

Is the Bible Divinely Inspired? -- *Special Edition* (2nd Ed.)

By Richie Cooley

A few legal notes...

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Hello and welcome. I began several years ago writing on Biblical topics and started self-publishing booklets on Amazon. After I had written about 7 or 8 I felt like I was beginning to dilute my original intent of simplicity, so I began the process of combining my writings, first in an all-in-one, volume format, and then by condensing this large work into the smaller book, **Is the Bible Divinely Inspired?**

However, having finished that, I still wasn't satisfied by the state of my writing efforts. Mainly, I didn't like to think that I was "selling" something very meaningful to me; so I've decided to quit using Amazon Kindle and instead publish the electronic version on free sites. Also, for anyone who read the original, this version has been given a lot of new bells and whistles. For example, I decided to re-include my Messianic prophecy discussions from an earlier version of "Mashiach ben Elohim," and I also included an appendix which was taken from a booklet that I published under a pen name. In the "Major Divine Patterns" section there is a lot of new material as well, including a full reworking of the Davar/Devir thesis. Anyway, thanks for reading.

Sincerely,
Richie Cooley
September, 2014

A few instructional notes...

1. The words in brackets [] within direct quotations are from the translator/author; the words in the special brackets { } are from me.

2. Abbreviations for the Bible versions used are as follows:

Analytical Literal Translation (3rd edition) = **ALT3**

English Standard Version = **ESV**

King James Version = **KJV**

New American Standard Bible (1995) = **NASB**

Rotherham's Emphasized Bible = **REB**

Young's Literal Translation (modified) = **mYLT**

3. Two of the Bibles have special features. The NASB places an asterisk beside a present verb that has been translated in the past tense (only in the New Testament). The ALT3 indicates if "you" is plural or singular by putting an asterisk beside the plural form.
4. "LORD," "GOD," or "Hashem (meaning 'the Name')," signify the personal name of God, which is popularly rendered "Jehovah" or "Yahweh."
5. For the most part the direct quotes utilize American spelling while my writing uses European spelling.
6. Most of the Bible versions quoted capitalize divine pronouns; however, I do not follow this practice in my writing.
7. Long quotes begin with a "<" symbol.

Table of Contents

[General Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1. What is Truth? \(Origins vs. Evolution\)](#)

[Chapter 2. Are the Biblical Documents Trustworthy?](#)

[Chapter 3. The Messianic Prophecies of Divinity](#)

[Chapter 4. The Messianic Prophecies of Salvation](#)

[Chapter 5. Major Divine Patterns \(in the Word\)](#)

[Chapter 6. Major Divine Patterns \(in the World\)](#)

[Chapter 7. Eschatology \(End Times Prophecy\)](#)

[Appendix 1: Pim Fortuyn and Revelation 13](#)

[Appendix 2: Dino-flesh; Ussher's revenge](#)

[Citations](#)

General Introduction

<Any physical theory is always provisional, in the sense that it is only a hypothesis: you can never prove it. No matter how many times the results of experiments agree with some theory, you can never be sure that the next time the result will not contradict the theory. On the other hand, you can disprove a theory by finding even a single observation that disagrees with the predictions of the theory. As philosopher of science Karl Popper has emphasized, a good theory is characterized by the fact that it makes a number of predictions that could in principle be disproved or falsified by observation. Each time new experiments are observed to agree with the predictions the theory survives, and our confidence in it is increased; but if ever a new observation is found to disagree, we have to abandon or modify the theory. At least that is what is supposed to happen, but you can always question the competence of the person who carried out the observation.*1

This is the *scientific method* as stated by Stephen Hawking. If the academic world actually lived by such sentiments then there would be no need to write a book in defence of God and his revealed truth; unfortunately, this isn't the way "higher education" always works. John Lennox, a colleague of Richard Dawkins at Oxford, referenced a disturbing attitude in his book, *God's Undertaker...*

<...In his review of Carl Sagan's last book, the Harvard geneticist Richard Lewontin makes it abundantly clear that his materialistic convictions are *a priori* {meaning prior to proving through examination}. He not only confesses that his

materialism does not derive from his science, but he also admits, on the contrary, that it is his materialism that actually consciously determines the nature of what he conceives science to be: 'Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs... in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment... to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated.'*2

Many universities have shoved the masses into this very precarious corner. They've actually built their whole temple of "knowledge" on the slippery supposition that there is nothing supernatural. If some of these "intellectuals" would conduct their research on the front lines of fruitful missionary outposts or even at the places in the world where dark magic is still practiced, their edifice would crumble...

<The spirits arrived again, only this time riding a fire burning at the base of the poteau mitan. The hounsis was mounted violently -- her entire body shaking, her muscles flexed -- and a single spasm wriggled up her spine. She knelt before the fire, calling out in some ancient tongue. Then she stood up and began to whirl, describing smaller and smaller circles that carried her like a top around the poteau mitan and dropped her, still spinning, onto the fire. She remained there for an impossibly long time, and then in a single bound that sent embers and ash throughout the peristyle, she leapt away. Landing squarely on both feet, she stared back at the fire and screeched like a raven. Then she embraced the coals. She

grabbed a burning faggot with each hand, slapped them together, and released one. The other she began to lick...and then she ate the fire, taking a red-hot coal the size of a small apple between her lips. Then, once more she began to spin. She went around the poteau mitan three times until finally she collapsed into the arms of the mambo. The ember was still in her mouth {*the woman was not harmed in any way; this is a description of a supernatural Haitian ceremony witnessed by a Harvard scientist*}.*3

In this book we are going to survey the proof of supernatural realities in a way that doesn't require travel to exotic lands; we are going to view the divine finger which is evidenced in the written Word of God. Our study has a simple, five-point outline. First, since deep agnosticism and crass materialism are currently the norms in academic circles, we are going to point out some of the major flaws in these theories. Second, having taking these modern stumbling-blocks out of the way, we are going to investigate the Bible as to its authenticity and overall reliability. Third, having proven the historicity of the Scriptures themselves, we shall then examine in detail the extensive prophetic passages that were fulfilled with the coming of Jesus Christ nearly 2,000 years ago. Afterwards we will consider the divine patterns that are displayed in nature and the Scriptures, while the final section will discuss what the Bible predicts for the future.

Chapter 1. What is Truth? (Origins vs. Evolution)

<We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many different languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the arrangement of the books, but doesn't know what it is.

That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent being toward God. We see a universe marvelously arranged and obeying certain laws, but only dimly understand those laws. Our limited minds cannot grasp the mysterious force that moves the constellations.*1

-- *Albert Einstein*

1. The Anthropic Principle

The more scientists study the universe the more it appears that things are adjusted for life in a way that defies all explanation. Even Stephen Hawking has written of this phenomenon and the conclusions one could draw from it...

<The laws of science, as we know them at present, contain many fundamental numbers, like the size of the electric charge of the electron and the ratio of the masses of the proton and the electron. We cannot, at the moment at least, predict the value of these numbers from theory -- we have to find them by observation. It may be that one day we shall discover a complete unified theory that predicts them all, but it is also possible that some or all of them vary from universe to universe or within a single universe. The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life... Most sets of values would give rise to universes that, although they might be very beautiful, would contain no one able to wonder at that beauty. One can take this either as evidence of a divine purpose in Creation and the choice of the laws of science or as support for the strong anthropic principle.*2

Information theorist Dr. William Dembski sums up the odds of such occurring randomly...

<What happens when we try to assign a probability to the fine-tuning of these constants? Such a probability would look

like $1/N$ (one over N). How big is N ? Oxford physicist Roger Penrose concluded that if we jointly considered all the laws of nature that must be fine-tuned, we would be unable to write down such an enormous number because the necessary digits would be greater than the number of elementary particles in the universe.*3

2. Who Created the “Big Bang?”

What science currently postulates is that a giant, random explosion caused all the intricate order, and even if the odds are astronomical that life could have ever been supported, then we simply have hit the universal lottery. Even if this ridiculous thesis could be swallowed there still would be a gaping, unsolved quandary: *who created the components of this explosion?* Evolutionists will quickly reply, “Well who created God?” God claims to be eternal (cf. Deuteronomy 32:27; Psalm 90:2), energy does not. In fact, we know that energy cannot be eternal. How? The first and second laws of thermodynamics.

The first law dictates that energy can be changed into other forms but cannot be created nor destroyed. The second law dictates that when energy is used it loses a bit of its utility. So put these laws together: if new energy cannot be created and when energy is employed a bit of it becomes useless, then there is a finite amount of available energy, not an infinite amount.

Modern science asks the public to believe in the existence of a universe (or even *multiple universes*) without an original first-cause, which is of course impossible. They get away with it because no one takes them to task. Actually, the average atheistic lay person is often a lot wiser than the “cutting edge” physicist, but the atheist isn’t aware of this, so he or she trusts the physicist blindly. People don’t realize that an unbalanced intellectualism often warps the reason of “great minds” in many fields (especially those deluded by

quantum mechanical indulgences). We laugh at the absurdities of ancient pagan philosophers; we have no need to look beyond our own culture to enter into fits of hysterics...

<If symmetry is perfect on a cosmic scale, the total amount of energy in the universe is actually zero. Does this mean that nothing caused the universe? If our universe is an absolute zero, absolutely nothing seems required to cause it! Is our universe such an ultimate absolute accident? Is it nothing that was caused by nothing for no reason at all? Extreme Big Accident Cosmology answers affirmatively. This cosmology is advocated by Quantum Cosmologists like Edward P. Tryon, Peter Atkins, A. Vilenkin, Victor J. Stenger, Quentin Smith, and a few others for whom the origin of the universe was a stupendous accident, having no cause whatsoever.*4

3. When Did Matter Begin to Live?

Aristotle was one of the most influential philosophers to promote the idea that some living things came about spontaneously:

<Now there is one property that animals are found to have in common with plants. For some plants are generated from the seed of plants, whilst other plants are self-generated through the formation of some elemental principle similar to a seed; and of these latter plants some derive their nutriment from the ground, whilst others grow inside other plants, as is mentioned, by the way, in my treatise on Botany. So with animals, some spring from parent animals according to their kind, whilst others grow spontaneously and not from kindred stock; and of these instances of spontaneous generation some come from putrefying earth or vegetable matter, as is the case with a number of insects, while others are spontaneously generated in the inside of animals out of the secretions of their several organs.*5

The invention of the microscope (A.D. 1590) made such ideas questionable and Louis Pasteur later (around 1860) conducted experiments that definitively proved living things don't come about automatically, but that they can only descend from other life. Where did life originally come from then? Science's answer is that after a cooling-down period which followed the Big Bang, despite Pasteur's truths, somehow there was "spontaneous generation" anyway.

This is an outlandish assertion. When considered on a miniature scale the simple building blocks of life are just as spectacular as the galaxies. One of the most well-travelled quotes of Richard Dawkins is where he states that the nucleus of a cell has a "database larger, in information content, than all 30 volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica put together" (originally from *The Blind Watchmaker*).

And not only is such information present, but it is living...

<The genome is not just a simple string of letters spelling out a linear series of instructions. It actually embodies multiple linear codes, which overlap and constitute an exceedingly sophisticated information system, embodying what is called 'data compression'...plus multiple, overlapping, linear, language-like forms of genetic information [with] countless loops and branches -- like a computer program. It has genes that regulate genes that regulate genes...genes that sense changes in the environment, and then instruct other genes to react by setting in motion complex cascades of events that can then modify the environment.

Some genes actively rearrange themselves...changing portions of the instruction manual...!

The bottom line is this: the genome's set of instructions is not a simple, static, linear array of letters; [it] is dynamic, self-regulating, and multi-dimensional. There is no human information system that can even begin to compare to it.

The genome's highest levels of complexity and interaction are probably beyond the reach of our understanding... All this mind-boggling information is [located] within a genomic package that is contained within a cell's nucleus -- a space much smaller than the smallest speck of dust (from J.C. Sanford, a Cornell University professor and plant geneticist). *6 {some of the quotes throughout this book have been taken from secondary sources, so I apologize for passing on any typos, etc.}

Yet there must have been simple organisms before natural selection could begin to have any sort of effect, so the original kernel of this wonderful microcosm could only have come about by chance. We are going to see how unlikely this is.

Let's briefly consider the enormous complexity of one of the most important components of living matter. Darwinists don't think proteins came first; nevertheless, they had to be present before the first real cell could have existed...

<Proteins themselves are built from amino acids. A protein molecule is actually a long chain of linked amino acids... In nature there are 80 types of amino acids; however, only 20 of these are found in living organisms. If any of the other 60 amino acids would be in the chain, it would actually make the protein not viable for use in a living organism. It takes about 100 or so correctly "selected" amino acids to assemble one protein molecule.

To make things more complex: amino acids come in equal amounts of so called right- and left-handed orientation... So, any primordial soup would not only contain a random distribution of the 80 different amino acids, but also each amino acid would be present in a random distribution of right- and left-handed orientations. For some, not yet scientifically understood reason, proteins found in viable living organisms only contain left-handed amino acids.

...A calculation for the chance of one functional protein molecule forming randomly would be:

1/80 (select the right amino acid, one out of 80 possible choices) multiplied by 1/2 (only left-handed amino acids are usable) = 1 in 160. This is the probability of selecting the correct first amino acid for the protein. This needs to be repeated 100 times, since there are about 100 amino acids required to assemble one protein molecule. This chance is: 1/160 times 1/160...(one hundred times) = 1/160 to the power 100 = 2.6×10^{-220} {to the power} 220.

Compare this to the fact that there are only 10 {to the power} 80 atoms in the whole universe.*7

4. Dependency

Even if against all odds a basic ingredient somehow formed at the most primary of levels, it wouldn't have been useful. Other properties would have had to come about by chance around the same time and then somehow all of these different elements would have needed to combine. Jerry Bergman, a man who has earned five degrees, including a PhD in biology, sums it up like this...

<Oversimplified, life depends on a complex arrangement of three classes of molecules: DNA, which stores the cell's master plans; RNA, which transports a copy of the needed information contained in the DNA to the protein assembly station; and proteins, which make up everything from the ribosomes to the enzymes. Further, chaperons and many other assembly tools are needed to ensure that the protein is properly assembled. All of these parts are necessary and must exist as a properly assembled and integrated unit. DNA is useless without both RNA and proteins, although some types of bacteria can combine the functions of the basic required parts.

The problem for evolution caused by the enormous complexity required for life is quite well recognized, and none of the proposals to overcome it are even remotely satisfactory (Spetner, 1997)...For life to persist, living creatures must have a means of taking in and biochemically processing food. Life also requires oxygen, which must be distributed to all tissues, or for single-celled life, oxygen must effectively and safely be moved around inside the cell membrane to where it is needed, without damaging the cell. Without complex mechanisms to achieve these tasks, life cannot exist. The parts could not evolve separately and could not even exist independently for very long, because they would break down in the environment without protection (Overman, 1997).

Even if they existed, the many parts needed for life could not sit idle waiting for the other parts to evolve, because the existing ones would usually deteriorate very quickly from the effects of dehydration, oxidation, and the action of bacteria or other pathogens. For this reason, only an instantaneous creation of all the necessary parts as a functioning unit can produce life. No compelling evidence has ever been presented to disprove this conclusion, and much evidence exists for the instantaneous creation requirement, such as the discovery that most nucleotides degrade rather fast at the temperatures scientists conclude existed on the early earth (Irion, 1998). *8

If scientists would be sensible and cause mind-numbing speculation and charlatan philosophical models of probability to cease they would realize that every cell in every organism fulfils Darwin's own curse upon himself...

<If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down. *9

5. The Exclusivity of Selection

As we saw above, it is impossible to think that a simple cell formed because there are too many processes that would have had to develop simultaneously by chance. When we start talking of complex organisms we can begin to factor in natural selection, but this actually hurts instead of helps.

First of all, let's give a simple definition for *natural selection*. If a small number of giraffes exist, half having short necks and half having long necks, and the only available leaves are high up in trees, obviously only the long-necked giraffes will survive. This is a basic principle found in nature that both evolutionists and creationists regard as legitimate. We must be aware of this however, and I definitely think this is where so many go wrong -- *natural selection is simply a term for a mindless process, not a tangible force*. Modern science must prove how something as complex as the pituitary gland with its amazing array of hormones evolved and not just say "natural selection did it" or speculate via some imaginative story. All the term describes is the very predictable idea that the fit survive {*if it even does that*}.

It was stated that natural selection actually hurts the odds of evolution instead of helping it, and this is why: when it is factored in, non-essential structures are more than likely to vanish off the scene.

<It may be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life {*Darwin*}.*10

The classic example is the eye. Unless the eye is complete (or nearly complete) it isn't useful. If it did begin to develop, natural selection would have cancelled it out for being a wasteful anomaly in its early stages.

Think about the engineering feat of reproductive organs. How did male and female reproductive organs evolve separately and yet be compatible? Natural selection couldn't have had the foresight to "create" the different sexes for some sort of beneficial end. Also, selfish genes (which neo-Darwinists think rule the world in order to copy themselves) would not want to go down that path, for it instigates an unnecessary struggle for duplication.

6. Helpful Glitches?

Another logic problem is the means of evolution. The only real hope Darwinists have is that beneficial mutations take place at high rates and that they cause there to be new features which are retained by natural selection. The hindrance is that mutations of the genetic code are nearly always harmful, not helpful. This is why medical science takes precautions to protect people from radiation that could cause mutations. Add a random letter to this sentence or take one away. What are the odds of making an improvement so blindly (*given that my writing skills are subpar the odds are probably higher than they should be*)?

Over time a wolf could perhaps be turned into a Boston Terrier through breeder-induced selection because of the genome that's already there. Due to adaptation through natural selection a bear will be white at the Arctic Circle and brown in North American woodlands. Neither the dog nor the bear however can gain all sorts of new features to "progress" to another creature.

Neo-Darwinists don't really believe in progression anyway, and this is one of their more dangerous ideas. The erasing of the line between humans and animals has serious implications in the precarious world of genetic engineering. Scientists are already inserting human genes into animals. It doesn't take much imagination to foresee the worst sort of horror movie

becoming reality if the sanctity of human life is completely undermined.

Given this fact, it's amazing that sociobiologists are so eager to erase the line anyway. Are they misanthropic? Or are they just obtuse, being blind to the law of cause and effect? They certainly do not understand this rule as it applies to cosmology and biology, and it's becoming obvious that they don't understand it when it comes to sociology either.

<So glibly do the phrases 'higher animals' and 'lower animals' trip off our tongues that it comes as a shock to realize that, far from effortlessly slotting into evolutionary thinking as one might suppose, they were -- and are -- deeply antithetical to it. We think we know that chimpanzees {our nearest ancestors according to evolutionists} are higher animals and earthworms are lower, we think we've always known what that means, and we think evolution makes it even clearer. But it doesn't. It is by no means clear that it means anything at all. Or if it means anything, it means so many different things as to be misleading, even pernicious {Dawkins}.*11

Humanism is living on borrowed time. It is a relic of Judeo-Christianity. In reality, if Dawkins is right, then there can be no purpose for life and no worth in morality of any sort, including basic respect for humanity.

Back to the point, in an attempt to prove that mutations could eventually cause macroevolution, Richard Dawkins in *The Blind Watchmaker* described a computer program he designed that sharply brought down the odds of a monkey randomly typing a short line from Shakespeare. Yet the program included features of intelligent design, as each guess from the monkey was weighed against what the final outcome was supposed to be, with any successes along the way being retained. Thus the process wasn't blind at all; it had a goal while guarding its "improvements" towards that goal.

Randomness is an inescapable reality for atheists no matter how much abstract reasoning is offered to the contrary...

<...Some students and teachers at Plymouth University actually decided to put the monkeys-typing-Shakespeare theory to the test. In 2003, they placed six Sulawesi crested macaques in Paignton Zoo along with a computer and allowed them to get creative for four weeks.

The first monkey whacked the computer with a rock. Others urinated and defecated on the keyboard. In that time, the monkeys produced the equivalent of five typed pages but not a single word in the entire text. The text contained mainly strings of Ss and the occasional A, L, M, and J. The literary efforts of the six monkeys have been printed in a limited edition book entitled 'Notes Toward the Complete Works of Shakespeare.'*12

7. The Inner Being

Darwin recognized the danger to his theory that instincts posed yet did little to answer them. Read his introduction to a section where he attempts to discuss the issue in a very shallow and unsatisfying way...

<The subject of instinct might have been worked into the previous chapters; but I have thought that it would be more convenient to treat the subject separately, especially as so wonderful an instinct as that of the hive-bee making its cells will probably have occurred to many readers, as a difficulty sufficient to overthrow my whole theory. I must premise, that I have nothing to do with the origin of the primary mental powers, any more than I have with that of life itself.*13

He then goes on to describe instincts as habit or necessity for the most part, which is ludicrous. A spider spinning a web from birth skilfully with no teacher or a butterfly navigating a two thousand mile migration route without a guide can't be

fobbed off so easily. All these things underline the fact that there is more to the world than material elements; there must be an inner being.

Instinctual behaviour is just one proof among many that points to the existence of non-material inner processes, such as *spiritual realities* or *consciousness*, as the Nobel Prize winning John Eccles said...

<The modern Darwinian theory of evolution is defective in that it does not even recognize the extraordinary problem that is presented by living organisms acquiring mental experiences of a non-material kind that are in another world from the world of matter-energy, which formerly was globally comprehensive...

It is disturbing that evolutionists have largely ignored the tremendous enigma that is presented to their materialistic theory by the emergence of mentality in the animal evolution...

Popper (1982; 150) states that: 'The emergence of consciousness in the animal kingdom is perhaps as great a mystery as the origin of life itself. Nevertheless, one has to assume, despite the impenetrable difficulty, that it is a product of evolution, of natural selection.'

I believe that the emergence of consciousness is a skeleton in the cupboard of orthodox evolutionism.*14

If the butterfly's mind is a mystery, then how much more is the human's? What could push a human being to become so advanced mentally? Evolutionists do not believe "Lucy" appreciated music, wrote books, mixed paint, or could even discuss such concepts. Darwin says it is the struggle for life, the struggle to reproduce that rose man to new heights. The philosopher David Stove rings in clearly on the insufficiency of Darwin to explain the current state of humankind:

<A biological error, or error of heredity, is an organism which does not have as many descendents as it could have, or a characteristic of an organism which prevents it having as many descendents as it otherwise could.

Among plants there is no biological error at all, and in most species of animals there is none worth mentioning. A cockroach, a fish, or a snake, hardly ever has fewer descendents than it could. They do not waste their time or their health on biology, or philosophy, or religion, or art, or social reform, or any such foolishness. They don't smoke, drink, or gamble either, nor yet do they practice contraception, or fret themselves about over-population or the environment. They concentrate all their efforts, from the earliest possible moment, on having as many descendents as they can... *15

Why does our species fall so short in comparison? The upward swing towards reproduction *should* be greater in beings that are high in terms of ability. We should therefore be consumed, obsessed, and unbelievably successful at making babies {*at least in comparison to chimpanzees*}. Does that seem like an accurate picture? If it were there would be no homosexuality, no abortions, no monogamy, no bad habits, no putting off having children for career or altruistic missionary efforts or caring for a sick relative, or anything else. Breed and bread would be our lives, but such is not the case.

Only a society of remarkable stupidity could ardently believe in the scientific reality of homosexuality via Darwinistic evolution!

8. Fossils Don't Bear Evidence to Gradualism

Fossils are normally evoked as the great saviour of evolution. Even if all else fails, surely the bones uncovered from the earth point to a gradual increase in complexity over vast

stretches of time, don't they? No. If they did there wouldn't have been any need for the "punctuated equilibrium" nonsense of a few decades ago.

Darwin himself was very apprehensive about the subject of fossils. He tried to come up with excuses and possible scenarios to explain the overt problems, yet the doubts he expressed intermittently are very candid and intriguing. A hundred and fifty years later, the major obstacles that Darwin specifically touched on have never been overcome.

The following is an article by a creationist (John Morris) with Darwin's doubts intermixed. Also, in the portion of the writing that I've used from Morris he is just focusing on the marine section of fossils, which indeed make up well over 99% of them all [*note the following numbers...*

*<*95% of all fossils are shallow marine organisms, such as corals and shellfish.*

**95% of the remaining 5% are algae and plants.*

**95% of the remaining 0.25% are invertebrates, including insects.*

**The remaining 0.0125% are vertebrates, mostly fish. (95% of land vertebrates consist of less than one bone, and 95% of mammal fossils are from the Ice Age after the Flood.)*16*

This is exactly what one would expect if the account of Noah's flood is taken seriously.].

(Morris) -- <For decades students have been shown a representation of the fossil record appearing as a vertical column with marine invertebrates on the bottom, overlain by fish, then amphibians, reptiles, and mammals, with man on the top. The column is a column of time, they are told, with the long ago past on the bottom and the present on top. The

fossil column (or similar figure) is presented without question as if it were true -- as if it were real data. Students are led to believe that the order of first appearance of the fossils over time proves evolution.

I suggest that it does no such thing, for several reasons. First, the fossils do not occur in this order, simple to complex from bottom to top. The fossils at the bottom (i.e., long ago) are equally as complex as any animal today, and are essentially the same as their modern counterparts.

...Diverse forms continue up the column (i.e., throughout time) with much the same appearance possessed at the start. The term stasis describes the tendency to “stay” the same, remain “stationary” or “static.” Some body styles go extinct as you come up the column, but no new basic styles are introduced.*17

(Darwin) -- <Geological research, though it has added numerous species to existing and extinct genera, and has made the intervals between some few groups less wide than they otherwise would have been, yet has done scarcely anything in breaking down the distinction between species, by connecting them together by numerous, fine, intermediate varieties; and this not having been effected, is probably the gravest and most obvious of all the many objections which may be urged against my views.*18

(Morris) -- <Second, the evolutionary presentation in the textbook column implies that all life has come from one (or perhaps a few) common ancestor(s). But the Cambrian System, the lowest (i.e., oldest) level containing extensive multicellular fossils, exhibits a virtual explosion of life. Suddenly (by this I mean without the necessary ancestors lower in the column), every phylum of life is found -- every basic body style, including vertebrate fish. The abrupt appearance of diverse forms of life does not match with

evolutionary predictions of one form descending into many.*17

(Darwin) -- <The abrupt manner in which whole groups of species suddenly appear in certain formations, has been urged by several palaeontologists, for instance, by Agassiz, Pictet, and by none more forcibly than by Professor Sedgwick, as a fatal objection to the belief in the transmutation of species. If numerous species, belonging to the same genera or families, have really started into life all at once, the fact would be fatal to the theory of descent with slow modification through natural selection.

...There is another and allied difficulty...I allude to the manner in which numbers of species of the same group, suddenly appear in the lowest known fossiliferous rocks. Most of the arguments which have convinced me that all the existing species of the same group have descended from one progenitor, apply with nearly equal force to the earliest known species. Consequently, if my theory be true, it is indisputable that before the lowest Silurian stratum was deposited, long periods elapsed, as long as, or probably far longer than, the whole interval from the Silurian age to the present day; and that during these vast, yet quite unknown, periods of time, the world swarmed with living creatures. To the question why we do not find records of these vast primordial periods, I can give no satisfactory answer. The case at present must remain inexplicable; and may be truly urged as a valid argument against the views here entertained.*18

9. Consider the Source

Let's look at a few of the quotes that prove Darwin was a disgusting racist...

<Man is liable to numerous, slight, and diversified variations, which are induced by the same general causes, are governed

and transmitted in accordance with the same general laws, as in the lower animals. Man has multiplied so rapidly, that he has necessarily been exposed to struggle for existence, and consequently to natural selection. He has given rise to many races, some of which differ so much from each other, that they have often been ranked by naturalists as distinct species...

There is, however, no doubt that the various races, when carefully compared and measured, differ much from each other, -- as in the texture of the hair, the relative proportions of all parts of the body, the capacity of the lungs, the form and capacity of the skull, and even in the convolutions of the brain... Their mental characteristics are likewise very distinct; chiefly as it would appear in their emotional, but partly in their intellectual faculties...

With civilized nations, the reduced size of the jaws from lessened use -- the habitual play of different muscles serving to express different emotions -- and the increased size of the brain from greater intellectual activity, have together produced a considerable effect on their general appearance when compared with savages...

The great break in the organic chain between man and his nearest allies, which cannot be bridged over by any extinct or living species, has often been advanced as a grave objection to the belief that man is descended from some lower form; but this objection will not appear of much weight to those who, from general reasons, believe in the general principle of evolution. Breaks often occur in all parts of the series, some being wide, sharp and defined, others less so in various degrees; as between the orang and its nearest allies -- between the *Tarsius* and the other Lemuridae -- between the elephant, and in a more striking manner between the *Ornithorhynchus* or *Echidna*, and all other mammals. But these breaks depend merely on the number of related forms which have become extinct. At some future period, not very distant as measured

by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes, as Professor Schaaffhausen has remarked, will no doubt be exterminated. The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilised state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla.*19

Now I don't want to present an unbalanced picture. Above, when Darwin said the white race would exterminate Africans and native Australians and thus widen the gap between humans and monkeys, he didn't mean hunting and killing. He probably meant rather that they would be susceptible to disease and sterility as a result of colonization, for he believed them to be inferior and therefore unable to cope with change.

Also, it can be said in Darwin's favour that he was anti-slavery. Nevertheless, I think Africans and native Australians should be horrified that a major teaching of the world's universities makes them out to be intellectually inferior and on the low end of the human race in general. Though he might have been an advocate for human rights in some ways, he still was a racist; why do modern intellectuals try to deny it?

Shockingly, I think they hide it because they are racist too. The great evidence for this is that the search for a missing link is being conducted heavily in Africa. Dawkins has recommended this strongly in the recent past; the insinuation should be insulting to all black people.

10. Consider the Effects

Moving on, Darwinism also reasonably leads to a troubling conclusion: there is no real, potent God, so someone or something else must be God, normally, the state. When the

survival of the human being is no longer to be left in the hands of an almighty deity, then men must step in and take control. This has led to unfathomable death and destruction....

