

Eschatology 101

T. Justin Comer

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## Preface

The book of Revelations begins with a blessing. The author writes, “Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”<sup>i</sup> Then, when we come to the end of the book, we find the words, “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life in the holy city, which are described in this book.”<sup>ii</sup> For us to look into eschatology,<sup>iii</sup> we need to take seriously this warning. Quite clearly, the author is quoting Deuteronomy 4:2 in the latter passage quoted, however, we hold to this being holy writ. The book of Revelations specifically speaks of a blessing to those who read and hear, and a curse to those who would add or subtract from.

In the case of eschatology in general, I believe that we have the very same blessing and curse. It is a blessing to know and understand the times, for the time is near. However, for they who desire to understand according to human intelligence, they will continue to speculate, and thus add and subtract to attain the curse. Here we have a crucial point. There are only two books in the whole Bible that speak of being sealed: Daniel and Revelations. Concerning the end time pattern, Isaiah also prophesied of a sealed scroll.<sup>iv</sup> The book of Daniel contains the framework for the end times. Jesus even pointed His disciples to the prophecies of Daniel in order to understand what He was saying of the end times.<sup>v</sup>

In Daniel 8:26, we read, “...but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.” Again in Daniel 12:9, we read, “Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.” We find Revelations 22:10 countering that by saying, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.” Yet, we find in Revelation 10:4, “I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down’.” Thus, we find both an open seal and a closed seal in Revelations. In response, I would like to offer a bit of clarity. To those who desire to take these prophecies and speculate about the near future, the books are closed and sealed. Like insane men, they ‘prophesy’ according to their own visions and lusts. In this, they both ruin the reputation of the prophetic texts, and they also dull the minds of the Body of Christ.

The books are sealed to those who desire to approach them with pride. Yet, to the humble, God will reveal all things. We find in Revelation 5 that the Lamb was worthy to open the seven seals, because he “has triumphed”.<sup>vi</sup> Likewise, for they who desire to understand these things, we must “overcome” as Christ has told all the seven churches. The issue of understanding the end times is an issue of triumph. For those who desire to take hold of these truths for their own gain, or for their own security, they will find that their understanding is darkened. But to the ones that “do not love their lives, even unto the death,”<sup>vii</sup> Christ will reveal to them all the secrets of the visions that have been sealed.

It is at this point that we turn to a question of prologue. In what manner have I written this book? I have two types of chapters: conceptual and Scriptural. The first deals with the concepts in theology<sup>viii</sup>. The second has little comment, and is mostly comparing

Scripture to build the focus of the chapter.<sup>ix</sup> Let me be clear, I strive to support every word with Scripture. The difference is not in the lack of Scripture used, but rather the amount of commentary.

Thus, I desire that we have this understanding from the beginning. As we progress through the concepts, we will be brought to the place where much Scripture can be tersely quoted, and after we have established some foundations from the prophetic texts, we can then go back into some of the deeper concepts of theology. They work together, hand in hand. For this reason, much of what is contained within these pages are not necessarily eschatological subjects. Yet, because I desire to build from the ground up, we need to place them within these pages as prerequisite. This brings me to my final point. Within these pages is an overview of eschatology. I do not dive into much of the symbolism. I don't spend too much time commenting on Scriptures. I don't look at some of the challenging questions, such as why the tribe of Dan is not mentioned in Revelation 7:5-8. I ignore many of the end time discussion, such as the mark of the beast or who the restrainer is in 2 Thessalonians 2.

Here is what I do have within these pages. This is a foundation. Initially, I titled this book "Eschatology 101". After searching for an appropriate title to use "eschatology 101" as a subtitle, I came up with none. Thus, the title remains. But let us remember this: it is eschatology 101, and not anything deeper. In the realm of end time books, many speculate, and very few actually explore what the Scripture says. Within those that explore what the Scripture says, many give multiple mindsets, or they will give their own commentary on the Scripture. It is rare, then, for us to find a book on eschatology that simply asks one question: What does the Bible say? This question is not one of, "What do I think the Bible says," but rather, "What do the Scriptures say?" In this, we compare the Scripture with itself, and we don't look to interpret it based on bias or opinion.

This is both difficult and strenuous, seeing as we all have bias and opinion. As much objectivity as I desire to write this with, I'm certain that my own opinions have seeped into the pages. Thus, I commit this writing to you with a grain of salt. Test everything. If it stands up, and it is indeed what the Scripture says, then no argument will suffice on the Day of Judgment if we desire to ignore what is written. However, if what I have written is only opinion, then I am in deep trouble, for "If anyone adds" or "anyone subtracts words from this book," then "God will add to him the plagues described in this book," and "God will take from him his share in the tree of life." With warning and with blessing, I commend the reader this writing:

Grace and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

## Chapter 1: Stories

For this writing, I desire to start at the very beginning of our Christian walk. So we'll start with stories. The Old Testament is full of stories. From Joshua to Job are all historical accounts of ancient Israel, and the stories of how God relates to His people. We find the New Testament also containing stories about our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus, as well as the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Other books, such as Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers, also have stories, however, these books also have sections that many Christians call "boring". Whether we're talking about the vast genealogies contained within Genesis, the plans for the Tabernacle, the census in Numbers, or we're talking about the many genealogies in Chronicles, many don't delight in reading these sections. Thus, we focus upon the stories first.

The book of 1 John maps out our spiritual progression in the Christian faith.<sup>x</sup> He speaks to children, because their sins have been forgiven on account of his name and they have known the Father. He speaks to the fathers, because they have known him who is from the beginning; an obvious parallel with the first few verses of his letter. John speaks to the young men, because they are strong, and the word of God lives in them, and they have overcome the evil one. We see here the progression of the Christian faith.

And so, I speak to you children, because you have known the Father. You are fascinated with the stories in the Bible because they reveal to you the Jesus that you know and love, and they reveal the Father's heart and character. The stories in the Bible give us insight into who God is. The Scriptures never tell us outright what God's attributes are. Instead, we read of this God that relates to humanity, and loves them simply for who He has created them to be. We read of David taking down the giant, Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, God sending plagues to Egypt to deliver His people, and Jesus speaking to the leper, "I am willing," just as He reaches out His hand to heal the man.

These stories stir up something inside us. They stir in us an appreciation and love for God. They cause us to stagger. Who is like our God that will nearly bankrupt an entire nation, Egypt, just so that He can deliver His people from slavery? Would our God truly send fire down from heaven upon a sacrifice on Mount Carmel when one of His prophets prays? We're stirred to ask the question, "Where is the God of Elijah?" These stories stir in us a zeal and passion to see God working in our midst. We desire His power and His love to be manifest in us and through us to a world that is dying and lost, and that doesn't even realize that it is dead and in bondage.

These stories work in us a hope. That hope does not put us to shame, but instead fills our hearts with glory. Jesus is not only our Savior. He is our Rock, our fortress, our protection, our hope in times of need, and He is our all-in-all. We come to love Him and amaze at just how far this God will go in order to protect His children. This God always hears the cry of the oppressed, and the proof is in both the stories as well as our own story. Many times what captures me about David, Elijah, or the apostle Paul (and all the other saints that have gone on before us) is that they are men of like passions. I'm amazed at what God will do through a willing servant, but I realize as well that God is equally willing to work like that through me. He is equally willing to work like that through you.

The stories in the Bible give us a framework for understanding God and His relationship to us. When I first came to Christ, I was fascinated with these stories. I had never heard of the Spirit descending like a dove, or Abram being called out of his family, or David defeating Goliath, or even the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. I had never heard these stories. All I knew was that God is supposed to forgive those that come to Him in repentance. And when I started to read these stories, I started to realize that this God is a personal God. He is a God that speaks, and not simply some far off God that we pray to and hope that He hears.

I speak to you young men, because you are strong, and the word of God is in you, and you have overcome the evil one. To you, these stories are more than just stories. They are patterns. They are types. They are foreshadowing. God has worked out purposes for our lives and for the whole of history, and He has explained it within these stories. We see that David is not simply a man that once upon a time threw a smooth stone and crushed the forehead of the giant Goliath. David is a type that all Christians are to reflect. With our smooth stones that we have gotten out of the creek, that place of prayer where living waters flow from our bellies, and the rock being the word of God – the promise of God – we are not afraid to cast that stone at the devil with all of our passion and intensity knowing at whom we are aiming.

You, young men, know the story of Rachel that cried out to Jacob, “Give me children or I die!” And you look up to heaven and cry with a loud voice, “My God! Give me souls or I die!” We see Joseph and how he goes from being promoted to cast into a pit, back to being promoted under Potiphar, and then once again cast down into a pit. We see that this Joseph is eventually brought up to stand under Pharaoh, and he is second in command over all of Egypt. We see this and understand the pattern for our own lives. We see how God works. Just because we’re feeling downcast now does not mean that we will remain down forever. With David we plead, “Praise the Lord, oh my soul.”<sup>xi</sup>

God has revealed to us the patterns and the types and the symbols that these stories represent. We are not simply to be imitating Elijah because he was a mighty prophet of God, but because we are called to be an Elijah people. We are called to stand against the spiritual powers of darkness. Those that convince men of their false religion, whether it is Hinduism or pseudo-Christianity, we stand against those dark forces that blind them. We give the ultimatum, “May the God that answers by fire be God.” In this, we know in whom we have believed. We trust fully in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We wrestle not in the name of Jesus Christ as though it is some addendum to “amen,” but rather in Jesus’ character. Because we wrestle according to the word and character of God, we are given the victory over the powers of darkness, both personally and in community with other believers.

I speak to you fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. You know that He that shows the end from the beginning. You see in the stories of the creation how they parallel the end times. You see the whole of Scripture, from beginning to end, and therefore are able to recognize the end-time paradigm contained within the stories of the Bible. Your sight is deeper than that of the young men. They who are able to recognize the significance of the patterns put forth in the stories see further than they realize, but they don’t see the whole of it. When we read of Esther and Mordechai, we are

reading an end time message about an antichrist figure that desires to kill all of the Jewish people. From their birth, there has been a demonic spirit that desires their death.<sup>xii</sup>

You, oh fathers, know and see the distinction between the purposes of God and the intentions of men. You can ask with Elijah, “How long, O Israel, will you waiver between two opinions?” You have spiritual depth and clarity. You see the end from the beginning, and therefore are able to discern the true from the false. Because you know God’s original intention, for you know Him who is from the beginning, you are able to discern the pattern that God has given for the Church today. Whether we are truly living according to that apostolic and prophetic Body that we’re called to be, or whether we’re content to live far beneath the glory of God, you know.

These stories are living realities in your midst. You see and perceive them as more than history. They are more than patterns. They are the prophetic intention of God for all of time and history, and you are able to speak words and instruction to build up and edify the saints. The words that you speak are from the heart of God, and therefore they equip the Body for her ultimate intention and call. You see past the dimensions of “local church” and into the dimension of Church as God has prescribed it. You see and understand that a Body that is fascinated with self will continue to neuter self.

You see the breadth of insight regarding the Church and her ultimate purposes for her nation, against the principalities and powers, and unto the Jewish people. The Bible tells one story, and it is an unfolding story to the consummation of the age. Every detail to that consummation expresses another pattern and type of the ultimate confrontation at the end of the age between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. The whole of the Scripture is livid with every sort of type and pattern to help us in understanding both God and His purposes, which ultimately helps in understanding who we are in God and the purposes that we have in Him.

## Chapter 2: All of Scripture

Just like in the previous chapter we went from being a child to being a father, I would also like to address the subject of Scripture in this fashion. We often think of the Bible as being the “good book.” There are cute clichés about how it is the B-I-B-L-E, the Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. We see it as a manual. There are all sorts of silly and trivial ways that people view the Bible, but what exactly is the correct way of viewing Scripture?

For myself, when I first came to Christ, I knew nothing. I read the smaller books of the Bible so that I could read through the whole of it in one sitting. Then, I moved on to trying to read larger books. When I was about a month along in my faith, a friend of mine set me up as a leader of a Bible study. I panicked. In order to know *something* to talk about, I read the book of Job. Did I mention that I read it in one night? I went to that Bible study having my head full of the book of Job, not knowing anything of what the book was even talking about, and why were these three friends making God upset? It seemed like they had legitimate arguments. And why was Job allowed to suffer? I don’t get it. I had just experienced a God that *loves* and is willing to forgive.

I was wrestling with the story, because this Job character was a righteous man. How is it that God would allow for the righteous to suffer so terribly, and yet I, myself, who was a terribly wicked sinner, was given grace and charity? I told the story of Job. And then I asked my questions. I did not have one answer to give to those questions. I was a babe, and I had never heard any of these things. The questions staggered my listeners. They didn’t have answers either. At least, most of them didn’t have answers. There was only one who did. He took up the challenge to explain how the book of Job is about a man that is being accused by Satan, and God trusts him. He explained how the righteous are persecuted simply because they are righteous and the unrighteous need no other excuse. He explained how God then used this as an opportunity to show Job that even though He trusted Job, Job did not trust God.

This Bible study was possibly the worst thing that anyone could have ever come up with. Who in his or her right mind would ask someone so young in the faith to speak on something so critical? Yet, God brought me through it. I learned a lot. In spite of knowing very little, and having no one willing to sit down and teach me, I was placed before people in a way that I was supposed to communicate biblical truth. It was with this that I started pouring through the Scripture.

Those first few years, I found myself reading about a God that is merciful. Even when I read Leviticus, I found a Jesus that was our ultimate scapegoat. He is the fulfillment of our drink offering, our burnt offering, our meal offering, and even a fulfillment of our feasts. I found in Christ the ultimate sacrifice for my sin. I began to see and understand that this God is not some New Testament Jesus, but once and for all. He has always had the same character and never changed. I found Jesus in the Bible, and I knew that this was the word of God because I had an extra-biblical source to prove it: a personal relationship with that risen Savior. For you who are young in the faith, the whole of Scripture speaks to you about this risen Savior and His love for you. God has saved you, and you are eternally grateful.



For the young men, you read the Scripture and you find that it gives purpose to your life. Not only do you find Christ in all things, but now also you find yourself in those same Scriptures. Jesus laid down His life as a living sacrifice to the Father, and so we too are called to lay down our lives as living sacrifices. This idea of finding God's purposes for our lives is not constituted upon pride or ego-centrism. It is founded upon the revelation that there is more to life than work, food, defecation, sleep, school, make a name for self, be successful, have kids, buy a home, and all the other things that society tells us are "proper."

Our whole culture is set up around the idea of perpetuating the system. I'm born, I learn to walk, talk, and eat, I become potty trained, and I am now officially a "toddler." From there, I learn how to tie my shoes, I learn to read, I learn basic everyday things that give me a little more independence, and it is at this point that I am now old enough for Kindergarten, where I will continue for the next 13 years of my life to learn what the government classifies as necessary. At the age of about 10 or 12 I start to change; that change is called puberty. As I continue to grow through adolescence, I stop relying so heavily upon my parents. I might get a job, I consider what I'm supposed to do with my life, I look into colleges, I start dating, etc.

It is after college that I am supposed to get a "good job." What is a good job? It is a job that pays well. Somewhere between graduating High School and turning 30, I should be able to find a wife, move out of apartment living and into a house, begin to pay off my school debt, have a child or two, and continue to strive to move up in the corporate ladder. It is when I have a child that I then begin to train them up in the same process that I have now gone through. They grow up to be 18, and I begin to help them in their process of being an adult and moving out into their own lives. They have children, and I become a grandparent. I then give my whole life savings away to that grandchild, because I never knew when I had my own children how much I can love a child. I then grow to the age of retirement, and I live the rest of my life (hopefully) in my home until I pass away. That is supposed to be "life."

Yet, for the young man in the faith, you read the Bible. You find in the Scripture a different pattern. God requires that we put our trust in Him, and not in a system. We are called out of Egypt, which is out of the worldly system that binds us to death. Against logic and against rationale, we pursue a different kind of living. We pursue the lifestyle of love. That lifestyle is characterized as the righteous in Proverbs by saying, "Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death."<sup>xiii</sup> This man is generous, even when he has nothing.

We begin to experience in our youth a different kind of humanity. That humanity was God's ultimate intention from the beginning. We see the pattern that has been laid out in front of us, lived out in the man Christ Jesus, and we pursue that heavenly glory. Whether by definitive foolishness or by supreme sound judgment, we give ourselves over to the lifestyle that declares, "Either God is God, or I perish." We hold onto the promises that "the Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,"<sup>xiv</sup> and if we "seek first His kingdom, all these things will be added."<sup>xv</sup> Though the world finds this to be absolute insanity, we find that the Scriptures teach one message of this lifestyle being authoritative reality. We cling to the insanity in faith, hoping against hope, because God is God, and He does not lie.<sup>xvi</sup>

It is in our youth that we discover that God has chosen every person for a destiny. We have personally been chosen to fulfill God's ultimate purposes, even if those ultimate purposes are to be objects of wrath. I have been run out of every congregation that I've desired to be a part of. I can look back and honestly say that there are times where I have been the cause of such things, but there is always something beyond that. The reason that I'm run out, and that my wife and I together are also quite the team at causing an offense, is because we just seem to be the very ones that God desires to use in order to display the sin of those that we come in contact with. I have been foolish in the past, but even with that foolishness there is an obvious undertone of truth and reality.

It is God that forms the clay, and we simply conform to what He has made us to be. This is ultimate freedom. Some define freedom as the ability or "choice" to do what you want. That isn't freedom; it is slavery. Freedom requires that we are bound by one thing, and one thing alone: the very core of who we are. We live from the reality of the very fabric of our being. That essence, that when you strip away all of the personality, reflexes, habits, ambition, goals, hopes, circumstances, and all these sorts of things that define the person we are today, but ultimately are outside forces – it is that essence from the very center of your soul that defines who you are. When that absolute center of who you are is yielded to Christ, and you live from that source and that source alone, then you are free.

No longer are you bound by reactions to things you cannot control. No longer do you find yourself in a place where you are lacking. You have overcome the evil one, because Satan cannot destroy who you are in Christ. Those decisions that we make, and the reaction to how we're treated or mistreated, create bondage upon us. Blatant sin, such as addictions, fits of rage, and perverse speech, are manifestations of a deeper issue. Those deeper issues need to be engaged and wrestled against. We find in the Scripture alone the very thing necessary to do so: the crucified life.

By claiming that our life is no longer our own, we overcome all things. We submit self to a place of foolishness. It is in that mode of living, where we aren't sure how we're supposed to continue to live life that causes all of these root issues to bubble to the surface. Living a life of comfort and luxury does not lend itself to seeing the truth of our hearts. We need to throw away our televisions. We need to unplug the internet. We need to get away from all of the conveniences of perfectly temperate homes all year long. When we find ourselves uncomfortable, whether because we can't afford meat or because we no longer have entertainment to keep us busy through the day, it is in those moments that reality looks us in the face. The person you are when there is no longer convenience and ease is who you are in actuality.

But there is still a deeper insight. You, who are fathers, you don't just see your own purpose in Scripture. You don't only hear the voice of God beckoning you to be who He has created you to be. You see God's eternal and cosmic purposes for all of humanity and all of creation. When you view the big picture from Genesis to the New Heaven and New Earth, you find that God has pressed one question alone: How do I live in unadulterated communion with my creation? That one question branches off into every other aspect of theology. To understand the answer to that one question is to understand everything, because it relies first and foremost upon the heart and character of God.

God has established an eternal plan of redemption for all of creation, of which we are only a part, and that eternal plan of cosmic redemption is unfolding even at this very moment. Asking the “why” and the “how” questions are to seek the face of God Himself. He is intimately tied up with His ultimate purposes for all things. Those purposes are the reason for my writing. As an introduction, we need some very basic understanding. We need to know that the stories in the Bible are patterns of that ultimate consummation at the end of the age. We need to know that the Bible gives one testimony. We need to understand that God has placed this at the heart of every verse and every passage.

The whole of the Bible paints a portrait, of which all of the different ins and outs of theology string together to form the beautiful tapestry of God. When we seek to know any subject in the faith, we must first and foremost seek to know the end from the beginning, and the beginning from the end. From that large overview of the cosmic redemption and eternal perception we come into a better foundation of understanding all other subjects. To teach these things is to teach Christ, because they are His ultimate purposes. God does not desire what is not a reflection of Him. So, to seek an answer to these eternal and weighty matters, we are pressing ourselves into a very tight space.

This will either cause you to grow up quickly, or cause you to reject everything that I am personally standing for. I hope that the statement can be said of me, as God told Samuel, “They do not reject you, but instead they reject me.”<sup>xvii</sup> This message of the cosmic redemption of all things is one that causes much chafing, because it rubs our face in the grit of judgment, apocalypse, devastation, fear, and torture. It causes us to turn aside and see the bush that is burning, but is not consumed. That bush is a symbol of the Christian life. Ultimately, it is not just you or I, but the corporate people of God that is on fire. It is painful to consider severe devastation and agony to come upon the ones we love. It is even more difficult when the ones we love, and the people that we love, have been made into idols.

God’s eternal purposes search for a time when every people group, and every nation, will come to Him and offer sacrifices of praise unto Him. As the Scripture unfolds, we find that God has selected a certain people, Israel, to be His people. He has selected a certain Land, Canaan, to put His dwelling. He has selected a certain city, Jerusalem, from which to rule and reign over all nations of the earth. If we have a problem with that people, that land, that city, or God’s specificity, then we have a problem with God Himself. These are not issues of real estate or redemption of whoever is willing to come unto Christ. These are issues of the very nature of who God is.

### Chapter 3: Theocracy

What is theocracy? *Theos* is the Greek word meaning “god.” We know what democracy is: government ruled by the people. Theocracy is a government ruled by God. When we’re expressing the Kingdom of God, we’re expressing the rule of God. Jesus has Himself called the Gospel “the Gospel of the Kingdom.”<sup>xviii</sup> This is very possibly the central theme of all of Scripture. We aren’t talking about some sort of ethereal utopia when discussing the Kingdom of God. Instead, we’re speaking of a reality.

Paul said that the Jerusalem from above is our mother.<sup>xix</sup> Even before the New Heaven and New Earth there is apparently a ‘New Jerusalem.’ Jerusalem is the symbol and statement of God’s ultimate intention. When you read Psalms or prophetic Scriptures that say something like, “Come, let us go up to Jerusalem,” it is because Jerusalem has become the fulfillment of God’s ultimate intention. Though it is a literal city, and many Scriptures are to be translated as a people going up to that literal city, it is also a symbol. We are to be the Jerusalem of God according to Revelation 21<sup>xx</sup>. The Bride of Christ is called the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven.

It is that Bride that comes down that is being expressed when Hebrews 12:22 says, “But ye have come unto Zion...” It is not saying that we have somehow achieved a super-spiritual place, but instead have achieved a reality. By being in Christ, we are no longer strangers and pilgrims without home. We have come unto our home, and our home is Zion. Our home is not here upon this earth. It is heavenly. That heavenly reality has a certain character and quality about it.

We read in Colossians 3:17, “Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” This is our mandate. We are of a different kingdom. Our life should be lived through a different society. The homes we buy for ourselves, the type of clothing we wear, the occupations or careers that we are employed by, what we do with our money, and how we spend our time should all be considered in light of the Kingdom. God’s people have a certain culture about them. We need to know what that culture is.

To be in the Kingdom of God, we must yield ourselves fully to that Kingdom. Nothing is our own. Everything is unto Jesus. To be Kingdom minded is to be heavenly minded. There is no difference in terms. The Kingdom of God is heaven. Theocracy is the government of God. God rules from Zion. Currently, Zion is a heavenly reality, but it will soon be married to the earthly Zion. When Christ returns, He shall rule and reign from that locality over all of the families of the earth. We will be united with Him to rule and reign for 1000 years. The only thing necessary to achieve that calling is to come unto Zion. We put away all hindrances and the sin that so easily entangles us, and run the race with full passion.<sup>xxi</sup>

The New Heaven and New Earth are barely described at all in Scripture. The reason for this is twofold: it is something so holy that God does not reveal its majesty to those that have not also endured great struggle, and we only see through a glass darkly. John was not able to describe the New Jerusalem coming out of heaven with language that we would understand. He looked for symbols and metaphors in order to explain what

he saw. The glory that Saint John beheld was more than language can express.<sup>xxii</sup> It is that glorious City that we are currently seated in.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Who of us truly believes that? It is that belief, that we have come unto Zion, that actually keeps us and saves us from deception. It keeps us from falling away, and it saves us from anything less than that glory. Anything less than the glory of God is apostasy, because the glory of God is in you<sup>xxiv</sup>. It is the love of that reality, the glory of God, which is the love of truth.<sup>xxv</sup> God's glory is Truth. It is ultimate reality, which is to say ultimate truth. When I say that anything less than the glory of God is apostasy, what I am communicating is that any settling for something less than truth and reality is a false ground to live our lives from.

We actually pay a much higher price than we could know for such settling. It is a difficult thing to follow God. The Sermon on the Mount displays the impossibility of following Christ in our own ability. It actually takes the Spirit of God to walk in obedience to God. It is obedience to that Spirit, which is always obedience to the Scripture, that will keep us in the days to come. How do we make it through these hard times that are about to come upon us? We live like Jesus told us to.

If we were to only take the Sermon on the Mount and live according to those words, our lives would be completely other than what we have ever subjected ourselves to. That alone is enough to constitute that we are of a different kingdom. But if we don't live like that *now*, why should we believe that we would live like that *then*? At what time do you think that somehow the Holy Ghost will fall and "all of a sudden" you will be able to endure until the end? This is deception, dear children. We deceive ourselves if we think that we can currently live in luxury and comfort without there being severe repercussions in the soon coming future.

### Adopted as Children of God

In the question of what it means to be a part of the Kingdom of God, one of the most often quoted verses is found in Luke 17, "...the kingdom of God is within you."<sup>xxvi</sup> There is something that chafes me about this flippant quotation. It preaches 'good', but it simply is not true. The context that we use in saying that the Kingdom of God is within you is incorrect. Jesus was making a point here. He was saying that currently, at that time, the Kingdom of God was among them. It was within in the sense of among, or in the middle. The Kingdom of God is fully come when Christ Jesus rules and reigns from Zion over Israel, and Israel over all of the nations of the world. The statement is being made that the Kingdom has come, because Christ is here.

There is a conflict that is being expressed throughout the Scripture. The Kingdom of God is expressed from the beginning to the end. There are literal kingdoms. There is the Kingdom of Light, and the Kingdom of Darkness. Those two kingdoms are at enmity with one another. Our adoption into the Kingdom of Light is a salvation from the one kingdom and into the other. While we were once given over to the sinful habits of the flesh, and were bound under the power of the devil, which is death, we are liberated and made free from both death and sin by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Each kingdom symbolizes a wisdom. By wisdom, I mean value system. The one kingdom, the kingdom of darkness, promotes self. We were at one time governed by that selfish wisdom. Now, because we are children of Light, our chains of selfishness have been broken off. The Kingdom of God is governed by selflessness. We have the two wisdoms symbolized in the two trees within the Garden of Eden. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a symbol of this world's wisdom, handed over to the kingdom of darkness, and ruled over by the same serpent, the devil, that deceived Adam and Eve into taking that fruit. The tree of life symbolizes the heart and character of God – humility and sacrifice.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is about coming to our own conclusions. While Jesus said that no one is good but God alone, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil tells us that humanity is sufficient. That tree tempts us to use our own intelligence to discover the things of God. Yet, it is the tree of life that says our intelligence can't comprehend the things of God. To take of the tree of life is to take up our crosses and follow Christ. Even in our understanding and knowledge, we forfeit our own opinions to take up what it might be that God would reveal. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and His ways are higher than our ways, but we have the mind of Christ.<sup>xxvii</sup> To be ruled by the Kingdom of God, we must come out from our old mindsets and habits to be ruled by a different mindset and government.

It always amazes me to find people that claim they are ambassadors of heaven, and yet their lifestyle is completely contrary to my own. In a sense, I don't believe that God truly cares all that much about what cereals we buy, what kind of clothes we wear, what kind of music we listen to, and those sorts of things. Yet, there is a sense in which what makes up our lifestyle – the home we live in, how many clothes and shoes we own, whether we go out to eat regularly or cook at home, how we spend our money, what we lend our time and devotion to, etc – should be governed by a different culture than the one we've been taught.

Discussing with speakers who travel, it doesn't take long before you realize that staying at people's homes is quite revealing as to whether or not they have truly been given to the Kingdom of God. Some homes have a closet so full of jackets and coats that are never even worn that the speaker can't find room for his own coat. Some provide a massive meal for the speaker, and others will set the plate with the allotted portions and don't you dare ask for seconds. Some people live in homes that are barely big enough for their families, because they want to be conservative and use their money in better ways. Others live in homes that have many more bedrooms than they have people living there. How is it that there is such a massive difference?

From what tree are we gaining our opinions? What kingdom is telling us how to live? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a selfish tree. It symbolizes self-preservation. The branches go out and develop into self-promotion. The fruit is self-gratification, which, when we eat it, we find that the seeds bring forth death. The tree of life is a cross. It symbolizes sacrifice. The branches go out and develop into humility. The fruit itself is death, but the seeds bring forth eternal life. When we attempt to take of the fruit of that tree in selfish motive, we find that we are all the more practicing the values of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In order to obtain life we must lose life. It seems absolutely absurd.

Everything in the world tells us that we gain life by preserving and maintaining life. Why do you think such practices as botox and other forms of plastic surgery are popular? To the world, and in the natural, we assume that life is actually about doing things and having toys and taking adventure. Enjoying life means vacation. It means retirement. It means playing games. It means having fast moving vehicles. We eat, drink, and are merry, for tomorrow we die.<sup>xxviii</sup> Yet, the tree of life expresses to us that we are not truly living until we have truly died.

Adoption into this kingdom means passing from death to life. We were once dead in transgression and sin.<sup>xxix</sup> We were once enslaved by our lusts and greed. God has brought freedom to the captive,<sup>xxx</sup> and life to the dead.<sup>xxxi</sup> No longer are our lives lived under the bondage of sin and depravity.<sup>xxxii</sup> Instead, we are now given ultimate hope. We are children of God.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Our inheritance awaits us.<sup>xxxiv</sup> With the new birth, we have been brought into a kingdom that is not like the kingdom we've lived in up to this point. Everything about it is contrary. But we know that even though we live contrary to the way of the world, and indeed at enmity with the world,<sup>xxxv</sup> we have a better inheritance that will endure.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Adoption is about coming into the Kingdom of God. It is about discovering the Father that has so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.<sup>xxxvii</sup> It is about coming to the light so that the darkness might be exposed,<sup>xxxviii</sup> and we might have sublime freedom. To be adopted is the first stage of discovery. We're now exposed to a new and different reality. This reality is invisible, and yet more tangible than the false reality that the culture around us lives in and promotes. Our adoption pushes back the kingdom of darkness, and it fixes us to be brought into the Holy City where there is no night, and no darkness.<sup>xxxix</sup> It might be the first step, but that first step is a doozy.

### A clash between light and darkness

The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Light.<sup>xl</sup> The opposite is the kingdom of darkness. We don't need to point fingers or play the "blame game" to figure out what nations and peoples are in what kingdoms. The truth is that there are only these two. Neither are a physical reality (yet), and both are also spiritual conditions. It is a condition to be in the Kingdom of God. You cannot do anything to get yourself in or out of that by your own strength and ability. It is of grace that you are saved, and not of works.<sup>xli</sup> Likewise, "we were born dead in our sins and transgressions, in which we used to live when we followed the ruler of the kingdom of the air."<sup>xlii</sup>

Some have argued that to walk according to the light, as written in 1 John, is a statement of walking in purity. This is not true. When we look at the gospel of John we find a conversation with Jesus and Nicodemus. In this conversation, Jesus makes a remarkable statement: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."<sup>xliii</sup> Walking according to the light is not about

purity, but about transparency. We are open and honest. We don't hide ourselves. We can see, because we are willing for others to see us.<sup>xliv</sup>

Those that are righteous will discern the times. They will know whether what is written in this book is true or not.<sup>xlv</sup> It takes righteousness to know truth, not intelligence. If we are of the light, then we will be discerning. It doesn't take any kind of wand waving or cultivation of the Spirit. Yes, it is a gift, but ultimately we are all called to "discern the spirits."<sup>xlvi</sup> If we cannot practice discernment in our own lives now, then how shall we discern at the end when everything will be done to fool even the elect?<sup>xlvii</sup>

This battle between light and dark has been going on from the beginning. What God had originally allowed to remain upon the earth and called it 'very good,' Satan has now manipulated darkness into something abominable. What was intended to cloak God so that He might have fellowship with humanity has been perverted in order to blind and deceive humanity. But now God has brought into the world the Light, and so we are all without excuse.<sup>xlviii</sup> Those that reject the Light do so because they love darkness. It has nothing to do with 'not knowing.'

Jesus is the Light, which is also the light of men.<sup>xlix</sup> He came into this dark world to set free the blind, the captive, and the enslaved. He is our Moses that went to the Pharaoh, which is the devil, and proclaimed, "Let my people go!" Our exodus from darkness into His marvelous light<sup>1</sup> is characterized by our new identities. He has given us all new names in Heaven,<sup>li</sup> so that we might walk according to the righteousness that He has given us instead of the old sinful habits. We are new creations, and therefore we are no longer objects of darkness.<sup>lii</sup>

His sheep hear His voice,<sup>liii</sup> and anyone that is still in darkness without understanding has only himself or herself to blame. Jesus told us that He would give us the Holy Spirit to "tell us what is yet to come."<sup>liv</sup> He also told His disciples that He does not consider us servants, but friends.<sup>lv</sup> You tell your friends even the secret things, and so we ought to be able to discern the times. As we have faith to believe for it, to that extent God can reveal His plans and purposes.

In the end, only light remains. Light prevails over the darkness. It doesn't matter how bad it gets, we can remind ourselves of this and rejoice. Good always defeats evil. It is inherent in the wisdom of God. We can go to our own deaths and martyrdoms with joy knowing that what is to come will surpass anything that we can think, feel, or imagine in this life. Even in martyrdom we show light in the darkness. Our lives are lived in a way that display the Kingdom of Light to a world that is in darkness. Likewise, our deaths shall also display God's Kingdom and His power.

We do not fear, because fear comes from a lack of faith. Perfect love casts out fear.<sup>lvi</sup> But why does perfect love cast out fear? It casts out fear because we know in whom we have believed. God is our judge, and we know how He shall judge us. Because we know that there is no judgment or destruction coming upon us (also known as the second death), we shall not fear. Love has been perfected in us, because we know that Christ has loved us. He has loved us, and we have loved Him. If we remain in that love and do His commandments, then we shall never fear. His command is to love one another. In perfect love, fear is driven out.<sup>lvii</sup> This is the wisdom of God. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.<sup>lviii</sup> Our testimony is not our own,



but Christ's. It is the testimony of His redemption. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."<sup>lix</sup> When the enemy tries to overcome us, we have victory even in our death, because light overcomes the darkness, and darkness cannot overcome the light.

### Who will rule over this cosmos?

This is at the heart of the Gospel. Many times we think that the Gospel is somehow a formula to get saved. We think that the Gospel is a magic genie lamp that if we pray a prayer, and 'believe the gospel,' that God is then bound by His word to save us. The Gospel in the first century was about how Jesus overcame the devil.<sup>lx</sup> The question wasn't about how do we get to be saved, and therefore enjoy heaven when we die. The question was, "Who will rule over this cosmos?"

During the time of Jesus, Caesar Augustus ruled.<sup>lxi</sup> The Roman Empire stretched from Britain to India. It was the known world. If there were a people that were known, Rome took them over by force. This is a physical depiction of a spiritual reality. The devil has taken this world by force, and has challenged God. Satan has proclaimed that he desires the Throne of heaven, but that Throne cannot be occupied by anyone other than God.<sup>lxii</sup> So the whole of the Bible is speaking of this drama. Who will rule over this cosmos: God or Satan?

It isn't enough to explain that God will defeat Satan. Eschatology explains how and why God is now able to dwell on the earth. There is a coming Kingdom where Heaven and Earth shall marry. How does that take place? Why does that take place? These are the questions of eschatology. It searches to understand the Bible as a whole instead of isolating individual passages. We aren't so caught up in asking when the end will come, who will be the Antichrist, whether the Pope will be the false prophet or the Antichrist, or whether all of this fits into past history. We aren't trying to figure out how much of the Book of Revelations has been completed and how much of it is future. Instead, our primary purpose and intention is to seek to understand the heart of God.

There is a coming Kingdom. Either Satan will rule over the whole world, or God will rule over the whole world. If Satan is able to foil the plans of God, then Christ Jesus does not return. God has both established that a very peculiar and specific plan should unfold, and also stacked the cards against Him. He has made sure that when everyone sees that He will defeat Satan that there will be no excuse or question. God is real, and He has come to dwell among us. He establishes His Kingdom, and any nation that rejects that Kingdom will be cut off from the face of the earth.<sup>lxiii</sup> To understand the purposes of God is to understand His heart. That is the foundation of all of our studies.

To reject Christ and His Kingdom upon this earth is to reject God Himself. Nothing else can play out before you to convince you to repent. It is at that moment that the only thing that awaits you is judgment. Your condemnation is already present, because to reject the light is to beg God for hellfire. Everything revolves around His Kingdom. "And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come".<sup>lxiv</sup>

## The Patterns of God

We find in Genesis 1:1-5 a small account of the first day of creation. We find that darkness was upon the face of the deep. But God was not willing to allow His creation to remain in darkness. He spoke, "Let there be light," and there was light, and God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness, and the light He called, "Day;" the darkness He called, "Night." Think about your salvation. Think about how when you were without Christ you were walking in darkness. There was little hope. Despair was a daily reality. Darkness was indeed upon "the face of the deep." Those depths of our heart yearned and cried out because of that darkness, and God was not content to allow us to remain in that darkness.

We can find parallel with this first passage of Scripture and our testimonies of salvation. Each of us has come out of darkness and into His marvelous light. But, there is still a further application. Just like mentioned in the first chapter of this book, where the stories seem to indicate to many our personal testimony and salvation, and what Christ has done for us, there is a deeper understanding of the fathers. This is an eschatological story of a clash between darkness and light. The whole world will be steeped in darkness during the reign of the Antichrist, and even in the midst of this, God will "hover" over the darkness. He will hover through a people that bear His name.

The Hebrew verb used for "hover" is rachaph, and is in the piel participle. Rachaph means "to relax." The piel conjugation is an intensifying conjugation. The participle means that we use the verb as an adjective. Thus, we should read, "The intensely relaxed Spirit of God..." Now, we do find this verb in one other place in the Bible: Deuteronomy 32:11. The verb is being paralleled with an eagle that stirs up the young. What the verb means precisely, I would like to suggest: from God's state of rest and relaxation over the waters, the creation began to stir into greater degrees of order and form. In the end times, there will be a people that are in the midst of the darkness, and yet they are able to rest because they have the Spirit of Christ in them. That rest will stir the creation around them, because anxiety reacts to rest. Fear reacts to peace. Darkness reacts to light.

We move forward in the Bible to Abraham. What is so significant about Genesis 12? It comes directly after Genesis 11. There doesn't even seem to be much of a break from the Tower of Babel to the call of Abram. At Babel, the nations of the earth formed together to create a tower that would reach unto the heavens. This was such an urgent desire of their hearts, and antichrist in origin, that they baked the bricks thoroughly instead of allowing them to sit in the sun and dry. Not only does this describe technology, to go from building with stones to building with bricks, but also a technology that is given over to instantaneousness.

It is about this kind of unholy unity that God says, "Nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them." Therefore, God confuses their language. We then see the call of Abram, "Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to the land that I will show you." In response to the nations coming together in opposition to God, "so that they might not be scattered," God calls one man out of all nations to make of him a nation. Likewise, we see the call in Revelation 18:4 to those that are God's people still

living in the midst of Babylon, a symbol synonymous with the Tower of Babel and Abraham, "Come out from her, my people!"

Moses stands in opposition to Pharaoh.<sup>lxv</sup> Pharaoh is a symbol of the devil that oppresses the people of God. In Daniel 7:21, 25, and Revelation 13:7, we read of how the Antichrist will overpower the saints, wear out the saints, and overcome the saints. The Antichrist is given his throne and authority by Satan.<sup>lxvi</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that just as much as Pharaoh is a symbol of a spiritual Egypt ruled by Satan, it is also a symbol of the Antichrist kingdom that oppresses and seeks to kill the people of God. But God sends a deliverer, Moses, to rescue the people of God out from Egypt. That deliverer is Christ's Body, the Church, and the people are still the children of Israel.<sup>lxvii</sup>

Saul pursues David. That which is of the spirit of David, or Davidic, is the same as the spirit of Jesus. Just as Saul had a seeming righteousness that lasted for a short while, so too is there a church that calls itself by the name of Jesus that has a seeming righteousness.<sup>lxviii</sup> Their lamp will go out, having a legitimate oil to ignite, but not enough oil to last until midnight.<sup>lxix</sup> Midnight is a symbol of the return of Christ. Their lamp goes out, because they settled for artificial oil instead of the true oil, which is the Holy Spirit. That religious church will continue to go through the Tribulation not even knowing the hour that it lives in, and I am convinced that the deeper the religiosity, the more brutal the persecution that will come from them. It is possible that even some of the children of Israel will rise up in indignation against Christians, but not out of fervor for the Lord.

The reality is that there is a pattern given in the Scripture of a righteous Abel people that are oppressed and murdered by the Cain people.<sup>lxx</sup> We see it through and through. This pattern is something that we can begin to use to make predictions from. The kingdom of darkness is the kingdom of oppression, superiority, and exaltation. It is the kingdom of light that embodies submission, humility, and "being content in all things."<sup>lxxi</sup> Theocracy is the embodiment of the Kingdom of Light living, breathing, manifesting, and moving here on the earth. There is a literal fulfillment coming when the whole world will be a part of that Kingdom, but for now we are the ambassadors.

## Chapter 4: New Covenant

What makes the “New Covenant” new? Some would say that it is a New Testament phenomenon. I disagree. This covenant is ever and always. It is sometimes spoken of as the “eternal covenant.”<sup>lxxii</sup> How can an eternal covenant be new? Sadly, I feel as though there is too much detail to truly begin to expound this sort of a subject in one chapter. I would like to start by saying that the New Covenant is not so much new because it is a “New Testament phenomenon,” but rather that there is a long progression to that covenant.

When we read our Bibles, we see how God interacts with humanity. Humanity was simply not willing to enter into that covenant. It took a progression from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Abraham, and from Abraham to Moses before there was a generation able and willing to handle the covenant made at Sinai. There was a progression in history that leads to a people of God taking up the Pentateuch Law. From there, we find another progression to King Saul, where the people were no longer content to live as a theocracy ruled by God and His servants the judges. From King Saul, we find another progression until Israel is cast out into exile, the northern kingdom into Assyria, and the southern kingdom into Babylon.

It was close to this point in time that the prophets began to speak of a coming “new covenant.” This new covenant would be different and distinct from the covenant made at Sinai, not because it is somehow altogether different in content, but because it is given in a way that is altogether different. The Law and covenant are no longer given from some sort of oracular statement, or commandments written on stone, but instead by a personal speaking with the Spirit of God, and the written Law upon our hearts.<sup>lxxiii</sup> It took thousands of years of human history to progress to a time where the prophets even began to speak of the eternal covenant, where God would dwell *with* and *in* humanity.

We find another progression to Christ Jesus where the covenant is revealed. From there, we have Pentecost. Now, we are in a place where after 2000 years of Church history, I’m not entirely convinced we understand the new covenant, let alone understand the old covenant. We need to be able to wrestle with the history and progression of Scripture up to the point of Christ and onward. We need to understand the context from which the prophets spoke, and from which the New Testament authors penned. So let us examine a few Scriptures to see if we can better understand this new covenant.

### Salvation and Transfiguration

Some of the classic texts regarding the new covenant are preached on to explain our new birth. They are used to express the salvation and transfiguration of the believer. For example, it says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that “any man who is in Christ is a new creation.” Something to know about Paul is that he is a good Jewish boy. When he writes, he typically is quoting or referencing an Old Testament Scripture or pattern. Paul might be referencing 1 Samuel 10:6 here: “The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophecy with them; and you will be changed into a different person.”

What exactly is meant by this “change into a different person”? It isn’t that we were once bad and now we’re good. We were once dead and now we’re alive. There is a very true and real sense in which we stop living the way that we used to, and now we’re completely different. Yet, that wording can get us in trouble. God does not change the very core of who you are. The fabric of your being does not get “changed”, but instead, awakened. Paul never speaks about a change in the believer that entails being something other than who you are. By this, I mean that person who God has created you to be. We do put things upon self that are not expressions of who we are, but we convince ourselves that they are expressions of self. Paul expresses resurrection.

The slight and subtle change in wording is enough to cause for terrible error. When I was first taught about the new birth, I was under the impression that I was supposed to be entirely different than I was before I came to Christ. For some reason, I assumed that my personality even had to change. This is not the expression of resurrection. Resurrection is solely speaking of an animation and awakening of the believer to God. He has created us to be who we are, and He delights in us being that. Obviously, there is a sense in which we give up the sinful habits, and no longer support things that are evil, but these things don’t necessitate becoming a Hollister wearing persona with an acoustic guitar, playing Chris Tomlin, styling my hair in a faux hawk, wearing sandals everyday, and growing my soul patch.

To a certain extent, the person that comes to Christ lays down all things for the cause of Christ. He no longer desires to do the things that offend Christ. So, when other Christians say that rock and roll music is demonic, the new convert gives it up. I did. Then I listened to bands that are some of the godliest people that you will ever meet, and yet they’re *screaming* into the microphones songs of redemption and hope. I was told that I could no longer wear the clothing that I was wearing because it was “secular.” To a degree, I gave up wearing clothing that supported things that are opposed to Christ. But that in no way would mean that I now need to start dressing like a prep, jock, or (let’s be really honest) a homosexual.

It is the heart that changes. Outward expressions of the inward reality are manifest in much more glorious manner. I cried for the first time in a decade the day that I came to Christ. It is now common for me to soak tissues while praying alone before bed. God has equipped me to carry a burden that would have before made me to crumble. He has taught me to stand strong in my faith, even when terror is all around. I might be standing in the midst of chaos, tears running down my face and anguish of soul tearing me limb from limb, but I stand in the midst of that adversity and do not fear.

I used to be full of anger and bitterness. I used to be terribly afraid to confront others. I used to be afraid to simply express who I am. I used to be absolutely terrified to say my opinion, in case it got attacked. I used to fear being the person that I am, because I’ve been bullied my whole life. That fear is that people won’t accept me for who I am, but now I don’t fear because God has accepted me for who I am. I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because Jesus was not ashamed of me. Now that I have come to Christ, I am free. I no longer am controlled by my fears and emotions. *This* is the new birth. Outward manifestations are not trivial. Stupid preferences do not govern whether there is indeed an inward reality. The question should be raised: What does the Bible say?

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you of all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices,” Ezekiel 36:24-31.

When you read that, do you notice anything bizarre? I had heard messages from this and Jeremiah 31:31-34 multiple times. Something always seemed extremely ‘off’ to me. I’ll write out Jeremiah 31:31-34 to see if you also pick up on it:

“The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the Sovereign Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Did you notice anything bizarre in that passage? I had heard these passages used to describe our experience when we come to Christ, but the thing that struck me once is that both of these passages are talking about national Israel. Can we truly take that liberty to call these our promises? Is it possible that we’re missing the context entirely, because we simply want to look at ourselves with adoration, and that we have absolutely no idea what these texts are truly discussing? I believe so. If we would only be careful exegetes, we would notice that Jeremiah continues:

“This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar – the Lord Almighty is his name. Only if these decrees vanish from my sight, declares the Lord, will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me. This is what the Lord says: Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done,”

Ezekiel 36 similarly continues from where I left off to speak of a time when Israel would come back to the Land and inhabit the ruins. What is happening here? There is absolutely no way that we can claim these promises as fulfilled. Even the book of Joel that was quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost doesn’t seem to truly apply. Has the Spirit truly been poured out on *all* flesh? Yet, Peter uses this prophecy to express what was happening on the day of Pentecost. Why?

The context of the prophets and the history of Israel would explain to us that the apostles were fully expectant of national redemption. Peter was fully persuaded that the outpouring of the Spirit was the sure sign to say that devastation and judgment were coming quickly. Too often in the prophets is the message of doom and destruction. That word of judgment precedes a national redemption that would then bring in the messianic age, where the messiah sits upon the throne of David and rules over all the families of the earth.<sup>lxxiv</sup> Because Jesus did not set up that kingdom, I am sure that Peter assumed that the time of Jacob's Trouble<sup>lxxv</sup> was the only thing left to happen.

God is clear on this. It was when the Lord was delayed that it started to come together and further revelation was given. Peter had a vision that expressed God's desire that the Gentiles would also come into the Body of Christ.<sup>lxxvi</sup> Paul so clearly expresses this mystery to the Romans when he explains that we have been grafted into Israel's root, and that there will come a time when God will once again engraft those natural branches back in.<sup>lxxvii</sup> The new covenant is about a time when God would save and transform *national Israel*, not only individual believers.

I refer once again to Romans 11:15, when Paul said, "For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" If the rejection of Christ Jesus by national Israel opened wide the door for the Gentiles to come into that new covenant glory, then how much more will their fullness be? When national Israel will once again turn back to God and embrace Jesus as the Messiah, it will mean redemption for all of creation. They are the crux. Everything hinges upon Israel's salvation. And if that is true, what will it take for national Israel to recognize Jesus as their messiah? It is about that question that I write this book.

### Authority over Demonic Forces

Though we cannot say that the new covenant as written by Ezekiel or Jeremiah (and all the prophets) is currently fulfilled, we do know that we are a first fruit. Once again, Paul does an immaculate job in explaining this for us. We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.<sup>lxxviii</sup> We are Christ's first fruit.<sup>lxxix</sup> But, that does not give legitimate credence to then say that everything has been fulfilled. In Romans 8:23, Paul says, "We... groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." Paul was not content to say that what we experience here and now is the absolute fulfillment of everything the prophets wrote.

Paul was jealous over a deeper expression of the new covenant. That deeper expression would mean the redemption of all nations, all tribes, and all peoples.<sup>lxxx</sup> However, with the first expression being wrought in the Church, the Kingdom of God has broken forth upon the face of the earth. We are ambassadors, because that Kingdom has not yet come to the earth in a literal form. We are ambassadors of a heavenly Kingdom that is pushing back the darkness; the light is already shining.<sup>lxxxii</sup> Because of that, there is a mastery over the demonic forces of darkness. We have an authority in the name of Jesus Christ over those powers of darkness. This is why Jesus brings the parallel of the Spirit of God casting out demons and the Kingdom of God coming upon us.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Notice, however, that Jesus is not saying that the Kingdom is here and that is the end of it.

Now, if we know that there is an authority over the powers now when we only have a seal, or a foretaste, of the full expression to come, what will the full expression then bring? Jesus told His disciples in Luke 9:1 that we have authority to drive out *all* demons and to cure diseases. There is an expression of mastery over the powers. The forces of darkness, whether in illness or in demonic possession, do not have the authority to stand against the bearers of Light. Matthew 28:18 tells us that all authority has been given unto Christ. This needs to be understood in the context of Hebrews 2:8, however, where it is said that “At present, we do not see everything subjected to him.” Though that subjection has not yet come, we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> It is for this reason that Paul is able to say in Ephesians 6:12, “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

### Millennium

The new covenant will have its ultimate fulfillment in the millennial reign of Christ.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> The issue that I’m pressing here is not an issue of semantics. I’m not pressing an issue of dogma, nor definitions. Joel prophesied that the Spirit would be poured out on “all flesh”. When Peter quotes that passage on the day of Pentecost, he was fully persuaded of a soon impending judgment upon all nations, and a return of Christ Jesus to rule over those nations.<sup>lxxxv</sup> It has been 2000 years, and that “soon coming” of the Lord has not yet happened. That impending judgment upon all nations has not yet happened. So, did Peter misspeak?

The Bible accurately records what men spoke, but sometimes they don’t say the truth. Take, for example, many of the words of Job’s friends. Where we would philosophically agree with Job’s friends, and we can even find Scriptural support for what they said, it was God’s opinion that they misspoke. They mischaracterized God by proclaiming that Job must have some sort of secret sin in his life that is displeasing God. When Peter said, “This is that,” he gave the correct translation upon the correct phenomenon, but lacked the full explanation of a time when that prophecy would be fulfilled upon all nations, all peoples, and all tribes.

Read the book of Joel. The context is clear. God is not limiting that outpouring of the Spirit to only Israel. He doesn’t limit that outpouring only to those that call upon His name. The fact is that Joel expected *all nations* to call upon His name. Salvation will be upon Zion, and we know from prophets before Joel (such as Isaiah) that all the nations will stream to Jerusalem. There would be a time of world peace. There would be a time when the law would go forth out of Jerusalem, and the word of the Lord out of Zion.<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

Now, just consider this. If what the first century Church experienced was glorious, how much more glory must the absolute fulfillment of these new covenant Scriptures mean? If we are given a foretaste now, and sealed with the Holy Spirit as first fruits to drive the Jew to jealousy,<sup>lxxxvii</sup> what will we experience when Christ returns and the Spirit is poured out without measure? The power of the resurrection is to free us from sin, to engage the principalities and powers, to set the captive free, to speak life into the ears of our listeners, and to perceive with a heavenly vision the glory of God forever.



While Abraham sought for a City whose builder and maker is God,<sup>lxxxviii</sup> of that same City we're told, "But you have come".<sup>lxxxix</sup>

While Abraham sought for that city, and lived his days seeking the fulfillment of the promise given to him, we have now come to the obtaining of that heavenly promise. Yet, that obtaining is not to be experienced as though we have fully attained. We have not yet been brought to the place where heaven and earth meet. We still long and pray, "Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven..."<sup>xc</sup> There is still a yearning in our souls.<sup>xcii</sup> There is still brokenness, because we are caught up with the heavenly vision of Zion, and that groping after the heavenly reality on earth as it is in heaven causes for burden.

The issue of the end times, which is the issue of the Church, is the issue of the glory of God forever. The glory of God forever is the issue of Zion. Unto that glory do we attain, and City that is pure and spotless. It is the beauty of holiness. All of its radiance and splendor brings one to tears. The streets are of such refined gold that they are as clear as glass. The foundations are mighty stones, representing the apostles. The gates are the tribes of Israel. The Church and Israel are one, and there is no separating the one from the other. That unity and beauty is the unadulterated reflection of Divinity.<sup>xcii</sup>

When we see that glory, which God claims is ours here and now,<sup>xciii</sup> anything less than it is apostasy. We do not merely strive for that reality. We do not simply pray and hope that "one day" when we've passed away and "gone through the fire"<sup>xciv</sup> that we will suddenly be made likened unto the image of Christ. We either reflect His glory here and now or not at all. What we create in our souls in this life carries over into the next life. That which does not line up to the heavenly glory, the gold, silver and precious stone, it is burned up like hay, wood, and stubble.<sup>xcv</sup>

We have been given a down payment. The outpouring at Pentecost is a sufficient weight of glory to transfigure us and give us a new birth. From that new birth, we continue to learn what it means to live from the resurrection. All things have indeed become new. We are no longer governed by our mindsets and secular lusts. Our hearts covet after the Kingdom of God, and our spirits moan and groan for the ultimate attainment of reality. Anything short of that apostolic glory causes grief and despair. The reason for my tears is that I have seen and experienced truth in heaven, and when I speak to others about that grandeur that is theirs in Christ, they get hostile and reply, "There is no such thing as a perfect church."

My Jesus calls the Church a pure and spotless Bride! Yet, so many of my friends are whores! We have the ability to be free in Christ, and that freedom is not holiness in the sense of "sinlessness." Far be it from you to think that we're called to be sinless. We're called to be lovers. They that hear the call for truth and reality will pursue it with everything in their being. They will strip off every weight that hinders them.<sup>xcvi</sup> If that weight is sin, then we cast it aside. If that weight is doubt, then we proclaim, "I believe, Lord, help me with my unbelief!"<sup>xcvii</sup> If we simply don't think that it is worth it, and that we ought to continue in the path that we've always walked, then by what do we call ourselves ministers of the new covenant?<sup>xcviii</sup>

Though we only have a foretaste here and now, the veracity of that baptism in the Holy Spirit is enough to cause us to long for the completion. The day spirit and flesh no longer war against one another is the day that I will live in a resurrected body. Though

Paul was able to speak of being crucified with Christ,<sup>xcix</sup> and that he dies daily,<sup>c</sup> and that those who are dead to sin no longer live in it,<sup>ci</sup> he also said, “I do not want you to think that I have already attained”<sup>cii</sup>. There is a certain sense in which we know and understand full well the expression of the new covenant, and then there is another sense in which we have absolutely no idea what we’re even talking about.

When all Israel shall be saved,<sup>ciii</sup> the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh. The nations will send representatives to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>civ</sup> When the nation Israel is finally born again, and has entered into her rest, all other nations, as nations, will also be able to enter into that rest. Christ is the embodiment of Israel, and through Him we have access to that rest as individuals. Yet, Israel will be the mediator, as the firstborn son of God,<sup>cv</sup> not for individuals, but for nations.

This is a deep subject in which our wording needs to be extremely precise. Though it is the calling of Israel to be the mediator nation for all other nations, it is not their calling to somehow “win the nations.” There is too much tied up in what it means to have a nation repent and come under submission to Christ Jesus to simply say that it is Israel’s job. I desire to at least attempt to explain this at a later time.

The fulfillment of the new covenant is when all people, all nations, all tribes, all languages, etc come into relationship with God through Christ Jesus, and therefore receive the exact same outpouring of the Spirit that we have, and then some. Ours is a shadow of things to come; theirs will be without measure. Our baptism is a uniting to God through Christ as individuals; their baptism will be a uniting to God through Christ as nations. Do you have faith to believe that? When you look around at our world today, and you see the calamity, can you believe that the nation that you live in has a prophetic purpose in the Kingdom of God?

It is the calling of the Church to know the heart of God, and to be a prophetic presence in the nations, so that we might perceive that prophetic purpose for our own nations. While our nations might or might not exhibit that prophetic purpose, the Church within the locality and nation should. The judgment of the nations does not fall because the atheist politicians decided homosexual marriage was to be legalized. The judgment of nations comes because the people of God within that nation are playing games and twiddling their thumbs.

