as we were or as we are now. The Lord Jesus knows us as He will make us to be, serving Him in glorified bodies for a thousand years after His coming, during His earthly Kingdom. Pray for the coming physical manifestation of the Kingdom of God. The King has come and He is coming again to rule all the nations! We need to get ready for His coming (sanctification), we need to proclaim His coming, and we need to help the nations prepare for His coming. "And He shall reign forever, and ever" (Revelation 11:15). Jesus is coming!

Night Watchmen

There was the sunlight,
Fair was the sunlight
When He illumined all those
Coming unto Him.

From a distance
Some had seen Him
Out of the twilight
Of the early dawn.

From ancient ages
Only thick darkness,
And lanterns of the watchmen
Lit by God to give us light.

Then we saw Him,
Like the sun rising,
Drawing the veil
Of darkness away.

Yet that was long ago.
It seems like ages.
Now once more darkness
Seems to push away the dawn.

But in the darkness
He did not leave us,
He did not leave us
Without Light to carry on.

Shining like candles
Lit from His brilliance,
We shine like diamonds
In the coal black of the night.

And in the twilight,
The cold, still twilight,
We watch for Him who brings
The coming endless day.

R. Kirk Kilpatrick
10-26-1985

See Malachi 3:2, 4:2, and Mark 13:32-37.