<By the 1890s and especially in the early twentieth century, the eugenics movement gained popularity, especially in medical circles, in Europe and the United States. Eugenics was driven in part by fears that modern institutions had set aside the beneficial aspects of natural selection. Eugenicists continually played on the specter of weak and sickly humans being preserved through modern medicine, hygiene, and charitable institutions, while the more intelligent and supposedly better human beings were beginning to voluntarily restrict their reproduction. This was producing biological degeneration, according to many eugenicists. Their solution? Introduce artificial selection by restricting the reproduction of the so-called “inferior” and encouraging the “superior” to procreate. Biological determinism permeated the eugenics movement, which pressed for marriage restrictions, compulsory sterilization, and sometimes even involuntary euthanasia for the disabled, because they were deemed biologically inferior.

Another prominent feature of the biological determinism of the early twentieth century was its stress on racial inequality. In Europe racist ideologies proliferated in the 1890s and early 1900s, partly under the influence of Darwinism and biological determinism. Many biologists, anthropologists, and physicians considered black Africans or American Indians less evolved than Europeans. As Europeans colonized vast stretches of the globe, many scientists proclaimed that non-Europeans were culturally inferior to Europeans. Further, they believed that these cultural differences were manifestations of biological inferiority...

Just as one form of environmental determinism -- Marxism -- produced unfathomable misery for millions of humans, so did biological determinism. Hitler's National Socialism was based on a biological determinist vision of humanity that

stressed racial inequality. Nazism endorsed discrimination -- and ultimately even death -- for those with allegedly inferior biological traits. On the other hand, it hoped to promote evolutionary advance for the human species by fostering higher reproductive levels of those considered superior biologically. Hitler's regime ended up killing about 200,000 disabled Germans, 6 million Jews, and hundreds of thousands of Gypsies in their effort to improve the human race.*20

And David Stove said:

<It is less well known, but still is fairly well known, that Adolf Hitler found or thought he found an authorization for his policies in the Darwinian theory of evolution. He said, for example, that "if we did not respect the law of nature, imposing our will by the right of the stronger, a day would come when the wild animals would again devour us -- then the insects would eat the wild animals, and finally nothing would exist except the microbes. By means of the struggle the elites are continually renewed. The law of selection justifies this incessant struggle by allowing the survival of the fittest. Christianity is a rebellion against natural law, a protest against nature."*21

Chapter 2. Are the Biblical Documents Trustworthy?

Having noted just a few of the many problems with the world's current propositions {*and given these problems I suspect more evolutionists will try to hide by talking up ideas like panspermia and multi-verses, thereby placing their "science" beyond reasonable examination; run Darwin run!*}, we shall now show how the Bible is reliable, despite the abuse it has received over the last few centuries. We shall do this in three ways. First, we will continue our scientific inquiries by noting how the Bible's controversial first book, *Genesis*, is actually very scientifically accurate. Second, we

shall examine how archaeology also confirms the early histories found in Genesis (that are so often mocked). Last, we shall quickly run through the evidence that the books selected for canonization were faithfully chosen and accurately related throughout their many centuries of existence.

1. Explaining Our Age

Faith in the Bible is not blind faith. Very clearly this is a collection of documents that were written by someone who truly knows all, as the science of Genesis showcases.

Let's begin demonstrating this with *a few simple scientific laws/truths* (most of which have already been mentioned above), showing how Genesis {*and Job, which predates it*} stated their existence thousands of years ago...

<The universe had a beginning (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:10-12). Starting with the studies of Albert Einstein in the early 1900s and continuing today, science has confirmed the biblical view that the universe had a beginning. When the Bible was written most people believed the universe was eternal. Science has proven them wrong, but the Bible correct...

The Bible states that God created life according to kinds (Genesis 1:24). The fact that God distinguishes kinds, agrees with what scientists observe -- namely that there are horizontal genetic boundaries beyond which life cannot vary. Life produces after its own kind. Dogs produce dogs, cats produce cats, roses produce roses. Never have we witnessed one kind changing into another kind as evolution supposes. There are truly natural limits to biological change...

Our bodies are made from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7; 3:19). Scientists have discovered that the human body is

comprised of some 28 base and trace elements -- all of which are found in the earth...

The First Law of Thermodynamics established (Genesis 2:1-2 { "*Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts*" -- NASB}). The First Law dictates that the total quantity of energy and matter in the universe is a constant. One form of energy or matter may be converted into another, but the total quantity always remains the same. Therefore the creation is finished, exactly as God said way back in Genesis...*1

<The oldest book in the Bible, the Book of Job, pre-dates Christ by about two thousand years. Yet Job 26:7 says, "He hangs the earth on nothing." In the sacred books of other religions you may read that the earth is on the backs of elephants that produce earthquakes when they shake. The cosmogony of Greek mythology is at about the same level of sophistication. But the Bible is in a completely different class. It says, "He . . . hangs the earth on nothing"...

Job also says that the earth is "turned like the clay to the seal" (38:14, KJV*). In those days, soft clay was used for writing and a seal was used for applying one's signature. One kind of seal was a hollow cylinder of hardened clay with a signature raised on it. A stick went through it so that it could be rolled like a rolling pin. The writer could, therefore, roll his signature across the soft clay and in that way sign his name. In saying the earth is turned like the clay to the seal, Job may have implied that it rotates on its axis {*also as I've mentioned elsewhere, the fact that Jesus Christ predicted darkness and brightness being on the earth at the same moment (Luke 17:34-36; TR) shows his knowledge beyond the language of the people*} (from *You Can Trust the Bible* by John MacArthur).

Moving on, it's also astounding that all the pronouncements concerning the major themes of *human life* that we find in

Genesis are still valid. For example, Adam was told that he would only eat bread by the sweat of his brow, and that thorns and thistles would spring up for him (Genesis 3:18-19). After thousands of years and after all the advances via technology, we are all still plagued by the weariness of the world of work and the constant little problems that spring up in the midst of our labours.

Eve was told that childbearing would be a very painful experience (Genesis 3:16). Despite all the epidurals and various other helps, medical science has still not been able to make this pronouncement void.

The years of man were set at the maximum of 120 years in Genesis 6:3; very few get close to this number, and even fewer ever transgress it. Again, medical science is no match for God's Word.

In Genesis 8:22 it states, "Seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" [NASB]. Every season is a tribute to his faithfulness.

Why do we wear clothes? What is modesty? What is shame? Why do we feel bad when we transgress sound morality? Only Genesis can answer these questions.

Couple all these constants with the other bits of foreknowledge and we see a world remarkably predicted by God from the very beginning. Compare this to the olden poems of the pagans. They are filled with gore, carnal superstition, and the most banal allegorical explanations for the mysterious things of life...

<For, the whole universe consisting of moisture, and animals being generated therein, the deity above-mentioned took off his own head: upon which the other gods mixed the blood, as it gushed out, with the earth; and from whence were formed

men. On this account it is that they are rational and partake of divine knowledge (from the History of Babylonia).*2

Finally, before leaving this topic, let's call to mind one of the most important themes of Genesis and of the Bible at large: *the remarkable Jewish people.*

Why after thousands of years of recorded history is the little nation of Israel still the focal point of the world? Why is one small race still the most important? It's been about 4,000 years since Abraham (Abram) was called out from Shinar to be the father of God's inheritance in the early chapters of Genesis; how did Moses know that this would be a perpetually decisive act?

These people have been the object of the world's hatred since that time, and yet they still thrive. Why have they had so many various enemies throughout history? Why do so many currently wish to see the nation of Israel pushed into the Mediterranean? What dark energy turns the media against this people and fills the minds of the brain-washed-millennials with anti-Semitism?

Their enemies cannot succeed because the Lord has sworn to multiply their number as the stars of the heaven and as the grains of sand on the earth. Incidentally, herein is found another interesting bit of science...

<The Bible compares the number of stars with the number of grains of sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17; Hebrews 11:12). Amazingly, gross estimates of the number of sand grains are comparable to the estimated number of stars in the universe.*1

Think about it; how did ancient man know the stars were so numerous?

2. Dusty Witnesses

Let's now move on to our second major set of evidences for this section, considering patriarchal archaeology in brief.

A. The Flood

<Biblical archaeology really begins with the Sumerian civilization of about 2500 BC. To date, numerous sites and artifacts have been uncovered that reveal a great deal about the ancient Mesopotamian culture. One of the most dramatic finds is the Sumerian King List, which dates to approximately 2100 BC. This collection of clay tablets and prisms is most exciting because it divides the Sumerian kings into two categories; those who reigned before the “great flood” and those who reigned after it. The lists are also dramatic because they include the ages of the kings before and after the “great flood,” which show the same phenomenal life span changes mentioned in the Bible. Actually, records of a global flood are found throughout most ancient cultures. For instance, the Epic of Gilgamesh from the ancient Babylonians contains an extensive flood story. Discovered on clay tablets in locations such as Ninevah and Megiddo, the Epic even includes a hero who built a great ship, filled it with animals, and used birds to see if the water had receded.*³

B. Ebla

In 1964 Italian archaeologists began excavating a mound in northern Syria. Eventually they would come across a vast store of clay tablets, dating back to 2500-2000 B.C. The name of the city was called Ebla, and in its documents many gems of Biblical significance were discovered.

<An Eblaite creation hymn was discovered among the tablets, existing in three distinct versions, all of which contain the following verse:

Lord of heaven and earth:

The earth was not, you created it

The light of day was not, you created it

The morning light you had not [yet] made exist...

... Archaeologist Giovanni Pettinato has noted a change in the theophoric personal names in many of the tablets from “-el” to “-yah.” For example “Mika’el” transforms into “Mikaya.” This is considered by some to constitute an early use of the divine name Yah, a god who believed to have later emerged as the Hebrew deity Yahweh...

... Many Old Testament personal names that have not been found in other Near Eastern languages have similar forms in Eblaite {*this means that the Bible is accurate in using such names, not that these are records of the patriarchs/matriarchs themselves*}, including a-da-mu/Adam, h’â-wa/Eve, Abarama/Abraham, Bilhah, Ishmael, Isûra-el, Esau, Mika-el/Michael, Mikaya/Michaiah, Saul, and David. Also mentioned in the Ebla tablets are many biblical locations: For example, Ashtaroth, Sinai, Jerusalem (Ye-ru-sa-lu-um), Hazor, Lachish, Gezer, Dor, Meggido, Joppa, and so on.*4

C. Sinuhe

Some say that the tale of Sinuhe is the world’s first novel (there’s a debate as to whether it’s fiction or non-fiction). It certainly is very old (c. 2000-1800 B.C.) and very interesting to students of the Bible. The main character flees Egypt and ends up in the land of Canaan; therefore we have a primary source of what life was like in the time of the patriarchs...

<Certain insights can be drawn from the account of Sinuhe’s years in Palestine. For example, Sinuhe’s father-in-law, Ammi-enshi, has an Amorite name. Therefore, the Amorites had definitely arrived in Palestine by the time of the story...

The story reflects a tribal society similar to that pictured in the Book of Genesis. In each account, one man controlled an extended family. When Sinuhe prepared to return to Egypt he turned his property over to his eldest son. The primacy of the eldest son is obvious in the patriarchal stories, most noticeably in the lives of Jacob and Esau.

The setting of the story was a time of tribal armies, serfs, and servants. The full story of Sinuhe reveals a Palestine in which there was crime, attack, plunder, murder, and captivity -- conditions also found in the patriarchal narratives. The story of Sinuhe mentions bows and arrows, shields, battle-axes, javelins, and daggers. This array provides some idea of the weaponry available to Abraham's militia in Genesis 14. Like Abraham, Sinuhe never lost his outsider status. Abraham considered himself a sojourner in Palestine, and the people of Sodom called Lot an "alien." Later on, Jacob worried that the local populace would unite against him. The story of Sinuhe illustrates how threatening life could be for an outsider.*5

D. Nuzi

Another ancient Mesopotamian city of Biblical significance is the city of Nuzi. It is located near the Tigris River and dates back to as early as the late third millennium B.C. About 5,000 tablets have been recovered from this site. Many of its customs have been learned, and some of these explain the occasional peculiar behaviour displayed by the patriarchs, such as the selling of Esau's birthright to Jacob. It also explains the evil treatment of Hagar...

<One law stipulated that if a married couple did not bear children, the wife would permit her husband to lie with a handmaid to produce a child. This will help us to understand why Sarah told Abraham to have relations with Hagar.

The law also stated that if friction arose between the wife and the mistress, the wife could order both the mistress and the child to leave {*which Sarah also did; see Genesis 20:10*}.*6

E. Mari

A find similar in content to that of Ebla is the site of the city of Mari. It was a Sumerian and Amorite town on the western bank of the Euphrates. It flourished from about 2900 B.C. to 1759 B.C. Many tablets have been discovered there...

<The value of the Mari texts for Biblical studies lies in the fact that Mari is located in the vicinity of the homeland of the Patriarchs, being about 200 mi (320 km) southeast of Haran. It thus shares a common culture with the area where the Patriarchs originated. Some documents detail practices such as adoption and inheritance similar to those found in the Genesis accounts. The tablets speak of the slaughtering of animals when covenants were made, judges similar to the judges of the Old Testament, gods that are also named in the Hebrew Bible, and personal names such as Noah, Abram, Laban and Jacob. A city named Nahur is mentioned, possibly named after Abraham's grandfather Nahor (Gn 11:22-25), as well as the city of Haran where Abraham lived for a time (Gn 11:31-12:4). Hazor is spoken of often in the Mari texts and there is a reference to Laish (Dan) as well.*7

F. The Hittites

Hittites are mentioned many times in Scripture, including the book of Genesis. Until archaeological finds proved their existence the Bible's credibility was called into question...

<...In 1870 evidence began to come to light. The Tel el-Amarna tablets... were found in Egypt. They mentioned the activities of a Hittite army in Palestine. These letters hinted that the Hittite people were based north of Palestine in Asia Minor. In the early 1900s in Boghazkoy, central Turkey, God

produced “dead Hittite stones” with living messages. As the archaeologists excavated, inscriptions on massive stone buildings showed that the Hittite Empire flourished in Abraham’s day and that it formed a worthy third with two other empires of importance -- Babylonia-Assyria and Egypt.*8

G. A Narrow Time Frame

<Another interesting archaeological detail confirming the Biblical narrative’s depiction of the lives of the patriarchs is the fact that excavations of places where Abraham lived have shown that these places were occupied only during his lifetime. Places such as the Negev, which in the biblical narratives was frequently visited by Abraham, were not occupied earlier than Abraham’s day or for some eight hundred years later.

Furthermore, the freedom with which Abraham moved through the territories of the ancient Near East is a true reflection of the times in which he lived. Such free access to various lands and countries, such as Syria and Egypt, would not have been possible at other periods of time...

...Joseph was sold into slavery in Genesis 37:28. The biblical narrative records that price as twenty shekels of silver. From the laws of the Babylonian king Hammurapi, a contemporary of Joseph, we know that the price of a slave was precisely twenty shekels.*9

H. The Mural of Khnum-hotep II (*an Egyptian Official*)

<Dating from the early nineteenth century B.C., this mural shows a group of thirty-seven “Asiatics” arriving in Egypt from the desert. Its inscription reads, “The arrival, bringing eye-paint, which thirty-seven Asiatics brought to him [Khnum-hotep].”

According to the biblical chronology, Jacob and his sons entered Egypt in the year 1876 B.C. That would have been at the last years of the Middle Kingdom, during the reign of Sesostri III (1878-1841 B.C.), the greatest king of the twelfth dynasty. He is known for his administrative reform that took the political power of that region out of the hands of the local feudal lords (nomarchs) and centralized it into the office of a single administrator, the vizier. Though Joseph is not mentioned anywhere in the Egyptian inscriptions, the administrative achievement during the reign of Sesostri is virtually identical to that of the biblical story of Joseph (Gen. 41:41-57).*10

3. Textual Gems

A. The List of Inspired Books (i.e., *the Canon*)

The way some people speak of the Biblical canon one would think there was some ancient war where hundreds of terrific documents were set aside in lieu of a disputed handful that somehow served the purposes of sinister church fathers. Such ideas are complete fiction. First of all, well over half the canon, i.e., the Old Testament, was personally verified by Jesus Christ and the Apostles, as is easily proved through the New Testament, which not only referred to most of the Old Testament books, but also quoted from the Septuagint.

The Septuagint (abbreviated by the Roman numeral “LXX”) is the major translation of the Old Testament into the Greek language that took place approximately 100-300 years before the birth of Christ. All the books that are in the standard Old Testament are there along with a small collection of other works which some Christian denominations also regard as inspired.

Here’s a snippet about the antiquity of some of the recovered manuscripts:

<The oldest manuscripts of the LXX include 2nd century BCE fragments of Leviticus and Deuteronomy (Rahlfs nos. 801, 819, and 957), and 1st century BCE fragments of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and the Minor Prophets (Alfred Rahlfs nos. 802, 803, 805, 848, 942, and 943). Relatively complete manuscripts of the LXX postdate the Hexaplar rescension and include the Codex Vaticanus from the 4th century CE and the Codex Alexandrinus of the 5th century. These are indeed the oldest surviving nearly complete manuscripts of the Old Testament in any language; the oldest extant complete Hebrew texts date some 600 years later, from the first half of the 10th century. The 4th century Codex Sinaiticus also partially survives, still containing many texts of the Old Testament.*11

Another great proof of the antiquity of the Old Testament canon is Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Jerome (c. A.D. 347 - 420) directly translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Latin. His major contribution to our discussion is that he translated the standard thirty-nine books. Although he also translated some of the other material from the LXX he didn't regard this as canonical because it wasn't in the Hebrew. So here's a great scholar who worked directly with ancient Hebrew texts and he gives us the exact same Biblical content which we acknowledge today. Moreover, because he wrote such extensive correspondence throughout his translating career it is impossible to deny the historicity of Jerome.

As for the New Testament canon, most of the books were accepted as Scripture almost immediately, as can be seen from internal evidence {*i.e.*, *Paul quotes Luke as Scripture -- compare 1 Timothy 5:18 with Luke 10:7; Peter says the writings of Paul are Scripture -- 2 Peter 3:15-16; Jude says the writings of Peter are Scripture -- compare Jude 1:17-18 with 2 Peter 3:3*} and from the Muratorian Fragment. The Muratorian Fragment is a 7th century Latin text translated from an early Greek source (c. A.D. 170).*12

It gives a list of books that the church accepted as inspired. The list includes 4 gospels (although two cannot be read because of the state of the fragment, the last two are Luke and John), all of Paul's letters (except for Hebrews), Jude, two epistles of John, and Revelation (which the writer assumes is written by John as well). There would be a bit of debate about some of the latter Epistles off and on, but it must be stressed that there were only a few that were seriously considered for the canon that didn't make it, not hundreds!

<There were...several books vying for canonical status that were not included. The overwhelming majority of these were spurious works written by second-century Gnostic heretics. These books were never given serious consideration. (This point is missed by critics who allege that over two thousand contenders yielded a list of twenty-seven. Then they ask, "What are the odds that the correct twenty-seven were selected?") In fact, only two or three books that were not included ever had real consideration. These were *1 Clement*, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and *The Didache*. These books were not included in the canon of Scripture because they were not written by apostles, and the writers themselves acknowledged that their authority was subordinate to the apostles (R.C. Sproul; from *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*).

Now since it's normally the Gospels that are attacked, let's look at a quote from F.F. Bruce which demonstrates the early acceptance of our current four...

<The first steps in the formation of a canon of authoritative Christian books, worthy to stand beside the Old Testament canon, which was the Bible of our Lord and His apostles, appear to have been taken about the beginning of the second century {the phrase 'second century' means from A.D. 100-200; I say that because so many speak as if it means 200-300}...

At a very early date it appears that the four Gospels were united in one collection. They must have been brought together very soon after the writing of the Gospel according to John...About AD 115 Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, refers to 'The Gospel' as an authoritative writing, and as he knew more than one of the four 'Gospels' it may well be that by 'The Gospel' sans phrase he means the fourfold collection which went by that name...About AD 170 an Assyrian Christian named Tatian turned the fourfold Gospel into a continuous narrative or 'Harmony of the Gospels', which for long was the favourite if not the official form of the fourfold Gospel in the Assyrian Church...and a fragment of Tatian's Diatessaron in Greek was discovered in the year 1933 at Dura-Europos on the Euphrates...By the time of Irenaeus, who, though a native of Asia Minor, was bishop of Lyons in Gaul about AD 180, the idea of a fourfold Gospel had become so axiomatic in the Church at large that he can refer to it as an established and recognized fact as obvious as the four cardinal points of the compass or the four winds...*12

B. Accuracy

So even if we know that the books have existed in some form for thousands of years, how do we know they're accurate? For the Old Testament this question was answered thunderously by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

This is the mother of all archaeological finds. In 1947 this antique library that extends to B.C. times was discovered near the Dead Sea. Although portions of just about every Old Testament book have been retrieved, the diamond of diamonds was the recovery of a complete scroll of the book of Isaiah, arguably the most important Old Testament book for Christians. I'll quote at length about what we've learned from it regarding the integrity of our modern Bible. On a footnote, Qumran also proves that as time goes on and more archaeological discoveries come to pass, we are able to come

to a more accurate study of the Bible, and not a less accurate one; this directly contradicts the conspiracy theory idea.

<The significance of the find, and particularly the complete book of Isaiah, was recognized by Merrill F. Unger when he said, “This complete document of Isaiah quite understandably created a sensation since it was the first major Biblical manuscript of great antiquity ever to be recovered. Interest in it was especially keen since it antedates by more than a thousand years the oldest Hebrew texts preserved in the Masoretic tradition.”

What was learned? A comparison of the Qumran manuscript of Isaiah with the Masoretic text revealed that both were extremely close in accuracy to each other. “Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, there are only seventeen letters in question. Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as conjunctions. The remaining three letters comprise the word “ligh,” which is added in verse 11, and does not affect the meaning greatly... Thus, in one chapter of 166 words, there is only one word (three letters) in question after a thousand years of transmission – and this word does not significantly change the meaning of the passage.”

World-renowned archaeologist Gleason Archer states that the Isaiah copies of the Qumran community “proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”

In his book, *Can I Trust My Bible*, R. Laird Harris concluded, “We can now be sure that copyists worked with great care and accuracy on the Old Testament, even back to 225 BC... indeed, it would be rash skepticism now to deny that we have our Old Testament in a form very close to that used by

Ezra when he taught the word of the Lord to those who had returned from the Babylonian captivity.”

The Dead Sea Scrolls overwhelmingly confirm that the Old Testament has navigated the centuries well. As Notre Dame professor Eugene Ulrich, chief editor of *the Qumran Biblical texts for the Oxford Discoveries in the Judean Desert* series, observed:

“The scrolls have shown that our traditional Bible has been amazingly accurately preserved for over 2,000 years.”*13

As for New Testament accuracy, let’s look at another quote from F.F. Bruce...

<Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works. For Caesar’s Gallic War (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several extant MSS, but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is some 900 years later than Caesar’s day... The History of Thucydides (c. 460-400 BC) is known to us from eight MSS, the earliest belonging to c. AD 900, and a few papyrus scraps, belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the History of Herodotus (c. 480-425 BC). Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest MSS of their works which are of any use to us are over 1,300 years later than the originals.

But how different is the situation of the New Testament in this respect! In addition to the two excellent MSS of the fourth century mentioned above {*referring to the two famous Alexandrian ones*}, which are the earliest of some thousands known to us {*about 5,000*}, considerable fragments remain of papyrus copies of books of the New Testament dated from 100 to 200 years earlier still.

The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, the existence of which was made public in 1931, consist of portions of eleven papyrus codices, three of which contained most of the New Testament writings. One of these, containing the four Gospels with Acts, belongs to the first half of the third century; another, containing Paul's letters to churches and the Epistle to the Hebrews, was copied at the beginning of the third century; the third, containing Revelation, belongs to the second half of the same century...

...Earlier still is a fragment of a papyrus codex containing John xviii. 31-33, 37ff, now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, dated on palaeographical grounds around AD 130, showing that the latest of the four Gospels, which was written, according to tradition, at Ephesus between AD 90 and 100, was circulating in Egypt within about forty years of its composition (if, as is most likely, this papyrus originated in Egypt, where it was acquired in 1917). It must be regarded as being, by half a century, the earliest extant fragment of the New Testament.

A more recently discovered papyrus manuscript of the same Gospel, while not so early as the Rylands papyrus, is incomparably better preserved; this is the Papyrus Bodmer II, whose discovery was announced by the Bodmer Library of Geneva in 1956; it was written about AD 200, and contains the first fourteen chapters of the Gospel of John with but one lacuna (of twenty two verses), and considerable portions of the last seven chapters... *12

Having thousands of Greek manuscripts and fragments to compare (many of which are quite ancient), along with the voluminous use of the New Testament by the early church Fathers, we have the ability through Textual Criticism to uncover the accuracy of the original documents in a more certain manner than is possible with any other ancient book in the world.

Chapter 3. The Messianic Prophecies of Divinity

The great thing about the Christian Old Testament is that it is Judaism's canon as well. Both religions believe that the same 39 books are from God. This is significant, for if Jesus Christ can be proved to be found in the Old Testament than it is obvious that Christians didn't just tamper with the texts, for the texts themselves have been very well preserved by a completely different religion.

Now I believe fully that the Bible is the Word of God; that the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, in their original autographs, were completely from the hand of divinity. We should try to uncover the original words as much as possible through conservative textual criticism and try to recreate them as accurately as possible through strict, literal translation. Yet even with this outlook there's sometimes a little bit of "give" in the language (especially in Hebrew poetry), a little bit of linguistic slackness that allows translators with different agendas to turn the renderings a bit to fit their fancy. This happens a lot less than one might think, and nearly disappears altogether if the translator is very scientifically consistent in his or her renderings.

Yet because translation is so important and can often vary (*especially from one religion to another*), I want to justify my use of the Bible in a more thorough manner for the next two chapters. Therefore after a major Messianic quote there will be an inserted section which gives the Jewish Publication Society's 1917 Version [JPS]. Any significant discrepancy with the translation I use will be discussed. I will try to avoid dead-end issues as much as possible, such as terms that are only slightly different. Every translation must be allowed to breathe as no version can perfectly express the original.

As for my discussing the Hebrew in the insertions, all the definitions I provide are from the bog-standard *Brown-Driver-Briggs* lexicon unless otherwise stated. Any grammar that I mention has been double-checked by consulting the *Westminster Hebrew Morphological Database*.

Also, although I'm sure some readers will be very familiar with the books of the Bible, some may not be. It seems pointless to write about Messianic prophecies, highlighting the statements about the Messiah in the Old Testament while showing fulfilment in the New Testament, if there is to be confusion over which books belong to which Testament. So to rectify this, in the next two chapters the Old Testament (which was written between c. 1500 B.C. to c. 400 B.C.) quotes begin with an "[OT]" and the New Testament (written between c. A.D. 40 to c. A.D. 100) quotes begin with a "[NT]."

The Bible quotes are from the NASB unless otherwise stated.

1. Messiah as God

Let's begin by looking at a couple of the bold, direct quotes, that state there is a divine Messiah. Judaism of course believes there shall be a Messiah, but only the Christian understands him to be a transcendent Saviour.

A. Psalm 45:6-7

[OT] Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows.

[JPS: Thy throne given of God is for ever and ever; a sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; therefore

God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.]

The Hebrew literally reads “*kisakha Elohim*,” “your throne God...” There is no other way to literally translate this phrase, therefore the JPS just employs a bizarre grammatical construction. The person being spoken to is addressed as “God.” As we read on we see that this God has been anointed by God. *Messiah* (which is a term derived from Hebrew) and *Christ* (which is a term derived from Greek) both mean “anointed.” So here is a terrific description of the divine Messiah: the God who is anointed of God.

B. Zechariah 13:7

[OT] “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man, My Associate,” declares the LORD of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; and I will turn My hand against [Or upon] the little ones.”

[JPS: Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is near unto Me, saith the LORD of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn My hand upon the little ones.]

At first glance this verse doesn't seem like too marvellous of a prophecy; however, it gains strength when the context is considered and when the term rendered “associate” is scrutinized. “The Shepherd” must be in reference to one of the shepherds mentioned in chapter 11 of Zechariah. Five are mentioned there, but only one is good. He is said to be commanded of God to perform a certain task: “Thus says the LORD my God, ‘Pasture the flock [doomed] to slaughter’” (11:4)... He then goes on to describe his role of obedience, but also speaks as if he himself has divine authority: “I took my staff Favor [Or *Pleasantness*] and cut it in pieces, to break [Or *annul*] my covenant which I had made with all the

peoples.” (11:10). Finally, he is said to be sold for thirty pieces of silver:

<I said to them, “If it is good in your sight, give [me] my wages; but if not, never mind [Lit cease]!” So they weighed out thirty [shekels] of silver as my wages. -- Zechariah 11:12

[JPS: And I said unto them: “If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear.” So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver.]

Now going back to Zechariah 13:7, this shepherd is said to be the *associate* of the LORD of Hosts; i.e., he is co-equal with God the Father. For this Hebrew word literally means “neighbour;” note an example...

[OT] You shall not hate your fellow countryman [Lit brother] in your heart; you may surely reprove your *neighbor*, but {*lit*, “and”} shall not incur sin because of him. -- Leviticus 19:17

To say the least, it is significant for God to call someone by this term.

So putting it all together, Zechariah states that the Messiah must be someone who is submissive to God yet equal with him; and he is to be smitten and forsaken of men, even being sold for thirty pieces of silver. Of course not only did Jesus say, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), but he was also sold for that exact price by Judas Iscariot (Matthew 26:15). Moreover, Zechariah 13:7 was applied directly in the New Testament to his arrest and to the fleeing of his disciples (Matthew 26:31).

2. The Shema

Another great quote that calls the Messiah transcendent is found in Isaiah 9. We must lead up to it a bit first by noting the significance of *The Shema*. It is the most important

doctrinal statement of Judaism, with the chief verse being Deuteronomy 6:4...

“Shema-Yisrael-the LORD-Eloheinu-the LORD-ekhad...”

Hear Israel the LORD [is] our God, the LORD [is] one....