To all of the preachers and Christians that want to condemn America to persecution, judgment, and suffering, you better believe that Christ will hold you fully accountable. If judgment comes upon our nation, state, county, city, or neighborhood, it is solely because we have not been obedient to Christ. Obedience is more than the focus of obeying the Bible. Obedience is only obedience when our lives are reflections of God’s heart. What good is it to achieve some sort of righteousness through “do this” and “don’t do that”?<sup>cvi</sup> If we lack to understand the heart of God, then we lack to understand the commandments in the Bible. If we do not understand the purpose of the command, then we cannot live in obedience to that command.

Our obedience to Christ is this: Take up your cross and follow me. Just as Christ was a ransom for many, so too shall our lives be a ransom for many.<sup>cvii</sup> Any lesser living is not true living. We might be breathing. We might be eating and digesting food. We might be going through the motions day after day. But how much of that truly constitutes

life, and life abundantly? There is a life that emits from the believer who is occupied with the purposes of God.<sup>cviii</sup> Those eternal purposes, both for our own nations and for the nation of Israel, are the sole purposes that will deliver us from monotony and being “imperfect people.” There are perfect people, and there is a perfect Church. They are both defined as they who take up the purposes of God, even at their own peril, for the sake of the glory of God forever. That is the fulfillment of the new covenant. When we reach the Millennium, we will see the expression of that new covenant being worked out even among nations. So for now, we live as close to that reality as we can, knowing that one day the ultimate fulfillment will come upon us, and the glory of that day is beyond expression.

## Chapter 5: Principalities and Powers

I came to Christ in a “non-denominational” church that was a part of the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement. There was a stress on demons, overcoming the devil in our own lives, how we used to be slaves to Satan, and those sorts of things. When I had left this congregation, I left questioning just about everything that they stood upon. I was questioning spiritual gifts, I was questioning demonic forces, I was questioning the legitimacy of fasting, I was questioning whether church is supposed to even meet in buildings, I was questioning the emphasis on “fire”, I was questioning manifestations of the spirit, and I was questioning just about everything else in the faith as well. The only thing that I did not question was whether God existed, and whether Christ truly rose from the dead. I was convinced of my salvation in Christ, but that was about all I was convinced of.

It was that journey of leaving the Charismatic groups and searching for answers in the Scripture that I began to realize truth and authenticity. There is a real sense in which we were once governed by the ways of this world, which is the kingdom of darkness.<sup>cxix</sup> There is a real sense in which we can say that Satan was at work within us. However, what I find is that we have too glib a notion of the principalities and powers. We, too, often think so small. Our perception barely passes demonic possession. We assume that Satan either possesses or oppresses, and that beyond that, the devil really doesn't have a whole lot of authority.<sup>cx</sup>

Yet, many times we read passages about “this present evil age,”<sup>cxix</sup> or not being conformed to the ways of this world.<sup>cxii</sup> We read Paul's words to the Corinthians about the god of this world being the one who blinds the unbelievers.<sup>cxiii</sup> We read in Ephesians that “the days are evil.”<sup>cxiv</sup> John tells us that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.<sup>cxv</sup> Even Jesus called Satan “the prince of this world.”<sup>cxvi</sup> It is one thing to quote Ephesians 2:2 and claim that we were blinded and deceived. It is something completely different to say that the devil is actually the ruler of this present world.

I've heard multiple times in my life about how the believer “tears down strongholds” and thwarts the plans of the devil. I've heard over and over again about commanding the devil “in the name of Jesus.” I have experienced demonic possession in a close friend, and after four hours of prayer and fasting, he was delivered. I have experienced the chains of the enemy on other's lives, and after laying hands and loosing them in the name of Jesus Christ, they walk in freedom from then on. I have seen the truth of the statements that we are given the authority over the enemy to push back the kingdom of darkness. I have experienced the power of God in my life.

Yet, something still seemed so far off. It seems like there is a deeper realm that wasn't being discussed. I understand full well that there are demonic forces that can possess and oppress. I understand full well about having authority and victory. I would like to suggest, however, a deeper understanding. The deeper understanding actually helps to put into perspective the lightness that we teach. It is not that Christ has simply disarmed the devil on the cross,<sup>cxvii</sup> and so now we have the authority to command that toothless lion, the devil.<sup>cxviii</sup> Let's not forget that Satan stripped the seven men and chased them out into the street. “Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you?”<sup>cxix</sup>

There is a demonic force that is influencing all government and institutions. Nothing is beyond that influence. These demonic figures, typically the name Satan is given to represent all of them, are also called “the principalities and powers...” Principality and power causes for many Christians to think of governmental authority. However, what is being addressed is bigger than a king or ruler. These demonic principalities and powers have rule and sway over the realm of systems that causes for the whole world to be a massive Egypt in which all of humanity is subject to their rule. Humanity has been taken away from the place of freedom and brought into the place of bondage. But, bondage of what kind?

A system is any institution, corporation, or organization that seeks it's own perpetuation and/or goals over and above anything or anyone else. People do not matter. They are only numbers – means to an end. The ultimate end for systems is their perpetuation or success. Depending on what the “goal” of the institution, corporation, or organization is, we find the degree to which it despises and oppresses humanity. Even the organizations that are supposed to be bringing water to other countries and helping their fellow man are systems that ultimately cause oppression and slavery.

I'll give an example from a Christian college that I had visited while looking to go into “ministry training.” The college was a prominent college in my area, and they had a program where I could get a degree in Biblical Studies. When my wife and I (fiancé at that time) visited the school, they had bragged about how they are debt free. We saw the campus: an easy 30 acres, about 15 or more buildings, the latest technology, sprinkler systems going, and all the bells and whistles that say, “We are just as credible as any secular college that you will find.”

This *Christian college* bragged about being debt free. They claimed that the Bible is their foundation. They claimed that being debt free is something to take seriously. (I'm not opposed to being debt free, seeing as I am also debt free. It is taught in the Bible.) They claimed that they use their budget wisely so that they can keep up-to-date on all of the latest technology and trends. They claimed that, as a Christian college, they need to uphold the morality of the Bible. The Bible speaks against debt, so they are debt-free. Yet, when we asked about scholarships they said they don't have any.

Did you see it? This *Christian college* that would *brag* about being debt free *keeps from going into debt by putting children into debt*. Their goal is to be just as great, if not even better, than the secular universities. Their goal is to do all of that and more, because they are doing it Scripturally. Their goal is to keep from going into debt. How are they going to attain that end? They will force their thousands of students to go into massive debt of \$5,000 to \$15,000 a year, depending on their major and whether it is seminary or not. Tell me, how Christian is it to fund your empire on the backs of slaves?

In the Bible, God told Israel that because they were enslaved in Egypt that they should never have slaves. If a foreigner comes into your land, you can hire them and cause them to work for you, but no Israelite has an occupation, and no Hebrew owns slaves. The Bible is very careful in its wording. They have servants, yes, but not slaves. Everyone tends to their own homestead and trades with their community so that everyone is able to feed their families. If someone is in need, you take care of the poor. You take care of the widow and orphan. If someone can't take care of himself or herself, for whatever reason, then it is your job to take care of them.

There are regulations for hired servants. Some translations use the word “slave”, but the Hebrew says no such thing. The author was very careful to let everyone know that these are not slaves – they are hired servants. Because they are hired, when the year of Jubilee comes, they are released as freemen. If they decide that they enjoy working for you, then you are allowed to pierce their ear to show that they are your servant – but not your property. This is a willing submission, and it is where Paul gets his term “bondservant” or “bondslave”. The idea is that you have willingly accepted that you will work for this person for the rest of your life. This is not forced slave labor. The whole point is for they who are unable to maintain life for their family. They are then allowed to come under another man and work for him in order to support his family. It wasn’t the first intention, but it was understood that this might happen – and it did indeed happen. God wanted to ensure that this man was not taken as a slave because of debt or inability to afford the necessities of life.<sup>cxx</sup>

Yet, when we get to 1 Kings, we begin to read of the kingdom of Solomon. Solomon was the son of David. He had 300 wives, which was specifically condemned for kings to do.<sup>cxxi</sup> He gathered horses; another thing condemned by God for kings to do.<sup>cxxii</sup> Then he also built *the Temple of the Lord* on the backs of slave labor.<sup>cxxiii</sup> He also used that slave labor to build his palace and military bases. Behold Solomon’s kingdom: the New Egypt.

The way that 1 Kings records Solomon’s kingdom is very subtle, but very insulting. Solomon’s income is an annual 666 “talents” of gold – a talent being about 25 tons.<sup>cxxiv</sup> Going up to Solomon’s throne are six steps. On each step are two lions opposing each other. You have six lions on the left, six lions on the right, and six steps going up to the throne to give us another “6-6-6.”<sup>cxxv</sup> Solomon’s kingdom is being equated with the kingdom of Satan. Why? The reason for this equation is that Solomon had deliberately gone against the commandment of the Lord in multiple behaviors. In Solomon’s disobedience to God, he is actually establishing that even Israel itself is a system that is influenced more by the principalities and powers than by God.

That “Christian college” that enslaves countless students each year so that they can look good has the same fate. I don’t care who the dean is. I don’t care how saved the staff are. I don’t care how Biblical the messages at chapel are. When you forfeit standing with God in absolution in such a way to push your agenda over and above the lives of people, then you have forsaken the command to “walk worthy of your calling.”<sup>cxxvi</sup> The only thing left after Jerusalem becomes the “New Egypt” is judgment. First, God split the kingdom during the reign of Rehoboam, Solomon’s son. From there we find both good and bad kings in the Southern Judah, but only wicked kings in Northern Israel. There was never a king to fully restore the kingdom of God – Josiah being the only one to attempt. Thus, with the wickedness of both Israel and Judah not being repented of, there came only one more judgment from God: exile. Babylon is the true kingdom of darkness, the nation that Satan has put his name upon, and any establishment that sacrifices their Christianity (or in this case, the next generation) upon the altar of Baal will inevitably be taken away into that darkened kingdom. For Israel to be captured by Assyria, and for Judah to be captured by Babylon, we need to understand that these are not only countries, but also types. They are symbolic of something. The person, tribe, nation, or people group that willingly submits to the principalities will in the end be handed over to them.

If you love the darkness so much that you reject the light, then the darkness is what you will receive.<sup>cxxvii</sup> Whether we have establishments and institutions of religion, or whether they are systems of government, it doesn't matter. A system by definition looks out for itself before bending the knee to help out those that are connected to it. It might be true that they do a lot of good. But somewhere in the core of that foundation will be darkness. You cannot be beyond this. The only way to be free from this kind of manipulation of the principalities and powers is to not be a system. The only way to not be a system is to be an organism. What exactly an organism looks like is equally as difficult to understand.

For we as the Body of Christ to be an organism instead of a religious institution would require that we are no longer supporting any kind of Egypt. Either God brings us out from Egypt or we're still in Egypt. A partial deliverance is no deliverance. We might come out from the world in the sense that we are no longer enslaved to sin, but if we then continue in the ways of the world – the establishment and perpetuation of systems – then we haven't truly been brought out of the world. This is all or nothing. That doesn't necessarily mean that we are to be jobless, without schooling, etcetera. It means that even if we are in that system, we are not *of* that system. We do not endorse it, and we blow the whistle. We make it clear where we stand and we are not afraid to condemn such things as evil. Even if we are at a “Christian college,” we call the entire infrastructure to repentance and not merely a few souls within it. This is what the prophets of old did. By speaking to the whole of the nation of the sin of the nation – it might not have been the sin of some of the individual hearers, but your guilt remains in that you have not done anything about it – individuals within that nation see the corruption and repent of the wickedness in their own hearts and lives. This has always been the message of the prophets: Come out from her my people.<sup>cxxviii</sup>

An organism builds itself up, teaching the next generation how to live. In the case of the Christian college, there is a certain degree to which it will always be a system of education. Yet, there is another degree where you can indeed cease to be a system. When the goal is no longer to perform these selfish ambitions, but instead to teach the student to learn for themselves (Paul calls it “preparing the people of God for the work of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up”<sup>cxxix</sup>) and that these students would not need to rely upon their professors, you have begun to be an organism. When the students learn how to learn for self, and to discuss and debate among themselves, the college has started to become an organism instead of system. There is a certain degree of immediacy in college. Instead of waiting upon the Lord to reveal the depth of these subjects to us, we go to college to be taught by the professors.

Likewise, in church congregations, when it is taught that we need to continue to serve the system and go to the elders, deacons, pastors, church board, district supervisor, etc, we're actually sacrificing the hope of being an organism. Organic living of the Body requires that we would build one another up in Christ, so that they might be able to live and move and have their being in Him,<sup>cxxx</sup> and not in anyone else. The equipping of the saints is about bearing the heart and burden of the Lord, and carrying that heart and burden together as the Lord gives each person. The equipping of the saints is not about teaching them information. It is about working in them character and reality to live as Christ lived. It is about maturity in both the congregation and the individual.

## Governmental Influence Over All Nations

I had mentioned earlier that the whole world is a system. Until we can recognize this, we cannot truly bring a message to this world or generation. We are called to speak to our nations, and not only individuals that we want to ‘witness’ to. It is in the context of seeing the world as system that we can better understand the condition of our own nations. Our nations are under the manipulation of the principalities and powers. Speaking forth words that condemn the practices of the system – the oppression of the poor, the enslavement of children/teenagers, the promotion of premeditated “self defense”, the rebuke of anyone that doesn’t ‘go with the flow’, the constant and incessant proclamation of relativity of morale, etc – are actually the very things that reach to the heart of the people within that system. To those that are in Jerusalem using slave labor to “build the Temple,” these words are words of conviction. To those that are enslaved, they are words of freedom and hope.

It is our calling as the Church to wrestle and engage those spiritual powers of darkness. It says in Ephesians 3:10-11, “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” It is our high calling to engage those demonic powers. We are to broadcast and call out the fraud. To engage those powers is not some sort of “hidden” thing.

The way that we engage those powers is by being an organism. When we care for the poor, when we take in the widow and fatherless, when we show love to the despised, when we are unified, when culture and nationality don’t matter, when hostility has been broken, and when our love covers over a multitude of sins we have engaged those powers. Wrestling the principalities and powers is not some sort of “prayer warrior” thing. It is taking up the cross and dying to self. To deny self and promote another over and above self is to wrestle the principalities and powers, which is to say, to blow the lid off of the system.

A “prayer warrior” is a term that is dubious to say the least. It robs from the spirit of humility and expresses instead a spirit of hostility. It is to fight fire with fire. When we think we can engage the powers by our “prayers” that look more like what the world would insist “true prayer” should look like, then the game is over. They have already conquered us. Wrestling doesn’t imply writhing of the hands or shouts or big motions and booming “in the name of Jesus” vanity. Wrestling is a daily submission to God. Wrestling comes from a daily contending for the faith.<sup>cxxx1</sup> We will not settle for anything less than something that engages those powers.

Ultimately, I think that terms like “prayer warrior” might be one of the many reasons that have given rise to our lack of humility in our daily lives. We completely misunderstand the faith and the heart of God. For a lack of knowledge, we perish.<sup>cxxxii</sup> God has equipped us with every need, but instead we insist on a soulish, or maybe even carnal, working up so that we can “feel” as though we’re pressing through, but the reality of our condition is something to mock. Those demonic powers yawn and ask us, “Jesus



we know, and Paul we know, but who are you?” And we love it to be so. We take the cheap route because to live costly before the Lord is difficult.

Difficulty means suffering, and every suffering is vehemently opposed. But we must suffer and endure that suffering in this life if we are to be a testimony.<sup>cxxxiii</sup> We must depend solely upon God, or else what credit can we give Him? Like Eve that bore Cain and said, “I have bore with the help of God...” so often we also take credit. That credit is sometimes ours to take. We have indeed worked it out for ourselves. This statement, I think, is symbolic of the way of Cain. Our religion is more Cain-like than Abel-like. When it says of Abel that he brought “the firstborn of the flock without blemish,” it makes no such reference of the grandeur of Cain’s offering.

Instead of bringing the costly thing, that which would require a trust in Christ, Cain instead brought “the fruit of the ground.” These sacrifices represent the relationship that each had in God. Abel brought something that costs deeply, because His relationship unto God was a continual deep calling unto deep. Yet, Cain brought the fruit of the ground – not a hint of anything of extravagance, like the first fruit – because he did not cultivate a relationship of doing what was difficult for the love of truth. Instead, Cain continued to do bring what was cheap and easy. If we continue to bring what is cheap and easy, then we will continue to bring what is cheap and easy.<sup>cxxxiv</sup>

The religion of Abel brought a costly sacrifice. The cost of Abel’s sacrifice attests to his faith, which is ultimately what God examines. What God saw as the “sweet savor” was actually the fat portions. The fat is a representation of our rest. I can’t help but wonder at how many of our Sunday “sacrifices” are performed by the sweat of our brow instead of in the rest of God, when we have finished *our work*. How much of our doing is by our own ability instead of leaning not on our own understanding?<sup>cxxxv</sup> This might be pivotal for the last days. The system gives an offering made by the sweat of our brow, but the organism gives an offering out of rest. This is the very thing that the nations recognize: hard labor to make it to the top, so that when you’re on the top (whatever that means) you will be able to live the good life (whatever that means). Instead, God seems to indicate that this life is never the good life, and so we are to live out of a heavenly reality in place of the “fruit of the earth.”

In the first mention of the nations in Genesis 11, all of the nations come together united to build a tower that would “reach unto heaven.” In Revelation 13:3, all the nations gather together to promote the Antichrist. The parallel here needs to be noted. When the nations come together, it is in a technical unity, yes, but it is actually united in disunity. There is still scoffing and striving among the nations, because these nations are not pursuing the purposes of God. Every time the nations come together, from the first mention until the return of Christ, it is demonic in its purpose.

However, there is a Body in the earth that is not deceived. There are a people that are “wise,” according to Daniel 11:33-35. These wise are they that see through the deception. They are those that are organically together. To be organically united is to be united first and foremost unto Christ. Through His grace and power we are able to be united one to another. When the nations will be united in that manner, even as nations instead of individuals, there will be no more war or rumor of war. There will be no more stereotypes. There will be no more bureaucracy. Society and culture and national pride will have come into maturity to be expressed in love instead of violence.

Currently, the nations are not united as this Antichrist kingdom. However, there is a spiritual reality that pervades over them. That spiritual reality is the kingdom of darkness. When that kingdom merges with the physical plane, the Antichrist will be established. It happens in the moment of time when Satan is kicked out of heaven.<sup>cxxxvi</sup> We'll see later as to why this must be a future event instead of an event of the past where Satan took a third of the angels with him.

The suppression and manipulation of these nations is hinted at in Luke 4:5-7. Satan tells Jesus, "If you will bow down before me and worship me, I will give you the nations of the world..." He even says, "They are mine to give..." There is another subtle hint in Daniel 10:20 when the angel speaking to Daniel says, "Soon I will have to return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come..." In both of these passages we're given the hint that Satan currently 'owns' and manipulates the nations, but there will come a time when that ownership is revoked.

### Defeat by God's Wisdom

It is said in Colossians 2:15 that Christ made a public spectacle of the principalities and powers through the cross. It is the cross that defeats the powers. They have not come to that ultimate demise,<sup>cxxxvii</sup> because there is an ultimate saga to be played out that defeats them. Their final defeat waits for a time when the cross will be reiterated through a Body of believers on behalf of a people that are the least deserving of all to receive this mercy. It is God's wisdom to go to the least and offer the greatest grace that can be bestowed.<sup>cxxxviii</sup>

Throughout the history of the Bible God has made it clear that He does not choose the firstborn, but instead the youngest. It has taken me years of wrestling with this before I finally understood what was happening here. Why does God accept Abel's sacrifice and reject Cain's? Why does God then take Seth's lineage as the holy lineage to redeem humanity (through Noah) instead of choosing one of Cain's offspring?<sup>cxxxix</sup> Why does God say through Noah that Shem shall be blessed over Japheth in that Japheth must enter the tents of Shem?<sup>cxli</sup> Why does God choose Isaac over Ishmael?<sup>cxlii</sup> Why does God say of Jacob and Esau that "the elder shall serve the younger?"<sup>cxliii</sup> Why does God bless Joseph over his brothers?<sup>cxliiii</sup> Why does Ephraim get the blessing over Manasseh?<sup>cxliv</sup>

Throughout the entire book of Genesis, one thing persists: God chooses the younger to be ruler and exalted over the elder. Even in the choosing of Israel's King, God says that the Messiah will come through the line of David. David was the youngest of his brothers.<sup>cxlv</sup> When it is the natural impulse to say that the elder should be chosen over the younger, it is God that chooses the younger over the elder. Even Rachel was loved, but Leah was hated.<sup>cxlvi</sup> Thus, Rachel's two children were blessed over all the others.

This is no small thing, because it is attached to the very heart of God. We find in Romans 1:17 that the Gospel is actually the righteousness of God. Why is this statement made? We can come to a general conclusion that God is righteous in redeeming people that are sinners. "This is how we know love: that He loved us while we were still yet sinners."<sup>cxlvii</sup> But I don't think that is it. I think we find the answer at the end of Romans

1:16, "...to the Jew *first*, and then to the Greek." Why is the statement made that the Gospel is first to the Jew, and then to the Greek?

I think that the reason is because God chooses the least of all people to be His people. I think that God chooses the elder to serve the younger. When Japheth was the older sibling, Noah declared that Japheth would have to dwell in the tents of Shem. That line of Shem was blessed through Abram. God is righteous because He promotes the weak. He promotes the foolish. Those that are not strong are made strong through God's power. Those that are fools are made wise through God's wisdom. He takes the undeserving – the least deserving – and chooses that vessel to bless all the families of the earth. *That* is the Gospel. *That* is the righteousness of God.

It is *that* wisdom that will defeat the principalities and powers. When we can display that kind of character in our daily lives with one another, we have overcome the evil one. When we display that kind of character in the end times when it matters most, we break the power of the enemy over the people. This will come into an important part of the understanding of the end times. Our calling is not for ourselves, but for something much larger than ourselves. God has made it that we are saved so that we will "drive the Jew to jealousy."<sup>cxlviii</sup> Since we are not merely going about our lives with a little Jesus sprinkled on, but instead engaging ultimate purposes, we are given freedom from anything and everything that might cause for pride, arrogance, and deception.

This is pivotal to the entire understanding of the faith. In order to engage those principalities and powers, we are not to somehow work up the Spirit and "war" against them. Instead, we live our lives in humility and love. When Israel sees our love for them – not mere sentimentality that wants to see the nation of Israel to succeed – it will cause a reaction that we cannot predict. There has never been a church through the generations that has had this kind of testimony to them. They have never before witnessed a people that are not of the genes of Jacob, and yet are somehow enjoying the very promises of Jacob.

This one thing is what defeats the powers. When we can identify with that people in a way that their sin is our sin, their struggle is our struggle, their burden is our burden, and their joy is our joy, we have come to the place of defeating the principalities a final time. It is actually in our witness to *that* people that we are no longer contending against demons in the sense of demonic deliverance, but are instead now being a Moses people plaguing the kingdom of darkness. Even Moses was the youngest of his family.<sup>cxlix</sup> God chooses the younger to rule over the elder. When we subject ourselves to that choosing of God, we actually find that He promotes us to a status that we hadn't intended.

Anyone who will put his or her hand to *this* plow and turn back is not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>cl</sup> That Kingdom is one that takes ruthless zeal to honor the name of the Lord. God chooses the elder to serve the younger, because in doing so we are broken of our pride. When that pride has been broken off of us, we are now fit to rule in a very specific way alongside Israel, our brethren. It is our pride that blinds us and makes us ungodly rulers and ministers. Yet, the pride we're discussing is deeper than egocentrism. This kind of pride is the very pride that caused Satan to boast against the Lord.<sup>cli</sup> It is characterized in self-promotion, and not necessarily selfishness in general. To desire to promote self will end in humiliation.<sup>clii</sup>

Until that time when it is reserved for the defeat of Satan, we have two options. First, we witness to the Jew in our neighborhoods. That might not require going to the synagogue or trying to meet someone who is Jewish. First and foremost we desire to follow God in all things. If God does not lead us into relationship with the Jewish people, then we wrestle in prayer for them. We continue to cultivate the burden of God over those people. We continue to learn God's heart. The second option is engaging the powers of the air over our cities, counties, states, and nation. To do this, it requires that we are able to discern the prophetic purpose of our nation as a nation, and that we oppose any and every spirit contrary to that.

As the Church, we are to be the people that God has required us to be. Whatever that prophetic destiny and purpose of our nation might be, it behooves us to wrestle with God to become the reality of that prophetic purpose. As believers, we do not necessarily need to speak to our nations about how they are not living up to what God has called them to be. That might come; it might not come. First, however, we need to put into practice the lifestyle from heaven that God has intended us as American saints to live. That lifestyle might differ from town to town, county-to-county, state-to-state, and region-to-region. What God requires from someone in Ohio might be completely different than someone living in California. There will, however, be a similar link in that we are both of the same country.

To engage the powers at a national level is to live as God has called us to live according to His purposes for this nation. Self-denial and sacrifice on behalf of the rest of the nation is a reiteration of the cross. It requires a vision from God as to what He desires for our country, and to live according to that vision. Once the vision is obtained, we cannot live from another reality. We are ruined for anything less than His glory. We deny all of our convenience and luxury of living according to our Sunday culture. This, of course, is the first step in being a thorn in another's side. Those who are only too willing to live sub-par will despise you.

Through our lives we wrestle against the powers of darkness. Yet, it is from our lifestyle that we are then brought into deeper awareness of the demonic forces that we are engaging. To come against them in prayer and to anguish for the deliverance of our nation is the second step in engaging them at the national level. We pray through our brokenness. If we have not yet obtained brokenness over our country, we cannot truly pray for it. If we lack the faith to believe that our government, our schools, our workplaces, and all the other systems are ruled over by the principalities and powers, then we will continue to come against outward manifestations of an inward bankruptcy. Issues of abortion and teenage suicide are not the true issue. They are merely branches of the tree. We have yet to find the trunk, let alone the roots.

It requires from us both a prophetic understanding as well as willingness to live according to that prophetic understanding. We need a prophetic understanding of who and what God has called Israel to be. We then need to understand who God has called us to be in relation to Israel. When we perceive that, we will then understand how to live and pray. The same is true for our nations. We are called to be a royal priesthood.<sup>cliii</sup> If the priests within our nations are not acting like priests, then it is no wonder that the Western World is going to hell in a handbag. This is both an indictment as well as a challenge. We are called to wrestle against those demonic powers at a national level as

well as an individual level. The authority over demons that oppress or possess individuals does not come from some sort of spiritual accomplishment, but instead from a lifestyle lived according to the purposes of God for the Church in your locality.

### Cities of Refuge

We have in Ephesians 3:8-10 a mandate given to the Church by Paul that we are to express the manifest wisdom of God to the principalities and powers. The word principality would seem to indicate some sort of higher degree of demonic influence, maybe over a governmental role, where the power might indicate the powers of nature and forces outside of man's ability to control. The principalities and powers are found in the Old Testament as the foreign gods of the nations. While some are called "principalities" that govern over nations through the worship of weather, stars, knowledge, the State, and other idolatries, we find in the New Testament mention of demons as well. One thing is certain: they are all governed by the same wisdom. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is that exact depiction of their wisdom.

Just as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil depicts selfishness, and the tree of life depicts a cross, so too do we see the polar opposites in the powers of the air and the path of God. The principalities and powers are manifest in their wisdom: greed, manipulation, hostility, ambition, lust, power, threat, intimidation, and intrigue. This, of course, is not an exhaustive list, but gets you started in seeing their game. Interestingly, there is a teaching in the Charismatic and Pentecostal circles in the Body of Christ that would say that we could uproot these demons by putting a name on it and identifying it. As much as I am for identifying the spiritual problem and battling it, I do not endorse the idea of "naming" these demonic powers. It doesn't matter if we call it Jezebel or Pinky, what is most necessary is to realize the influence that it brings, and then to understand the counter lifestyle.

It is much better to know the spiritual problem, and to be able to treat those symptoms, than to somehow think that because you can identify that you're wrestling python that you need to pray in this manner, and say these words, and perform these sorts of rituals. This kind of notion is pagan in origin. Instead, we identify that these manifestations of lust, sexual addiction, pride, rebellion, etc in our society and culture are actually branches to a root cause. There is always a root. We need to be discerning enough to see past the manifestations and to the trunk, and then to be able to see past the trunk and into the roots. This takes both the Holy Spirit to teach us as well as ruthless intention to get to the bottom of it.

In discovering what power that we might be dealing with, we're not identifying them to know how to engage that specific power, but instead identifying them to know the purposes of God. Satan knows what it is that will tempt us as an individual. He also knows what will tempt the nation as a nation. To come out with spells, demonic possession, demonic manifestations, and all sorts of things that would cause for our society to know that Satan exists is not the proper temptation. Instead, Satan keeps himself hidden. He makes sure that our society does not believe in him, and that they apply his works to other physical things.

The reason that Satan tempts an individual or nation in a certain way is because God has made and designed us for a specific purpose. The way that God has designed us is specific to fulfill that purpose. When we see the demonic temptation and stronghold, it helps to give insight to what God has created us to be. Once again, this takes discernment. The point is not to then engage that power as if because we name it, it has to obey. Instead, we understand the spiritual problems and seek to understand the manifestation of light that contrasts that manifestation of darkness. To engage the powers of darkness, we don't pray against them in Jesus' name, but instead live in a reality free from their influence and bondage. We manifest the light, which is the wisdom of God, and that manifestation, or demonstration, is what uproots them.

It is the wisdom of the powers of darkness to take the temporal things that are passing, and give them great value. Then, they take the eternal things that will endure forever, and give them no value – call them worthless. Thus, the things of wealth, power, prestige, sexual pleasure, making a name for yourself, and the like are given much more credence and praise than they should. The things of eternity, heaven and hell, eternal reward and eternal punishment, and the like are made into a mockery. Even in the children's movie "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs," they had a quick jab at the man who is dressed in the sign, "The end of the world is today." Statements that should grab our attention and cause us reflection are made a mock and joke.

This is the wisdom of the powers of darkness. This is why God does not simply want an articulation of His wisdom, as if praying in Jesus' name with gumption is enough. God is after demonstration of His wisdom. God's wisdom is to consider the eternal. God's wisdom is to lay down your life so that you might find life. God's wisdom, in a phrase, is the cross and resurrection. That demonstration of the cross and resurrection worked out within the life of the believer, and within the life of the community, is alone the weapon of warfare that will overpower the kingdom of darkness. This is why Paul does not say that it is the individual within the Church that manifests the wisdom of God, but instead, "*through the Church*, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known."

This is either displayed by the whole of the Body, or not at all. One individual who has come to some higher spiritual plane is not enough. Individuality and the isolation of individuals from the rest is the wisdom of the powers of the air. It is God's wisdom that we should be one. To be united in life and character is true unity. Our display of the manifold wisdom of God is only a true display when we display it *together*. The individual that has come to a higher plane cannot remain there alone. True spirituality is manifest in that the believer is not content that they alone have climbed.

Because we have not sought to be free from their wisdom, and because we have not considered that Church is community or not at all, we have employed the wisdom of the kingdom of darkness instead of opposing it. We see ministers who build their own kingdoms via mass mailings, crocodile tears, emotionalism, hype, manipulation, threat, public relations methods, or hope of reward. "If you will donate this much to me, then you will receive this blessing or reward." There are some ministers who will even curse anyone who opposes their ministry. That is moving by the wisdom of the powers of darkness, and it is going to lead to the condition of national atheism.

We need to come out from that wisdom. Employment of their methods ultimately shows that there is the deeper problem: lack of authenticity. The man who is authentic

before God does not allow anything to come in between his relationship to God. If that means willingly being poor, so be it. If that means moving to a place of obscurity and hidden-ness, so be it. If that means forfeiting popularity, so be it. The first priority is the glory of God being manifest throughout all the earth. Beyond that, it does not matter what we have and what we don't have.

1 Timothy 2 begins, "I urge you, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." Dwell on the last part of that second verse: "that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." This is engaging the powers. This is overcoming the powers. Whether we are in the city or whether we are on a farm, it doesn't matter. We live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. Just think about how contrary that is to the wisdom of the powers of darkness. Ambition, wealth, promotion, exultation, greed, popularity, and prestige are powerful temptations. This is why the call is made to live simply, and to not pursue those things.

This reminds me of Paul's other statement regarding himself, "I am content in all things." To be content in all things is much more than a statement that says you are comfortable. You might not be comfortable. Yet, are you content? Whether you live, you live unto Christ, and whether you die, you get to see Christ, so whether you live or die, you have gain. Whether you are poor or rich, it does not matter, because the ultimate hope is the glory of God being made manifest. It does not matter whether you have meat in the house, because God is still the provider and has given you proper food to eat for nutrition.

My wife and I quit our jobs. To the time of this writing, we have been 14 months without paychecks. We've lived in obscurity. We're not popular. We don't have provision for ourselves. I can't fulfill my "duties" as a husband, as the world tells me I'm supposed to be the breadwinner. God has provided the whole time. We've received donations from people that we didn't even know. Friends and family have both donated groceries to us. The entire time, I have been seeing the manifest wisdom of God. At the same time, I have been seeing those that are living by the wisdom of this present age getting fierce and hostile to our perpetuation of unemployment. "How long are you planning on doing this? Don't you know that you can't survive like this forever?" Even those who purport to be elders and Christian leaders, who think they have authority over me, have told me to get a job and that I am outside of the will of God. We have lived peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

Yet, there is something that we are hoping for. We are searching to expand this verse to a community. We hope that we can live in peaceful and quiet lives with other believers, going from house to house, daily breaking bread. Numbers 35:6 reads, "Six of the towns you give the Levites will be cities of refuge." This is our hope. We want to be a priestly community living in all godliness and holiness, sobriety and solemnity, to be a refuge during the time of Jacob's Trouble. It says in Revelation 12:6 that the woman will be chased by the dragon into the wilderness, where God has provided a refuge for her. That refuge can only be a refuge when we as a community are living in opposition to the powers of darkness. We desire to be a community that cannot be seduced by the enemy.

It is the life that is lived hidden with Christ in God that overcomes the evil one. The communities of saints that are living in that kind of willing insignificance will alone possess the keys to shake the gates of hell. But, who is willing for these things? Who is willing to work at their jobs and not seek a raise or promotion? Who is willing to live a life that doesn't bring attention to self? Who is willing to be a minister of the Lord, and not promote your ministry? Who is willing to wait for God to reveal His mysteries instead of seeking to understand them in your own intelligence? Who is willing to remain as a nobody until the voice of God rings forth, "Separate unto me..."? To engage the powers, we need to corporately demonstrate the exact opposing wisdom that they promote. Everyone should come to this mission with fear and trembling, knowing that we do not have the ability to perform this naturally.



## Chapter 6: Replacement Theology – the great malady

In our day, there are many in Christendom that teach and believe that the Church has replaced Israel. This is called replacement theology.<sup>cliv</sup> The views span widely. Some believe that the Jewish people simply have no part in God at all, and are therefore no better off than the pagans. Others believe that they are under the covenant still, but they can never experience any of the blessings – only curses. Still others have the idea that we have replaced Israel in a manner that God is not interested in theocracy anymore, but instead in a “new heaven and new earth” being lived out among the believers on this present earth. Still others claim that because the church has replaced Israel, when we read the Old Testament – especially the prophecies and promises – we should not consider Israel at all, only ourselves.<sup>clv</sup> With such diversity, it is little wonder why there is much confusion in this area. Of course, there are more opinions than just these, and even on the opposing side that says Israel has not been cast away; there are many, many opinions.

As with everything, our primary concern should be with what Scripture actually validates. For certain issues, there is a bit of interpolation and speculation that is necessary. This, however, is not one of those areas. There are preterists that believe all of prophecy has been fulfilled, an idea that can only be come to when you take replacement theology to it’s absolute worst outcome mingled with a severe twisting of Scripture. Then, there are those that are not necessarily preterists, but at the same time teach a very similar doctrine. Men such as N. T. Wright would hold this view. It says that we are currently living out the new heaven and new earth, however, they also hold to a future return of Christ and a future new heaven and new earth. Both of these positions are arrived at by claiming that the Babylon in Revelation 17 is Rome. It takes a certain kind of view that is based in symbolism and mystery to come to any conclusions that Israel is replaced, let alone that the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation have been fulfilled.

I have a hermeneutical principle when it comes to understanding the Scripture: if it makes sense in the immediate context in which it reads, that is the interpretation of the text. For example, when Isaiah says that the mountain of the Lord will be exalted higher than all the other mountains in the world, and that all nations shall stream to it,<sup>clvi</sup> how should we translate that? We can take it at face value and say that the literal Mount Zion will ascend up, and coupled with other verses that speak of the mountains being brought low,<sup>clvii</sup> all the other mountains will shrink. At that time, which is the return of Christ, all nations will come to Jerusalem. Or, we can spiritualize the text and say that the mountain of the Lord is being described in Psalm 24 as some sort of ethereal, and imaginary, sort of mountain that we “spiritually” climb to come into the presence of God. There will be a time when that mountain, which is the Church, will be the most prominent and influential object in all the world, and all nations will come to saving faith because we have taken the world by storm with our acoustic guitars and loud praises to enter into the gates of thanksgiving. Of course, I’m mocking the second option a bit here. This interpretation is known as dominion theology. It claims that there are seven “mountains”, or spheres of influence, that Christians need to take dominion over. When the Christians can take these areas of politics, media, education, etc, then the end will come. The mountain of the Lord will be higher than all these other mountains, thus all nations will stream unto it – the Church. I call this a doctrine of demons.<sup>clviii</sup>

I see no reason to expect that we must spiritualize the text in Isaiah 2. It makes perfect sense as it is stated. This is true for practically every prophecy. Many times, the visions that the prophets behold are explained. If that explanation makes sense, then why should we change it?<sup>clix</sup> There are, however, times where things aren't so clear. An example of this would be many of the prophecies in the book of Revelation. Much of the symbolism is not explained. Yet, things such as Revelation or the symbolic prophecies in the book of Daniel should not be taken in the context of themselves, but rather in the context of a symphony of prophecy given through the ages to all the prophets of Israel.<sup>clx</sup> If we look at the prophecies as literal prophetic utterance, then much of what we need to answer is how much has been fulfilled and what yet remains to be fulfilled.

Now, it is mentioned in the prophetic texts that there would come a time when a people that are not God's originally chosen people would be the object of God's attention.<sup>clxi</sup> From these texts, we can conclude two things: the Church does not replace Israel, and the Church has become united unto Israel. In the Hebrew, the word 'kahal' is used for "assembly." When you read of the "assembly of Israel" that traveled in the wilderness, or came to the mouth of the tent of meeting, the word being used is 'kahal', and it is used in relation to the whole camp of Israel.

In the Greek Septuagint, the word 'kahal' is replaced with ecclesia. Ecclesia is the Greek word used in our New Testaments as "church." There is never any place where the Greek word ecclesia is being used to represent a local gathering, nor anywhere that the word is used to describe some sort of gathering place. In every reference, it is being used to describe the Church as a whole, whether it is they that meet in Ephesus, or the global Body dispersed throughout the earth. In Acts 19:32, we read of an "assembly" that was in confusion. The word used is ecclesia. How can it mean church in one place, and then assembly in another? The answer is that the church never has been the gathering place, only the gathered people of God. When Paul addressed the Church in Corinth, he didn't need to send 15 copies of the same letter to 15 different congregations. They are all one Body that just so happens to be in Corinth.

This is important to note, because the other word that is sometimes used to replace kahal is the Greek word synagogue. In our modern times, we have come to the conclusion that a church is where believers in Jesus meet, but a synagogue is where the Jews meet. That is not a distinction that was made in the first century. Both ecclesia and synagogue were used as variants of the Hebrew word 'kahal'. Kahal was the assembly of Israel. It was the gathering of the chosen people – the elect. The church was never intended to replace Israel, but rather to come alongside of Israel. Many times the confusion is answered in seeing that the synagogue is where the believers met, and the ecclesia is the body that meets together.

Think of the movie series, "The Lord of the Rings". There comes a certain time where Frodo desires to travel alone. Sam, his companion, has to go with him. Frodo tells Sam, "I'm going alone, Sam!" Sam responds, "Of course you are! And I'm going with you."<sup>clxii</sup> Sam had made a promise that he would take care of Mr. Frodo, and Sam was not going to be caught going back on his promise. At a later time, Frodo is weighed down with the burden of carrying the ring. He doesn't think that he can continue. Sam then proclaims, to paraphrase it, "If you cannot walk, then I will carry you."<sup>clxiii</sup> This is a shadow of the Church and Israel. I'll admit that it breaks down, but the idea is there.

What we are to Israel is what Sam was to Frodo. We come alongside of, and when they can't carry the burden by themselves, we will carry them. This is where the second person becomes the hero. Though the Jewish people do not yet know it, they are incomplete without us, and we are incomplete without them. When we read Romans 11:11-25, Paul ends the statement of how we've been grafted into Israel with these words: "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brethren, lest you be wise in your own conceit..." If the Church will start to become ignorant of this mystery, that the two have become one, they will be conceited. They might begin thinking that they have replaced Israel! They might have some sort of haughty notion that they are the kingdom! After all, didn't Jesus say, "The kingdom is within you"?<sup>clxiv</sup>

We have neglected the mystery. After not understanding it, we have then tossed it aside and haven't even thought to ask the question again. What is it that Paul is getting at in Romans 9-11? Is there a reason for what he is saying? We read the inception of Paul's thoughts on national Israel in the first verses of Romans 9: "I could wish myself accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers according to the flesh." Does it get any plainer than that? We have two options to take now. Either we can say that Paul has this disposition because he is Jewish, and who doesn't long for those that they love to come to Christ? Or, we can say that Paul has this longing and anguish because he has an apostolic heart. The beginning of an apostolic heart and mind is that it has conformed to the heart and mind of the Lord. If we take the first option, we bring Paul down to being petty and unnecessarily mouthing concern. If we take the second option, we bring Paul up to a status that would require of us. Why is it that we have not attained to that status? Maybe it isn't an individual status, for not everyone is an apostle, but as a corporate apostolic Body, why is our disposition so contrary to Paul's?

Now, it is true that Paul mentions in verse 6, "not all Israel is Israel." So, Paul uses this title of Israel in a special way. But let's just look at the other times that Paul uses the name Israel. When he wishes himself accursed for the sake of the people of Israel, is that national Israel or special Israel? It is national Israel. He quotes Isaiah concerning Israel, "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved." Is this national Israel or special Israel? It is national Israel. What about Romans 9:30-31? The Gentiles obtained righteousness by faith, but Israel, who pursued righteousness according to the Law, has not obtained that righteousness. Is this national or special Israel? It is national Israel.

We reach Romans 10:1, and once again Paul is referring to the Israelites and his desire that they might be saved. Is this national Israel or special Israel? It is national Israel. Then, Paul goes through how anyone who confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believes in their heart that God raised Him from the dead that you shall be saved. Yet, this is still in context of the previous statements about national Israel. This is why Paul moves onto speaking about how they cannot believe if they have not heard, and how can they hear unless one preaches to them, and how can one preach unless he is sent? And Paul concludes this by saying, "But not all the Israelites accepted the good news..." Is this national Israel or special Israel? It is national Israel.

Are you starting to see my point? Just because Paul uses the idea of Israel in a special way one time, that not all Israel is Israel, does not mean that Paul is talking about the remnant every time he speaks of Israel. So, when we come to Romans 11, we see Paul

ask the question, “Did God reject His people?” Paul then goes back to speaking about special Israel, or the remnant, in claiming that this is proof that God *has not rejected His people*. Just as Elijah claimed he was the only prophet left, and God replied that there are 7000 that have not bowed the knee to Baal, so too is there a remnant of Jewish believers in Jesus the Messiah. What all of Israel sought so earnestly, only a remnant obtained. The others were hardened in heart.

It is with this context that Paul then explains God’s purposes. Have they stumbled so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. Is Paul using the term Israel to mean the remnant or the nation? It is the nation. The remnant is a part of those Gentile believers that are supposed to make national Israel envious. What is the purpose of making Israel envious? We find Paul answer this in Romans 11:32, “For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he might have mercy on them all.” It is God’s desire that the majority be hardened so that they might obtain mercy in the end. As Paul explained in Romans 11:26, “And so all Israel shall be saved...”

Now, the next bit that concerns us is the pieces of Romans 11 that I have skipped. We read in verses 17-21, “If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over the branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say, then, ‘Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.’ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.”

The two have become one. Though national Israel is currently broken off, that does not in any way mean that they are rejected. They will be grafted back into their own root. All Israel (national) will be saved. Now, because the two have become one, we cannot then validate any kind of theology that would say, “It is our call as the church to...” or, “It is their call as Israel to...” The two have become one, and therefore even our purpose and call is the same as their purpose and call. I need to be careful with what I say and how I word it, because the truth is that God has distinguished between the remnant and national Israel. As the remnant, we cannot fulfill the call that God has placed upon all of Israel until all of Israel is saved.

Therefore, we are currently given the task of driving the Jew to jealousy that they might be saved. It is our task, as the Church, to live in such a manner that national Israel perceives that we are living in the reality of their promises. What they have sought after and have not obtained, we have obtained by faith. So, when we’re discussing what our call is as the Church, we are discussing a subject within a subject. The larger subject to first understand is Israel’s primary purpose and calling. Once we understand that, we then need to progress from there to asking what it is that we do now, because we do not have all of Israel to perform that calling. It takes all of Israel to perform the intended gifts and callings of God. We can’t do it simply because we have enough faith.

So, I will venture into more depth with this, but I will leave you at least with a glimpse of what we are called to be. Our calling as the Body of Christ is to be the priesthood to the nations. We cannot fulfill that mandate apart from all Israel being saved. So, as the remnant within Israel, our calling is to first be the priesthood to *them*. Our

purpose is to drive the Jew to jealousy, so that they might come to the saving knowledge of Christ. The way that we do that is split into two separate topics, both of them related. First, we display the manifest wisdom of God to the principalities and powers. To do that, we reiterate the cross in showing selflessness on behalf of those who do not believe. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”<sup>clxv</sup> Second, we live and move and have our being in the reality of Zion. Zion is in two places: heaven and earth. The heavenly Zion is what we are called to represent, for the earthly Zion is currently far beneath the glory of God. With those two commissions, we have all of ecclesiology explained. It is from these two mandates that we better understand our purpose, how to function, and all the minute details of daily life lived together as believers.

## Chapter 7: Is Current Israel Under Covenant Blessing?

To truly dive into such a topic as this, we need to look at the Bible as a whole. We need to see the history of Israel, what their purpose is, and we need to let the Scripture speak for itself. Both they that say Israel is finally restored and they that say we are the New Israel have taken Scriptures out of context. For example, I would challenge you to look at any prophecy that speaks of Israel's final return. One of the most often quoted verses would be out of Amos 9, where it says, "They shall never again be uprooted." This is actually the very last verse of Amos. But lets just assume that Amos 9:15 has a context. What is that context that is being spoken of?

Well, contrary to the sub-divider in my Bible, the context actually starts way back in verse 8 (if not sooner). We find that God declares to "the sinful kingdom," "I will destroy it from the face of the earth - yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob. For I will give the command, and I will sift the house of Israel among the nations as grain is sifted in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground. All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say, 'Disaster will not overtake or meet us.' In that day I will restore the tabernacle of David. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name, declares the Lord who will do these things."

Question: has that happened? Has the tabernacle of David been restored? Has Edom been given into the hand of Israel as a possession? The tabernacle of David is the throne of David. Is there a king upon the throne of David ruling over Israel? No.<sup>clxvi</sup> When we couple this with Isaiah 2:2, "The mountain of the Lord's Temple will be established above all other mountains... and all nations will stream unto it," we find that this part about Edom and the nations might actually have more to do with world peace and all peoples coming up to see the Lord. Has that happened? No. Why? Because the first thing that must happen before there is the "never again will you be uprooted" is the establishment of Messiah upon the throne of David. That hasn't happened, so the latter can't have happened either.

But this leaves an interesting question: if the final restoration is not what we're currently seeing, then how exactly do we understand from Amos 9:8-10? And another question: What exactly *are* we seeing when we look at the Middle East?

There are two things necessary for good hermeneutic of the prophetic Scriptures: an understanding of the general history of Israel (which is actually part of a larger history and context of Scripture) and the relentless pursuit of contextual analysis. Both of these are rooted in one essential ingredient: hearing the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that leads us into all truth. This is God's eternal purpose. Such topics as Israel and the last days are not things to 'meddle' with. It says in Zechariah 2:8 that, "whoever touches you (Israel) touches the apple of my eye." That Hebrew word used there is literally the *pupil* of God's eye.

We need to have the utmost sobriety about this. Casual glimpses and meshing together of Scripture in a dubious sort of fashion is an abomination. You play games with the apple of God's eye, and ultimately if Israel has not been restored to her land that final time, you play games with the lives of countless Jews. The Messiah came before God's last judgment upon Israel. We can say that Israel has been exiled for the past 2000 years, and in 1948 they were reestablished as a nation – *born in a day*. But there are a few

things that must happen when God restores them the last time. We'll look into each one of these subjects individually:

- 1) Israel's final redemption comes with world peace.
- 2) Israel's final redemption means they believe in the Lord their God.
- 3) Israel's final redemption happens at Christ's return.
- 4) There are prophecies about two returns at the end of the age.

What will become increasingly obvious is this: The current state of Israel is not the redeemed Israel spoken of in prophecy. Instead, it is an Israel that is out of sync with God's covenant, and they will continue to be until that final restoration unto glory. All four of those things must take place before Israel is redeemed (or, more precisely, the first three at the time of their redemption). We actually mistake Bible prophecy when we say that Israel can be restored to the Land before they are redeemed. This cannot happen in a progression or spurts, as some suggest it is happening. It must all happen at once, or it won't happen at all.

#### Israel's final redemption comes with world peace

When we look through the Scriptures, we find that the covenant made to Israel was that they would be at peace in the Land. They won't have any wars. If a nation decided to come up against Israel, they will flee in seven directions. Five will chase 100, and 100 will chase 10,000. The sword will never pass through Israel. This is all found in Leviticus 26:6-8. If Israel will obey the commandments of the Lord, then they shall dwell in peace. But if she disobeys, then her enemies shall pursue her to the exact same degree. Actually, it even says that they will flee when no one chases.<sup>clxvii</sup>

The exile is a judgment. What is also a judgment is when there is no peace. This is a covenant that God has made with Israel.<sup>clxviii</sup> If God has established this covenant with them, and has brought them back according to that covenant, then don't you think that they should have peace in the Land? Why are Israel's enemies sending rockets day and night into the Land of Israel? Why is Israel a stench and burden to those surrounding her? This is a judgment from God. The redemption of that nation, and the restoration of her brings peace to the whole world.

Isaiah 35:10 specifically promises that when Israel returns, she will return with everlasting joy upon her head. Mourning and sighing will flee away. Why does it say this? It says this because everything that Israel has experienced up to this point would be persecution and tribulation (of which the Nazi Holocaust was only a foretaste). Israel will go through a time that is unparalleled. She will endure great suffering and trial. It is called by the prophet Jeremiah, "The Time of Jacob's Trouble."<sup>clxix</sup> That time was mentioned by Jesus as being unequalled: "If that time were not cut short, no flesh would survive."<sup>clxx</sup> The people will go through such anguish before their restoration that when they are delivered from it, they will enter Zion with singing.

But wait, wasn't the Nazi Holocaust a time of unequalled tribulation? Indeed it was. So maybe Israel endured that, and then God delivered her. But we can't reject the verse in Isaiah. She shall enter Zion with *everlasting joy* upon her head. Why is it everlasting? It is everlasting because there will never again be persecution or torment. Sorrow and sighing will flee away. Why? God will make sure that they are never oppressed again. They will have peace on every side, and the Lord their God will rule over them to protect them. Does this fit the description of modern day Israel?

Though their oppressors do not overtake them, she still has oppressors. It is said in Joel 2:19, "Never again will I make you an object of scorn among the nations." Guess what... Nations are scorning. It is not sufficient to say that there will come a time when the nations don't scorn. I agree that there *will* come a time, but there will not come a time with the current state of Israel. She is still under the covenant curses. The evidence for that is that she does not have the temple, she does not have the sacrifices, and she is not at peace in the Land. All of these things are covenants that God has established with her.

We'll see later that even these things don't necessitate that Israel is under blessing. I believe in a third temple rising, and sacrifices being offered at that third temple. Yet, this will be with the current state of Israel, as outside of God as they are. The Lord is making a point. There can be an establishment of that nation, and that nation can marvelously succeed in their own strength and power, but that nation will never be able to be the glory that God has called her to be in their own strength and power. Though they have arrogantly claimed, "Never again!" after coming out of the Nazi Holocaust, there will indeed be another Holocaust that will seek the annihilation of world Jewry.

This coming Holocaust will eclipse the Nazi age. Current Israel cannot stand. There is absolutely no Scriptural support to say it will. Not only do we have these four points that must happen at or before their restoration, the entire history of Israel speaks against their succeeding as a nation. God has ordained it that even though that people are able in their own strength to endure through the ages, they will never endure if it is upon their own strength. God Himself fights against them when they are in disobedience.<sup>clxxi</sup> Yet, God's chastisement is out of love. His desire is that they repent. It is the desire of the nations around Israel that they are destroyed.

In order for there to be world peace, two things have to happen. First, God must be the one to establish Israel. If there is ever a question of whether it was Israel that established herself, there cannot be world peace. Second, the principalities and powers must be defeated. It is they that want to destroy Israel. Those demonic powers know far better than we do that Israel's redemption and restoration means judgment for them. When Israel is redeemed, the nations' blindness is taken away, and everyone sees truth. Reality crashes into this world of unreality, and the lie is exposed. God establishes Israel by the coming of the Redeemer Christ Jesus, and the nations will forever come unto her to offer sacrifices to God.

When the world is at peace with God, they will be at peace with Israel. It takes the coming of Jesus in the clouds, the judgment of the Antichrist, the establishment of Israel as the center of all nations, and the rule and reign of Christ's Body over those nations in order for theocracy to be established on this earth. Nothing short of the glory of God being exposed to all flesh will suffice. When God displays His glory to all peoples then the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh. It is at the Second Advent that this takes place.



Israel's final redemption means they believe in the Lord their God

Lets start in Isaiah. We'll then work our way through to Zechariah. For the record, the amount of Scripture that I'm referencing is small. Compared to the overwhelming testimony of Scripture, I am being quite conservative. The fact is, if you continue through to study the prophets, you'll see over and over and over again this same testimony. There is simply an embarrassment of Scripture references. Isaiah 10:20 says, "In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down, but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel." What we find in this verse is a little bit of what I had previously spoken. Israel's final redemption comes after a great calamity. "They will no longer rely on him who struck them down..." When Israel returns that final time, they will no longer trust on the arm of the flesh at all. The arm of the flesh has historically been Egypt that would be an ally to Israel, but this final allegiance will be with the Antichrist himself.

When they return the final time, they will trust in the Lord their God. "Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I," Isaiah 52:6. When Israel shall return to the Land that final time, it shall be in such a manner that causes them to know it was God's doing. They won't take the prophecies about how God has said they would return, and therefore they have a right to the Land. This is taking the Lord's name in vein. They act as though God has established them to bless them, so they can then ignore Him in all other areas of their politics.

The Lord has indeed established the current nation of Israel. God has restored her, for no one else has the authority to do such a thing. That does not give Israel the right, however, to then take those promises and use them as a "magic genie" against all her oppressors. It is a shameful thing to use the name of the Lord as a safety blanket. When He shall redeem Israel and bring her back to the Land, that people will know Him. That kind of knowledge is not some sort of acknowledgment of God, but is a deep intimate knowledge. Because they have suffered His judgments, they shall know His mercy. For His judgments are His mercies.

That people will return knowing their God. That knowledge will consist of more than an intellectual ascribing. Israel shall deeply know and be united with God. She shall come to know the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That people will come to know Christ Jesus, and that kind of knowledge does not come cheaply for the Jew. There is a stripping that must take place. God must pluck up, destroy, and then plant.<sup>clxxii</sup> He must destroy any knowledge that they currently have, because even if it is truth, it is based in a false reality. Any false reality or perception of God cannot remain.

To have the proper knowledge of God as God is to have a proper knowledge of everything. It is that knowledge of Him that reveals to us our own self. It reveals to us the condition of the nations. It reveals to us the understanding of God's purpose for the nations. For Israel to return knowing the Lord is more than a statement about them coming back and "believing" in Jesus. Our current understanding of repentance barely even scratches the surface. I think repentance is an understatement. "At that time, I will

be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they will be my people... The people who survive the sword shall find favor in the desert. I will come to give rest to Israel.”<sup>clxxiii</sup> Notice here again the context of coming out of tribulation and destruction. God brings them out of calamity, “The people who survive the sword...”

“Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people... You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord.”<sup>clxxiv</sup> God does not mince His words. He doesn’t speak into the air to fill it with noise. What He has said shall be done. That people *will be His people*. Though there is only a remnant of followers of Christ Jesus now, at that time they shall all be followers of Christ Jesus. As it is written, “And so, all Israel shall be saved,” Romans 11:26.

To move from their current beliefs (or disbeliefs) to the state of “all Israel shall be saved” is quite an epoch. Something drastic has to take place that Israel shall say, “I will go back to my Husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.”<sup>clxxv</sup> That something is called the Time of Jacob’s Trouble. The Tribulation is the calculated drama to take place that will drive the Jewish people to repentance before the Lord. They will recognize that their punishment is in proportion to their sin.<sup>clxxvi</sup> To come to that acknowledgement is to come to the understanding that you are under judgment. When in history has that taken place? The only example that I can think of *might* be with the generation of Nehemiah.

To acknowledge that the Lord is judging His people is to acknowledge the error or our ways. But we are a stiff-necked people – all of us. It isn’t Israel that is stiff-necked and we can mock them for it. We have all been bullheaded and absolutely absurd. That kind of an acknowledgement from the people of God grants unto God His due worship and adoration. He has not slain us because He is against us, but because He is for us. He has not abandoned us and allowed mischief to take place. Instead, He is the author of the chastisement, and He is the finisher and “perfecter” of our faith.

“I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God.”<sup>clxxvii</sup> To claim that the first can happen without the second is an abuse of Scripture. If we are content with saying that God has restored Israel in her sinful condition so that they might gradually come to know the Lord, then what exegetical error are we not capable of? This is quite possibly the one thing that needs to be understood in Christendom. If we are sending Jews back to Israel as a safe haven, we are sending them to their deaths. We are taking them out of the frying pan and throwing them into the fire.<sup>clxxviii</sup>

Though it is true currently that the Jews worldwide are suffering persecution, it is not true that Israel is safe. If you send them to the Land, they will suffer the greater persecution. It is actually upon *that* land that the judgment is the most concentrated. There is better possibility of survival to endure the persecution in the nations than to go unto Israel where God has spoken, “though *a tenth* remains in the Land, it will again be laid waste”.<sup>clxxix</sup> Ninety percent of the population in Israel will either flee or die. God has declared that during the Tribulation there will only be a stump to remain.<sup>clxxx</sup> Zechariah 13:8 adds the detail that two-thirds will die in the land.

This is not a game. This is not something to wistfully send money in order to send the Jews back home. This is life and death. There is coming a time of judgment that is yet future that will eclipse even the Nazi Holocaust, and it will be worldwide. The devastation that will occur *in the land of Israel* will be such devastation that it will actually cause even some Christians to fall away from God.<sup>clxxxix</sup> The question of “why” won’t cut it. To believe that God would allow such terror to break out upon the Jewish people is considered by the Jews and many Christians as anti-Semitism. Yet, it might actually be the greatest form of love to warn them and prepare our hearts and homes to be a refuge for them.

Why is it that the Tribulation is the calculated drama to lead them to repentance? They won't just flee into the wilderness and “be sifted through all nations.”<sup>clxxxii</sup> They will *find refuge* in the wilderness.<sup>clxxxiii</sup> That refuge will be a Church that has been prepared by God. They will flee Jerusalem to come unto a Body that is so unified in character and heart that Psalm 133 calls them “Zion.” That reality being portrayed and lived out in daily interaction with the saints, and taking in the Jewish people as brethren instead of “sinners,” is the very means necessary to drive them to envy. It is actually that very thing that will cause for the layers to be stripped away little by little. While they are suffering agony without the Holy Spirit, we are wrestling the principalities and powers over them *in the Spirit*. It is that wrestling that will actually lead to their blindness and hardness of heart being taken away – removing the veil and breaking their power<sup>clxxxiv</sup> – so that when Christ returns they shall each person break away to weep and repent.<sup>clxxxv</sup>

The final redemption of Israel comes after great tragedy. It comes when they are brought back to the Land knowing their God. It comes when there is to be worldwide peace. There is only one thing that can cause such a predicament:

#### Israel’s final redemption happens at Christ’s return

Nothing short of the revelation of Jesus returning on the clouds will save them. The nations will behold Him coming,<sup>clxxxvi</sup> and all they that have persecuted Israel will be held accountable.<sup>clxxxvii</sup> The nations will gather to Jerusalem for a final battle against Christ Jesus, but He shall prevail over them. It is actually upon this return of Jesus that God has ordained the redemption of Israel. There is much to the story that needs to be played out and explained as to how we get here, but know that it takes nothing less than their rejected Messiah (beholding Him whom they have pierced)<sup>clxxxviii</sup> returning to cause repentance to spring up in the House of Israel.

It is prophesied in Genesis 49 what shall come to pass *in the last days*. Upon Judah (from where we get the *Jews*) the prophecy is given, “The scepter will not depart from Judah; nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and *unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*” This is an obvious prophecy that Christ shall come from Judah. But notice that it is an end time prophecy, and that the gathering of the people is *unto Him*.

“The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land. In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it – one from the house of David – one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause

of righteousness.<sup>»clxxxix</sup> Notice the oppressor is defeated when the throne is established. The oppressor is the Antichrist, which is a shadow of the ultimate oppressor: Satan. Later Isaiah says, “Your eyes will see the King in His beauty and view a land that stretches afar. In your thoughts you will ponder the former terror.”<sup>»cxc</sup>

It is upon beholding His appearing that Israel is saved. On *that* day, when Christ returns, He shall gather Israel. It shall be in that day that kings and queens will bring them back upon their shoulders.<sup>cxc</sup> At the return of Christ, Israel is redeemed. When Israel is redeemed, the nations are subjected under her. When the nations humble themselves and “enter the tent of Shem”,<sup>cxcii</sup> then everlasting righteousness has been established, and world peace will last from generation to generation. All of this climaxes at the return of Christ.

### Fulfillment of Prophecy, but not of Promise

There is a text in Ezekiel that explains what we’re seeing in the Middle East currently. “Then the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross unto me; all of them are the copper, tin, iron, and lead left inside a furnace. They are but the dross of silver. Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because you have all become dross, I will gather you into Jerusalem. As men gather silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin into a furnace to melt it with a fiery blast, so will I gather you in my anger and my wrath and put you inside the city and melt you. I will gather you and I will blow on you with my fiery wrath, and you will be melted inside her. As silver is melted in a furnace, so you will be melted inside her, and you will know that I the Lord have poured out my wrath upon you.”<sup>»cxciii</sup>

The current state of Israel is a fulfillment of prophecy, but not of promise. God has gathered the people back together a second to final time in judgment. The plan is to convict of sin, and to display to Israel her wrongs. When Israel has acknowledged that she has sinned before the Lord, the end has come.

God says, “In that day the Lord will reach out His hand *a second time* to reclaim the remnant that is left of His people...”<sup>»cxciv</sup> Why does God reach out a second time? We’re seeing the first time play out before our eyes. Yes, God brought Israel back to the Land. In fact, no one else has authority to do so. However, that restoring to the Land is not based upon the redemption of Israel and the restoration of the covenant. Instead, it is based upon judgment. God will pour out His furor upon a disobedient people.

“For a little while your people possessed your holy place, but now our enemies have trampled your sanctuary.”<sup>»cxcv</sup> We learn from Daniel 8:10 and other places that the Temple will be rebuilt, and sacrifices begun to be offered again.<sup>cxcvi</sup> The Antichrist will cut off the sacrifices and sit himself upon the throne in the Temple.<sup>cxcvii</sup> There has to be a temple and sacrifices for that to happen. I don’t believe that we’ll be seeing Israel having the Temple and sacrifices for a long time. It says in Isaiah 63:18 that they have possessed His holy place “for a short while.”

We are beholding prophecy play out before us, but we are not witnessing the restored and redeemed Israel that is gathered back to the Land by Jesus Christ Himself. There is a coming calamity before that will take place. Israel will pass through another

time of being sifted through the nations, also called exile. The Jewish people will be uprooted from that Land and scattered throughout *all nations*.<sup>cxviii</sup> When God has sifted them as one sifts grain in a sieve, then the end has come. So many things connect right at the very end.

We could spend a lifetime searching out the details of all of the sub-stories. All of the little details that are given to tell us what is happening to Israel during the Tribulation is one “story.” Another “story” is that which is happening to the Church. Another story is what is happening in heaven. Another story is that which is going on in the midst of the nations. Another story is what is going on in the midst of the Antichrist’s kingdom. All of these stories interweave, but ultimately intersect together into one story at the consummation of the age: the return of Christ.

To understand what is playing out before our eyes is a life and death necessity. I’m not against building ministries or sending the Jews back to Israel *per se*. But to do so without the understanding of a coming calamity that Jesus gave the warning, “When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, then let those who are in *Judea* flee to the mountains”,<sup>cxci</sup> is the same as wickedness. This is ministerial malpractice at its absolute worst. We have not rightly divided the word, and the result will be the blood of countless masses upon our hands.

This is also true of those who go to Israel to set up ministries. Many Christians will send money to those ministries that are outreaches to the Jewish people. It is typically an easy way to have a successful ministry in that regard. But in numbers, ministry to the Jewish people is the most fruitless ministry of all. Maybe the reason for this is exactly what has been expressed. We pamper them. We tell them that Israel is safe, and yet it is not safe. We go to Israel expecting that if it is not safe, we’ll be raptured out before it gets bad, so why does it matter? If we have the understanding that God will destroy that land, and that there is a coming judgment and terror to those who dwell in Israel, maybe we would be a lot more hesitant in going. Yet, if we’re called to Israel, maybe we’ll go with a lot more sobriety. That sobriety will produce earnestness, and that earnestness will result in the power of the Holy Spirit. The lack of the power of the Holy Spirit in Jewish ministry is evident. The reason for this might very well be that we simply either have sentiment for them, and our love only goes as deep as our love for our own flesh and success, or that we don’t believe that they will ever be under judgment again, and therefore deify them as something more than human, which is to say, sinless.

### Patterns of God

I mentioned earlier that the history of Israel would suggest that there is a coming calamity. I would like to briefly examine that history. There is a pattern that God has established. The pattern is that Israel forgets the Lord their God, gets oppressed, they cry out to God, God delivers them, and then Israel forgets the Lord their God. Then they are oppressed, and they cry out to God, and then Israel forgets the Lord their God. All of their history explains this. The only way to break the cycle would be for the whole of Israel to experience repentance unto salvation, as a nation.

The generation of Moses came out of Egypt and rebelled. They weren't allowed into the Promised Land, but instead wandered the desert for 40 years.<sup>cc</sup> The very next generation enters the Promised Land and takes it.<sup>cci</sup> God gives them great victory. They establish the Lord their God as ruler and king over them. Yet, we read at the end of Joshua and the beginning of Judges that when the elders of Israel died, the children rebelled.<sup>ccii</sup> This is two generations after coming out of Egypt, and they are already in rebellion against God. So, God sends oppression upon them. The Israelites cannot conquer all the peoples of the land of Canaan. The whole of the book of Judges establishes this very story: oppression, repentance, forsaking, and then oppression.<sup>cciii</sup>

We reach 1 Samuel and find that the generation of Samuel rejects God and desires a king to rule over them.<sup>cciv</sup> God gives them Saul, who has an appearance of godliness, but lacks the reality when the time comes to display it. The people of God go into rebellion, and they are now unable to battle against their enemies. David is established as king, and now there is national revival and renewal. There is peace in the land. The enemies of God cannot stand before David. No one is able to oppress Israel while David is the king.

And then we come to Solomon. I mentioned earlier that the numerology displayed with Solomon is 6-6-6. They are equating Solomon's kingdom with the kingdom of darkness. That which was supposed to be a light to the world, and was supposed to bring freedom to the captive, is the very nation that is now enslaving the nations around him. The result of Solomon's wicked lifestyle is that the very next king, Rehoboam, splits the kingdom into two.<sup>ccv</sup> There is rebellion in northern Israel, and they seek to establish their own nation apart from Judah. Severe and grotesque immorality is then established in northern Israel.<sup>ccvi</sup> They do not have one good king in their history. As the kings are wicked, and as the priests that the king establishes are also wicked, all of northern Israel seems to be wicked.<sup>ccvii</sup> So God sends them into exile by the hand of Assyria.<sup>ccviii</sup>

Meanwhile, in southern Judah, there are a mix of good kings and bad kings. Some desire to reform Israel; others simply disregard all morality.<sup>ccix</sup> Some kings desire to reform Israel, but are not jealous for God.<sup>ccx</sup> Thus, they only reform Israel to a certain degree, but never to the full degree necessary... until Josiah comes. Josiah is the last good king of Judah before they are taken into captivity by Babylon. The people of Judah repent before God, and then the very next generation after Josiah is the generation that would have persecuted Jeremiah the prophet.

We come to Nehemiah and Ezra. Israel is brought back to the land. There is repentance. Yet, we read the words of Zechariah (who was a prophet during the time of Nehemiah and Ezra), "Return to me, and I will return to you".<sup>ccxi</sup> How is it that during a time of repentance, the word of the Lord comes to return to Him? We see the next few generations after Nehemiah under persecution. This is the time of the Maccabees. They are oppressed, and then they cry out to God. God then delivers them from their oppression. Yet, it is the next couple generations after the Maccabees that Christ Jesus walked on earth. That generation of Jesus rejected the Messiah.

They have been scattered ever since, at least up until recently, and not once is there a record of the Jewish people asking why they are dispersed through the nations instead of living in Israel. It simply wasn't a question. Yet, the Scripture is clear that this is a judgment of God. After almost 2000 years of dispersion through the nations, there is

a Nazi Holocaust. There is severe tribulation and persecution of the Jewish people. They then cry out to the Lord their God. The result is what we see today. There is a nation called Israel that does not act like the people Israel. They are continually rejecting the Lord and His commands as a nation, establishing their own gay pride parades, casinos, occultism, whorehouses, and all of the modern practices of idolatry and debauchery. Just from their history, it would seem logical to conclude that the Lord will send judgment. Because Israel has rejected their God, and thus rejected their purpose as a nation, God will chastise His people for the sake of repentance and restoration.

## Chapter 8: Israel's Ultimate Purpose and Destiny

There are four main roots that I think many of the modern day heresies and fads come from. When we readjust our perception of these four roots, everything else in Scripture seems to come alive. The four roots are an inadequate understanding of the Kingdom of God, the heart of God, the principalities and powers, and Israel's purpose. God has given us a plumb line unto which everything else must measure up. If our understanding does not measure up to embrace all of Scripture, then the issue is not with our understanding. The issue lies at the foundation.

It is said in Zechariah 2:8 that "whoever touches you (Israel) touches the apple of my eye." That Hebrew word translated 'apple' is more properly translated as the *pupil* of the eye.<sup>ccxii</sup> When we mess with Israel, even in our doctrine, we are poking fingers into the very pupil of the eye of God. He takes His covenant with Israel extremely seriously. I would even venture to say that if we don't know Christ Jesus as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then we don't have a solid understanding of Christ.

God's purposes with Israel might be one of the most controversial subjects in Christendom. On the one side of the spectrum are they that teach the church has replaced Israel. On the other side are those that are so Zionist that you could not tell them that Israel is in error. In between these two opinions are many varieties of beliefs, almost none of them being biblical. Our approach to Israel as Christians seems to be based on one of two things: arrogance or sentimentality. We either have great arrogance in claiming they are cast aside and we have replaced them, or we have only the most questionable sentimentality toward them. The chapter exploring whether the current state of Israel is the redeemed Israel is a part of this controversy.<sup>ccxiii</sup>

Those who have only sentimentality to Israel will not even consider the possibility of another exile. These are the same people that when you try to explain that they will be uprooted from the Land and we will take them in as refugees, they want to play the rapture card. "Well, you can stay if you want to, but I'm getting out of here!" This kind of statement really shows precisely how loveless and non-biblical so many 'saints' truly are. Though they have the Bible and every possibility to reason and understand and love, they instead choose convenience.

We don't get to choose whether we stay or we go. Either we will all stay, or we will all go. The question that truly needs to be asked is our willingness to stay through the Tribulation. Are we willing to endure suffering at the hands of men – possibly even Jewish men – for the glory and purposes of God? Are we willing to, for love's sake, put ourselves in a place of danger? If the answer to those questions is no, then there is absolutely no amount of reasoning that I can perform to convince you of God's eternal plans and our place in those plans. But for those that are willing to lay down their lives and live in a manner that would display love and truth to an entire nation, there is still hope that we might be able to come to reasonable conclusions together.

Nothing more shows the extraordinariness of God than His plans concerning Israel. Some have called this 'the mystery of Israel.' I'm not sure that Israel's role in eschatology is a part of that mystery, as some claim, but instead the mystery is simply found in the scandal of a God that would choose one nation over all others. When we can



understand that mystery, it makes a lot more sense as to why God would use words like, “election.” Election doesn’t necessarily have only to do with ‘national Israel.’ It has to do with the people of God, foreknown from before the beginning of time. During the Millennial reign of Christ, and during the New Heaven and New Earth, there appear to be a people that are outside of that choosing, yet are not destroyed in the Judgment of Christ.

This issue is the issue of nations. God doesn’t destroy all nations. Nor does He cast all people into the lake of fire. There are those nations and people that do indeed get cast into the lake of fire, but how can we reconcile the notion of a people outside of election that are still able to come up and worship God? Also, how can God elect the nation of Israel, and yet there are Gentiles such as Rahab and Ruth that make it into the election? Obviously, even before Christ broke down the wall of partition, God has established that His people will not only be Israelite. Abraham was to be a “father of many nations”. Likewise, Ephraim was the only other person in all of the Old Testament that is told he shall be “a multitude of nations”, or, to translate literally from the Hebrew, “a fullness of the Gentiles”.<sup>ccxiv</sup> This is part of the mystery. It comes down to a few subjects that we’ll look at: covenant, centrality of Israel, and God’s nation. These three factors help us to better understand what it is that we’re looking at.

## Covenant

God has revealed His covenant progressively. The first statement of it is in Genesis 3:15 – that a man will rise from the seed of the woman to crush the serpent’s head. From that initial statement, we don’t really gather a whole lot of information. We certainly don’t gather a bunch of messianic prophecy about a “greater than David” and how the messiah must be a priest and a king, and how Jesus will come twice, etc. Actually, the covenant made with Israel unfolds. It starts with a promise of a man to come that will crush a serpent’s head, and then eventually evolves into an eternal covenant that will be the redemption of all of creation.

I have absolutely no problem with saying that God had foreordained such a plan of salvation. We just don’t find the full statement and revelation of such a cosmic plan at the inception of Genesis. It progresses from that first statement to a promise that Canaan will be a slave to Japheth and Shem, and that Japheth will enter the tents of Shem.<sup>ccxv</sup> It is after the incident at Babel that God calls a man out of all nations in order to bless all nations.<sup>ccxvi</sup> That covenant is reiterated to Abram in Genesis 15:1-21, but the details are added that Abram’s offspring will inherit the land from the Nile to the Euphrates. That promise has yet to be fulfilled.

Now, before we go forward in the progression, let’s deal with an issue. Paul quotes the promise given to Abraham. He mentions that the word used for seed is singular, and not plural. This is a hint at one single man, Christ, that would be the seed of Abraham. We cannot take this knowledge and trade it for the whole progression of Scripture, though. Yes, there is something to this, but no, the promise of Abraham was not solely for Christ. That is not to say that those with Jacob’s blood in them are saved according to the flesh. What it is saying is that we need to be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Once again, the statement of “through your seed” is given in Genesis 22:18. The context of the statement is in God’s provision of the lamb instead of Isaac as sacrifice. When we take this to mean that Israel has been replaced, we err in being terrible exegetes of Scripture. The statement is still resonating the fact that “*God will provide a Lamb.*” This is actually the heart of the covenant. From before Israel, and before Abraham, God established this covenant. It is an eternal covenant about a God that provides a Lamb.

The covenant is an eternal covenant. The eternal covenant is not necessarily with Israel, but with all of God’s elect. God has chosen a specific people for Him to put His name upon, and all other nations must come unto *them* in order to worship the Lord.<sup>ccxvii</sup> The covenant unfolds throughout the Scripture gaining more and more detail, until finally it culminates in the man Christ Jesus – the true Israel and first fruit from the dead. When Israel was given the promises of being called the firstborn of God,<sup>ccxviii</sup> we find the New Testament writers referring to Jesus as God’s *only begotten Son*.

How is it that God can make a statement about Israel being His son, but then that title is given exclusively to Jesus in the New Testament? It comes down to the mystery of Israel, which is the mystery of Christ. In the book of Isaiah from chapter 40 onward for about 15 chapters we read about a servant of the Lord. This servant is the Messiah in some places, but is clearly spoken of as Israel in other places. What is being communicated is: As with Israel, so with Messiah; as with Messiah, so with Israel. The Gospel of Matthew also communicates this.

We find in Matthew the “prophecy” that, “Out of Egypt I call my son...”<sup>ccxix</sup> Read Hosea.<sup>ccxx</sup> That isn’t a prophecy; it is a statement. The statement isn’t even a messianic statement. It is referring to Israel being delivered from the hand of Pharaoh. How can Matthew make such a big blunder? As with Israel, so with Messiah. The Gospel of Matthew continues that theme all the way through. Jesus comes out of Egypt, gets baptized in the Jordan (symbolic of Israel crossing the Red Sea), and is led into the wilderness for 40 days (Israel wandering for 40 years). At the beginning of Matthew 5, Jesus goes up onto a “mountain” to speak to His followers. This is reminiscent of Moses upon Mount Sinai.

The corporate Israel is made manifest in the man Jesus Christ. He is the true Israel that fulfilled all of the purposes of Israel.<sup>ccxxi</sup> However, there is a flip side to that coin: as with Messiah, so with Israel. As Jesus fulfilled perfectly all of the commands of the Lord concerning Israel, so too must Israel do. God awaits a time reserved when He will establish His King upon the earth for 1000 years that Israel will finally come into her purpose: to be a corporate demonstration of Jesus. As the Body of Christ, we have this mandate. We have this mandate to be Jesus unto the Jewish people. They will have the mandate to be Jesus unto the nations, for “You will be a Kingdom of priests, and a holy nation”.<sup>ccxxii</sup>

Though the covenant was progressively revealed through the Old Testament, it was ever and always the eternal covenant (Jesus slain before the foundation of the world). Israel rejected that covenant at Sinai, and placed Moses as their mediator in exchange for personal relationship of God.<sup>ccxxiii</sup> Because of that exchange, the nation forfeited for a season their call to be the priestly nation as God had intended. This is why the prophets call the eternal covenant “a new thing” and “a new covenant.” It isn’t so much that it is a “new covenant” as it is the eternal covenant rejected at Sinai. Instead, they embraced a

covenant that could be performed. This is why it is said by the religious leaders of that new wine, “The old is good enough”.<sup>ccxxiv</sup>

It is according to the covenant made with God at Sinai that Israel’s destiny hinges upon. God still holds them accountable to that covenant, though the Gentiles have not been placed under such a covenant. It is said in Deuteronomy 4:1, “Follow [the decrees and laws] so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land...” Israel has been given the land promised to Abraham, but not that full amount promised in Genesis 15:18. That Land is to be inherited only. Israel cannot come into possession of that Land by coercion or military power. Because the Land must be inherited, for Israel to remain in that Land they must remain faithful to the Lord their God. If they don’t remain faithful, they don’t remain in the Land.

It was said in Deuteronomy 6:25 that the obedience to the Law is considered their righteousness. Where Paul has said that we cannot be saved through works, God seems to be indicating that they can be saved by works. However, Paul is actually expressing the fullness of this text. It is not the works of the Law that make them righteous, but the faith behind those works. In remaining faithful to God, which is to continue to put their faith and confidence in Him throughout all generations, their works are considered righteous. This is why God continues by saying, “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse – the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God”.<sup>ccxxv</sup>

The blessing does not come when Israel upholds the Law, but when they live by faith. The curse does not come with disobedience to the Law, but when they reject the Lord their God. The two are connected in a way that cannot be separated. Ultimately, Christ is the fulfillment of the Law. He is our offering and sacrifice. He was the anointed unleavened bread of Truth to be offered as our meal offering. He is our peace offering – that through Him we have peace with God. He is our sin offering, that *if* we sin, we have propitiation.<sup>ccxxvi</sup> He is our Passover Lamb. He is the drink offering, of which we can take and say, “This is His blood...”

The Law is not something that is a burden to fulfill as believers because Christ is our fulfillment. It is apart from faith in Christ that the Law becomes impossible. This is the eternal covenant. We have stepped into this reality as Christians – something that Israel has yet to do nationally. That is why the command is given through Paul that we are to “drive the Jew to jealousy”.<sup>ccxxvii</sup> This is almost a parallel of the statement made by Moses, “I will make you envious by a people that are not a people; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding”.<sup>ccxxviii</sup>

How is it that Gentiles, they that were despised by the Jews, are the ones to live in the promises and blessings given to *the Jews*? It is a Divine revelation of the character of God. He will go that far, to cut off the natural branches and engraft wild branches, in order to call the nation of Israel to repentance. While we’ve been content to live beneath the glory of God, Israel continues to be unmoved and not jealous. God has established the covenant with Israel so that He might use them as a nation to all the other nations. Our call is to be a people that are no people – a pariah.

By being slapdash saints we rob God. Our purpose and calling is to be nobodies. But we have the same complex that Israel has: we want to be like all the other nations.

We want to be somebodies. Are you willing to take up the purposes of God for the sake of a greater reward in the next life? This cuts to the heart of every grumbling. We don't expect to be somebody. Instead, we are content in all things. It is for the lack of understanding this mystery that even the church has been quite flabby. We are unchallenged and bored.

What might actually be the solution is the very thing we have refused to consider: we are to be the priesthood to Israel so that they might be the priesthood to the nations. Instead of embracing this calling, we have coveted their calling. We want to be the big dogs. Maybe the parable of Jesus speaking of the prodigal son is more literally true than we know. The elder brother that has always been with the father says, "I have slaved in your household for all these years..."<sup>ccxxix</sup> He refuses to celebrate with the father because he thinks he is lacking in reward for his "enslavement." Who among us are exact replicas of that elder brother? Who among us don't want to even consider playing second fiddle, because we are a part of that remnant that stems back through the generations? Has God not said that the *least* shall be the greatest?

### Center of nations

Ezekiel 5:5 says, "This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her." I believe that the King James translates it as "set in the midst..." The Hebrew word speaks of "the middle." Why is it that preachers insist on the 'fact' that "God's not interested in real estate?" That isn't what God says. He is very interested in this particular Land. He has even established that it should be *the center* of all nations. This is the pupil of God's eye, at the center of all nations, to be a priestly nation to the nations.

God has chosen a specific place (Zion) for His rule. The classic chapter for blessings and curses,<sup>ccxxx</sup> begins with the verse, "The Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth." From there, it is reaffirmed that "the Lord will make you the head, and not the tail".<sup>ccxxxi</sup> These are promises of God, and the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable.<sup>ccxxxii</sup> Deuteronomy 32:8-9 doesn't just imply, but blatantly states, "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples *according to the number of the sons of Israel*. For the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob his allotted inheritance."

I'm not sure that I've ever heard this expounded. The very statement itself seems to drive something deep within me to repulsion. Would God be *that* specific? Would He truly set up the boundaries of the nations according to the sons of Israel? What does that even mean? It has been decreed that God would make Israel the priesthood. They are to show the nations the ways of the Lord. They are to separate the precious from the vile. It has been said in the prophets, and it is true unto this day, "Like priest, like people."<sup>ccxxxiii</sup> When Israel is disobedient to their God, the nations are disobedient and do not consider.

For God to redeem Israel is for Him to redeem the nations. There is something interwoven between Israel and the nations that shouldn't be lightly disregarded. The way that Israel acts and interacts with the nations actually affects those nations. When she is a whore, the nations blaspheme the name of God. This is why it says in Ezekiel over and

over that Israel has “profaned my name.”<sup>ccxxxiv</sup> Even if there is not a technical blaspheming of God’s name by Israel, the very fact that they are causing the nations to blaspheme Him is likened unto the same thing in God’s sight.

I don’t know that I have fully come to understand and appreciate what God has communicated in these quoted verses. There are too many possibilities for me to grasp what God has in store. Whatever is being communicated in God establishing Israel as the center of all nations, it is at the heart of Israel’s primary purpose. When we can come to understand *that* mystery, we have come to understand the whole of eschatology. So much is stored away hidden in God that we cannot begin to even fathom what this seed will blossom into. The mystery of Israel is the mystery of Christ. As Christ, so also Israel. The impact of that statement alone can give us depth and insight beyond what I’m personally able to communicate.

### God’s nation among nations

Israel’s purpose is to be God’s nation among all nations. Just as Satan has taken his pick and placed his name upon Babylon, God has called out one man from all nations to make him a nation. This is not simply a political state. When God gathers Israel the final time, He will gather *all* Israel. Any and all of the Jews that are scattered abroad will be brought back to that Land. It is more than a political state – it is God’s nation and statement.

This has a few implications: priesthood, theocracy, display of God’s character, and His witness unto the four corners of the earth. In this is the summary of Israel’s call. Books and volumes can be written on those subjects alone to further understand the depth and magnanimity of God’s calling. “For you are a people holy unto the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.”<sup>ccxxxv</sup> “Listen to me *my people*; hear me, *my nation*.”<sup>ccxxxvi</sup>

“Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?”<sup>ccxxxvii</sup> God has chosen this particular people above every other people. In order for us to even come into the faith we must be grafted into that root.<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> God is jealous over Israel.

### Israel as Priests

There is a word that I have used multiple times up to this point, but have not given any kind of definition. The word is priest. We are called to be priests. Israel is called to be the priesthood to the nations. Priestliness is a word that we cannot define. We can only explain it. We can only apprehend it. We know when we have apprehended a definition of that word when we are apprehended by it. When we can no longer live our lives

without the reality of priestliness working through us, we have begun to obtain a definition of that word. Ironically, it actually takes a bit of priestliness in order to even try to search out a definition to that word. It is the sacrificial life. It is the expression of fatherhood. It is the hope of men. It is the beauty of holiness. It is the reality of eternity.

There is an incident in the life of Jacob, after he is renamed Israel, that might give us insight to what it is for Israel to be priestly. Israel goes to his brother Esau. When they meet, they end up weeping upon one another's neck. They exchange words – Esau saying that Jacob should keep his gifts, and Jacob pleading with Esau to accept the gifts. Jacob then says, “For to see your face is like seeing the face of God.”<sup>»ccxxxix</sup> Could you imagine an Israeli that would go to their brethren, whether the Islamic nations of Ishmael, or the Esau people that have desired their annihilation, to weep upon their necks and claim, “To see your face is like seeing the face of God”? What manner of man is this?

God had said multiple times regarding the Levites, “They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them.”<sup>»ccxl</sup> The priests of God have no inheritance. What that might mean in regard to Israel is that they will not be settling among the nations. Just as the Levites were given cities of refuge to live in, there will be a City called New Jerusalem that the Israelites will dwell within. Their inheritance is not among the nations. It is a certain City that comes down out of heaven. It is a heavenly place before it is an earthly reality.

Their inheritance is first and foremost the Lord their God, and secondarily it is the Promised Land. Their first inheritance is the Lord. With that inheritance, they will somehow be in the world, but not really be in the world. They will be ambassadors. While the Lord even rules and reigns from Zion and Jerusalem, the people Israel will be among a world that is not within that City of Light. The nations will be all around that City, and will come up to it to take the leaves from the tree of life for their own healing. Somehow, life continues as we know it, and yet life is nothing like what we know or understand. Somehow, we see the prophetic texts speaking of a coming Kingdom that will be established upon this earth, and yet we will still be ambassadors to those in outer darkness – those who can see the Light, but are not able to bear that Light.

We find in Deuteronomy 17:8-13 that those who govern Israel are the priests. There aren't courts or judges set up by kings and government. Instead, the priest is the one who judges. Why? It is because the priest is the one who ministers before the Lord. They will judge in righteousness, not according to what they think or desire, but according to truth and equity. They will say, as Jesus said, “If I judge, my decision is true, because I do not stand alone. I am with the Father who sent me.”<sup>»ccxli</sup> They will judge righteously so “that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God”.<sup>»ccxlii</sup>

As it says in Isaiah 14:2, “The house of Israel will possess the nations as menservants and maidservants in the Lord's hand.” Later we read in Isaiah, “Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that you do not know will hasten to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.”<sup>»ccxliii</sup> “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, the darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.”<sup>»ccxliv</sup> “For the nation or kingdom that will not serve

you will perish; it will be utterly ruined.”<sup>ccxlv</sup> These verses are speaking of the same phenomenon. They go hand-in-hand together. When we see the connection, that priesthood means being the head, but at the same time it means being the least and the sacrifice on behalf of the people, our romantic notions disappear.

This kind of adoration and exultation comes from severe humiliation. Just as Christ bore the cross before He was raised unto glory and ascended to the right hand of God, Israel must go through utter terror before they are exalted into priesthood. To whom much is given, much will be required.<sup>ccxlv</sup> This is not something to covet. I fear that many of those who are Christians, and who play games from Sunday to Sunday, will also be sifted. They too will experience terrible torment. The reason for this is because we are all called to be that priesthood together. The two have become one, and our calling must be fulfilled together or not at all. If the Church is not in a place capable of ruling and reigning with Christ, then they will be forced to endure extreme tribulation in order to be purified and refined.

We read at the end of Ezekiel 37, a chapter about the utter devastation of Israel that brings them down to being only dry bones so that they claim, “Our hope is gone, and we are cut off”, the following passage: “I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them.”<sup>ccxlvii</sup>

Isn't it interesting that many times in the prophetic texts, we have the sweep from utter devastation to ecstatic exultation? It is personified in the man Joshua when we read from Zechariah 3:4, “The angel said to those who were standing before him, ‘Take off his filthy clothes.’ Then he said to Joshua, ‘See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you’.” We see here the symbol of Israel being taken out from the filth of the world, where we all seem to be fascinated with sinful lusts, and being brought into the priesthood. Their righteous acts, which are filthy rags before the Lord,<sup>ccxlviii</sup> will be replaced with priestly apparel.

Later in Zechariah, we find verses such as 8:13, “As you have been an object of cursing among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so will I save you, and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong.” And again in 8:23, “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, “Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you”.’” This is the fulfillment of the priesthood. They will display the Lord their God to all men and all nations. We will take part in their joy, ruling and reigning with Christ. That is, of course, if we do indeed make it to ruling and reigning. It is said in Revelation 20:4-6 that not everyone attains to that first resurrection.

This priesthood is holy. Only they that have come into the realm of God's holy heart can then teach others of that holy heart. Some will rule over 10 cities, and others will rule over 5. It will be allotted according to our character. They that have not attained to a place in Christ to be able to rule and reign with Him, which is the reward of priestliness, will not have a place to rule and reign. They will make it into the new heaven and new earth after the judgment seat, but they will not be a part of that City. They will be marked with those that must come up to the City in order to take the fruit and leaves of

the tree of life for their healing. This only scratches the surface, and does not do justice in explaining true priesthood. Yet, it will have to suffice for now.



## Chapter 9: Nations – Babel to Babylon

When we first come into the faith, we're taught about God's heart for the people of the world. We're taught that God does not desire for anyone to perish.<sup>ccxlix</sup> The heart of God is consumed with hope for souls. He loves, and therefore He does not want any to be cast into hellfire. The emphasis is actually so heavy, that it took for me to stop listening to people's opinions before I came to any conclusions on what God's heart truly is. Everyone has an opinion. Sadly, many opinions, if not all, are completely selfish. We desire to show that God's heart is that He loved *me*. For those who are in the outside world, as long as they will do the same things that we have done to be saved, then we want to tell them they are completely secure and going to heaven.

I've wrestled with the Scriptures. I've probed the heart of God. I have sought to understand what God's intention is. In this, I have become less focused upon the individuals, and more focused upon nations. While I have for so long believed that God has established Israel so that they would be redeemed, and that God loved them, I have also believed that God is only interested in people. The thought had never occurred to me that I was in the wrong, because that thought would actually indicate that those who taught me were also in the wrong. God is interested in both people and nations.

God is indeed interested in the individual.<sup>cccl</sup> Yet, something that we need to understand is that as much as it means to be an individual, we are born into a specific context. We are born into a specific nation, a specific locality within that nation, a specific race, a specific culture, and a specific family. More than our personalities and individual calling governs the person that God has made you or I to be. Our personality and calling is actually based upon who God has created us to be within our context. He has a heart for the nations, and even though patriotism can be an idol, I believe that God desires for all nations to be represented before Him.

The way that we do this is a very deep and rich subject. I have decided to devote three chapters to that one subject alone. Because this is so foreign to the mindset of many believers today, I feel the necessity of explaining out the pieces and details in a way that would help show forth how both individuals as well as nations work hand-in-hand together. God does not desire one over the other, and we shouldn't expect that God only sees us as a means to an end – that end being the redemption of our nation. He is extremely jealous over every human being on the planet, and it is not correct to negate that. But with that being said, it is equally incorrect to negate the understanding of God's jealousy over nations for the sake of being selfish and isolated.

We find the first mention of nations in regard to Noah and his sons. Out of Shem, Ham, and Japheth come all the families of the earth. Genesis 10 is called the Table of Nations, and from it stems all of the nations and peoples that we see today. What we need to note is both the nations mentioned, because the Scripture recognizes these peoples under a certain mindset and connotation, as well as the patriarchs from which they come. When God speaks about a certain people, he looks back to that patriarch. For example, we see in the book of Obadiah judgment to come upon Edom. Edom has Esau, the brother of Israel, as their forefather. The reason that God speaks of judgment to come upon Edom is because of the oppression that Esau has placed upon his brother Israel.<sup>cccli</sup>

Yet, neither Jacob nor Esau is alive. These are completely different people, and they are almost entirely assimilated from their origins. After a multitude of generations, they might still have the history or the remembrance of who they came from, but those people resemble neither Jacob nor Esau. And here lies the problem. Their heritage would say that as sons of Israel, the generations have a specific mode of living and purpose that they are to exist from. Likewise, as the brothers of Israel, Edom has a very specific purpose and mode of living that they too are supposed to uphold. When the people begin to act less like their patriarch, God holds them accountable for their wavering.

Does this make sense? To one degree, Edom is going to be under judgment for their actions against the people of God. To another degree, and an equally legitimate degree, Edom is going to be judged because they are not acting like Esau. Esau embraced his brother and they wept upon one another's neck. Esau forgave Jacob after all his deception and manipulation to rob Esau of both birthright and blessing. Edom was not having the same reaction to Israel, but instead found an opportunity to take advantage of their brethren. This is the wickedness.

God holds accountable entire peoples and generations because of their lack of respect for their forefathers. Jesus at one point calls the generation He spoke to the same generation that killed Abel and Zechariah son of Berekiah.<sup>cclii</sup> Why? These people were acting in the exact same manner as previous generations. In order for we, who have been called out of being Gentiles and into the commonwealth of Israel, to fully represent who God has created us to be, we must wrestle with the implications of what it means to be adopted. We need to wrestle with the implications of no longer being called by our Japheth or Ham origin, but instead are being called sons of Shem. We need to wrestle with the implications of no longer recognizing ourselves as men and women from this or that background, but now adopted into the commonwealth of Israel.

To Abram the call went, "Get thee out."<sup>ccliii</sup> Likewise, for we who claim that same faith of Abraham, the call is made to get out of father's home, out of country, and to leave our kindred. As the people of God, we are called to a certain lifestyle and culture unlike any other. We are ambassadors of heaven. Our culture is governed by God, and not by our nation's culture or what we see around us. Even the Jewish people do not have this reality in their midst. Though they are technically the sons of Abraham by blood, many of the Jewish people live more like Japheth people. If you take away just three Jewish men from history, we no longer have modern times: Freud, Marx, and Einstein.

It is the call of God to His elect to come out from that. Yet, at the same time, there will be a people from every nation that are not within that election that will come up to Jerusalem and offer sacrifices. There are a people somehow that are not a part of the Bride of Christ, the City of God, that must come up to the City and bring their glory into it. There are a people that somehow continue to live, even into the New Heaven and New Earth, that are not a part of the holy people – the Bride of Christ. This is a mystery, and it needs to be unraveled delicately. God has not established the nations in order to cast them all aside. He has desired that not one nation should perish before His eyes, and that each one should somehow be represented before Him by a remnant people that make it into the New Heaven and New Earth.<sup>ccliv</sup>

## Babel

We find the first episode regarding nations is at the Tower of Babel.<sup>cclv</sup> The nations come to the plains of Shinar, and they desire to build a tower that would reach to the heavens. There is a problem: in this plain there are no stones to build with. So, the people build their tower with bricks. They don't even allow the bricks to dry out in the sun, but instead must bake them. Their plans are so imminent, so important, that they refuse to wait even the extra time for the bricks to dry.<sup>cclvi</sup> I'm not sure I can sufficiently describe the problem here. God did not grant that locality for building. The evidence is that there were no stones. What altar of the Lord has ever been built by something other than stone?

For the nations to take brick instead of stone is a subtle hint that this action was in disregard and contrary to what God had said. The word came to Noah and his sons to be fruitful and multiply.<sup>cclvii</sup> Instead, the nations came together so that they might not be scattered.<sup>cclviii</sup> This first episode regarding nations is vital, because it shows that from the inception of nations, the agenda of those nations has been their first priority. Which nation has asked God what their purpose is? Can you think of any nation or any people group in history that has sought the Lord that they might be found of Him?<sup>cclix</sup>

As nations, I can only think of one modern example that actually surrendered itself to the authority of God. Uganda in recent years has officially declared that they are now following what the Lord would specify to them as a nation. This is not the Christians of Uganda; the government and leaders of Uganda have made this statement. The question of whether it is possible for a nation to come to God is answered with a whole-hearted yes. It is not outside of the nations' ability to be surrendered to God. What we learn from Babel is the inherent disregard for God and His purposes.

There is a real sense in which the nations have their own agendas to push. They have their own desires. Whether we're speaking of genocide and supremacy that would demand ethnic cleansing, or whether we're speaking of imperialism seeking for more territory, both are in complete opposition to God. As long as we are content as a nation, or more specifically as the people of God in the midst of our nation, to go with the flow and continue to seek our own glory and purposes, we will be given over into greater degrees to the principalities and powers of the air. We will not truly have the power and influence that we desire, because manipulation and violence is not power.

Love conquers all. When intimidation and force and coercion might cause for many to cower, love is what defeats all else. Until the nations are willing to cast aside their own ambition and motives to take up love, they will continue to starve for more. Satisfaction only comes when truth is obtained. Truth cannot be obtained when we're wholly surrendered to the mechanisms and tactics of the devil. Demonic furor is a lie, and the perpetuation of a lie produces unreality. It is the lack of reality that has caused our societies in the Western world to go berserk. Rape, rampant sexuality, murder, road rage, idolatry to sports and Hollywood, hatred, selfish ambition, orgies, drunkenness and drug abuse, and all of the like are only outward manifestations of the inward unreality. When mankind is forced to live in the lie, they will seek anything to come out from the

deadness of that lie. The lie produces numbness. That lack of feeling is what leads mankind to absolute corruption – anything to feel *something*.

It was at the tower of Babel that mankind was not content to wait. They could not be given to patience, even if it meant a better quality of brick. Bricks are imitations of stones. Stones represent the truth and reality of God's building. Everything that was made for God, whether an altar or the Temple, was made either out of stone, or out of some sort of precious metal/gem. Nothing was made from bricks. When wood was used, it was typically overlaid with gold. Bricks are cheap imitations of what God demands. God demands stone, so we'll make our own stones out of the clay from the ground. To build with stone is costly and time consuming. Yet, a brick is cheap and simple. You can make the bricks to all be one size and shape, so that they fit together nicely and neatly.

We have here at Babel the very inception of unreality over the nations. That veil that blinds them<sup>cclx</sup> came upon them in the plain of Shinar. Those powers of darkness have desired to keep their place of authority ever since. To challenge that spiritual stupor over the nations, that kingdom that rules the kingdoms of the earth, is to place self in the most undesirable of places. We are asking for attack from those powers of darkness when we accept the call to come out from their rule. When we, by faith, come out from their kingdom and begin to look for a City that was not made by human hands, but instead who's builder and maker is God,<sup>cclxi</sup> we put a target on our backs. This is not for the light hearted. This is an ultimate call. To come unto Zion is to find yourself at enmity with the world.

Here we have with the tower of Babel the very condition of all nations that continue to go their own way. Though they seem to have everything together, and they know what they are doing, the end result is confusion and dispersion. Just as God confused the language and scattered the people from Babel out to the ends of the earth, so too do we find this same result in empires of history such as Rome, Babylon, and the Mesopotamians. From our earliest archeological kingdoms to the more recent fall of nations such as Australia (before being settled by Europeans) or the Soviet Union, we find this pattern of confusion and dispersion.

Yet, though there is confusion and dispersion, there is still a record that God keeps. He still knows from where we come. Even modern archaeology has given some insight to where these peoples in Genesis 10 have gone. For example, Japheth begat Gomer, and Gomer begat Ashkenaz. Ashkenaz is the father of peoples in Thailand, Bhutan, Nepal, Burma, Tibet, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mongolia, China, Japan, Ukraine, Denmark, South Romania, Northwest Turkey, Galatia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Albania, Hungary, Austria, Northwest Russia, Germany, Scandinavia, and the Saxons. The people of Assyria, who came from Asshur, migrated north and east after being conquered. They settled in the Roman province called Germania (modern day Germany), and also in India, where they set up classes (the Cass System).

Nazi Germany desired to establish the "supreme race." That idea actually comes from the ancient Assyrians, who called themselves the master race.<sup>cclxii</sup> It is thought by some that the Assyrians were actually the ones to establish Tsars, Kaisers, Caesars, and Shahs. The Holocaust was not an issue of a megalomaniac. The Holocaust was the outworking of a demonic spirit that possesses the Assyrian nation, and has imposed a false reality into the people's mindset, and is at enmity with the Jewish people because

they are God's people. Nazi Germany was not Hitler versus the Jew. It was Assyria versus Israel – the same ancient enmity that we read of in the Bible.

Do you see why this is important to know? It is from these patriarchs that we find our eternal purpose and destiny as nations. The gods of this world have laid claim to the nations, and they do not desire to give up their seats of power. They can take possession of an entire people, as in Nazi Germany, in order to accomplish their plans and schemes. It behooves us to look into our own histories and understand what it is that governs our localities and nations. As the Body of Christ, we must engage those powers. There are no other people that have authority to engage them. But let's not rush out in some sort of gusto and immature zeal. The stakes are far too high to simply begin naming and claiming, and emphatically calling in the name of Jesus. What we're dealing with in the area of the prophetic destiny of nations, and how to engage and wrestle the powers at a national level I will deal with more thoroughly in the next chapter.

### Antichrist Kingdom

In the area of eschatology, something that it seems like everyone wants to know is, "Where does the Antichrist come from?" There are hints given, but in all honesty it is truly not most important. What is more important to understand is that the Antichrist Kingdom is actually already established upon the earth. If we can see the larger picture and then come into the smaller details, those smaller details will take on more depth and significance.

What do I mean when I say that the Antichrist Kingdom has already been established? Though the Antichrist is not a physical reality yet, there is a kingdom that Satan has placed his name upon. That kingdom is called Babylon. There is a continuum from Genesis 10:8-12 through to Revelation 17-18. We see in Genesis 10:8 that Nimrod is the father of Babylon, and at the end of the age, the kingdom that is being addressed is called Babylon. Though that nation is currently not on the map, it is still a present reality. I don't think that the Antichrist will restore Babylon, and thus we'll have modern maps with Babylon as a nation. The thing that is important to note is that it doesn't matter if it is called Persia, Greece, or Rome; it is still Babylon.

We find in Daniel 2 a dream that King Nebuchadnezzar has. In the dream, there is a statue. This statue has a head of gold (Babylon), chest of silver (Medo-Persia), abdomen of bronze (Greece), and legs of iron (Rome). This statue had feet of iron and clay mixed together. Those feet are a representation of the Antichrist kingdom. Some have argued that the feet were the Roman Empire after the Caesars were established. I have no problem with saying both. There is a real sense that the Kingdom of God has been established upon the earth, but the ultimate fulfillment of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was that all these nations were broken to pieces and blown away by the wind. What is necessary to note is that this statue is one statue. Though it has multiple elements, each representing a different nation, it is all one statue. All of these nations are connected in one manner: they are the parallel of one another.

This same parallel is made in Daniel 7:1-7. Four creatures come out of the sea. If you reference that with Revelation 13:1-2, you find that the Antichrist is a hybrid of all

four of these animals. The four animals represent Babylon (lion), Medo-Persia (bear), Greece (leopard), and “Rome” (fourth beast). Rome is also the kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream that is mixed with clay. In Daniel 7, however, the contrast between Rome and the Antichrist’s kingdom are not distinguished. Similarly, we find that in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that literal kings are being addressed, but you come to a certain point through these prophecies and wonder if the kings are being addressed or if Satan is being addressed...

What is happening is the same phenomenon already explained. There is a connection between the heavenly reality of the principalities and powers and the earthly reality of a nation that is the corresponding counterpart. Zechariah 1:19 speaks of four different nations that “scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.” Once again, we’re given the exact same mystery. The tower of Babel was in the plain of Shinar, which is Babylon. Are you starting to understand the mystery? The connection between the Antichrist and Satan is not so much about Satan becoming incarnate as it is a full representation of the kingdom of darkness made manifest upon the earth.

In Daniel 7 there is a horn that comes up upon the fourth beast, which has a description quite similar to the dragon in Revelation 12, 13, and 17. This little horn that springs up is the Antichrist. In the book of Daniel, we find that the prophecies are to be looked at side by side. What is mentioned in Daniel 2 corresponds to Daniel 7. The four metals and the four beasts are the same thing being described in two different manners. Then, when we come to Daniel 8, we find the dream of a ram with two horns and a goat with one horn. Notice in Daniel 8:3 that the description of the ram is that it has one horn longer than the other. If we reference that back to Daniel 7:5, we find that the bear representing Medo-Persia was raised up on one side. These two animals are representing the same nation – Medo-Persia.

Now notice that the goat is flying (Daniel 8:5). This is a similar detail mentioned in Daniel 7:6 about Greece. The leopard had four wings. Now note that in Daniel 8:8, the goat’s horn falls off and four horns replace it. The number four being associated with Greece both in Daniel 7:6 and Daniel 8:5-8 is a representation of the four kings that ruled after Alexander. When Alexander passed away, he decreed that the four mightiest men should take his place. So, Greece was divided into four sections. These four sections are then referenced as the four horns that “grew up toward the four winds of heaven.” Once again in Daniel 8, we find a “little horn.” This little horns grew on one of the four horns of the goat.

In Daniel 7, we see that the Antichrist will come out of Rome. Yet, in Daniel 8, we find that the Antichrist will come out of one of the four regions of Greece. What I suggest might be happening here is a hint of which area we are to look. In Daniel 11, the Antichrist is known as the “king of the north.” Some have argued that this is Antiochus Epiphanes, but that simply cannot be true. Antiochus does not match the prophecy of Daniel. Not only that, but many scholars will admit that the last five verse of Daniel 11 sound like they are to be pushed into the future with the Antichrist. Yet, when we follow the Hebrew antecedent backward in the text, we find that from Daniel 11:21 through to the end of the chapter is all speaking of the same person.

This chapter is not truly the chapter to get into lengthy discussion on the Antichrist and what he does. That will be examined at a later time. For now, we focus

upon the kingdom that Satan has placed his name upon. Babylon was the first representation of that kingdom, and it then was captured by Medo-Persia. It was while being ruled over by the Persians that the message came to Daniel that the prince of Persia delayed the angel.<sup>cclxiii</sup> Here we must ask a significant question: Who is the prince of Persia? To wave our wand and say that who is being described here is simply the earthly ruler of Persia doesn't cut it. That leaves too many open-ended questions. What makes much more sense is to say that the price of Persia being described is actually a demon, or Satan himself. We then read again in Daniel 10:20 that after the angel speaking with Daniel goes, the prince of Greece would come. Once again, it makes more sense to say these are demonic rulers in the heavenly realms over the nations.

Satan has placed his name upon Babylon, and has caused for an unbroken continuum through the ages. At the end of the age, when the Antichrist will be defeated by the return of Christ Jesus, we find that Revelation 17-18 describe the Antichrist kingdom as "Babylon". Yet, Babylon would by this time have been destroyed for millennia. Hopefully now you can better understand the mystery at work here. The seven heads upon the beast in Revelation 17 are seven hills. They are also seven kings. It says in Revelation 17:10 that "five have fallen, one is, and one is to come." When that seventh king does come, he will remain for only a little while. We know the seventh king is the Antichrist. It is of him that the riddle is given that he once was, now is not, and will be an eighth king.

The Antichrist will be another Nebuchadnezzar. That doesn't necessarily mean that his name will be Nebuchadnezzar, nor does it mean that he will restore Babylon, but like John the Baptist was supposedly Elijah, this man will have the same kind of authority and glory as Nebuchadnezzar had. In the passage in Revelation 17:9-10, we can define the seven hills that are also seven kings as follows: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Antichrist.<sup>cclxiv</sup> These are the seven kingdoms that oppressed the people of Israel, and there are seven kings that specifically should be noted. The Pharaoh of Moses' day, the Assyrian king that captured Northern Israel, Nebuchadnezzar, the Medo-Persian king that captured Babylon, Alexander, and Augustus Caesar.

Now, the truth is that when John would have written this down, Augustus Caesar would have been dead. Yet, in his place reigned another under the title of Caesar. I'm not sure how specific we need to truly be; it seems to be enough to simply list the nations and let the details sort themselves out. We find in Revelation 17:12 the description of those ten horns again. The ten horns upon the fourth beast in Daniel 7 are described as ten kings. We find the same mention of ten kings in Daniel 2:42 and 2:44. Daniel directs the attention to those toes, and finish his statement by saying, "In the days of these *kings* shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom..." These are all passages that help to direct us to an understanding of the Antichrist and his kingdom. Just like with the Tower of Babel, all the nations will submit unto Babylon and worship the beast. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be at the end, for God has established the end from the beginning.

Now, in relation to the question of the Antichrist, we find many Scriptures in the Old Testament about certain rulers that come to an end, or certain kingdoms that come to an end, and history does not match it. We also find certain prophecies coming forth that seem to sound quite related to prophecies concerning the Antichrist. Yet, these passages

are about nations like Moab, Tyre, Egypt, Assyria, and other nations that are not a part of that continuum mentioned from Daniel 2 and 7. There is a sense of immediacy in the prophetic texts, where the prophecies were fulfilled in their day and age. Then, the prophecies also look past the immediate to a type. The Antichrist is a type. Just like Moses and David are a type of Christ, so too these pagan kings are types of the Antichrist. This is vital to understand.

When we read texts from the Old Testament, and they are technically not about the Antichrist, but the words seem to be speaking about the Antichrist, this should be our question to ask. Is it possible that this king is a type? Is it possible that God is speaking to or about this country or king, and yet is looking beyond that country and king? We can trace the roots of these places back to the table of nations, and we find that a demonic force governs them. There is a certain spirit that pervades the nations mentioned in Scripture. The Amalakites (sons of Esau) act quite a bit like wolves. Egypt is the nation of oppression and slavery. Assyria is the nation of the “supreme race”, and they boast and gloat over all other nations because of it. Moab is addressed almost like a people that know God, but do not act like they know God (much like the apostate Church). These are spirits as much as they are nations.

So, to see past the simple textual implications and to perceive the spirit behind these nations and kings being addressed, we uncover much more than just the prophetic utterance regarding certain biblical peoples. This is in no way special pleading, either. I am one who holds to the literal fulfillment of prophecy. I don't think that we should be searching for supernatural or spiritual interpretations. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 2:7 we read of a man of iniquity and a mystery of iniquity. The man of iniquity is the Antichrist,<sup>cclxv</sup> and the mystery of iniquity is the very thing I've been expressing. To what degree are we addressing human depravity, and to what degree are we addressing the influence and manipulation of the principalities and powers? This is the mystery. When we see the spiritual reality behind the earthly manifestation, we have begun to perceive the mystery that is already at work in the world.

Right now, that mystery cannot be fully discerned and perceived. It takes an apostolic or prophetic man to be able to come to understanding in that manner. Yet, in the day of the revealing of the man of sin, this mystery will be fully discerned and understood, not only by apostolic and prophetic men, but also by the whole of the Body of Christ. This is currently at work, and only those foundational men can understand it, but when it is revealed through the Antichrist, all of God's people will see and perceive. This is not to say that it is past being understood in theory or concept. What I am implying is that this mystery cannot be fully understood in the depths. Who can truly discern whether we are acting out of depravity or demonic manipulation?

I don't claim to have this understanding myself. I recognize the mystery, and I perceive the reality of it. But I in no way have come to full understanding of this mystery. When we understand that the nations are both literal and symbolic, and we see that the kings are both literal and types, it helps us to better understand the prophetic texts. It takes discernment to know what prophecies fit where. Some truly don't fit in the last day's scenario. Other texts only fit in the last day's scenario. As the Body of Christ, we need to wrestle with this together to come to understanding of God's prophetic intention for our nation, as well as God's prophetic intention for all nations. That understanding



only comes when we see the patterns of God that reveal the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of godliness.

## Chapter 10: Nations – Prophetic Purposes

There is a verse in Deuteronomy that I have recently asked others to help me to understand. This verse was passed over by a speaker who simply said that they don't understand it, and that they have never heard anyone speak on this verse. It is found in the song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32. Verses 8-9 read, "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided up all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance."

Do you find this to be as interesting as I do? For starters, Abraham was not called out of his father's home for a couple generations after Genesis 10. We read of the descendants of Eber, and then eventually Abram was the sixth generation after Eber, the son of Arphaxad. This is incredibly interesting, because the passage in Deuteronomy 32 claims that God had set up the boundaries of the nations in accordance with the number of the people of Israel. Yet, in Genesis 10, and certainly with the dispersion from Babel, there aren't any offspring of Abraham – let alone Israel. Abram was not yet alive to give birth to Isaac, who would then give birth to Israel. Do you see my point?

It seems altogether bizarre that God would tell Moses that all of the nations that have been set up upon the earth have their boundaries allotted to them in accordance with the sons of Israel.<sup>cclxvi</sup> First question: why? Second question: what relation does Israel have to all other nations? Third question: what relation do the nations have with Israel? We read in Acts 17 in the life of Paul an episode upon "Mars Hill". Paul gives a message to the Greek philosophers and highly educated of his day. The truth is that there should be an entire chapter devoted to that message. However, the message itself is not a piece of eschatology. There are eschatological statements within it, but our main focus here is upon the statement, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us..."

I think that Paul understood the mystery that was being expressed to Moses. He understood it and he proclaimed it to the Greeks. God has established the boundaries of all nations, and has even established the times that they shall be allotted to dwell upon the earth, and that is given them for one purpose: that they might seek the Lord in the hope of being found of Him. Where it has been my understanding for years to assume that this was a verse speaking of individuals, the truer exegesis of the text would say that Paul is still speaking about the nations. With that in mind, Paul then does change the conversation to speaking about individuals when he says that God is not far from any one of us. But, that is not to be used as a reason that Paul can't be talking about nations here. In fact, if we continue onward in Acts 17, we find that Paul uses that statement to make the point that God now commands all men everywhere to repent. From there, Acts 17:31 once again seems to take up the issue of nations before God. Why has God commanded all men everywhere to repent? "He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained." That judgment that Paul is speaking of is understood from Old Testament prophecies as the judgment of nations.