Compare this with the name of the Messiah given in Isaiah 9:

[OT] [Ch 8:23 in Heb] But there will be no [more] gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make [it] glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles [Or nations]. [Ch 9:1 in Heb] The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. You shall multiply the nation, you shall increase [Another reading is not increase] their [Lit the] gladness; they will be glad in Your presence as with the gladness of [Lit in] harvest, as men [Lit they] rejoice when they divide the spoil. For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian [Lit in the day of Midian]. For every boot of the booted warrior in the [battle] tumult, and cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire. For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest [Lit be] on His shoulders; **and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.** There will be no end to the increase of [His] government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. -- verses 1-7

[JPS: For is there no gloom to her that was steadfast? Now the former hath lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but the latter hath dealt a more grievous blow by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in

the district of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, Thou hast increased their joy; they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, Thou hast broken as in the day of Midian. For every boot stamped with fierceness, and every cloak rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire. For a child is born unto us, a son is given unto us; and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name is called Pele-joez-el-gibbor-Abi-ad-sar-shalom [That is, Wonderful in counsel is God, the Mighty, the Everlasting Father, the Ruler of peace]; that the government may be increased, and of peace there be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it through justice and through righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts doth perform this.

There are three key differences between the Christian and Jewish translation. The first is the opening verse. This is a very difficult passage in the Hebrew. Here is a rough walk-through of it:

kee [for/because] lo [no/not] mu'aph [gloom/darkness] lamed (it's my practice for the most part to separate prefixed conjunctions and inseparable prepositions for simplicity's sake, unless the word is very small) [to/for] asher [that/which] mutsaq [constraint/distress] lah [to her/for her] definitive kaph [as the/like the] ayt [time] ha-rishown [the former/the first] hayqal [he made light/he treated with contempt] erez with directional hey [towards land] Z'vuloon [Zebulun] vav [and] erez with directional hey [towards land] Naphtali [Naphtali] vav [and] ha-akharon [the following/the subsequent] heekhbeed [he made heavy/he caused to be honoured] derek hai-yam [the way of the sea]

*ayver hai-yardain [the region beyond of the Jordan] G'leel
hag-goyeem [Galilee of the gentiles] ...*

My translation would therefore be...

For [it is] not [the] gloom for which [there was] distress to her. As [in] the former time he treated with contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; even so afterwards he has caused to be honoured the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles.

The NASB is much closer to what I consider to be the literal translation. Assyria carried the Northern Kingdom away, whereas Messiah would come and bring glory.

The second major difference is the name, which I discuss below.

The last major difference brings in a very important fact about the Hebrew Old Testament. In the actual text itself sometimes there were words that the ancients couldn't come to terms with, so they supplied a substitution. The strict consonantal original is called the 'ketiv,' the substitution is called the 'qere.' Most translations sometimes go with a ketiv or sometimes with a qere indiscriminately. Nearly all of the differences are extremely minor and don't even change the sense, yet some are significant, such as the one here in Isaiah 9.

*The NASB gives the original, the ketiv, in a footnote. The JPS doesn't mention it at all. The real Hebrew says this for verse 4a: "you shall multiply the nation, you shall **not** increase the gladness" ... What does this mean?*

Well, Isaiah obviously had in mind the fact that the coming of Messiah would not necessarily be sweetness and light in all aspects of life. Just as women in Genesis were to increase the family through the pain of childbirth, the prophet obviously

understood the pains that would come with Messianic growth. This pain at Messiah's coming will be a major theme of Isaiah's second section.

*There is also a slightly important difference as to just what will be increased without end; i.e., is it the peace **and** the government? The Hebrew allows for either version.]*

The above name is an area of contention between Jews and Christians. Most of Judaism's English versions either don't translate the name given to the Son, thus avoiding all controversy as to why the Messiah is called by such glowing terms, or some strange construction ensues, in an effort to make the name out to be a hum-drum statement describing God's glory. The truth is found in the simple grammar. The name consists of four couplets, with one word modifying another; therefore, the Christian rendering is to be preferred.

It's very common in the world of theology to describe Jesus as a prophet, priest, and king, for these were the three offices in ancient Israel that sometimes came by way of "anointing" and therefore epitomize the idea of "Messiah/Christ." We shall consider these things in more detail later, but being aware of this makes the Isaiah 9/Deuteronomy 6 comparison to be much more poignant:

"Wonderful Counsellor" [or, "A Counselling Wonder"] matches "**Hear**." The Messiah is to be the great prophet of God, hearing his words and counselling others.

"Mighty God" matches "**Israel**," a name meaning, "he who prevails with God." It is Messiah as priest that gives the Godhead leverage to transform its wrath into loving-kindness.

"Father of Eternity" obviously matches "**the LORD**," and describes the Messiah as having the divine authority.

Finally there is “Prince of Peace,” which fits “*the LORD is one,*” as in the Son of God, the Messiah, the Godhead is fully represented [*for primarily the prophet is as the Holy Spirit, the priest as the Son, the king as the Father*], as it is written in the Old and New Testaments:

[OT] {*Describing the advent of the Messiah*} And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one. -- Zechariah 14:9; [ESV]

[JPS: And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the LORD be one, and His name one.]

[NT] For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form... -- Colossians 2:9

[NT] In [the] beginning was the Word {prophet}, and the Word was with [fig., in communion with] God {priest}, and the Word was God {king}. This One was in the beginning with God. -- John 1:1-2; [ALT3]

3. In the Father’s Bosom

Let’s now carry a step further the idea of the divine Messiah also being the Father’s representative. John uses an intriguing phrase when describing the Christ in his illuminating first chapter...

[NT] No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained [Him]. -- 1:18

This description, “in the bosom of the Father,” is not something John invented however; it is actually an ancient Messianic depiction.

In the book of Exodus, God in the form of an angel [*who was the pre-incarnate Anointed One, as we shall see in a*

subsequent chapter] called to Moses from out of the burning bush. Notice the unmistakably deific description of this “*Messenger*” [which is the literal meaning of the term “*angel*”]:

[OT] The **angel of the LORD** appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a [Lit the] bush... When **the LORD** saw that he turned aside to look, **God** called to him from the midst of the bush... Then He said, “Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” He said also, “**I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.**” Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at **God.** -- Exodus 3:2-6; portions

[JPS: **And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush... And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush... Moreover He said: “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.**]

It is this Angel who then gave Moses several miraculous signs to prove that his mission was from Heaven. One such sign involved the bosom of Moses:

[OT] The LORD furthermore said to him, “Now put your hand into your bosom.” So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then He said, “Put your hand into your bosom again.” So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like [the rest of] his flesh. -- Exodus 4:6-7

[JPS: **And the LORD said furthermore unto him: “Put now thy hand into thy bosom.” And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was**

leprous, as white as snow. And He said: “Put thy hand back into thy bosom.” And he put his hand back into his bosom; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.

There isn't a difference here of importance, although the reader might wonder where the word “white” comes from in the JPS. Strictly speaking it is not in the original and was probably just added by way of implication.]

A further usage insinuates that this was meant to be something more than just some random miracle:

[OT] Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? From within Your bosom, destroy {or, “complete/finish”}... You [Or You Yourself] divided the sea by Your strength; You [Or You Yourself] broke the heads of the sea monsters in [Lit on] the waters. -- Psalm 74:11-13; portions

[JPS: Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand? Draw it out of Thy bosom and consume the m... Thou didst break the sea in pieces by Thy strength; Thou didst shatter the heads of the sea-monsters in the waters.

The NASB is stricter here, whereas the JPS helpfully fills in a few blanks.]

Compare this with:

[OT] Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not You who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?... I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish [Lit plant] the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, “You are My people.” -- Isaiah 51:9, 16; *(many quotes could*

be given to prove that the “Arm of the LORD” is synonymous with the Messiah, but the most famous will have to suffice for time’s sake: “Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot [Lit suckling], and like a root out of parched ground...He was pierced through [Or wounded] for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being [Or peace] [fell] upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed” [Isaiah 53:1-2a, 5]...)

[JPS: Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Art thou not it that he wed Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon?...And I have put My words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of My hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion: “Thou art My people.”

JPS: Who would have believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he shot up right forth as a sapling, and as a root out of a dry ground...But he was wounded because of our transgressions, he was crushed because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our welfare was upon him, and with his stripes we were healed.

The primary quote is nearly identical in both versions, but the one from Isaiah 53 is a bit different.

The very first line has a slightly differing force in each but can both be supported by the Hebrew.

A bigger difference comes in the middle, where the NASB says he comes up “before him,” and the JPS says that he “shot right forth.” The NASB seems to be the most straightforward rendering of “l’phanav” [before + him/it].]

It's not difficult to connect the dots here. God told Moses to put his hand in his bosom, and it came out leprous, unclean, and accursed. He brought it back to his bosom (*why would he embrace leprosy?*) and it came out normal again. The Psalmist prophetically urges the Messiah to be revealed in order to deliver his people. Isaiah takes it a step further while using similar language. Not only had this Hand of God, this Arm of the LORD, delivered the people of God in times gone by, but he would eventually become the accursed servant of Isaiah 53; moreover, it is he who truly speaks the words of the Father, and it is he who even created the world [*this is the sole theme of a forthcoming section*].

4. The Confusing Duality

Up to this point we have seen that the Old Testament points to a figure much more like the Christian Messiah than that of contemporary Judaism. Whereas adherents of Judaism look for a normal man to win political victories for them, the Bible actually describes a divine Saviour who also represents the Father in the fullest way possible. Sometimes in the prophetic books this duality of the Messiah shines forth strikingly; for example...

[OT] For thus says the LORD of hosts, "After glory [Or the glory] He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple [Lit pupil] of His eye. For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me. Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the LORD. "Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you." -- Zechariah 2:8-

[JPS: For thus saith the LORD of hosts who sent me after glory unto the nations which spoiled you: “Surely, he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I will shake My hand over them, and they shall be a spoil to those that served them;” and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me. “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be My people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee;” and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

There are significant differences here. First, the JPS tries to join the declaration of the word of Hashem to the following pronouncement by saying, “who sent me...” The NASB stops the declaration of Hashem’s word before this, thus opening the possibility of Hashem himself saying that “He has sent me.” To put it more simply, the JPS says in effect, “Hashem, the one who sent me, says the following...” The NASB could say in effect, “Hashem says this: although I myself am this Hashem, I have also been sent by him.” The Hebrew actually favours the NASB. We’ll get to that momentarily, but consider this as well: when was Zechariah ever sent to the nations who were spoiling Israel to receive glory?

As for the Hebrew...

kee [for/because] **coh** [so/thus] **amar** [he said] **Hashem**
ts’va’ot [Hashem of Hosts] **akhar** [after/behind] **kavod**
[glory/honour] **sh’lakhaneh** [he sent me] ...

Next, know that there are no such things as quotation marks in the Hebrew, so in every version the marks are from the translator, and may or may not be correct. This is the crux of many passages in the prophets where there seems to be more than one member of the Godhead speaking. The JPS leads the

reader along a certain path, but this is just their best (non-literal) guess.]

The speaker on the one hand claims to be God -- “Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day **and will become My people**” -- yet on the other hand claims to be someone distinct from God: “Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that **the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.**” A Messiah who is synonymous with the LORD is the only reasonable explanation.

5. Messiah the Creator

The Old Testament speaks of the transcendence of the Messiah not only by describing his person but also by describing his works. As we have already seen from Isaiah 51 above, the ancient Scriptures clearly state that he played an integral part in creation. Let's examine this further...

[OT] In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void [Or a waste and emptiness], and darkness was over the surface of [Lit face of] the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving [Or hovering] over the surface of [Lit face of] the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. -- Genesis 1:1-4 (*this isn't a normal Messianic prophecy, and so will not be compared; I try to leave out as many comparisons as possible so as not to weary the reader*)

After stating that Jesus was the Word in verses 1-2 of his introduction, John goes on to write:

[NT] All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend [Or overpower] it. -- verses 3-5

The apostle clearly calls Messiah here the light of Genesis 1 and a Creator; but where did he get these ideas?

A. The Mysterious “Beginning”

Genesis chapter 1 and chapters 2-3 both have very intriguing/enlightening introductions [*the intro to Genesis 2-3 will be covered later; also, for years I struggled over the possibility of the gap theory, not because of ridiculous misinterpretations of geology -- for fossils themselves bear irrefutable evidence to catastrophe, the cardinal sin against modern uniformitarianism -- but because of the ancient fall of Satan; however Mark 10:6-8 clearly closes the door on this theory, as Jesus Christ states that both Genesis 1 and 2 are the beginning of God's creation*]. They both describe remarkable events that summarize the successive content, all the while foreshadowing the Messiah...

In Beginning God created the heavens and the earth...

This is how the Hebrew literally reads: “In beginning,” not, “In *the* beginning.” There is no definite article, for a *person* is being esoterically referenced along with a *point in time*. This can be seen by way of an allegory from the book of Genesis itself and also by way of declaration through Paul in Colossians...

[OT] It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb. Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet [thread] on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” So he was named Perez [I.e. a breach]. Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet [thread] on his hand; and he was named Zerah [I.e. a dawning or brightness]. -- Genesis 38:27-30

[JPS: And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that one put out a hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying: "This came out first." And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold his brother came out; and she said: "Wherefore hast thou made a breach for thyself?" Therefore his name was called Perez [That is, A breach]. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zerah.]

Since "Zerah" means "dawning" or "brightness," here a light with a scarlet thread (*see the blood that protected the Israelites at Passover in Exodus 12 and the scarlet thread that protected Rehab's house in Joshua 2*) is born, but before him was the breach, and before the breach was the arm of the light. This fits the Genesis 1 pattern. First "Beginning" is mentioned in verse 1, a reference to time, but also to the Eternal Son, the Arm of the LORD who brought forth an initial creation. Then the darkness (akin to the leprosy of Exodus 3) is said to be over the earth (*verse 2; although a description of the unformed world, it also connotes the results of Satan and sin*); and then the light is brought forth (*verse 3*) to illumine the framing of the world (and this also connotes the Redeemer who expels the chaos of darkness). So here in the opening verses the rest of the Bible is hinted at: Christ the exalted God of Heaven in the Old Testament; Christ, engulfed with the darkness of condemnation at Calvary in the Gospels; and Christ, the restoration of the creation through his victorious light.

[NT]...In whom we have redemption {*some manuscripts add, "through his blood"*}, the forgiveness of sins, who is [the] image of the invisible God, firstborn of [fig., existing before] all creation; because by Him all [things] were created, the [things] in the heavens and the [things] on the earth, the visible [things] and the invisible [things], whether thrones or

dominions or rulers or authorities; all such [things] have been created through Him and for Him, and He is before all [things] and all [things] are held together by Him. And He is the head of the body {the word “beginning” in Hebrew comes from the root meaning “head”}, the Assembly; who is [the] beginning {*speaking of Genesis 1*}, [the] firstborn from the dead {*speaking of Genesis 2-3, as we shall see*}, so that He shall be having preeminence in all [things]; because in Him all the fullness [of the Godhead] was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all [things] to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross, through Him, whether the [things] on the earth or the [things] in the heavens. -- Colossians 1:14-20; [ALT3]

Note that Paul didn't use a definite article when describing Messiah as “Beginning;” “[the]” is supplied by the translator.

B. The Voice of God

It is safe to say that Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) is the father of modern Judaism. His thirteen principles form the core of Jewish beliefs. One of his most important contributions to the Judeo-Christian debate is his insistence that God has no discernible form. His theology left him with the arduous task of having to explain away every seeming appearance of God in the Old Testament.

He was right in that surely the Godhead is an eternal Spirit, and spirits do not have simple materializations; but this is something even Jesus and the apostles affirmed:

[NT] And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. -- John 5:37

[NT] No one has seen God at any time. -- John 1:18a

Given these facts there are only two possible choices. One can side with Maimonides and state that everything in the Old Testament that seems to point to a physical God is misunderstood; or one can honour the Scriptures, affirming that what they relate is literal and true, and therefore believe in an *almighty emissary of the invisible God*.

It is obvious from Genesis 1 that the only act of creation was God speaking all things into existence. Either the Scriptures are intentionally and pointlessly being deceptive here, or it was the Morning Star who spoke. Clearly the apostles of Christianity believed the latter, but this is also a firm Old Testament doctrine as well; note three supporting quotes:

[OT] Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky [Lit heavens] and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. -- Genesis 1:26-27

[JPS: And God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.]

So there is more than one agent of creation and they are obviously of like substance.

[OT] Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His [Lit the] garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son’s name? Surely you know! -- Proverbs 30:4

[JPS: Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in his garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?

The NASB has “surely” and the JPS has “if” regarding knowledge of the name. Both are possible secondary definitions of the particle “kee.”]

The same one who created the world would come down to earth, and consists of a Father and a Son.

The last passage showcases the power of the Son's voice...

[OT] Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called [Lit My called one]; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand together... Come near to Me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit. -- Isaiah 48:12-13, 16

[JPS: Hearken unto Me, O Jacob, and Israel My called: I am He; I am the first, I also am the last. Yea, My hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spread out the heavens; when I call unto them, they stand up together... Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this: From the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord GOD hath sent me, and His spirit.]

6. The Messiah's Heavenly Origins

Since he walked and talked with Adam in Genesis 2 as the LORD, obviously at some early point the Emissary of God took on a heavenly physical form. Although we have already

seen this reality in the beforementioned Exodus 3, let's now delve a bit deeper into this somewhat surprising reality...

[OT] In all their affliction He was afflicted [Another reading is He was not an adversary], and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. -- Isaiah 63:9

[JPS: In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them, and carried them all the days of old.]

[OT] Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him. -- Exodus 23:20-21

[JPS: Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take heed of him, and hearken unto his voice; be not rebellious against him; for he will not pardon your transgression; for My name is in him.]

Bible commentators of yesterday were much more at home with the fact that the Angel of the LORD in the Old Testament was the pre-incarnate Messiah. John Gill (1697-1771), the English Baptist minister whose commentaries are considered to be among the finest ever, had this to say about him:

<Not a created angel, but the uncreated one, the Angel of God's presence, that was with the Israelites at Sinai, and in the wilderness; who saved, redeemed, bore, and carried them all the days of old, whom they rebelled against and tempted in

the wilderness; as appears by all the characters after given of him, which by no means agree with a created angel: Aben Ezra observes, that some say this is the book of the law, because it is said, “my name is in him,” or “in the midst of it;” others say, the ark of the covenant; but he says this angel is Michael; and if indeed by Michael is intended the uncreated angel, as he always is in Scripture, he is right.>

The last bit, i.e., Jesus being called “Michael,” may be shocking to modern readers, but this was a common assertion of fundamental believers in days gone by. Note the words of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), the famed preacher of the Great Awakening:

<When Lucifer rebelled and set up himself as a head in opposition to God and Christ, and drew away a great number of the angels after him, Christ the Son of God manifested himself as an opposite head, and appeared graciously to dissuade and restrain by his grace the elect angels from hearkening to Lucifer’s temptation. So that they were upheld and preserved from eternal destruction at that time of great danger by the free and sovereign distinguishing grace of Christ. Herein Christ was the Savior of the elect angels, for though he did not save them as he did elect men -- from ruin they had already deserved and were condemned to, and a miserable state they were already in -- yet he saved ‘em from eternal destruction they were in great danger of, and otherwise would have fallen into with the other angels. The elect angels joined with him, the glorious Michael as their captain, while the other angels hearkened to Lucifer and joined with him.>

Two things have changed since then.

1. Knowledge of the Old Testament is at a dangerously low ebb.
2. The Seventh-Day Adventists.

Because this particular heretical sect boldly declares Jesus to be Michael, everyone associates it with blasphemy. Although such zealousness for orthodoxy is commendable, yet the old theologians didn't say that the Lord is Michael in that he had an alternate identity; they simply believed that he was the Chief Angel, and that this Messenger is described in the book of Daniel under the cryptic name which means, "Who is as God?" Anyway, let's go on a bit further in re-establishing the fact that in the Old Testament there was a transcendent angel who displayed Messianic characteristics by looking at a few more passages.

A. Jacob's God

[OT] Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak... He {*Jacob*} said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel [I.e. he who strives with God; or God strives]; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel [I.e. the face of God], for [he said,] "I have seen God face to face, yet my life [Lit soul] has been preserved." -- Genesis 32:24-30; portions

[JPS: And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day... And he said: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And he said unto him: "What is thy name?" And he said: "Jacob." And he said: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; [That is, He who striveth with God] for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed." And Jacob asked him, and said: "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name." And he said: "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: [That is, The face of

God] “for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”]

[OT] In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his maturity he contended with God. Yes, he wrestled with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought His favor. He found Him at Bethel and there He spoke with us, even the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is His name [Lit memorial]. -- Hosea 12:3-5

[JPS: In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and by his strength he strove with a godlike being; so he strove with an angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him; at Beth-el he would find him, and there he would speak with us; but the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is His name.

The big and weighty difference here is that the NASB says the name of “us” (seemingly the angel and another member of the Godhead) is the LORD, while the JPS disjoins the last line by sticking in “but.” The term rendered “even” in the NASB and “but” in the JPS is the Hebrew “vav,” meaning “and.” Like every minor particle it is very generic; however, in a normal sense it should be made to join ideas together and not separate them {see Robert Alter}. All the versions at many (many!) points in the Old Testament do render it as “but,” for it is extraordinarily common and there are many complex sentences with a scarcity of specialized tools at the authors’ disposal. In these instances however the context naturally demands the odd change from conjunctive to disjunctive. “Vav” is not some blank square that a translator can fill with whatever he or she wishes, which is what the JPS does here. Exceptions shouldn’t mutilate a rule.

This is true with the difference between the NASB’s “God” and the JPS’s “godlike being.” One might be able to dig up a place or two where ‘Elohim’ can’t possibly mean the One True God, but this doesn’t give the translator the right to pick

and choose between definitions every time 'Elohim' appears in the text.]

Jacob supplicated an angel, who also is God, who also is one of “us,” referring to a plural Godhead; and to top it all off, “the LORD” is the name of the members of this Godhead. This is the name that the Angel wouldn’t relate immediately in Genesis, but it is told to Jacob’s children through Hosea. And to make the story of Jacob’s God more poignant, there’s another great quote, this one proving that the Angel is also the Redeemer of God’s people:

[OT] He {*Jacob*} blessed Joseph, and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life [Lit from the continuance of me] to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads...” -- Genesis 48:15-16a

[JPS: And he blessed Joseph, and said: “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath been my shepherd all my life long unto this day, the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads...”]

B. Manoah’s Messenger

[OT] There was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had borne no [children.] Then the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold now, you are barren and have borne no [children,] but you shall conceive and give birth to a son”... Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, “A man of God came to me and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome”... {*After the Angel returned later*} Then Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “Please let us detain you so that we may prepare a young goat for you.” The angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Though you detain me, I will not eat

your food [Lit bread], but if you prepare a burnt offering, [then] offer it to the LORD.” For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of the LORD. Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “What is your name, so that when your words come [to pass,] we may honor you?” But the angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful [I.e. incomprehensible]?” So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to the LORD, and He performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar... Manoah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. So Manoah said to his wife, “We will surely die, for we have seen God.” -- Judges 13:2-22; portions

[JPS: And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bore not. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her: “Behold now, thou art barren, and hast not borne; but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son”... Then the woman came and told her husband, saying: “A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible”... And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD: “I pray thee, let us detain thee, that we may make ready a kid for thee.” And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah: “Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt make ready a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD.” For Manoah knew not that he was the angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD: “What is thy name, that when thy words come to pass we may do thee honour?” And the angel of the LORD said unto him: “Wherefore askest thou after my name, seeing it is hidden?” So Manoah took the kid with the meal-offering, and offered it upon the rock unto the LORD; and [the angel] did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward

heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar...Manoah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto his wife: "We shall surely die, because we have seen God."

A slightly weighty issue is what the Angel called his own name. Is it "wonderful" as the NASB or "hidden" as the JPS? The Hebrew is "p'lee," and according to the BDB, this means "wonderful, incomprehensible, extraordinary." It is related to the verb "pala" which means "to be wonderful" or "marvellous." The "hidden" of the JPS doesn't seem to go far enough, especially given the Angel's subsequent action.]

Here the Angel uses the word "wonderful" to describe his name, a word of the exact same root as is found in the Messianic attributions, *A Counselling Wonder* (Isaiah 9:6), and, *It {God's cornerstone} is wonderful in our eyes* (Psalm 118:23).

Also he does not accept worship because Manoah "did not know that he was the angel of the LORD," implying that had he known he would have been able to worship him. This is a truth which greatly foreshadows Messiah's ministry to Israel in the New Testament. For example, the Lord Jesus once told a man not to call him "good," for only God is good (Mark 10:18). Of course, Jesus is God, thus he too is good, yet the one he spoke with didn't understand this, so the Lord didn't want his phoney reverence.

7. The Messiah's Earthly Origins

We've already encountered quotes such as Isaiah 9:6 and Proverbs 30:4 that declare the Messiah to be God's Son. Yet critics will state that it's no great thing for the Christ to be described as such, for normal men were called sons of God in Scripture (cf. Deuteronomy 14:1), as were angels (cf. Job 1:6). This is true, yet the Messiah is not just a son by way of special creation (as were the angels, being fully formed

directly by God), nor by way of title (as were Israelites and Davidic kings), but it was prophesied that he would actually be begotten (that is, born of a womb).

A. The Virgin Birth Battlefield

[OT] Then he {*Isaiah*} said, “Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin [Or maiden] will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel [I.e. God is with us].” -- Isaiah 7:13-14

[JPS: And he said: “Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [That is, God is with us].]

Seemingly this quote states that one day a woman would conceive, although a virgin, and give birth to a son called, “God [is] with us.” Yet for some strange reason it is a favourite dartboard of Judaism’s anti-missionaries.

The main problem is the Hebrew word “*alma*.” It doesn’t strictly mean “virgin.” Or put another way, what “virgin” means classically is a bit different than what it means today. In contemporary language it strictly means to never have engaged in sexual activity. Yet classically applied the word as found elsewhere in the mYLT shows the fuller sense of the term:

[OT]...(Lo, I am standing by the fountain of water), then **the virgin** who is coming out to draw, and I have said unto her, Let me drink, I pray you, a little water from your pitcher; and who will say to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels

also.” Let her be the woman whom Hashem has appointed for my master’s son. . . -- Genesis 24:43-44

Abraham’s servant didn’t plan on asking women their sexual history as they visited the well. It would be obvious to him if a young girl was an unmarried candidate for Isaac; and in the ancient Middle East it would have been a 100% must for her to have been a true virgin. So perhaps words like *maiden*, *miss*, *mademoiselle*, etc., are a bit more accurate than “virgin.” Given however the fact that virginity among young people is at an all-time low, this can hardly be insisted upon now, for the hue of chastity is thereby vanquished.

As for Isaiah, his focus is a bit broader than just the medical science behind Mary’s conception {*anti-missionaries remind me of Mark Twain’s blasphemous “Letters from the Earth”*}. He is rebuking a faithless king. His rebuke encompasses the principles of religion, and not of anatomy. It would be the young Mary, believing and obedient, who would parent the Christ, and not the faithless and fearful Zacharias [see Luke 1], reminiscent of Abraham and Sarah. Virginity is more than implicit in what Isaiah says, for how could conception by a young woman be considered a great sign of God? But his real focus is on faith as opposed to scoffing.

So what of Matthew? Did he exaggerate when he wrote “virgin” when quoting Isaiah? Well first of all he was probably influenced by the Septuagint, that ancient Jewish translation which predates the time of Christ. Second of all, one has to understand the way Bible prophecy works.

Technically speaking, Isaiah chapters 40-66 is, for the most part, promises to Israel from God concerning restoration from the Babylonian captivity. Yet one would have to be very short-sighted to miss the Messianic implications, as the language far excels the boundaries of anything that could describe the return of a few thousand captives. God plants diamonds in the midst of dusty fields. Isaiah 7 has very little

to do (if anything) with a Messiah apart from verse 14 itself, but it certainly is Messianic; how can we be sure?

[OT] Now therefore, behold, the Lord is about to bring on them the strong and abundant waters of the Euphrates [Lit River], [Even] the king of Assyria and all his glory; and it will rise up over all its channels and go over all its banks. Then it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass through, it will reach even to the neck; and the spread of its wings will fill the breadth of [Lit be the fullness of] your [Or Your] land, O Immanuel. -- Isaiah 8:7-8

[JPS: Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River, mighty and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks; and he shall sweep through Judah overflowing as he passeth through he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

There is no Hebrew word for “it,” so therefore “he” or “she” can always be changed to “it” at the translator’s discretion, hence the slight difference above.]

So Immanuel [*whom Isaiah never depicts as being born, but seemingly the immediate prophecy from chapter 7 is swapped with the birth of maher-halal-hash-baz in chapter 8, with the birth of Immanuel rather being described in chapter 9*] has gone from being a baby to owning the whole land of Israel. Clearly he is a divine Messiah, and although the reference was obscure to begin with, Isaiah had a right to pick up on his own original prophecy and take it deep into the future. Similarly, Matthew saw beyond “maiden,” having understood what the Holy Spirit was fully conveying, and the language completely warranted the insight.

B. The Israel that isn’t Israel

One of the greatest quotes to prove that a mighty Messiah was to be born as a real man comes within a very important passage:

[OT] Hearken O isles unto me, and attend O peoples from afar. Hashem from the womb has called me, from the bowels of my mother he has made mention of my name. And he makes my mouth as a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he has hid me; and he makes me for a clear arrow, in his quiver he has hid me. And he says to me, "My servant you are, O Israel, in whom I beautify myself." And I said, "For a vain thing I laboured, for emptiness and vanity my power I consumed;" but my judgment [is] with Hashem, and my wage with my God. And now, said Hashem, who is forming me from the belly for a servant to him, to bring back Jacob unto him (though Israel is not gathered, yet I am honoured in the eyes of Hashem, and my God has been my strength). And he says, "It has been a light thing that you are to me for a servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and the preserved of Israel to bring back; and I have given you for a light of nations, to be my salvation unto the end of the earth." -- Isaiah 49:1-6; [mYLT]

[JPS: Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye peoples, from far: the LORD hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name; and He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of His hand hath He hid me; and He hath made me a polished shaft, in His quiver hath He concealed me; and He said unto me: "Thou art My servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." But I said: "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God." And now saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, and that Israel be gathered unto Him -- for I am honourable in the eyes of the LORD, and my God is become my strength -- Yea, He saith: "It is

too light a thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the offspring of Israel; I will also give thee for a light of the nations, that My salvation may be unto the end of the earth.”