For example, we find in Joel 3:1-3 that God has established a day when He will gather all the nations together to enter into judgment with them in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. This judgment of the nations is at the end of the age, when Christ returns and all the holy angels with Him. How do I know that? Jesus has said so. In Matthew 25:31-32, Jesus proclaims, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the *nations* will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” Notice that the emphasis is not on separating the people, but that the nations are gathered. We understand the second phrase, “separate the people”, in the context of, “All the nations will be gathered before him.”<sup>cclxvii</sup>

God has a jealousy over nations. Each one has a prophetic destiny and purpose. That prophetic destiny and purpose of the nation in which we live is determined by the number of the sons of Israel. The coming calamity upon Israel, the number of the Jewish people in our land, and the number that will be sifted through our nation are all factors that determine our prophetic destiny and purpose as a nation. Ironically, those three factors are intimately tied together with what patriarch we descend from. God has established the nations in Genesis 10 as the peoples that are scattered throughout the earth. Whether we are from Ham, Shem, or Japheth actually matters, because each one of those three patriarchs were given a very specific role in the end time paradigm.

### Discovering Your Nation’s Purpose

In American history, we have seen a couple great awakenings. We have seen several revivals. The First Great Awakening came in the early 1700’s before America was a nation. While the nation was still only colonies, immorality and drunkenness were rampant. The people of America, though claiming religion, were very much living immoral lives. The Puritans were even known for their violence against the Anabaptists. This First Great Awakening swept the nation and caused for many men and women to consider holy living once again. The people of America devoted themselves to Christ, and the rampant immorality was neutralized.<sup>cclxviii</sup> That is, until the Revolutionary War. Once war came, the effects of the revival began to dwindle until they were eventually only a memory written down in the pages of history.

In the late 1700’s, America was actually quite a bit like what we see today. The schools and universities were mostly atheistic. Society and culture mocked religion, especially Christianity. Drunkenness and sexual immorality were rampant across the land. Yet, through men such as John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards, the spiritual and moral climate of America shifted. It is known as the “revival of 1792”. Others call it the Second Great Awakening. Yet, after this revival came the war of 1812. The spiritual climate degenerated again, and people were once again given over to debauchery. Our land was a place of immorality and mockery of religion. Though the effects of the Second Great Awakening continued to linger, they slowly died until there was only a history written about it. Many men were not content to allow it to die, and so they gave themselves to prayer. Finally, the last few that remembered “the glory days” passed away, and the others were content to have their eyes glazed over with only memories.

This led to a Third Great Awakening in America. In the year 1857, revival began in Canada and went south into America. This was the time of men such as D. L. Moody, Surgeon, William Booth, and Hudson Taylor. This revival caused for the moral landscape to once again be converted toward holiness. The preachers insisted upon devout and holy living, and the people responded positively. People were giving themselves to the cause of Christ. They were claiming that the devil no longer had a hold upon them.

And then we move toward the 1860's, and the Civil War broke out. During the time of the Civil War, the revival continued. In all of these cases, the revival did not cease simply because war began. Yet, we find the pattern that there is revival, and then devastating war. The moral climate is given to sexual immorality and drunkenness, and then there is revival, and then another war, which brings forth drunkenness and sexual immorality, and then another revival. This is the pattern of American history. Now, in 1904, there was a revival in Whales led by a man named Evan Roberts. The judges in Whales were given white gloves, because they had a whole year without any crime. The men that worked in the coalmines had to retrain the horses because the miners were no longer yelling and cursing. The horses didn't know how to respond.<sup>cclxix</sup>

That revival in Whales was found continuing in 1906 through William J. Seymour, an African American. The Azusa Street revival was in Los Angeles, and the people came from miles to see it. Out of Azusa Street came the modern Pentecostal religion. Just like John Wesley before him, Seymour had no intention of creating a new denomination. What is it that happened after these two revivals in Whales and Los Angeles? We found ourselves in the midst of World War I. After the war was the Great Depression. After the Great Depression came World War II. Interestingly, there have not been any revivals that we can call legitimate with certainty.<sup>cclxx</sup> Though there are spurts here and there, the truth is that America has not had a nationwide reformation like in the previous years.

Now, in the question of what caused for the revivals to come, the short and simple answer is prayer. When the Christians of our nation got on their faces and began to pray, God sent revival. People saw the sin, and they were broken. They saw the nation going into atheism and mockery of God, and they cried out on behalf of America. What no one seems to ask, however, is whether revival is the answer for today. Out of all of the prayers for revival, the many pastors and preachers that are declaring revival is coming, the desperate hope among the youth, and the uncountable riches that we've been given to stir us to prayer and expectation, my only question is this: Why are there not streams of blessing flowing in the streets? God does not ignore the prayer of the righteous. We don't simply cry out to God repeatedly until He answers, always hoping that if we maybe pray just a little bit more that He might hear us. The prophets of Baal might have prayed and prophesied in that manner, but we serve a living God who hears and cares.

We don't serve Baal. Our God hears the cry of the oppressed. Though it took desperate prayer in the past for revival to come, I think that we're missing the point. It wasn't about the prayer. The prayer caused for the people of God to get back to holiness. They began to come to a place where the things of this world, and the lifestyle and culture that they grew up in, did not satisfy. They were no longer willing to give self over to the ways of the world. Instead, they desperately pleaded with God on behalf of those who did not know Christ, and all the while they encountered the resurrection life in their

own day-to-day activities. Is it possible that in our modern day we want the cheap fix? Have we stopped obeying and started praying in hopes that God would answer?

In all sincerity, I'm not one who believes in revival I used to. But what it seems to me that God has been communicating is that we can continue to pray about the problems we face, and they will go. We can continue to cry out to God about the issues, just like the generations before us cried out when they saw the land wholly given over to drunkenness and wickedness. We can continue to seek that God would bring the hearts of Americans back to Him, and that the mockery of Christianity would be silenced. We can pray all these things. Many of us do pray these things. I believe that God will honor the prayer of the righteous. Yet, the truth is that even when God sends revival and the spiritual atmosphere of the nation shifts, it is only a couple decades later before our nation is given wholly to idolatry again.

To pray for the nation, stop praying merely about problems and start praying for God's prophetic destiny. God has established America for a purpose and destiny. He has established all nations for a prophetic purpose and destiny. If we want to see reform that lasts, we need to move past seeing the branches and look to understand the trunk, and eventually the roots. When we pray about problems that we see, whether immorality or spiritual laziness, we are only praying against branches. The problem is much bigger and deeper than that. There are ways that the enemy desires to destroy a nation. All of these ways ultimately go back to one thing: abolish the prophetic destiny of that nation.

Devastation and sickness are only manifestations of spiritual warfare. Hurricanes, plagues, drought, floods, devastation to crop or animals, viruses and illnesses that sweep the nation, and all of the like are only outward expressions of a spiritual battle between darkness and light. God will send devastation as preliminary judgment upon the Church in a nation when that Church has given itself over to the same immorality and idolatry as the rest of the nation that does not know God. Any judgment of God that comes to America will not come because of homosexuality or grotesque sin of the people. Judgment comes because the people of God no longer act like the people of God.

We need to recognize the spiritual battle between darkness and light. It is the enemy's hope to have possession of the western world. He desires to have nations such as America and Canada under his control. That is not to say that third world countries are not also under attack. I believe that the enemy also wants control over the Nile from Egypt through Rwanda. The reason is because that region around the Nile has a prophetic destiny and purpose in God that the enemy desires to stifle. Likewise, there is a certain purpose to the western countries, whether in North America or in Europe. To understand the spiritual battle over America, we need to look back into our history and understand the struggles over our nation between darkness and light. We need to see the patriarchs from Genesis 10 that we are descendants from, and seek to understand what character or spirit broods over that patriarchal people. Those spirits can be introduced into the country through the immigration of settlers, and then perpetuated by the refusal to repent (let alone acknowledge) of the sins in our history.

This is true for all nations. Seek to understand the principalities constricting your nation throughout its history. God has a prophetic destiny for every nation, every region, and every people group. Those destinies are not to be lived out by individuals within that nation, region, or people group, but to be lived out by the nation as a whole. Either the

nation as a whole lives out their prophetic destiny, or no people within that nation live out the prophetic destiny. The same is true for the region and people group. The remnant within these three areas can only go so far. Without an open heaven, where the whole of the nation, region, or people group are given over to God, our anointing and calling are constrained. The enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Each nation and people group will have a peculiar anointing and blessing to give to all other peoples and nations. When the nation is misaligned with its prophetic purposes, the ministers of that nation will be stunted and neutered.

When ministries focus upon their congregation and community at the expense of the Church of the nation, they will never fulfill their calling and purpose. We need a view of the Church as Christ Jesus and the apostles teach it. We are one Body with one Spirit. We are not a bunch of local churches that meet together separately, but together compose a bigger, or “global”, church. The understanding that we are all one Body, and that there is no separation between them in California and myself in Ohio, that understanding alone is the necessity for engaging the powers of the air. If we are willing to split the Body, whether by congregations or by denominations, we then forfeit our corporate authority.

In America, the Native Americans had a certain spirit over them. From what I have researched, it seems as though the Native Americans come from two patriarchs: Magog and Tiras. Those that are descendants of Magog are typically the more violent of tribes. Yet, the majority of the Native Americans were not hostile. They came from Tiras. Now, Magog is the patriarch of other nations like Mongolia, the Huns, and certain fierce peoples of that region. Some of the early Irish Celts also trace their lineage back to Magog. Yet, Tiras is quite different. From Tiras come other peoples like the Scandinavians, the ancient city of Troy, and the Tuscan area of Italy. The people that descended from Tiras are said, by Josephus and other ancient Greek historians, to have been typically in a state of drunken and tipsy excess.

This would help explain why drunkenness pervades both the Native Americans as well as the nation of America as a whole. It is a spirit that has not yet been dealt with. When the European settlers came over, they also brought their history of spiritual conflict with them. In my area of the United States, we have mostly German descendant people. From Germany come the Gauls, the Franks, the Assyrians, and several other peoples. It is likely that we cannot truly discern just who all has come into our nation, and what spiritual conflicts they have brought with them. What we can do is look into the history to discover the patterns. The annihilation of the American Indians (150 million were executed during the event of the “Trail of Tears”) would reveal to us the same Germanic spirit that comes from Assyria. Ever since that terrible atrocity in our nation’s history, that spirit has pervaded over the United States of America. To sweep it under the rug, and pretend like nothing ever happened both perpetuates and hands us more fully over into the hands of that spirit.

There is another spirit that was introduced into Canada and the United States during the 1990’s. There was a dubious revival that swept the land. It was called the “Toronto Blessing.” When the Church of Jesus Christ did not stand up in the authority of Christ to battle against that spirit of witchcraft, but instead many in the Church sprinted to behold the phenomenon, we handed our nation into the demonic spirit of witchcraft. That spirit has pervaded our countries ever since, and has even come into the Church of Jesus

Christ. Because of the Toronto Blessing and our lack of authority to challenge it, the spirit of witchcraft has brought forth other dubious revivals and blessings. As if that weren't terrible enough, we have seen since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a rise in the sales of tarot cards, ouija boards, and other sorts of "play" witchcraft. To a large degree, people don't know what they're getting into, but I've known some that do. There has been the increase of wicca and other magical religions. There has been an increase in popularity of mediums, spiritists, occultists, and other forms of witchcraft in Hollywood and television.

I remember in the 1990's when television programs and movies started to push these kinds of things. There was an increase in the late 1990's for these sorts of shows – mediums that consult the dead, people that "whisper" to animals, demonic possessions, séances, and other forms of witchcraft. Where did this spirit come from? It comes from the inception of the Satanic Bible via Anton Lavey.<sup>ccclxxi</sup> Now, I'm not about to say that it starts with him solely, and I'm not about to say that one man brought in a spirit over the whole of America. This man's influence led to artists such as Jimmy Paige and the Red Hot Chili Peppers becoming members of the church of Satan. With the popularity of the occult and witchcraft introduced into the mainstream, this spirit spread like wildfire. It eventually culminated in the Church of Jesus Christ through so-called revivals.

With Anton Lavey came Alister Crowley. Alister Crowley wrote up a manifesto on "sex magik". This would introduce the spirit of sexual "liberty" that pervaded the 1960's. That so-called liberty eventually snowballed into the grotesque sexual immorality of college orgies, swinger parties, the trend of homemade sex tapes, child pornography, and even darker types of sexual explicitness than I'm unwilling to acknowledge in this writing. True, sexual immorality has plagued our country for centuries. The sexual spirit most likely has its inception from the Greek world. The ancient Cretans inspired the sexual disgustingness of Sodom and Gomorrah. They also inspired the sexual practices of the Greek philosophers – you aren't simply a student, but a sexual partner. That kind of sexual immorality was not limited to the philosophers of Athens, but was projected through all of Athens' culture. That same Greek spirit has traveled over the ocean and into our land.

In recognizing some of the spirits that are over our country, we need to understand that there is still a deeper realm of understanding. The purpose of knowing the spirits is not that we can "name" them, but instead to come out from them and break the generational chain upon our own lives. These spirits are at work in every person born into our country, for we as a nation are given over to their influence and teaching. The first step is coming out from these demonic influences on our own lives, but the second step is seeing the prophetic destiny for America. We need to understand our purpose in God. Intercession for our nation is not to be negative, but instead positive. We don't merely "pray against", but instead live in the reality of what God has called us to be.

Now, there are two ways that the enemy uses to fight whole nations. Obviously, there are more than two ways that the enemy uses to fight. We've already expressed a few ways that the devil has come against the Church in America. There could even be more than two ways that the devil fights against whole nations, but these two I have discerned. First, Satan has a strategy of torment and oppression. Second, Satan has a strategy of ease and slumber through luxury and convenience.

When we look at the oppression that is taking place in nations such as Iraq, we find Islamic extremist groups (such as ISIS) terrorizing everyone. This is a strategy of the enemy that needs to be prayed against. I believe that this kind of tactic does not work against every nation. Yet, it is extremely possible that this tactic will be worldwide. I think that the second strategy of ease and slumber might be preliminary to torment and oppression. A people that are still willing to fight against such oppression will rise against the minority. In Germany, the Nazi party only reached a maximum of 6 million people. While that is a lot, it only consisted of about 7% of the population of Germany. How is it that such a small minority came to such prominence and power? The first strategy of ease and slumber caused the people of Germany to continue to remain at ease and slumber until they were now oppressed and tormented, but couldn't fight.

The hope of the enemy with ease and slumber, I think, is to eventually oppress and torment. While people are sleeping spiritually, Satan robs them of their intelligence and authority. The casual Christian no longer knows they have authority, and they no longer know how to use that authority. Issues like homosexuality, abortion, etcetera are only manifestations of the lukewarm condition. No amount of proclaiming and organizing will work until the root issue is dealt with. To come against that root of ease and slumber through luxury and convenience requires a people that have come out of that condition, and can now recognize the spirit behind that condition.

Do not expect to wrestle against that power by naming and claiming. It is wrestled through a lifestyle. Our mode of living must be the antithesis to the principality. While the demonic forces promote selfishness, intimidation, personal gain, coercion, manipulation, violence, and self-preservation, it is the way of the Kingdom of God to live according to selflessness, sacrifice, turning the other cheek, lavish generosity, truth, sincerity, and peace. That kind of lifestyle is not easy. Everything of the world comes against it. If you don't look out for yourself, who will? It's a dog eat dog world, after all. Yet, that kind of mentality is unbecoming to any kind of spiritual maturity in Christ.

The ultimate hope of the enemy is to oppress and torment. If oppression and torment is only available in the form of rape, hate crimes, and other acts of violence, then that will be the degree to which the enemy creates oppression and torment. If, however, the people have been lulled to sleep, and he is now open to bringing violence and terror, then the enemy will invade the nation with a demonic extremist group. Whether that demonic extremist group is Nazism or Islamic hatred, it does not matter.

The intention is that the people of the nation would be so consumed with desire for revenge, self-pity, and 'Where was God?' that they do not pray for, nor manifest, God's wisdom and love. When Satan can grieve the hearts of the people within a nation so that they are turned to vengeance, anger, hatred, and all of the fruits of the flesh, then he has stunted the possibility of that nation fulfilling its prophetic purpose. And know this: the greater the call on the nation, the greater the confrontation. When in the midst of that confrontation, to turn toward politics, witchcraft, idolatry, etc actually hands more authority over to the devil.

Idolatry is one way to give the nation into greater bondage. The funeral for Princess Diana handed over Great Britain into such spiritual bondage that I don't think the Church of England truly understands. To allow that kind of celebration to go on about a jet setter, where even the most prestigious religious leaders spoke such words that you



would think that Christ Jesus Himself had passed away, is to allow for a demonic spirit to enter the nation that had not previously been there. Likewise, for the kind of idolatry that has filled America over the death of celebrities like Elvis or Michael Jackson, we too have crossed over a threshold that cannot be undone. We have entered into a new realm of demonic possession for our nation. That kind of willing submission to their authority and power, and invitation to their occupancy, can only be uprooted by a corporate son – the Body that is truly an apostolic glory.

We have given ourselves over to idolatry. I would go so far to even say that we have given ourselves over to witchcraft. Ouiji boards, tarot cards, horoscopes, television, orgies, freemasonry, and prostitution are all examples of witchcraft. Anything that is not God's Spirit, kingdom, and power is ultimately a willing surrender to the principalities and powers of the air. That kind of deference lends our spirits over to greed. Greed is to desire anything over God. Greed comes when we are not content, but instead of looking to the only one who can satisfy, we look anywhere else. With greed comes deception. Deception is anything that we believe to be truth, but is not truth. We deceive ourselves into thinking that everything is okay, and that we are indeed content. The truth and reality is that we are everything other than content. We are not okay. We are being plagued by demons, and we don't even know the bondage that we're in. That is deception.

The devil makes strongholds in the nation through these means. Yet, there is another mean: unresolved injustice. A wounded people are a weak people. Unresolved injustice perpetuates wound. A wounded person wounds other people. They are filled with anger, bitterness, vengeance, resentment, etc. They will lash out instead of helping. It is through torment and oppression that Satan continues to beat down a nation and a people. When they are bruised and wounded, they are weak. Instead of attacking the true source of the problem, they attack one another, thus resulting in more bruising and wound, and thus perpetuating the problem.

When we do not wrestle the powers and pull down these strongholds in our own lives, families, communities, cities, and nations, we give our nations over to their rule and influence. They influence the mindsets of the people, which then blocks them from the Gospel. Whole cultures, societies, and peoples are influenced in attitude and disposition away from the Gospel of God. This is why we're told to "cast down vain imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."<sup>cclxxii</sup> It takes the whole of the Body of America to come together in unity – out from Babylon, and unto Zion. When God has a people from sea to shining sea that have come to Zion, which is the heavenly glory of the Kingdom of God, then He has a people that can engage those powers. It might only be 10 people per state. Numbers do not matter. There is even one time where God claimed, "I sought for a man to stand in the gap."<sup>cclxxiii</sup> If there were only *one* man, God would have stilled the judgment to come.

I'm not convinced that we need numbers. What I'm convinced of is that we need authenticity. When we have, as a people, come out of Egypt, delivered by the Spirit of God, then we have devastated the principalities and powers. Our prayers will shake the nation. We have currently stopped obeying and started praying, and we have neglected to realize that obedience is more important than sacrifice.

## Fulfilling our Purpose and Destiny

What hope is there? After coming this far, we're confronted with a burden. The true condition of our walk before God will be expressed in our reaction to what has been stated thus far. If we are content to say, "Well, there is nothing I can do about that," then we show we're actually void of the Spirit of God. Yet, the heart that is truly God's will break. There has to be something that we can do. Indeed there is. We can become a little more educated. We can learn the history of our nation, and we can seek God to give us the discernment of the root issues. People that prayed against the branches generated all of the revivals in American history. They successfully prayed against those branches. Their success was not only because of their prayer, but rather was the outpouring of a lifestyle lived in the presence of God.

Our first mandate as the Church of Jesus Christ is to live a life separated from all of these things. When we are devoted to Him, and Him alone, only then are we in a place that we can begin to understand the spiritual implications of such things. As an example, I stopped driving on the highway. God had called my wife and I to take the back roads. It was not until after we submitted to that that we began to realize how much of a mindset we had to ask, "Why is it taking so long?" Somehow, taking the highway seemed to bring us into a mindset that demanded instant result. This is true of fast food culture as well. When we came out from that, we began to realize that this mindset actually overpowered the way we perceived everything. Only a people that are willing to hear the call of God and come out from such a society and culture that they don't even know what is truly bondage and what is only simple luxury will be able to discern the spirits.

Though we are in the world, we are not of the world. That needs to be more than a Bible verse. That needs to be truth. While praying and seeking God to help me to understand this, in my mind's eye I saw a vision of plastic wrap over the top of a city. This plastic wrap, or film, was stretched out as far as I could see. I asked God what that was, and I believe that He replied with this revelation: This film that covers the land is the principalities and powers of the air over our nation. They are invisible to the eye, so it appears as though they are not there and we have direct access to God. Yet, the truth is that they are indeed there blocking our prayers and our access to God. The degree to which God is able to pour out His Spirit upon us is in proportion to the thickness of that film. Where we are content to not even notice it, we will be anemic.

How is it that we pierce that film? How do we overcome the darkness? There are a few steps. First: personal holiness. Our prayers are only as powerful as our walk before God. Second: family holiness. We need to, as families, be accountable to one another, and we need to live in transparency before one another. That transparency is difficult, but it is necessary for all righteousness to be fulfilled. When we can be one with our families, we are in the place where we can truly pray to God together as families. Third: community holiness. That community might only be four families. You are a remnant. The community that you associate with in frequent gathering must also strive for the same unity that I mentioned for the families. These altars that we build to God in prayer are to be built with costly stones: holiness unto the Lord.

As a community, you come together on behalf of the neighborhood, city, or region in which you live. Yet, there is a larger altar to be built: Church. Do not isolate yourself. Seek to find others within your region that will join you. Find other communities of saints that also have a heart to pierce the veil. This is not something for the lighthearted. I remember when I was younger; I used to work with my father. We would often carry something heavy. You can carry this weight with only the effort that it takes to pick it up. Or, you can put your gut into it. You can be lazy, and continue to pray and seek the Lord for revival. You can continue to have your scheduled time of prayer and/or fasting on behalf of the nation. Or, you can allow the burden of God to consume you. You can give yourself wholly to the purposes of God over your life and the region in which you live.

We have the authority over Satan.<sup>cclxxiv</sup> We have the authority to wrestle against those powers that manipulate our nations. Yet, that kind of authority is not something to play games with. To engage the powers on a national scale requires prophetic prayer. Prophetic prayer means that we seek God for a prophetic insight. When we have obtained the revelation of whom God has called our nation to be, our region, our cities, we pray for the fulfillment of that revelation. God will impregnate us with the reality of heaven. When God shows us to what we are called, that revelation is an impregnation. It is not yet a reality, but anything less than that reality does not suffice.

To be impregnated requires. It requires that we would be open to giving birth. The birth will be delivered in our communities before it is delivered as the nation. If we are unwilling to give birth, but we desire the impregnation, both the child and the mother will die. The mother is the community; the child is the reality of heaven being worked out in our midst. There is a certain weight that we carry, and that weight grows until it is time to give birth. At that moment of giving birth, we travail on behalf of our nations. The issue of engaging the powers at a national level is the issue of travail. Travail is giving birth. Travail is the result of recognizing the Lord's burden and carrying that burden in prayer and lifestyle until it comes to fruition.

It is much easier to be given to prayer *about* our nations. It is much easier to be given to prayer over the branches. Outward manifestations of the inward problem are much easier to engage and wrestle against. You will not be rebuked for only praying against the problems. You will actually be rewarded. The ironic thing is that to seek for the root and to ask the difficult questions will cause reproach and rebuke. If you do not desire to do this, I don't blame you. This is not a call to everyone – only to those that are willing to endure the anguish of it. I apologize that I personally cannot give any revelation of what the prophetic destiny of America is, but can only give the small amount that I have shared. This is something that I too am wrestling and engaging, and because it has not yet been revealed, I am still at a place of seeking the Lord for that impartation and impregnation.

## Chapter 11: Nations – Millennial Destiny

This will most likely be a very short chapter. I did not see it fit to put this topic in with either of my first two chapters on nations. The question that I want to raise is, “What happens to the nations in the millennial reign of Christ?” When Jesus returns, He rules and reigns for 1000 years.<sup>cclxxv</sup> During that time, there are a few things mentioned about nations. Now, because I don’t have the full picture painted yet, a lot of these passages are going to be left open. However, I think that the point will be made and will be clear.

To start, I think that maybe I should retouch on something that I passed earlier. The nations will be judged. What are they judged over? They are judged on the account of how they treat Israel. I used Joel as an example. I’ll put down the whole passage here: “In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land. They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink.”<sup>cclxxvi</sup>

Notice that God holds the nations accountable for their use or abuse toward Israel at the end of the age. For a nation or people to abuse Israel is for that people to abuse God Himself. Just as God stopped Saul on the road to Damascus and asked him, “Why are you persecuting *me*?” God will also ask the nations, “Why did you abuse the least of these my brethren?” To despise His brethren is to despise Him. Though the nations don’t realize it, and secular men see no connection, the principalities and powers know it far too well. When we’re messing with Israel, we are essentially coming against God. God has placed His name upon that people, and they are to be the blessing of all nations. Yet, if we reject that blessing and make it a curse, then we are rejecting the very God from which the blessing comes.

Obadiah 15 says, “The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.” Notice again that this is not a verse directed at individuals, but instead directed at nations. The treatment that a nation will receive during the Millennial Kingdom will be the exact treatment that they hand out to Israel. Micah 4:3 says, “He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” The millennial hope of nations is world peace. Christ will not only rule over Israel, but over all nations, for we just read, “He will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.”

Revelation 11:18 reads, “The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for the judging of the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great – and for destroying all those who destroy the earth.” Notice once again the attitude that is given: “destroying all those who destroy the earth”. Those that cause terror will receive terror. Those that cause devastation will be devastated. Those that destroy the earth will be

destroyed. “As you have done, it will be done to you.” The judgment of the nations is the first aspect. It is the birth canal.

After the nations have been judged, those remaining will then live in a very specific way. For example, it mentions in Micah 4:2 (we looked at verse three) that the nations will go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. They will learn of God’s ways, and any time that someone desires to learn of the ways of God, it is so that they might perform them. The nations will go up to Jerusalem to honor the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written in Zechariah 14:16. They will live in peace, not taking up sword against one another anymore. For that kind of peace, there must be unity. Unity is not something we can trivialize. It is not enough to say that because they aren’t fighting that they are at peace. It cannot be said that there is unity simply because they all agree with one another.

Peace and unity go hand-in-hand. They both represent a disposition of heart. In order for there to be peace, there cannot be any selfish ambition. In order for there to be unity, the nation or individual must be servant to those around him. Just as Christ Jesus prayed for His Body that each individual person would “be one as He and the Father are one,”<sup>”cclxxvii</sup> so too is the desire and prayer that the nations would be one. Though they are many members, they are all of one blood. They all stem from one man: Noah. The nations will learn to live at peace with one another, which include being servant to one another.

There must continue to be nations after the judgment, which is after the overthrow of the Antichrist and his kingdom, because it is written that nations will come up to Jerusalem. Daniel 7:11-12 says, “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)” Remember that the horn mentioned in Daniel 7 is the Antichrist. This horn is cast into the lake of fire, but the beasts that were mentioned in Daniel 7:1-7 continue to exist. It is logical, then, to conclude that there is some sort of purpose for the nations during the Millennial Age.

### Principalities and Powers Defeated

We read in Revelation 20:1-5, “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or in their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.”

Lets compare this to Isaiah 24:21-22: “In that day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days.” Do you see the similarity? There is a conquering of the principalities and powers. Those demonic forces over the nations that manipulate and influence will be defeated. They will be locked away in the Abyss for 1000 years. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will be loosed once again. Those same nations that have enjoyed freedom for 1000 years will now have the possibility to be deceived. Those that do not follow Satan in his regime against Jerusalem the final time will endure in the New Heaven and New Earth.<sup>cclxxviii</sup>

There are mentioned a people on thrones in Revelation 20:4. These are they that did not take the mark of the beast and did not worship his image. Those that are beheaded by the beast are given a place to rule. We know it is not limited to they who were beheaded, because Daniel was promised a throne.<sup>cclxxix</sup> So, this is not exclusively for they who are beheaded. They who oppose the antichrist system – Babylon – inherit this ruling and reigning with Christ in the first resurrection. Anyone who is willing to live in comfort and security, though they may still be technically saved, will not have place in the Millennial Kingdom.

The veil that covers the nations, that film that I saw in a vision, will be taken away. That veil represents the pride of the nations – the arrogance to push their own agendas and refuse to even consider the need to seek the Lord that they might be found of Him. It is the Church’s mandate to wrestle those demonic powers that have placed that veil over the nations. We must wrestle them to overcome them and break off the veil that blinds both our nation and also Israel. God has given the call to Israel that they should inherit the nations.<sup>cclxxx</sup> That inheritance is acceded to when they are no longer bound by the same veil of pride that is over all nations.

It is the duty of the Church, as the remnant of Israel, to wrestle the principalities and powers over the nations. When the veil is lifted, Israel’s role as the mediators unto God can then be fulfilled. That is why Isaiah 25:7 says, “On this mountain he will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.” Precisely what mountain is being spoken of? It is Zion, of which the author of Hebrews tells the Church, “You have come unto Zion”.<sup>cclxxxi</sup> It is upon that mountain, Zion, that God has ordained the veil be broken off of the nations. That veil must first be broken off if the nations are to then come under the obedience and authority of Israel.

Israel is not yet at a place to take up that authority. They are not yet in a place of priesthood. As Hosea has said, “Like priest, like people.”<sup>cclxxxii</sup> Because Israel is still technically the priestly nation to the nations, all nations follow Israel’s example. In this, there are so many factors tied together that it is difficult to discern where the one begins and the other ends. It is difficult to say whether or not the nations would be living in subjection to God if Israel were to have embraced her messiah. There are still the principalities and powers that would be manipulating those nations.

The purposes of God have been fulfilled in that all these things come to a pinhead at the end of the age. When the Church can display the manifest wisdom of God to the principalities and powers,<sup>cclxxxiii</sup> through her end time purpose, she destroys the power of the kingdom of darkness.<sup>cclxxxiv</sup> Christ has made a public spectacle of them through the

cross.<sup>cclxxxv</sup> It will be by bearing our own crosses on behalf of others that will not only dismantle them, but also defeat them.<sup>cclxxxvi</sup> Many times in the book of Revelation the topic about overcoming is presented. That overcoming is an overcoming of the spirit that pervades, and to overcome the spirit is to give liberty to the captive – even if the captive is an entire nation. It is by the word of our testimony and the blood of the Lamb, and not loving our lives even unto the death that defeats the principalities and powers.<sup>cclxxxvii</sup> Ezekiel prophecies, “Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.”<sup>cclxxxviii</sup>

This prophecy about Satan might have a literal outcome.<sup>cclxxxix</sup> This one that the nations bowed to will be cast down. He will be made a spectacle, not only in that he will be cast into the Abyss, but also in that the Antichrist and his army will be left outside of Jerusalem rotting.<sup>ccxc</sup> Later in Ezekiel 28, we come to the statement, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will show myself holy among them in the sight of the nations.”<sup>ccxc</sup> The result of Israel’s final return to the land is that the nations will recognize the truth and reality. They will see the Lord and understand their past events as not simply being their own agendas. They will see the reality of the principalities and powers manipulating them, and the truth of the phrase, “the God of Israel.”

It is from the Church engaging those powers in the time of Jacob’s Trouble that the mask is lifted. The nations will no longer have a veil of pride that will blind them to truth and reality. Instead, when Christ is revealed, Israel will behold him whom they have pierced and weep for him as one mourns for an only child.<sup>ccxcii</sup> The result of the veil being torn off the nations is both Israel’s redemption, and also the nations finally realizing that they have been made for a purpose, and that purpose is to bring the glory of God to the ends of the earth. The glory of God is more than a cute phrase. We must be jealous for it. We need to guard it and protect it. When God’s glory is simply the idea of a light shining, or some sort of “awe”, we have cheapened the very thing that causes the angels to amaze.

Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. “Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.” Have you noticed the ignorance of these kings in Psalm 2? Let us break their chains and throw off their fetters... They do not realize that any chains the Lord might attach to us bring ultimate freedom and not oppression. God is free, and He leads His people into freedom. Any bondage, like the bondage of the Law, is freedom to those who believe. And we shouldn’t be surprised. It is both the kings *and the rulers* that rage. Maybe this is a subtle hint of the principalities and powers over those kings.

God responds by saying, “I have installed my king on Zion, my holy hill.”<sup>ccxciii</sup> When does this take place? This is at the end of the age. When Christ returns and sets up His literal rule from that literal place, it is said, “I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.”<sup>ccxciv</sup> Those same nations and kings that reel against God and His Anointed One are now being given as an inheritance. Something drastic has happened. Those “chains” are no longer being considered chains. Otherwise, the nations would continue to rebel. Yet, if any nation continues to rebel, the word is given that they

will be cut off from the land of the living.<sup>ccxcv</sup> Thus, there must at least be some nations that do not think that submission to God is burden.

Think of Matthew 8:29. The demon-possessed man comes to Jesus and asks, “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?” Who is asking the question? It is the demon(s) within him. Those demonic powers that possess this man are recognizing that Christ has come, and that He has the power and authority to condemn them. That condemnation has already been decreed. It only waits an appointed time. That appointed time is the age when the Church engages the powers in an ultimate way, thus breaking their power and strength over all nations. It is after that when the demons are cast into the pit and await their eternal fate.

### Redemption of Nations

I used the verse in Deuteronomy 32 about how God established the boundaries of the nations in accordance to the sons of Israel. The purpose of nations is tied together with that. We find later in Deuteronomy 32 these words: “Rejoice, O nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people.”<sup>ccxcvi</sup> That atonement that is being spoken of is more than Christ. Though it is true that He is our propitiation, Israel will endure judgment because of her sins. Once God has poured out the full wrath upon Israel, He will then turn away His fury.

It would appear that when God turns away that furor from Israel, the nations are to rejoice. Once the wrath is finished upon Israel, it is then poured out upon Babylon. Something about the full wrath being poured out upon Israel brings blessing to the nations. That blessing is intrinsic to the call of Israel. Once Israel comes into her redemption, she will no longer be a curse, but instead be a blessing to the nations. Only a priest can truly bless. A phrase of, “Bless you brother,” does absolutely nothing. The priest can transact and impart blessing from heaven. It is at the redemption of Israel, with the coming of Jesus, that the nations rejoice because they are now going to finally receive their blessing for which they have been established.

That blessing is the same thing that we have received with our salvation. It comes with humility, as Psalm 9:20 reads, “let the nations know they are but men.” And again, “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.”<sup>ccxcvii</sup> The nations will be humbled. No longer will they be bound by their pride, but will receive meekness, and it is the meek that inherit the earth.<sup>ccxcviii</sup> The final statement regarding nations is not their pride. It is not a statement of how they rebel against the Lord, as at Babel. Instead, the final statement regarding nations is that “All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name”<sup>ccxcix</sup>.

“The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God”.<sup>ccc</sup> Isaiah 52:15 says, “So will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they



were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.” Though many attribute this to Christ Jesus, I don’t believe that this has yet happened. The kings’ mouths have not been stopped. The nations have not been sprinkled. They are continuing in disobedience and disbelief. Yet the time will come, when they see Israel come out of her time of Trouble, and they see the Church within their midst take on the spiritual powers of darkness, that the nations will then understand that which they have not heard. They will see what they had not been told.

The result of that understanding and seeing will be life from the dead. They will then honor and glorify the Lord. They will magnify God, and bring praise into His courts. The sovereignty, power, and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints.<sup>ccci</sup> While the fact is that most of the nations today do not consider God, it will be in that day that “many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty. I myself am going.’ And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him”<sup>cccii</sup>.

While the call is given here and now that the nations should seek the Lord that they may be found of Him, it will come to pass in the millennium that all nations *will* seek the Lord and be found of Him. “My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun.”<sup>ccciii</sup> This is what they are called to. The millennial destiny of all nations is that “they will walk by [Zion’s] light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it”<sup>ccciv</sup> Where many preachers seem to indicate that our purpose as human beings is to glorify the Lord, it seems like the Bible actually concludes that this is the chief end of nations.

God has called all nations to make His glory known to the ends of the earth. Each nation has a specific calling and purpose to fulfill. By walking according to the light of Zion, as they are taught when they come up to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty, the kings and the nations will bring the glory of God to the ends of the earth. All of creation will benefit from the blessing that the nations themselves will give. The children of God will at that time be brought unto glory, for which the creation currently moans and groans and waits for their revealing.<sup>cccv</sup> To be the son of God is not simply the statement of being adopted. It is not simply a statement of salvation. It is instead the statement of ruling and reigning – of being a co-heir with Christ, which we inherit only.

There are such glories in store for the Millennial Kingdom, many of which we cannot even begin to fathom here and now. The stark contrast between life as we know it now, and life as it will be revealed during the millennium is too extreme to compare. To then try and examine life in the Millennial Kingdom to the New Heaven and New Earth, it has an equal gap of dissimilarity. We can only ponder these things, and never come to full understanding on this side of eternity. I both apologize for the lack of information that can truly be expressed, but also rejoice that there really is so little revelation. It keeps us on the edge of our seat, in eager hope and expectation. May we all begin to search and be brought into an increasing jealousy for the glory of God, even manifest to all nations.

## Chapter 12: Church

We all have our own views of the Church and what she is called to be. Few of us actually understand the mystery that is described in Ephesians 5:30-31. Paul makes the statement that the mystery being explained in Genesis 2:24, that they should become one flesh, actually applies to the Bride of Christ – the Church. With that one insight, that we are not two, but one flesh with Christ, we ought to have the utmost sincerity about our lives. Everything matters. We're connected to Christ in a way that the two cannot be separated. As if that wasn't enough, this would also imply that we are not simply human beings, but as the corporate expression of God's Body, we are divine.

Hear me. I am not saying that we, as individuals, are divine. I am saying that we, as a corporate Body, have been exalted to the right hand of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and made to be one with God Himself. It is not that we have stopped being human, but that we have become the incarnation. We are God in the flesh – corporately. As God in the flesh, we are witnesses unto Him. We are not simply people that should witness, but instead are the very image of God to the rest of mankind. Does that calling express your daily walk? Are you living in a way worthy of that calling?

If this is true, that we are God incarnate, His expression in the earth, then we have a very specific purpose. We are to be Christ to the world. We are to reiterate the cross of Christ Jesus in an expression that would manifest the wisdom of God to the principalities and powers, and at the same time be a ransom for many. We are called to lay down our lives as living sacrifices. As ministers of the new covenant,<sup>cccvi</sup> we present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service,<sup>cccvii</sup> and to minister the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit<sup>cccviii</sup> and the building up of a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices,<sup>cccix</sup> namely, our own bodies,<sup>cccx</sup> acceptable to God through Christ Jesus<sup>cccxi</sup> – for the sake of provoking the Jews to jealousy,<sup>cccxii</sup> and so all Israel shall be saved.<sup>cccxiii</sup>

Can you follow that? We have been given a purpose as the Church. We are the remnant of Israel within Israel. We are not some sort of separate entity, but instead have been brought into them. The two have become one flesh, as it says in Isaiah 56:8, “The Sovereign Lord declares – he who gathers the exiles of Israel: I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.” We are those “others”. We are those Gentiles mentioned in verse 6 who bind themselves to the Lord, to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to his covenant. We are that people mentioned in Deuteronomy 32:21: a people that are no people. We are that people that will provoke Israel to envy, because we're only an inference. We are a no people, not even called a small people or an insignificant people. With that “no people”, God desires to drive the Jew to jealousy so that Israel might come to know their God. They will see the new covenant at work in our midst, and the very fact that we have been called the “arrogant kingdom” up until now only shows how far below the glory of God we live and move and have our being. We have not given ourselves over to the purposes of God. Instead, we have considered our own purposes, which is ironically coveting the very call of Israel.

Now, one of the questions that I have is this: How can the Church be taken out of the earth if she does not fulfill her primary purpose? How can a rapture take place if the Church has not yet fulfilled its ultimate mandate to be witnesses unto Him, as the remnant people engrafted into Israel, and to defeat the powers of the air over Israel and all nations? We desire to take Israel's place. We want their calling. Instead of accepting the challenge that we've been given, we covet their purpose, as if we are able to fulfill their calling without them. The Jews are right; we are indeed the "arrogant kingdom".

When we have desired to major on selfishness, God has given us the necessary calling to free us from selfishness. We are given the eternal purpose that is beyond us. It is outside of us. We are called to wrestle an invisible enemy, of which we have never even known existed until we came into the faith. Does that make sense? Why would God put this challenge to us? Are we supposed to just pretend? It seems like we're imagining some sort of "pretend" powers that we're supposed to engage. Wouldn't it make more sense to tell us to oppose government, or to challenge those who are promoting wickedness? Yet, it is the wisdom of God that He has not called us to oppose nations as if government is the enemy. Instead, we are called to oppose the powers that influence that government. Either wrestling the demonic powers is insanity, or it is ultimate reality. If it is ultimate reality, then intuition and spiritual discernment is vital. We need to know who, what, and how to combat those powers.

I don't think that we should spend this chapter reviewing what we've already discussed. Rather, I want to put before you the connection from now to the Millennium. I want to raise the eyes toward heaven. It was the glory that is to come that caused Paul to say that his suffering was "momentary and light." A man who had been stoned, shipwrecked, beaten, whipped with 39 lashes, and many other horrors is telling us that his afflictions were, and are, momentary and light. That should cause us to pause. What kind of glory must Paul have seen that would claim suffering and anguish that many, if not all, of us are flabbergasted that one man could even endure, "momentary and light"?

### The End Time Church

A while ago, my wife and I had noticed that Proverbs 31 is a description of the Bride of Christ. As a man, this was one of those chapters that I would skim because "it didn't apply to me." Yet, when the moment of revelation came that this passage is a description of the Bride of the Lamb, and that this view of the Church will be enough grandeur to maintain us through the end times, it gave me a new respect for this passage of Scripture. I vehemently oppose the usage of the term "virtuous woman". We have cheapened that wording. We have made it some sort of "woman thing" that is only used on Mother's Day or women's retreats and women's small group studies. This kind of Church is nearly impossible to find. There are spurts of reality glittered here and there throughout the world, but the majority of believers today simply don't have the faith to even consider that we are able to live like this today.<sup>cccxiv</sup>

When I begin to speak about the Church and Christianity, one of the most frequent reactions is to stop me and say, "There is no perfect church." If they do not use those words, they will tell me, "The church is full of imperfect people." If they are too

pusillanimous to outright say one of these phrases, they might use a tone of voice that would sound almost joking as they word it, “It sounds like you’re trying to find a perfect church, and that just doesn’t exist!” Most often, I encounter these words by older men in the faith. They feel the need to take me aside and reprove me privately because I’m a nuisance. I demand something that is “impossible” to come into.

What exactly does it take to be someone whom the principalities and powers fear? Understand that this is something that can describe an individual, but I am writing in the sense of a corporate man. This man is a prophetic man; a man of many sorrows and acquainted with grief.<sup>cccxcv</sup> A man ruled by Zion, our heavenly dwelling where Christ currently sits and we are seated with Him.<sup>cccxcvi</sup> A man that recognizes the spiritual forces that influence and manipulate our nation. This man cries. This man is alone, though never alone.<sup>cccxcvii</sup> This man is a father to many, but a son to God. This man does not see circumstance, but instead sees possibility. When persecution is all that he faces, this man loves.<sup>cccxcviii</sup> This man is crucified with Christ.<sup>cccxcix</sup> This man hopes against hope.<sup>cccxxx</sup> This man’s lamp does not go out at night.<sup>cccxxxi</sup> This man trembles, and yet stands firm. This is a man in whom the Spirit of God is.<sup>cccxxxii</sup> This man is given to charity even when it hurts. Of this man, there is no guile.<sup>cccxxxiii</sup> This man alone is what is necessary to shake hell and free the captives. This man alone will drive the Jew to jealousy and tear off the veil that covers the nations, that all flesh may receive the Spirit and walk in God’s anointing.

The Church of Jesus Christ is beautiful. She is not a whore. She is not defiled. She is spotless and blameless. We need to be extremely careful how we speak about Christ’s Bride, because He is jealous over her.<sup>cccxxiv</sup> It is not becoming to degrade this Bride, even if there are people that do not live up to the calling. It is Christ and Christ alone that is the author and finisher of our faith.<sup>cccxxv</sup> This Bride of Christ – the Church – is pure and spotless.<sup>cccxxvi</sup> In her there is no guile. She has been given a new name, a new heart, and a new reality from which she lives. She is first and foremost a community – multiple people that have come together in unity to shake hell and climb Mount Zion to usher in the King of Glory.<sup>cccxxvii</sup>

This Church is perfect. It is this Church that will rule and reign with Christ forever. The issue of ruling and reigning is the issue of servanthood. Those that are servants are they that will rule and reign. They have been made perfect in the image of God, and therefore they alone are able to rule and reign with Him.<sup>cccxxviii</sup> There is a union that we all have with this Bride, but to come into this reality is quite different than praying a prayer and being accepted into the family of God. This is a reality that must be apprehended, and in return apprehend us. It is one thing to be a friend of God, and to be adopted into His family. It is quite a different statement to be co-heirs and sons or daughters. There is a maturity that must be reached for that to take root. We are called to Zion, and Zion is defined as the symbol and statement of God’s House. This is the place where He has put His name.<sup>cccxxix</sup> This is His sanctuary. This is where He dwells, and God does not dwell where He is not at rest. Zion is the ultimate manifestation and revelation of God’s glory through mankind. Zion is the word made flesh.

It is to this that we are called. Let us read through Proverbs 31:10-31 and take up a few of the statements to consider. “A wife of noble character, who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her, and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.” You know what this

introduction of the Bride and Husband speak to me? It speaks of adoration. The Bride adores her husband, and the husband adores His Bride. I don't know that I have come to the place that I can truly say that I adore Christ. Cherish Him, yes, and even love Him. Yet, adoration is such a deep relishing. To adore Christ is a far greater statement than we originally expect it to be. Adoration would cause that we would do nothing out of sync with His desire for us, because to grieve Him is the most atrocious act that we can perform. Adoration eclipses our ideas of a novel esteem and brings us into the realm of joyous praise and tears for the heavenly vision of our Maker.<sup>cccxxx</sup>

I've heard the story of a man that I sadly never had opportunity to meet. When he prayed over the food at a meal, it would only take a few sentences before he was caught up in rapturous ecstasy. Tears would be streaming down his face, and his hands would be raised toward heaven, and all he was doing was blessing the food. There was something in his heart that could not help but thud with excitement at the opportunity to commune with his creator. He would pant and break into blissful tears at the moment that he felt the presence of God. That man loved Jesus. That man *adored* Jesus. "She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life."

"She selects wool and flax, and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls." These verses, to me, indicate of a fresh word from heaven. When she speaks, her words are not her own. Just as Christ was able to say while on earth that His words are the words that His Father has spoken to Him,<sup>cccxxxi</sup> so too can this Bride say that she only speaks what Christ has spoken to her. Those words that she speaks are provision and sustenance. They go deep into the soul and cause for freedom from fear and despair. God has spoken when this woman speaks. Our words are to cause for men and women to pause and wonder if they are talking to a human being, or whether an angel has visited them. Surely no mere man speaks like this. These words are God's words being spoken through a human vessel. And it is not on bread alone that a man shall live, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.<sup>cccxxxii</sup> Those words are Spirit, and where the Spirit is there is liberty.<sup>cccxxxiii</sup>

"She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard." What is the vineyard? What is this field? This is the field that Christ has said is ripe for the harvest.<sup>cccxxxiv</sup> The vineyard is our personal relationship with Christ. When we read Song of Solomon, what is so important about this vineyard that the beloved tends for the sake of her lover is that it is her love and devotion to him.<sup>cccxxxv</sup> The Bride adores her Husband, and it is of that love and adoration that these words speak: "You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain".<sup>cccxxxvi</sup> And again later, "Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave".<sup>cccxxxvii</sup> We're told in 2 Corinthians 1:22 that Christ has set His seal of ownership upon us, which is the Holy Spirit,<sup>cccxxxviii</sup> guaranteeing what is to come.

"She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night." Paul writes to the Church in Corinth, "You do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed."<sup>cccxxxix</sup> If the Church in Corinth did not lack any spiritual gift, neither do you. Do not think that Christ has called us to something bigger than what we

are capable of performing. “Her arms are strong for her tasks.” The Bride of Christ is both able and willing, for “her lamp does not go out at night.” Night, in the eschatological sense, is the hour of tribulation. In 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5 we read, “You know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.”

The Church will know the day and hour. She will know and understand when the time has come. When that dark hour is here, her lamp will not go out. That is why we continue and read, “She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.” The Bride of Christ does not fear this hour. We read later in Proverbs 31 that “she can laugh at the days to come.” What is it that causes this? It is twofold. First, this Bride understands the times and seasons, and therefore does not fear because she knows that her salvation draws nigh. Second, we read of the character of this woman. Her character is something that describes utter confidence in her God, her Husband.

“In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers... When it snows, she has no fear for her household, for all of them are clothed in scarlet. She has made coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.” For this woman to hold the distaff and grasp the spindle with her fingers, it speaks of dexterity. It is difficult to be able to hold both of these things with the same hand. It takes both practice as well as dexterity to accomplish this. When we read of the scarlet, fine linen, and purple, we are reading of royal attire. This Bride is clothed in royal clothing, and even her bed is dressed with the finest of cloth. Similarly, we are clothed with Christ.<sup>cccxi</sup> Yet, there is another way of looking at this. It says in Revelation 19:8 that fine linen, bright and clean, was given to the Bride to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.

When we skip a verse, we read, “She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.” Apparently this Bride has such righteousness and demeanor that those who are not saints are compelled to live righteously by her. By her strength and dignity, her words of wisdom and faithful instruction, she compels those around her to righteousness. Yet, righteousness without faith is but filthy rags. This kind of selling of linen garments and supplying the merchants with sashes must go beyond causing people to respect your religion. We are the fragrance of Christ, and that glory that is seen within our faces radiates light that attracts the hungry.<sup>cccxi</sup> Faith comes by hearing, and hearing the word of God.<sup>cccxlii</sup> This Bride speaks words of heaven that actually cause faith in the listeners. Both by lifestyle and by speech, this woman brings many sons to glory.<sup>cccxlili</sup>

“Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat upon the elders of the land... She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ‘Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.’ Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.” I marvel at such words. Something deep within me intuits the majesty of these verses. Yet, it seems too

extravagant to formulate words to help describe this. It is because of the Bride's character that the husband is respected at the city gate. Her children call her blessed because of her character. It is because of the Bride's character that her Husband praises her. We shall hear those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; now enter into your rest."<sup>cccxliv</sup>

Christ is returning with His rewards in hand.<sup>cccxlv</sup> We shall each receive what we have earned. To those that are a part of this Bride, who have entered into that rest by faith, they shall inherit the Kingdom of God. They shall rule and reign with Christ forever.<sup>cccxlvi</sup> Though they have entered the rest by faith here and now, and there is a rest that has come in a legitimate way, in that day they shall enter into a rest that we can only begin to postulate about here and now. There is a very real glory to which we are called to assume. It is this glory that will cause us to be able to wade through the Tribulation. Being prepared for the Tribulation will not prepare us for the Tribulation. Too many times I hear of sermons, teachings, books, and/or conferences that are designed to help us as believers wade through the Tribulation. If that is our only goal, we'll fail. This glory prepares us for eternity with Christ. It brings us to adoration, if we are willing to cast off all the weights that hinder and the sin that so easily entangles us.<sup>cccxlvii</sup>

What the Church needs is to see this glory as a reality. It is the beauty and splendor of this Bride, fit for the Millennial Kingdom, that will alone cause for us to call our present affliction momentary and light. This is the equipping to carry the burden. This is the vision necessary that the burden of the Lord is no burden, but instead a joy. We laugh at the times to come, because we have been remade into the glory of heaven. Those that will rule and reign with Christ are those that are currently ruling and reigning. They are given over to the work of preparing a Bride for Christ. They make garments of fine linen, and they make sashes that they sell to the Body of Christ.

This beautiful Bride repeats the same words of God, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor"<sup>cccxlviii</sup>.

Maybe this is why one of the last statements of the book of Revelation says, "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life"<sup>cccxliv</sup>. The degree to which you have obtained those waters, and the degree to which you have come yourself, will be the revealing factor of whether you can call to others to come. Those that have taken and quaffed of the living water that flows from God's throne – the Holy Spirit that flows out of our bellies – are they that can make this cry. It is a necessary cry. I pray to God that all of us might both hear it, and also bid those that we know to come to the river with us.

## Chapter 13: Priestliness

We have misunderstood priesthood. Far too many consider it an Old Testament phenomenon. Yet, it is in both 1 Peter as well as Revelation that we are called a royal priesthood.<sup>cccl</sup> Priestliness is also a New Testament phenomenon. Unlike the Old Testament, however, the New Testament priesthood is not sacerdotalism. What exactly it means to be a New Testament priest tells us what it means to be a son of God. The issue of sonship is not about adoption. We've all been adopted, and we're all children of God. Yet, we must grow up unto sonship, and God is bringing many sons to glory.<sup>cccli</sup>

One of the preliminary issues of being a priest is a jealousy for God's glory. We are not interested in being glorified ourselves. Anything that would desire to rob God of His due honor and praise is utterly opposed. We are ruthlessly combating anything that would pomp itself above the glory of God. Anything, especially within the context of religion, that would diminish God for the sake of the individual is plucked up and destroyed. Those in many congregations typically oppose the priest of God. They are intimidated because this man or woman of God will not relent. Priestliness is the first step in any calling. No man or woman can come into apostleship, be a prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher without first being a priest. This is preliminary to all of God's callings, and it is the outworking of the Spirit in the lives of the saints.

When we read the epistles, and we come across the phrase, "the glory of God", what happens? Does the drool flow? Does the heart skip a beat? The priest has seen a heavenly vision of the glory of God that causes their heart to groan for that glory to be established *forever*. That glory is incumbent upon the saints. You cannot be a saint without that reality in your life. It is a jealousy for the glory of God that will cause for anything that is light to be countered. In my Christian walk, almost from the very beginning, I have been troubled by the lightness of our Christianity. How is it that the eternal souls of men are hanging in the balance, and we are content to speak on trivial things like whether being single is okay with God?

Where is the weight? Where is the substance? Did you know that there is an eternal weight to glory?<sup>ccclii</sup> Eternity itself brings a weightiness and sobriety to the consciousness of the believer. A lack of the eternal perspective, knowing the terror of the Lord, has caused us to not persuade men. We debate with men. We reason together. We argue, and we counter their arguments. But we do not persuade them. It is this eternal weight of glory that causes the heart to tremble. Our hearts tremble, not because we think that God will condemn us, but because we know the judgments of God that are coming. We know that there is more coming than simply a judgment seat, and if we could teach people about the Bible, then maybe they will reconsider their position.

Men are not persuaded because we ourselves are not persuaded. A priest is one that communicates the knowledge of God to the people. They are ones who bring the reality of eternity into the here and now. We will venture to understand priestliness to a greater degree in this chapter, but maybe the truth is that we cannot appreciate our priestly call until we first appreciate what is implied in the glory of God. If we think of a beam of light from heaven, or the angels singing, we have misappropriated that term. How many of us think of songs and "clouds"?



God's glory is His essence. It is the manifestation of who He is, in actuality and not who we believe Him to be. To behold the glory of God is to cause for corruption to cease. It is our sin that separates us from God,<sup>cccliii</sup> but that is not because God cannot dwell where sin is. Sin cannot dwell where God is. Thus, we choose our sin over the glory and majesty of God. That is the eternal agony of hell – one has been given over to corruption and must dwell in the presence of God for all of eternity without any remedy of being refined. When God is present, sin cannot be present. It is for this reason that God told Moses that no one could see His glory and live.

We do not behold His glory and simply remain the same. It is actually from being exposed to His glory when He is revealed in the clouds of heaven that will cause for the believers to be transfigured. When we behold Him, we will be made like Him.<sup>cccliv</sup> The greater the understanding of God's glory, the greater the degree of holiness in the believer. The perfection of the Church, and coming unto Zion, is wrapped up in the beauty of holiness. Holiness is the issue of otherness. To be holy is to be set apart, to be sanctified. Sanctification is not merely becoming less sinful, but instead reflecting the divine image through our own faces. We become less like ourselves, and more like Him. Even though our personality, our nationality, our culture, our accent, and all the little details about who we are remain, God is radiantly present even within our very eyes.

It is the foundation of a jealousy for God's glory that helps us to be brought into a fuller understanding. The Father desired to exalt the Son, and to give Him a name above every name. The Son, in return, desired to obey the Father and do nothing of His own account, but only what the Father has done and spoke.<sup>ccclv</sup> Anything that we live or speak out of our own imaginings is sin, because *our* thoughts are not *His* thoughts.<sup>ccclvi</sup> Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. They are not wicked or unrighteous because they are inherently evil, but because they are not God's way nor God's thoughts.

Our jealousy for God's magnification and glory through the ends of the earth alone is what will bring us into the realms of achieving that first resurrection. Any other purposes for our lives, even biblical purposes, fall incredibly short of God's ultimate call and purpose for our lives. It says in Ephesians 3:21, "To God be glory *in the Church...*" His glory is manifest to this world through those that believe. That is why the priest must not walk up stairs, lest the skirt of their robe be lifted and the flesh of their legs be exposed.<sup>ccclvii</sup> No flesh may be exposed. The only thing that we live for and display to the world is a life that is hid with Christ in God. That is our main purpose and desire. We don't want anything else. Nothing else satisfies. It is this reason that jealousy for God's glory is the preliminary to priestliness.

## Aaron

We are not called to the Aaronic priesthood. Yet, these things were written for our instruction.<sup>ccclviii</sup> We read in Hebrews 8:5 that these things are a shadow of the heavenly reality. Aaron's priesthood and the things of the Tabernacle are things symbolic of the heavenly pattern.<sup>ccclix</sup> It is to that heavenly pattern that we are called. In order to look beyond Aaron, we need to understand the purpose and pattern of the Aaronic priesthood.

There is a certain episode in the book of Leviticus that would help us to understand this type and pattern. It is Leviticus chapters 8 and 9. Leviticus 8 is the consecration of the priests, and in chapter 9 they offer the sacrifices. Let us consider these things.