The controversy here is a ketiv/qere variant. The servant named “Israel” has “not” gathered Israel according to the mYLT, which uses the ketiv, “lo” (lamed-aleph) [no/not], while the JPS goes with the qere, “lo” (lamed-vav) [to him].]

Now anytime God speaks in the Bible it can be understood as the Messiah speaking, for the Father and the Son are co-equal. Anytime Israel is spoken to it can be understood as the Messiah who is addressed, as he was the covenant-head of the ancient people. Here Israel is spoken to, but it’s clear by “Israel” a person is meant, and not the entire nation. For this Israel has a mission from God in which the Jewish people reject him while he becomes a light unto gentiles. But the point here is that this man who is responsible for the salvation of Jew and gentile alike is said to be formed in a womb.

8. The New Anointed One

So we began this section on Messianic prophecies by noting how the Messiah is God, then how he is also God’s representative, and also explored his heavenly angelic role and his birth on earth as an actual human being. Let’s now spend some time looking at the prophecies of just how this sanctified Son was to be a “Messiah,” as it was indeed prophesied that he would be an anointed *prophet, priest, and king of a new covenant*.

[OT] “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them {or, “and I ruled over

them” [mYLT]},” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”
-- Jeremiah 31 :31-34

[JPS: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; forasmuch as they broke My covenant, although I was a lord over them, saith the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying: “Know the LORD;” for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.

The only difference here isn't very important. The mYLT has “and I ruled over them,” while the JPS has “although I was a lord over them.” Here's the Hebrew...

vav [and] *anokhee* [I] *ba'altee* [I + married/ruled over/lorded over] *bam* [in them/on them]

The crux I suppose is the force of “vav” which favours the mYLT's simplicity.]

Jeremiah prophesied that there would be a New Covenant comprised of the following characteristics:

1. It will not be like the covenant of Sinai (where the Ten Commandments were delivered), in which their sin was always met with wrath.
2. The law will be placed in their hearts, seemingly through the Holy Spirit.
3. It shall be an individual religion, not a communal one. Everybody in this group will know God personally.
4. Their iniquities will be forgiven.
5. They will be justified in such a way as to no longer be held legally accountable for their sins.

Clearly this covenant is the one instituted in the New Testament.

A. The New Davidic King

[OT] Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money [Lit silver] come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money [Lit weigh out silver] for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you [Lit your soul] may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, [according to] the faithful mercies shown to David [Lit of David]. Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, and a nation which knows you not will run to you, because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you. -- Isaiah 55:1-5

[JPS: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye for water, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your gain for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a prince and commander to the peoples. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee; because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for He hath glorified thee.

I'll take this opportunity to point out that there are many nouns in Hebrew that have an odd way of reckoning number. For example, the NASB has "to the waters," while the JPS has "for water." [The "to" versus "for" is explained by the broadness of "lamed," the preposition which means "to/for."] "Water" in Hebrew is one of those nouns that are always in the plural (technically dual) yet translators often take it to be singular. Another example is "face" which is normally "faces" in Hebrew; moreover, with a preposition [lamed] it is often simply translated "in the presence of" or "before." On the other hand, some collective nouns are in the singular but are sometimes translated to refer to many.

Another slight difference is that the NASB says to eat in order to "delight yourself in abundance," whereas the JPS has, "let your soul delight itself in fatness." The JPS is certainly more literal; the term which means "soul" is often obscured in translation, and "fat" is often seen as a really good thing to the ancients, although it doesn't normally mean that in modern communication.]

God makes a revealing connection here: one's thirst can be quenched and hunger satisfied through his everlasting covenant, and this covenant is somehow connected to the Davidic Messiah, to the one who is a witness, leader, and commander.

More such words can be found in Isaiah:

[OT] Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold [Or hold fast]; My chosen one [in whom] My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations [Or Gentiles]. He will not cry out or raise [His voice,] nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law [Or instruction]... I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, and I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another... -- 42:1-8; portions

[JPS: Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon him, he shall make the right to go forth to the nations. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the dimly burning wick shall he not quench; he shall make the right to go forth according to the truth. He shall not fail nor be crushed, till he have set the right in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his teaching... I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee, and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in

darkness out of the prison-house. I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another...

Most of the differences in the first part of the passage have to do with “justice” versus “right,” which is basically an irrelevant distinction in Hebrew.

Another slightly enlarged gulf is between the NASB’s “wait expectantly” versus the plain “wait” in the JPS. The verb is from “yakhal,” which means “to wait/hope/expect.” As far as I can tell it is never used in the simple sense (‘qal,’ the active form). It is in the ‘piel’ form here. The piel is the intensive verb form, which is perhaps why the NASB gives the word extra force.

There are seven major verb aspects in Hebrew: qal [active, such as “I hit”], niph'al [passive, I was hit], piel [intensive, I slugged], pual [intensive passive, I was slugged], hiph'il [causative, I caused to hit], hoph'al [causative passive, I caused to be hit], and hithpa'el [reflexive, I hit myself]. Like everything else in linguistics, this is a nice, neat idea, but it doesn't always work out in practice. Many verbs might technically belong to one of the more expressive categories, but only in very subtle ways that can't be translated. In addition, some verbs seem to use the category-patterns indiscriminately.]

Here again a ruler (*this time a judge*) of God is bound up with some sort of mighty covenant, even becoming the very light and liberty of gentiles, while receiving the honour of the LORD. Nor is this just some misunderstood device used by Isaiah and taken out of context, for other prophets wrote such words about this coming king:

[OT] [Ch 4:14 in Heb] Now muster yourselves in troops, daughter of troops; they have [Lit he has] laid siege against us; with a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek. [Ch 5:1 in Heb] But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah {*the*

city of David's youth}, [too] little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity [Or His appearances are from long ago, from days of old]...And He will arise and shepherd [His flock] in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain [Or live in safety], because at that time [Lit now] He will be great to the ends of the earth. -- Micah 5:1-2, 4

[JPS: Now shalt thou gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops; they have laid siege against us; they smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days...And he shall stand, and shall feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide, for then shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

The NASB refers to "clans" of Judah while the JPS speaks of "thousands" of Judah. The word in question is from "eleph," which literally means a "thousand."]

[OT] Seventy weeks [Or units of seven, and so throughout the ch] have been decreed for your people and your holy city {*Jerusalem, the city of David's kingship*}, to finish [Or restrain] the transgression, to make an end of sin [Another reading is seal up sins], to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy [Lit prophet] and to anoint the most holy [p]lace.] So you are to know and discern [that] from the issuing of a decree [Lit word] to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah [Or an anointed one] the Prince [there will be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza [Or streets] and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah [Or an anointed one] will be cut

off and have nothing [Or no one], and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its [Or his] end [will come] with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined [Or war will be decreed for desolations]. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations [Or detestable things] [will come] one who makes desolate [Or causes horror], even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate [Or causes horror]. -- Daniel 9:24-27

[JPS: Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to forgive iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal vision and prophet, and to anoint the most holy place. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto one anointed, a prince, shall be seven weeks; and for threescore and two weeks, it shall be built again, with broad place and moat, but in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall an anointed one be cut off, and be no more; and the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; but his end shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease; and upon the wing of detestable things shall be that which causeth appalment; and that until the extermination wholly determined be poured out upon that which causeth appalment.

There is a large bundle of differences here. Let's hit the highlights...

The JPS says iniquity shall be "forgiven," whereas the NASB has that it shall be atoned for; the term in question is from the

major root “**kaphar**,” which strictly means “to cover” or “atone” (i.e., as in Yom “**Kippur**”).

Next, the NASB joins the sixty-two and seven weeks together by saying “seven weeks and sixty and two weeks.” The JPS seemingly tries to separate this period by saying “seven weeks; and for threescore and two weeks.” There is not a separation in the Hebrew...

shavu'eem [“sevens,” i.e., weeks] **shivah** [seven] **vav** [and] **shavu'eem** [“sevens,” i.e., weeks] **shisheem** [sixty] **vav** [and] **sh'nayeem** [two]

But why separate the weeks at all then? Why not say sixty-nine weeks? I don't know and I have thought a lot about this issue. Perhaps it has to do with the building of Jerusalem versus the building of the Temple, especially since the Jews said three years before the Lord died that it had taken forty-six years to build the Temple (John 2:20). If this was the case however there would perhaps be a slight difficulty with the mentioning of sixty-two at the beginning of verse 26.

Moving on, the NASB says that he shall “have nothing,” while the JPS says that he shall be “no more.” The Hebrew literally says “**ain**” [nothing/not/nought] “**lo**” [to/for him]. It is obscure enough to allow for both renderings.

The NASB says that “to the end there will be war” while the JPS seems to just have one conflict in mind: “and unto the end of the war.” The Hebrew is complex...

vav [and] **ad** [as far as/until] **kates** [end] **milkhamah** [battle/war]

This is followed by two difficult participles; due to the structure of the whole sentence there is a lot of elasticity, enough to accommodate a wide variety of renderings.

The last major disagreement concerns what is the object of abomination towards the end of the passage; is it a person as in the NASB (“one who makes desolate”) or is it a thing as in the JPS (“that which causeth appalment”). The issue isn’t resolved by the Hebrew. The term in question is a participle, and participles often carry the ambiguity of referring to people or things.]

Micah foresees an ancient smitten judge receiving the LORD’s name and having dominion over the earth. Daniel ties in the consummation of all righteousness with the cutting off of this Messianic ruler.

There were several decrees issued to restore Jerusalem after the overthrow of Babylon by the Medo-Persian Empire. Most likely the specific pronouncement that was prophesied about by Daniel can be found in the book of Nehemiah, chapters 1 and 2 (*after all, the book of Nehemiah is about the restitution of political Israel, as Ezra is about the restitution of religious Israel*). This word to rebuild came around 445 B.C. Now it is obvious that the weeks being spoken of are years as opposed to days. For the Hebrew word for week is actually “seven,” and could refer to seven of anything; given the overall context (i.e., a covenant shall be made for one “seven”), “years” is the increment most appropriate. So 69×7 years = 483 years. It is necessary to make adjustments due to the differences of calendar systems (*especially given the fact that 360 days makes a year in the book of Revelation*), but surely just glancing at the math makes it evident that the Messiah was to come around the time of Jesus, with the Temple and the city being destroyed subsequently.

On a closing footnote, Daniel says, “the people of the prince who is to come” was to destroy Jerusalem, meaning the Romans; so therefore there must be a European leader one day who shall make a covenant with Israel and then break it. Here is conclusive proof that Messiah was to be cut off and leave the scene for many years before coming again

(something vehemently denied by Judaism's anti-missionaries), leaving space for the gentiles to repent and believe. For the Messiah can't fully come until after this seventieth week, for not until then can restitution be completed.

B. The New Priesthood

There are words in the book of Hebrews that lead Christians to say that Jesus has replaced the Levitical priesthood, but this is inaccurate. Jeremiah makes it very clear that the Levitical priesthood will never be replaced (Jeremiah 33:21). The Messiah hasn't swapped one set of ceremonial priests for another. The sons of Aaron are the priests of this earth and always shall be:

[NT] Now the main point in what has been said [is this:] we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in [Or of] the sanctuary and in [Or of] the true tabernacle [Or sacred tent], which the Lord pitched, not man... Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law... -- Hebrews 8:1-2, 4

The Messiah hasn't replaced the priesthood by destroying the old, but he has so personally surpassed it by way of greatness and importance that the Levites are left as the little dipper after the rising of the sun, becoming abolished as to the focus of the people of God, until salvation is clearly understood in Israel and the Levites can minister again with the right attitude and outlook (cf. Ezekiel 40-48; Psalm 51:17-19). And this is what the Old Testament always prophesied would happen:

[OT] A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet"... Your people will volunteer freely [Lit will be freewill

offerings] in the day of Your power [Or army]... The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind [Lit be sorry], “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter [Or has shattered] kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will fill [Or has filled] [them] with corpses, He will shatter [Or has shattered] the chief men over [Lit head over] a broad country. He will drink from the brook by the wayside; therefore He will lift up [His] head {*or more probably, “[the] head”*}. -- Psalm 110; portions

[JPS: A Psalm of David. The LORD saith unto my lord: “Sit thou at My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool”... Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy warfare... The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent: “Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek.” The Lord at thy right hand doth crush kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations; He filleth it with dead bodies, He crusheth the head over a wide land. He will drink of the brook in the way; therefore will he lift up the head.

*The only important question I see concerns the nature of Melchizedek’s office; is the person being spoken to a priest according to the “order” or “manner” of Melchizedek? Is it an official priestly order being described or is it stating that Melchizedek is a similitude for this exalted person to mimic? As one can imagine, both ideas are present in Paul’s explanation of Melchizedek’s relation to Christ (see Hebrews 7). The noun in question is “**divrah**,” a slightly different form of the generic “**davar**,” “word/matter/thing.” The BDB defines “**divrah**” as a “cause/manner/reason.” It is broad enough to encompass both renderings.]*

This is a very rich prophecy:

(1) This exalted one is actually told to sit at the right hand of the LORD [*Figuratively speaking; otherwise, he would have*

to sit at his own right hand. Saints as Stephen have witnessed a literal fulfilment to this for the sake of clarity, but the Lord is actually the Father and the Son to all creation. In his own glory he is himself, in the Father's glory he is himself and the Father (John 14:8-9; Daniel 10). This is why Paul could say that at the end Christ will give the kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) and yet John could say that the Lamb will be the lamp of heaven eternally (Revelation 21:23). Paul is referring to the future when the glory of the Father will perpetually reside on the Son. At that time the singularity of the Godhead will be prominent and his individual Sonship will no longer be in the foreground].

(2) People would willingly follow him as Elisha followed Elijah (see how the disciples gladly abandoned all in Matthew 4 or John 1).

(3) He has received a special priestly role with an oath from the LORD.

(4) He shall be this great priest forever.

(5) This priest is also a warrior-king.

(6) This warrior will crush the head of the Antichrist (*i.e., in Genesis 3:15 [which is quoted later] the serpent is called a "head" and is also said to have a special seed in the future; we see the two seeds mentioned in that verse contrasted in Daniel 9 [given above] and Isaiah 28 [which is also quoted later]*), similar to David slaying Goliath and cutting off his head after picking up stones from a brook.

(7) He will be as Melchizedek from Genesis 14; therefore he became a heavenly priest after Aaron but his order actually precedes the Levitical.

So who was this Melchizedek? He was a mysterious figure who appeared out of nowhere and was proclaimed to be the

priest of God and the “king of peace” (probably of proto-*Jerusalem*). He had no formal genealogy, no recorded age, and his name means “King of Righteousness.” Timelessness is the prerequisite to join his order (Hebrews 7:15-16). This is as different in comparison to the sons of Aaron as a furnace to a candle.

Moreover, the idea of a king-priest is a very Messianic concept:

[OT] Take silver { *like the pock-marked moon, signifying Christ's scourged humanity* } and gold { *as the sun, signifying his almighty power* }, make an [ornate] crown { *literally, “crowns”* } and set [it] on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then say to him, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Behold, a man whose name is Branch [Lit Sprout], for He will branch out [Lit sprout up] from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices [Lit of them].’” -- Zechariah 6:11-13

[JPS: Yea, take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set the one upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and speak unto him, saying: Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying: Behold, a man whose name is the Shoot, and who shall shoot up out of his place, and build the temple of the LORD; even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and there shall be a priest before his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

The very significant difference is whether there is one person with two offices (a priest and a king) as in the NASB or two people who are in close agreement as in the JPS. If kept

completely literal the text favours the NASB. Here's the Hebrew...

vav [and] hayah [the bog-standard 3rd person masculine singular perfect form of "to be," meaning "he has been"/(with vav, "he shall be")] cohane [a priest] al [on] kiso [his throne] vav [and] atsat shalom [counsel of peace] tiyeh [shall be] bane [between/among] sh'nayhem [the two of them/both of them]

C. The New Prophet

It is a familiar prophecy of Moses but well worth repeating:

[OT] The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. -- Deuteronomy 18:15

[JPS: A prophet will the LORD thy God raise up unto thee, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken...]

This is a tall order. Moses was a man who fled to a gentile land at the rebuke of his people and then came back later and delivered them. He performed signs and wonders and brought the nation unto the land of promise, all the while being hated and condemned and rebelled against. He was a ruler, but also built the Tabernacle, instituted the priesthood, and consecrated both. All these types can be fulfilled by none other than the exalted Messiah:

[OT] The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted [Or humble]; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners [Lit opening to those who are bound]; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn... You will be called the priests of the

LORD; you will be spoken of [as] ministers of our God... They will possess a double [portion] in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs... And I will faithfully give them their recompense and make an everlasting covenant with them... I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness... -- Isaiah 61; portions

[JPS: The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to bring good tidings unto the humble; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the eyes to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD'S good pleasure, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn... But ye shall be named the priests of the LORD, men shall call you the ministers of our God... Therefore in their land they shall possess double, everlasting joy shall be unto them... And I will give them their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them... I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of victory...

Is the robe that "of righteousness" as in the NASB or "of victory" as in the JPS? The word in question is the common "ts'dakah," meaning "justice/righteousness." I quite like the JPS's translation of "victory," for it highlights very sharply the forensic nature of being thus clothed. To receive the divine "ts'dakah" is to be proclaimed victorious as to the law of God.]

Here we see that this Mosaic Messiah shall heal hearts, bring deliverance, and inaugurate a time of bountiful inheriting. He shall also cause his followers to be spiritual priests and ministers, being clothed with the garments of the LORD's

salvation and righteousness, by way of an everlasting covenant.

To summarize this section, surely our only hope should be in a Messiah who can subdue our spiritual enemies as a triumphant king, can offer the blood of his covenant as an effective priest, and can proclaim peace through his prophetic acumen...

[OT] Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Lo, your King does come to you; righteous -- and saved is he; afflicted -- and riding on an ass, and on a colt -- a son of she-asses. And I have cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; yea, cut off has been the bow of battle. And **he has spoken peace to nations** {*prophet*}; and **his rule [is] from sea unto sea, and from the river unto the ends of earth** {*king*}. Also you -- **by the blood of your covenant, I have sent your prisoners out of the pit** {*priest*}, there is no water in it. -- Zechariah 9:9-11; [mYLT]

[JPS: **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee, he is triumphant, and victorious, lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace unto the nations; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, because of the blood of thy covenant I send forth thy prisoners out of the pit where in is no water.**

The YLT describes the king as “righteous -- and saved is he; afflicted.” The JPS describes him as “triumphant, and victorious, lowly.” Obviously then there are three terms in question.

The first is “tsadeek,” a slightly different form of the earlier “ts’dakah.” What was true of the earlier term is true of this one, and again, the JPS supplies us with good Christian theology.

Next is “nosha,” the passive participle of “to save,” therefore “to be a saved one” is literal. Obviously to be “victorious” is a reasonable idiomatic substitution, and the BDB even lists it as a possible definition.

The last term is “ani,” a common word meaning “poor/afflicted/humble/wretched.”

So how can the Messiah be so victorious and so poorly?]

9. The Divine Messiah in Classic Literature

The problem with Jewish-Christian debating regarding the Messiah is that there is not a level playing field. Anti-missionaries enjoy attacking the Christian Christ, but are very slow to describe their own views of the coming king. Over the years Jewish Messianic doctrine has come to work this way: whatever doesn't point to Jesus (*mainly the things set to be accomplished at his second coming*) is promoted, and whatever does, is not. To argue properly between the two religions one has to peer back to see what scholars of Judaism have said about the Messiah in days gone by. Even Norman Solomon, an authority on Jewish studies at Oxford, admits to a vital, oft-neglected truth in the Judeo-Christian debate...

<Strange as it may seem, the Talmud and other founding texts of rabbinic Judaism were actually written later than the Gospels, which were the founding texts of Christianity. When the Pope recently referred to Jews as the ‘elder brother’ of Christians he got it wrong; we are both, of course, ‘children’ of the Hebrew scriptures, but in terms of our defining texts (New Testament, or Talmud) it is Christians who are the ‘elder brother’.*1

Since the religion of Judaism came after, did its leaders intentionally circumvent Christian theology? Probably.

It is beyond my capabilities to delve too deeply into classic Jewish texts, but it should be noted that the idea of a divine Messiah is not something invented by Paul. Let's review a few of the major categories which prove this.

A. The Metatron

If you type the word "Metatron" into a search engine you're likely to find more links to the occult than to the Talmud, but originally this divine angel was a very Jewish idea. Following is an excerpt from an article which can be found on several different websites...

<The angel Metatron is described in Rabbinical sources that provide hints of his considerable power as well as his relationship with the other angels. The Babylonian Talmud mentions Metatron in three places: "Sanhedrin" 38b, "Hagiga" 15a, and "Avodah Zarah" 3b. In one of these stories, Elisha ben Abuyah, also called Acher, is said to have entered Paradise when he sees Metatron sitting down (an action that in heaven is permitted only to God Himself). As a result, Acher mistakenly views Metatron as a deity and says heretically, "There are indeed two powers in heaven!" The Talmud subsequently explains that Metatron sits because of his function as the Heavenly Scribe, writing down the deeds of Israel (Babylonian Talmud, "Hagiga" 15a).

... the Talmud states, it was proved to Elisha that Metatron could not be a second deity by the fact that Metatron received 60 'strokes with fiery rods' to demonstrate that Metatron was not a god, but an angel, and could be punished (Gershom Scholem).

...The Zohar calls Metatron "the Youth", a title previously used in 3 Enoch, where it appears to mean "servant". It

identifies him as the angel that led the people of Israel through the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt...and describes him as a heavenly priest. *2

B. Philo of Alexandria's Logos

Philo (c. 20 B.C. to c. A.D. 50) was the leader of the Jewish community at Alexandria, and was a highly intelligent and complicated philosopher. He is noted for his explication of the "Logos" in the Old Testament. "Logos" is an ancient Greek term/ideal meaning "word," "utterance," "thought," and "reason."

Dr. Marian Hillar posted a thorough article about Philo on the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Here are some of the things the ancient philosopher penned about the "Logos":

<...When the scripture uses the Greek term for God *ho theos*, it refers to the true God, but when it uses the term *theos*, without the article *ho*, it refers not to the God, but to his most ancient Logos (Somn. 1.229-230)...Commenting on Genesis 9:6 Philo states the reference to creation of man after the image of God is to the second deity, the Divine Logos of the Supreme being and to the father himself, because it is only fitting that the rational soul of man cannot be in relation to the preeminent and transcendent Divinity (QG 2.62). Philo himself, however, explains that to call the Logos "God" is not a correct appellation (Somn. 1.230). Also, through this Logos, which men share with God, men know God and are able to perceive Him (LA 1.37-38). Philo describes the Logos as the revealer of God symbolized in the Scripture (Gen. 31:13; 16:8; etc) by an angel of the Lord (Somn. 1.228-239; Cher. 1-3). The Logos is the first-born and the eldest and chief of the angels. Philo's Logos has many names (Conf. 146). Philo identifies his Logos with Wisdom of Proverbs 8:22 (Ebr. 31). Moreover, Moses, according to Philo called this Wisdom "Beginning," "Image," "Sight of God." And his personal wisdom is an imitation of the archetypal Divine Wisdom. All

terrestrial wisdom and virtue are but copies and representations of the heavenly Logos (LA 1.43, 45-46). The fundamental doctrine propounded by Philo is that of Logos as an intermediary power, a messenger and mediator between God and the world. When speaking of the high priest, Philo describes the Logos as God's son, a perfect being procuring forgiveness of sins and blessings: "For it was indispensable that the man who was consecrated to the Father of the world [the high priest] should have as a paraclete, his son, the being most perfect in all virtue, to procure forgiveness of sins, and a supply of unlimited blessings" (Mos. 2.134).*3

Since Philo's "Logos" is more of a principle than a person, his contribution to Christian theology is debatable. Yet the irrefutable point is that these are obviously the ideas and questions any thinking person must deal with while studying the Old Testament.

C. The Son of Man

The book of Enoch, a pre-Christian work which features a very powerful Messianic figure called, "The Son of Man," furnishes great proof of a different emphasis prevailing among readers of the Old Testament in days gone by. Here are two quotes from the translation by R. A. Charles (*public domain; capitalizations were modified*):

<And there I saw one who had a head of days, and his head was white like wool, and with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, (and) why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me: This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and whose lot hath the pre-

eminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness for ever. And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen shall raise up the kings and the mighty from their seats, [and the strong from their thrones] and shall loosen the reins of the strong, and break the teeth of the sinners. [And he shall put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms] because they do not extol and praise him, nor humbly acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them. And he shall put down the countenance of the strong, and shall fill them with shame (46:1-6).

And at that hour that Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits, and his name before the Head of Days. Yea, before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits. He shall be a staff to the righteous whereon to stay themselves and not fall, and he shall be the light of the Gentiles, and the hope of those who are troubled of heart. All who dwell on earth shall fall down and worship before him, and will praise and bless and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits. And for this reason hath he been chosen and hidden before him, before the creation of the world and for evermore. And the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits hath revealed him to the holy and righteous; for he hath preserved the lot of the righteous, because they have hated and despised this world of unrighteousness, and have hated all its works and ways in the name of the Lord of Spirits: for in his name they are saved, and according to his good pleasure hath it been in regard to their life (48:2-7).>

The Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906 (Funk and Wagnall) has a worthwhile comment on this work, counteracting any modern cynicism (*this is the age when the only qualification to be a Bible scholar is the ability to sneer*):

<Moreover, contrary to the view held by many, that all the passages concerning the Son of Man = Messiah in the Book of Enoch and IV Ezra are of Christian origin, it may be

pointed out that the phrase “Bar Nash” (= “Son of Man”) must have been a common name for an angel of the highest order among the Palestinian Jews of the first Christian centuries. Yer. Yoma v. relates that, when reference was made in the bet ha-midrash to Simon the Just’s having, every year of the forty during which he was high priest, been accompanied into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement by an “aged one,” veiled and garbed in linen (i.e., by a heavenly being; comp. the “labush ha-badim” in Ezek. Ix. 1, 3 et al.), R. Abbahu objected: “Does not the prohibition, ‘No man shall be present in the Tabernacle when the high priest enters the sanctuary,’ extend to those of whom it is said, ‘the appearance of their countenance was that of a man’s countenance’?” (Lev. Xvi. 17; Ezek. i. 10). Whereupon the rejoinder was made, “Who says that that being was Bar Nash? It was the All Holy Himself.”>

D. The “Word” of the Targums

After the Jews came back from the Babylonian captivity they had lost much of their national heritage; in particular, fluency regarding the Hebrew language. Aramaic would become dominant, and in the synagogue services it became standard practice to read the Old Testament in Hebrew and then to read an Aramaic translation, i.e., a “targum.” These translations weren’t word-for-word renderings however; they encompassed many quirks, one of which was the regular substitution of the divine personage for the title, “Word” (usually, *mamra*).

One has to be careful not to get swept away with speculation: the authors of the targums did not believe in a second person of the Godhead. Yet why did they use this device? It would seem that they thought it was a necessary theological truth; that is, the transcendent, invisible God must be referred to by his Word and not by his ethereal and mysterious person. Is not this the doctrine of the Messiah? Anyway, the “Word” substitutions make for some colourful quotes; note a few of

the more interesting ones from the book of Genesis as found in Targum Onkelos (*translated by Etheridge, public domain; emphasis added*)...

*And they heard the voice of the **Word** of the Lord God walking in the garden in the evening of the day*

*And the Lord said, This is the sign of the covenant which I appoint between My **Word**, and between you, and between every living soul that is with you unto perpetual generations. I have set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of the covenant between My **Word** and between the earth*

*Fear not, Abram: My **Word** shall be thy strength, and thy exceeding great reward*

*And he believed in the **Word** of the Lord, and He reckoned it to him unto justification*

*And the Lord opened her eyes, and she saw the well of waters, and went and filled the skin with water, and gave the youth to drink. And the **Word** of the Lord was the Helper of the youth, and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness*

*And the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham the second time from the heavens, and said, By my **Word** have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only son, therefore, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thy sons as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the sea shore*

*And Abraham was old, (and) advanced in days, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who had authority over all which was his, Put now thy hand under my thigh, and I will adjure thee by the **Word** of the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou wilt not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Kenaanaee among whom I dwell*

*But the **Word** of the Lord was the helper of Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the eyes of the captain of the prison*

*And Israel said to Joseph, Behold, I die; but the **Word** of the Lord will be your Helper, and restore you to the land of your fathers*

*This was to him from the mighty God of Jacob, who by His **Word** pastureth the fathers and the children of the seed of Israel. The **Word** of the God of thy father shall be thy Helper, and the All-Sufficient shall bless thee, with the blessings of the dew that descends from the heavens above, with the blessings that spring from the depths of the earth beneath, with the blessings of thy father and of thy mother*

E. Messiah Ben-David/Messiah Ben-Joseph

As a lead-in to our next section, let's read about an ancient idea from Judaism that there would be two Messiahs, a kingly lord and a salvific sufferer. Quoting again from *the Jewish Encyclopedia* {which is available online}...

<Finally, there must be mentioned a Messianic figure peculiar to the rabbinical apocalyptic literature -- that of Messiah ben Joseph. The earliest mention of him is in Suk. 52a, b, where three statements occur in regard to him, for the first of which R. Dosa (c. 250) is given as authority. In the last of these statements only his name is mentioned, but the first two speak of the fate which he is to meet, namely, to fall in battle (as if alluding to a well-known tradition). Details about him are not found until much later, but he has an established place in the apocalypses of later centuries and in the midrash literature -- in Saadia's description of the future ("Emunot we-De'ot," ch. viii.) and in that of Hai Gaon ("Ta'am Zekenim," p. 59). According to these, Messiah b. Joseph will appear prior to the coming of Messiah b. David; he will gather the children of Israel around him, march to Jerusalem, and there, after

overcoming the hostile powers, reestablish the Temple-worship and set up his own dominion. Thereupon Armilus, according to one group of sources, or Gog and Magog, according to the other, will appear with their hosts before Jerusalem, wage war against Messiah b. Joseph, and slay him. His corpse, according to one group, will lie unburied in the streets of Jerusalem; according to the other, it will be hidden by the angels with the bodies of the Patriarchs, until Messiah b. David comes and resurrects him ...>

Chapter 4. The Messianic Prophecies of Salvation

1. God's Standards

Before beginning this section I want to repeat what was written before: the unique, Christian Messiah is not just a political ruler, but also a divine Saviour. Having viewed his powerful person in the last chapter, let's view what the Old Testament prophesied concerning the benefits of his work for us. First we must set aside some space to establish why it is that we need a saviour.

A. Why Do We Sin?

This is a very complicated question; anthropology is perhaps the most oversimplified and underdeveloped branch in all of theology. First, it is obvious that we do have something like a "sin nature," for we all commit ceaseless transgressions against God with our thoughts, desires, words, and actions. Yet what does a "sin nature" actually mean? Did God alter man's DNA in Eden to have "sin genes?" Or rather does he impute to us sinful spirits? Both options seem altogether unthinkable.

Rather, it probably has everything to do with our spiritual and covenantal dispensations being changed because of Adam

and Eve's sin {*although as with the fangs of nature, it's possible the make-up of humans were changed to a small extent, yet not as being explicitly pointed to iniquity*}. When they transgressed, mankind lost God's special presence and effectual spiritual power, while gaining the enormous responsibility of having to keep the whole moral law through their own efforts. It doesn't really matter how it happens, but due to our lust, selfishness, anger, faithlessness, fruitlessness, etc., we can all be daily assured that we are deep in transgression.

[OT] The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? -- Jeremiah 17:9

[NT] If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. -- 1 John 1:8

B. What is the Punishment of Sin?

When the first couple transgressed, a frightful declaration was enacted: "Dying you shall die" (Genesis 2:17; [mYLT]). Most translations use the infinitive absolute in Hebrew simply to intensify another verb, so this phrase is rendered, "You shall *surely* die." The infinitive absolute should be translated however. We are dealing with the Word of God, not a grammar rodeo. "Dying you shall die" is the true rendering; for note the fulfilment of these verses in the book of Revelation, where the dead die a second death:

[NT] And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books [Or scrolls] were opened; and another book [Or scroll] was opened, which is [the book] of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books [Or scrolls], according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one [of them] according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the

second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was [Lit anyone was] not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. -- Revelation 20:12-15

And we are all heading to this place of the second death, for we all, like Adam, stand condemned:

[OT] Fathers shall not be put to death for [Or with] [their] sons, nor shall sons be put to death for [Or with] [their] fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin. -- Deuteronomy 24:16

[NT] ... The wages of sin is death... -- Romans 6:23

It is also implicit that if we do not die then we do not have to go to the second death. This is how the Messiah's death is able to save us from the Lake of Fire; he has set his seal upon his believers that they shall be resurrected unto eternal life {*John MacArthur often points out the common New Testament designation of the death of the believer being mere sleep*}, thereby overcoming the first death ...

[NT] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only [Or unique, only one of His kind] begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. -- John 3:16

C. We are Unable to Work

Many simply try hard to avoid all thoughts of judgment and Hell, but some are convicted, and will put forth an effort to render obedience and perform good works. There's a problem however: a husband isn't impressed by the scrambled eggs of a wife who committed adultery the night before. When we sin we are condemned, and are no longer in a place where any of our works can come before God:

[OT] “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Ask now the priests [for] a ruling [Lit law]: If a man carries holy meat in the fold [Lit wing] of his garment, and touches bread with this fold [Lit his wing], or cooked food, wine, oil, or any [other] food, will it become holy?’” And the priests answered, “No.” Then Haggai said, “If one who is unclean from a corpse [Lit soul] touches any of these, will [the latter] become unclean?” And the priests answered, “It will become unclean.” -- Haggai 2:11-13

If a man was defiled then what he touched became defiled, even his good works. Now this is what God said to rebuke the former captives of Babylon who were risking their lives to build God’s Temple! How much less is he impressed when we donate a pair of old shoes! Fig leaves were the way Adam and Eve sought solace from their guilt (Genesis 3:7), and all of our efforts are of equal worth:

[OT] For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. -- Isaiah 64:6

D. We are Unable to Continually Atone

Some religions take provision for sin; that is, they understand condemnation and the need to be forgiven and so they have certain things that can be done for propitiation if their mark is missed every once in a while. Let us look at the insufficiency of such systems by taking a glance at a popular framework found within Christian circles. Many churches across many denominations teach the exact same error: if a major sin is committed, then salvation has been forfeited, and so the transgressor needs “re-baptized” or “re-dedicated;” i.e., he or she needs fresh cleansing judicially or all is lost. But there’s a problem: no matter how much sanctification we undergo, no matter how much we pray for inner strength, no matter how much we sequester ourselves and no matter how much we

strive, we still all commit “cosmic treason” [*to borrow a term from R.C. Sproul*] against God every single day of our lives. The general consensus is that these “serious sins” encompass most of the Ten Commandments (and some conservatives include other portions of Scripture as well). Who has gone a day without violating these precepts in heart, if not in other ways? We are never able to make enough reparation if the process of judicial scrutiny is ongoing.

And what of the Mosaic sacrificial system? Does it not offer respite apart from a slain Messiah? Read the books of Moses. You may be amazed to find that there isn't an offer for atonement concerning real sin (*apart from some forms of theft, but let's not wrangle over exceptions*). The law of the Levitical priesthood was designed to teach spiritual truths by cleansing lepers or people who touched dead insects, etc.; there isn't any verse that says, “When you have committed murder bring two turtle-doves” (and we all commit murder every time we are angry without good cause; Matthew 5:21-22). If anyone is guilty of a real sin then Moses offers them no hope:

[OT] The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may [Or and he shall] be forgiven. You shall have one law for him who does [anything] unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them. But the person who does [anything] defiantly { *literally, “with a high hand”* }, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. -- Numbers 15:28-31

Of course modern Judaism is without a Temple and has been forced to substitute prayers in its place. But if the commandments of Moses could only guard against grasshoppers, how effective are the words of a prayer-book over-against the Day of Judgment?

We need another form of atonement, one that is Biblical and one that is complete. This is offered in the Christ...

2. Regeneration through the Messiah

We all go astray; if we are to turn back, it is because God turns us back. Sometimes it happens in a matter of minutes; others search for the truth for months or years. The point is that we never seek the atonement God offers on our own. It is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8), and it is through the Messiah. The most amazing of all Messianic prophecies proves this:

[OT] I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit [Or a spirit] of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn...In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. -- Zechariah 12:10, 13:1

[JPS: And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto Me because they [That is, the nations. See verse 9] have thrust him through; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born...In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for purification and for sprinkling....

*Before saying a word about the mammoth line of who is being pierced, let's look at the last word, rendered "impurity" in the NASB and "sprinkling" in the JPS. Both renderings are good Christianity. The term however is "**nidah**," meaning "impurity."*

As for who's being pierced, here's the Hebrew...

vav [and] **hibeetu** [they have looked/(with **vav**, "they shall look"); see Numbers 21:9 below] **aylai** [to/towards + me] **aleph-tav** [direct object marker] **asher** [that/which/who] **dakaru** [they pierced/ran through]

"Me" was pierced. Hashem was pierced.]

The Jews are God's eternal people, yet they have been treated no differently than any other nation (*apart from order of presentation*) regarding the Gospel; there have been remnants who have believed among all the different people groups. Yet one day at the end, God will pour forth his Holy Spirit upon the Israelites in a special way, and they will all call upon the Messiah and be saved from massive hoards of haters (see Psalm 18 and Zechariah 14). And here's when they shall call: when they recognize their slain Messiah, and look to him for cleansing. They shall not call however until they receive the spirit to call; they shall not look for grace until the spirit of grace is poured out upon them. He who was pierced in their midst is the same one who shall enlighten their eyes to recognize his salvation. This is just like one of the greatest Gospel pictures in the books of Moses:

[OT] The people spoke against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food [Lit bread] and no water, and we loathe [Lit our soul loathes] this miserable food." The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make [Lit Make for yourself] a fiery [serpent,] and set it on a standard {*i.e.*, a "pole"}; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live." And Moses made a bronze

serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived. -- Numbers 21:5-9

[JPS: And the people spoke against God, and against Moses: "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, and there is no water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses, and said: "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us." And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses: "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live." And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived.

The NASB has the manna being called "miserable," while the JPS has "light." The BDB defines "k'lokayl," the term in question, as "contemptible/worthless." This word is derived from "kalal" which means "to be slight/trifling;" so thus both versions are accurate from different vantage points.]

Those made to feel the punishment of death by the hand of God were to look at the likeness of the inflicting serpents hanging on a pole, thereby receiving health and life from God...

[NT] He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. -- 2 Corinthians 5:21

The Messiah was the first cause of creation, and he must also be the first cause of our redemption. He was slain not only to

give us salvation from sins, but also to give our repentance which leads to such forgiveness...

[NT] The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death [Or on whom you had laid violent hands] by hanging Him on a cross [Lit wood]. He is the one whom God exalted to [Or by] His right hand as a Prince [Or Leader] and a Savior, *to grant repentance to Israel*, and forgiveness of sins. -- Acts 5:30-31

3. Messiah the Substitute

So if we do repent of being sinners and look to the finished work of Christ as being the sole way of forgiveness, just what really happens? In this section we are going to review the passages that describe the simple yet vital transaction that comes immediately upon our exercising saving faith: the completely perfect life of Christ becomes ours while the fullness of our sins are actually placed on him through the veil of time.

A. The Called Volunteer

[OT] My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, have given a pledge [Lit clapped your palms] for a stranger, [if] you have been snared with the words of your mouth, have been caught with the words of your mouth, do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; since you have come into the hand [Lit palm] of your neighbor, go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor. Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids; deliver yourself like a gazelle from [the hunter's] hand and like a bird from the hand of the fowler. -- Proverbs 6:1-5

[JPS: My son, if thou art become surety for thy neighbour, if thou hast struck thy hands for a stranger -- thou art snared by the words of thy mouth, thou art caught by the words of thy mouth -- do this now, my son,

and deliver thyself, seeing thou art come into the hand of thy neighbour; go, humble thyself, and urge thy neighbour. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a gazelle from the hand [of the hunter], and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.]

[NT] Then Jesus *came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and *said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He *said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." And He went a little beyond [them,] {*some manuscripts have instead, "approached [God] a little"*} and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." And He *came to the disciples and *found them sleeping, and *said to Peter, "So, you [men] could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. -- Matthew 26:36-44

The book of Proverbs speaks in several places about the danger of committing yourself to someone. Becoming someone's "guarantor" is risky business, and the Bible's book of wisdom smartly says to avoid it if possible. Even before the foundation of the world however the Messiah volunteered to put up a pledge for his people regarding righteousness with God, and in the Garden of Gethsemane this oath came to a head.

A marauding band from the chief priests were soon to ransack the small group of disciples and so the Messiah did all he

humanly could to encourage his friends to be awake and vigilant; but his attempts were in vain. He alone had the strength to face the trial. Just so, he alone has the moral potency to have a perfect righteousness with God, and so he must give himself on our behalf, as we cannot pay the price of complete obedience. He agreed with the Father to be our surety; had we been obedient he would have lived, but because of our languid morals he had to die. He had to stand in the gap for our redemption if he was to fulfil his task of bringing us home to Heaven:

[NT] For Christ, while we were still weak, at the right time, died on behalf of the impious [or, ungodly]. For scarcely [or, only rarely] will anyone die on behalf of a righteous [person]; for perhaps someone even dares [or, might be prepared] to die on behalf of the good [person]. But God demonstrates His own love to [or, for] us, [in] that us still being sinful [people] [fig., while we were still sinners], Christ died on our behalf! - - Romans 5:6-8; [ALT3]

Though we were sinfully without strength, God sent to us the only one who had the power of the Almighty within him to overcome sin in the flesh:

[NT] No one who is born [Or begotten] of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born [Or begotten] of God. -- 1 John 3:9

[OT] Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. -- Psalm 80:17

[JPS: Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself.]

B. The Transaction of Iniquity

The above section from Matthew, when the Messiah wrestles in prayer with the shadow of Golgotha upon him, may seem disturbing at first glance. Many martyrs have died valiantly; if Jesus was truly the LORD of Glory, would he have behaved in this way? One has to understand that more was upon him that night than the shadow of the valley of death; the sins of his people were also upon him, not figuratively, but actually....

[OT] Sacrifice [I.e. Blood sacrifice] and meal offering You have not desired; my ears You have opened [Lit dug; or possibly pierced]; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I said, "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of [Or prescribed for] me. I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart"... Evils beyond number have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see; they are more numerous than the hairs of my head, and my heart has failed [Lit forsaken] me. -- Psalm 40:6-12; portions

[JPS: Sacrifice and meal-offering Thou hast no delight in; mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I: "Lo, I am come with the roll of a book which is prescribed for me; I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is in my inmost parts"... Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me.

The big difference comes with the line about the roll. Both begin with "I have come," and then deviate sharply from each other. Let's look at what the Hebrew says after "I have come..."

bet [in/with/on] **m'gilat sayfer** [roll of a book] **katuv**
[literally "written," although idiomatically the idea of

prescription is possible] alai [upon/on the ground of/according to/on account of/on behalf of/concerning + me]

As one can see, the language is vague enough to allow for either version.]

The book of Hebrews contains an enlightening exposition on the first half of this quote:

[NT] After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND [sacrifices] FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE [in them]” (which are offered according to the Law), then He said [Lit has said], “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL {*some manuscripts add, ‘O God’*}.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this [Lit which] will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. -- 10:8-10

But it is the second part that speaks of Gethsemane. Sampson was a Nazarene from birth who styled his hair into seven long locks (see Judges 16:13). They were cut at the same time his eyes were blinded, and this man of amazing strength found himself to be the object of ridicule and violence at the hand of his venomous enemies.

The Messiah in Gethsemane actually had the sins of his people placed upon him; no longer as a promise, but a present reality. The Lord didn't waver that night because he was afraid to die; he wavered that night because he had become his people and therefore the glory of the seven-partitioned Spirit [*which we will review later*] was momentarily eclipsed. In the blink of an eye he found himself to be the greatest of all sinners before the throne of his Holy Father. This is also why he spoke the most doleful of all words upon the Cross: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* He wasn't

play-acting, but rather was truly being forsaken, that he might open for us the pearly gates...

Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain... -- Judges 16:3

[JPS: And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the mountain...]

C. The Taken Cup

Adam at the instigation of Eve took the forbidden fruit and set in motion the ruin of us all. The Messiah wasn't compelled to take the cup, but he took it because he loved us and knew it was the only way it could be drained; and because his Father is so perfectly just, he knew that it had to be drained. When Adam and Eve sinned in Eden, God shortly thereafter "preached" the first "Gospel sermon":

[OT] And Hashem God says unto the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed [are] you above all the cattle, and above every beast of the field: on your belly do you go, and dust you do eat, all days of your life. And enmity I put between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he does bruise {or, "crush"} you -- [the] head, and you do bruise {or, "crush"} him -- [the] heel." -- Genesis 3:14-15; [mYLT]

[JPS: And the LORD God said unto the serpent: "Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of

thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; they shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise their heel.”

*In the first verse the YLT says that the serpent will be cursed “above” the rest of the animals, while the JPS says that it will be cursed “from among” them. This is because of the many different ways the prefix “**mem/min**” can be used in Hebrew. Both of the usages employed here are very common. It’s possible that the JPS intended the same meaning as the YLT.*

The second verse provides one of the more significant differences. Let’s set the scene. God created the world and all things in it, made a special garden, placed man (and later woman) in it, and told them to obey the one law of not eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The serpent comes along (Christians believe this snake to be Satan, as in Revelation 12:9, while the Jews do not universally hold this view) and tempts Eve to eat of the tree, who in turn tempts Adam. God comes, and the time of reckoning is at hand. Adam blames Eve for the sin, who in turn blames the serpent.

*God begins levying punishments for the transgression, starting with the serpent. He promises that there will come a “**zera**,” and that this zera will crush the serpent, while also being crushed by the serpent. The problem is that the term “**zera**” has a double meaning. It can refer to a single child or to progeny in general, much like the term “offspring” which can mean one or many. The YLT says “**he**” shall bruise the snake and that the snake shall bruise “**him**,” while the JPS says, “**they** shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise **their** heel.”*

*The YLT takes “**zera**” to refer to one child and the JPS to many children. The YLT is without a doubt the literal translation, for the terms translated “**he**” and “**him**” (as opposed to “**they**” and “**their**” in the JPS) are indeed 3rd*

person masculine singular. The JPS translators could easily answer back however and show examples from the Hebrew Bible where collective nouns that are meant to be taken in a plural way are commonly paired with pronouns that do not strictly agree in number.

Therefore, this argument cannot be completely settled in a linguistic manner, although the YLT is truly the literal version here. Besides, Eve, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all sought to crown one of their children with the blessing, not all of them (of course with Jacob the blessing was split between Joseph and Judah, hence the minority-Jewish idea of two Messiahs).]

The heel shall be hurt by crushing the head of the snake; this is the sense of the verse. They heard this promise and then were sent out of Eden, the way to eternal life being guarded by powerful angels:

[OT] So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the **flaming sword** which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. -- Genesis 3:24

[JPS: So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way to the tree of life.]

Later in Genesis the *Akedah* occurs, the binding of Isaac, a story highly significant to Jews and Christians. It is in the morning service of the Jewish prayer-book, and of course it is one of the greatest pictures of Mt. Calvary in the Old Testament...

[OT] Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there

as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you”...Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the **fire** and the **knife**. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac spoke to Abraham his father...“Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God will provide [Lit see] for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son”...Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. -- Genesis 22:1-10; portions

[JPS: And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him: “Abraham;” and he said: “Here am I.” And He said: “Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of”...And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father...“Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?” And Abraham said: “God will provide [Heb. Jireh; that is, see for Himself] Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son”...Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.]

It is significant that this mountain is found in the land of promise, while Sinai languishes in a wasteland. Isaac’s altar would become the place where the Temples would be built, but God delights not to honour the place of the giving of the Law. Ebal, the mount with the graven stones, is accursed, while Gerizim is free. Why? Though a kind and upright judge

upholds justice, he takes no pleasure in it; his delight rather is to pardon. God did provide the Lamb, and put the wood of the Cross upon him:

[NT] {*Jesus said*} As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him {*some manuscripts add, "not perish but"*} have eternal life... **He who believes in Him is not judged**... John 3:14-15, 18a

Emphasis was added, for such words are the Gospel in a nutshell; a similar statement is found later in John's Gospel:

[NT] Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. -- 5:24

We are never going to be good enough to endure the heavenly tribunal no matter how much we are edified or how much "religion" we gain. We must pass out of judgment altogether, the Messiah having been fully judged for us.

4. Messiah the Complete Redemption

I must stress the fullness of the grace we receive in the Messiah, for this is the greatest problem in the history of the church. Many faithful and earnest Christians miss the mark and believe to be only partially saved in the Lord. I know I'm sounding a bit like a broken record, but this is so vital to understand: he is not some helping force of our deliverance; rather, he himself is its entirety:

[NT] In the same way then also in the present time [there has] been a remnant according to [God's] choice [or, election] of grace. But if by grace, [it is] no longer of works, otherwise [or, in that case] grace no longer becomes grace; but if by

works, it is no longer grace, otherwise [or, in that case] work is no longer work. -- Romans 11:5-6; [ALT3]

These verses should be called, “Mary of Bethany.” Everywhere the Gospel is preached they should be spoken of as a memorial to the truth. We must persistently shirk the temptation to believe that salvation is by the quasi-grace of God, with this “grace” being manifested in his helping us in our pursuit of morality and uprightness. God hasn’t just taught us how to fish; he has caught the fish for us. Grace means he’s completed the course, not that he’s there to give us cool water along the way. Let’s review this truth further via a few pictures presented in the Old Testament.

A. The Middle

[OT] And it came to pass that, when Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud came down, and stood at the opening of the tent, -- and spake with Moses. And, when all the people beheld the pillar of cloud, standing at the opening of the tent, then all the people rose up, and bowed themselves down, every man at the entrance of his tent. Thus Yahweh {*i.e., the LORD*} used to speak unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend, -- and, when he returned unto the camp, his attendant, Joshua, son of Nun, a young man, moved not from the midst of the tent. -- Exodus 33:9-11 [REB]

[JPS: And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent; and [the LORD] spoke with Moses. And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent, all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. And the LORD spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he would return into the camp; but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.]

This quote describes the comings and goings of Moses and Joshua around the Tabernacle. Now Joshua would be the successor of Moses and lead the people into the Promised Land, and as has been stated a zillion times by others, his name is nearly identical to *Yeshua* (i.e., Jesus).

What we have in the above quote is like unto many other Messianic prophecies: a description of history, yet with little clues and hues of greater things to take place in the future. Rotherham is the only translator among my favourites who picks up on an important point. The last clause says that Joshua departed not from “the midst of the tent.” This word for “midst” is in the Hebrew (*toke*), but for some reason a lot of versions choose to ignore it (*as the JPS*). Two poignant things are being portrayed here in Exodus. The first is that Moses came and went, though Joshua remained. The second is that Moses spoke with God at the entrance to the tent, while Joshua dwelt in the *toke*, the middle of it.

The Old Covenant was often a religion of the periphery, where there was a substantial lack of specific information about key issues; i.e., Heaven, Hell, etc. Moses was only given vital glimpses of the Godhead and Christ, and not the fullness of specifics concerning the future epochs.

Also, the priests would only remain on the periphery regarding redemption as well, providing picture lessons off and on; only the Messiah dwells in the permanent place of true intercessory pardoning, in the true Holiest Place...

[OT] The tree of life was in the midst of the garden... --
Genesis 2:9 [ESV]

[NT] And I saw, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb, standing, showing that it had been slain... -- Revelation 5:6
[REB]

B. The Sabbath Day

It is a great irony that the enemies of the Messiah found fault with his Sabbath observance when the Sabbath is a great commemoration of the complete redemption found in him. Just as a careful son or daughter of the Torah will not work in any way, shape, or form on the Sabbath, so it is that we cannot add one small degree to the salvation wrought for the people of God at Calvary. He was completely forsaken and completely killed with our sins upon him, so we are completely restored...

[OT] And the heavens and the earth are completed, and all their host; and God completes by {*more literally, "in" or "on"*} the seventh day his work which he has made, and ceases by {*more literally, "in" or "on"*} the seventh day from all his work which he has made. And God blesses the seventh day, and sanctifies it {*or, "him"*}, for in it {*or, "him"*} he has ceased from all his work which God had prepared for making. These [are] births of the heavens and of the earth in their being prepared, in the day of Hashem God's making earth and heavens; and no shrub of the field is yet in the earth, and no herb of the field yet sprouts, for Hashem God has not rained upon the earth, and a man there is not to serve the ground. And a mist goes up from the earth, and has watered the whole face of the ground. And Hashem God forms the man -- dust from the ground, and breathes into his nostrils breath of life, and the man becomes a living creature. And Hashem God plants a garden in Eden, at the east, and he sets there the man whom he has formed. -- Genesis 2:1-8;
[mYLT]

[JPS: And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of the m. And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which God in creating had

made. These are the generations of the heaven and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven. No shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground; but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. Then the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed.

*Some might wonder why Young called Adam a “creature” while the JPS called him a “soul.” The Hebrew “**nephesh**” is very broad and has a rainbow of uses in just about every version.]*

With Genesis chapters 1 and 2 there is a very meaningful theme which is depicted throughout the Bible: the universal God versus the personal one. In Revelation 4 God sits upon his throne and everyone worships him according to his greatness and glory as the Creator; in chapter 5 the Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne and is glorified for redeeming a people. In Romans 1 Paul sums up masterfully God’s dealings with the entire gentile world, while in chapter 2 his focus is rather on the religious Jew. Elijah the prophet of 1 Kings was a man who lived a very mysterious life, appearing out of nowhere, and often being alone and terse and fearsome. He also stayed with a gentile woman and raised her son from the dead. They all survived on the little oil that miraculously never ran out. Elisha, his successor in 2 Kings, came from a family and was very warm and friendly, being often found among his disciples; he stayed with a Jewish woman and raised her son from the dead. He cleansed lepers in his life and his bones brought forth another resurrection; he also caused oil to appear in an amazingly abundant way.

In Genesis 1 the whole world is in view, with just *Elohim*, the powerful Godhead being spoken of. In Genesis 2 there is *Hashem Elohim*, the covenant God, and the focus is on the creation of Eden and communion with a particular family. In chapter 1 there is no light, and of course we have seen on several occasions that Messiah was to be the light unto the nations (see Isaiah 42:6, 49:6). In chapter 2 there is no water, and the *rain* of the LORD is a great Messianic promise to the Jewish nation:

[OT] And you sons of Zion, joy and rejoice in Hashem your God; for he has given to you the Teacher for righteousness, and causes to come down to you a shower, sprinkling and gathered {or “early” and “latter;” i.e., there were two major rainy seasons in the Bible, the fall and the spring rains} -- in the beginning. -- Joel 2:23; [mYLT]

[JPS: Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God; for He giveth you the former rain in just measure, and He causeth to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain, at the first.

There is a homonym difference here that is evident in many versions. Since the term in question (“moreh”) comes from “yarah,” and since “torah” also comes from the same, then it is evident that “teaching” is a real possibility. “Hammoreh lits’dakah,” “the teacher for righteousness,” seems to be a very good translation; however, given the fact that “moreh” can also mean “rain” it is impossible to know for sure.]

[OT] He comes down as rain on mown grass, as showers -- sprinkling the earth. Flourish in his days does the righteous, and abundance of peace till the moon is not. And he rules from sea unto sea, and from the river unto the ends of earth. -- Psalm 72:6-8; [mYLT]

[JPS: May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days let the

righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, till the moon be no more. May he have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth.]

[OT] Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn [us,] but He will heal us; He has wounded [Lit struck] [us,] but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth. -- Hosea 6:1-3

[JPS: Come, and let us return unto the LORD; for He hath torn, and He will heal us, He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us, on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His presence. And let us know, eagerly strive to know the LORD, His going forth is sure as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth.]

The Messiah is the true seventh day (*incidentally, the Sabbath was the only full day he lay in the grave*); creation is complete in him. As a mist arose out of the ground and formed Paradise, so the Lord Jesus arose from the dead on the day of the waiving of the omer, ascended to Heaven forty days later, and on Pentecost (Shavuot) poured forth the Holy Spirit in an amazingly abundant way, forming the assembly and overcoming the world.

Messiah said it best himself:

[NT] I am the Light of the world. -- John 8:12

[NT] If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. -- John 7:37

The Jews were to receive the waters from on high and be a nation of ministers, displaying his glory to the dying gentile world; and that's exactly what many did, and shall do.

C. The Sprinkling

[OT] And Hashem says unto Moses, “Go unto the people; and you have sanctified them today and tomorrow, and they have washed their garments, and have been prepared for the third day; for on the third day does Hashem come down before the eyes of all the people on Mount Sinai. And you have made a border [for] the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, going up into the mount, or coming against its extremity; whoever is coming against the mount is certainly put to death; a hand comes not against him, for he is certainly stoned or shot through, whether beast or man it lives not. In the drawing out of the jubilee cornet they go up into the mount.” -- Exodus 19:10-13; [mYLT]

[JPS: And the LORD said unto Moses: ‘Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments, and be ready against the third day; for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying: Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death; no hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live; when the ram’s horn soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.’]

The last sentence is very significant...

***bet* [in/with] *m’shoke* [drawing out/prolonging] *hai-yovayl* [the jubilee] *haymah* [they] *ya’alu* [they go up/they ascend] *bet* [in] *ha-har* [the mountain]**

The original YLT has here “jubilee cornet,” yet “cornet” should be disregarded, for only the word “jubilee” is in the original. Most translations read “ram’s horn” or “trumpet,” but the Hebrew word is *yovayl*, which is used just about everywhere else in the Old Testament to describe the holiday that transpired every fifty years (see Leviticus 25:8-13). According to the NASB’s exhaustive concordance, “*yovayl*” is used twenty-seven times. Twenty-one times it just means “jubilee.” The rest of the times (minus this present usage), it is always coupled with “*shofar*” [“ram’s horn”] or “*keren*” [“horn”]; why? The answer must be that on its own “*yovayl*” simply means “jubilee,” not a musical instrument (*by the way, I’m aware of the Phoenician “ram” discussion; yet to explain away Biblical words through abstract etymology misses the point of God’s artistry*).

On the Day of Atonement the blood was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies and on the altar before the LORD. On the Day of Atonement of the fiftieth year a great horn was also blown and everyone regained family lands and rights to freedom. God says that when the jubilee is drawn out they may go up on the mount. This signified that in the future there would be a great Day of Atonement, and at that time the condemnation via the law would be overcome, with the people being free to approach God. In Exodus 24 this scene transpires in miniature:

[OT] So Moses took the blood and sprinkled [it] on the people, and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made [Lit cut] with you in accordance with all [Lit on all] these words.” Then Moses went up {Sinai} with [Lit and] Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement [Lit like a pavement] of sapphire, as [Lit and as] clear as the sky itself. Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel {or, “to the extremities of the sons of Israel”}; and they saw God, and they ate and drank. -- verses 8-11

[JPS: And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said: "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you in agreement with all these words." Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet the like of a paved work of sapphire stone, and the like of the very heaven for clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand; and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.]