“The Lord said to Moses...” Very rarely do I stop after such a small segment of Scripture. I think it necessary this time. Let those words sink into your consciousness. None of what is about to be performed to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests has been thought up or imagined by Moses or anyone else. This is a command from God Himself. God ordered that they do things in this manner, and if they do not comply, the sacrifices and priesthood would not be acceptable. Everything hinges upon how well Moses can discern the voice of the Lord, and how willing Aaron and his sons are to obeying the command of the Lord.

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast, and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.’ Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and the assembly gathered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.” We then read from verse 6, “Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water.” What is not said here, yet is implied by the bathing with water, is that Aaron and his sons were to strip before the assembly and be washed in front of them all.

Could you imagine the humiliation? That kind of nakedness before everyone is embarrassing. We can liken that sort of stripping to the Messiah that hung upon the cross. Not only was he stripped naked, but his hands were also nailed so that he could not cover his genitals. There is something about being exposed in this manner that is preliminary to priestly ministry.<sup>ccclx</sup> It is required for the exact reason that we would reject it. Nakedness is transparency. To be open and transparent means that the whole of the assembly can spot those areas in our lives that we fall short. Transparency is painful, and often it means that we might be rejected. But, if we are to offer sacrifices for the sins of others, they need to know that we aren’t high and sinless. Those that we are offering sacrifices on behalf of need to understand that we are just as human and flawed as they are.

It is nice to consider that the man up on the platform has some closer walk with Jesus than we do, and that’s why we listen to him. But that is a lie. Truth is established when we see that the leaders and elders are made out of the same stuff that we are – men of like passions. So why do we go to them? We go to them because God has called them out from the crowd to minister unto Him. It is not by our own choosing, but by God’s choosing that we go to these men. It tells us in James to go to the elders if we are sick, and our sins will be forgiven. Confess your faults one to another, and carry one another’s burdens.<sup>ccclxi</sup> It takes priests to be able to confess to. But a priest is not someone who sits in a confessional and listens to everyone’s sin. A priest is one just like we that we know will not judge us or condemn us. We know they will not judge and condemn, because they too are struggling with their own issues. That has to be established if we are going to be required to put our trust in them to offer up sacrifices on our behalf.

“He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him. He also tied the ephod to him by its skillfully woven waistband; so it was fastened on him. He placed the breast piece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breast piece. Then he placed the turban on Aaron’s head and set the

gold plate, the sacred diadem, on the front of it, as the Lord commanded Moses.” We spoke in the last chapter about the woman in Proverbs 31. I explained how this is the Church – the Bride of Christ. We saw how she was robed in scarlet and made fine linen and sashes to sell. I compared this to being clothed in Christ. I think that here, as the High Priest, we’re getting a glimpse of what Christ is clothed in.<sup>ccclxii</sup>

It is not until after Aaron is anointed that his sons are clothed. While their father is being clothed here, and while he is being anointed, they continue to stand naked. Why? Well, we are those sons. As Christ is being clothed and anointed, we stand naked. Christ is our first fruit. Until He was robed in glory through His resurrection, no one else could taste of that glory. Now, we have an enigma presented in Romans 6-8. We find Paul explaining that we have been raised with Christ. So, we conclude that we have been clothed as priests with Christ. Yet, we reach Romans 8:19, and the story seems to change. Paul now speaks about how the creation is waiting for the sons of God to be revealed, and how we too groan inwardly for that resurrection.

Currently, Christ has been crowned High Priest and Apostle of our confession.<sup>ccclxiii</sup> He is the firstborn from the dead.<sup>ccclxiv</sup> We, too, have been raised up with Him. But there is something more than just being raised up with Him. As glorious and liberating as it is to walk in the resurrection reality, there is something yet still more glorious. We are being brought unto sonship. To be sons of God would require being exalted by God unto glory. That glory is not something that is attained because we simply believe. It is inherited. There is a certain quality of life that must be come into, of which we will need to discuss in the later part of this chapter, that the majority of us have not yet entered.<sup>ccclxv</sup>

“Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them. He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar and all its utensils and the basin with its stand, to consecrate them. He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head and anointed him to consecrate him. Then he brought Aaron’s sons forward, put tunics on them, tied sashes around them and put headbands on them, as the Lord commanded.” The anointing is more than oil. There is something precious about the anointing. With it comes authority. He who is anointed has authority over the assembly. He speaks on God’s behalf, and as long as that anointing remains, he is to be listened to and submitted under.

How many of us have rejected the Lord’s anointed because he doesn’t seem legitimate? King Saul was about as illegitimate as it comes, and yet David refused to “touch the Lord’s anointed.”<sup>ccclxvi</sup> In 1 Samuel 24, we read of an episode where David cuts the corner of the king’s robe in a cave. He then goes out to Saul and shows that God had delivered him into David’s hand. Yet, David doesn’t magnify himself as being more holy. Instead, David grieved that he touched the Lord’s anointed. How many of us not only touch the Lord’s anointed, but even harm them without repentance? The anointing cannot be fabricated. I’m not talking about working up the Spirit, or shouting because we’re excited. There is a legitimate and tangible presence of God that we can actually feel when certain men or women of God speak, worship, or pray. There is no question of whether or not they are truly anointed. It is obvious. Yet, even with the anointing it is possible to backslide and lose your authority in God. Saul did. That backslidden

condition did not rid him of being the Lord's anointed, though, and David respected that anointing. So should we.

“He presented the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Moses slaughtered the bull and took some of the blood, and with his finger he put it on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar. He poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. So he consecrated it to make atonement for it. Moses also took all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, and both kidneys and their fat, and burned it on the altar. But the bull with its hide and its flesh and its offal he burned up outside the camp, as the Lord commanded Moses.”

There are a couple of things that happened in this passage. To start from the beginning, imagine if you were one of the people watching this bull be slaughtered. You watch as the knife sinks into the animal, the animal winces and lets out a groan, stumbles a little bit with one last kick of life, and then falls to the ground dead. Blood is pouring out of the open wound. Then, Moses takes that knife and cuts open the belly of this bull. All of its innards are exposed. The blood, guts, and organs of the animal are displayed for the whole crowd to see. This is a gross sight. I don't think that we have appreciated what it must have meant for that bull to be cut to pieces for the sacrifice to take place.

Aaron and his sons placed their hands upon that bull to impart their sin into it. They do this on behalf of all Israel. Thus, all Israel gets to see the result of their sin: death. The wages of sin are death, and those wages are not pretty. The inward parts that we would throw to the side are the very ones that are placed upon the altar. God is not after the flesh, the hide, the good cuts of meat, and all the other aspects of the cow that we would delight to have. The good cuts of steak, roast, and shoulder are all burned outside of the camp with the dung. God requires the inward parts – the most intimate and deepest parts of the animal. So, too, does He require our inward parts – the most intimate and deepest aspects of what we are.<sup>ccclxvii</sup>

“He then presented the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Then Moses slaughtered the ram and sprinkled the blood against the altar on all sides. He cut the ram into pieces and burned the head, the pieces and the fat. He washed the inner parts and the legs with water and burned the whole ram on the altar as a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the Lord by fire, as the Lord commanded Moses.” Something I neglected to mention from the last sacrifice was the emphasis on fat. Fat represents rest. The animal cannot gain fat if it is not at rest. When the beast is frightened, feels threatened, is uncomfortable, or is overworked, it will not have fat to offer. Fat is the accumulation of rest, and God delights in it.

“He then presented the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then he sprinkled blood against the altar on all sides. He took the fat, the fat tail, and all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, both kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh. Then from the basket of bread made without yeast, which was before the Lord, he took a cake of bread, and one made with oil, and a wafer; he put

these on the fat portions and on the right thigh. He put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons and waved them before the Lord as a wave offering.”

Once again, we'll start from the beginning and work our way through this passage. Moses placed some of the blood on Aaron's right ear lobe, right thumb, and the big toe on his right foot. He also did this with Aaron's sons. I believe that this is a symbol of hearing, working, and walking with God. Our ears need to be sanctified in order to be attuned to God's voice. Our hands need to be sanctified in order to do the work of God. Our feet need to be sanctified to go where Jesus sends us. Everything is both sanctified and handed over to the will of God – to be used however He sees fit. We all intuit the importance of it being on the right side that the blood was put. We have phrases like, “right hand man.” To be the right hand man is to be an indispensable helper or chief assistant. If we are to be priests, this is our call.

What about this bread made without yeast? Jesus warns His disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees.<sup>ccclxviii</sup> Paul tells the church in Galatia that a little leaven leavens the whole lump<sup>ccclxix</sup> – the context being sin. Leaven represents corruption. It does not take much to leaven the whole loaf of bread. A little sin that is allowed to remain will corrupt the whole of your being and character. God requires unleavened bread – the bread of Truth. That bread is to be anointed with oil. The anointing is animation. Without the anointing, our words and deeds are dead. Even with excitement and hype, our words will only create atmosphere without reality. The anointing alone will give the truth its cogency. And the truth is both the whole truth and nothing but the truth, or it is not the truth. We can render truth a lie when we don't live in accordance with that truth. As long as it is only a fact or a statement, and not reality in our life, our truth is reduced to being truism.

These things were waved before the Lord as a wave offering. What does that mean? The wave offering was presented to the Lord by holding up the offering toward the heavens. You lift your hand up and down, and then side to side. You make the motion of a cross with your waving. So, when Aaron offered these things as a wave offering, he was actually making motions of the cross. This was symbolic foreshadowing of the one who was to be offered as the ultimate sacrifice, the ultimate unleavened bread, anointed with the Holy Spirit, and offered to make atonement for the whole world. He would then be lifted up and exalted to being the High Priest of our confession. This man, Christ Jesus, is the heavenly pattern of all of these consecratory commands of the Lord.

“Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments.” It is after all of the sacrifices have been made that there is now the final anointing and sprinkling of the blood for the consecration of the priests. Likewise, it is when we have breathed our last and given up the ghost saying, “Into your hands I commit my spirit,”<sup>ccclxx</sup> that we are then brought to the final and ultimate consecration. To be consecrated is more than being given to the worship of God. It requires holiness and sanctification. We aren't simply dedicated and presented to God for service. We are made to be like Him through the renewing of our minds. That renewal of our minds is achieved by laying down our life, which is our reasonable service.<sup>ccclxxi</sup>

“Moses then said to Aaron and his sons, ‘Cook the meat at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and eat it there with the bread from the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, “Aaron and his sons are to eat it.” Then burn up the rest of the meat and the bread. Do not leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for your ordination will last seven days. What has been done today was commanded by the Lord to make atonement for you. You must stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days and do what the Lord requires, so you will not die; for that is what I have been commanded.’ So Aaron and his sons did everything the Lord commanded Moses.”

The sacrifices were to be eaten by Aaron and his sons. They were now qualified to eat of the holy offerings made by fire before the Lord. Only one thing stood between them and fulfilling their priestly ministry: seven days of waiting. Waiting is more than twiddling your thumbs. It is more than sitting in silence. It is more than letting the time pass. Waiting is anguish. Everything in the flesh fights against this. We want to do. God has called us to this or that, and so we want to rush out knowing our calling and perform it. Yet, before there can be a fulfillment of that calling, we’re required to wait.

I’m not sure that we can truly appreciate all that is being stated here. God does not focus on doing, but instead on being. When we are priests, we can then be priests. Priesthood is not a calling that we perform. It is something that we are. Likewise, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers are not callings into ministry that we perform. They are distinct modes of living. The man who is called is the calling himself. You cannot separate the man from the calling or the calling from the man. The two are interwoven in a manner that they describe each other. How do you know whether you have reached a place of priestliness? The priest is only the priest when they are priestly in character. It becomes a part of who they are. You cannot stop being a priest. You simply are one.

The priest speaks, works, and moves according to the command of God. That is their life. If God does not dictate, the priest remains waiting. They offer spiritual sacrifices on behalf of others. The spiritual sacrifice is nothing that we use our imaginations to describe. It is real and tangible. It is our own self. We give ourselves on behalf of others. We spend ourselves and are expended for the sake of the brethren.<sup>ccclxxii</sup> We pour ourselves out like a drink offering.<sup>ccclxxiii</sup> Everything is done for the glory of God, which is acted out for the edification and benefit of the Body of Christ. How do you know that you are truly living for God’s glory? It will manifest in the way that you treat and react with the Body. If you are one that continues to seek for others to help you, and you rarely (or never) give in return, then you are either a babe in Christ or a goat. The true priest is both the altar and the sacrifice, offering up their own life for the sake of their brethren.

Only a priest can bless the people. They are given the authority to bless and to curse, because they alone have the heart of God. They will give their life as a ransom.<sup>ccclxxiv</sup> With that heart, when the priest blesses the people, the people are truly blessed. It is not a cheap word that has an elusory definition. The blessing results in actual blessing. The curse results in actual curse. This kind of blessing and cursing is described in the New Testament as “binding and loosing.” What you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. What you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. There is an actual

affect in flesh and blood reality. Blessing is more than a word that we say because it is “Christian lingo.” This word needs to be guarded. We need to make sure that it isn’t robbed of its power. I know that we enjoy big and powerful terms like “prayer warrior” and “power evangelism,” but the priest sees the magnanimity in even these common words like bless, love, bind, and loose.

## Melchizedek

Interestingly, to understand the Melchizedek priesthood, we need to start in Genesis. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, but this is too far into the story. We need to back up to Genesis 12, with the initial calling of Abraham. In Psalm 110:4, and also repeated in Hebrews 5:6, we find that the messiah will be “a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” Our High Priest is not a Levite. He came out of Judah. Captivatingly, it is written of David’s descendants (sons) that they are kohanim, priests.<sup>ccclxxv</sup> Kohanim are traditionally only the sons of Aaron. And yet, both the Psalm as well as 2 Samuel 8:18 seem to indicate that there is a priesthood that Aaron was only patterned after, and both David and the messiah are priests of that order.

In Genesis 12, God speaks to Abraham and says, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.” I like how the King James translates it, “Get thee out.” Sever yourself from all ties. These three ties are possibly the deepest identifications that humanity has. My father doesn’t simply mean the man who bore me; it means the whole family line that has brought us to this point. My father’s side is German, and from my mother’s side I’m Irish and British. I’m a war waiting to happen... Yet, I’m not identified with being German, Irish, or British, nor American. I’m not identified with the Comer name. My identity comes from Christ.

The same call that Abraham received is the call that we all receive. Come out from national patriotic pride. Come out from your racial pride. Come out from your family heritage. Instead, be identified in a new way: as a new nation with a name and a land that I will give you. These are deep waters. It is not pleasant to consider coming out from those identifications. They classify who we are, and many get much pride from their heritage. Many are proud to call themselves Anglo-Saxons, or Latino, or Italian, or Irish. Many are proud of their Nazarene, or Baptist, or Methodist roots. Many are proud of being African-American or oriental. Much of our culture teaches us to take pride in what we are, but *who* we are is not governed by our nationality.

There is a deeper recognition of identification. Yes, I am a white man of Anglo-Saxon origin. Yes, I live in the United States of America. Yes, I have a rich history from my family line – one that is so rich that my family has yet to tell me of it. But, God has called me to something higher than that. There is an identification that I have in Christ that exceeds all other identification. Because I am now brought into the commonwealth of Israel, I don’t take pride in my heritage as though it defines whom I am. I am instead an ambassador of heaven. There is a heavenly dwelling from where I have my identification. That is not cheap. It costs much to sever your ties and be identified by something that is bigger than your heritage. That kind of separation is painful.

The call came to Abraham, and it comes to us as well. Whether we experience more of a kinship with our own families and those of our nationality and/or race than with the brethren of our faith is the plumb line (especially when our brethren are from a rival or enemy nationality). It is one thing to say that we are all brothers, but is that statement true? Generalizations are always wrong (pun intended). We might both believe in Jesus as the Messiah, but does that in fact make us brethren? The word brother needs to be radically altered in our mindsets. To be a brother or a sister does not simply mean that we are of the same blood, nor that we have some sort of similarity between us that we recognize and respect. Brotherhood is only brotherhood when it goes beyond the bounds and limitations of blood and water. It is spiritual reality – kinship of heart that is counted as more precious than every other identification.

If we are truly in Christ, then we are no longer of this world. God told Abraham, “Get thee *out!*” He doesn’t mince His words. Here it is given once and for all. There would be a nation that is both on the earth and yet also in heaven. This nation that would be birthed through Abraham is a heavenly nation. It first requires a disposition of heart – hearing the same call as Abram and responding to that call. Why exactly do we need to respond to that call? We read in Hebrews 7:1-3 the definition of what it means to come into that Melchizedek priesthood: “This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means ‘king of righteousness’; then also, ‘king of Salem’ means ‘king of peace.’ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.”

Do you see what happened there? Lets go to Genesis 14. Here we find the story that is being referenced in Hebrews 7. “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram saying, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.’ Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.” So, before any statement of Melchizedek being a priest, or blessing Abram, or Abram giving this man a tithe, we find the statement that Melchizedek “brought out bread and wine.” You know what that bread and wine symbolized, because Christ Jesus also broke bread and gave out the wine of the New Covenant before He was established as High Priest and King.

There is something intrinsic to the call into this Melchizedek priesthood in the bread and the wine. The first statement is not about glory, nor about priesthood, but instead about, “This is my body broken for you, and my blood poured out for you.” The preliminary into coming into this Melchizedek call is a radical separation from the world – coming out of father, kindred, and nation – to be made into a sacrifice offered up to God on behalf of those who are undeserving. While Aaron offered the sacrifices on the altar, the Melchizedek priest *is* both altar and sacrifice. That is what it means to be a mediator. We have one mediator, and it is Christ. Yet, there is a sense in which we are giving ourselves for the sake of others, so that we might stand in the gap on their behalf. Mediation is standing in the gap between God and man.

With being mediators, we are brought back to the subject of travail. Travail is a birthing. It is carrying the burden of God – the heart of God – and letting it to grow in us



until it is brought forth. That birth is not the end, but instead the beginning. Travail is the issue of hearing from heaven and wrestling on behalf of God in both lifestyle and prayer to bring forth the intention of God into earth – “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” That is a difficult call, but a necessary call. It is necessary because everything that the Church is purposed to perform requires it. We can be casual Christians, but we will never see the glory of God or His purposes worked out through us if we continue in our idleness.

The inheritance of our nations is based upon being the priestly son to whom God sees fit to rule and reign forever. That priestly son is not an individual, but instead a corporate son. The creation moans and groans, painfully waiting for the sons of God to be revealed.<sup>ccclxxvi</sup> That son is Israel. The whole of the nation must come into an inheritance unto sonship. When Israel is birthed as a nation that final time, it is a nation brought forth to glory. They come into their ultimate call and purpose of being the priestly nation to the nations, and that priestly ministry is the order of Melchizedek. There has to be a corporate expression of this to them, through the Church, before they will join us in that demonstration to the ends of the earth.

Travail is intercession. Intercession actually affects time and space. A man named Rees Howells is famous in Christendom for his intercession. The young band of souls with him interceded during both World War I and World War II. One of the stories is that God had given the direction to pray for the British fighter pilots. They were only teenagers, and yet were victorious in battle. It can be laid to coincidence if we desire to push it off, but I’m much more convinced that there was a heavenly battle being fought by these intercessors while those planes were shooting. One of the more blatant signs of intervention came during WWII. God spoke to these men to pray for a strong delusion to come upon the Nazi army. They prayed for strong delusion to come upon the army, and that they would not attack Britain at its weakest time in history, but would instead turn toward the Soviet Union. Hitler ordered the army toward Russia, which to this day is looked at by military historians as a blunder. They cannot figure out why the order would be given; it was simply irrational.

We are called to that kind of prayer and lifestyle. We’re called to being able to discern the voice of the Lord to pray and anguish on behalf of others. It might or might not be on behalf of Israel. God speaks to whom He will speak. Maybe God desires that we would pray on account of our nation in certain circumstances, as Rees Howells did. The point is not entirely about giving our life as a sacrifice on behalf of Israel, but instead about giving our life as a sacrifice to God. As much as God desires to use us in a way to bring Israel to jealousy, that should not be our only focus and intention.

To be a priest of the order of Melchizedek requires the first offering of self. We bring the bread and the wine. But let us not neglect what is also written here in Hebrews 7. Melchizedek comes from two Hebrew words: melech (king) and tsaddiq (righteousness). Together we get the title “king of righteousness.” God has established that there is only one king of righteousness: Christ. He is our ultimate Melchizedek, but if we are to be His people, we must also reflect that same righteousness. Likewise, being the king of Salem, also known as Jerusalem,<sup>ccclxxvii</sup> we are to reflect that same peace that cannot be comprehended. In an age that will continue to tend toward violence,

wickedness, and havoc, we are to be islands of righteousness, joy, and peace, which is the expression of the Kingdom of God.<sup>ccclxxviii</sup>

Along with this righteousness and peace, we see that Melchizedek was a man without father and mother. “Get thee out.” He has no genealogy. He isn’t identified with who or where he comes from, but instead finds his identity in God. Everything is about Him, and ministering unto Him. We are to be a people without beginning of days or end of life. We’re brought into eternal life. Our perspective is based upon eternity, and not upon the world. Our minds are fully given to the things of God. They are fully given to the City that is above. We have come out from this world, and therefore the things of this world no longer have sway upon our lives. Television, video games, social media, youtube, entertainment, and all of the other foolishness that we waste our time on need to be reassessed. Is it worth it? Is it worth devoting five or ten hours of our day to entertainment while we allow only a few minutes of devotion to prayer and study of Scripture?

We are called as the Body of Christ to a war. This isn’t about petty and trivial arguments about whether it is sin; this is about your life. There is a false religion that has established itself. It boasts against the things of God, and all the while considers itself of God. The prophets of Baal that danced upon the altar and cried out, cutting themselves, as was their custom, actually believed that Baal would answer by fire.<sup>ccclxxix</sup> They honestly believed that they were being heard in heaven. Why devote yourself that fully to a lie that you know is a lie? We’re told that Elijah took the twelve stones, weighty as they were, and rebuilt the altar of God. I think that we need to do the same in our own generation.

The prophets of Baal were allowed to take the sacrifice and offer it first. This is almost a hint that the sacrifice was a quick and simple sacrifice. Not so with Elijah. He took his time. He made sure to do everything according to the word of the Lord. Elijah, who was not a Levite, offered a sacrifice to God that was answered with fire. God has such respect for the sacrifice of Elijah that He actually answered in the same glory and magnanimity as in Leviticus 9 when the Aaronic priest draft was consecrated. We are warned in Proverbs 5 and 7 against the adulterous woman. Yet, that woman is both physical and spiritual. There is a physical adultery, but the deeper spiritual application is to take up other gods and idols into our own homes and offer sacrifices unto them.

This adulteress says, “I have fellowship offerings at home; today I have fulfilled my vows.”<sup>ccclxxx</sup> She has a form of godliness, but inside she is as unclean as dead men’s bones.<sup>ccclxxxi</sup> The outside of the cup is white and glistens, but the inward heart is full of greed and self-indulgence and hypocrisy and wickedness. Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!<sup>ccclxxxii</sup> Woe to you who commit adultery of the heart, who drink and wipe your mouth and say, “I have done nothing wrong.”<sup>ccclxxxiii</sup> You are loud and defiant,<sup>ccclxxxiv</sup> crying out endless prophecies and nagging prayers, naming and claiming your own destruction, because you say, “My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon.”<sup>ccclxxxv</sup>

Christ might delay, but if the servants then claim, “Behold, he has delayed,” and begins to then beat his fellow servants, the master of that house will return at an hour that he does not expect.<sup>ccclxxxvi</sup> We’re given the indictment in Proverbs 5 to “drink water from our own cistern, running water from our own well.” Build and cultivate a relationship

with Christ. Don't continue to look to others to teach you the things of God. It takes a priest of the order of Melchizedek to turn the nations back to God. Those who have the eternal perspective, and see through the gobbledygook and dung that so many cling to, it says are "like the Son of God remaining a priest forever."<sup>ccclxxxvii</sup> Get your perspective right. In 1000 years, will what you devote your time to matter? What about in 20 years? What about in 5? If we give ourselves to such trivial things now, how will we be able to give ourselves to the weightier matters when all hell breaks loose and it is time to stand as men?

The Melchizedek priesthood is about eternity. It is about separation, which is holiness. This is the beauty. This is the solemnity. What we are called to being during the end times requires more than anything I've heard required in the church buildings. Challenges are made to "rededicate your life", but those challenges imply that if you continue to do the good Christian things, that you have no need of performing anything more. We continue to pat ourselves on the back and wonder why our countries are in shambles. God is calling His Body to priestliness. This is no longer a matter of willingness and maturity. It is the issue of obedience and disobedience. To continue to live in a manner that is not priestly is to continue to pull the shade down and creep further into apostasy.

## Chapter 14: Tribulation – The 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel

There is a certain sense in which we are going to face tribulation our whole lives. “Blessed are you when they revile, persecute, and slander you, because that is how they treated the prophets that came before you”.<sup>ccclxxxviii</sup> Jesus told His disciples in John 15:18-27 that they will face persecution and hardship. They will receive it because the world is in darkness and has been handed over to the evil one. If they crucified Jesus, why would we expect anything less? Tribulation and persecution is normative for the Christian. What that does not mean, however, is that we should pray for persecution. That is masochistic.

It is the wisdom of the world to persecute. It might not necessarily be violent or hostile persecution in the sense of beatings and murder. There can be equally hostile and violent persecution in the words and deeds of others against us. I cannot repeat what I have heard some people say to me. I have heard even from the mouth of other Christians such anger and resentment because I have spoken something that caused offense. Their Christianity leaves as soon as they have been offended. Once the area of flesh that they have been clinging onto is exposed, violence and hatred spew from their lips. Brothers and sisters have apologized to me because of their venom that they were only too quick to spit out, even on public posts and forums, because I simply disagreed with what they were saying.

I’ve been on the end of spitting out that venom. There is something about truth that hurts. While the sword of the prophets of Baal cut far enough to emit blood, the word of God cuts deep enough to separate bone and marrow, soul and spirit.<sup>ccclxxxix</sup> It takes that deep incision to find healing. The person that you speak the word to might not react kindly. Thus, we are on the receiving end of trauma. Yet, the persecution that comes from the world is a lot easier to handle. I expect that those who are in rebellion against God and His righteousness would continue to rebel and oppose righteousness. I delight when I speak to people that are welcoming to truth, even if they are unwilling to live according to that truth. But I understand from where it comes when people don’t welcome it.

The persecution that comes from the Church is much harder to bear. But this is not the Tribulation that we have in mind. Tribulation and hardship that comes to us from those in the world, and even those that are our brethren, is only persecution. To define terms, the Tribulation is the last period of time before Jesus returns. Some have said it pertains to the last seven years, while others claim that it is only the last three and a half years. For the sake of this writing, I will refer to it as the last seven years before the Second Advent. From where does such a number come? It actually only comes from one verse in the Bible, but there is a pattern of sevens that have preceded it. Daniel 9:27 reads, “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

The “he” being referred to is the Antichrist.<sup>cccxc</sup> The “seven” mentioned is a seven-year period of time. The context of Daniel 9 is that the prophet was praying for the restoration of Israel. Some have speculated that Daniel had been in exile for close to 70

years when he started praying this. The prophet Jeremiah said, “Build houses and get comfortable because you’re going to be there for 70 years”.<sup>cccxc</sup>

Daniel then takes this to the Lord and starts to pray for the restoration of Israel. God did not give Jeremiah this understanding, but it is hinted at in Jeremiah 30 that the prophet knew that the restoration after 70 years was not the final restoration.<sup>cccxcii</sup> God reveals to Daniel a plan that goes beyond 70 years. God says, “It is not just 70 years, but 70 seven year periods”.<sup>cccxciii</sup> It is at the end of those 70 “sevens” that God says He will, “finish transgression, put an end to sin, atone for wickedness, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, and anoint the most holy place.”

Has that happened? Here is where we get in trouble. There is a technical yes, but also a technical no. God breaks the 70 ‘sevens’ into three distinct parts: seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and a final seven. It will be 49 years from the issuing of the decree (whatever that means, no one is certain) and then the rebuilding of the Temple will be complete. From there, count another sixty-two sevens (434 years), and the “anointed one” will be “cut off.” The anointed one being spoken of here is the Messiah Jesus. Then the subject changes to another ‘prince’ that is not the Messiah, but instead a wicked ruler that will destroy the sanctuary.

This is the context of the last seven-year period. It is speaking of a time where some wicked ruler will destroy the sanctuary and set up an abomination that causes desolation. Jesus actually references this in Matthew 24:15 as a future event (future from Jesus’ time). Many have claimed that the book of Daniel was fulfilled in the time of the Macabees, and that Antiochus Euphron was the wicked ruler. There are a lot of similarities, but ultimately the word of Jesus trumps the commentators. If we’re looking at a future event from the time of Jesus, what event has happened to fit this description?

There is only one event that can possibly fit that description: the destruction of the second Temple. There is a problem here. We’ve separated the 70<sup>th</sup> week from the other 69 weeks. Those that use this argument that you cannot separate the 70<sup>th</sup> week from the other 69 weeks actually perform the same flaw. Others form heresy for the sake of “being right.”<sup>cccxciv</sup> This last week, or seven, *must* still be future. The reason for this is simple. Daniel 9:24 has not been brought to fulfillment.

Though it is true that there are a lot of parallels and similarities between Jesus’ sacrifice in fulfilling the Law and the accomplishment of Daniel 9:24, it ultimately falls short. One of the struggles is that according to the context of the book of Daniel, this had to happen before the destruction of the second temple in 70 A.D. How do we reconcile that this has not yet happened, and we are almost 2000 years after the destruction of that second temple? In prophecy, there is a general rule of thumb. Many times there is this sense of immediate fulfillment, but then it looks past that immediate fulfillment to an ultimate fulfillment at the end of the age. Some call this the “now, not yet”.

Jesus did indeed finish transgression. He put an end to sin. He atoned for wickedness. He brought everlasting righteousness. These are fulfilled in Jesus, at least symbolically if we’re unwilling to admit spiritually. But there is a literal fulfillment of those as well. All of the prophets spoke of a time when these things would have literal meaning, and there would be no more war. It comes at the consummation of the age. At the very end of this era, these prophecies are to be fulfilled. So, I have no issue with

separating the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel from the 69<sup>th</sup> week. I see a fulfillment in the first century, yes, but I also see a more complete fulfillment at the end of the age.

Lets ask the question of why God would choose the number seven. The number seven is vitally important to the Scriptures. There were seven days of creation; some of the rabbis have speculated the world is on a 7000 yearlong clock, the last 1000 years being the reign of Messiah. Joshua marched around Jericho for seven days, seven times on the seventh day, and blew seven trumpets on the seventh circle of the seventh day. When you offer a sin offering, you pour out the blood seven times upon the altar. Jacob worked seven years for Rachel and seven years for Leah. The number seven speaks of perfection, not merely completion. For the age to end with a seven year Tribulation seems perfectly legitimate and absolutely patterned.<sup>cccxcv</sup>

This Tribulation is the final judgment upon the nations. Any nation that continues to endure after this judgment<sup>cccxcvi</sup> must submit to the authority of God by “entering the tent of Shem.”<sup>cccxcvii</sup> For a more literal understanding of what that means, they must send representatives up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>cccxcviii</sup> The Feast of Tabernacles is a celebration that God has “tabernacled” with men. He is Emanuel, God with us.<sup>cccxcix</sup> To answer the question of how we know that this is the final judgment and that there is no more judgment after this, we simply need to ask “why?” Why is God sending the Tribulation? It is to redeem a people that have rejected Him, and to establish His literal Kingdom upon this earth.

If His people are no longer disobedient, and the world is in peace, then why would there need to be another judgment upon the earth? The Judgment Seat comes after the 1000-year reign of Christ, and after certain peoples and nations gather again against Jerusalem led by Satan Himself.<sup>cd</sup> So there is a final judgment that is not on the earth, but this is the final judgment upon the earth. This last seven years (specifically Armageddon) is when God gathers all nations together in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Armageddon comes from two words: har [strata/hill] and Megiddo [an ancient city in Israel]) and enters into judgment with them.<sup>cdi</sup>

The way that God enters into judgment with the nations in the Jezreel Valley (where Megiddo is located) is by the return of Christ. It is mentioned in Daniel 2:34 that a stone cut out from a mountain, but not by human hands, is cast at the statue in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. It strikes the feet of the statue, and the whole kingdom crumbles. We can parallel this with Matthew 25:31-32, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” This parable is actually Jesus’ exegesis of Joel 3:1-3. It explains why the nations are gathering, why they are being judged, and ultimately describes who will be found worthy to remain in His Kingdom. There is also a statement found at the end of Daniel 11, that the Antichrist “will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help.”

Everything about the end times revolves around this. When we read the book of Revelation, we need to understand that it is a repetition of the same seven-year cycle over and over again. The vision comes to the end, and then it backtracks to either the beginning or the middle to add more details. Then it comes up to the end, only to

backtrack and add more details. Then it comes up to the end, only to backtrack and fill in more details. With only a few exceptions (like the first few chapters, Revelation 12, and the last several chapters), the only thing being expressed is the last seven years.

It isn't until we reach Revelation 19 that we find the completion of the story: Jesus returns and sets up His Kingdom upon this earth. The return of Christ is called "the Day of the Lord." That final persecution that breaks out upon His people is called the "time of Jacob's Trouble."<sup>cdh</sup> The time of Jacob's Trouble is specifically the last three and a half years before the return of Christ. For the first three and a half years, there is peace, and then the last three and a half years are havoc. Now, in Daniel we have the mystery of God being expressed fully. We have in Daniel 9:26 the speaking of the Messiah being cut off, but not for Himself, and then the last part of the verse speaks of the sanctuary and the city being destroyed. Looking backward, I would assume that this is the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.

When we come to Daniel 9:27, we are talking about a different "he". That he is ultimately Satan, but we learn from Daniel 8:10-11 that the same man who sets up the abomination of desolation in Daniel 9:27 is the Antichrist. When we compare Daniel 2:34, 7:11, 8:25, 9:27, 11:21, 31, and 45, we see that the same man is being communicated the whole time.

I tried to put emphasis on the things that match, but maybe it came out more confusing than helpful. That which is only italicized shows the pattern of the Antichrist's destruction coming from something other than human hands – Christ. That which is only bold faced shows the destruction of the Antichrist. That which is only underlined shows the boastfulness of the Antichrist – even to challenge God Himself. That which is bold and underlined shows the pattern of the Antichrist taking away the sacrifice and destroying the sanctuary. That which is bold and italicized shows both the Antichrist's deceit as well as the timing of his destruction of the sanctuary. He destroys the sanctuary in the middle of the seven years, when the people feel secure. That which is italicized and underlined shows the passages dealing with the abomination of desolation:

"While you were watching, a rock was cut out, *but not by human hands*. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay **and smashed them**... Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and **its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire**... It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low... *He will cause deceit to prosper*, and he will consider himself superior. *When they feel secure*, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of Princes. **Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power**... *He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'*. In the middle of the 'seven' **he will put an end to sacrifice and offering**. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until **the end that is decreed is poured out on him**... *He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty*. He will invade the kingdom *when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue*... **His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice**. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation... He will pitch his royal tents between the

seas at the beautiful holy mountain. **Yet he will come to his end**, and no one will help him.”

There are many more passages through the prophecies of Daniel that line up, but I think that this is a good place to start. Also in the book of Daniel, we have the revelation of two comings of the messiah. In Daniel 7:11-14, we see the Antichrist slain and the coming of the messiah on the clouds of heaven. We then turn to Daniel 9:26, and we find the messiah – the anointed one – being cut off, but not for himself. Then we find at the end of Daniel 9:27 that the Antichrist comes to an end. How does that end come? It comes by the messiah coming on the clouds. So, we have in Daniel 9:26 a coming of the messiah as a ransom for many, and then in Daniel 9:27, we have the same messiah coming a second time to destroy the Antichrist.

The Jewish people have recognized this and have come up with a theory of two messiahs. One is a son of David, and he will be king. But he comes after the messiah, son of Aaron, who dies in battle. One comes meek and lowly riding on a donkey,<sup>cdiii</sup> and the other comes on the clouds of heaven. How much of a willing ignorance must you place upon yourself to go through all the trouble of coming up with two messiahs in order to reject the obvious conclusion of Christ Jesus coming twice? This sums up the Tribulation. We'll now venture into more detail and try to better understand the timeline of that last seven years.



## Chapter 15: Covenant with Death and Hell

In this chapter, I want to explore some of the basic things that happen during the first three and a half years. It is true that we can come to many conclusions, and many times those conclusions are speculative, but there are also some very solid details given in the Biblical account. Just like when we looked at the seven year Tribulation, there are patterns established from the Scripture that give credence to a view of what will happen during the first half of the seven years.

Before we get into any of those, let's find explanation for why I've divided the seven-year Tribulation into two halves. At the beginning of the last chapter I mentioned that some view the Tribulation to only be the last three and a half years. I don't personally have anything to say for or against this. I'm in the habit of referring to the entire seven years as Tribulation, and I don't think that there is any place where it is clearly stated one way or the other in Scripture. It truly seems like a non-issue.

In Daniel 9:27, we read, "He will confirm a covenant with many for one seven. In the middle of the seven, he will put an end to the sacrifice and offering." We find in Daniel 9:27 that this seven year period is being divided into two halves. The first half is a confirmation of a covenant. Notice the word "confirm" as opposed to "establish." The slight difference in these words might give us a hint as to what is being spoken of. I think that what should be said is that whether it is "confirming" or whether it is establishing a peace treaty, we are looking for Israel to be affirmed in their nation-state.

### Covenant/treaty made

This is one of the most powerful, yet subtle, understandings. There simply are not very many Scriptures to indicate a covenant or treaty to be made. The point isn't the treaty made with the Antichrist, but instead is that Israel trusts in the arm of the flesh. Instead of trusting in their God, they look to "Egypt" to protect them. This is a pattern that has been established throughout their history. The covenant, I don't think, is anything new. I don't think that we should be looking for peace treaties, even though that may very well happen. It is speculation to say with affirmation that there will be a peace treaty.

Here is what we do know: he will confirm a covenant. Is it possible that the 'confirmation' of the covenant as mentioned in Daniel 9:27 is actually a reference to the eternal covenant? Maybe what is being mentioned here isn't so much about a peace treaty, which might or might not be established, but instead about a mutual recognition to Israel's right to the Land. The language used in Daniel 11 is very suggestive and reminiscent of Daniel 9. In Daniel 11:22 we read of a "prince of the covenant." Remember in Daniel 9:26-27 that there is a "prince" being spoken of that is not the Messiah, and that establishes a covenant?

Once again, the commentators have attributed Daniel 11:21-39 to Antiochus Epiphanes. I think that is a mistake. This "prince of the covenant" will at a later time "show favor to those who forsake the covenant".<sup>cdiv</sup> What is the covenant being spoken of? It is obviously the same covenant mentioned in verse 22, but maybe it is also the

same covenant being spoken of in Daniel 9:27. If that is the case, then we know for sure that this covenant can't simply be a peace treaty. God doesn't call trusting in the arm of the flesh "holy."

Of this covenant that is confirmed, Isaiah wrote, "we have entered into a covenant with death and hell".<sup>cdv</sup> Deuteronomy 23:6 prophetically warns Israel, "Do not seek a treaty of friendship with [the other nations] as long as you live." Isaiah says again, "Woe to the obstinate children, to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin".<sup>cdvi</sup> Ultimately, there is very little to suggest any kind of pact made with the nations, but there is actually a lot to say that Israel does not uphold the eternal covenant.

The confirmation of this covenant sets in motion the end. Israel is given the right to their Land (whether by peace treaty or otherwise), and therefore is able to build the Temple and offer sacrifices. They live peacefully in the Land for that first three and a half years. This is the first time since the time of David that there will be peace in that Land. It is significant to expect this. But it is a false peace. Though there might not be any war, or any known threat, the fact is that the Antichrist will invade the kingdom when it feels secure, and will seize the kingdom through intrigue.<sup>cdvii</sup>

### Peace and Security

The statement that the Antichrist will enter the kingdom when the people feel secure is a reflection of something said earlier in Daniel: *When they feel secure*, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. The peace that we're looking for is not necessarily a world peace. There is mention in Daniel 11:25-30 about the king of the north<sup>cdviii</sup> invading the king of the south. A kingdom divided cannot stand,<sup>cdix</sup> and ultimately this kingdom of the Antichrist is not successful in becoming a one-world government. There are at least two other peoples mentioned in these verses that are in opposition to the Antichrist.

The peace that we are looking for is distinctly a peace in the Land of Israel. When they are secure in their ways, and it seems like no trouble is coming, sudden calamity appears. As Jeremiah cried out in his generation, "They say, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace." 1 Thessalonians 5:3 indicates that when people are saying, "Peace and security," sudden destruction comes. The context is about an unbelieving world at the time of Christ's return. Yet, I see that there is a pattern. Judgment begins at the house of God. It comes suddenly to Israel *first*, and then sudden destruction upon the ungodly.

In Isaiah 30:2-5, the prophecy that condemns the covenant made with death and hell continues. "... who go does to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help to Pharaoh's protection, to Egypt's shade for refuge." It might be that Israel will look to Egypt, the king of the south, and that is why the Antichrist attacks him. That is utter speculation, and cannot be proven Scripturally, but it would explain what is happening. However, one thing is certain: If Egypt's help is Israel's shame and disgrace, how much more the Antichrist's?

I think that maybe the best thing to note is Jesus' words to tell us to watch. Both Paul and Peter also talk about the Day of the Lord coming like a thief. To those that are not watching, they will be taken by surprise. Why? For those that are the people of God, they will not expect sudden calamity. Those that are not of the Lord will not find anything strange or 'unnatural' signs to clue them in. There won't be any kind of spectacular things happening that people will come to their senses and realize that they are in the last days and that these are the first signs of the coming judgment.

That is equally as true for Israel. They that have the Scriptures I've been referencing should know the signs of the time. That was one of Jesus' rebukes: You did not know the day of your visitation.<sup>cdx</sup> Jesus speaks these words while prophesying the coming destruction. The pattern is established through the history of Israel. They don't trust in the Lord, but instead in the arm of the flesh. Yet, even though they have the prophecies before them and should know that their final establishment is twice<sup>cdxi</sup> – not only once – they will be blind to their coming despair. In the same way that the people Israel have rejected and scoffed at the notion of a messiah that comes twice, the people of Israel have also scoffed at two final returns. That is important to note.<sup>cdxii</sup>

### Trusting in man/arm of the flesh

“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord... But the Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit.”<sup>cdxiii</sup> It is always Egypt that Biblical Israel goes to for help. Egypt is a representation of system. For Israel to go to Egypt for help is to go to the principalities and powers that are manipulating the world as system. There is both a literal and symbolic aspect being communicated in these verses.

To trust in the arm of the flesh is to reject the Holy One of Israel. Who is that Holy One? I can't help but think that this is not just a rejection of the Lord, but also a rejection of the Messiah. The one who came, that all of Israel has heard of, is the very one that can deliver them. Yet, they refuse to let this man to rule over them.<sup>cdxiv</sup> They would rather have Moses, who is contained to letters on a scroll, to lead them.<sup>cdxv</sup> Ultimately, for them to choose Moses over Christ is not really a fair comparison. They chose Caesar over Christ.<sup>cdxvi</sup> Moses made the Israelites drink their sin.<sup>cdxvii</sup> Caesar, however, only oppressed them.

Jeremiah proclaimed, “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.”<sup>cdxviii</sup> These words might be a little more literal than we would hope. It is nice to symbolize things, and thus rob them of their significance. Israel, however, is truly called to endure a time in the wilderness. Is it possible that those who don't put their confidence in God will have these curses placed upon them?

It is a dangerous thought to assume that these verses have symbolic meaning. With that being said, it is a dangerous thought to assume that these verses have literal

meaning. Either way that we take such rebukes, there is a price to pay. In order to not be affected negatively by that choice we take in how to believe these words, we need to guard our hearts. We need to make sure that we are not choosing the one over the other because we refuse to consider it. We need to make sure that if we choose a literal interpretation that we are not finding joy in it, but instead allowing it to penetrate our own hearts that have many times not trusted in the Lord.

If we are to be to Israel what we must, we too must be stripped. As the Body of Christ, to take in the Jew in the last days is a costly risk. The redundancy of that statement is only intended to elevate the severity. If they are to survive, they will need hope. The people that survived the Holocaust were not necessarily the most physically fit, but instead were the ones who hoped. The hope of Israel needs to be in God. When we take them in and provide for them, we need to make sure to provide more than a change in clothing and a new pair of shoes. We need to make sure that we provide hope.

This requires that we ourselves have hope. This requires that we ourselves have a history in God that if God is not who He says He is, then we perish. We cannot survive without leaning upon Him and Him alone. Without a history in God of trusting in Him, and not trusting in the flesh, how are we to honestly give them the hope that is needed? If we are to be to them what they need in that hour, we need to be transformed from where we currently are to a place that we weep before we get bitter. We should extend mercy to those that need mercy. How else shall they obtain mercy? The world does not give it.

If we do not have mercy to extend, then our cheap words will work death instead of life. It takes more than a speaking to impart hope. It takes the Spirit of Almighty God. If our words are not His words, then we will miss it. The opportunity of life and death will have come, and we will give clichés in the place of heavenly reality. We will give truisms in the place of unhackneyed expressions. We will give death instead of life. And, in due course, we will blaspheme instead of honor the name of the Lord.

Isaiah spoke in his own generation a timeless oracle, which I think will be especially true for the last days, “Whom have you so dreaded and feared that you have been false to me, and have neither remembered me nor pondered this in your hearts? Is it not because I have long been silent that you do not fear me? I will expose your righteousness and your works, and they will not benefit you. When you cry out for help, let your collection of idols save you! The wind will carry all of them off; a mere breath will blow them away. But the man who makes me his refuge will inherit the Land and possess my holy mountain”.<sup>cdxix</sup>

## Temple and Sacrifices

In Daniel 8:11, it is mentioned that the Antichrist will cut off the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of the sanctuary will be brought low. In order for these things to happen, there must be a temple, and there must be a daily sacrifice at that temple. I wouldn't doubt if the rebuilding of the Temple (to make the third Temple) would be a part of that first three and a half years. There is a mention in Daniel 8:14 about 2,300 evenings and mornings until the sanctuary will be re-consecrated. Some have taken this to mean that from the time of the casting down of the sanctuary to the rebuilding of it

would be 2,300 days. I don't necessarily have any problem with this, but for some reason people can't leave a good observation alone.

Some people have taken this to then mean that there will be a period of wrath after the Tribulation that God will use to bring judgment upon the world. There is a big problem with this. Daniel 9:24-27 says that at the end of the Tribulation, the Messiah comes and destroys the Antichrist. He sets up everlasting righteousness. He puts an end to sin (which is worldwide, and not just a spiritual metaphor). These are things that we cannot say happen at the end of the seven years if there are another couple years of judgment beyond the Tribulation. I personally think that the 2,300 days is a reference to when the people *begin to offer the sacrifice*.

What does God think about the sacrifices that Israel will be offering during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation? "They sacrificed to demons, which are not God"<sup>cdxx</sup> "Your multitude of sacrifices – what are they to me? I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats"<sup>cdxxi</sup> "But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a man, and whoever offers a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig's blood, and whoever burns memorial incense, like one who worships an idol. They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations; so I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me."<sup>cdxxii</sup>

We spoke earlier about how Jesus is the fulfillment of the sacrifices and offerings. Any other sacrifice or offering is a false sacrifice and offering. God does not accept it.<sup>cdxxiii</sup> When Israel starts to offer these things before the Lord, immediately it is considered that the sanctuary is defiled. The 2,300 days might indeed point to a restoration and rebuilding of the Temple that goes a couple years into the Millennial Kingdom. But what seems to fit the best in my heart is that to bring any sacrifice that is not the Lamb that God has provided is an abomination. "Even though you do bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them."<sup>cdxxiv</sup>

## Chapter 16: Tribulation – Jacob’s Trouble

“How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of Jacob’s Trouble, but he will be saved out of it.”<sup>cdxxv</sup> The time of Jacob’s Trouble is referring specifically to the last three and a half years. We read in this verse that there will be no time like it. What I find interesting is reading the previous chapter of Jeremiah. He writes a letter to the exiles telling them to build houses, marry, plant gardens, and generally live life as you would live if you were in the Land. Why? The Lord says, “When seventy years are completed, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.”<sup>cdxxvi</sup>

Jeremiah rejoices at this. He prophesies in Jeremiah 30:3, “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their forefathers to possess.” Yet, *in the very next verse* we read the beginning to the statement, “Cries of fear are heard – terror and not peace.” Jeremiah even asks the question, “Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor, and every face turned deathly pale?” Jeremiah prophesies of the return, and rejoices at that return. But then his focus turns, and he asks, “What is this that I see?”

Somehow, the return from Babylon wasn’t the ultimate fulfillment that the prophet expected. He expected a return from Babylon and the Lord to redeem His people. He expected the Messiah to destroy Babylon and rule over Israel on the throne of David. But instead Jeremiah sees a future time after the return from exile that is “terror, not peace.” It is this context that Jeremiah 30:7 is given. The time of Jacob’s Trouble is to be the worst time in the history of Israel. Jesus even said of this time, “Then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now – and never equalled again.”<sup>cdxxvii</sup>

This was the word spoken to Daniel the prophet concerning when Michael shall stand up and cast Satan out of heaven: “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress *such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.*”<sup>cdxxviii</sup> Maybe the words of Psalm 42:3 are somewhat prophetic in their declaration: “My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’”

We looked in chapter seven at how the current state of Israel cannot be the same as the redeemed Israel that comes out of this time of Jacob’s Trouble. Isaiah prophesied about that final purging with the words, “I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.”<sup>cdxxix</sup> Remember that Ezekiel had prophesied of a time near the end when God would bring Israel back to Jerusalem only to pour out His wrath upon them.<sup>cdxxx</sup> He called Jerusalem “the furnace of my affliction,” because he was going to smelt the House of Israel. “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh – Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and all who live in the desert in the distant places. For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole House of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.”<sup>cdxxxi</sup>

This last dealing with Israel is not only a last dealing with Israel. It is a final Tribulation in which God is going to “punish” all the nations. The only safe haven is the Church of Jesus Christ. Just as Israel was in Egypt, but was not plagued, so too the Church will be in the nations, but will not be plagued. In Luke 21:22-24, Jesus warns of this time that, “There will be great distress *in the land*,” and, “they will be taken as prisoners *to all the nations*.” We’ll explore later in this chapter that Israel will be scattered through all nations. For the introduction, the point only needs to be made that God is not only sifting Israel through the nations, but is also sifting those nations. The great question at the judgment is, “What did you do unto the least of these *my brethren*?”

Ezekiel 5:12 says, “A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine inside you; a third will fall by the sword outside your walls; and a third will I scatter to the winds and pursue with a drawn sword.” God is serious when He says, “I will gather you to Jerusalem to pour out my wrath.” He was very serious when He said through the prophet Zechariah, “two-thirds will be struck down and perish”.<sup>cdxxxii</sup> The context is about Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the furnace of His affliction.

The heavenly Jerusalem is the perfect intention of God. As long as the earthly Jerusalem does not reflect the heavenly Jerusalem, there shall be the words of judgment to come to her. These are not easy words, but they are true words. “When terror comes, they will seek peace, but there will be none. Calamity upon calamity will come, and rumor upon rumor. They will try to get a vision from the prophet; the teaching of the law by the priest will be lost, as will the counsel of the elders.”<sup>cdxxxiii</sup>

The people Israel will be judged. What exactly is their crime? “You thought I was altogether like you.”<sup>cdxxxiv</sup> They have made God to be in their image, and therefore have made Him an idol. The people that God has said they shall be a nation of priests unto Him have treated God as though He is just another god among many. The rejection of God upon Mount Sinai was reflective of a heart issue, and not a communication of the substance of their fear. The proof is in the pudding, and these are the same people that killed all the prophets. How is it that Jesus was able to make such a claim about the generation where there had not been a prophetic voice for 400 years? God Himself stood before them in human form, and they desired to kill Him.

The sin of Israel is their rejection of God. It is the same sin we have all indulged in. God need to break that people, but not before He breaks we who call upon His name currently. Deuteronomy 28 gives some frightening words of how God might be going about to “break their power”: “Because of the suffering that your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters the Lord your God has given you”.<sup>cdxxxv</sup> This is speculative that the people will eat their children in the last days, but it has happened in the past. It is the history and pattern of Israel that they would do such things when the enemy inflicts.

“You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the Lord your God. Just as it pleased the Lord to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you.”<sup>cdxxxvi</sup> The point is not to simply destroy, but to redeem. God’s judgments are always redemptive acts. God does not judge for the sake of punishment, but instead for the sake of repentance. Though “a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt; the earth’s inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left,”<sup>cdxxxvii</sup> God also establishes that

“the Lord Almighty will reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before its elders, gloriously”.<sup>cdxxxviii</sup>

Yes, this time will be “a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah”,<sup>cdxxxix</sup> but God does not destroy without building. He does not root up without afterward planting. God will make “man scarcer than pure gold, and more rare than the gold of Ophir”.<sup>cdxl</sup> He asks, “Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your forefathers?”<sup>cdxli</sup> The nations conspire, “let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no longer,”<sup>cdxlii</sup> but God promises, “Oh Israel, I will not forget you”.<sup>cdxlili</sup>

### Antichrist Wars with the Saints

While the Antichrist is raising hell for Israel, we also see that he is tormenting the saints. A quick look through Revelation 12 shows us a woman who births a man-child. This man-child is taken up to heaven – obviously the Messiah Jesus. That woman, then, must be Israel. The red dragon then pursues the woman into the wilderness (verse 6 is elaborated in more detail in verses 13-14). The dragon spews out of its mouth a flood. We’ve already cross-referenced this with other Scriptures. It is the Church that opens its mouth to swallow up the water. How do I know that? As soon as the water has been swallowed, the very next verse is about the dragon then making war on “the rest of the woman’s offspring” (verse 17). Then, if that weren’t enough, the explanation of who they are is given: “those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

Why would the dragon make war on those that hold to the testimony of Jesus? It is because they were the ones to hide the woman. They are the ones who swallow up the water, which is a reference back to Matthew 7:24-27. Jesus tells His disciples, “the rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house.” The house that was built upon the rock stood strong, but the flood took the house that was built upon sand away. The rock is Christ Jesus, our foundation.

In Daniel 11:33-35, we see that there are a people that are wise who instruct many during this time. The wise are the believers in Christ that have built upon the rock. They have understanding of the times, and are therefore able to respond instead of react. “Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will fall, so that they may be refined, purified, and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.”

What exactly these verses mean is not clear to me. What is obvious is that the wise will be murdered. Those who are not murdered will be captured or plundered. It doesn’t sound joyous, but the result of this is that “they may be refined, purified, and made spotless until the time of the end.” Now, I’m not convinced that this statement is about the wise as much as it is about those who join that are not sincere. However, we do find in Revelation 7:9 and 19:7-8 that the Bride that comes out of the Tribulation is *now* clothed in white robes, fine linen, bright and clean. The fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.



Speaking of the end times, Jesus promised His disciples, “You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. All men will hate you because of me”<sup>cdxliiv</sup> Whereas it is said for Jerusalem that two-thirds will perish, it is mentioned from Revelation 12:4 that a third of the church is killed.<sup>cdxlv</sup> It is not that we’re under judgment, but instead that we endure a redemptive suffering. Just as Christ had the ultimate victory over Satan through the cross – by allowing Satan to win, God won – we too will “love not our lives even unto death,” and in that death we shall obtain the victory.<sup>cdxlvii</sup>

There is a pattern of God that has been established. The persecution of David led to a faithful Israel. The stoning of Stephen led to the salvation of Saul. Rachel dies giving birth to a son named Ben-Oni (son of my sorrow), but Israel renames him Benjamin (son of my right hand). Likewise the Church suffers great and terrible sorrows, but is promoted to the right hand with Christ. The remnant people of God are persecuted, even unto death, so that “all Israel might be saved.”<sup>cdxlviii</sup>

It is given the beast (Antichrist) power to overcome the saints.<sup>cdxlviii</sup> He is given the authority to war against them.<sup>cdxlix</sup> He also wears the saints out.<sup>cdl</sup> These are not very joyous verses to contemplate. Maybe we can better understand from the connotation of these verses what Christ was dealing with in Gethsemane. Jesus did not suddenly become a coward. Instead, there was something about the judgment that He was soon to drink down on behalf of mankind that caused Him to anguish. The prayer in Gethsemane cannot be understood simply because we intellectually aspire to something. It must be understood on the basis of embracing it. We, too, will go through our own Gethsemane experiences. The victory of the cross was found in the garden, and the blood of sweat poured out in anguishing prayer was redemptive. I wouldn’t doubt if our Gethsemane will come during the first three and a half years, not necessarily because of persecution, but because of the magnitude of the soon coming calamity that we will be forced to endure.

### Israel’s flight

We saw in Revelation 12:6 that Israel shall flee to the wilderness. The warning of Jesus was for those in Judea to flee to the mountains.<sup>cdli</sup> We see in Ezekiel 20:33-35, “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will rule over you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with fury poured out. I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered – with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with fury poured out. I will bring you into the desert of the nations and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you.”

It is said in Amos 9:8-10, “Surely the eyes of the Sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the face of the earth – yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob, declares the Lord. For I will give the command, and I will sift the house of Israel through all nations as grain is sifted in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground. All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say, ‘Disaster will not overtake or meet us’.”

God says that He will sift the people Israel through all nations. He will destroy the sinful kingdom. What is that sinful kingdom? It is the state of Israel that continues to

have that name and continues to use the promises as means to proclaim their “inheritance,” yet has nothing to do with the Lord in any other way. What is sinfulness or wickedness but doing that which you know you should not do? To take liberty in claiming those promises of God, but to take God out of the equation and out of politics and society, is to use His name in vain. God will judge *that*. Ironically, that kind of vanity is not found most prevalently in the atheistic or secular Jews, but instead in the most devout and religious.

During the Nazi time, the Polish Jews that were the most religious and devout were the ones to suffer the worst. Is it possible that God has an issue with their devotion to an idol? They have rejected their Messiah so that they could continue to worship the tradition of men, something Moses even condemned.<sup>cdlii</sup> They care more for their traditions and their culture than they do for God, and that is why it must all come crashing down. God will give them the desire of their heart, and that is a fearful thing. When the rug is pulled out from beneath them, chaos and panic will be the only thing seen or heard. Religion is deadly, because religion is something that tells us that we are in the right with God without needed to even consult God. Religion tells us to perform certain works, without the corresponding faith, and as long as we do the formula we’ll be fine.