And so it is all the more interesting that Isaiah said the Messiah would sprinkle people through his sufferings:

[OT] Behold, My servant will prosper {*or, "act wisely"*}, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted [Or very high]. Just as many were astonished at you, [My people,] so His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men. **Thus He will sprinkle many nations**, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand. -- Isaiah 52:13-15

[JPS: Behold, My servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. According as many were appalled at thee -- so marred was his visage unlike that of a man, and his form unlike that of the sons of men -- so shall he startle many nations, kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they perceive.

There is a linguistic war over the translation "sprinkle" versus "startle." This verb occurs 23 times according to the NASB exhaustive concordance: 16 times is it rendered "sprinkle," 4 times "sprinkled," with "splashed," "splashes," and "sprinkles" being used one time apiece.]

5. Appropriating Messiah's Redemption

A. The Stone

The "stone" motif is perhaps one of the most profound Messianic allusions in the Old Testament. Some such passages are extremely familiar:

[OT] The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner [stone.] This is the LORD'S doing [Lit from the LORD]; it is marvelous in our eyes. -- Psalm 118:22-23

[JPS: The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief corner-stone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.]

[OT] But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. -- Isaiah 8:13-14; [ESV]

[JPS: The LORD of hosts, Him shall ye sanctify; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.]

In Psalm 118 a wonderful stone is rejected; Isaiah 8 speaks in similar terms, but it refers to the rejection of the LORD himself, coming in the form of a "sanctuary" to some, but not to the Houses of Israel. Just as he who "became flesh, and dwelt [Or *tabernacled*; i.e. lived temporarily] among us"... "came to His own [Or *own things, possessions, domain*], and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:14, 11).

[OT] Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, O scoffers, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol [I.e. the nether world] we have made a pact [So some ancient versions; Heb seer]. The overwhelming scourge [Or flood] will not reach us when it passes by, for we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception.” Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone [for] the foundation, firmly placed [Lit well-laid]. He who believes [in it] will not be disturbed [Lit in a hurry].” -- Isaiah 28:14-16

[JPS: Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scoffers, the ballad-mongers of this people which is in Jerusalem: Because ye have said: “We have made a covenant with death, and with the nether-world are we at agreement; when the scouring scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood have we hid ourselves;” therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a costly corner-stone of sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste.”

*The NASB has “rulers” while the JPS describes “ballad-mongers.” The word in question, “**mashal**,” is a homonym, which can mean either “to rule” or “to use a proverb.”]*

A common theme in the Old Testament is the call of God to his people Israel to trust in him and not in the rulers and kingdoms of the gentiles. Here in Isaiah it is brought to the fore; they were revelling in yet another alliance with a foreign power (*and this passage will have its ultimate fulfilment when Israel makes a seven year covenant with the Beast, a European ruler; that's why it is discussed again in the appendix about the Antichrist*), yet God points to his Messiah as being the one whom they should confide in.

Let's look at one more "stone" passage to prove that this is a common Messianic theme before demonstrating how it teaches us about appropriating the salvation which is offered through the Anointed One...

Daniel and three of his friends were among those taken captive from Judah and chosen to enter the royal service at Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar the king would have a dream which troubled him so greatly that he threw down a memorable gauntlet. His magicians must either tell the dream and its interpretation or face death. Nebuchadnezzar was fed up with phoney pseudo-prophets and talking-heads. He wanted proof. He wanted to witness divinity in action, and so he made this seemingly impossible request.

Daniel prayerfully presented the King of Heaven with Nebuchadnezzar's demand and it was given in full. The dream and interpretation is one of the most succinct, comprehensive prophecies in the entire Bible. In short, he was shown the coming of the great kingdoms leading up to the time of Christ: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and then Rome. The last was to be destroyed by a stone, which is Christ...

[OT] {*Daniel said*} In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and [that] kingdom will not be left for [Or passed on to] another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future [Lit after this]; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy. -- Daniel 2:44-45

[JPS: And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; nor shall the kingdom be left to another people; it shall

break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, but it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.]

Now what does it mean that the stone would be cut out of the mountain? It certainly seems to imply the sonship of the coming deliverer. It is the third chapter of Daniel which pushes that thesis closer to certainty.

In this scene Daniel is absent and his three friends take centre stage. Nebuchadnezzar initially was humbled at the dream's interpretation and sought to honour Daniel. Nevertheless, the Chaldean dictator doesn't retain such fear, for soon he creates a statue that makes a bold, theological rebuttal. The original dream compromised a statue made of four metals, each representing the four kingdoms that would succeed one another. Nebuchadnezzar in rebellion makes a *six cubit wide/six cubit tall* statue that is *all* of gold, as if to say, "My kingdom will never end!"

What's more, he has all the rulers of all his provinces come in to give the people an example of obedience. All these various power-brokers must fall down and worship this statue together. The three friends refuse and are therefore thrown into a fiery furnace. Just as the Roman soldiers watched the Christ and two others hang on crosses, the Babylonian king and his courtiers watched as the men were thrown into the engulfing flames. Then something paranormal happened that sent the potentate reeling...

[OT] Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." He said, "Look! I see

four men loosed [and] walking [about] in the midst of the fire without harm [Lit there is no injury in them], and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of [the] gods!" -- 3:24-25

[JPS: Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was alarmed, and rose up in haste; he spoke and said unto his ministers: 'Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?' They answered and said unto the king: 'True, O king.' He answered and said: 'Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.']

The Son of God appeared to save his people from the flames of Hell. He is indeed the Son of Man who...

[OT]...Came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom [Or sovereignty], that all the peoples, nations and [men of every] language [Lit tongue] might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. -- Daniel 7:13-14

[JPS: ...Came even to the Ancient of days, and he was brought near before Him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.]

Now Nebuchadnezzar could have called him a divine son by way of some knee-jerk coincidence; I would think not. Either way, the event most certainly gave him food for thought as to what a stone from a mountain by this mighty God would mean.

Note as well how Daniel saw the Messiah being presented in chapter 7 above, similar to Daniel being presented to Nebuchadnezzar and Joseph being presented to Pharaoh (*as we shall see later*). The Son of God, the stone from the mountain, having descended to the pit to proclaim his triumph over the riddle of sin and death, was brought before the throne to receive his just wages.

But anyway, let's now view one of the supreme Messianic prophecies of Scripture: Zechariah chapters 3 and 4...

[OT] Hear, I pray you, Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions sitting before you (for men of type [are] they); for lo, I am bringing in my servant -- a Shoot. For lo, the stone that I put before Joshua, on one stone [are] seven eyes; lo, I am graving its graving, an affirmation of Hashem of Hosts, and I have removed the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day -- an affirmation of Hashem of Hosts, you do call, each unto his neighbour, unto the place of the vine, and unto the place of the fig-tree...

...Who [are] you, O great mountain before Zerubbabel -- for a plain! And he has brought forth the top-stone, **cries of "Grace, grace" -- [are] to it**. And there is a word of Hashem to me, saying, Hands of Zerubbabel did found this house, and his hands do finish it, and you have known that Hashem of Hosts has sent me unto you. For who trampled on the day of small things? They have rejoiced, and seen the tin weight in the hand of Zerubbabel; these seven [are] the eyes of Hashem, they are going to and fro in all the land. -- 3:8-10, 4:7-10; [mYLT]

[JPS: Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a sign; for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Shoot. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone are seven facets; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts: And I will

remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree...

...“Who art thou, O great mountain before Zerubbabel? thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it.” Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying: “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? Even they shall see with joy the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, even these seven, which are the eyes of the LORD, that run to and fro through the whole earth.”

The last sentence has three important variances.

(1) *The YLT has “tin weight” while the JPS has “plummet.” The Hebrew literally reads “**ha-ehven**” [the stone] “**hab-b’deel**” [the alloy/tin/dross], which combine to give: “the alloy stone” or “the tin stone.” The JPS simply takes it a step further and sees in this literal description a plummet tool (complete with a stone). The NASB also renders it “plummet line” and then says in the margin that literally it is a “plummet stone.”*

(2) *There are two statements made, one about the stone, the other about the seven eyes. Young leaves the statements without any sort of conjunction, whereas the JPS supplies the word “even.” There is no conjunction in the Hebrew.*

(3) *The YLT has the eyes in the “land” while the JPS says they are in the entire “earth.” The Hebrew word “**eretz**” is notoriously ambiguous. It can mean either.]*

Here is a short list of Messianic statements found in this passage:

(1) Messiah is called a “Shoot,” a theme we shall explore later.

(2) Messiah shall be “graven” of God.

(3) The graving of Messiah shall remove iniquity.

(4) The age of peace shall be ushered in when iniquity is removed (sometimes pictured in the Old Testament as reclining under vines and fig trees; for an example, see Micah 4:4).

(5) Messiah is the top-stone. He is the root **and** offspring of David (Revelation 21:16).

(6) People will shout out to Messiah for grace (see Mark 10:46-52).

(7) Zerubbabel will be a forefather of the Messiah (see Matthew 1:12-13).

(8) Messiah is called a tin stone, which in the context signifies his being the ultimate measuring tool whereby the true Temple of God is built (Ephesians 2:19-21).

(9) Messiah has seven eyes, and with the seven eyes he is all-seeing.

Apart from Jesus there is no historic figure who has even claimed to fulfil these credentials...

[NT] And I saw in [the] middle of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in [the] middle of the elders, a Lamb having stood as if having been slain {i.e., Jesus}, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits [fig., which is the seven-fold Spirit] of God being sent into all the earth. -- Revelation 5:6; [ALT3]

It is written above that people will shout to this stone for grace; this is all we have to do to gain justification from God. Moreover, the stone motif is used in the Old Testament again to highlight the way to gain this reconciliation and the heavenly inheritance...

[OT] Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike { “in” or “on” } the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. -- Exodus 17:5-6

[JPS: And the LORD said unto Moses: “Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, where with thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.]

It doesn't take much imagination to understand why this is a mighty Messianic prophecy. Here God stands on a rock and it is either smote or pierced with the rod of Moses. This whole scene appears again with a slightly different twist later in their journey:

[OT]...The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink.” -- Numbers 20:7

[JPS: And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: “Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes,

that it give forth its water; and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their cattle drink.”]

Moses didn't obey, but would smite the rock again and be barred from entering the land of promise. The rock only needs to be struck once:

[NT] For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a [mere] copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself [Or by His sacrifice]. -- Hebrews 9:24-26

The Messiah having died and rose again, it only remains for us to ask him for his Holy Spirit, to ask him to save us through union with him; this is the substance of the last point...

B. Call on the LORD?

It's a bit surprising that the Old Testament says little about Heaven or Hell or salvation. "How to get saved" isn't specifically spelled out in every chapter; in fact, it only appears once in a declarative fashion, spoken against the background of an impending war:

[OT] And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered... -- Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21

It's hardly a straightforward Gospel plea, but it is not just some shot in the dark either; it has its historical basis. For these words are used to describe the way that the patriarchs found peace with God:

[OT] And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh { *i.e.*, "*weak man*" }. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD. -- Genesis 4:25-26; [ESV]

Abraham "called upon the name of the LORD" several times in the Bible. The second time in particular has a lot to teach, for it happened after his sinning in Egypt. Thus it is obvious that calling upon the name of the LORD can be a supplication for mercy and forgiveness. We also have a record of David calling in such a manner...

[OT] Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create in [Lit for] me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast [Or an upright] spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. -- Psalm 51:7-12

On an aside, this prayer came after his committing adultery and murder and contains several memorable truths...

(1) Although he had committed such great crimes he still had the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. Christians should still confess sins, yet their union with the Father is not in jeopardy.

(2) David knew that God was perfectly just, yet he displays here a belief that there was also a way for his gross sins and iniquities to be blotted out.

(3) He tied the forgiveness of God into the ceremonial law, of being purged with the blood-soaked hyssop and washed with

holy water. Yet it was David who wrote Psalm 40; therefore he knew there was no power in animal sacrifices, but only in the one who was to come.

Finally, the early church had no qualms about applying Joel 2:32 directly to Jesus Christ, knowing that Jesus and the LORD are the same:

[NT] For Christ [is the] end of [the] law for righteousness to everyone believing. For Moses writes [about] the righteousness, the [one] by the Law, “The person having done them [i.e., all the commandments of the Law] will live by them.” [Lev 18:5] But the righteousness by faith speaks in this way, “You shall not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend to heaven?’” [Deut 30:12] (that is, to bring Christ down) or, “Who will descend into the bottomless pit [or, abyss]?” [Deut 30:13] (that is, to bring Christ up from [the] dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” [Deut 30:14] -- that is, the word of the faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth [the] Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from [the] dead, you will be saved! For with the heart it is believed to righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed to salvation. For the Scripture says, “Every one believing on [or, trusting in] Him will not put to shame.” [Isaiah 28:16, LXX] For there is no difference [or, distinction] [between] both Jew and Greek, for the same [Lord is] Lord of all, being rich [fig., giving generously] to all the ones calling on Him. For every[one], “who himself shall call on the name of [the] LORD will be saved.” -- Romans 10:4-13; [ALT3]

Chapter 5. Major Divine Patterns (in the Word)

The last section from our five-point outline will deal exclusively with end times prophecy and the second coming of Christ. Before delving into that subject however there

needs to be another section of Biblical proof, similar to the preceding Messianic prophecies, yet a bit different in scope. There are two types of patterns I want to present; the first (chapter 5) is what can be found exclusively in the Bible; the second (chapter 6) is what can be found in conjunction with the natural world.

Divine patterns of course have been presented above in the Messianic prophecy sections, as they touch every aspect of Biblical interpretation. Searching for designs has two great benefits: the first is they demonstrate that God is the author of the Bible, for there are identical threads of truth running throughout all the individual books within the canon. The second is that they often help fill in the blanks of salvation history, giving us a fuller picture of God's times and epochs. The greatest such pattern is perhaps Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob. He was of course a real figure in history, but his life was also patterned after God's beloved Son. Let's begin by reviewing his story.

1. Joseph [*all the quotes for this specific sub-section use the ESV for the Old Testament and the ALT3 for the New Testament unless otherwise stated*]

A. Genesis 37

<Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers {1}. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons {2}, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors {3}. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him {4}. Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, "Hear

this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us {5}?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you {6}?” And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them {7}.” And he said to him, “Here I am.” So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word.” So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” “I am seeking my brothers,” he said. “Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” And the man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him {8}. They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.” But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him” -- that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped

him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore {9}. And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it {10}. Then they sat down to eat {11}. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah {12} said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver {13}. They took Joseph to Egypt. When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit {14}, he tore his clothes and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?" Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood {15}. And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not." And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him. Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard {16}.>

(1) <{Jesus said} I am the good shepherd! The good shepherd lays down His life on behalf of the sheep (John 10:11).

(2) and (3)

<And having been baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water. And look! The heavens were opened to Him, and

he {*i.e.*, *John*} saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him. And listen! A voice [comes] out of the heavens, saying, “This is My Son -- the Beloved -- in whom I am well-pleased” (Mathew 3:16-17)!

The Lord Jesus Christ was cloaked with the Holy Spirit’s approval and power, due to his Father’s love for him.

(4) Envy played a major part in the Messiah’s condemnation:

<But Pilate answered to them, saying, “Do you* desire [that] I release to you* the King of the Jews?” For he knew that because of envy the chief priests had handed Him over (Mark 15:9-10).

(5) and (6)

There are two dreams concerning Joseph’s future glory. One is where his brothers (represented as sheaves) bow to him in a field; the second is where all his family (represented as the sun, moon, and stars) bow in the sky. Thus earthly things are contrasted with heavenly things. This fits the idea of the God-man whom all of heaven and earth will worship one day (Philippians 2:9-11). Also of interest is that Jacob interprets the second dream as relating to Joseph’s mother even though she had long been dead...

<Therefore, I strongly urge [you] before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, the One being about to be judging [the] living and [the] dead at His appearing and His kingdom (2 Timothy 4:1)...

<And He gave strict orders to us to preach to the people and to solemnly testify that He is the One having been designated by God [to be] Judge of living [people] and of dead [people]. To this One all the prophets bear witness [that] through His name every[one] that is believing [or, trusting] in Him receives forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:42-43).

(7) In many passages the Messiah calls himself the sent one (Matthew 10:40, 15:24, 21:37, Mark 9:37, 12:6, Luke 4:18, 4:43, 9:48, 10:16, John 3:34, 4:34, 5:23, 5:24, 5:30, 5:36, 5:37, 5:38, 6:29, 6:38, 6:39, 6:40, 6:44, 6:57, 7:16, 7:18, 7:28, 7:29, 7:33, 8:16, 8:18, 8:26, 8:29, 8:42, 9:4, 10:36, 11:42, 12:44, 12:45, 12:49, 13:20, 14:24; 15:21, 16:5, 17:3, 17:8, 17:18, 17:21, 17:23, 17:25, 20:21).

(8) After the rulers saw the signs of his power and piety manifested they plotted his death...

<And immediately, in the early morning, the chief priests having created a plot with the elders and scribes and the whole High Council [or, Sanhedrin], having bound Jesus, they led [Him] away and handed [Him] over to Pilate (Mark 15:1).

(9) <And having stripped Him, they put around Him a scarlet cloak...And when they [had] ridiculed Him, they stripped the cloak off Him, and they put on Him His [own] garments, and they led Him away to crucify [Him] (Matthew 27:28-31; portions; his good tunic was also taken by the soldiers while being crucified -- John 19:23)...

(10) This exact expression, i.e., a pit with no water in it, appears a couple of times in Scripture (Zechariah 9:11; Jeremiah 38:6). The allusion is to the fact that the realm of the dead is void of the goodness of God (*the sense is only partially applicable to the Lord; it was only Christ's body that was among the dead for a few days, as his spirit was in Paradise for most of that time -- see Luke 23:43*).

(11) <Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Fortified Palace. Now it was morning. And they themselves did not enter into the Fortified Palace, so that they should not be defiled, but so that they could eat the Passover (John 18:28).

(12) <Then Satan entered into Judas {*anglicized Greek form of “Judah”*}, the one being surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And having gone away, he conferred with the chief priests and the captains [of the temple guard] [about] how he should betray Him to them. They were glad and agreed to give him money (Luke 22:3-5; *the last verse is from the NASB*).

(13) Christ being sold for pieces of silver is a very famous Messianic prophecy (cf. Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15).

(14) Reuben going to the pit and not finding Joseph is reminiscent of the disciples (especially Peter) visiting the tomb of Jesus Christ only to find it empty.

(15) In two places the Messiah is said to wear a garment covered in blood (Isaiah 63:1-6; Revelation 19:13).

(16) Joseph was handed over to the gentiles and made to serve them (to include being thrown into a dungeon for two years over a false accusation). The Lord was given over to Rome to be killed and after his resurrection became “a light for the nations” (Isaiah 42:6).

Now one could be cynical and say that perhaps the writers of the New Testament constructed the biography of Jesus to fit that of Joseph. First, there would be little reason for them to do that. Rabbis weren't expecting the Messiah to come and imitate Joseph meticulously. Second of all, the Gospel writings are complicated networks, bound up with the whole early church.

Mark worked with Peter (*this is discussed more later*), yet also had a friendship with Paul and spent some time with him (Acts 13:5; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11). Thus being a well-travelled believer, he had plenty of opportunity to verify by a variety of sources the information he wrote about.

Luke is similar. He travelled so much with Paul (as is evidenced in the book of Acts that he authored and also in 2 Timothy 4:11, Colossians 4:14, and Philemon 1:24) that he was probably conversant with an enormous amount of the early church, with people who saw the Lord and heard him speak and witnessed his mighty deeds.

Matthew was one of the original twelve disciples, although not in the inner circle (i.e., consisting of Peter, James, and John). He obviously knew enough to be sure that the stories he related were accurate and trustworthy.

Is it really possible that they all created these Gospels to mimic Joseph and then spread the message that many of them were thrown into prison and killed for? Also, since Peter and Paul probably had a large influence over the Gospels, if they devised a Joseph-motif, why does neither apostle in any of their letters ever mention him as a Christ-type?

Lastly, even if the New Testament was taken away it would be possible to verify the Joseph-like qualities of the Lord Jesus. For example, Pliny the Younger, a Roman ruler who reported to the Emperor Trajan, stated around A.D. 112 that the early Christians were in the habit of singing hymns to Christ as to a god.*1

Cornelius Tacitus, one of the greatest historians of ancient Rome, stated while commenting on Christians:

<...Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus...*1

Josephus, commenting on Jesus Christ, mentions his death by Pilate at the instigation of the religious authorities (Antiquities 18:63-64).

So thus we see that Jesus Christ made claims to divinity, was repudiated by domestic religious authorities, and killed by foreign rulers...

<For truly [there] were gathered together against Your Holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod [Antipas] and Pontius Pilate, along with [the] Gentiles and [the] people of Israel, to do as many [things] as Your hand and Your plan predestined to occur. -- Acts 4:27-28

By the way, may no one ever get bogged down by the question of who killed Christ. With all seriousness I can say that I killed him, as did every born-again Christian, when our sins were made over to his account.

B. A Holy Reunion

As touched on above, Joseph faithfully served in the home of his new master until the man's wife falsely accused him of rape. The response of his owner was to throw him into a dungeon. While there, Joseph met two servants of the king and correctly foretold how they both would be brought out of the pit, one to death and one to life. This again alludes to the fact that the Lord Jesus is the judge of the living and the dead.

These predictions, which came true on the third day, directly resulted in Pharaoh bringing Joseph up from the dungeon in the third year and making him ruler over all of Egypt...

<And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God {1}?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are {2}. You shall be over my house {3}, and all my people shall order themselves as you command {literally, "on/at your mouth shall all my people kiss"} {4}. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you {5}." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt {6}." Then Pharaoh took his signet

ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand {7}, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, "Bow the knee {8}!" Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:38-43).

(1) <There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse {*David's father, forefather of Jesus*}, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him (Isaiah 11:1-2)...

(2) <Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:10-11).

(3) <And Moses on the one hand as a trusted servant [was] faithful in all his house, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken [later], on the other hand Christ as a Son over His [own] house, whose house we are (Hebrews 3:5-6).

(4) <Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him (Psalm 2:12).

(5) and (6)

<For "He put all [things] in subjection under His feet." [Psalm 8:6] But when He says that all [things] have been subjected, [it is] evident that [this is] except for the One subjecting all the [things] to Him. Now when all the [things] are subjected to Him, then the Son also Himself will be subjected to the One having subjected all the [things] to Him, so that God shall be the all in all (1 Corinthians 15:27-28).

(7) <{*Jesus said*}...And I am no longer in the world, yet these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, so that they shall be one just as We [are] (John 17:11).

(8) <...At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of heavenly [ones] and of earthly [ones] and of [ones] under the earth, and every tongue [fig., person] shall confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord to [the] glory of God [the] Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

Later during a great famine the brothers would venture to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph without knowing who he was. Eventually the family would be reunited after this “Egyptian” lord made his identity known...

<So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life...And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him (Genesis 45:4-5, 15).

So it is that Israel will eventually be reconciled to her Messiah...

<O to see the sight, next to Christ’s Coming in the clouds, the most joyful!...The Jews and Christ fall upon one another’s necks and kiss each other! They have been long asunder; they will be kind to one another when they meet. O day! O longed-for and lovely day-dawn! O sweet Jesus, let me see that sight which will be as life from the dead, thee and thy ancient people in mutual embraces (*Samuel Rutherford, writing in 1633*).*2

C. Joseph the Branch/Shoot

Joseph is likened to Christ through a description given to him by his father Jacob...

<Joseph is a fruitful bough [Lit son], a fruitful bough [Lit son] by a spring; [its] branches [Lit daughters] run over a wall. -- Genesis 49:22 [NASB]

Perhaps the most familiar prophecy of the Messiah as a “branch” is that which is found in the beforementioned Isaiah 11:

<And a rod has come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch from his roots is fruitful. Rested on him has the Spirit of Hashem, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of Hashem; to refresh {or, "delight/smell"} him in the fear of Hashem...And {he} has smitten earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he puts the wicked to death. And righteousness has been the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness -- the girdle of his reins...And there has been, in that day, a root of Jesse that is standing for an ensign of peoples; unto him do nations seek, and his rest has been -- honour. -- verses 1-5, 10; portions; [mYLT]

Another familiar prophecy is Jeremiah 23:

<Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.” -- verses 5-6

But someone may say that this is surely a Messianic prophecy which states a credential that Jesus of Nazareth didn't meet. This is where it helps to keep Joseph in mind; there will be a second visitation of Israel. Besides, there are two types of

Messianic prophecies -- those which can be fulfilled later, and those which cannot. For example, when the Lord Jesus comes again Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely; but note a prophecy of the other variety...

<...The word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, 'Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?...The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former,'" says the LORD of hosts. "And in this place I will give peace," declares the LORD of hosts. -- Haggai 2:1-3; [NASB]

After the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity they began rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem; only they didn't have the money and skill that was at Solomon's disposal, so the second Temple was much more humble. Amazingly, God promises here that its glory would actually exceed that of Solomon's Temple. Yet there was never an Ark of the Covenant placed in its midst, nor did a *Shekinah* cloud fill its corridors; only the advent of Messiah could explain the words of the LORD. It was because the Messiah would visit the Temple that its glory would be great. Indeed, this is just what Malachi (*who prophesied around the time of Haggai*) declared:

<"Behold, I am going to send My messenger [Or angel], and he will clear [Or prepare] the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and [Or even] the messenger [Or angel] of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. -- Malachi 3:1 [NASB]

Given these prophecies and the ones found in the book of Daniel, it is doubtless that the Messiah had to come before the

second Temple was destroyed; thus we have a time-sensitive prophecy that no one can fulfil now.

Finally, let's close this section with one of the richest branch/shoot quotes:

<Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; and he sent out a {*literally, "the"*} raven, and it flew here and there [Lit went out, going and returning] until the water was dried up from [Lit from upon] the earth. Then he sent out a {*literally, "the"*} dove from him {*literally, "from with him"*}, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface [Lit face] of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself. So he waited {*anxiously*} yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came to him toward evening [Lit the time of evening], and behold, in her beak [Lit mouth] was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth. Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again. -- Genesis 8:6-12 [NASB]

Here the dark bird is released to cover the earth and then the dove {*Hebrew 'yonah/Jonah'*} is sent forth three times...

During Messiah's first mission he didn't touch the ground in flesh, but spoke to the patriarchs via angelic manifestations and via the Holy Spirit, as it is written:

<...As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that [would come] to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking [Or inquiring] to know what person or time **the Spirit of Christ** within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow [Lit after these]. -- 1 Peter 1:10-11 [NASB]

Then 2,000 years ago the begotten Son came and took back to Heaven the plucked-off branch, the crucified righteousness of God. Soon the Messiah will be sent out “in the glory of His Father” (Matthew 16:27) to destroy his enemies and reign as king forever.

Recall the Beginning-darkness-light pattern of Genesis 1, the Zerah-Perez-Zerah pattern of Genesis 38, and the hand-leprosy-hand pattern of Exodus 3. All these things highlight the foreordained Messianic dispensations: a pre-incarnate Christ, then a sin-bearing Christ, and then a victorious king; i.e., first a prophet, then a priest, and then a king. Or better put -- first a prophet, then a prophet-priest, and then a prophet-priest-king. Notice how he never ceases to be the Word...

<As to the likeness of their faces, the face of a man, and the face of a lion {*king; see Revelation 5:5*}, toward the right [are] to them four, and the face of an ox {*priest*} on the left [is] to them four, and the face of an eagle {*prophet; as the Spirit of God is said to have “brooded” over the waters in Genesis 1:2*} [is] to them four. -- Ezekiel 1:10; [*m YLT; this is a very odd rendering but it does literally represent the Hebrew*]

D. The Raven and Salvation History

So again, Joseph has helped unfold Biblical mysteries. For example, having seen the patriarch as irrefutably being patterned after the history of Jesus Christ, we can see more clearly and understand more certainly the future restoration of the Jews to their Messiah. I can't stress how important it is to have a proper outlook regarding the election of Israel. Many reputable preachers now-a-days, having been affected by the *theological anti-Jewish* bent of some Reformation-era teachers, make a complete mockery of chapters like Romans 11, and flowing from this they don't understand prophecy and

condemn any who speak of it. What a shame that the church is being bullied into abandoning eschatology at the end.

Moreover, patterns always overlap other patterns, as we see here with the raven. We were following the trail of Joseph, which led us to branches, which in turn has led us to this mysterious bird. Any student of the Bible will find a strong semblance between its description and the description of the arch-villain of humanity, *Satan*...

<...And he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there [Lit went out, going and returning] until the water was dried up from [Lit from upon] the earth...>

<Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason?" -- Job 1:6-9

Just as Cain was barred from his homeland upon sinning against Abel and was forced to be a wanderer (see Genesis 4:9-14), so we see both the raven and Satan being global amblers...

<Be of sober [spirit,] be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. -- 1 Peter 5:8 [NASB]

His malicious work necessitated the advents of the dove, the Spirit-filled Christ...

<...The devil has sinned [Lit sins] from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. -- 1 John 3:8 [NASB]

The fall of Satan isn't completely related in a definitive way. Most expositors who are spiritually minded recognize that there is much in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that excels the condemnation and description due to any world ruler (*although I believe some of it will be fulfilled literally by the Beasts*), and therefore best depicts this dark prince. It's hard to know where the satanic verses begin and end for sure, yet there are a few things from each that I'd like to relate which appear to speak of the Devil...

<How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn!
How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. -- Isaiah 14:12-15

<In Eden, the garden of God, you were, of every precious stone was your covering -- sardius, topaz, and diamond, chrysolite, beryl, and jasper, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald -- and of gold was the work of your timbrels and your flutes within you, in the day you were created were they prepared: you were the anointed cherub that covered -- when I appointed you, in the holy mount of God you were, amid stones of fire you did walk to and fro: complete, were you in your ways, from the day you were created, -- until perversity was found in you. By the abundance of your traffic, they filled your midst with violence, and you did sin, -- so I cast you as profane out of the mountain of God, and destroyed you, O covering cherub, from amid the stones of fire... -- Ezekiel 28:13-16 [REB]

Satan seems to have been a covering cherub, a regent who rendered some type of service in an Eden-like environment (*like Lewis Sperry Chafer I do not see how this could refer to the Eden as we know it; it probably refers to a heavenly realm*) to the angels. His service must have been pretty important, for the only other time we see a covering cherub it is shading the Ark of the Covenant...