The point of Israel’s flight is made obvious in Deuteronomy 8:2: “Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, *to humble you and to test you* in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.” The point is to humble Israel. They will be provided for in the midst of the desert the whole time. It isn’t that God sends them out to see how they fare. God provides for them, both supernaturally and naturally through the Church. It is in this manner that He has decided to meet with them “face to face”.<sup>cdliii</sup>

“They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and water gushed out.”<sup>cdliv</sup> As it was at the beginning, so it shall be at the end. God led Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness for 40 years; at the end He shall take Israel out of the world system and sift them through the wilderness for 42 months. The Church will be Moses to them, both in bringing the word of the Lord and in leading them through the wilderness safely. God Himself will be made manifest to them through that Church.

Yet, even with this, the prophecy is still, “So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead. We all growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away. For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the Lord, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, and uttering lies our hearts conceived”.<sup>cdlv</sup>

The reason for this goes back to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3. We talked earlier about how when people say “peace and safety” sudden destruction comes. The people of the world don’t expect the end, but we are children of the light. Why are we children of the light? God is in us. He is light, and He is the light of men. When men reject that light,

then even in the daytime they stumble around in darkness. Israel must endure this, because nothing else will have them make the confession, “Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our sin.”

At what point in Israel’s history has that confession been made? It can’t be at the time of Nehemiah, because even the prophets at that time were saying, “Return to me, and I’ll return to you”.<sup>cdlvi</sup> Ezekiel 37, the valley of the dry bones, says that this vision is about a time when Israel will proclaim, “Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off”.<sup>cdlvii</sup> “I said I would scatter them and blot out their memory from mankind, but I dreaded the taunt of the enemy, lest the adversary misunderstand and say, ‘Our hand has triumphed; the Lord has not done all this’.”<sup>cdlviii</sup> This is God’s doing, and Israel needs to acknowledge that.

As long as the people Israel continue to play the victim card, they will never find healing. As long as we evangelicals and Zionists continue to pamper them and tell them that it is an attack of the devil, they will never find healing. That people need to know that they are in the wrong, not because we are bitter toward them, but because it is true. As long as they continue to reject their Messiah and put faith and trust in a faulty religious system, we cannot any longer condone what they practice. Our “interfaith relations” are an abomination to the Lord. To validate and call their faith “legitimate” is as much a forfeiting of our faith, as was their crucifying the Messiah.

God has bigger plans for that people than having “the most moral military in the world” (as Benjamin Netanyahu recently told the U.N.). God’s plan for Israel is a glory, and anything less than that glory is apostasy. We cannot settle. “I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long, but will certainly be destroyed. The Lord will scatter you among the people, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you... The Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed them by oath.”<sup>cdlix</sup>

God confirmed the covenant with their fathers. What covenant is being spoken of? It is the eternal covenant; the covenant they rejected at Sinai. “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will *all* know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

“This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar – the Lord Almighty is his name: Only if these decrees vanish from my sight, declares the Lord, will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me. This is what the Lord says: Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because all they have done.”<sup>cdlx</sup>

“Therefore my people will go into exile for lack of understanding; their men of rank will die of hunger and their masses will be parched with thirst.”<sup>cdlx<sup>i</sup></sup> Israel needs to go through this kind of drastic distress. It is through enduring this kind of extremity that we learn God’s character all the more acutely. His judgment is His mercy. They are interwoven inseparably. If Israel is to come out of this being redeemed and knowing the Lord their God, it will be because they experience a Calvary of their own. They will bear a cross and learn the faithfulness as well as the mercy and love of their God. Though they taste of the stings of death, they shall come out of that death resurrected and asking, “Where, O death is thy sting?”<sup>cdlx<sup>ii</sup></sup>

“I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped.”<sup>cdlx<sup>iii</sup></sup> The trouble that we are currently seeing in the Middle East against the Christians is only a foreshadowing of an event to come upon Jerusalem. The terrors that are causing people to flee Iraq from the Islamic hatred are only birthing pangs. It will get much worse, and it will not be contained to only Israel. It is said in Amos 9:9, “I will sift you through *all nations*.” We read about Jesus’ words that those who do not fall by the sword will be taken as prisoners *to all nations*.<sup>cdlx<sup>iv</sup></sup> Do not think that the Jewish communities in America are safe. Expect calamity, and expect furor.

“How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered? Because those who live in it are wicked, even the animals and birds have perished.”<sup>cdlx<sup>v</sup></sup> “Though they dig down to the depths of sheol, from there my hand will take them. Though the climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them.”<sup>cdlx<sup>vi</sup></sup>

The Lord does not mince His words. Not only are these words harsh, apocalyptic, and exaggerated, but they come from the mouth of God. This is the same who said, “You will give an account for every idol word that you speak.”<sup>cdlx<sup>vii</sup></sup> If God takes our words that seriously, and even is called “the Word”, how much more sobriety ought we to have when reading such texts as this? It is not fun to listen to all of the devastation and horror. Apocalypse is not a message that anyone desires to bear. God is after something, though. The same language is used with Simon Peter in Luke 22:31: “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

The Greek word here, “Satan has asked to sift *you* as wheat,” is plural. Though Satan is asking to sift Simon, the Greek word is plural to remind the reader of the message in the previous chapter of a coming time when *Israel* will be sifted like wheat. They must endure this for the same reason that Peter had to deny the Lord three times. It was in seeing his flaws that he was better equipped to follow the Lord unto the ends of the earth. Jesus told him, “When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” It shall also be so for Israel, that when they have turned back, they shall “bless” all the families of the earth.

What is a blessing? A blessing is only a blessing when it stands for truth and truth alone. It is only a blessing when it brings the receiver of that blessing into a right standing before God. The blessing that Israel is required to produce over the nations is one that

requires for themselves to first pass from death unto life. It is through this final sifting that God will redeem His people, and therefore they will be re-grafted into their roots. We find in Romans 11 that they have received blindness in part. It isn't every Jew. It isn't everyone in Israel that is doomed and lost and damned. There is a remnant, but it is a remnant. In regards to 'all Israel shall be saved,' Paul says, 'For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?'"<sup>cdlxviii</sup> The redemption of Israel means life to the nations as nations. There is more at play here than an individual's salvation. The nation of Israel will be saved, and that salvation will be the first fruit of national salvations. The other nations will also be redeemed when Israel is resurrected.

### Strength and Power of Israel Broken

If Israel is to be a priestly people, they must be a broken people. It was required of the High Priest to offer a sacrifice for himself *first*, and then he could offer sacrifices on behalf of the people on the Day of Atonement.<sup>cdlxix</sup> Likewise, Israel must also have her sins atoned for before there can be any other nations that will be nationally atoned. We currently experience redemption on an individual level. Some haughtily covet Israel's calling and claim that they will bring salvation to the nations, but in reality that will never happen until God has a literal nation of priests. Just like the people of the Old Testament did not see the whole blessing of Pentecost, but only a remnant of judges, priests, kings, and prophets were anointed, so too the nations today might be able to experience some sort of salvific and anointed encounter, but it is not the fullness that will come with Israel's salvation.

It says in Daniel 12:7 that the last part of the Tribulation shall be for a time, times, and half a time. From what I understand, this is based off of the feasts. To cycle from Passover to the Feast of Tabernacles is one time. So, the way that they measured a year was according to the Feasts. A time, times, and half a time, then, is three and a half years – the exact half of the seven year tribulation. The rest of Daniel 12:7 says, "When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

The strength and power of Israel is their pride. God must break it off of them if the strength and pride of all other nations is to be broken off as well. When we cross-reference Daniel 12:7 with Leviticus 26:19, we read, "I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed." This pride is a veil so that they cannot see God. "We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read."<sup>cdlxx</sup>

That veil, that power, that strength needs to be broken. The way that God does that is by judging His people, and confronting them with a people that are no people. "I will make them jealous by those who are no people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding. The Lord will judge his people and have compassion on his

servants *when he sees their strength is gone* and no one is left, slave or free”<sup>cdlxxi</sup> Israel will even corporately confess, “In the course of my life he broke my strength.”<sup>cdlxxii</sup>

“The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear.”<sup>cdlxxiii</sup> What must happen for this to take place? What must come to pass? I think that Deuteronomy 28 is one of the most encouraging, and at the same time most discouraging, chapters in the Bible. The curses are given in a very specific manner. God stops giving them the blessings that He promised. Then He starts to raise His hand against Israel. There is a progression where Israel should be able to catch on and realize that the Lord is cursing them instead of blessing them. They should never even get to exile. To see what the Lord has set in motion and decreed, they should be able to see it played out before them. If they are getting the curses instead of the blessings, then why not repent?

That might be the million-dollar question. Why would they not repent? Instead of listening to the prophets, and instead of interpreting the signs of the times, the people continue to harden their heart until the enemy is laying siege upon them and they are trapped within the walls of their cities eating their children. That has to stop. That deliberate hardening of the heart instead of asking the difficult question needs to stop. Why is God not blessing anymore? Why does what we’re seeing look more like the curses mentioned than the blessings? The question is never asked.

“Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?”<sup>cdlxxiv</sup> “I will bring the most wicked of the nations to take possession of the houses; I will put an end to the pride of the mighty.”<sup>cdlxxv</sup> God is interested in devastating Israel. In order to build them up, and in order to plant them, He needs to first tear them down and uproot them.<sup>cdlxxvi</sup> As it says in Zechariah 4:6, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord.” In order for Israel to dwell in the land throughout all generations, they must live in obedience to God. That kind of obedience is not possible when their power is their own ability.

It is part of Christian theology to say that we trust not in our own ability, but in the strength of God. When we are weak, He is strong.<sup>cdlxxvii</sup> Where our hearts fail, we know that our faith is in one who is greater than our hearts.<sup>cdlxxviii</sup> That kind of faith must be Israel’s. Nothing less than the apostolic faith proclaimed through Christ Jesus, and all the holy prophets and apostles, will suffice for them to live in that land inevitably. It takes nothing short of the absolute obedience to the Torah for Israel to dwell in that land. That kind of obedience is only possible when Christ is our fulfillment of that Torah. What exactly it means for Christ to be the fulfillment is debated, but this much is certain: it is through His strength and not human ability/strength.

Psalm 88:13-18 has a very interesting wording: “But I cry to you for help, O Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you. Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me? From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death; I have suffered your terrors and am in despair. Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have destroyed me. All day long they surround me like a flood; they have completely engulfed me. You have taken my companions and loved ones from me; the darkness is my closest friend.”

Isn't it interesting that the confession comes, "From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death"? It reminds me of a time in the life of Jesus. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain. He then talks to Elijah and Moses. While talking with them Peter speaks up foolishly. God the Father then cuts Peter off by surrounding the place with a cloud of glory and speaking to them, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." When they come down from that mountaintop experience, they are met at the bottom with morbid confrontation. A young boy who is plagued by a demonic spirit is brought to Jesus. The father says that he has had this spirit from childhood, often being thrown into fire or water to kill him.<sup>cdlxxix</sup>

This spirit that would afflict an entire generation from its youth, from its inception even, is the demonic spirit that we are called as the Church to corporately wrestle. Maybe we can believe that *Jesus* can cast out that demon, but when we are called upon, will we be able to prophesy to those dry bones? It is one thing to believe that Jesus or the apostles could do such miracles, but when we're the ones standing before that generation, and the demon has thrown the boy down into a convulsion, will we have the gumption and faith to still proclaim, "Come out of him?" The boy was not healed immediately, and Jesus allowed for that demon to grab hold of the boy and toss him about like a rag doll. The people around assumed that the boy was dead. What are you going to do then, hot shot?

Our calling as the church to that people is one that is more intense than we can know. It behooves us to have an intimate relationship with God the Father through Christ in that same depth and magnitude as the first century saints. Can we truly believe for something like this? God does. His faith amazes me. What is more impressive to me is not that God would believe a few are going to perform this, but that there will be a corporate demonstration! "The Lord Almighty planned it, to bring low the pride of all glory and to humble all who are renowned on the earth."<sup>cdlxxx</sup>

## Chapter 17: Revelation 12

Revelation 12 is massive. In this one chapter, we have the whole scenario panned out before our eyes. We see the inception of the Christ through Israel, the catching up of that Messiah to the right hand of God, the end time persecution of Israel, Israel's flight into the wilderness, the refuge that God provides for Israel, the reaction of Satan to that refuge, and finally the cosmic redemption that comes through the Church out of Zion. This has become one of the most important chapters in all of Scripture for me.

“A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.” This sounds reminiscent of Joseph's dream in Genesis 39. The sun was his father Israel, the moon his mother Rachel, and there were eleven stars bowing down to Joseph. Here, John sees instead twelve stars, and they all consist in the description of the woman. It is an obvious reference to Israel and the twelve tribes. This is also made obvious when she gives birth to the Messiah. We know it is the Messiah because this child is caught up to God.

“She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.” Where have we seen this dragon before? Does it not sound reminiscent of the fourth beast in Daniel 7? And, in Daniel 8:10, the Antichrist casts down some of the starry hosts *and tramples upon them*. These stars are not demonic powers that were manipulated into following Satan in rebellion. Instead, these are the saints of God. As it is written in Daniel 12:3, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens,” and again in Philippians 2:15, “You shine bright like stars in the universe.” Why would Satan trample upon his minions?

“She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.” Here we have a reference to Psalm 2:9, that Jesus is installed upon the holy hill of Zion as king to dash the nations to pieces with an iron scepter. Also, we find a similar phrase used in reference to the ruler that is supposed to come out of Judah: “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience is his” <sup>cdlxxxix</sup>.

“The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.” The King James is the only modern version that actually renders the Greek correctly in this verse. That last part should read, “and *they* will take care of her...” The translators read that word “they”, and it doesn't make sense, unless, of course, you understand the mystery being expressed here. It is our primary call as the Church of Christ to take in Israel during her time of need and to witness to her through it. We read earlier in Ezekiel 20:33-35 where it says that God will gather Israel into the wilderness where He will then meet with them *face to face*. How does God meet with them face to face? It sounds like a reiteration of Sinai. In fact, it is. Just as Jesus had a symbolic pattern in His life to reiterate the exodus and coming into the Promised Land, the final flight of Israel through the wilderness is a perfect reflection of a second exodus.



In the life of Jacob, after he had wrestled with God, Jacob calls the place Peniel, which means “face of God.” The statement is made, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.”<sup>cdlxxxii</sup> The interesting thing about this is that the Hebrews had an incredible sense that you cannot see God face-to-face and live. This was spoken to Moses *after* Jacob. How does Jacob have this sense? Whatever it might have been that would cause Jacob to believe that you cannot see the face of God and live, the reality is that this same belief runs deep. It is still embraced today.

Both Jewish and Christian theologians hold to the notion that you cannot see God face-to-face and live. Yet, I believe that just as Jacob wrestled with God and was renamed Israel, so too shall the Jacob people that call themselves “Israel” wrestle God in the wilderness. They too must struggle with God. It is after that struggle that they will look back and proclaim the same words as their father Jacob, “I have seen God face to face and yet my life was spared...” It is in the wilderness, both for the patriarch Jacob and also for Israel corporately, that they see God face to face. He came down upon Sinai to interact with them personally, but they cried out in fear for Moses to speak to Him. They will not have that option during this final struggle.

“Very well, then. With foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people.”<sup>cdlxxxiii</sup> Of those that escape the city Jerusalem and flee Judea, the promise is given, “Those who survive the sword shall find favor in the desert.”<sup>cdlxxxiv</sup> “Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will return.”<sup>cdlxxxv</sup>

Jesus asked the question, “Who is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?” Because this is found in Matthew 24:45, and the larger context of Matthew 24 and 25 are about the end times, I must assume that this question is pertaining to Israel. Who is this servant that will provide food to Israel at the proper time? Isn’t that an interesting question? Certainly the disciples wouldn’t have understood what Jesus was saying at that moment. The question went beyond them to our day where a church is filled with mostly Gentiles instead of Jews. This Gentile Church, which is the foreign lips Isaiah prophesied of, will be the instrument of God. We humble ourselves to serving them.

This is our charge as the elder brother Japheth: enter the tent of Shem. That is symbolic language of our salvation (being grafted into their root), but also has a literal significance when we take seriously the end times. We are to enter our brother’s tent to be servant to him. Even of Esau the charge was given that the elder shall serve the younger. This is the plan and intention of God. But if that elder brother wants to stand outside and bitch and moan about how he has never even gotten a goat, then by what means can we honestly call ourselves children of God? It is the child of God that takes up the things of God.

God has chosen the wilderness as His place of refuge for His people. Throughout all of the Scripture, the wilderness is a place of safety. Notice that David finds solace from Saul there. John the Baptist lives in the wilderness, eating locusts and honey. Moses was on the backside of the desert for 40 years before the burning bush experience. Elijah flees from Jezebel 40 days into the wilderness to arrive at Mount Horeb (also known as Sinai). Jesus is baptized and immediately is led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

There is a lot of rich symbolism in the wilderness. It is a place of testing, a place of refuge, a place of destruction, and a place of building. God works some of His greatest miracles in the lives of those that flee into the wilderness. For Israel to be called out into the wilderness places is a call out of the system that Egypt represents, and out of Babylon – that Satanic kingdom that rules the world – to again find her God. The wilderness is a frightening place, but it is the place where God restores order. It is from that restoration of order that Israel will be brought to a place where they are able to accept their Messiah when He finally returns.

They are broken down; slowly their pride ebbed away, until that final moment when the revelation of Christ coming in the clouds should be displayed throughout the earth. That chiseling comes in two forms. The wilderness itself is a place that will cause for the people Israel to be chiseled, but the second form is through Gentile believers that shine like the angels. When they behold in our faces, even our Black, Hispanic, Asian, Anglo-Saxon, and/or Indian faces, the glory of God, they will be moved to jealousy. We are currently moving to a showdown between religions. The Jewish people have held to a view of God that is inadequate. They will find themselves being provided for by the very people that they least expected it from.

That will not be comfortable for anyone. I think I need to give a bit of warning. This isn't easy. This isn't something that we can join hands together in and sing "Kumbaya." They will be frightened, uncomfortable, cast out of their lives of luxury and into devastation, and all these factors will be enough to cause them to be rude, crude, and probably even malicious. It will take us to task to be able to show them mercy, because they are the enemies of the Gospel for our sakes.<sup>cdlxxxvi</sup> Not only are they the enemies of the Gospel, but we will be enduring them at their worst. This isn't something that we can partake in because we have prayed a little bit and we have an affection for the Jewish people. It requires ultimate submission and ultimate love.

We continue in Revelations 12, "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him." When does this war take place? There is one other place in Scripture that speaks of Michael the angel. The only other book in the Bible that says anything about Michael is the book of Daniel. One time in chapter 10, Michael comes to help Gabriel. Then, in chapter 12, Gabriel tells Daniel, "At that time Michael, the great prince of your people, will arise."<sup>cdlxxxvii</sup>

What time does Michael arise? It is halfway through the Tribulation, for the verse continues, "There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then." Michael stands up halfway through the Tribulation, and then there comes unequalled distress. How do we know that this is the same event? Revelations 12 continues, "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night, has been hurled down.'" The devil is cast down during the middle of the week, and we know that because it says *now* has come salvation and power and the kingdom of our God. It is once Satan has been cast to the earth that the end is here.

Now, in Luke 10:18 there is a statement out of the mouth of Jesus about Satan being cast down like lightning. Jesus said that He *saw*, past tense, Satan being cast down. If Jesus saw it, does that mean that we put Revelation 12:7-9 in the past with Jesus? Not necessarily. It is possible that Satan has been cast out of the place where God dwells, but still occupies some intermediary place where he is allowed to accuse the brothers. It says in Job 1 that Satan approached God to accuse Job. So, if we were to say that Luke 10:18 implies a past casting down at the fall, how do we fit Job into the picture? The whole point of Revelation 12:7-9 is that the devil can no longer accuse the brethren.

The progression of Revelations shows us that now that Satan has been cast down to the earth, in Revelation 13 we see him standing on the shore of the sea. Then, the Antichrist comes out of the sea and is established – given the throne of Satan to rule over all the nations. The direct result of Satan being cast down is the establishment of the Antichrist, and then in Revelation 12:13, the woman is pursued. Revelation 12:13-17 is an expansion of verse 6. So, at the time that Satan is cast down, we find the persecution of Israel, and we find the establishment of the Antichrist. This is halfway through the Tribulation.

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.” Who are these that overcame him? Well, one answer would be that it is Michael and his angels. I’ve always heard it spoken that this is speaking of the saints, though. We are not of this world. Though we are technically in it, we are not ruled and governed by it. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:13, “No one has ever gone into heaven except the Son of Man, *who is in heaven.*”

Jesus makes the claim that He not only has been in heaven, but that while He was on the earth speaking to Nicodemus, He was also in heaven. This man claims to be in two places at once. But that is just it. Heaven is not a place outside of this universe. It is here and now, all around us. We don’t need to leave this universe in order to go to heaven, but instead be brought into that heavenly dimension through the blood of Christ Jesus. The saints are currently in heaven.<sup>cdlxxxviii</sup> Therefore, rejoice you heavens and you who dwell in them! You who overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony – do not fear. You have already overcome. Even if he is given the power and authority to kill the saints, what is that to you? He kills you, and then you get to go and be with Christ. Oh, the horror...

When the devil is cast down to the earth, it is at this time that we find the Antichrist to be established in Revelation 13. There is a ruler that has been acting in a certain manner up to this point, during the first three and a half years, but it is technically in the middle of the three and a half years when he establishes the abomination of desolation that he is given the title of the Antichrist in Scripture.<sup>cdlxxxix</sup> It is at this time that he sets up the demonic dragon statue mentioned in Revelation 13:14 and takes his seat in God’s temple as mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

“When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be

taken care of for a time, times, and half a time, out of the serpent's reach." This goes back to Revelation 12:6. When does Revelation 12:6 take place? It is after the dragon is cast down. Revelation 12 has two parts. There is a short summary, and then it goes into the details leading up to and covering verse 6. These aren't two separate flights, but the same one being described. Notice the repetition of the "time, times, and half a time" that we saw in the book of Daniel.

"Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a flood, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing up the flood that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

Where have we heard this flood language before? In Daniel 9:26, we're told that the end will "come like a flood." We also considered the parable in Matthew 7:24-27 about the wise and foolish builders. The rains came and the floods rose and beat against both houses. To those that build their house upon the sand, the flood carried it away. But those who built their houses upon the rock, their homes remained. We can liken this also to the parable in Matthew 24:36-41. Jesus says that the last days will be like the days of Noah. The wicked continued to eat and drink, marry and be given in marriage, and continue their lives as if nothing was coming. The flood came and took away all of the wicked. Likewise, two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other will be left. Notice that the one being taken is actually a bad thing. It is the one who remains that is considered blessed. This passage is not about rapture; if we took it as that, we'd have to say the rapture is being taken out of the world to be thrown directly into the lake of fire.

There are a people on the earth who swallow the water. Why do I say a people? The text states that the earth swallows the flood. The result of the earth swallowing the flood is that the dragon then makes war with the saints. Obviously, this is in reaction to the Church taking Israel in and providing for her. Because the dragon is not able to destroy Israel, he seeks to destroy the rest of her offspring: those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Why is this the reaction? It is because we took upon ourselves the full force of the persecution that was supposed to overtake and destroy Israel. We will take upon ourselves the vehemence that was intended for them.

## Chapter 18: Church's Mandate

“If those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, why should you go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but must drink it.”<sup>cdxc</sup> This is a prophecy to Moab. Those who do not deserve to drink it are those of whom it is true, “There is no condemnation in Christ.” Why do we deserve the cup of God’s wrath? We’ve been saved from God’s wrath. So, we take of Jesus’ cup, but not because we deserve it. We lay down our lives willingly. And because we lay our life down willingly, just as was true for Christ (through the eternal Spirit), it is ours to take back up again.<sup>cdxci</sup> By the power of God the Father,<sup>cdxcii</sup> and through the eternal Spirit,<sup>cdxciii</sup> we are imitators of Christ.<sup>cdxciv</sup>

In this manner we make known the manifest wisdom of God to the principalities and powers.<sup>cdxcv</sup> We love not our lives even unto death,<sup>cdxcvi</sup> and because we display God’s “secret wisdom”,<sup>cdxcvii</sup> the power of the resurrection is released through our death. It takes an eternal perspective to see this. It is through our death that we bring life to the dead. Those that are dead are they who “follow the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air”.<sup>cdxcviii</sup> This command to die, as propitiation, on behalf of others is “not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world.”<sup>cdxcix</sup>

I know that this is a rather bizarre way of putting forth these verses. What I guess I’m trying to convey is that it would seem as though when the righteous die, there is a redemptive quality to it. Something takes place in the heavenly realm. That demonic blindness and stupor, which was put there by the Lord,<sup>d</sup> is the very thing that we are trying to set Israel free from. The veil that blinds the nations equally blinds Israel. This sense does not only heighten our awareness of the importance of our lives during the time of the Tribulation, it also heightens our attentiveness to the weight and significance of *every* moment.

This moment, even now, is once and for all. Either I am spending time doing that which I believe engages those powers and tears down strongholds, or I am wasting my time. If it is not something that builds up the Kingdom of God, then it is not important. Our engagement of those powers is based upon prayer and fasting.<sup>di</sup> Prayer is constituted by our life lived as a devotion to the Lord, and fasting is any kind of sacrifice of luxury and convenience for the sake of God’s glory. I find that the times when I have an elevated awareness of the severity of a situation, I am fasting one way or another. If I cannot fast my food, then I will lose sleep.

In regard to wrestling the principalities and powers while Israel is in our care, I would like to point to Matthew 25:14-30. This is the parable of the talents. To one man ten talents were given, to another man five talents were given, and to a third man one talent was given. From the context of Matthew 24-25 being about the end times, I don’t think it is extravagant to say that this parable is given in relation to the Jews that are fleeing into the wilderness for refuge (especially Matthew 24:45-46).

In the ancient Hebrew culture, to take someone into your home was to place them under your protection. At any and/or all costs, you protect that person that has come under the “shadow” of your roof. The word shadow is used as a symbol for the “shadow” of the Lord’s wings, which is distinctly a term used to display God’s protection. When we bring them in, we protect them with everything in us. Lot brought in the angels and

offered his own daughters in their place.<sup>dii</sup> I'm not advocating this; I only make the point that the culture of the Hebrews was such that you did not allow anyone to harm your guest.

Jesus seems to already have in mind the question that will be asked: "What about us? How do we defend ourselves? What do we do if we're discovered?" Jesus replies with, "Make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict".<sup>diii</sup> It is actually to also be made up in our mind that we are in the Lord's hands. We need to be content that whatever happens is to His glory, and if it weren't He would rend the heavens and come down "riding upon a cherubim" and "shooting flaming arrows".<sup>dvi</sup>

In point of fact, our message to Israel will be one of hope: "You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!'"<sup>dvi</sup> We read in Isaiah 35 about a people that the wilderness will be glad for. The people who are being scattered through that wilderness are being addressed by a message that God prompts upon the hearts of His servants saying, "Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong and do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.'" The people being addressed to speak a message are not the same as they that have feeble hands, shaky knees, or fearful hearts.

God is addressing the church in the wilderness that has been prepared for that people to give a word that would actually cause for hope when hope has been diminished. As it says in Romans 10:14-15, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Our witness to them is one of hope. Even if we are called upon to give a hard word, and to explain that they are being judged for their sin, and to explain to them why this God that they don't even believe in is interested in them, we are producing hope. The hope does not come from the words in themselves. The hope comes from the Spirit that is being communicated through those words.

Jesus said, "My words are spirit",<sup>dvi</sup> and our words will also be Spirit and life. It doesn't matter what exactly those words are, as long as they are not *our* words, but are instead the words of the Father, then we will be communicating life and not death. The man is the message. We cannot separate the one from the other. If our words are of a God that will save, but we show forth in our characters and livelihood anything other than that salvation, our words will bring death instead of life. However, if we give words of condemnation, all the while we don't show the severity of the words in our daily lives – that we have truly wrestled with such terrible words – then the words will be a mock and slander, no matter how true. For our words to be the whole truth and nothing but the truth, they need to be more than mere sentiment or quotation of the Scripture. Neither constitutes truth alone. Unless the words have gripped us and shown themselves true in our lifestyles, they are only words. Truth is reality, and not mere fact.

## Uncle Tom

There is a word to the African American saints that I think actually applies to all of God's saints. The term "Uncle Tom" is used as a racial slur to mean a weak, fearful, timid, rat that sells out his brothers. When you read the book Uncle Tom's Cabin, you come to a different notion. An Uncle Tom is not a weak person that was afraid of being beaten or in trouble, nor someone that sells out his brothers, but instead a submitted servant with costly submission. The spirit of the Uncle Tom is one of humility. They place themselves under the rod of bondage for the sake of submitting to authority. This is not a weak person, but in actuality, a strong person.

The amount of strength and moral grit that it takes to be able to endure that kind of mistreatment, and to not rise up against it but to submit under it, is more than words express. This patient endurance of oppression and exploitation show forth a stronger character than many of us are willing to consider. To be called to be an Uncle Tom to the Jewish people seems like an insult. How dare I say that we should be an Uncle Tom at all – and especially to the "Christ killers"? Yet, that kind of character of submission and love are throughout the Scriptures, but especially in the New Testament.

In Luke 2:41-52, Joseph and Mary leave Jerusalem without their son Jesus. Jesus remains at the Temple debating the teachers of the law. He impresses even the most intelligent and outstanding of the Pharisees. When Joseph and Mary realize that they are without Jesus, they go back to Jerusalem to find him. When they find him, there is a stern rebuke, like many mothers give, "You had me worried sick!" Jesus' reply is, "How did you look for me? Didn't you know that I would be of my father's business?" They didn't understand. Yet, Jesus submitted to them. He went *down* to Nazareth with his parents and was obedient to them. Little wonder we find the next verse saying, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and men."

You would think that in this episode there would be a legitimacy for Jesus to say something like, "Hey, mom and dad... You guys just don't understand me. You know, I am twelve after all. I know what I'm doing, and you guys are a hindrance to my ministry! I'm supposed to be the messiah, and to sit upon the throne of David. But you guys want to raise me up like I'm the same as all the other kids. Don't you know that I have a calling?" This is not the spirit of Christ. While we are often too much in that character to stand up for ourselves, and to give credence to why we're important, Jesus submitted himself unto them, and obeyed them – even though they did not understand him.

We find in Ephesians 6:5-8 words to slaves. "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."

Have you ever paused and considered these words? What manner of a man is this? We can even use this in application to our employment. Everything of ambition and carnal desire bulks against this. Obey your master? Sincerely serve wholeheartedly as if we're serving the Lord? What about me? What do I get out of this? What did they ever do

for me? They don't deserve that kind of respect. It is all the more amplified if our employment does not treat their employees with respect and kindness. Yet, here is the word of God. Submit to that authority without bumping it. Serve them wholeheartedly. Pull out the stops. Give everything. Don't hold back. Even in the times when your master is not looking, work for them with intensity and passion and fervor.

Isn't this amazing? Slaves are to submit to their masters without begrudging. There doesn't seem to be a hint of, "Well if I have to..." That kind of submission is one that entails wholehearted surrender with joy, knowing that God is sovereign. We don't grit teeth, nor do we allow for something within us to rise up in rebellion, but we instead submit with everything in us. I can only think that if that were the heart of the slaves in the 1800's, we would be living in a different America. If the Christian workers worked like that at their jobs, we would have a different kind of stereotype. The truth is that we are all too much like the rest of the world: full of pomp and greed.

To submit in that sort of manner chafes our hide. We still want to be recognized. We still want to be patted on the back. Yet, this kind of submission rejoices in being unrecognized and hidden. We rejoice in being in the place of obscurity. Submission is more than agreeing to do something. It is more than simply saying, "Well, you're the boss." Submission would require being at their dispense. If they abuse and use you, you continue to submit, knowing that it is working in you a character suitable for the end of the age. When the Jewish people come to our homes and communities for refuge, we will be required to wait on them with submission and love that is almost impossible to describe. If we have something inside that will rebel and get agitated, we have lost the battle.

God is placing everything in this. We must reflect His heart and attitude. Like a lamb before its shearers is silent, so too do we remain silent. Though they might mock, though they might ridicule, though they might seek to catch us in our words, and though they might do everything to expose our faulty hearts, we do not speak against them, but humbly submit to them. As if they are fathers of our faith, we submit to their authority. We willingly take in their insults. We swallow down their accusations. We don't combat it when they believe that it is because of 2000 years of Christian persecution against the Jewish people that they are now being persecuted yet again. We simply submit ourselves in love unto it, and we do not lend ourselves to a spirit of dissention.

"Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."

As the Bride of Christ, we are to have this kind of beauty and submission to Him and His purposes, all the more because it is more than we're able to bear. Let us not shrink from this call to Israel. It is something that we would not choose, but it is necessary in order to fulfill all righteousness in us. If we are to become the Bride that



comes down out of heaven, and has such purity that the streets of gold are like glass, we need this kind of costly surrender to the purposes of Christ. Let Christ give us the difficult situations *now*, so that we might reflect Christ ultimately when the time comes to take in the Jew and provide for them.

This is how we manifest the wisdom of God to the principalities and powers. That kind of humility is unrelenting. God alone has displayed that kind of unrelenting humility, but He desires to display it through His people. It says in Romans 12:1-2, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

The call to lay down our lives might be much more literal than we have before thought. Likewise, we find in Matthew 23:2-3, “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.” Maybe this is what Paul was saying when he wrote in Romans 13:13, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.”

This point is noted quite poetically when Psalm 102:13-15 says, “You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come. For her stones are dear to your servants; her very dust moves them to pity. The nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.” The servants are the Church, and the favor/compassion is priestly identification with Israel. That identification is what brings the compassion to Zion, and so the nations will fear the Lord, and all the kings will revere God’s glory.

## Chapter 19: Theocracy II

In our first look at theocracy, we defined our term as the Kingdom of God. There we discussed how it is important to know that this kingdom is not simply abstract, but a reality. Our lives are to be governed by this reality, and the way to discern how closely our lives truly are ruled by God's Kingdom would be to see our 'culture'. How do we interact with other people? How do we treat those around us? How modest is our lifestyle? All of these sorts of questions help to facilitate the truth of our condition. The more like the culture around us that we are, the less like the Kingdom we live. Simple questions that seem irrelevant should indeed be asked. What size home is proper? How many televisions, if any, should we own? What kind of luxuries should we grant for ourselves? What kinds of television shows are appropriate?

These sorts of questions seem almost legalistic, but when we approach them with the notion that we desire nothing short of the glory of God, they suddenly lose their legalism. Is it all right to allow our children to watch violent shows like batman or power rangers? What effects are there for allowing countless hours to be devoted to computers and screens? These are legitimate questions to work through and discuss in the context of community, but I would stress that the answers to these sorts of questions are not to be taken as "thus saith the Lord." In this chapter, I want to revisit the kingdom of God. Now that we have a good amount of eschatology under our belts, I think it is worth diving into this subject again.

We see the Kingdom of God as both here and now, and a coming kingdom. Jesus had expressed that the Kingdom of God is like a growing seed.<sup>dvii</sup> You plant it in the ground, it sprouts, grows a stalk, then a head, and then a kernel in the head. All of this happens by itself. Likewise, the Kingdom of God started by calling one man out of the nations to make him a nation. Little by little, the man's offspring multiplied into twelve tribes, and those twelve tribes into hundreds of thousands of people. It eventually came that God took Israel out of Egypt and established them as the theocratic kingdom in the Promised Land. From there, prophecies and promises started to arise about an anointed king (Messiah) that would arise. He would be the offspring of David, and the government of God would be upon his shoulders.<sup>dviii</sup>

We see the progression through Scripture about this kingdom. It starts as a little seed within Abraham, a promise. It then grows until we find a culmination in the man Christ Jesus, who then claims, "The Kingdom is within you." Why does he say that? These words are expressing something: The Kingdom of God is fully established when the Son of David takes his seat upon the throne of David and rules from Zion over the whole of the earth. That statement that Jesus made was declaring that he is the Son of David, and He has come to establish His rule. We see in Psalm 2 that, "[God has] installed [his] King on Zion, [his] holy hill." We see a couple verses later that this happens in the moment when the declaration is made, "You are my son; today I have become your father." What day was that? Remember from the chapter on priestliness that this took place at the cross and resurrection. Christ's ascension was to the right hand of the Father, to take his place on that throne of David to rule and reign over the nations forever.

This has a couple of implications. This kingdom that has been established is both present and very tangible to us now. Yet, there is another sense in which we know that Christ will return to rule and reign over the nations literally. So, how do we reconcile this? Psalm 2 seems to be speaking about a future time, and yet when the author of Hebrews quotes it, he puts it in the past with Christ's crucifixion. The answer is found within Jesus' own parable. The seed is planted, and it grows and grows. Yet, you don't harvest that crop until it produces the kernel in the head, and the kernel is ripe. Likewise, the kingdom has indeed been established, and it is indeed among us. Yet, we don't say that the kingdom has fully come because we know that the harvest has not yet come. The seed has been planted, but the harvest is not yet.

So, in this chapter I want to examine this kingdom. I want to look into the topics of Zion and David. What does it mean for Jesus to be established upon Zion now, and what does it mean for Him to be established upon Zion when He returns? What does it mean for Christ to be a Son of David, and for Jesus to rule upon the throne of David? To sum up, then, we will put the two pieces together to hopefully better understand the connotation of theocracy – specifically the Davidic Kingdom.

## Zion

Zion is in two places at once. It is heavenly, but it is also physical. We don't need to think abstractly, nor do we need to spend our time divesting in ethereal notions. As much as Zion is a heavenly pattern, that heavenly pattern has been made known to us quite plainly. For example, Psalm 84 is a beautiful psalm about going up to the City of God, and how the psalmist yearns to be in the dwelling place of God. We have in Psalm 133 the statement that Zion is when brothers dwell together in unity. Jesus had even said, "When two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst."<sup>dx</sup> Zion is that reality of true fellowship one to another. It is the place of God's habitation – within the praises of His people.<sup>dx</sup>

For Christ to be seated in Zion is both symbolic and literal. There is a literal heavenly place, I am quite certain, where Jesus sits next to the Father. We are granted access to that very place – the throne room of God – through the blood of Christ Jesus. In ancient Israel, the Ark of the Covenant was actually considered the throne of God. The wings of two cherubs made the back of that Ark. The cherubim were facing the mercy seat, but also facing one another. They were placed on opposite sides of the mercy seat, and their wings stretched up over their heads and connected at the tip to create the back of the chair. It is from between those cherubs that God told Moses, "There... I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites."<sup>dx</sup> One version states, "I will *commune* with you..." It is between the cherubim, where their wings touch, that God said He would meet with Moses. This Ark was placed in the Most Holy Place, and from that innermost room in the Tabernacle the Israelites assumed God actually dwelt there. The Holiest Place was God's throne room.

For the ancient Israelites, they knew that God could not be contained within a small room in the Tabernacle, and later the Temple. They knew that the earth is His footstool, and the heavens are His throne.<sup>dxii</sup> Solomon even addressed this in his prayer of

dedication. What the Israelites were thinking was that God had told Moses it is there, and only in that Most Holy Place before the Ark of the Covenant, that God would meet and speak. Outside of that dwelling, there were prophets that could hear God. But no one was able to speak and commune with God like Moses did. He alone was allowed into the dwelling place of God to speak with Him as a friend. Only the High Priest once a year could go into that holy dwelling to offer sacrifices on behalf of Israel.

Do you see the solemnity? This is considered a sacred place. The dwelling of God was chosen to be in Jerusalem, within that Tabernacle. God specified very acute details. Those details in the Ark of the Covenant help us to see how it is that God is currently ruling and reigning. They help us to understand practically what it means to be a part of that heavenly Zion, especially since we cannot see it. The Ark was made of acacia wood. That symbolizes humanity. The acacia wood was overlaid in gold. That gold represents Divinity. Just as the Ark was made of acacia wood overlaid in gold, believers are human beings indwelt by God.

The mercy seat was set upon the Ark of the Testimony. The mercy seat was made of gold – there was no acacia wood in it. Likewise, we are saved by grace, and not of works. Inside the Ark were the Ten Commandments. The mercy seat was placed over that Ark to show that mercy triumphs over judgment. The two cherubs that were upon the mercy seat were on opposite sides. This represents all of the people that are opposites – male and female, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, black and white, Palestinian and Israeli, etc. They are both opposite, and yet they are somehow one. Not only do their wings touch, but also they are made of the same stuff. The only difference between these two cherubs was that they were on opposing sides of the mercy seat. Likewise, God has made of one man all of the nations of the world<sup>dxiii</sup>. We are all of one blood, and God has broken down that dividing wall of hostility and made of the two one.<sup>dxiv</sup>

The fact that the wings of these two cherubs touch is essential. It is where our lives come together that God dwells. It is when brothers dwell together in unity that God commands the blessing. What does it mean for brothers to dwell together in unity? We can have a pseudo unity, where we come together in good spirits and enjoy one another, but we then go back to our homes and go on with our lives as if nothing ever happened. True togetherness demands that we are united thoroughly. You cannot see where the one begins and the other ends. They have been made one, and are no longer two. This is intimacy. It is deep calling unto deep. To be together means more than simply being in the same location and both believing in Jesus. It requires pouring out your life on behalf of the other, and the other pours out their life for you. Neither of you are ever empty because you both pour out self into the other.

In marriage, we see this kind of symbolism in the Hebrew words for man and woman. The Hebrew word for man is ish. The Hebrew word for woman is ishah. Ish is spelled with a yud, and ishah is spelled with a hey. When you add the yud and hey together, you have yah, which is the name of God. It takes both man and woman coming together in marriage – the two becoming one in all things – that we see the expression of yah. Unity is the breaking down of hostility between us so that love might cover a multitude of sins. It is within us that Christ dwells: Christ in you, the hope of glory.<sup>dxv</sup> This is why Paul tells the church in Corinth that we leave our faces unveiled. It is so that we can behold in one another's face the very glory of God – Christ in you – and seeing

God within my brothers and sisters is what leads me from image to image and glory to glory.<sup>dxvi</sup>

Now, it is interesting to mention this. Paul says in 1 Corinthians that men should not wear head coverings, and women should let their hair grow long. But when we see the original Greek of this passage,<sup>dxvii</sup> we find that Paul's words are not so clear. He is addressing men with head coverings, but that word in Greek is actually something that would hang down over the head like a veil. This is most likely the prayer shawl. Paul most likely is telling the men and women to not cover your face when they pray and prophesy. Why? Paul started the statement with saying that Christ is the head of everyone. We don't cover our faces because others need to see Christ in us. What implication does this have for praying with our eyes closed and heads bowed?

It is of this Zion that the author of Hebrews says Abraham sought for a city whose builder and maker is God. We find in the very next chapter of Hebrews, "You have come to Zion."<sup>dxviii</sup> What Abraham knew he was searching for is what we have come to. This city is not some sort of ethereal place that we still look up into the heavens for. It is here and now among us. This city is a reality because we have in Christ the ability to be unified believers. We have the ability to be made new in Christ, and thus come unto Zion. The earthly Zion is not as of right now modeled after the heavenly pattern. It takes the New Jerusalem to come down out of heaven, where we are currently seated with Christ, in order for that earthly Zion to be made into the image of the heavenly protocol.

### Davidic Kingdom

The issue of David's throne is the issue of David's character. When we read 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, or 2 Chronicles, we find a statement made for every king. Either they are "like David", or they are "not like David". In order to be established as the messiah, you need to have the same character and heart that God saw in David. This is not to say that David is the prototype, but to say that there is more going on to the story than we've initially been led to believe. For God to say that David is a man after God's own heart is more than a statement to claim David seeks to know God's heart. There is something about David and his heart that God acknowledges and associates Himself with. David's heart is God's heart, and therefore we are not making a statement about Christ that he needs to line up with. That which is Davidic is of the spirit of Jesus, and that which is of the spirit of Jesus is Davidic.

God has actually established that His Kingdom is forever to be considered a Davidic Kingdom. The messiah sits upon the throne of *David*, not simply because he is a descendant of David, but because David's heart and character are a reflection of the Divine heart and character. When Jesus is called the son of David, it is a deep expression of subjection to this man's authority in God – not because of His words or power, but because of His tenderness, compassion, and character. In Mark 11, Jesus makes His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. There are people who are going before Him and behind Him that are shouting, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" The kingdom of David is associated with Christ, and Jesus never seems to have any rebuke

when that association is made. It is not something lowly for Him to come into, but instead is an honor to be known as a Son of David.

David is the ruler of Zion, the heavenly kingdom. The Davidic Kingdom is not simply an implication of a kingdom to come where a greater David, or son of David, rules upon his throne, but instead a reality of a Davidic pattern-type. That type is Christ, who is currently seated in the heavenly Zion ruling and reigning. The character of the Davidic Kingdom is the character of Zion, and the character of Zion is the character of Jesus. That which is Davidic can be expressed in the words of Jesus toward Nathanael, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile”.<sup>dxix</sup> We see this same statement being made by Paul in Romans with different words: “A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God.”<sup>dxix</sup>

Two times the Lord handed Saul into the hands of David, and David did not kill him. It is said in both of those instances,<sup>dxxi</sup> that David is without guilt of wrongdoing or rebellion. Contrast that with Saul who was rebuked by Samuel for his rebellion. Samuel actually told Saul that what he did was no better than witchcraft!<sup>dxxi</sup> We see the humility of David expressed throughout his life. Right from the inception of David’s story, we find that he is not at the party with his family, but instead out in the fields with the sheep.<sup>dxxi</sup> After David is anointed king, he goes right back to the sheep to tend his father’s flock.<sup>dxxi</sup> When the majority of humanity would have then left their father to come into their kingdom, this youth continued in submission and respect unto his father. We find in 2 Samuel 1:19 that David ties the Lord’s anointed together with God’s glory. This might explain why David was jealous to preserve and fight for the Lord’s anointed in 1 Samuel 24:6, 26:9, and 2 Samuel 1:14-15.

It is true that if we miss the Jewishness of Jesus, we erect an idol. It is equally as true to say that if we miss the Davidicness of Jesus, we have erected an idol. Interestingly, it is the pouring of self into the Hebrew Scriptures that tears us out of our Gentile worldviews and into the Hebraic mindset. We erect the Greek Jesus, Greek faith, and Greek interpretations of the Scriptures because of the vicissitudes of hellenization that has affected the Western World. By constructing our Hellenized Jesus, we have forsaken the faith that was once and for all given to the saints in order to embrace a more Gentile Kosher Jesus that reeks of Aryan supremacy.

This Gospel of the Kingdom is a Gospel of the Hebrew Jesus that sits upon the throne of David. Each Gentile, when coming into this faith, revisits the Abrahamic call. This separation from culture and upbringing to come into the Hebraic root is not instant upon salvation. It requires a process and it requires that we be diligent to consciously perceive that we are grafted into Israel’s root, otherwise we will not be granted the life that emits from that root, which is God Himself. From the lack of that life, we Gentile believers have turned up the amplifiers and employed varieties of manipulative tactics for our Sunday agenda. The lack of the Davidic fruit in our midst is the result of a refusal to embrace the Hebraic roots. Israel’s history is our history. Israel’s heritage is our heritage. That is not to say that we should employ the Jewish traditions of the phylacteries, yarmulke, or other means of worship and study. This is what the book of Galatians is all about. We are grafted in, but that in no way means that we are to now be Jewish.

There is something beyond Judaism. There is something beyond our Greek Christianity. It is Davidic, and it is Hebraic. To be a Hebrew is to be without guile. To be Davidic is to be grafted into this Kingdom and to rule and reign with Christ from Zion. The fruit that sprouts when we move from our own life and heritage to embracing the life of God and the heritage of Israel is actually the very fruit that will drive the Jew to jealousy. For us, we are no longer ruled by our pagan culture, but are now governed by the Hebraic faith – which is to say: Zion. No longer do we invest self in the paganism of our Western culture and society. We move out from that demonic stronghold to embrace the very root and sap of God – Christ in you.

Christ is Jewish, and not Gentile. Christ is Davidic, and not Aristotelian. Christ is theocratic, and not democratic. When we think pagan, we think of some sort of tribal or primitive people dancing around. Yet, pagan is defined as any practice of religion outside of Christ. To worship the state is to submit to paganism. To embrace opera and theater as means of fulfillment is paganism. To live in unreality because our lives are subject to Hollywood and the music industry is paganism. Even though these things might not necessarily be indecent, and there might even be a good amount of elegance to our culture, it is still pagan.

For those like myself who are not descended from Israel, to come into the faith – into the commonwealth of Israel – is a release from my pagan upbringing to come into ultimate freedom and joy. For many, it is not a joy to break from culture and upbringing. We are American, all too American. Because of that, we have stripped away the Hebraic notions of the faith in order to maintain our culture and heritage. Our prayers for revival and our repentance because of things that our nations have performed are not conducive to the spirit of Christ. We have the same sin that the Jewish people have. We have reduced our Christianity to a Sunday phenomenon, which is an additive to our life, but not a radical laceration from our previous kingdoms. The Jewish people have done the same thing, making their Saturday Sabbaths religious obligations, but in no way do they depart from the bondage of the principalities and powers of the air. Because they had both made religion cheap, both the German and the Jew were to blame for the Holocaust. It was a judgment against both religious systems; systems that our Sunday culture mimic.

We too have our judgments in America. The time is coming, and is now at hand, when there will be another Holocaust that is worldwide. That Holocaust will eclipse the Nazi Holocaust in severity and death toll. The Nazi furor can be solely laid against the German Church that did not have the willingness to separate from German culture and pride. Because the spiritual atmosphere over Germany was one that claimed, “God is dead”, the void was filled with demonic hatred. Likewise in America, we have not sufficiently come out of our own culture and national pride to fill the spiritual void. We have been repenting for the wrong things. We don’t want a Jewish Jesus, and we don’t want a Davidic Kingdom. We are Gentile, all too Gentile. For that reason the society and culture around us goes berserk seeking for a fix. Something has to fill the void, and when the Church of Jesus Christ will not step up and fill those shoes, the principalities and powers of the air are more than willing to take full possession of our nation. For us Gentiles, our salvation is what the exodus was for the Israelites: deliverance from the house of slavery. To reject that deliverance for the sake of continuing in culture robs God of His glory.

How can we witness to the Jewish people if we do not even believe in a messiah? What is a messiah? The word means “anointed king.” Messiah does not mean mere savior; it means anointed king. We have been taught that it means redeemer, or anointed one, and have been able to continue in our own petty kingdoms living as though there is no king over us. With our lives, we repeat the words, “We will not have this man to rule over us,” and thus commit the same sin that we indict Israel for. There is a king, and his kingdom is Davidic. It has the heart and character of David, which is a heart of purity. David is the expression of servant-kingship.

David was not a glorious king because of his exploits. It was not that David was a mighty warrior and he had the mighty men fighting with him that made him such a wonderful king. David was a servant. His heart was tender. He was a king that was zealous for justice and equity. The poor and oppressed were heard before him. He did not neglect the fatherless and widows. David was one who served his people. His kingdom was one of humility – giving everything for the benefit of those whom he served. When we read the words of Jesus that he “did not come to be served, but to serve,” we are reading of a Davidic character. This kind of humility that would strip off the outer garment and wash His disciples feet is the reflection of the heart of God.

It chafes to think that the Kingdom of God is not set up in Geneva, or on Olympus, or some other superior landmark. For God to choose Jerusalem and Zion for the locus of His rule goes against every aspect of our pride. It flies in the face of national ego and cultural bias. It is the devil that continues to pomp and gloat, accusing God because ‘true’ power is found in threat, intimidation, manipulation, force, intrigue, military might, and these sorts of things. God, however, takes the weak and the foolish thing and establishes it to be greater than the strong and the wise. He takes that which is despised and makes it to be anointed king. Here the issue of the Davidic Kingdom is found in that Christ rules from Zion, and not from Babylon.

One of our biggest problems in modern Christendom is that we reject the notion that there is a literal kingdom. We like to think ethereally. We like to assume that God is contained away in the heavens somewhere so that we can continue life, as we want it. Foxes have holes, and the eagles have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest His head.<sup>dxv</sup> We play games with our faith because we desire Jesus to return and relieve us from stress and suffering. How many of us are panting and groaning, crying out, “Come Lord Jesus,” and that cry is not one of alleviation? How many of us look forward to the return of Christ so that He could establish His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven? That cry requires pain. It requires anguish. It means that the world will go through unspeakable horror before Christ returns, but we also know that Christ’s return establishes world peace and a kingdom of righteousness and justice.

A Davidic people here and now marks the Kingdom of God. Whether they are Jewish or Gentile, both heritages have left that heritage to embrace something deeper. We join spiritually and psychologically the remnant that has always existed. We struggle inwardly and outwardly for the rest of Israel. Our ambition is to serve and make this world habitable for God and His people. We vicariously come into the Scripture and claim their history as our history, their promises as our promises. Paul addressed the Gentile believers in Corinth as though their fathers were with Moses.<sup>dxvi</sup> He also tells those in Ephesus they have been brought into the commonwealth of Israel.<sup>dxvii</sup>



The inclusion of the Gentiles has not given us something new, but has continued the same faith that has been once and for all. That which is Davidic is expressed through the Church in that we display a character and mode of being that is ultimate humility. Guilelessness is the character of David. We are true Israelites indeed, not because we have faith in the Messiah, but because we have been converted out of the Egypt of our own nations and into a glorious newness of life. That newness of life is expressed in lifestyle as well as submission to a kingdom that is not of this earth. We are the fragrance of Christ, and that fragrance is mishpocha Yehudi. There is a literal Hebrew quality to our lives that is animated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We're taken out of our Gentile livelihood and brought into the tent of Shem.

### Christ Jesus' Rule from the Throne of David Upon Zion

The expression of the kingdom of God in this world through the Church is the same expression that we find in the Old Testament. There has ever and always been a remnant. Yet, when Christ returns, He does not only come to establish world peace. The establishment of world peace, and the coming of the nations unto Jerusalem is the result of Zion being made manifest on earth as it is in heaven. The Kingdom that we speak of as heavenly currently, even though it has manifestations in the earth through the Church, will come down out of heaven and be one with the earth. Heaven and earth shall kiss. There shall be a marriage of heaven and earth in such a way that we cannot distinguish the one from the other.

In that day, there will be a people that will rule and reign alongside of Christ Jesus with their resurrected bodies. We don't get new bodies. Our bodies get resurrected. The slight difference is significant. Resurrection is not about glory, but instead about eternal life. We like to hype things up and romanticize them. The glory of resurrection does not come from some sort of glorious body, but instead from the unification of spirit, soul, and body. There is no longer a fight in our bodies, flesh against spirit. With the resurrected body comes unity with Christ in a manner that we can only scratch the surface on describing. That kind of unity with Christ is not yet experienced, only intuited. Jesus ate fish, had scars, and told Thomas to touch the hole in His side. Christ's new body was not 'new', but the same body revitalized.

It will be upon the establishment of this Kingdom upon the earth that the saints of God will be granted resurrection. Because they have humbled themselves unto death, they are given ultimate authority. Some will rule over ten cities, and others will rule over five. Ruling and reigning is about being a servant. It is not about lording it over one another like the Gentiles do, but instead about being the servant of all. To understand ruling and reigning, we only need to look to the Gospels, the book of Acts, and the epistles. Examine the way that the apostles teach. Seek to understand the way that Christ brings His disciples to maturity. This does not happen because He is able to somehow snap His fingers and people obey. Instead, He takes upon Himself the sin of all mankind, and through His love He covers a multitude of sins. Paul told the Church in Corinth that he would be expended on their behalf,<sup>dxviii</sup> and the Church in Philippi that he pours himself out like a drink offering to them.<sup>dxix</sup>

The consummation of this age will conclude in Christ establishing the Davidic Kingdom upon the earth, in which all the nations will be blessed by that rule. The throne of God is established upon righteousness and justice. That same heart that would promote Mephibosheth to sit at the table of David is the heart that will triumphantly enter Jerusalem once more. When Christ returns, more is happening than simply defeating the Antichrist and putting His enemies under His feet. There is love. There is grace. There is passion for the oppressed. Jesus' establishment upon the throne of David means that this holy kingdom governs all the nations of the earth. That kind of kingdom, with that kind of character, is the very thing that every human being on the planet desires.

I think many times we have the wrong assumption that God's character changes when Jesus returns. He came meek and lowly, but when He returns He will be fierce and hostile.<sup>dxxx</sup> Christ showed the character of love and compassion and longsuffering, but when He returns He will show anger, vengeance, and oppression. How can we have a theology based upon God's attributes, and then completely cast all of God's character aside so that we can then fit in a God that would judge the world? If Christ was a servant in His first coming, He will be a servant in His second coming. Don't forget that Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth, and yet this meek man had the authority to demand all of Israel to drink the powder of their golden calf.<sup>dxxxi</sup> Not a whimper is noted in the Scripture against Moses at that moment. Likewise, Christ will have the authority to demand justice, and justice is exactly what the people will perform. The sword out of Jesus' mouth is the decree of God over all peoples. That decree is justice and righteousness, which can either be a blessing or a curse. Christ's character doesn't change when He returns, but instead is manifest gloriously when even the resurrected saints display that temperament to the ends of the earth.

The enemies of God are not necessarily nations that oppose Him. They are the spiritual rulers that manipulate and jerk humanity into following a lie. To overcome those powers of darkness and set free the nations is to establish for all of humanity the same kind of freedom that we have in Christ as both Jew and Gentile. No longer are we governed by the same pagan practices of our nations, even if those nations are supposedly established upon righteousness, but have now been brought into the depth of freedom. Freedom is living out from the very core of who we are without restraint. When all of humanity and even the nations are able to live in that kind of freedom – to be what God has called them to be – the rule of David over those nations will blossom into ecstasy. The stories and psalms of David are glimpses into this eternal Kingdom of God. What we know only through a glass darkly now will be revealed fully when Christ comes.<sup>dxxxii</sup>

## Chapter 20: Second Advent

The Tribulation ends with the war against the Antichrist – Armageddon. It is this moment – the return of Christ – that every loose end aggregates together at a focal point. The Scripture is somehow terse, while still being expansive on these subjects. The authors of such prophecies give only a few words regarding such a monumental moment, but the combination of this prophecy with those prophecies, and the addition of the events leading up to this point, give us such an expanse that we could probably only read what the Bible says and have many more volumes of understanding than any book or “prophetic interpretation” will ever convene.