<And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. -- Exodus 25:18-20

The only thing that seems certain about his rebellion is that he sought the throne of God, the seat in the loftiest heights of Heaven. He is now an ambling lawyer, scouring the creation, seeking whom he may devour with his malicious accusations. He still has considerable sway over this earth (cf. Luke 4:6), yet the day comes when he shall no longer be privy to the face of God. The story of the Devil's overthrow is very ironic. Let's look at this telling scene via another allusion, perhaps the most colourful and complex of all historical allegories, the book of Esther.

E. Purim

The Devil appears several times in Scripture trying to overthrow the human race. He's there in Eden, tempting the first couple; his comrades also polluted the pre-flood world; but above all he has maliciously pursued the Jews. To this day anti-Semitism is a mystery that can only be understood in terms of the kingdom of Hell. Why have these people continually been dogged throughout earth's chronicles?

Perhaps their plight in B.C. times was an attempt to thwart the coming of Christ, but what of A.D.?

Well, just as Satan isn't fully condemned at this point, neither is the world completely redeemed; the full merits of Christ's work have not been enacted. The global curse is not yet lifted; there is more sin yet to bud. God's purposes for the human race in this age aren't finished, and these purposes are always bound up with the nation of Israel. All the other nations may perish tomorrow, but Israel must survive, for God's covenant-seal is upon it.

One genocide-attempt recorded in Scripture is found in the account of Esther. The interplay between Haman the antagonist and Mordecai the protagonist fits perfectly into our discussion of the Devil and the Christ. Haman was obsessed with himself and sought to slay all the Jews simply because they (*mainly Mordecai*) would not honour him. Mordecai on the other hand cared not for positions of authority, but only for his darling cousin Hadassah (Esther), and sat at the gate of the king's palace, interceding passionately on behalf of her and the Jewish people.

Now when Eve was created for Adam there was a very telling description of her by God; originally she was created to be "a help as in front of him" (Genesis 2:18; *this is my ultra-literal translation*). Another very literal translation of this description comes from Julia Smith: "I will make for him a help as before him." Adam and Eve were originally meant to be equals, to face each other as the cherubim upon the Ark. Incidentally there is a motif in Genesis where the wives of the patriarchs didn't live up to this, as Sarah laughed at God behind Abraham (Genesis 18:10), and worse still, Lot's wife looked back to Sodom while behind Lot (Genesis 19:26). Anyway, it was the angelic world that was meant to be the special servants of God, of the Angel of the LORD, yet many rebelled with Satan, and therefore the believers in Christ shall rule instead, becoming the true heavenly bride...

<On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. -- Esther 8:1

There comes a day when the Jews, God's inheritance, will confess their Saviour to the Father, and this Christ, the Lord Jesus, and the Jews collectively, will rule the entire creation, as long as dominion endures. Satan and his fallen angels shall be upstaged and replaced by mere mortals made from dust. The church is offered such a place in Israel's covenant of rulership during these times of the gentiles...

<To me, the very least of all saints [Or holy ones], this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light [Two early mss read make all know] what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things {*some manuscripts add, "through Jesus Christ"*}; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly [places.] -- Ephesians 3:8-10 [NASB]

We know that Satan entered Judas on the night before Christ's death (John 13:27), but whether Satan had an active hand in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus or knew better and tried to tempt him to come down from the Cross can't be known. It is clear however that the general plan of the power of darkness (see Luke 22:53) which sought to sink the heavenly Mordecai backfired. Christ died and went to Sheol for a quick season (not to suffer, but to proclaim -- 1 Peter 3:19); he was not left there, but rather was raised in glory...

<I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. -- Psalm 16:8-10

<...Having disarmed the rulers and the authorities, He publicly disgraced them, having triumphed over them by it [i.e., the cross]. -- Colossians 2:15

The Devil however will go to the underworld, and stay there forever...

<All of them will answer and say to you: “You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!” Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers. -- Isaiah 14:10-11

<And Esther said, “A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!”...They covered Haman’s face. Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated. -- Esther 7:6-10; portions

Christ was set upon Mt. Calvary (Golgotha) for all to see, yet now he is raised to the throne which the Devil coveted. Satan will one day be a great spectacle (compare Isaiah 66:24, Revelation 14:10, and Revelation 20:10) of judgment, and the time of his punishment will never end.

On a footnote, I think Old Testament prophetic references for just about every major plot-point in the life of Christ have been supplied by now, except for his ascension. This topic will be discussed a bit in the following section dealing with “the Gospel Furniture,” but there is another remarkable depiction in the Tanakh that I’d like to quickly share.

There is a prophetic reference to the ascension of the Lord Jesus that Paul highlights in Ephesians 4; it is found in Psalm 68:17-18...

<The chariots of God are myriads [Lit twice ten thousand], thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them [as at] Sinai, in holiness [Another reading is The Lord came from Sinai into the sanctuary]. You have ascended on high, You have led captive [Your] captives; You have received gifts among men, even [among] the rebellious also, that the LORD [Heb YAH] God may dwell [there]. -- [NASB]

Given the context of the Psalm, it might as well be specifically referencing the coming Messiah; yet the language is also reminiscent of another Old Testament figure...

<Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song; rise, Barak, and take captive thy captivity, Son of Abinoam. -- Judges 5:12 [NASB]

Barak was an interesting figure. At the instigation of Deborah (a name obviously similar to Debar/Word), he goes up a mountain with myriads of men...

<Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh, and ten thousand men went up with him [Lit at his feet]; Deborah also went up with him. -- Judges 4:10 [NASB]

In the Hebrew the group of warriors are spoken of in the singular, as if all this mighty camp was one with Barak himself, and were "at his feet." Later Barak comes down the mount to crush the enemy. The leader of the rebels is eventually killed by having his head smashed; and poetically, when he alights from his chariot to run away from the war, he is said in the Hebrew to take flight "at his feet," employing the exact same construction used to describe the warriors of Barak.

<Deborah said to Barak, "Arise! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the LORD has gone [Or has not the LORD gone...?] out before you." So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten

thousand men following him. The LORD routed [Lit confused] Sisera and all [his] chariots and all [his] army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. -- Judges 4:14-15 [NASB]

<And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. -- Jude 1:14-15 [KJV]

2. The Gospel Furniture [*this specific sub-section uses the NASB unless otherwise stated*]

There were many different methods whereby people received the books that make up the collection of sacred writings. Some of them indeed came by way of special supernatural disclosures, but many did not. A great number of the books were written with a lot of serious effort on the part of the authors, as Luke is said to have “investigated everything carefully from the beginning” (1:3). Men worked, and unbeknown to many of them, God was bearing them along, invisibly, silently, yet without mistake and according to an eternal purpose. Divine providence is a wonderful thing; God often designs to build the most magnificent of structures from the humblest of materials.

It is this sort of mixture that can be seen with the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Their material was compiled through very ordinary means, but if you step back and look at this little library, there are many interesting hues and patterns that come together to paint a very striking picture, a picture of the most fascinating of all portraits, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this allegory that we are now going to consider briefly, bringing along with us to aid our study the major furniture of the Tabernacle/Temple.

A. Former Things First

Before pushing forward with this writing in full speed I must back up to material I wrote about above. Although we've already spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the significance of John 1:1, I'll briefly revisit some of this material here, for it is necessary groundwork.

Basically, God in the Old Testament described three special offices that came by way of "anointing," a ceremonial act of pouring oil on the head of a chosen leader. The three offices were prophet (cf. 1 Kings 19:16; *although with prophets, actual oil wasn't used, but some other fitting emblem, as Elisha's cloak, Isaiah's firebrand, Ezekiel's eaten scroll, etc.*), priest (cf. Exodus 29:7), and king (cf. 1 Samuel 10:1). This is the idea behind the terms "Messiah" and "Christ," both of which mean "anointed." The offices are easy enough to understand, that is, until you start considering them in detail.

For example, a prophet is someone who speaks to God for the people (cf. Genesis 20:7) and to the people for God (cf. Exodus 7:1-2). Yet, did not the Levitical priests communicate with God for the people and the kings give decrees for God? Did not the kings of Judah pray weighty prayers for their nation and the priests expound the law? It is as difficult to splice these offices in detail as it is to distinguish between the members of the Trinity. A sampling of this can be seen with the constant overlap between the roles of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, to the point that the two are often interchangeable. The Son and the Holy Spirit are both called priests in Hebrews 9:14, and both are said to be prophetic agents of revelation and intercession throughout the New Testament.

Therefore, the only way to really highlight the partitions of Christ is to keep in mind the fundamental characteristic of each office: the prophet's is *divine communication*, the

priest's is *sacrificial intercession*, and the king's is the act of *ruling*. Andrew Murray does a brilliant job of encapsulating these vital aspects while expounding how they are applied to a believer's personal salvation...

<As Prophet, He {*Jesus*} brings the light of God into our hearts. He reveals to me my sin and wretchedness; that is the first thing He shews in the light of God. He tells me not only my sin, but God's love too; and the way to God; He tells me God has made Him a Priest to bring me nigh to Him; and shining into my heart as a Prophet, He brings me to His Priestly work, and teaches me to understand that. You see the Prophet first, and then the Priest. Then comes the Kingly office; when, as a Priest, He has redeemed and purged and sanctified me; as King, He fits me to rule over sin and self. The three offices of Christ; do not look upon them as something accidental, but understand how inseparable they are (from *The Prophet Priest*).

With these things in mind it is easy to see a three-fold description of the Messiah from John's first verse...

In the beginning was the Word {i.e., logos}, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Christ (first as the Angel of Hashem, later and everlastingly as Jesus of Nazareth) is the physical representative of the Godhead (which consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and it was his spoken **word** that created the universe (see John 1:3 and Hebrews 11:3). Moreover, this voice of God also had closeness (which equates to favour) **with God** the Father, and this favour would one day be poured upon his people after his sacrifice on the cross. Finally, he also has all divine authority: he **was God**, is God, and shall be God forever.

B. Mark and the Altar of Incense

1. The Altar

After God brought his nation out of Egypt and led them to Sinai, he gave Moses the plans to create a special place where there could be divine communion. This Tabernacle contained two chambers. Outside of the most important one, the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was placed, was a special room that contained three items (often called “the Holy Place”).

On one side of this room was a menorah, a seven-branched candlestick made entirely of gold, which the priests maintained every morning and evening. On the opposite side of the room was a table made of wood and gold, on which sat twelve loaves of bread that the priests changed weekly. In the middle was an altar, also made of wood and gold, which the priests burned incense on twice-a-day, and which was an important part of the *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) service performed yearly, where blood was taken from without to purify the altar within (Exodus 30:10) and to sprinkle about the Ark.

To view the altar of incense correctly we must start outside of the Tabernacle. If one were to approach the precincts of this structure from a distance, its dividing wall of outstretched white linen which enclosed it on all sides would first become visible. These large patches of fabric would have gleamed brilliantly in the desert sun. The only relief to the 100 cubits x 50 cubits (a cubit was probably about eighteen inches) fence of white linen was the doorway that led into the precincts. It was designed much differently...

<For the gate of the court [there shall be] a screen of twenty cubits, of blue [Or violet] and purple and scarlet [material] and fine twisted linen, the work of a weaver [Lit variegator; i.e. a weaver in colors]... -- Exodus 27:16

This multi-coloured entranceway was the first of three. There was another very similar one at the entrance to the Tabernacle itself and a third at the entrance to the Holy of Holies. Inside the Holy of Holies was the Ark, which was a quasi-throne for the invisible God...

<There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel. -- Exodus 25:22

Not only did these scarlet-tinged veils separate the people from the immediate presence of Hashem, but there were also two altars (*I'll ignore the laver for the purpose of brevity*) that stood in the way. One was between the entrance to the precincts and the doorway to the Tabernacle, and the second was between the doorway to the Tabernacle and the entrance to the Holy of Holies. The first was a large brazen altar where animals were sacrificed. The second was the golden altar of incense.

The bronze altar was the only altar in the world where animals could be sacrificed to God. This instrument was the centrepiece of the Israelite ceremonial worship. Countless slain animals were burnt upon it, with the blood of the victims being splashed against its four sides. Here it was sounded forth over and over again that communion with God would come through a sacrifice, with the blood of it being shed for a universal testimony (symbolized by it being applied to the north-south-east-west altar walls) to the righteousness of God.

Moving to the inward altar, incense in Scripture is used to signify prayer in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament David said...

<May my prayer be counted [Lit fixed] as incense before You; the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. -- Psalm 141:2

In the New Testament we see the Angel of Hashem (Christ) in Heaven offering incense upon an altar, the heavenly version of the golden one described by Moses...

<Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add [Lit give] it to the prayers of all the saints [Or holy ones] on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with [Or for] the prayers of the saints [Or holy ones], went up before God out of the angel's hand. -- Revelation 8:3-4

Earlier in Revelation the prayers of the saints are said to be incense (5:8). The reason there is a difference here between the prayers of the saints and the Angel's incense must be that this particular incense was his unique, meritorious intercession.

All these things mirror the composite picture of the Tabernacle as borne out by the teachings of Paul in Hebrews. The Lord Jesus was sacrificed on the brazen altar of the cross, and then ascended to Heaven via the altar of intercession, presenting before the throne his blood as a means of securing substitutionary atonement...

<But when Christ appeared [as] a high priest of the good things to come [Two early mss read that have come], [He entered] through the greater and more perfect tabernacle [Or sacred tent], not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place { *in this instance the Holy of Holies is meant* } once for all, having obtained [Or obtaining] eternal redemption. -- 9:11-12

The theme that needs to be stressed is that of *primacy*. These doorways and altars were the key to the entire religion of God. No Tabernacle or priesthood could exist unless these altars were used correctly to purify everything else. It's not

surprising therefore that the more important covenant of Christ also hinges completely upon his death (*altar 1*) and ascension (*altar 2*) to the right hand of God. Unlike the Levitical priests who went in and out of the Holy Place daily and the Holy of Holies yearly, always busy with useless ceremonial routines, the Christ of God is “seated” in the heavenly Holy of Holies.

2. Mark

Right, so what does that have to do with the Gospel of Mark as a whole? Like I said at the beginning, I desire to demonstrate how God supernaturally uses the ordinary, for the Gospels were written in a very normal fashion, yet contain a distinct divine pattern.

Just as the altar was the primary object among the other pieces of furniture, so is Mark probably the primary Gospel. There are not air-tight, full-proof evidences that make Mark the first Gospel beyond the shadow of a doubt. Yet there is an often overlooked reason why I’m personally convinced Mark was first. The reason is that it was really the Gospel of Peter, who was seen as a chief apostle. There is internal Scriptural evidence that bears out the close relationship Peter and Mark had (cf. 1 Peter 5:13), but there is also a famous extra-Biblical attestation...

<A tradition which dates from Papias (AD 70-130) says that behind the record of Mark’s Gospel there is in fact the preaching and authority of the apostle Peter. The statement of Papias (preserved by Eusebius) is that “Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately all that he remembered of the things said and done by the Lord, but not however in order.” This tradition has been called in question by some of the most recent scholars (e.g. A.M. Farrer), but it is confirmed by other patristic writers and “is so sound,” says Vincent Taylor, “that if we did not possess it, we should be compelled to postulate something very much like it”...

...The internal evidence for the influence of Peter is equally clear:

The Gospel begins at the point where Peter became a disciple, and gives no account of the nativity.

The Galilean ministry is prominent, centring particularly on the district around Capernaum, Peter's home.

The vividness of the narrative suggests the first-hand acquaintance of an eyewitness.

Details such as the benediction at Caesarea Philippi and the walking on the water, which tend to present Peter in a favourable light, are omitted; while others less favourable, such as the denial, are related with exceptional fullness (*The New Bible Commentary Revised*). *3

Matthew uses about 90% of Mark's material and about 50% is used by Luke (*Morris*4; and so throughout this paragraph*). As a whole, only four paragraphs of Mark are not used in one or the other Gospel. This usage often extends to a word-for-word transmission from Mark to the others (about 50% of the time for each). What this all means is spelled out by Kummel in a footnote by Morris, that of Mark's 10,650 words, 8,189 are used by the other two (of course these numbers should be understood as approximate).

This is very significant not only when one looks at what is common to all three but also to what is different. There is nothing specialized about Mark in comparison to the others, yet Matthew clearly heads off into a Jewish/Messianic style writing while Luke heads off into a gentile/humanistic one. The fact that Mark doesn't have an agenda apart from the other two, and the other two had an agenda but still echoed Mark, could indicate that Luke and Matthew felt confined by the authority of Peter's recollections in Mark.

After all, it's not as if Mark wrote an exhaustive commentary on the ministry of Christ. There is actually little information concerning the years of the Lord's service, the sum of which could literally be slotted into a handful of days. So why did Matthew and Luke feel compelled to rehash this same handful? One might say because these were the only interesting things that happened during his public ministry, yet this would be disputed by the completely new content found in John and also by this self-same apostle's closing words...

<And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written. -- John 21:25

This idea of Mark influencing the others is also poignant when considering the beginnings of the Gospels. Matthew and Luke begin in very unique ways, yet both start agreeing at the point where Mark's Gospel begins. It is because of this fact, i.e., that all the Gospels are most unique in how they begin, and therefore convey most clearly the focus of the authors, that I will concentrate heavily on the beginnings when discussing the overall themes of each.

Before doing this with Mark, let's have a wee refresher of the Mosaic ceremonial history. Along with divine laws for conduct and ceremony, God gave Moses plans for a Tabernacle to house the covenant and to give the people a sense of his presence. This Tabernacle was described to Moses in detail, including the holy furniture that was to be placed inside (and out). The altars were the primary vessels of the worship, they being in the direct line to the Ark of the Covenant, and being the only way to gain entrance via the purification by the Levitical priests. Ultimately, they pictured the salvation that Christ won when entering into the heavenly sanctuary via his cross.

And just as there were three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place (the menorah, altar, and table), so there are three similar Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The altar of incense is comparable to prayer, and therefore echoes forth this idea of the *Word of God* being effective in atonement. Mark is seen by many scholars as the first, the primary revelation (*and even if it wasn't, since practically the totality of its information is contained in the others, for all intents and purposes our allegorical thesis is not lost*). So it would be interesting if there were parallels between Mark and the altar of incense; if there was a special emphasis on divine communication (i.e. prophet, as opposed to priest and king), especially in the beginning of the Gospel, as these were each uniquely crafted by the writers, and so more clearly demonstrate theme.

Let's see how Mark starts...

<The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU [Lit before your face], WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT {*Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1*}'.'" John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching [Or proclaiming] a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. -- 1:1-5

Unsurprisingly, Mark begins with a prophet, a shadow of the eternal and transcendent Word. Not only does he invoke Isaiah, but he skips all references to the early days of the Lord Jesus and jumps directly into the proclamations of John the Baptist. John had the greatest testimony of prophethood from the Lord Jesus Christ...

<But [Or Well then,] what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I {*Jesus*} tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen [anyone] greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least [Or less] in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he...All the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept [it,] John himself is Elijah who was to come [Or is going to come]. -- Matthew 11:9, 11, 13-14

Not to spoil the latter chapters, but wanting to push the thesis a bit beyond the realm of subjective as early as possible, note that Luke begins with a priest at the Temple, and Matthew with a list of Judean kings, thus we are seeing a prophet/priest/king pattern emerge.

Another place where the Gospels vary greatly is at their endings, which is universally a key juncture where writers try to restate their original premise while concluding their overall themes. Mark records two interesting scenes that form a fitting resolution, the first describing the morning of the resurrection, the latter describing the ascension of the Christ up to Heaven several weeks later...

<When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the [mother] of James [Or Jacob], and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although [Lit for] it was extremely large. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. -- 16:1-5

<So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. -- 16:19

The way the angel in the tomb was sitting foreshadowed what would happen to the Lord Jesus, and then towards the end of the Gospel we see the actual fulfilment, with him ascending to his “rightful” place. The twelfth son of Jacob was first called Ben-oni (“son of my sorrow”), but later was called Benjamin (“son of the right hand”), and in this we can see the pain and glory of the Messiah. As we saw earlier, this Word of God has sat at the right hand to intercede, having successfully passed through the altars. With this acquired authority, he gives his help by producing sanctification, ministry, and wonderful powers, as Mark says in conclusion...

<And they went out and **preached** {*carrying the torch that John the Baptist first held*} everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed [Or attesting miracles]. -- 16:20

C. Luke and the Menorah

1. The Menorah

Christ was the great prophet during his preaching ministry and then the great priest upon the cross. When he comes again he will officially be the great king over all (just as he has been king from eternity past). The two offices of prophet and priest both transpired during his first coming, for these two roles are inseparable. Christ *interceded sacrificially* as the *Word*...

< [He is] clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. -- Revelation 19:13

His prophethood, his communication Godward, combined with his worthy offering, and thus redemption was accomplished. After the Word entered the true holiest place, he sat at the right hand of the Father, to constantly act as our priestly advocate. It's fitting therefore that at the right hand

(*from God's vantage point*) of the altar of incense is our priestly object of interest, the golden menorah.

This lampstand was a beautiful piece of furniture. There were six branches and seven lamps. In the middle was the shaft, and on top of the shaft was the first lamp. Then the six branches that came out of the shaft (three on each side) had a lamp on top as well. Now at different points on the branches and shaft there were decorations: cups, bulbs, and flowers. The cups were shaped like “almond [blossoms]” (Exodus 25:34). Mickelson/Strong calls the bulbs “wreath-like button(s) or disk(s).” The flowers literally were “buds” or “sprouts” (*Theological Wordbook of the OT*). So the whole radiant structure resembled a tree in bloom. It would find a direct parallel in a poignant scene involving Aaron later in the Torah...

<Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and get from them a rod for each father's household: twelve rods {*i.e., one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel*}, from all their leaders according to their fathers' households. You shall write each name on his rod, and write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi; for there is one rod for the head [of each] of their fathers' households. You shall then deposit them in the tent of meeting in front of the testimony {*i.e. the Ark*}, where I meet with you. It will come about that the rod of the man whom I choose will sprout...Now on the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds. -- Numbers 17:1-5, 8

Not only were “almonds” common to both the rod of Aaron and the menorah, but the word for “bud” in the account of the rod is the exact same Hebrew word translated “flower” in the description of the menorah.

There's a remarkable parallel to Christ when considering the whole history of this rod. Whenever God told Moses and Aaron to perform wonderful signs in the land of Egypt, he also commanded this rod to be used in conjunction with the miracles. After the Israelites were delivered they entered the wilderness en route to the land of Canaan. During their sojourn the authority of Moses and Aaron was tested by a group of grumblers. A man from the tribe of Levi (Korah) and two from the tribe of Reuben (Dathan and Abiram) challenged their leadership (mainly, Korah coveted Aaron's priesthood).

After their demise, God ordered this test with the rods to confirm his choice of Aaron as the high priest. So a lifeless stick, the one that had accompanied so many miracles in Egypt, was placed before "the testimony." The next day it had sprouted to life, bearing the almonds and buds, etc.

Before applying this to the Messiah, I must pause and address the issue of the origin of the rod from Numbers. I believe it was the same one used in Egypt, yet many commentators do not agree. There is one major reason why I'm convinced it was. The rod used in Egypt never appears again, apart from Numbers 20, at the performance of another miracle. In this scene God commands Moses to bring the rod to a rock for the purpose of giving water to the people. Before doing that he had to retrieve it from its place near the testimony, where he was told to place the one that budded (see Numbers 17:10-11).

*So Moses took the rod **from before the LORD**, just as He had commanded him. -- 20:9*

As I've mentioned above, when the same miracle happened earlier in Exodus, Moses smote the rock with the rod to bring forth water. In Numbers however he was only to speak to the rock with this stick in hand (see verse 8). Just so, the churches that claim Jesus is still a weak, bleeding Lamb, constantly

being sacrificed, are blaspheming. The Christ is as a Lamb “slain” (a perfect passive participle, Revelation 5:6), and is almighty now, his glory having budded 2,000 years ago. We need to supplicate with faith, not slay him afresh.

Similar to the rod, Jesus of Nazareth, the man of low esteem and destined for the cross, worked many miracles to confirm his ministry of spiritual redemption before the chosen nation. Afterwards, he too arose to new life before the throne of God, confirming his priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, his credential being preeminent perpetuity (see Genesis 14; Psalm 110; Hebrews 7). There are many famous ancient teachers who died in weakness, and in weakness remain. Only one has had his teaching verified by being granted everlasting life on his own merit, thereby blossoming into the Tree of Life.

The idea of the Messiah being equated to a bud or sprout is constantly alluded to in the Old Testament, as I’ve mentioned above.

There is also another quote in the menorah-genre which is very relevant...

<There {*Zion*} I will cause the horn of David to spring forth; I have prepared a lamp for Mine anointed. -- Psalm 132:17

The anointed in this passage is King David, who was predicted to be a forefather of the Messiah. One of the many reasons we can be sure that the Christ has already come is the fact that it’s impossible now-a-days to prove Davidic descent. The Jews are able to discern who is descended from Aaron and the rest of the tribe of Levi to some extent, but that’s it. Their records have been lost for centuries and centuries. This predicament is downplayed by modern rabbis, as is anything that points to Jesus.

So it says above that David is to have a son who will “spring forth,” who is also called a “lamp.” The Davidic lineage of the Lord Jesus is testified to everywhere in the Gospels, and he also famously referred to himself as “the Light of the world” (John 8:12). Finally, in Revelation, he is depicted as being a living light, the true *Shamash*...

<Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands [I saw] one like a son of man [Or the son of man], clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash...and His eyes were like a flame of fire -- 1:12-14

2. Luke

As I've intimated, in seeking to uncover a relationship with the items of the holy place we are going to let the first few verses in each Gospel do the talking. Let's read Luke's introduction...

<Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us [Or on which there is full conviction], just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were [Lit became] eyewitnesses and servants [Or ministers] of the word [I.e. gospel], it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated [Or followed] everything carefully from the beginning, to write [it] out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught [Or orally instructed in]. In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias [I.e. Zechariah], of the division of Abijah [Gr Abia]; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron [I.e. of priestly descent], and her name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord {*outwardly with a limited scope; see Ecclesiastes 7:20*}. But they had no child, because Elizabeth

was barren, and they were both advanced in years [Lit days]. Now it happened [that] while he was performing his priestly service before God in the [appointed] order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense...etc. -- 1:1-9

Luke, after a short explanation of his writing, begins with a priest officiating in the Temple, and explains that even his wife was a descendant of Aaron. Also in his pre-Markan material he includes a lengthy section of the infant's presentation in the Temple (2:22-38) and also of the boy Jesus staying among the teachers there (2:41-51).

It is written that Zacharias was going to burn incense, a central function of the ceremonial routine, initiating the "hour of prayer" (verse 10; see also Acts 3:1). We know from the Old Testament that when the incense would be offered the priest would also do maintenance work on the lamps of the menorah (Exodus 30:7-8). An angel stood beside the altar and announced that Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth would give birth to John the Baptist (verses 11-13), the priest who was called to be a mighty reproving prophet instead, just as the priests Jeremiah and Ezekiel were.

Like Zacharias, Aaron's wife was also named Elizabeth (i.e., Elisheba, of the tribe of Judah -- Exodus 6:23), which meant something like "God is an oath" or "my God has sworn," *oath* being directly from the word *seven*. Similarly, Mary is said to be a relative of Elizabeth in Luke 1:36; so although Mary was a descendant of David, she obviously had Levitical connections. Luke is the only author to mention this.

Now before carrying on we must consider the very first verses of Luke. Before he began the history of John's birth, Luke addressed his Gospel to someone called "Theophilus." We don't know who he was, but his name means "friend of God" according to Thayer. The very first words of Mark

were, “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Luke begins by addressing an individual. Whereas Mark was seeking to give a raw account of the activities of the Divine Son, Luke was seeking to do *maintenance* to the beliefs of a spiritual child of the faith-filled Abraham (i.e., that patriarch was the first to be called “friend of God” -- see 2 Chronicles 20:7), to maintain a comrade of the divine, a Christian.

This fits well into something peculiar about Luke that’s obvious to any reader: he has more original material than Mark and Matthew. You could almost put it like this: in the beginning was Mark, and Mark was with Luke, and Mark was Matthew. Mark and Matthew are near twins, yet Luke does not bear quite as much of the family resemblance. Many scholars have speculated that Luke had already written a version of his own Gospel before he came across Mark. This is called the *Proto-Luke* theory. The major reason why this thesis holds water is that it basically seems like Luke dumped Mark into his work. There’s very little effort to combine the Marcan material that is interspersed in chunks throughout his Gospel. Also there is evidence that Luke sometimes used Mark more as an afterthought as opposed to a basis, for some of the Marcan events in Luke are put into a different order (*these points and others can be seen in Morris*5*).

This is meaningful, for the menorah is the object in the Holy Place that best describes the church, the collection of believers in Jesus Christ. As we saw from Revelation, Christ is said to be standing in the midst of seven lampstands. As an explanation for this, the Lord says, “The seven lampstands are the seven churches” (1:20). “The seven churches” are a reference to the seven assemblies in cities of Asia Minor that were to receive the book of Revelation first (see 1:11; interestingly, the seven cities formed a circle). They are descriptive however of every church throughout this dispensation, and some even go as far as to see the seven as a

chronological allegory of Christendom from the time of the apostles to the time of the second coming.

So whereas Matthew and Mark would be more descriptive of the unified Father and Son, the book of Luke would be more descriptive of the church, a pack of believers who have lived lives separate from God, yet have been raised up to the highest heavens through union with the Holy Spirit. Indeed, among all the other Gospel writers, Luke was definitely most interested in spirituality in general. According to my computer's calculations, there are 146 mentions of the word "spirit" in the NASB version of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts (which was also written by Luke). 16 occur in Matthew (11 percent), 18 occur in Mark (12 percent), 18 occur in John (12 percent), 30 occur in Luke (21 percent), and 64 occur in Acts (44 percent). So in total, Luke is responsible for about 65 percent of every use of the word "spirit" in the Gospels and Acts.