So maybe the first thing to do is read the text of Jesus’ return in its entirety. Revelation 19:11-21 reads as follows: “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND  
LORD OF LORDS.

“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”

“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

The scene painted here in Revelation 19 is graphic. The book of Revelation never puts down any detail that is not already somewhere else in Scripture. The man who sits upon the white horse is obviously Christ. His robe is dipped in blood. Where do we find this in the Old Testament? Isaiah 63:1-4: “Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? ‘It is I, speaking in righteousness, might to save.’ Why are your garments red, like those of one treading in the winepress? ‘I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them

down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come.”

This man who is coming from Bozrah is Christ. It is a vivid picture, coupled with Revelation 19:13. I find it quite interesting that it says in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 that Christ will return and destroy “the man of sin” with the breath of His mouth. We see in Revelation 19:15 the sword that comes from Jesus’ mouth. We find in Isaiah 27:1, “In that day, the Lord will punish with his sword, his fierce, great, and powerful sword, Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea.” Is it possible that Leviathan is a symbol of the Antichrist? Isaiah 31:8 mentions that “Assyria will fall by a sword that is not of man; a sword, not of mortals, will devour them” (also see Psalm 74:13-14).

Yet, even though the sword that comes from Christ’s mouth kills the Antichrist, it is the birds that seem to at least feast on (if not kill) the army of the Antichrist. We read in Isaiah 18:6, “They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals; the birds will feed on them all summer, the wild animals all winter.” Ezekiel 39:4 reads, “On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals.” Jeremiah 7:33 reads, “Then the carcasses of this people will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away.” This might give us a hint about what Jesus was saying when He spoke, “Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather”<sup>dxxxiii</sup>.

It would be beneficial to also look at Zechariah 12 and Zechariah 14. To read the chapters in full would help to give a little more context and detail. The same is true for Ezekiel 38-39. I will insert Scripture references to check in relation to this passage. In Zechariah 14 we read, “A day of the Lord is coming when your plunder will be divided among you (Joel 3:1-3). I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.” These first two verses are in relation to the time of Jacob’s Trouble. The Antichrist establishes the abomination of desolation at the temple, and Israel then goes into flight. It is after this flight that Zechariah 14:3 then picks up.

“Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Isaiah 31:4), east of Jerusalem (Psalm 48:4-7), and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley (Joel 3:1-3, Revelation 16:18-19, Isaiah 29:5-8), with half the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and the holy ones with him (Matthew 25:31).

“On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime – a day known to the Lord (Matthew 24:36). When evening comes, there will be light. On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in the summer and winter. The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord and his name the only name. The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the

Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up and remain in its place,<sup>dxxxiv</sup> from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses. It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.”

We then read in Zechariah 14:12-15 about those that marched against Jerusalem. This back tracks slightly to describe the battle mentioned in Zechariah 14:3-5. “This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day men will be stricken by the Lord with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other. Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected – great quantities of gold and silver and clothing. A similar plague will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and all the animals in those camps.”

Does it get any clearer? Why is there so much speculation and junk teaching about the end times? How much more detail does the Lord need to give? He has said to the nations: “Raise the war cry, you nations, and be shattered! Listen, all you distant lands. Prepare for battle, and be shattered! Prepare for battle and be shattered! Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; purpose your plan, but it will not stand”<sup>dxxxv</sup> “The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”<sup>dxxxvi</sup>

The war against Jerusalem at the very end is hinted at in Daniel 11:40-45, but specifically verse 45: “He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.” This last verse is about the Antichrist going up to the *west* side of Jerusalem, “between the seas.” Then we read in Zechariah 14 that Christ’s return is upon the *east* of Jerusalem. While the Antichrist sets up his tents on the west side, and tries to claim the holy mountain (Zion), Christ then returns on the east side and it is over before it started.

There are details about what might be happening at this point, and why the Antichrist might have been alarmed,<sup>dxxxvii</sup> but we won’t get into that for now. A deeper study of eschatology would be necessary to further develop such things. What is most necessary is to outline how these Scriptures come together to paint the big picture, and the details then are easily understood from that big picture view. It is at the return of Christ that the Antichrist is defeated and the Kingdom of God established upon this earth. There are quite a few prophecies concerning the establishment of this Kingdom, along with “the Branch” or “the son of David” to rule over this Kingdom.

### Establishment of the Branch

“In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. The Lord will wash away the filth of the women in Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by

day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm.”

Isaiah 4:2-6 paints for us a beautiful day. On this day, the return of Christ, we see that the day of the Lord is not specifically judgment. It is a day of redemption. God redeems Israel for Himself. All Israel is saved. Once again in this passage we have wording that seems very much like a “new exodus.” There is the cloud of smoke by day and the glow of flaming fire by night. Here we have the heavenly Zion established upon the earth. God has made it on earth as it is in heaven. The smoke and the fire are reflections on a time when God led Israel to the Promised Land. Just as God led Israel out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan safely, so too will God lead Israel out of the nations and unto Zion.

The prophet Isaiah cried out later, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”<sup>dxviii</sup> This establishment of the branch is the establishment of Jesus upon the throne of David. “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on him whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.”<sup>dxix</sup>

Once again in Isaiah, we have a statement made to Israel to “return to him you have so greatly revolted against”.<sup>dxl</sup> The obvious context is God, but is it plausible that their revolt against God is most evident in their rejection of Jesus as the messiah? It is upon seeing that man whom they have pierced that they are broken and do indeed return to God. It actually is called the spirit of grace and supplication. Grace and supplication is poured out upon Israel when Christ returns, which is interesting because up to that point they would have been in flight through the nations. Yet, God’s judgments are His mercy. It is in the nations that Israel has seen God face to face. They have been receiving grace and supplication, so it is little wonder that the Spirit would be poured out upon them when they see Jesus return in full glory and recognize Him whom they have pierced.

“Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it, says the Lord Almighty, and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.”<sup>dxli</sup> Notice the verse in Revelation 5 that reads, “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” We have in Zechariah 3 a stone, also called the Branch, that has seven eyes upon it. Then in Revelation 5:6, we see the Lamb that has seven eyes. Zechariah 4:10 also reference these seven eyes. What are these eyes?

The symbolism is defined for us in Revelation 5:6 as the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Who are the seven spirits? Some have claimed that they are the seven archangels from Jewish tradition. We know of two of them: Michael and Gabriel.

Then there is in the book of Tobit an angel named Raphael. I, however, enjoy the idea of understanding Scripture from Scripture. In Revelation 1, we find the seven candlesticks with the seven angels. I think it is much more reasonable to say that these seven spirits that go throughout the earth are actually the seven Churches and the seven angels (or ministers) of those Churches.<sup>dxlii</sup> That stone is Christ, the capstone that the builders rejected. His Body is still in the earth. Just as it says in Zechariah 2:8 that Israel is the pupil of God's eye, we who have been grafted into that same root act as the "seven eyes" of the Lord. He engraves upon the stone an inscription, and that inscription is mentioned in Isaiah 49:16. "See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands..."

We sing hymns about our names being written on Christ's heart and in His hands. From the context of Zechariah 3, I assume that it is seeing the name of Israel engraved into the very palm of Christ when He returns<sup>dxliii</sup> that causes for the nation to be born in a single day. Isaiah 66:8 and Zechariah 3:9 both indicate the "single day" salvation and cleansing of Israel. The national salvation happens on the day of Christ's return, but there has been a three and a half year process leading up to that.

Later in Zechariah 6, the subject of the Branch is taken up again. "Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two."<sup>dxliv</sup> Do you notice how God is asserting that David's throne, priestliness, God's temple (which was upon Zion), and the redemption of Israel all come together? It is debatable as to whether what is being stated here is a literal fourth temple, which we read of in Ezekiel 40-48, or whether this is symbolic of "living stones being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood".<sup>dxlv</sup>

In case there was question, we know from multiple passages of Scripture that this Branch *must* be the return of Christ. We see in Luke 21:27, Revelation 11:15, Matthew 24:27, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, and Daniel 7:13-14 the return of Christ. This isn't anything new or profound; you already know this. We see in Amos 9:11 that the messiah is given the throne of David. We also see that same notion maintained in Ezekiel 34:22-24 and Ezekiel 37:23-24. What Ezekiel adds about this rule of David is that he will be a shepherd. Think about the heart of Christ when He saw the large crowds and had compassion on them. They were like sheep without a shepherd.<sup>dxlvi</sup> The establishment of the Branch is the Second Advent. We know this because of the context of these prophecies.

"Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see! Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself. Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at your rebuke your people perish. Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself."<sup>dxlvii</sup> In this passage, we see something strange. It seems like this passage is talking about Jesus, yet there is this reference to the vine being the people Israel in verse 16. As I mentioned in chapter 8, Jesus and Israel seem to be tied together in a very peculiar manner. The general rule of thumb is: as with Israel, so with Jesus, and as with Jesus, so with Israel.

We saw in the first part of this section that the Antichrist sets himself up on the west side of Jerusalem, and that Jesus enters Jerusalem on the east side. This detail gives

us insight on how to interpret Isaiah 41:2, “Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow.” The ultimate joy of Christ’s return is expressed in the very next chapter: “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on the earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.”<sup>dxlviii</sup>

### Jesus Rules from Jerusalem and Zion

Up to this point I have asserted that Jesus rules and reigns from Zion. I’ve given a couple of Scripture references, but for the most part I have not gone into much depth on this subject. What are the various Scriptures to explain that God has indeed established to rule and reign from Jerusalem and Zion?

One of the classic texts that I use almost immediately is Isaiah chapter 2. “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, ‘Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

The law shall go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. God shall set His King upon Zion, and that King shall be given the inheritance of the nations.<sup>dxlix</sup> Zechariah 14:16 tells us that the survivors of all the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. It is during this time that Israel will “lend to many nations but will borrow from none.” They will “rule over many nations but none will rule over” them.<sup>dl</sup>

The psalmist writes, “Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King. God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress”.<sup>dli</sup> Isaiah 24:23 adds, “the Lord Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.” From Isaiah 2, we get the pattern that Mount Zion will be lifted up higher than all the other mountains. The people of all nations will then stream unto it. However, Zion won’t be elevated higher than Everest. Everest will be “made low”.<sup>dlii</sup> We see the reason that the nations stream to it, and the reason that the law goes forth out of Zion, the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem, is because the Lord Almighty will reign upon Zion.

We see in Jeremiah 31:6, “There will be a day when watchmen cry out on the hills of Ephraim, ‘Come, let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God’.” In Psalm 102, we



find the time of Jacob's Trouble expressed quite intensely. It is upon the return of the Lord that Zion is rebuilt (verse 16). In verse 21 we read, "So the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the Lord." It is on that day that Joel writes, "And everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls".<sup>dliii</sup>

The words are true still today, "Again the word of the Lord Almighty came to me. This is what the Lord Almighty says: I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her. This is what the Lord says: I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."<sup>dliiv</sup> Many passages speak of the Lord ruling from Zion. It is and always has been the apple of his eye. What I find interesting is that Zion then becomes the joy of even the nations. We find in Zechariah 14:17 the hint that nations will have the choice to come up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, however if they refuse, they will undergo certain punishments. But for the most part, the prophecies mentioned in Scripture seem to indicate bliss.

I can't help but think about how the Gentile believers wept upon the neck of Paul when they discovered that he would be bound hand in foot when he went to Jerusalem. What was it about the character of Paul that caused for both Jewish and Gentile believers to delight in him? I think it goes back to being Davidic. When you are no longer Jewish, Roman, Greek, Hamite, Semite, or of Japheth, but are instead of Zion, people's reactions are quite contrary to what we would originally assume. Even the most bitter hearts toward Christianity open up when there is a fragrance of heavenly reality. I've learned that my friends who want nothing to do with Christ have actually been more willing to speak to me about it than others because, "You're not like every one else."

Zion and Jerusalem become the joy of the nations because it is not of this world. It is the full expression of everything their souls have ever longed for. When that expression manifests, who of us can reject it? We might be skeptical at first, but certainly that skepticism will vanish the moment we receive the benefit of it. We'll all be groaning, "Heaven, more heaven." The nations no longer rebel against God when Zion is established upon the earth. No longer is there a tower at Babel to keep from being scattered. Instead, the nations are finally able to express themselves as they have been intended from their inception to express themselves.

## Chapter 21: Gathered from Nations

When Jesus returns, he sets up shop in Jerusalem. It is from Zion that the law goes forth, and out of Jerusalem goes the word of the Lord. Israel is at that time finally knowing the Lord their God, and we will fulfill our purpose of being the priestly nation to the nations. There is only one question that remains. Are the people that make up Israel already in the Land? More Scriptures than I can quote speak of the ingathering of Israel, and it is interesting that with many of these Scriptures comes a regathering as well. When they are “ingathered” to Christ, they will then also be gathered again from all nations unto which they have been sifted.

I’m not sure how much this is realized, but the people of Israel are more than the Israelis. There are Jews around the world. Jewish communities are even in the most remote places of the world that we wouldn’t expect. God has established that where the Church is, so is the Jew. The two go hand-in-hand together. God has given us every opportunity to witness to them. However, when we witness to them, we need to understand that they aren’t the Jewish people of our city that we’re speaking to. Their family heritage is traced back to Israel. Though they might not technically be in Israel, and though they might even think that where they are located does not matter, God still remembers each inherited plot of land from the time of Joshua and to whom that plot of land is designated.

The Jewish people are Israelis whether they like it or not. And we, too, having been grafted in, have a place in Zion. If the Jewish people dispersed even currently throughout the world, and to be sifted again through all nations, are to come back to Jerusalem, what are some of the terms of that gathering? I think of the Exodus where God told Israel that they will not flee. They will go out with joy like royalty.<sup>dlv</sup> Remember the Scripture in Isaiah 11 that we looked at earlier. It says that God will gather His people *a second time* from “Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonian, from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth”.<sup>dlvi</sup>

My mind flashes to that verse that is later in Isaiah where the prophet foretells of the nature of their coming. “See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will carry your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on your shoulders. Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who hope in me will not be disappointed”.<sup>dlvii</sup> Just like in the Exodus, Israel does not return in gloom or despair. Contrary to that thought, it is written, “The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will be upon their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away”.<sup>dlviii</sup> God will do great things in their midst. They will see miracles before their eyes as they wander the wilderness of the nations. Isaiah 35 states earlier that “the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped” – obviously an undoing of Isaiah 6:9-10 – “Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.”

Israel will survive their time of trouble because of the providence of God. Miracles will burst forth, both through the Church as well as in the literal wandering of the wilderness. The divine character being manifest to Israel is what God meant when saying: “I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”<sup>dlx</sup>

Ezekiel saw the devastation of Israel. God speaks to Him about how He will strike their hearts with fear and terror. By the time they come to this point in the narrative, God has already been striking at that heart of stone. Here in Ezekiel 36 we have cogent and precise words. These are calculated. God gathers them from the nations – even upon the shoulders of kings and queens<sup>dlx</sup> – and it is in this divine manifestation of love that Israel breaks down and weeps. At the coming of Christ, the people of Israel have already gone through torture. What is a judgment upon them is an act of mercy and love, for Jesus even told the Church in Laodicea, “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.”<sup>dlxi</sup> When the power of that people is broken, as is mentioned in Daniel 12:7, they have finally come to the place where they can see God and accept Him. It takes ruthless breaking upon them for it to come, but so it is with us all.

This is why Isaiah 14:1 starts with the words, “I will have compassion on Jacob.” Jeremiah 3:18 states that “in those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.” That divided house that has been at enmity with one another since the time of Rehoboam (and further pressed by Ezra and Nehemiah who rejected their brethren from Northern Israel) will be joined once again. Christ will break down the wall of hostility between them. Yet, Isaiah 14:1 goes a step further in even adding the detail, “Aliens will join them and unite with the house of Jacob.” Not only will Israel and Judah be united, as Ezekiel 37:15-28 also suggests, but even the foreigners and Gentiles will be added to them. Guess who that is!

Zechariah 10:10 tells us that “there will not be room enough for them.” We find the same sentiment in Isaiah 49:20-21 when we read, “The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, ‘This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.’ Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who has brought these up? I was left all alone, but these – where have they come from?’” Notice in Isaiah that the point is being made that Israel was utterly ruined, and the woman who is here is looking out and seeing the ruins. She is metaphoric Zion, seeing the devastation and the small remnant that is left in her. She cries out “I was left all alone,” but now sees coming upon the shoulders of the Gentiles her sons and daughters born to her from afar – reared and nourished by a people that Isaiah calls later in chapter 56 “eunuchs”, who Jesus alludes to in Matthew 19:12.

Jeremiah tells us that among those who return will be “the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return. They will come weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them besides streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel’s father, and Ephraim is my firstborn son”<sup>dlxii</sup>.

We see in Ezekiel 20:41: "I will accept you as a fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered." This, no doubt, is where Paul got his understanding that we are the "fragrance of Christ." We have been brought out of our own nations and unto Zion through Christ. The fragrance of Christ will in that day be at work in Israel, which will cause them to also have "singleness of heart and action".<sup>dlxiii</sup> This also reminds me of something Paul said to the Corinthians, where he encouraged them to be one in spirit and heart. Do you see how the new covenant Scriptures affects the way that we live? And yet we also know there is a coming time where the new covenant shall be fulfilled to the uttermost.

The importance of recognizing the return from the nations is critical. We spoke briefly about how the return in 1948 could not be this final return. Do you see why? After going this far in the eschatological Scripture, can you see why it is that the Nazi Holocaust cannot be the Time of Jacob's Trouble, and the return to Israel cannot be the final return? Though Israel returned with gladness and joy, Isaiah 51:11 tells us that "sorrow and sighing will flee away." Sorrow and sighing has not fled away, and indeed Israel's enemies are on every side. The Gentiles did not bring Israel back. Ezekiel 28:26 says that the Israelites will live safely and build houses and plant vineyards. The abundance of Scripture on this subject is simply embarrassing. The fact that we as the Church have pretty well not even recognized this tells us just how Scripturally nonliterate we are. We have every ability to read the Bible, but we don't.

### New Exodus

"So then, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "When people will no longer say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land."<sup>dlxiv</sup> This passage from Jeremiah 23 should give us a moment to pause. I've used the term "New Exodus", but how legitimate is that term? Honestly, can we use such a wording when God says that it will *not* be like when He brought them out of Egypt? It is interesting that God makes the point that no longer will the Israelites need to look back to Moses in order to know that the Lord lives.

Have you ever spoken with a religious Jewish person? They might pray to God. They might or might not believe that God performs miracles. They might tediously obey the Torah. They might find joy in keeping the Law. But, something that is strangely missing in the religious Jew should become obvious as you speak to them or listen to them give lecture. Though they give homage to God, they don't really seem to believe that He is living. Of course, like most of us, they would accept the doctrine that God is alive. But, often they don't speak of how God interacts in their daily life. They are extremely humanistic. They employ the correct terminology, often time knowing the Scripture better than we do, and yet that terminology is only vocabulary.<sup>dlxv</sup> It is much like many of us who claim to have a "burden" for the lost. That supposed burden that is plaguing our soul is nothing more than vocabulary.

Isaiah 31:5 has an interesting phrase. God says that He will come down upon Mount Zion to do battle, but it says that He will “pass over it and will rescue it.” This, of course, should have us immediately think of Exodus. The Lord came with the spirit of death, and those who had the blood upon their doorposts were “passed over”. What is the blood upon the doorposts? God says, “Like birds hovering overhead, the Lord Almighty will shield Jerusalem; he will shield it and deliver it.” Think back to Isaiah 4:5. “Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy.”<sup>dlxvi</sup>

The blood on the doorposts is the Lord Almighty. We know this to be Christ, our Passover Lamb. Yet, in Isaiah 4, we find some more interesting information here. Christ is the Passover Lamb, and His blood is sprinkled upon the doorposts of our lives. Yet, that same Lord Almighty that will be over Mount Zion as a shield to protect her in Isaiah 31 is described in Isaiah 4 as the cloud by day and fire by night. Above all of this glory is a canopy. What does that mean? This is no doubt a chuppa. In Jewish weddings, the bride and groom stand underneath a chuppa. That chuppa is a symbol of God overshadowing the lives of these two – a three-chord strand is not easily broken.<sup>dlxvii</sup>

What we see in Isaiah 4 is a hint as to what the wedding of the Lamb is. It is the gathering back of Israel, the bringing forth of the nations to give tribute to the Lord, and the uniting of the Church and Israel to become one flesh – a Bride of Christ. The reason that the term New Exodus works just fine, but at the same time might not be a big enough term, is because at Sinai, God spoke in wedding language to Israel. The Ten Commandments are His vows. He came down upon Sinai with a cloud that was overhead – a chuppa. He invites Israel to be married to Him, and what is the response? Israel tells Moses to speak to God, but they don’t want to hear Him.

God was left at the altar.

But now, at the consummation of the age, Israel will finally be united unto their Husband, and being united to Christ they will be a part of that heavenly Jerusalem. Remember that the foundations of that city are twelve stones, each one representing the apostles. But, the gates of pearl are 12 gates, each representing one of the tribes of Israel. Zion is the Bride, and the Bride is Zion. The expression of Zion is found where humanity and divinity marry. Spirit and flesh unite and become one. No longer are we stuck in this battle between wanting to do good, but that which I want to do I do not do. That which I do not want to do, the evil found within my sinful nature, I find myself doing. Oh wretched man that I am! Who can rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!<sup>dlxviii</sup> The gathering of Israel from the nations is the coming up to Zion for marriage.

### Destruction of Idols

When Israel is regathered from the nations unto the Land, she is given the obligation to destroy all of her idols. By this time, since the coming of messiah has already taken place, Israel and all the Jewish people are believers. The idolatry in the heart has been eradicated. The outworking of that heart transplant is the destruction of the idols that fill Israel – whether graffiti, occult temples, whore houses, or the abomination

of desolation. God gives the clear charge to destroy the idols. In Isaiah 27:9, we read about the altar stones being like chalk stones ground to pieces. No Asherah poles or incense altars will be left standing. The children of Israel will destroy all of her idols, and in that they find their full redemption.

The pattern of God's Kingdom is David. Yet, there is a real sense in which Josiah is also a pattern. He was the last great king of Judah. Josiah tore down all of the idols and high places. He scattered bones and feces upon the altars to ensure they were unclean and could never be used again. It is a symbol of a future king who would restore Israel back to her land, and an Israel that would then break down all of the idols that have been erected. The final restoration of Israel to the Land will not take place in a land that is spotless, but instead in a land that needs to be refurbished. The cities will be in ruins. The land will be desecrated. Idols will clutter the countryside. And Israel is brought back to her Husband at Zion. It is in this new condition that we can even reflect on our own salvation. When we came to Christ, we were not the cleanest people. There were idols and abominations that we needed to tear down.

It is at the return of Christ that thrones are set up, and there are people who will rule over the whole of the earth. That rule cannot go forth unto a pagan world if Israel itself still has pagan idolatry. The tearing down of the idols symbolizes the baptism of Israel – for we it is a burial into the waters of death to be raised up unto glorious newness of life; for Israel, it is the destruction of the idols to show that they are no longer governed by demonic powers, but have been gloriously set free by the power of resurrection in Christ Jesus. The one symbol of baptism is given to the individual, but the destruction of the idols is given unto the nation.

## Chapter 22: Full Redemption – In One Day

After such a long endeavor to share the heart of God for the eschatological plan of redemption, we now come to the understanding that Israel is fully redeemed in a single day. First, let us establish the many verses that speak of the full redemption of Israel, and then we shall venture into the texts that describe that it happens in a single day. I've asserted previously, but now I show from the Scripture, that when Israel is saved, the nations shall also be saved.

The easiest text to go to is Romans 11:26: "And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come out of Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.'" Here we have a quotation from Psalm 14:7. However, this could also be a quotation from Isaiah. Isaiah 59:20 reads, "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins..." We discussed briefly at the end of the previous chapter the destruction of the idols. Isaiah 27:9 speaks of the destruction of the idols, but the first part of that verse reads, "By this, then, will Jacob's guilt be atoned for, and this will be the full fruitage of the removal of his sin." It is not simply that the idols need to be cleaned up because God wants to have the Land purged. The destruction of the idols signifies the full redemption of Israel.

While we have been saved by the grace of God, it is not enough to simply say that we are redeemed. There is still something further: the seal of the Holy Spirit. The Nazarenes call this the second work of grace; the Charismatics call it the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The truth is, we can be technically saved without the filling of the Spirit, but our salvation is utter and full when we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit and are now free from all bounds of sin. In the book of Acts, this was accomplished by the laying on of hands by the apostles. In the case of Israel, it is accomplished by the destruction of these idols.

"Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains and on the hills and under every spreading tree where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places."<sup>dlxix</sup>  
"When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul."<sup>dlxx</sup>

We find that about the time of their regathering, Isaiah prophesied, "The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city deserted; citadel and watchtower will become a wasteland forever, the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks, till the Spirit is poured

upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest.”<sup>dlxxi</sup> The Spirit is poured out from on high upon the whole house of Israel. As it is written, “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them.”<sup>dlxxii</sup> What does it mean that they will not break this New Covenant?

Paul answers that in Romans 7. They who are dead are no longer bound to the Law; therefore we who have died with Christ are no longer bound to the Law, but instead are bound to Christ. Israel, while they are currently bound to the law, and therefore bound to death and sin, will be released from their oppression to be made new in Christ. Jeremiah continues: “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.” Compare this with Ezekiel 36: “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart” – the same heart mentioned before by Jeremiah with the Law written upon it – “and put a new spirit within you” – the sealing of the Holy Spirit unto Christ – “I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

It is significant to note that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was prophesied to an entire nation. While the baptism is marvelous, and we have received a foretaste of things to come, it needs to be recognized that the fulfillment of this prophecy is when Israel is saved to the uttermost. God has given us a foretaste, but we shouldn’t take this as being the end in itself. Neither shall we despise the day of small things. If the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?<sup>dlxxiii</sup> Now, if the ministry of the Spirit that we have in our midst is “surpassing glory” compared to the Old Covenant made at Sinai, what eternal weight of glory must the accomplishment, the bearing of the fruit of our labors be? We are ministers of a New Covenant,<sup>dlxxiv</sup> given the task of driving Israel to jealousy<sup>dlxxv</sup> by being an offering acceptable unto God,<sup>dlxxvi</sup> sanctified through the Holy Spirit.<sup>dlxxvii</sup>

Isaiah 12:3 speaks of Israel drawing water from the wells of salvation with joy. We know that this water is the living water mentioned in John 7:37-38, of which we as believers of the New Covenant drink (1 Corinthians 12:13 with nostalgic reference to John 4:10). This baptism of the Spirit for Israel takes place at the return unto a land filled with “vile images and detestable idols” which Israel will have to remove. Ezekiel 11 continues from that phrase to say, “I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and given them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done.”<sup>dlxxviii</sup>

Zephaniah adds, “On that day you will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to me, because I will remove from this city those who rejoice in their pride. Never again will you be haughty on my holy hill. But I will leave within you the meek



and humble who trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid.<sup>dlxxxix</sup> Israel shall at this time have a spirit of humility, which is the spirit of Christ. No longer will they be prideful or haughty, not because God will destroy all who have pride and haughtiness, but because God will pour out the Spirit of grace and supplication upon the remnant.<sup>dlxxx</sup> All men are prideful and haughty, thus we cannot say it is somehow that these who survive are not.

We know that it is not because of their lack of pride that they are spared, but rather that God will “judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats.”<sup>dlxxxix</sup> For this reason we have a verse in Zechariah 9:11-12 about God freeing the prisoners from the waterless pit and restoring twice as much to them. It is “because of the blood of my covenant with you” that God redeems Israel. What exactly is that “blood of [His] covenant”? “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”<sup>dlxxxii</sup> The very wine that we drink, the bread we break, as ministers of the New Covenant is the symbol of Israel’s redemption. Not because of their humility, but rather because of Christ’s atonement will God restore them.

They will meet with God in the wilderness, where God has set a table for them, and that table is Christ. We break the bread and we give them the wine of the New Covenant. We display to Israel during her final calamity the reality of the New Heaven and New Earth at work within us – not because God has already established them, but because though we are in the world we are not of the world. While the earthly Jerusalem is currently the son of the slave woman, the heavenly Jerusalem is free.<sup>dlxxxiii</sup> We are not under the bondage of the earthly Jerusalem, but have been freed for freedom’s sake<sup>dlxxxiv</sup> to drive the Jew to envy.<sup>dlxxxv</sup> By our mercy they shall obtain mercy.<sup>dlxxxvi</sup> For this reason, we lay down our lives as living sacrifices.<sup>dlxxxvii</sup> We are the offering. We are the bread broken for them. Our blood is the wine poured out, because Christ is in us, and we are His body. This isn’t to diminish the work of Christ, but all the more to exult it.

When Israel shall taste of that New Covenant wine for the first time after she has been restored, “a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity. On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more.”<sup>dlxxxviii</sup> What day is this? It is the day of the return of Christ. Up to this point, Israel has been fed with “the bread of affliction”,<sup>dlxxxix</sup> but now “your teachers will be hidden no more.”<sup>dlxc</sup> Who are these teachers Isaiah is speaking of? They are the ministers of the New Covenant – the Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ Jesus our Lord. They are the wise mentioned in Daniel 11:33-35. “With your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’ Then you will defile your idols overlaid in silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, ‘Away with you!’”

It is for this reason, because their teachers are no longer hidden from their eyes, and because they drink deeply from the well of salvation the eternal Spirit, that Isaiah later says, “But Israel will be saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting.”<sup>dlxci</sup> Obadiah declares, “But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be by holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance.”<sup>dlxcii</sup> Of this inheritance, Paul writes concerning the believers, “Having

believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory.”<sup>dxciiii</sup>

Moses asks, “Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?”<sup>dxciiv</sup> Zechariah then continues this thought by comparing it to the end time exodus back to the Land: This is what the Lord Almighty says, “It may seem marvelous to the remnant of the people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?”<sup>dxcev</sup> This reminds me of a question that Jesus asked in Luke 18:8. “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

It is the eternal perspective that saves us. It is the love of the truth.<sup>dxcvi</sup> When we see the magnificence of God's eternal plan, it saves us from being cheap or casual. We have an end to work toward. We are no longer going about by our days wandering through life until we either die or the Lord returns. Now we have a purpose in Christ, and that purpose saves us from pride and deception. Will Christ find faith upon the earth when He returns, or will the majority of His followers be asleep? I have often found it quite astounding that Jesus tells the parable of the ten virgins. All ten of them fell asleep, and woke up just before His coming. It was at that time that the five realized they did not have enough oil, and by that time it was too late to go and buy. How many of us will also be caught doing just a little too little a little too late?

### In One Day

We saw in Isaiah 10:20-23 that there would come a time when Israel will no longer rely on him who strikes them down – the Antichrist – but now returns to the Lord. In the verses leading up to this statement, we find verse 17: “The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and briers.” In a single day... There are few verses that speak of this, but many that speak of “the Day of the Lord.” Why the “Day” and not the “Days”? Some have speculated that the Day of the Lord is a period of time, and that the Hebrew word yom can have that loose translation. I'm not entirely convinced. There are some references to the Day of the Lord that seem to be outside of the return of Christ, this is true. However, the vast majority can all be found in a single day, or maybe to better word it, can be the result of a single day.

The return of Christ is the Day of the Lord. It is upon that one day that all of history pivots. The two advents of Christ are the two hinges that we understand the entirety of the Bible to swing upon. While we understand that there is more that happens before and after the return of Christ, it does seem as though the defeat of the Antichrist, the locking up of Satan in his prison,<sup>dxcevii</sup> the redemption of Israel, and the banner set up for the nations to behold the glory of God are all accomplished in a single day. From that day, there are other things that might take longer, such as the rebuilding of the ruins, the bringing back of the Diaspora, the destruction of idols, etc. Yet, those things that might

take longer than a day to accomplish in no way should be considered factors to speak against the notion of the Day of the Lord being a single day.

For example, we read in Ezekiel 36:33-36 that “on the day I cleanse you from all your sins,” God will resettle their towns, the ruins will be rebuilt, the desolate land will be cultivated, the cities will be fortified, and the land will be replanted. Do we conclude that because it says, “On the day” that all of these things take place in a single day? Of course not. Yet, we also do not consider that because these things take multiple days that God is intending that “on that day” would actually refer to a period of time. When it says in Zechariah 3:9, and is also repeated in 9:16, “I will remove the sin of this land in a single day,” we can be confident that the removal of sin is indeed accomplished in a single day. I was saved on December 14, 2006. Does that mean that because it took me years before I finally broke free of my many sinful addictions and habits that I wasn’t truly saved until 2010 (to give a guess)?

There is an initial vertex from which we see the rest of time and history extending out – both into the past and into the future. There are three points of history that we need to focus upon for proper theology: the two trees in the Garden of Eden, the crucifixion of Christ Jesus, and the return of Christ Jesus. In the Garden of Eden, we find two trees. Mankind ate from the one and was guarded from the way of the tree of life after eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Christ then took that tree from which we have all found death – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – and died upon it, telling His disciples, “Take up your cross and follow me.” From that point forward in history, we come to another time when the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is no longer found; only the tree of life remains from which the nations shall come and eat its fruit for healing. Between Genesis 3 and Revelation 21-22, it is only “life between the trees”.

However, I would even argue that there seems to be a hint of the tree of life being established in the Millennial Kingdom. When Christ Jesus rules upon this earth for 1000 years, there will be a river to flow out from the Temple. It was this Millennial Kingdom that Ezekiel saw. Many of the Old Testament prophets saw the Millennium, and yet spoke of it in a manner that would cause us to think it is the New Heaven and New Earth. It might very well be that the Millennial Kingdom has the tree of life for the nations to come unto. In that case, we find that between Genesis 3 and Revelation 20 is “life between the trees”. All of the curse, sin, death, and what fallen humanity is accommodated with currently is not the reality. There is a reality beyond that – Genesis chapters 1-2, and Revelation 21-22. There are four chapters of humanity that speak past the corruption that we see.

The restoration to that humanity – which is unknown to us – is spoken of as taking place in a single day. One day, and the whole of the creation is restored back to its original intent in God. Isaiah asks the question, “Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment?”<sup>dxcviii</sup> Yet, no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children. Does God bring to the moment of birth and not give delivery? There is a travail that takes place in the people of God. That travail is the impregnation and birthing of the nation of Israel. This delivery doesn’t take ages, but only moments. It is upon the return of Christ, of which we can hasten His return according to the apostle Peter.<sup>dxci</sup> One thing is certain: we cannot hasten that day by “doing”. It is not about what

we do, nor about attaining higher righteousness. Such mentality is still under the bondage of the law. Our hastening of Christ's coming can only be done in our intercession on behalf of Israel.

### Redemption of Nations

“All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.” Psalm 22:27-28 gives us a statement to allow us to see that God does indeed have a prerogative over the nations. One translation renders Psalm 24:1 as, “The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the nations, and all who live therein.” In the schema of eschatology, we find that the nations have an importance. They are not without their place. In much theology, the nations are left without much mention. However, in the purposes of God, the nations are given high priority. The Lord desires to rule over the nations. He desires that the nations would honor Israel, and thus honor Him. He desires that the nations would be redeemed before Him, and not simply be obligated to perform something that they have no intention of performing.

It is said in Isaiah 26:9 that “when your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness.” There is something intrinsic to the redemption of nations to see the judgments of God. In a very real sense, it is not simply that the people Israel are sifted through the nations, but the nations are also being sifted through Israel. In every nation that the people are scattered to, God is looking to see how they might react. He is putting in their sight, plainly before their eyes, a people that are no people. When Christ returns and the nations realize that God has established the very people they wished to destroy, what can the reaction be but either rebellion or repentance?

We read in Isaiah 52:15, regarding Christ, “So will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.” How is it that the nations will see and understand? How is it that they will stop their mouths? How is it that He will sprinkle many nations? We know that the sprinkling here is the same language used of Israel, that God would sprinkle clean water upon them and they would be clean. That water signifies the rebirth of the Spirit – the entrance into the New Covenant. Yet, the way that God achieves this with the nations is not in them seeing Christ as Israel will see Christ. It is instead in them seeing Israel as the son of God – the firstborn son.<sup>dc</sup> It is in beholding Israel and their hour of judgment that the nations will come to God. After they see all that God performs in their midst, they will now see and hear and understand the things that they had previously not seen, heard, or understood.

It is at that time, when Christ restores the kingdom unto Israel,<sup>dcii</sup> that “all the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name.”<sup>dciii</sup> It is through the sifting of Israel through *all* nations that God will “make his salvation known and reveal his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”<sup>dciii</sup> It is when Christ restores all things unto them, for

Ezekiel prophesies, “Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.”<sup>dciv</sup> Daniel saw the Son of Man coming on the clouds, and writes, “All people, nations and men of every language worshiped him.”<sup>dcv</sup>

It is upon seeing the mercy of God unto Israel that we read in Zechariah 8:20-23, “This is what the Lord Almighty says: Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty. I myself am going.’ And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty. This is what the Lord Almighty says: In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’” Let us remember the story of the woman who grabbed the hem of Christ’s robe to find healing.<sup>dcvi</sup>

Malachi also says that “My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations...”<sup>dcvii</sup> Why will God’s name be great among the nations? Let us hear the answer from Moses: “Rejoice, O nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people.”<sup>dcviii</sup> Add to that the psalmist’s cry, “Why should the nations say, ‘Where is their God?’ Before our eyes, make known among the nations that you avenge the outpoured blood of your servants.”<sup>dcix</sup>

With the redemption of Israel, the nations also are redeemed. When God avenges the blood of His servants, the nations shall see the glory of God and repent. Isaiah 18:7 and Zechariah 14:16 speak of nations coming from afar to offer gifts and sacrifices to God. Whether there will truly be sacrifices when Christ returns isn’t necessary to debate. The point is still maintained that nations will come from all over to Jerusalem in order to worship God. Isaiah 51:4-5 reads, “Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations.”

“Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.”<sup>dcx</sup> Amos also tells us that Israel shall inherit the nations.<sup>dcxi</sup> In the last chapter of Isaiah, we read, “And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory.”<sup>dcxii</sup> “For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.”<sup>dcxiii</sup>

It was with all of this in mind that Paul wrote to the Romans in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, “Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their

rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?<sup>dcxiv</sup>

In this, Paul sets forth one of the most profound texts in all of Scripture. He brings together a massive subject. The nations, though they are currently without God and without hope, will be brought unto salvation in Christ when Israel shall be redeemed. For, “All Israel shall be saved.”<sup>dcxv</sup> And when they are saved, “What will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” They will receive mercy, for “God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them *all*.”<sup>dcxvi</sup> While it is true that you cannot be saved unless you come to Christ, there is a special relation between God and Israel. As regarding the nation, they are beloved on account of the patriarchs.<sup>dcxvii</sup> God has an end time purpose for them, and that end time purpose is to be the priestly nation to all nations. Remember, “The gifts and callings of God are irrevocable.”<sup>dcxviii</sup> When Israel has come unto God in salvation – when they behold Him whom they have pierced – then shall all nations be saved.

## Chapter 23: Eternal Rule and Reign

It is established in Scripture that humanity was made to “rule”. Genesis 1:26 declares that God created man in His own image, in His likeness, to rule over the fish, birds, livestock, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground. From the very beginning, humanity was created to rule. We were made to be kings and queens. Even now, for we who are in Christ, we are called ambassadors.<sup>dcxix</sup> The truth of our condition is shown in how well we currently rule and reign. But what does that mean? What does that signify? If our notion of ruling and reigning is found in someone being “over” another, and therefore having the ability to “lord”, then we have left the faith.

Christ Himself told us that they who desire to be “over” must not “lord” over like the Gentiles do.<sup>dcxx</sup> No, the Kingdom of God is one of submission. It is founded upon righteousness and justice. It is a kingdom of love and service. To rule and reign with Christ means that we must be servant of all. If we desire to rule, we must serve. Indeed, serving is ruling. The waiter on tables, Stephen, was somehow so caught up with heaven that the Synagogue of the Freedmen could not bear him. Just by that title, I am under the assumption that Stephen’s very presence blew the whistle. It revealed their “freedom” as a lie. They claimed to be free, but they were enslaved. This man, a waiter, had more freedom and expression of God manifest through his life than the whole of the Jews from Cyrene and Alexandria combined.

Therefore, he was not tolerated. They stoned him.<sup>dcxxi</sup> What was it about Stephen that caused for such an uproar? If we think that there was something lacking in the persecutors, we are correct. Yet, if we think that it had little or nothing to do with Stephen, then we would be incorrect. The man himself had a face like an angel. What manner of a man is this? There was something intrinsic in the occupation of Stephen, serving the Body of Christ, that created in him godliness that few have seen expressed, and even fewer have experienced. There was a wisdom at work – the wisdom of God. For Stephen to submit under, and to serve, he was thus given a higher place in God. He attained unto greater glory through the submission that he bore.

That is what it means to rule and reign. Those who have the authority to rule and reign with Christ are not given that authority simply because they “did a good job”. Many pastors are going to be shocked when they find out that they won’t rule at all. Many homeless and poverty stricken nobodies are going to be shocked when they rule over ten cities. This, of course, is not the rule, but only used to make a point. The least shall be the greatest. They who are least among us, hopefully they are our pastors, will be exalted to higher stature in Christ. To be clear, this doesn’t mean that some will somehow attain to a closer proximity with Christ in the sense that they will have a different salvation or Spirit, but instead that they who rule will be given greater authority.

The issue of ruling and reigning is a touchy subject, because many enjoy the idea that we will all be at the same place in Christ in heaven. They enjoy that notion that says Spurgeon will have the same place as the casual Christian. Yet, we read over and over about the rewards given according to the deeds. Once again, this isn’t about a different salvation or Spirit, but instead about different rewards. For they who labor with fervor

and passion, God will richly reward them. But for they who are casual and nonchalant about their faith, God will reward them according to their works. This is why Paul speaks multiple times about running the race to achieve the gold.<sup>dcxxii</sup> What glory is it if we attain to eternal life, but we have the eternal shame of only escaping as one through the flames?<sup>dcxxiii</sup> What we attain to in this life will be our eternal essence.

Now, in the issue of ruling and reigning, we have two subjects. The first is the Millennial Kingdom,<sup>dcxxiv</sup> and the second is the New Heaven and New Earth.<sup>dcxxv</sup> Some have said these are one and the same thing; however, I can't agree. There are too many passages about Israel performing certain functions unto the whole world that can only take place in the Millennial Kingdom. The Marriage of the Lamb is the coming together of Israel and the Church unto their Husband – Christ. Israel shall be redeemed – the New Covenant being poured out upon them, and they experiencing what we now know, but to even greater glory. The Church, which is the remnant of Israel, will be resurrected unto glorified bodies to rule and reign with Christ for 1000 years.

There are only a few Scriptures in regard to the Church being the spiritual rulers in glorified bodies, but the references are indeed in both the Old and the New Testaments. Likewise, we don't find many references to all of Israel attaining to that resurrected state until the New Heaven and New Earth, when there are kings and nations outside of the City of God that must come up to the city to take of the Tree of Life for healing. The people that are outside of the City are ruled over by the Bride of Christ, which is the unification of Israel and the Church in resurrected form. Make no mistake: The Church is not separate from Israel, but is the remnant within Israel. As that righteous remnant, our reward is the rule and reign with Christ for 1000 years. Those who are not worthy of this will continue to sleep in the dust of the earth.<sup>dcxxvi</sup>

### Church as Spiritual Rulers

Those that are believers in Jesus *now* and are found worthy of ruling and reigning with Christ during this time will be the priesthood within the priesthood. They will be the priests to Israel as Israel is the priestly nation to the nations. This is the reward for that elder brother that will submit and serve the younger. We read in Revelation 20:4-6, "I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years." Jesus told us, "Everyone who has left father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."<sup>dcxxvii</sup>

In Isaiah 32:1, we read about a king that will reign in righteousness – Christ – and *rulers* will rule with justice. Could this be an allusion to the people that will be counted



worthy to rule with Christ? Combine this thought with Psalm 112:5, which says, “Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice.” Some argue with the passages and verses that say these sorts of things. We can see how this doesn’t come to pass many times over with some people. Yet, the truth is that those who truly do have a heart of generosity and lend freely, and those who truly do conduct their affairs with justice will inherit the Kingdom of God. The verses don’t always look to an immediate fulfillment in this life, for even of the great men and women of the faith in Hebrews 11 it says, “These people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.”<sup>dcxxviii</sup>

It isn’t about attaining the promises in this life; it is about the life to come. Daniel was promised to receive an allotted inheritance.<sup>dcxxix</sup> He died without receiving, and thus we know that he shall rise at the end of the age to receive that inheritance. Daniel will be one of the remnant that will rule and reign with Christ. In Jeremiah 23:4, God says that He will “put *shepherds* over” the House of Israel. Why the plural if it is only Christ, the son of David? Indeed, it is not only Christ, but it is instead the righteous remnant that has always existed in Israel. This is the Church. We are joined with the greats of the faith. Yet, we see that there is an Israel that will still not be raised unto glorified form; otherwise there would not still be an Israel that these “shepherds” need to tend.

Isaiah 66:21 speaks of a time when He will be in the midst of Israel, and the nations shall behold His glory, and it is at this time that God will “select some of them also to be priests and Levites”. Why does God need to select some to be priests and Levites? Wouldn’t Israel already have descendants of Levi and Aaron to inherit that role? This priesthood that is being spoken of is not sacerdotal, but instead of the Melchizedek form. They who are Melchizedek priests here and now, and who have lived their lives according to that rule, will inherit the better priesthood – the one that has neither beginning of days, nor end of life. It is this that the New Covenant is all about.

Zechariah 2:11 speaks of “many nations” that will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become His people. This would be the Gentiles who have been grafted into the commonwealth of Israel by the blood of the Messiah. We see at the end of Zechariah 14:5 that the Lord will come with all the holy ones with him. That is directly quoted by Jesus to let us know that He is the one who comes.<sup>dcxxx</sup> Notice the usage of the LORD in all caps, and that the one who comes is Jesus. Also notice that Jesus says it is the angels who come, and we find in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 a seeming allusion to that the angels (an archangel is mentioned) *as well as those who have already fallen asleep* will return with Christ.

In Romans 8:18-21, Paul mentions that our present sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed *in* us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. Who are these sons of God? We find that the answer is given later in verse 23, “We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” Notice the sweep of Romans. In Romans 6, Paul stresses the resurrection reality here and now. In Romans 7, Paul stresses that because we have been buried and resurrected with Christ, we are no longer alive unto sin and the law. Therefore, because the law only binds those who are not dead, and we have already died, we have been set free from the

bondage of the law, which is the power of sin. Then, when we reach Romans 8, Paul starts by explaining how this is why there is no condemnation in Christ, but Paul was not content to say that the resurrection reality that we experience is the full expression of resurrection. In Romans 8:23, we find that there is a fuller expression yet to come.

It is that fuller expression that happens when Christ returns, and we're given our resurrected and glorified bodies, that the creation itself is then liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. This is a verse connected with Genesis 1:26. How is that the creation is liberated? It is by the greater than Adam – Christ Jesus our Lord – returning with all the holy ones, and our subsequent resurrection from the dead as well (in the twinkling of an eye at that!), that fulfills the mandate given from the foundations of the world: Humanity was to rule over the creation. That rule is a sacrificial rule. To give oneself sacrificially even to the creation – not to mention the very presence of God being made manifest through the glorification of Christ Jesus and His brethren – is the very thing that restores and redeems the creation.

We find in Romans 11:25 that “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so, all Israel shall be saved.” This phrase, the fullness of the Gentiles, is one that eludes many. Paul is quoting Genesis 48:19. Only one time in the whole of the Bible do we find the phrase “melo-hagoyim”. The verse is translated in most English versions as “a multitude of nations”, but the actual Hebrew words would mean, “a fullness of the Gentiles”. That fullness being expressed through Ephraim, the symbol of Northern Israel, is found in the resurrection of the Gentiles. Only Abraham was told that he shall be a father of many nations, and now that same blessing is being spoken over Ephraim.

The many nations are they who are grafted in. That is not to say that the tribes of Northern Israel are “lost” and the Gentile believers have replaced them. In these prophecies, we're being shown types and patterns. Zechariah calls Joshua the High Priest and all of his associates “men symbolic of things to come”. Here, too, we have Abraham and Ephraim being men symbolic of things to come. The fullness of the Gentiles is the full number of they who attain to this resurrection glory. When the full number of Gentiles overcome, and therefore receive a place to rule and reign with Christ, then all Israel shall be saved. This is the end of the age.

Daniel 7:18, being spoken by the interpreting angel, says, “But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever – yes, forever and ever.” Of these who will possess the kingdom, we read in Daniel 12:3 that they shall shine like stars. This should remind you of two New Testament passages where the same phrase is used. In Matthew 13:43, we have Jesus speak, “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Paul also quotes this to the Philippians when he writes, “Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.” Here Paul is expressing that they who overcome inherit this resurrection. Ruling with Christ is about overcoming, and overcoming is about enduring temptation and tribulation.

“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”<sup>dcxxxix</sup>

In the end, there will be a resurrection. One of the often referenced “rebuttals” of a first resurrection and millennial reign is an illusion to these verses. The question is asked, “How can there be resurrected saints along with people who are not resurrected?” While at first this seems like a problem, because it seems like God would raise everyone from the dead or no one, it isn’t really an issue at all. Jesus walked with His disciples and taught them for 40 days after His resurrection. The universe didn’t collapse because of that glory. Why should we assume that the resurrection of the saints would be any different? My contention in those who believe amillennialism is this: it says in Revelation 20:4-6 about thrones set up, and about reigning with Christ for 1000 years. What exactly is there to rule, or reign as the NIV puts it, over if everyone has been either brought into the New Heaven and New Earth or cast into the lake of fire?

Even in Revelation 22:5 we see this language of ruling with Christ. So even in the New Heaven and New Earth there is something to rule over. While it might be true that humanity’s mandate in Genesis 1:26 was to “rule over” the creation, that in no way seems satisfactory in these instances. All things have been brought under subjection to Christ in the New Heaven and New Earth. The creation doesn’t need any longer to be worked. There is no darkness in Revelation 21-22, while in Genesis 1-2 there was darkness to overcome. There is no more sea in Revelation 21-22. Pretty well everything about the New Heaven and New Earth is different than in Genesis 1-2. I’m not convinced that the creation will need to be “ruled over” as in the Garden of Eden.

So what is the need for these thrones? We learn from Matthew 19:28 that the twelve apostles will sit upon twelve thrones judging the House of Israel. Yet, these thrones don’t seem to be limited to the apostles, seeing as the Hebrew parallelism is given to connect the thrones with those who have been beheaded by the beast. Those who have authority to judge are more than just the apostles. Upon thrones would be *any* who are found worthy. The prophets of old are included. The saints before the flood are included. Those who have come to stature in God, whether in the Old Testament, New Testament, or even in this age after the close of the canon, that they can truly be called priests of God have the authority to sit upon those thrones.

These thrones are alluded to in Psalm 122:5. “There the thrones for judgment stand, the thrones of the house of David.” David is a type, both of Christ and also of Melchizedek the priestly king. These thrones in the psalm are steeped in mystery, revealed ultimately in the millennial reign of Christ. They are also referenced in Daniel 7:9, where Daniel sees the Ancient of Days (compare the description of the Ancient of Days with that of Jesus in Revelation 1:14) and thrones along with Him.

David knew of his own resurrection in Psalm 17:15 when he claims, “I – in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.” Job had a similar revelation: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”<sup>dcxxxii</sup> Daniel was promised his place at this resurrection in the last verse of his book: “As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.”

It seems as though the whole of 1 Corinthians 15 is dedicated to this very theme. We read of Christ’s resurrection as a first fruit (verses 20 and 23), and the verses leading up to this explain the importance of that statement. We read of our resurrection: “So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (42-44). Yet, Paul’s most vehement point is stated in verses 50-53: “I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.” This last point goes back to one of his first statements when he said: “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.” The point is that Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, and because of this, we can truly hope for our own resurrections.

Yet, we know that there are two resurrections mentioned in Scripture: the first in the Millennial Kingdom, and the second for those entering the New Heaven and New Earth. These are not two different resurrections in the sense that what those who attain to the first resurrection receive will be greater, but rather that those who achieve the first resurrection will have the honor of ruling with Christ *before* the rest of the dead stand at the Judgment Seat. The magnificence of the resurrection is not different; the *timing* of the resurrection is what is different.

We find this resurrection to be made manifest to us in Philippians as well. The apostle Paul writes, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Again, he writes, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body”.<sup>dcxxxiii</sup> It is obvious that all of the apostles knew and believed in a resurrection from the dead, but what is often questioned is the timing of that resurrection. For this we turn again to Paul who wrote, “According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”<sup>dcxxxiv</sup>

Notice the wording. We have again a mention of the trumpet. From 1 Corinthians 15:52, we ascertained that the resurrection is at the *last trumpet*. When is the last trumpet? We find this being elaborated quite extensively in the book of Revelation. It is in Revelation 11:15 that we find the last trumpet blow. Yet, once again, we have the question of timing. Many scholars have done severe damage – and many laymen as well – in their interpretations of the book of Revelation. When we compare Revelation 8:5, 11:19, and 16:18, we find all of these verses speaking of an earthquake, a severe lightning storm, and hail. We see earlier in Revelation 11:13 a severe earthquake that causes a tenth of the city Jerusalem to collapse. It is possible that Revelation 11:13 and 11:19 speak of the same event, thus putting the two witnesses at the very end of the world. All of these verses are speaking of the same event, which means that the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls of wrath all mark the same moment in time. What moment in time is that?

It was from 1 Corinthians 15:52 that we so boldly assume that the moment in time is the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection of the dead is the return of Christ. How do I know that? 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 says that it is when Christ returns that the dead shall raise first, and then we too shall be caught up to be with Him. Yet, this verse needs to be dissected a bit more, because it is one of the main passages used to support the pretrib rapture. Until then, we'll simply leave it as a proof text to say that this puts the timing of the resurrection at the return of Christ. So, how do we know that there will be the resurrection at the return, and another resurrection after the Judgment? This should be obvious from simple logic. If not everyone is raised during the Millennial Kingdom, then there still remains a resurrection before entering into the New Heaven and New Earth.

Now, we saw in Revelation 20:4-6 that the qualification is priestliness. Why is it priestliness that matters? Priestliness is the quality of eternity. They who are priests are they who are able to separate the precious from the vile. They know the eternal realm because they live from the eternal realm. To be a priest is to be a minister of the New Covenant, and to be a minister of the New Covenant is to be arrested by the Spirit – to walk according to the Spirit and never according to the flesh. Violence is done against the ways of the world, because to be at rest with the world is to be at enmity with God. They who are bent upon the call of Heaven are they who understand the eternal purposes. To know the eternal purposes of God is to know the very heart of God, and if we know the very heart of God, then we know how to rule and reign. Ruling in the Kingdom of God is about servanthood. The true servant is the one who has true authority, because it is in that serving obedience to Christ that His will is manifest to our hearts.

The New Covenant, servanthood, priestliness, and walking according to the Spirit are all summed up in one term: the new heart. They who live according to the new heart that they have received by the Spirit, the circumcision of the heart that Jeremiah speaks of, are they that know the heavenly protocol. They know the ways of the Kingdom of God, because their very hearts are pounding to the beat of the Heavenly Jerusalem. They are not found worthy because of their efforts, but rather because they have entered that “Sabbath rest” that “remains for the people of God”.<sup>dcxxxv</sup> For, anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from His. This is the resurrection lived out in daily life – to enter that rest by living from our new hearts.

All that now remains is the expansion of why resurrection matters. It is not enough to simply say that we shall receive “glorified bodies.” The truth is that all of

creation will be resurrected; a concept implied in the term “New Heaven and New Earth”. There is a question that had bothered me for quite some time regarding the issue of darkness. In Genesis 1 we find that where there is chaos, God brings order. Where there is shapelessness, God forms. Where there is emptiness, God fills. Yet, what God does not do is eliminate the darkness. God creates light, and He sets up “rulers” over the darkness (the sun and moon), but God does not eliminate the darkness. Why is the darkness not eliminated like the other negative factors of that primordial creation?<sup>dcxxxvi</sup>

The answer to that question is the same as another question I had been bothered by. We find in the book of Genesis a pattern. This pattern extends past Genesis and to the whole of Scripture. It is a pattern of the younger being chosen over the elder. Abel’s sacrifice was accepted while Cain’s was not. It was through Seth that the redeemer Noah came. Out of Noah’s three sons, the youngest – Shem – was the one who gains the greatest blessing. It is not clear as to whether Abraham was the eldest or not, but concerning his children it was Isaac that was accepted and not Ishmael. Of Isaac’s children the prophecy came: “The elder shall serve the younger”. Of Jacob, also known as Israel, the adoration fell upon Rachel, the younger sister. Of their children, it was Rachel’s children that were most loved, both of them being the youngest of the twelve brothers. Of Joseph, we find Ephraim, the younger, receiving the greater blessing from Israel rather than Manasseh – something that Joseph himself tried to correct. Moses was the youngest in his family, and yet was chosen as deliverer of Israel. David was the youngest, and yet was chosen to be king of Israel.

The two questions are the same. Why did God not eliminate the darkness? Why does God consistently choose the younger over and above the elder? The answer to both of these questions is the resurrection. It would have taken Adam to be resurrected by eating of the fruit of the tree of life to overcome the darkness, and for humanity to then lead the onslaught against Darkness so that all of creation could overcome into resurrection reality to be at perfect fellowship with God. God kept the darkness because it was used as a cloak. He could hide behind the darkness, and therefore not kill Adam, for no one can see God’s glory and live. Yet, through the resurrection, and with our resurrected and imperishable bodies we shall see God face to face – even as Job put it: “In my flesh I shall see God.”<sup>dcxxxvii</sup> The issue of overcoming is the issue of resurrection. It is resurrection that would have allowed for the darkness to be vanquished and for the true light to shine fully upon the creation. This is why there is no darkness in Revelation 21.

The reason that God chooses the elder to serve the younger is because the old man, the carnal man, is to be subject to the spiritual man. It is a metaphor of resurrection displayed through genealogy and patriarchy. It all points to the resurrection – the only means by which we might be in unadulterated fellowship with God and live. It is the first resurrection that is the mechanism of teaching the whole world – even the nations – what it means to live by the Spirit, and what it means to walk according to the resurrection life. After the first resurrection, the dead are judged. It is that judgment that determines those who are able to endure the New Heaven and New Earth. Ability is according to resurrection. They who receive the Spirit of God and live from it shall inherit eternal life, but they who continue in darkness shall receive darkness.

## Epilogue

It seemed necessary to have a final remark. After going through all of the material in eschatology, we are now faced with a new problem: the ever-pressing question of “now what?” First, I would like to make the statement that it is from the eternal perspective of the New Heaven and New Earth – the Jerusalem that is above – that we determine the answer to that question. Because we have come to the end of our foundational study of the end times, you now know the ultimate purpose for resurrection. What does it mean to live out of the resurrection here and now? We, who have the first fruit of the Spirit, are in a sense raised with Christ through our baptism, and yet are looking forward to an ultimate resurrection, what do we do?

Much of the necessary lifestyle has been communicated in this writing. Let me give a couple thoughts. If we believe that we will need to endure a time of trouble, known as the Tribulation, then we need to live lives that reflect that understanding. For example, my wife and I live in poverty on purpose. Our income doesn’t even register on the scale. There is coming a time where we will need to live with less luxury, and I would rather be caught up with the eternal purposes *now* than to come to a place where I am suddenly unable to enjoy everyday conveniences like Internet, restaurants, television, heating and air conditioning, etc. We have food to put on the table, the ability to cook that food, shelter, water, clothes, and the necessary electronics for study and communication. Outside of that, we simply don’t have much.

If we believe that there will come a time to take in fleeing refugees – whether Jew, Christian, or otherwise – then we need to open our doors now to that possibility. Why wait until the Tribulation to take someone in? Will we truly have the courage, character, and/or ability at that time if we aren’t currently living in a manner that opens wide the door to those who are refugees? Of course, I am not saying that we open our door to anyone and everyone. They who are in need of coming out from the world and unto Christ should be our target audience. That takes discernment. My wife and I have hopes of taking in kids that live in the inner cities on the streets. We want to open our doors to those who might be in Juvenile Detention, but qualify for some sort of camp or halfway house. Our doors are always open to they that are brothers or sisters. We’ve even taken in travelers who needed a place to stay while driving across the country.

Finally, I want to give a little bit of insight to the resurrection life lived out here and now. It is written that if you have two coats and your brother has none, you give them one of your coats.<sup>dcxxxviii</sup> That is the logic of love. We need to live in a manner that we see one another daily, and not merely weekly. For some this is more difficult than for others. If your job keeps you from this, find another job. If you live outside of the city and can’t make it to seeing others more frequently, then either move or invite others to live in the country with you. This is the logic of love. When someone is in need, and you know that you have ability to meet that need, donate to them whatever it is that they need. If it is healing, then pray for their healing. If it is finances, then give without expecting return. If it is mercy, then give out of the abundant mercy that you’ve received. If it is understanding, then give counsel. As you have freely received, so you shall freely give. This is the logic of love.

In Romans 9-11, Paul gives the overall view of what this book has desired to put forth. You have from Romans 1-3 the establishment of two opposing views: the righteousness of this world and the righteousness of God. From Romans 4-5, Paul expounds the righteousness of God through faith. In Romans 6-8, we read of the resurrection that brings righteousness and freedom from sin, ultimately looking forward to the resurrection of our bodies to bring full salvation and deliverance of corruption. It is Romans 9-11 that Paul sets forth the end times and how Israel shall be saved – especially in Romans 11. It is on the heels of that understanding that Paul then tells us to “lay down our lives” as “living sacrifices”. From Romans 12-15, Paul gives one teaching after another of how this is supposed to play out in daily life.

These writings in the New Testament are not supposed to be “new”, but rather to bring clarity to those that are unlearned in the Old Testament. The authors – every single one of them – seem to delight in putting hidden references to the Old Testament for they that do know the Scriptures. It is in understanding the New Covenant that tells us what it means to live our lives according to the New Covenant. The logic simply demands it. So, when we read Peter’s epistles, we need to know that he is giving advice according to the revelation of the Old Testament, and not simply “new revelation” that has come. It was hidden, but has now been revealed, but that does not mean that it was nonexistent and has now been brought forth. Our New Testaments are full of teachings of what it means to endure the end times, and if we do not read them as such, then we will continue to go about asking what it is that we must do in order to survive the Tribulation. It has all been recorded for us.

So I pray for every reader that they will be able to come to the Scriptures afresh, and might be able to see past the basic teachings that pervade our Christianity. I pray that you might be able to discover more deeply the depth of God’s purposes. There is much that I desire to say, but simply have left out. All of our theology needs to weave together, and I pray that you begin to see how it all ties together. May God grant you love, and to that love be added peace, and to that peace be added understanding, and to that understanding be added character, and to that character be added hope. In God the Father, through the blood of our blessed Savior Christ Jesus I bless you all. May your eyes be forever opened to the heights, width, depths, and breadth of all that God has revealed, amen.



## End Notes:

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### Preface:

<sup>i</sup> Revelation 1:3

<sup>ii</sup> Revelation 22:18-19

<sup>iii</sup> To define eschatology, it is a study on the end times. It comes from the Greek word ‘εσχατον (eschaton), which loosely means “last”. The eschaton is the last, or final, days. We are told in the New Testament that since the coming of the Messiah and the birth of the New Covenant that we are living in the last days. However, eschatology typically refers to the study of what will be the last several years before the return of Christ.

<sup>iv</sup> Isaiah 29:11

<sup>v</sup> Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14

<sup>vi</sup> Revelation 5:5

<sup>vii</sup> Revelation 12:11

<sup>viii</sup> Chapters 1-6, 10, 12, 13, 18, and 19 all fall into this category

<sup>ix</sup> Chapters 7-9, 11, 14-17, and 20-23 all fall into this category

### Chapter 1:

<sup>x</sup> 1 John 2:12-14

<sup>xi</sup> The quote is from Psalm 103:1, however the verse in mind is Psalm 42:11

<sup>xii</sup> See Psalm 129:1-2, and make careful reference to Mark 9:14-32

### Chapter 2:

<sup>xiii</sup> Proverbs 11:4

<sup>xiv</sup> Proverbs 10:3

<sup>xv</sup> Matthew 6:33

<sup>xvi</sup> Numbers 23:19

<sup>xvii</sup> A paraphrase from 1 Samuel 8:7

### Chapter 3:

<sup>xviii</sup> Matthew 24:14

<sup>xix</sup> Galatians 4:26

<sup>xx</sup> Specifically in verses 2 and 9 do we find the City of God being referred to as the Bride of the Lamb. This should put a couple things into mind. First, we typically think of passages like Ephesians 5:21-33 where the Church is called the Bride of Christ. Yet, we also find in the prophets that Israel was a Bride to God.

Because we read in Romans 11:29 that God’s gifts and callings are irrevocable, we must either assume that the Church has replaced Israel, or there is a deeper mystery at work where the Church and Israel have both united to become the Bride of God.

<sup>xxi</sup> While I typically want to reference these assertions with Scripture, I know that later chapters will establish these assertions and also dig deeper into what they are and are not saying.

<sup>xxii</sup> Actually, John borrows a lot of his language from Ezekiel 40-48 in Revelation 21:10-22:5

<sup>xxiii</sup> Ephesians 2:6

<sup>xxiv</sup> Colossians 1:27

<sup>xxv</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, but specifically the phrase in verse 10: “the love of truth”

<sup>xxvi</sup> Luke 17:20

<sup>xxvii</sup> Isaiah 55:9, 1 Corinthians 2:16

<sup>xxviii</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:32, Isaiah 22:13, Luke 12:19, and Ecclesiastes 2:14

<sup>xxix</sup> Ephesians 2:1

<sup>xxx</sup> Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18

<sup>xxxi</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:9, Ephesians 2:5, Colossians 2:13

<sup>xxxii</sup> Romans 6:7

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- xxxiii Romans 8:14-16  
xxxiv Romans 8:17, 23  
xxxv A play on James 4:4  
xxxvi Psalm 37:18, with thought of Colossians 1:12  
xxxvii John 3:16, but with thought of John 3:17-21  
xxxviii John 3:20, Ephesians 5:11, Acts 26:18, Romans 13:12  
xxxix Revelation 21:22-25  
xl Colossians 1:13  
xli Ephesians 2:8  
xlii Ephesians 1:1-2  
xliii John 3:19-21  
xliv Paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13:12  
xlv John 7:17 – obviously not being used in the same context of Jesus, but still making the same point  
xlvi 1 John 4:1  
xlvii Matthew 24:24 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12  
xlviii Acts 17:30-31, though quite different from the statement I have made, bears similarities  
xlix John 1:4  
l 1 Peter 2:9  
li Revelation 2:17, 3:12-13  
lii 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:3 – the phrase in Ephesians is “objects of wrath”, which I’ve altered to “darkness” to press the point all the more that we were once under the kingdom of darkness.  
liii John 10:4, 16  
liv John 16:13  
lv John 15:15  
lvi 1 John 4:18  
lvii Summary of 1 John 2:3-11, 28, 3:7-11, 14-20, 23-24, 4:7-21, 5:2  
lviii Revelations 12:11  
lix Revelations 19:10  
lx See John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, Acts 10:38, 1 John 3:8, Hebrews 2:14-15, Colossians 1:13, 2:15, and Romans 16:20  
lxi Luke 2:1, but it is common historical knowledge that Augustus died in A.D. 14. Tiberius Caesar came after him, dying around A.D. 37, and thus the life of Christ would have been during these two rulers. It was under Augustus’ rule that Christ was born; it was under Tiberius’ rule that Christ died.  
lxii See Isaiah 14:13-15. Though this text is specifically a prophecy against the king of Babylon, it has been classically understood to refer past the king of Babylon to ultimately Satan himself. For this understanding, see Daniel 10:13, 20. Also see Ezekiel 28:11-19, where once again the prophecy is specifically labeled under the king of Tyre, but the content of the passage seems to suggest something past the king of Tyre.  
lxiii See Zechariah 14:17 and Isaiah 60:12  
lxiv Matthew 24:14  
lxv For the story read Exodus 5-12.  
lxvi Revelation 13:2  
lxvii We will venture into this thought in much detail through the book, so I will not mention the almost countless Scripture references to this assertion at this time.  
lxviii This so-called church is not the church. Though it professes to be, it is not, and therefore it does not deserve the title. I only use such wording so that we might understand what I’m talking about. I am an advocate of not calling the apostate “church”, but instead calling them what they are: pagan. As John the apostle said, “The went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us,” 1 John 2:19.  
lxix See Matthew 25:1-13  
lxx For this story, see Genesis 4:1-16  
lxxi Philippians 4:11

Chapter 4:

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<sup>lxxii</sup> Interestingly, the phrase “eternal covenant”, or berith olam, is first found in Genesis 17:7 to Abraham and His descendants. This is before the Torah, given upon Mount Sinai. Though it deals with the people Israel and the land of Canaan, it does not deal with the Law, but instead with the covenant made in previous chapters (Genesis 12:2-3, 15:18-21). It is here that God establishes the covenant of circumcision, which we find in the prophets (specifically Jeremiah dealing with this terminology) that this is an outward expression of heart circumcision.

<sup>lxxiii</sup> Jeremiah 31:31-37

<sup>lxxiv</sup> Once again, this assertion is made knowing that these details will be firmly established as we continue through the rest of the book.

<sup>lxxv</sup> See Jeremiah 30:7

<sup>lxxvi</sup> See Acts 10:9-16, 28

<sup>lxxvii</sup> Romans 11:11-25

<sup>lxxviii</sup> Ephesians 1:13

<sup>lxxix</sup> See Romans 8:23, James 1:18, and Revelation 14:4. We won't be discussing the 144,000 in this book. Who they are exactly is irrelevant to the point: we are the first fruits unto Christ and God.

<sup>lxxx</sup> This might be what is hinted at in Romans 11:32

<sup>lxxxi</sup> 1 John 2:8

<sup>lxxxii</sup> Matthew 12:28

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Ephesians 2:6

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> This is taken from Revelations 20:4, where it claims that there will be some to rule and reign with Christ for 1000 years.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> For evidence of this, see the context of Joel 2. Also notice the words of Peter after his message, still addressing the crowd, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation,” Acts 2:40. The warning in verses 38-40 seems to be one that comes from anticipation of judgment, and maybe another hint to this would be the crowd's response: “Brothers, what must we do to be saved?” Saved from what? The salvation being expressed here was the deliverance from judgment and devastation.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> See Isaiah 2:1-4

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> See Deuteronomy 32:21, and Paul's exposition of this verse in Romans 11:11 and onward.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Hebrews 11:10

<sup>lxxxix</sup> Hebrews 12:22

<sup>xc</sup> Matthew 6:10

<sup>xc i</sup> Romans 8:23

<sup>xc ii</sup> For these references as well as others, see Revelations 21-22. Also, Psalm 96:9 for the phrase, “beauty of holiness”.

<sup>xc iii</sup> See Hebrews 12:22 and Galatians 4:26

<sup>xc iv</sup> In this, I'm referencing what many hold to: that at the end of the age, or when we die, we'll be suddenly changed into something we're not. Somehow we'll be purified through the fire (maybe an allusion to 1 Corinthians 3:15?), and from that purity, we will then be made sinless. It is a severe misunderstanding of Romans 6-8, emphasizing heavily upon Romans 7 and neglecting the verses that tell us we are no longer enslaved from sin through the resurrection. We will enter eternity in whatever condition we are when we die. Jesus has even taught that it is better to enter eternity maimed than to be cast into hell with both hands and both eyes (Matthew 5:29-30). In this, we find that Paul could not have meant that we will be refined through fire and changed into something that we're not, but instead (at best) meant that we will be refined and that everything that does not meet the level of holiness required will be burned off of our souls. This is not purgatory, but instead the flame consuming the dross of our lives. In this, we find that those who build with hay wood and stubble, but have the foundation of their life as Christ, will enter into eternity with much loss. But they who enter eternity with gold, precious stones, and silver will find themselves rich in eternity. The question my wife likes to ask is, “If heaven is unadulterated joy, will those who are bitter enjoy it? If it typifies unity, would a racist enjoy it? If heaven is freedom, will the oppressor find delight there?” If what cannot tolerate heaven is burned off of our souls, how much will be left to enjoy heaven for what it is?

<sup>xc v</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

<sup>xc vi</sup> Hebrews 12:1-2

<sup>xc vii</sup> Mark 9:24

<sup>xc viii</sup> The phrase comes from 2 Corinthians 3:6, but I recommend reading from 2:12 to 4:15 for the full context of the statement.

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- xcix Galatians 2:20
  - c 1 Corinthians 15:31
  - ci Romans 6:2
  - cii Philippians 3:12
  - ciii Romans 11:26
  - civ Zechariah 14:16
  - cv Exodus 4:22
  - cvi Colossians 2:20-21
  - cvi Mark 10:45
  - cviii 2 Corinthians 2:15

## Chapter 5:

- cix Ephesians 2:1-3
- cx As important as these things are, and as much as I do believe in both, they seem to limit what is fully expressed in the New Testament. The demonic possessions and exorcisms that take place in the Gospels and the book of Acts come from a larger view of the whole world lying under control of the evil one. It is from that foundation that we can then venture into the realm of demonic possession and oppression to better understand what exactly is happening. Possession doesn't happen because someone looked like a good target for demons. It happens solely based upon our worship of them, and our giving of self over to their influence and powers.
- cxii Galatians 1:4
- cxii Romans 12:2
- cxiii Specifically, 2 Corinthians 4:4, but also see John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11.
- cxiv Ephesians 5:16
- cxv 1 John 5:19
- cxvi John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11
- cxvii Colossians 2:15
- cxviii See 1 Peter 5:8-9
- cxix Acts 19:11-20
- cxix You can find these commands in Deuteronomy 15:12-19
- cxxi Deuteronomy 17:17
- cxxi Deuteronomy 17:16
- cxiii 1 Kings 9:15
- cxiv See 1 Kings 10:14-15. They didn't include the revenues from merchants and traders and all the Arabian kings and governors of the land purposefully so that the number would be 666.
- cxv See 1 Kings 10:18-20
- cxvi See Ephesians 4:1 and 1 Thessalonians 2:12, with reference to Philippians 1:27 and Colossians 1:10
- cxvii See John 3:18-21
- cxviii Jeremiah 18:11, 50:8, 51:45, Isaiah 48:20, 52:11, Revelations 18:4, Ezekiel 18:31, Zechariah 1:4, etc
- cxix Ephesians 4:12
- cxix The phrase comes from Acts 17:28
- cxxi This phrase is found in Jude 1:3
- cxviii Hosea 4:6
- cxviii See Matthew 5:10-12, 2 Corinthians 1:3-9, Revelation 2:3, 2:10, 12:11, James 1:2, 1 Peter 3:13-14
- cxv For the story, see Genesis 4:1-16
- cxv Proverbs 3:5
- cxvi Revelation 12:9
- cxvii See Hebrews 2:8
- cxviii For Scripture that attests to this, see 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:8
- cxvix Genesis 5
- cxl Genesis 8:25-27
- cxli Genesis 17:15-16
- cxlii Genesis 25:23
- cxliii Genesis 37

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- cxliv Genesis 48:13-20  
cxlv 1 Samuel 16:11  
cxlvi See Genesis 29:18, 31  
cxlvii Romans 5:8  
cxlviii Romans 11:11  
cxlix In Exodus 2, Miriam watches the ark Moses floats in, and we find out later that Aaron is also older than Moses: Exodus 2:4 and 7:7  
cl Luke 9:62  
cli Isaiah 14:13-15  
clii Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 18:12, 29:23, Matthew 23:12  
cliii Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6

## Chapter 6:

- cliv Also known as supercessionism  
clv This one is much harder to find complaint against at face value. Often times people will give sermons or teaching from the Old Testament and will speak as it relates to the Church. Often it is not even intended to be against Israel, but because Israel is so far out of the minds of those who are giving the message, they just completely don't even consider that it is *their* history, and not church history. The flaw is that in taking these prophecies, promises, and stories to self without acknowledgement of where it comes from is the same as claiming the benefits of the covenant for self, but then telling Israel they are to receive all of the curses. It is a grief to the heart of God to have that kind of disposition toward any people.  
clvi See Isaiah 2:2-5  
clvii Isaiah 40:4  
clviii 1 Timothy 4:1  
clix I would like to challenge the reader to read Ezekiel 37. We find a valley of dry bones, and I've heard this preached on numerous times as a revival message. Yet, in verse 11, God starts to explain the vision as it relates to *Israel*. This is about national Israel's redemption after severe turmoil that would cause them to say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off".  
clx Daniel and Revelation give us a framework for the rest of eschatology. Our end time pattern is found from these two books. With Revelation specifically, almost every verse is quoting something from the Old Testament. If it is not from the Greek Septuagint, then the author is actually translating the Hebrew directly into Greek. Other times the apostle John used Hebraicisms. For example, when we read about this "Son of Man" "who was, and is, and is to come", we find the Greek grammar being purposefully wrong to keep the Hebraicism of "I AM". The text is playing off of the great I AM to say, "I WAS, I AM, and I WILL BE". In relation to the book of Daniel, much of it was sealed up until the time of the end. The book of Revelations then says, "Do not seal up the words of prophecy of this book, for the time is near," Revelation 22:10. The sealing of Daniel's visions was made clear to those in the first century, for the time was near. However, 2000 years later, we have come to a place where many in the Body of Christ are at such a terrible state of discernment and understanding that these words have been sealed to us afresh. We can understand, but we can't understand. We can perceive the connections, but somehow things just don't click into place. I believe that the pieces of the puzzle that are missing, which are why we can't come to full conclusions on many of the passages in Daniel and Revelations, is the understanding of Israel's redemption and the principalities and powers being defeated once and for all. To the degree that we don't have either of those two understandings, to that degree we won't understand the end times.  
clxi Deuteronomy 32:21, Isaiah 56:3-8, Hosea 2:23, and Romans 11:11-25  
clxii A paraphrase from the scene at the end of the first Lord of the Rings.  
clxiii From the third movie in the Lord of the Rings series.  
clxiv Luke 17:21  
clxv Revelation 12:11

## Chapter 7:

- clxvi The answer is yes-no. There is the fact that Jesus has been raised to the right hand of the Father and given a throne upon which He rules, but that throne upon which Christ Jesus sits cannot be called the

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throne of David in the context of Amos, because Amos and all the prophets were expecting a human being that would sit upon a literal throne in a literal palace in Jerusalem. That has not happened.

clxvii Leviticus 26:17

clxviii The two chapters that explain the consequences of Israel obeying or disobeying the covenant established upon Sinai are Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

clxix Jeremiah 30:7

clxx Matthew 24:22

clxxi Notice Jeremiah 21:5

clxxii This is actually the prophetic calling given to Jeremiah in verse 1:10

clxxiii Jeremiah 31:1-2

clxxiv Ezekiel 34:30-31

clxxv Hosea 2:7

clxxvi Ezekiel 7:8

clxxvii Zechariah 8:8

clxxviii I would advise the reader to examine Ezekiel 22 carefully – specifically verses 19-22. Jerusalem is described as the furnace of God’s wrath. For we as the Church to send our brethren into the very furnace – the hottest and most severe of all judgment – is the worst example of ministerial malpractice.

clxxix Isaiah 6:13

clxxx Isaiah 11:1

clxxxi I believe that this is one reason of several for “the great falling away” at the end of the age (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3 for the reference).

clxxxii Amos 9:9

clxxxiii See specifically Revelation 12:6, but also Ezekiel 20:33-35

clxxxiv Isaiah 25:7, Daniel 12:7

clxxxv Zechariah 12:10-14

clxxxvi Revelation 1:7

clxxxvii Joel 3:1-3

clxxxviii Zechariah 12:10

clxxxix Isaiah 16:4-5

xc 33:17-18

xcxi Isaiah 49:22-23

xcxii Genesis 9:27

xcxiii Ezekiel 22:17-22

xcxiv Isaiah 11:11, emphasis mine

xcv Isaiah 63:18

xcvi In the text, there is not a specific prophecy of a third temple. Just like in the teaching of the apostles and Jesus, there wasn’t a specific prophecy of a third temple. However, the point to remember is that during the time of Daniel, there were prophetic utterance being given about a rebuilding of the temple (a second temple), and during the time of the apostles, they were being told of the destruction of the second temple. I’m convinced that during the time that a temple was set up, they would have looked to the fulfillment of “the abomination of desolation” and the “casting down of the sanctuary” in the second temple. Yet, with the destruction of “the Antichrist” is the coming of Jesus and the resurrection from the dead. If we want to claim that because the prophets and/or apostles in Scripture looked to the fulfillment in the second temple, then we need to explain the second coming of Christ and the resurrection from the dead in the first century. What is most likely is that they looked to fulfillment in their day and age – something that we find all the prophets doing – and thus we read that the first century was “the last days”. I’m not going to say that they were wrong in their assessment, but that if words have meaning, we cannot claim Christ’s return and the resurrection from the dead in the first century. Therefore, we look to a future fulfillment of these prophecies. If they have a future fulfillment, then there must be a third temple and sacrifices upon an altar at that third temple. Otherwise, we cannot expect the sacrifice to be brought low, nor “the man of sin” to take his seat in the temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

xcvii 2 Thessalonians 2:4

xcviii Amos 9:8-10

xcix Matthew 24:15-16 paraphrase

cc Numbers 14:34

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<sup>ccci</sup> This is the book of Joshua

<sup>ccii</sup> Judges 2:1-3, 6-11, 14-15

<sup>cciii</sup> The last verse of the book of Judges seems to summarize the whole book: “In those days, Israel had no king” – not even God as King – “everyone did as he saw fit.”

<sup>cciv</sup> 1 Samuel 8:4-5

<sup>ccv</sup> 1 Kings 12:1-20

<sup>ccvi</sup> 1 Kings 12:25-33

<sup>ccvii</sup> This is obviously not entirely true. Both Elijah and Elisha were from the northern kingdom. God even tells Elijah that He has reserved 7000 that had not bowed the knee to Baal. Though there are hints to it, there are very few stories to mention that anyone righteous were in Israel.

<sup>ccviii</sup> 2 Kings 17:7-23

<sup>ccix</sup> For example, see the contrast between Josiah (2 Kings 23:1-30) and Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1-18).

<sup>ccx</sup> For examples, see Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1-22) and Azariah (2 Kings 15:1-7).

<sup>ccxi</sup> Zechariah 1:3

## Chapter 8:

<sup>ccxii</sup> The Hebrew word is “bevat”. The root is babat, which means “apple”, specifically apple of the eye. The beyt prefix would mean “in”, such as “bereshit”, or “in the beginning”. Thus, we have the word “in apple”. Yet, the word babat is a feminine active participle of an unused root meaning “to hollow out”, like a gate. The gate of the eye is the pupil, considering that it is through the pupil that light enters the eye.

<sup>ccxiii</sup> To add a little more force to this, I would venture to say that ‘Israelology’ is severely lacking in our systematic theology. I cannot think of one systematic theology book that has dealt with any depth or length in this subject. We too quickly ignore the vast majority of the Bible, considering that it is only from the book of Acts and onward that Gentiles are considered grafted into their tree. Even in the Gospels we find the harsh words of Christ our Lord toward the Canaanite woman that “the food for the children should not be given to dogs”.

While it is true that we are not cast aside as secondary in the eyes of God, it is still equally true that this is a Hebraic faith. The root supports us, and we do not support that root. Our lack of understanding in the Hebraic realm of theology, and our even lesser understanding of Israel’s place in the Kingdom of God, together mixed with a severe case of ego-centrism has caused for our foundation to be a Gentile Jesus that looks more like an errand boy than the Jewish Yeshua who did not come to be served, but to serve. The foundations of our faith, and the foundations of the Church, are drastically misaligned simply because we are unwilling to think outside of our Gentile world. Yet, the truth is that even those who look into the Jewish flare of the “Hebrew roots” and that hold sentiment with Israel also commit extreme error in that they do not recognize the roots as Hebraic, only Jewish.

The Hebraic roots are beyond categories. God has identified with the Hebrews, not necessarily with the “Jews”. This distinction is important. The Hebrew roots go back to Adam, who was a son of God (Luke 4:38), whereas the Jewish roots simply go back to Abraham. There is a certain quality and character that we find in the Hebraic roots that is somehow quite similar to the Jewish mindset, yet it is beyond and deeper than the Jewish mindset and lifestyle. This character is displayed through all of the saints of the Old and New Testaments. They aren’t Gentile, and yet we desire to make them Gentile. Then others of us desire to lose our Gentile nature in order to take up the Jewish frame of mind. Better to keep that which is Gentile and Greek than to transfer into Judaism. To say it cheaply, Jesus has not made us Jewish, but Hebrew, and the distinction between those two words can only be intuited. There is indeed something about the Jewish way of thinking that is quite Hebrew, but not the other way around. There is a deeper well from which we drink. Judaism has cut itself off from its own roots in order to scoff at the Hebrew Yeshua, and the defining factor of the Hebraic life is found in Nathaniel: “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.” Paul also expands upon this in conclusion to Romans 2, where he states: “A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God.”

This language of heart circumcision is found in the prophet Jeremiah as the “new covenant”. As we have looked at, and as I hope it will continue to be developed, the new covenant is not necessarily “new”, but rather, eternal. That heavenly flare that comes from the heart circumcision was not unknown to the Old

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Testament prophets, but instead was explained from the experience of the Old Testament prophets. The saints of the Old Testament were saints because they had that inner heart conversion. It is that that makes us Hebrew – the heavenly manifesting into the earthly. The whole of the Pauline epistles are written to explain this phenomenon. Though we are Gentile, we are no longer Gentiles. Though some of the Church might be Jewish, they are no longer Jewish. There is something beyond these two categories of men, and it is that transcendent category that we pursue. This is all that is intended in the term “resurrection”. Somehow we are able to continue in our being Jewish or Gentile, and yet we are no longer merely Jewish or Gentile. Our identity and our culture stems from something heavenly, and not from our earthly identity and culture. This is what it means to be Hebrew, for “ye have come unto Zion”, and if the “heavenly Jerusalem” is our mother, then we are only ambassadors in this world, and not constrained to the labels and limitations of our carnality.

<sup>ccxiv</sup> Paul actually translates *melo goyim* from the Hebrew strait into Greek in Romans 11:25 when he declares, “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the *fullness of the Gentiles* be come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written...” What exactly Paul is trying to say here, I’m not certain. What is obvious is that it relates to the election of God, and that election of the remnant, both Jew and Gentile together, is supposed to be the salvific agent toward the nation of Israel.

<sup>ccxv</sup> Genesis 9:25-27

<sup>ccxvi</sup> Genesis 12:3

<sup>ccxvii</sup> For a more detailed analysis of what I’m saying, I am hinting that there are a regenerate people outside of the election. How do I define election? Election is specifically Israel. We, as believers, have been grafted into Israel, and for this time and age, to be saved is to be elected. Yet, there are a people outside of the election that will come unto Israel in the Millennial Kingdom in order to worship the Lord. We find parallels to this concept in Acts 17:34 where some of the men “cleaved unto Paul”, or became followers of Paul. To follow Paul is to follow Christ. Does that entail that somehow Paul is their savior? Certainly not. Nor does it necessitate that these people were somehow saved because they believed in Paul. In order for them to come to God, they came through Paul as a mediator, but ultimately Paul was a mediator to Christ, and the people were thus reconciled unto God through Christ. It was a belief in Paul, as an ambassador of Christ, that led them to salvation in Christ. In this same way, I believe that there will be a people outside of Israel – whether natural branches or grafted in – that will know the Lord, the God of Israel.

<sup>ccxviii</sup> Exodus 4:22

<sup>ccxix</sup> Matthew 2:15

<sup>ccxx</sup> Hosea 11:1

<sup>ccxxi</sup> Consider in the Olympics when someone wins the gold. They announce that “America has won the gold”, or “Germany has won the gold”, but in truth it was not the whole nation that won. Millions of people didn’t run the race to achieve the gold; only one man or woman did. Yet, that one man or woman was a representative for all of Israel. So too do we find the Messiah to be the representative for all of Israel.

<sup>ccxxii</sup> Exodus 19:6

<sup>ccxxiii</sup> To read the story, check out Exodus 20, and pay special attention to verses 18-19.

<sup>ccxxiv</sup> Luke 5:39

<sup>ccxxv</sup> Deuteronomy 11:26-28

<sup>ccxxvi</sup> 1 John 2:1

<sup>ccxxvii</sup> Romans 11:11

<sup>ccxxviii</sup> Deuteronomy 32:21

<sup>ccxxix</sup> Luke 15:29

<sup>ccxxx</sup> Deuteronomy 28

<sup>ccxxxi</sup> Deuteronomy 28:13

<sup>ccxxxii</sup> Romans 11:29

<sup>ccxxxiii</sup> Hosea 4:9

<sup>ccxxxiv</sup> See Ezekiel 20:9, 14, 22, 39, 36:20, 21, 22, 23, 39:7.

<sup>ccxxxv</sup> Deuteronomy 7:6

<sup>ccxxxvi</sup> Isaiah 51:4

<sup>ccxxxvii</sup> Deuteronomy 4:34

<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> Romans 11:11-25

<sup>ccxxxix</sup> Genesis 33:10

<sup>ccxl</sup> Numbers 18:20, Deuteronomy 10:9, but the direct quote comes from Deuteronomy 18:2



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ccxli John 8:16  
ccxlii Joshua 4:24  
ccxliii Isaiah 55:5  
ccxliv Isaiah 60:1  
ccxlv Isaiah 60:12  
ccxlvii Luke 12:48  
ccxlviii The first quote was verse 11, the latter quote verses are 26-28  
ccxlviii Isaiah 64:6

## Chapter 9:

ccxlix 2 Peter 3:9  
ccl Let me also add that it is not wrong to say that God is unwilling that any should perish. God's heart for the individual is more full of love and compassion than can be expressed. I simply desire to press that for many of us, it ends with the thought of how much Jesus loves you or I.  
ccli See Obadiah 1:9-10  
cclii Matthew 23:36  
ccliii Genesis 12:1  
ccliv There is a curious verse in Daniel 7. Notice verse 12: "The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time." The beasts are explained in the first handful of verses in chapter 7 – they are specific nations, but here represent generally all nations outside of the Antichrist's kingdom. The period of time that they are allowed to live is after the return of Christ, so we assume during the Millennial Kingdom. This is just one of the many prophecies that has to take place during that time, for I can't find any other place where it could be fulfilled. This is one of the many reasons I am not an amillennialist. In respect to the nations continuing outside of Israel and not being judged with the Antichrist, we find various passages that speak of nations coming up to Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom to celebrate feasts and pay homage to the Lord (Isaiah 2:2-4 and Zechariah 14:16-18 being two solid examples). The nations have a specific purpose outside of Israel to fulfill during that time, and any nation that at the end of the Millennium that is still disobedient to Christ is cut off – does not inherit the New Earth.  
cclv What I mean by this is that the Tower of Babel experience is the first time that we find the Hebrew word *goyim* – nations – appear.  
cclvi For the full story, read Genesis 11  
cclvii Genesis 9:1, 7  
cclviii Genesis 11:4  
cclix This is a quote from Acts 17:27.  
cclx Isaiah 25:7  
cclxi Hebrews 11:10  
cclxii The Assyrian phrase was the "Shar Kishshati".  
cclxiii Daniel 10:13  
cclxiv Note that in Jeremiah 51:25 and Zechariah 4:7 that mountains are kingdoms, and not simply kings. John is pulling from this, and expecting his readers to do their homework.  
cclxv Some would say that it is the False Prophet, but I'm not sure we can claim this, nor am I certain about their arguments, so I only put it down for the reader's further consideration.

## Chapter 10:

cclxvi I admit that it depends on what version you read. The Greek Septuagint has the phrase *αγγελων του* (angels of God), and the Latin vulgate reads "filiorum Israhel" (sons of Israel). The Hebrew is *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* (sons of Israel). It is in debate as to whether the original reading was "sons of God" – bene Elohim – considering the Greek Septuagint and some Hebrew manuscripts.  
cclxvii I would submit that the separating of the people might actually be a separation within a separation. There is already the distinction (separation) of nations, and within that distinction God separates the people – goats on one side, sheep on the other.

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<sup>cclxviii</sup> This, of course, does not indicate that America somehow had no more sin, although such things have happened in history (look into the Welch Revival). Instead, I mean to say that rampant immorality, drunkenness, and other debauchery was no longer prevalent.

<sup>cclxix</sup> Both of these historical facts are attested to by the book “I Saw the Welch Revival”, written by David Matthews.

<sup>cclxx</sup> Some would argue for the Brownsville Revival, but my only contention with this is that it simply didn’t have the effects nationally as the previous revivals have.

<sup>cclxxi</sup> It most likely came before this, of which I am certain. I cannot trace it back further, however, for whatever reason. The resources are not available, which causes me to consider that maybe this is indeed the inception of witchcraft at a popular level in our country.

<sup>cclxxii</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:5

<sup>cclxxiii</sup> Ezekiel 22:30

<sup>cclxxiv</sup> Luke 9:1

## Chapter 11:

<sup>cclxxv</sup> The Millennial Kingdom is highly controversial, not because of what it says, but because many don’t believe it will happen. It comes from Revelation 20:4, which is the only passage that directly claims a 1000-year reign of Christ. From the context (Revelation chapters 17-22), it is the easiest understanding to say that the 1000 years really does happen here on earth. But beyond the context of Revelations, there are many prophecies outside of Revelations that seem to only fit during this time. For example, Isaiah 65 speaks of a “New Heaven and New Earth”, but he talks about death and the curse still existing. How can that be when we read in Revelation 21:4 explicitly says there will be no more death? What Isaiah is most likely speaking about is a renewed world, such that we cannot comprehend it in this life, and thus calls it a “new earth”, but it is a preliminary step between the current earth and the glory of Revelation 21-22.

<sup>cclxxvi</sup> Joel 3:1-3

<sup>cclxxvii</sup> John 17:21-23

<sup>cclxxviii</sup> Notice in Revelation 22:5 that the people of the New Jerusalem will “reign forever and ever”. Who do they reign over? It is obvious that they continue to reign with Christ, but over what? In the Millennial Kingdom it is obvious: they reign over the nations that have just come into the Kingdom of God. They teach and discipline in order to display what it means to be a part of God’s Kingdom. But in the New Heaven and New Earth, is this still the case? I believe so. Somehow life goes on, but it is not life as we know it. Therefore the need for ruling and reigning with Christ continues on.

<sup>cclxxix</sup> Daniel 12:13

<sup>cclxxx</sup> Isaiah 54:3, also see Psalms 47:4 and 82:8

<sup>cclxxxi</sup> Hebrews 12:22

<sup>cclxxxii</sup> Hosea 4:9, but also notice the phrase in Isaiah 24:3.

<sup>cclxxxiii</sup> Ephesians 3:10

<sup>cclxxxiv</sup> Notice the context of Ephesians 3:10 from chapter 2 onward. The context is given that the dividing wall of hostility has been broken down between Jews and Gentiles, so that in Christ the two have become one new man. The outworking of that mystery is the engaging of the principalities and powers in the end time stratagem – it is simply the logic of such a statement.

<sup>cclxxxv</sup> Colossians 2:15

<sup>cclxxxvi</sup> This is hinted at in the word “overcome”, or as the Greek puts in “overcoming”, in Revelations. For a specific verse, look at Revelations 12:11. Though there is not a specific verse that I can point to in order to confirm this statement, the concept is spoken throughout the whole of the New Testament.

<sup>cclxxxvii</sup> Revelation 12:11

<sup>cclxxxviii</sup> Ezekiel 28:17-18

<sup>cclxxxix</sup> Some say that it is in the past, due to Luke 10:18.

<sup>ccxc</sup> Ezekiel 39 speaks of seven years that people will plunder the battleground for firewood (verse 9), and seven months that it will take for the burial of the soldiers (verse 12). This cannot be literal if there is no Millennial Kingdom. You could also add Isaiah 66:24.

<sup>ccxci</sup> Ezekiel 28:25

<sup>ccxcii</sup> Zechariah 12:10

<sup>ccxciii</sup> Psalm 2:6

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ccxciv Psalm 2:8  
ccxcv Isaiah 60:12, Zechariah 14:16  
ccxcvi Deuteronomy 32:43  
ccxcvii Psalm 22:27-28  
ccxcviii Matthew 5:5  
ccxcix Psalm 86:9  
ccc Psalm 98:2-3  
ccci Daniel 7:27  
cccii Zechariah 8:20-22  
ccciii Malachi 1:11  
ccciv Revelation 21:24-25  
cccv Romans 8:19

## Chapter 12

cccvii 2 Corinthians 3:6  
cccviii Romans 12:1  
cccviii Romans 15:16  
cccix 1 Peter 2:5  
cccix Romans 6:13, 16, 1 Corinthians 6:20  
cccx 1 Peter 2:5  
cccxi Romans 11:11, Deuteronomy 32:21  
cccxi Romans 11:26  
cccxiiv To be fair, I have not been around the world to know this. I collect fragments of what is spoken by other international speakers. It might well be the case that in the Western Church this is true, but in the case of the African, Middle Eastern, or Eastern Churches that this statement is not true.  
cccxiiv Isaiah 53:3  
cccxiiv Hebrews 12:22-4, Revelation 3:21, Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 3:1  
cccxiiv Hebrews 11:13, 1 Peter 2:11, Psalm 39:12, Matthew 28:20  
cccxiiv Romans 12:14, 21  
cccxiiv Galatians 2:20  
cccxiiv Romans 4:18  
cccxiiv Proverbs 31:18, Matthew 25:6-13  
cccxiiv Genesis 41:38  
cccxiiv John 1:47  
cccxiiv Zechariah 1:18  
cccxiiv Philippians 1:6  
cccxiiv Ephesians 5:27, Song of Solomon 4:7, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Colossians 1:22  
cccxiiv Psalm 24:3-7  
cccxiiv You can find this concept in Hebrews 5:8-9  
cccxiiv Deuteronomy 12:5, Ezra 6:12, 1 Kings 9:3  
cccxiiv Consider, for example, the angels in Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4.  
cccxiiv John 7:16, 8:26, 12:49, 14:10, 24, 17:8  
cccxiiv Deuteronomy 8:3  
cccxiiv John 6:63, 2 Corinthians 3:17  
cccxiiv John 4:35  
cccxiiv Song of Solomon 1:6, 6:2, 8:12  
cccxiiv Song of Solomon 4:12  
cccxiiv Song of Solomon 8:6  
cccxiiv Ephesians 1:13  
cccxiiv 1 Corinthians 1:7  
cccxi Romans 13:14  
cccxi 2 Corinthians 2:15-16, 3:18  
cccxi Romans 10:17  
cccxi Hebrews 2:10

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- cccxliv A combination of Matthew 25:21 and 25:34, and Hebrews 4:3, 11
  - cccxlv Revelation 22:12, Isaiah 40:10
  - cccxlvi Revelation 22:5
  - cccxlvii Hebrews 12:2
  - cccxlviii Isaiah 55:1-5
  - cccxlivx Revelation 22:17

### Chapter 13:

- ccccli 1 Peter 2:5, Revelation 1:6
- ccccli Hebrews 2:9-11, the phrase being specifically in verse 10
- ccccli The phrase comes from 2 Corinthians 4:17
- ccccliia Isaiah 59:2
- ccccliiv 1 John 3:2
- ccccli This is summed up in John 6:36-40
- ccccliia Isaiah 55:7-8
- ccccliia Exodus 20:26
- ccccliia Romans 15:4
- ccccli This is hinted at in Exodus 25:9 and 25:40
- ccccli Though Aaron and Jesus were both physically naked, I don't think that this is necessary. The nakedness felt by Peter when he denied the Lord three times, or the embarrassment felt by Thomas when he told the other 10 disciples, "Unless I put my hand in the hole of his side, and see the nail marks in his hands, I will not believe", is quite extensive enough. The point is to be brought low and see that our zealous mentalities are not sufficient. It is only when we have been stripped of our humanity and romantic notions that we can then be clothed with the priestly attire.
- ccccliia James 5:14-16, Galatians 6:2
- ccccliia The "white robes" in an eschatological sense are the resurrection bodies. Compare Revelation 3:4-5, 6:11, 7:9, 19:8, 2 Corinthians 5:2-3, and Romans 8:23. We find Joshua the high priest being so clothed in Zechariah 3:4-5.
- ccccliia Hebrews 3:1
- ccccliiv Colossians 1:18, Revelations 1:5
- ccccli It should be noted that while the resurrection of the body is not attained until the return of Christ, what I am maintaining is something aside from that. There is a maturity and stature in Christ that we *can* attain in this life, of which many of us know nothing of.
- ccccliia 1 Chronicles 16:22, 1 Samuel 24:6, 26:9
- ccccliia Psalm 51:6
- ccccliia Matthew 16:6
- ccccliia Galatians 5:9
- ccccliia Luke 23:46
- ccccliia Romans 12:1
- ccccliia 2 Corinthians 12:15
- ccccliia Philippians 3:17
- ccccliia Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45
- ccccliia 2 Samuel 8:18
- ccccliia Romans 8:22
- ccccliia Consider Galatians 4:26 in that context
- ccccliia Romans 14:17
- ccccliia 1 Kings 18:26-29
- ccccliia Proverbs 7:14
- ccccliia Matthew 23:27 and 2 Timothy 3:5
- ccccliia Matthew 23:25-26
- ccccliia Proverbs 30:20
- ccccliia Proverbs 7:11
- ccccliia Proverbs 7:19
- ccccliia Matthew 24:45-51

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ccclxxxvii Hebrews 7:3

ccclxxxviii Matthew 5:11 paraphrased

ccclxxxix Hebrews 4:12

cccxc In the case of Daniel, he is referred to as the “little horn”.

cccxcii Jeremiah 29:5-10

cccxciii See Jeremiah 30:3-5, and note Jeremiah is seeing a return, but yet even in that return there will be terror and calamity.

cccxciv ” Daniel 9:24 paraphrase

cccxcv I have even heard some go so far as calling Jesus the vile prince that will destroy the temple in the 70<sup>th</sup> week, thus equating Jesus with the Antichrist.

cccxcvi This may be why the book of Revelations has so many sevens in it: seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls of wrath, seven beatitudes, seven churches, seven lamp stands, seven angels, seven spirits, seven eyes upon the Lamb, etc.

cccxcvii Daniel 7:12

cccxcviii Genesis 9:25-27

cccxcix Zechariah 14:16

cd Revelation 20:7 and onward

cdi Joel 3:1-3

cdii From Jeremiah 30:7

cdiii Zechariah 9:9

#### Chapter 15:

cdiv Daniel 11:30

cdv Isaiah 28:15

cdvi Isaiah 30:1

cdvii Daniel 8:25, 11:21

cdviii This king of the north is obviously the Antichrist, but we learn this both from the way that he acts and interacts in chapter 11 and also from the vision in Daniel 8, where the little horn comes from one of the four divisions of Greece.

cdix Mark 3:24

cdx Luke 19:44

cdxi As seen in Isaiah 11:11 and other texts

cdxii What makes this note equally important is that it affects the Church. How many people have put their trust in the state of Israel as the final return? How many have concluded that God has restored them, and therefore they shall never again fall? For some, the nation of Israel has become an idol in a manner that should cause us pause. What is it about the idea of two distinct comings, or two distinct restorations at the end of the age that chafes us? Why is it that we are so aggressive and cutthroat about this? To finger a second restoration to the Christian is the same as fingering a second coming to the Jew. There is something about it that rubs us the wrong way. It will either bring irritation, or it will cause for aggregation because they don't believe that Israel has any covenant promises anymore.

cdxiii Isaiah 31:1, 3

cdxiv Luke 19:14

cdxv Also, check out 2 Corinthians 3:13-16, which might give us a hint at why they are so blinded. What is it about the baptism into Moses that dulls and blinds the Jewish heart? What is it about the New Covenant and baptism of the Holy Spirit that brings liberty and removes the veil?

cdxvi John 19:15

cdxvii Exodus 32:20

cdxviii Jeremiah 17:5-7

cdxix Isaiah 57:11-13

cdxx Deuteronomy 32:17

cdxxi Isaiah 1:11

cdxxii Isaiah 66:3-4

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cdxxiii In the Old Testament, there was a tradition where when you offer the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, you tie a scarlet thread upon its head. Then when the man takes the goat and throws it over a cliff (usually a Gentile to do such a thing), the thread would turn white. This is why Isaiah says to the people, “Though your sin be as scarlet, I will make you white as snow”. He is playing on the imagery. If the thread does not turn white, it means that God has not accepted the sacrifice. There is a story in the Mishnah (a collection of Jewish teachings around the time of Jesus) that somewhere in the middle of the first century A.D. the scarlet thread didn’t turn white on the Day of Atonement. The next year, it didn’t turn white. The teaching goes that from somewhere around the time of Jesus’ crucifixion onward to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., that scarlet thread remained red.

cdxxiv Amos 5:22

## Chapter 16:

cdxxv Jeremiah 30:7

cdxxvi Jeremiah 29:10

cdxxvii Matthew 24:21

cdxxviii Daniel 12:1

cdxxix Isaiah 1:25

cdxxx Ezekiel 22:19-22

cdxxxi Jeremiah 9:25-26

cdxxxii Zechariah 13:8

cdxxxiii Ezekiel 7:25-26

cdxxxiv Psalm 51:21

cdxxxv Deuteronomy 28:53

cdxxxvi Deuteronomy 28:62-63

cdxxxvii Isaiah 24:6

cdxxxviii Isaiah 24:6, 23

cdxxxix Isaiah 7:17

cdxl Isaiah 13:12

cdxli Joel 1:2

cdxlii Psalm 83:4

cdxliiii Isaiah 44:21

cdxliv Luke 21:16-17

cdxlv This is to say that the stars swept to the ground by Satan is the Church. Daniel 8:10-11 mentions the same act of the “stars” being cast to the ground, but this verse adds an extra detail: they are trampled. If the stars represent demons, and this is the fall of Satan at the beginning of the world, why would the demons be trampled under the foot of Satan? It makes much more sense that the stars often – not always – represent the saints in the prophetic texts, and here in both Daniel 8 and Revelation 12 the stars represent the saints of God being cast down and trodden underfoot – obviously resulting in their martyrdom.

cdxlvi Revelation 12:11

cdxlvii Romans 11:25

cdxlviii Revelation 13:7

cdxlix Daniel 7:21

cdli Daniel 7:25

cdlii Matthew 24:16

cdliii Deuteronomy 18:15-20

cdliiii Ezekiel 20:35

cdliv Isaiah 48:21

cdlv Isaiah 59:9-13

cdlvi Zechariah 1:3

cdlvii Ezekiel 37:11

cdlviii Deuteronomy 32:26-27

cdlix Deuteronomy 4:26-27, 31

cdlx Jeremiah 31:31-37

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cdlxi Isaiah 5:13  
cdlxii Hosea 13:14, 1 Corinthians 15:55  
cdlxiii Zechariah 14:2  
cdlxiv Luke 21:24  
cdlxv Jeremiah 12:4  
cdlxvi Amos 9:2-3  
cdlxvii Matthew 12:36  
cdlxviii Romans 11:15  
cdlxix Hebrews 7:27, Leviticus 9:7, 16:11, 15  
cdlxx 2 Corinthians 3:13-14  
cdlxxi Deuteronomy 32:21, 36  
cdlxxii Psalm 102:23  
cdlxxiii Isaiah 2:17-18  
cdlxxiv Isaiah 2:22  
cdlxxv Ezekiel 7:24  
cdlxxvi This is the call given to Jeremiah the prophet, to “uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant” in 1:10.  
cdlxxvii 2 Corinthians 12:10  
cdlxxviii 1 John 3:20  
cdlxxix This whole story is found in Matthew 17.  
cdlxxx Isaiah 23:9

#### Chapter 17:

cdlxxxi Genesis 49:10  
cdlxxxii Genesis 32:30  
cdlxxxiii Isaiah 28:11  
cdlxxxiv Jeremiah 31:2  
cdlxxxv Zechariah 10:9  
cdlxxxvi Romans 11:28  
cdlxxxvii Daniel 12:1  
cdlxxxviii Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 3:1  
cdlxxxix To be fair and honest, the term “antichrist” only appears four times in the whole of the Bible – all four times in the epistles of John. Three times the term is used in 1 John, and once in 2 John. Yet, the concept is expressed throughout the New Testament, and the pattern is set quite extensively in the Old Testament. Paul calls this man “the man of sin” in 2 Thessalonians 2. Jesus preaches of “false christs”. Daniel speaks of a “little horn”. The book of Revelations calls him “the beast”, and later distinguishes this beast in Revelation 13:1-10 and the second beast (Revelation 13:11-18) by putting them side by side together in Revelation 19:20. Though the technical term “Antichrist” is not used but one time – 1 John 2:18, “you have heard *the Antichrist* is coming...” – the concept behind this is used quite extensively and thoroughly.

#### Chapter 18:

cdxc Jeremiah 49:12  
cdxci John 10:18  
cdxcii Romans 6:4  
cdxciii Hebrews 9:14  
cdxciv 1 Corinthians 11:1, Ephesians 5:1  
cdxcv Ephesians 3:10  
cdxcvi Revelation 12:11  
cdxcvii 1 Corinthians 2:7  
cdxcviii Ephesians 2:2  
cdxcix 1 John 5:3-4  
d Isaiah 29:9-10

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- di Matthew 17:20-21
  - dii Genesis 19:8
  - diii Luke 21:14-15
  - div Psalm 18
  - dv Isaiah 40:9
  - dvi John 6:63

#### Chapter 19:

- dvii Mark 4:26-29
- dviii Isaiah 9:7
- dix Matthew 18:20
- dx Psalm 22:3
- dxi Exodus 25:22
- dxii Isaiah 66:1
- dxiii Acts 17:26
- dxiv Ephesians 2:14
- dxv Colossians 1:27
- dxvi See 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 – but specifically verse 18.
- dxvii 1 Corinthians 11:2-16
- dxviii Hebrews 11:10, 12:22
- dxix John 1:47
- dx Roman 2:28-29
- dxxi 1 Samuel 24:11 and 1 Samuel 25:28
- dxiii 1 Samuel 15:23
- dxiiii 1 Samuel 16:11
- dxv 1 Samuel 16:19
- dxvi Matthew 8:20
- dxvii 1 Corinthians 10:1
- dxviii Ephesians 2:12
- dxviiii 2 Corinthians 12:15
- dxix Philippians 3:17
- dxix There is even a cliché that says, “Nothing is more precious than the meekness of the Lamb, but nothing is more terrible than the wrath of the Lamb!”
- dxxi Exodus 32:20
- dxiii 1 Corinthians 13:12

#### Chapter 20:

- dxiii Matthew 24:28
- dxiv Isaiah 2:2
- dxv Isaiah 8:9-10
- dxvi Psalm 33:10-11
- dxvii Daniel 11:44
- dxviii Isaiah 9:6-7
- dxix Zechariah 12:10
- dxl Isaiah 31:6
- dxli Zechariah 3:8-9
- dxlii It should be noted, however, that in Revelation 1:4 John gives grace and peace from the Father, the seven Spirits, and from Jesus. In this case, it seems as though the seven Spirits are somehow related to the holy Spirit – the Greek being pneumata. Now, in Revelation 3:1, we see the seven stars and the seven Spirits put side by side, distinguishing the two, but at the same time putting them in relation to one another. Who exactly the seven stars are – whether angels or ministers is debated among scholars – seem to be paralleled with the seven Spirits at least to some extent. Somehow the Spirits are intimately wrapped together with the lamps and stars, but is still distinguished from them.



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- dxliii Zechariah 12:10-14  
dxliv Don't pass too quickly that he is considered priest and king – both.  
dxlv 1 Peter 2:5  
dxlvi Matthew 9:36  
dxlvii Psalm 80:14-17  
dxlviii Isaiah 42:1-4  
dxlix Psalm 2:6-9  
dl Deuteronomy 15:6  
dli Psalm 48:1-3  
dlii Isaiah 40:4, Luke 3:5  
dliiii Joel 2:32  
dliv Zechariah 8:2-3, also see Zechariah 1:14-17

#### Chapter 21:

- dlv Exodus 3:21-22, 11:2-3  
dlvi Isaiah 11:11-12  
dlvii Isaiah 49:22-23  
dlviii Isaiah 35:10  
dlix Ezekiel 36:24-27  
dlx Isaiah 49:22-23  
dlxi Revelation 3:19  
dlxii Jeremiah 30:8-9  
dlxiii Jeremiah 32:39  
dlxiv Jeremiah 23:4-5  
dlxv It should be said that not every religious Jew fits neatly into a category, and that some do truly believe in a living God – even one that speaks to them. What is missing isn't the wording, but rather the reality in their words. Many times they will say the right things, believe the right things, perform the right things, and yet still reason based off of humanistic mindsets. The praise goes to God, but all of the work has been from their own hands.  
dlxvi Don't miss the seal of the 144,000 here. In the end, there are two seals: the mark of the beast, or the seal of God – both being upon the forehead. Those sealed with the mark of God are set aside as firstfruits unto the Lord, virgins who have not defiled their clothes. It is possible that this is what is being referenced, but these sorts of details are highly controversial because so many have various opinions of what and who these things are.  
dlxvii Ecclesiastes 12:14  
dlxviii Romans 7:21-25

#### Chapter 22:

- dlxix Deuteronomy 12:2-3  
dlxx Deuteronomy 30:1-6  
dlxxi Isaiah 32:14-15  
dlxxii Jeremiah 31:31  
dlxxiii 2 Corinthians 3:7-9  
dlxxiv 2 Corinthians 3:6  
dlxxv Romans 11:11  
dlxxvi Romans 12:1  
dlxxvii Romans 15:16  
dlxxviii Ezekiel 11:18-21  
dlxxix Zephaniah 3:11-13  
dlxxx Zechariah 12:10  
dlxxxi Ezekiel 34:17  
dlxxxii Matthew 26:28  
dlxxxiii Galatians 4:24-26

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dxxxiv Galatians 5:1  
dxxxv Romans 11:11  
dxxxvi Romans 11:31  
dxxxvii Romans 12:1  
dxxxviii Zechariah 13:1-2  
dxxxix Deuteronomy 16:3, Isaiah 34:20  
dxci Isaiah 34:20-21  
dxci Isaiah 45:17  
dxcii Obadiah 17  
dxciii Ephesians 1:13-14  
dxciv Deuteronomy 4:34  
dxcv Zechariah 8:6  
dxcvi 2 Thessalonians 2:10  
dxcvii Revelation 20:1  
dxcviii Isaiah 66:8  
dxcix 2 Peter 3:12  
dc Exodus 4:22  
dci Acts 1:6  
dcii Psalm 86:9  
dciii Psalm 98:2-3  
dciv Ezekiel 37:28  
dcv Daniel 7:14  
dcvi Luke 8:43-48  
dcvii Malachi 1:11  
dcviii Deuteronomy 32:43  
dcix Psalm 79:10  
dxc Psalm 96:7-9  
dxci Amos 9:12  
dxcii Isaiah 66:18  
dxciii Psalm 47:7-8  
dxciv Romans 11:11-15  
dxcv Romans 11:25  
dxcvi Romans 11:32  
dxcvii Romans 11:28  
dxcviii Romans 11:29

#### Chapter 23:

dxcix 2 Corinthians 5:20  
dxxx Luke 22:25-27  
dxxxi See Acts 6 and 7 for the full story.  
dxxxi 1 Corinthians 9:24, 2 Timothy 2:5  
dxxxiii 1 Corinthians 3:15  
dxxxiv Revelation 20  
dxxxv Revelation 21-22  
dxxxvi For references, see Revelation 20:4-6, Revelation 21:24-26, and Revelation 22:5  
dxxxvii Matthew 19:29-30  
dxxxviii Hebrews 11:13  
dxxxix Daniel 12:13  
dxxx Matthew 25:31  
dxxxii Revelation 20:4-6  
dxxxii Job 19:25-27  
dxxxiii Philippians 3:10-11, 20-21  
dxxxiv 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17  
dxxxv Hebrews 4:9

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dxxxvi Read Genesis 1 for this account

dxxxvii Job 19:26

Epilogue:

dxxxviii Luke 3:11, 1 John 3:17