The New Bible Commentary Revised (1970 edition) makes the following remarks regarding the themes of this Gospel...

<Luke has reserved for his second volume the story of the church {Acts}, but already in the Gospel he has indicated the characteristics of that period. It is the time during which Jesus, having ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God. His servants must continue His work of preaching the gospel of salvation to all nations, and they are enabled to do this by the power of the same Holy Spirit who equipped Jesus for His ministry...*6

The point of the matter is this: most scholars (not all, and for some good reasons) hold to the primacy of Mark, and it's obvious that whether or not he was first, his material is that which is found (nearly) in its entirety in the other two synoptic Gospels, Matthew and Luke. Thus Mark is the perfect candidate to be "the Word," the primary revelation of divinity. Then according to John 1:1 this Word is "with God,"

i.e., has his special favour, and thereby has the power of mediation. For an example of this concept, observe that when the disciples wanted to know who was going to betray the Lord Jesus, Peter asked the one (*John*) who was closest to Christ...

<There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell [us] who it is of whom He is speaking." {*The MT and TR render this verse differently; for example, the original YLT says: "Simon Peter, then, doth beckon to this one, to inquire who he may be concerning whom he speaketh."*} He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus then answered... -- John 13:23-26

The Marcan material wasn't used as thoroughly as Matthew used it, but was more or less slotted into a pre-existing writing of Luke (*Proto-Luke* might be a bit simplistic, but there was probably something like *Proto-Luke*, even if it was just an informal sketch of notes). Just so, the Holy Spirit comes upon a believer whose life is already begun, yet he or she is born again into a new life, and the two become one. The words of Peter shine through Luke as the Spirit of the Lord shines through a Christian. Christ was with God, yet came to us, that God might be in us.

Let's take these hues in Luke a step further by looking at the conclusion of his Gospel, just as we did with Mark...

<But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they {*"Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the [mother] of James; also the other women with them (the MT and TR also add at this point: "who") were telling these things to the apostles."* -- 24:10} came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were

perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; and as [the women] were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, [the men] said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen [Or been raised].” -- 24:1-6

Interestingly, the very next story in Luke tells of two men on a certain road who talked to the resurrected Lord (without knowing who he was) as they walked. Also, Acts begins with two others near the apostles as they watched the Lord Jesus ascend to Heaven. We’ll get back to the “two” in a minute. First, let’s look at the ascension of the Lord Jesus in the closing verses...

<And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshipping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising [Lit blessing] {*the MT and TR have “praising and blessing”*} God. -- 24:50-53
(note again how the disciples carry the torch of the first characters; this is made more special by all the other Gospels closing in Galilee)

Luke, after mentioning the Levitical connection of the Lord and stating that his ministry began at the age of thirty (3:23), the same time a Levite was to begin serving (cf. Numbers 4:3), concludes with Jesus Christ pronouncing a blessing very similar to the priestly one found in Leviticus...

<Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. -- 9:22

The Lord Jesus blessed the people after making his sacrifice and was lifted upward.

Let's discuss the two now. The Bible states over and over again that every matter is to be decided by at least two witnesses (cf. Deuteronomy 19:15). The Godhead can witness to anything himself, existing in three forms. The Son can witness to anything himself, having existed in three forms (eternal Son, temporal angel, perpetual man; cf. 2 Corinthians 13:1, where Paul's successive visits count as independent witnesses). Yet despite all this, the Lord does allow the agency of humankind to act as his witnesses, yet only through his Spirit...

<You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. But the testimony which I {Jesus} receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while [Lit an hour] in his light. -- John 5:33-35

<There came [Or came into being] a man sent from God, whose name was John. He [Lit This one] came as a witness [Lit for testimony], to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He [Lit That one] was not the Light, but [he came] to testify about the Light. -- John 1:6-8

Luke stresses the union of humanity with the Spirit. Thus it's fitting that he concludes with a picture of "witnesses," foreshadowing those who would receive the Word from the Lord and impart it. Howard Marshall even sees a specific Moses and Elijah motif in Luke's account of the transfiguration. It is only in Luke's version of the story that these two spoke to the Lord about his coming "exodus" (Luke 9:31; *this is the actual Greek according to Marshall*) and shortly after mentions his being "taken up" (9:51); concerning which the same author says...

<Could also refer simply to death but more probably includes the idea of his ascension to heaven {*reminiscent of the prophet Elijah's dramatic departure*}.*7

Also one can add that the story of James and John wanting to cast fire down “as Elijah” (9:54) takes place nearly immediately after this scene, and it is preceded by the question of who Jesus was. One of the responses was “Elijah” (9:8).

It is Moses and Elijah that are allegorically referenced in Revelation 11, a great chapter on prophetic witnessing.

D. Matthew and the Table

1. The Table

Opposite the menorah on the other side of the Holy Place was a special table where the priests would set bread. There were to be twelve loaves, representative of the twelve tribes of Israel, and they were to be exchanged for fresh loaves weekly. The only clue to its overall significance is in the name of the bread, which is literally rendered “bread of [the] face(s),” or “presence bread.”

It is the duty of ruler” to provide food for their people. Even in our own times we have come to realize the vitality of prosperity for political success, as the now-famous words of James Carville encapsulate: *(it's) the economy, stupid.*

Yet “bread of the face,” or “presence-bread,” alludes to the Scriptural practice of favoured subjects being treated to eat at the table of the king himself. For example, if you search the Old Testament for verses that contain both the words “bread” and “table” (*mind you, only a few versions translate “bread” strictly, such as the YLT; most others will substitute the word with “food,” etc.*) you will come across approximately nine relevant verses. Of these references, seven are speaking of the table of presence-bread, and two are speaking of King David’s table. Let’s look at one of the latter variety...

<David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land [Lit field] of your grandfather [Lit father] Saul; and you shall eat [Lit eat bread] at my table regularly.” -- 2 Samuel 9:7

Christian communion also has its roots in these thoughts, being called “the table of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 10:21). Moreover, just as we are to remember the Lord’s death through bread and wine/juice, likewise were the priests to garnish this table with bread and “bowls [Lit *libation bowls*] with which to pour drink offerings” (Exodus 25:29).

As alluded to above, “bread” is a word in the Bible that is often meant to be taken in the broader sense of general sustenance. Given that nothing is as basic for human life as water and bread/food, it speaks volumes that Jesus Christ called himself “living water” (*John 4:10, which if received, will flow to others, John 7:38*), and also spoke similarly of bread...

<I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh. -- John 6:48-51

2. Matthew

<The record [Lit book] of the genealogy of Jesus [Heb Yeshua (Joshua), meaning The LORD saves] the Messiah [Gr Christos], the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah [Gr Judas] and his brothers... {etc.} -- Matthew 1:1-2

Matthew begins his Gospel with a genealogy, starting from Abraham, going through the list of the kings of Judah descended from David, and ending with Joseph, the surrogate father of Jesus Christ about forty-two generations later.

<Matthew wrote his Gospel for his own Jewish countrymen to show that Jesus was the Messiah who had been foretold in the Old Testament. This genealogy of Jesus at the very beginning of Matthew has a thoroughly Jewish orientation. Matthew traced Jesus' family line all the way back to Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation.

Matthew also contains more quotations from the Old Testament than any of the other Gospels. After reporting on an event in the life of Jesus, Matthew often cites an Old Testament passage with this introductory phrase, "So that what was spoken through the prophet...might be fulfilled" (Matt. 8:17). He used this technique to show that Jesus was the Promised One whom the Jewish people had been expecting for several centuries.*8

Just as no one cares to dispute that the twelve loaves were symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel, the overwhelmingly vast majority of commentators are emphatic as to the Jewish orientation of Matthew's Gospel. Also adding to the "Father" motif of his pre-Marcian material is that this is the only place in all the Gospels where Joseph is given a prominent role; first with his genealogy, and then when he is responsible for all the comings and goings of his family while fleeing from Herod the Great.

In addition, Matthew is extremely interested in the *Kingdom* of God. In the NASB he uses the word "kingdom" 53 times. His book is responsible for 42 percent of every usage of that term in the Gospels and Acts. In his pre-Marcian material Matthew also mentions the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ at Bethlehem (meaning "house of bread"), focusing on the magi looking for the *King of the Jews*. Afterwards he gives the

account of the family's flight to Egypt and their return to the land of Israel, showing the Lord to be a miniature counterpart of the chosen people.

Now there are two aspects of the table that need mentioning at this point. First, as related earlier, it was made of wood and gold, as was the altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant (the menorah and the mercy seat upon the Ark were solid gold), thus stressing the humanity of the Son of God. Next, the same pieces of furniture that had wood -- i.e., the table, altar of incense, and the Ark -- all had an odd feature, a decoration of a moulding on top that resembled a crown...

<And thou hast made a table of shittim wood, two cubits its length, and a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height, and hast overlaid it [with] pure gold, and hast made for it **a crown** of gold round about, and hast made for it a border of a handbreadth round about, and hast made **a crown** of gold to its border round about. -- Exodus 25:23-25
[original YLT; although I admire Young's translation above, it must be said that the word rendered "crown" is not used of a king's diadem anywhere in the Old Testament; in Exodus 37 he uses "wreath" of gold when describing this furniture]

Whereas the Ark and the altar only had one "crown/wreath," the table was to have one, then a handbreadth wide border, and then another "crown/wreath." Similarly, Matthew begins by stressing the two major Jewish patriarchs: Abraham, who first received the covenant of blessing, including the owning of the Promised Land (and implicitly, the whole world), and David, who was given the covenant of being the ruler of this estate. The Lord Jesus Christ, forever a Jew in flesh, is that seed of Abraham and of David who has fulfilled their covenants.

As has been our habit, we shall not only look to the beginning for hues, but also the ending, in particular the resurrection

scene and the final words. First let's look at the resurrection morning as given by Matthew...

<Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first [day] of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone {*MT and TR add: "from the entrance"*} and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid [Or Stop being afraid]; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He {*MT and TR have "the Lord"*} was lying." -- 28:1-6

Some might be wondering at this point why all the resurrection scenes are slightly different. Given the names that each account includes, all the Gospels could have had a unique woman from the party imparting her own first-hand experience. The group of women was definitely larger than one might at first imagine and the tomb was hard to see into. All the various events could have occurred, with the women seeing things differently depending on their vantage point (to include their arrival at the scene, unique manifestations from the angels, etc.).

Matthew's messenger is certainly a throw-back to the Angel of Hashem as described by Daniel in his 10th chapter (*which is the same as Michael; yet the two stress different attributes and roles of the Son [cf. Genesis 19:24; John 3:13 in the Majority Text or Textus Receptus], just as there are two nuns, a "mouth of two," in Psalm 107:40/Revelation 19 and Judges 18:30/Revelation 10, with the Holy Spirit-filled Christ being depicted as the other six nuns from Psalm 107/Revelation 14*). The Angel of Hashem was the paternal leader {*i.e., the Christ with the glory of the Father*}, the God of Israel. He is the one

who spoke from Sinai, who led them through the wilderness, and who appeared to Joshua as he was about to fully begin the battle against the Canaanites.

Finally, Matthew closes with the very famous, very kingly “great commission” of the Lord Jesus...

<And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go [Or Having gone; Gr aorist part.] therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always [Lit all the days], even to the end of the age.” -- 28:18-20

E. John and the Ark of the Covenant

Having reviewed Mark, Luke, Matthew, and their relationship to the various Tabernacle vessels, let’s now close with a look at perhaps the greatest book ever written, *John*.

In John’s final chapter Peter is spending some time fishing with his friends on the Sea of Galilee after his denial and the Messiah’s resurrection. The Lord Jesus was on the shore preparing a fire, and the men eventually met him and had breakfast together. Jesus then asked Peter three times if the denying disciple loved him, and three times he said *Yes*. The wording in all three questions was very similar, just as the three Gospels that were born of his relationship with the Christ were very similar. Afterwards Peter looked back and asked a question about John...

<Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved {*this is a play on the name of “John,” which means something like, “to whom Hashem is gracious”*} following [them;] the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” So

Peter seeing him said to Jesus, “Lord, and what about this man?” -- 21:20-21

Peter asked what would become of John, since the Lord intimated that Peter would be martyred. The Christ replied by suggesting that John may live a very long life. John indeed wrote his Gospel at the end of one of the fullest lives ever lived. He was with John the Baptist before Jesus was baptized, followed the Lord everywhere he went after his ministry began, saw his trial and crucifixion, and saw the church grow throughout the borders of Israel and the Roman world. When he wrote his Gospel he had in mind all the shortcomings of Peter’s work and all the needs of the church that he personally helped form. By common confession, the Gospel of John is the greatest Gospel of them all, and this is proven by the fact that no single book of the Bible has ever been printed and distributed with like zealousness.

I remember telling someone who was recently saved to read the Bible, starting with the New Testament. They read Matthew, Mark, some of Luke, and got busy with other things, and never read any more. I’ve always regretted not telling that person to start with John. If you want to know Jesus, read John; and if you get to know Jesus intimately, doubtless you will go on with him. John was in the bosom, in the midst of the heart of Jesus, just as Jesus was described as being in the bosom, in the midst of the heart of the Father (John 1:18).

Now there were three things that were in or near the Ark of the Covenant in Biblical times. The tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments written on them were one. Another was a portion of manna from the wilderness sojourn...

<Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations.” As the LORD commanded

Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept. -- Exodus 16:33-34

The last was the rod of Aaron...

<...The LORD said to Moses, “Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept [Lit for preserving] as a sign against the rebels [Lit sons of rebellion], that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they will not die.” Thus Moses did; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did. -- Numbers 17:10-11

Paul highlights these objects in relation to the Ark in the book of Hebrews...

<...The ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron’s rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. -- 9:4

Paul says that all three items were “in” the Ark, although only the tablets were actually inside it. This is to stress that the rod, manna, and tablets all belonged to the Ark. Outside in the Holy Place there was the altar which signified prayer, the almond-decked menorah, and the table with the twelve loaves of bread. “In” the Ark were the Word of God via the Ten Commandments, Aaron’s actual almond-rod, and a pot of the bread from Heaven. This is a picture of the unity of the Godhead: Father, Son, Holy Spirit/ King, Prophet-Priest, all in one, all in Christ. There have been voices, doves, clouds, and lights employed to signify deity; yet there is only one true physical person.

So in conclusion, four ordinary flesh and blood writers, moved by the Spirit of God, prayerfully worked very hard to provide the most accurate picture of the Lord Jesus Christ they could paint. Unbeknownst to them, their books were formed by God to display the pattern of the holy places of the Tabernacle, and the holy character of his Son. Mark begins

with John the prophet, Luke with a priest of Aaron, and Matthew with a list of Davidic kings; of course John begins with a combination of them all...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He [Lit This one] was in the beginning with God.

Finally, John's resurrection scene (*we already gave his final words earlier; i.e., he said the world wouldn't contain the books that could be written about Jesus, connoting eternity again*) features Mary Magdalene seeing two angels in the tomb, sitting on either side of the place where the Lord had lain, "placed as cherubim upon the Ark" (McGarvey).

Chapter 6. Major Divine Patterns (in the World)

1. The Gospel Rainbow [*the NASB is again used primarily unless otherwise stated*]

Here we begin to not only consider the patterns in the Word, but also the patterns in creation. God is the author of both, so it would be surprising if we couldn't find divine clues of a religious import in the natural world. For example, we are all familiar with the similarity of the butterfly to Christ. Who could miss the significance of a lowly worm transforming into a beautiful butterfly? Moreover, how can we miss the significance of a keyhole sand dollar's skeleton, where what looks like a plant with a head, two arms, and two legs, is pictured along with five wound-marks aimed at the hands, feet, and heart (*and there are also dove-like structures inside*)? Let's begin by looking at a very early sanctified phenomenon, *the rainbow*...

We know from the Scriptures that God appointed a rainbow for a symbol of a covenant, reassuring the people who

survived Noah's flood that a like event would never occur (see Genesis 9). Incidentally, the word "rainbow" doesn't really exist in Biblical Hebrew, only the word "bow." The same Hebrew word is used in the Old Testament to describe the arrow-shooting weapon used in battle and the colourful arc we see in the sky. It's interesting to note that if a rainbow is a "bow," then this bow is pointed upward towards Heaven. God was making the parallel that there would never be complete destruction on the earth, for the complete destruction would one day happen to his Son who sits upon the throne above, to him who would come to suffer the fullness of wrath for his people...

<Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself [Lit to His heart], "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent [Or inclination] of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy [Lit smite] every living thing, as I have done." -- Genesis 8:20-21

<Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you [One early ms reads us] and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma [Lit for an odor of fragrance]. -- Ephesians 5:1-2

The rainbow doesn't appear often in Scriptures, but when it does there is a lot of significance attached to it. For example, although it's debated by scholars, Joseph probably wore a multi-coloured coat (*which was later ripped and dipped in blood*). In Revelation 4 and 10 the rainbow is pictured along with the over-arching authority of God. In the prophetic books of the Old Testament there is a usage that warrants special attention...

<Now above the expanse that was over their {*the cherubim*'s} heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli [Heb eben-sappir] in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, [was] a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed [Lit saw] from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal [Or electrum] that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and [there was] a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in [Lit which occurs in] the clouds on a rainy day, so [was] the appearance of the surrounding radiance... -- Ezekiel 1:26-28

There are several times in the book of Ezekiel where this anonymous figure appears. It's obvious that it is a physical representation of Almighty God, and therefore is another appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ. This is the only sense of the description that fits the bill. A telling comment from Rashi on this metal-man substantiates this claim. For concerning the verse describing the glowing ruler, the French Rabbi stated, "No permission was granted to ponder over this verse" (chabad.org). And again when this man is described in Ezekiel 8:1-3, Rashi hits us with the same unfortunate "piety," saying, "It is forbidden to reflect on this verse" (chabad.org).

In Revelation 4 and 10, and also in Ezekiel, the dominant theme is the power and judgment of God. The rainbow appears in these scenes to express that in the midst of wrath and dominion the Godhead still remembers mercy. Yet why was the rainbow employed to be such an emblem? What do multi-coloured layers have to do with loving-kindness? Well the rainbow is a dissection of light; God is light (1 John 1:5), so therefore a rainbow could connote the manifold attributes of the simple God (*"simple" in the theological nature of not being divided into parts; this is the idea of the seven-partitioned Spirit which is said to reside in the Lord Jesus Christ; that is to say, the Holy Spirit is complete wisdom and*

complete understanding, not half wisdom and half understanding).

The Bible covers two Covenants, and also covers two dominant aspects of the Messiah. This Christ is always “the Word,” yet in the Old Testament his greatest work was that of creation in Genesis, while in the New Testament his greatest work was that of redemption as found in the Gospels. What’s interesting is that both creation and redemption were framed into seven categories of speech. That is to say, there were seven days of creation when the Lord spoke all things into existence, and then there were also seven sayings the Lord uttered while dying upon the Cross. What’s amazing is that these two sets are strongly parallel, and paint an interesting picture for the Christian, as they describe the stages of a man or woman being saved, sanctified, and glorified by the Holy Spirit. Let’s take a look at each set of sayings.

A. Predestination

<In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void [Or a waste and emptiness], and darkness was over the surface of [Lit face of] the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving [Or hovering] over the surface of [Lit face of] the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light;” and there was light. -- Genesis 1:1-3

<When they came to the place called The Skull [In Lat Calvarius; or Calvary], there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. [*Some early mss do not contain But Jesus was saying...doing*] But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing...” -- Luke 23:33-34

On the one hand, salvation through Jesus Christ comes solely through the believer’s faith in response to the report of redemption. On the other hand, it is a predetermined matter, as the undeserving recipients of this grace were selected by

the three persons of the Godhead before the world was. The first utterance that Hashem spoke as Creator was to call forth light, and the first thing Jesus of Nazareth did on the Cross was to call forth mercy unto forgiveness.

The doctrine of predestination gets a lot of people in a tizzy; and currently, as in many times throughout church history, there's a rather unholy war between sanctified Augustinians and sanctified individuals who believe in extreme free-will. I personally am convinced that predestination is the only thing that makes sense according to the Word.

One reason is because I've never actually met anyone, no matter how anti-Augustine they claim to be, who truly believes in free-will. For example, if a friend comes to faith in Christ, what is the common assumption? Is it believed that the person came to faith because of some pre-existing goodness that was in them or rather through the direct action of God? I think the vast majority of Christians would reply that it was owing to the power of God.

If it is believed that this came through divine power, then free-will is ruled out, for God predetermined to lead and enlighten the friend. Besides, even if the salvation was due to some rare inner goodness and partly to intercessory prayer, where did these special dispositions come from? We confess that it's all from God; if so, then why does anyone question predestination?

Well, the reason why free-will still has a huge following is that the concept of being arbitrarily selected for redemption gets lodged in the throat of those who understand how kind and just God is. Many think that if God predetermines some for Heaven that inevitably means he predetermines some to Hell. It's because of this apparent blight on the justice of God that they think it their duty to fight the full doctrine of providence, no matter how counter-intuitive or anti-Scriptural

the arguments. I'd like to offer two lines of thought in an attempt to sway my free-will brothers and sisters a bit.

As I've said, the thesis of many is that predestination isn't just. Actually, God does give all of us a right to choose between life and death, between following his commands or being disobedient; otherwise, there wouldn't be a Bible at all. The problem is that we all choose death. If all choose death, then why is God unjust in punishing people according to their wishes? Moreover, if God, in accordance with his abundant mercy, decides through his own goodness and at his own expense (that is to say, through his own blood) to forcibly redeem some, how is this unjust?

The second line is the great chapter on the relationship between providence and grace, Romans 9. Paul follows a logical course that answers the great questions concerning predestination. He begins by expressing the love that he has for his natural people...

<I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish [Lit pray] that I myself were accursed, [separated] from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the [temple] service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ [I.e. the Messiah] according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever [Lit unto the ages]. Amen. -- verses 1-5

After discussing the common Gospel of the gentiles and Jews in the previous eight chapters, he begins to step up his concentration on Israel while closing out the section about justification. Paul knew that while no one is saved but through faith in Christ, God loves Israel and has a plan for it, otherwise the Bible is full of unfulfilled promises. His first

step therefore is to show his empathy and understanding for the election of Israel; yet just as he cannot allow these sentiments to deter his proclamation of the universal Gospel, neither can God...

<But [it is] not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants [Lit seed], but: "THROUGH [Lit in] ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS [Lit seed] WILL BE NAMED {*Genesis 21:12*}." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants [Lit seed]. For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON {*Genesis 18:10*}." -- verses 6-9

Is an Israeli axe-murderer set for Heaven simply because he's an Israeli? Although some evangelicals seem to teach something like this, the answer is obviously *no*. I, as Paul, and God, love the Jewish people in an unconditional way, yet all the love in the world will not make anyone sinless in the sight of God, which is the requirement for entry into the Jerusalem above. This can only come to pass through faith in their Messiah, the Everlasting Holy One who was made a curse so that we all could be blessed.

Paul draws support for this position from the Law itself, as the seed of Abraham that was set to inherit the covenantal-estate of the patriarch was born of promise. Abraham and Sarah gave birth to Isaac even when they were very old, for God gave the assurance and, as always, he fulfilled it. Since this is the case, it is implicit that the descendants of Abraham that are predestined for sonship and daughtership come via God's gracious providence, through promise, and not through flesh or law...

<He {*i.e., Jesus*} was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to

His own [Or own things, possessions, domain], and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, [even] to those who believe in His name, who were born [Or begotten], not of blood [Lit bloods] nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. -- John 1:10-13

We must indeed call upon Christ for salvation, yet some are predestined to receive all the needful things, spiritual and otherwise (such as learning, influences, etc.), for this to come to pass, and all such things are from God.

Paul continues on with the fact that predestination *is* grace -- just as Abraham and Sarah giving birth after decades of infertility was of grace -- by pointing out a statement made concerning Isaac's children...

<And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived [twins] by one man, our father Isaac; for though [the twins] were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to [His] choice would stand [Lit remain], not because of [Lit from] works but because of [Lit from] Him who calls, it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER {*Genesis 25:23*}. " Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED {*Malachi 1:2-3*}. " -- verses 10-13

Esau was hated because of his sins; yet Jacob, even though he was just as bad as his brother in the book of Genesis, was a recipient of grace. It's evident that Jacob knew the Christ in angelic form (that is to say, before he was born in Bethlehem), as he prays to him in Genesis 48. Jacob was given the knowledge of the Redeemer, while Esau was not. Ah, but is there not injustice in this? That's where Paul goes next...

<What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION {*Exodus 33:19*}." So then it [does] not [depend] on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT [Lit in] THE WHOLE EARTH {*Exodus 9:16*}." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. -- verses 14-18

This latter statement has caused a lot of controversy. Since God hardened Pharaoh's heart, does he actually harden some people against accepting the truth? The answer to this must be *no*, or else that would be unjust. God doesn't harden people away from Christ; as is said very plainly throughout Romans (cf. 3:10-18), no one willingly seeks the Lord. The case with Pharaoh has nothing to do with justification; it rather speaks of holy and fearful judgment.

God turns sinners towards more sin and the righteous to more righteousness. For example, God is shown in the first chapter of Romans to be delivering up society to rampant homosexuality and the ensuing diseases, all because it willingly rejected knowledge of him. In the Gospels the Lord Jesus sometimes tested the disciples with difficult speech to see who was really for him and who would be easily offended (cf. John 6). God urges us on in our path, testing, judging, and then rewarding or condemning.

But some still might argue, why are not all led unto Christ? Why doesn't he form everyone's life and give everyone the spiritual power to lay hold on salvation via the Lord Jesus? Well, because God is God, and he can do whatever he wants, and he desires to give the elect an example of righteous

wrath. We are all created equal. Some people might be given special dispositions (such as Paul's zealousness for the Law) or be born into special circumstances (such as with a bookcase full of Bible commentaries outside of their bedroom), yet no culpable person is born below par. All have the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, or else they will not be judged. Moreover, Christ enlightens everyone who comes into the world to a reasonable extent (John 1:9), yet they still willingly choose darkness (John 3:19-21). Therefore, as with Pharaoh, God will continue to mould the lives of the unredeemed to the praise of his glory, even while they are sauntering defiantly to Hades...

<You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory -- even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? -- verses 19-24 (*I had to use the ESV for this quote, as the NASB gives it a non-literal twist that spoils the essence*)

The hang-up with many is that they have an inflated sense of mankind's importance. We don't bat an eyelash when we hear that the fallen angels are condemned to Hell, but say this about a man, and God is called a monster. No, it is we who are monstrous sinners, and this by free-will, by our own choosing, day after day, and night after night.

B. Separation

<Then God said, “Let there be an expanse [Or a firmament] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” God made the expanse [Or firmament], and separated the waters which were below the expanse [Or firmament] from the waters which were above the expanse [Or firmament]; and it was so. God called the expanse [Or firmament] heaven. -- Genesis 1:6-8

<One of the criminals who were hanged [there] was hurling abuse at [Or blaspheming] Him, saying, “Are You not the Christ [I.e. Messiah]? Save Yourself and us!” But the other answered, and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed [are suffering] justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds [Lit things worthy of what we have done]; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me {*some manuscripts have, “And he said to Jesus, ‘Remember me Lord’”*} when You come in [Or into] Your kingdom!” And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” -- Luke 23:39-43

We don't know exactly what is meant when it is written that God separated the waters, although it's probably a reference to his fixing our atmospheric layers and appointing the cycle of clouds and rain. The only problem with this view is that God later commands the heavenly bodies to be put into this expanse, which would be an impossible mistake by Moses, for ancient man obviously knew that the clouds were in front of the heavenly bodies.

The solution to the problem is probably that the Hebrew word for *heaven* is always dual, thus there is the possibility of there being multiple heavens, just as Paul says he was taken to “the third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2). One heaven is our sky, the second is outer space, and the third is what lies outside of our universe, outside of time and space. In any case, it's clear that there was a vital separation, taking of the waters that were

below and lifting them skyward. It doesn't take too much imagination to see a like thing occurring in the second saying of the cross.

There were two thieves crucified with the Messiah and they added to his misery by reviling him. The other Gospels also depict these men as being hateful and belligerent to the Christ, but Luke was privy to an extra scene, where one of the criminals repents and puts his faith in the Lord: “We indeed [are suffering] justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ And he was saying, ‘Jesus, remember me...’”

If all would say those exact same words with faith there would be no water left below.

Moving on, since we *are* separate, we must *act* separate. Everywhere in Scripture we are called to be distant from the world and to set our sights on heavenly matters...

<What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. -- Romans 6:1-4

Baptism is not necessary for salvation, only faith. Yet baptism is a wonderful gift to the people of God, a tangible enactment of what has happened to us because of atonement through Jesus Christ, our body of death being immersed, and the newness of our persons arising from the waters. A new life doesn't mean that everything which is not “*for Christians by Christians*” is evil. All people are created in the image of God, and many have produced beautiful music, written thought-provoking works, or made fascinating scientific

discoveries, apart from the specific blessing of a faith-filled life. We are under no compulsion to avoid these things, but we are under compulsion to sift very carefully everything that enters our eyes and ears...

<Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely [Or lovable and gracious], whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things [Lit ponder these things]. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. -- Philippians 4:8-9

The Son of God is the greatest expression of truth, honour, righteousness, purity, loveliness, goodness, excellence, and worthiness, existing forever as the perfect image of the Father. Therefore, what better thing is there to focus on other than Jesus Christ? With this in mind let us look at the next set of sayings from Genesis and the Gospels...

C. The Fruit-Tree

<Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear;" and it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation [Or grass], plants [Or herbs] yielding seed, [and] **fruit trees** on the earth bearing fruit after their [Lit its] kind with seed in them [Lit in which is its seed];" and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation [Or grass], plants [Or herbs] yielding seed after their [Lit its] kind, and **trees bearing fruit** with seed in them [Lit in which is its seed], after their [Lit its] kind; and God saw that it was good. -- Genesis 1:9-12

<But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Clopas, and Mary

Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own [household.] -- John 19:25-27

Rashi has an interesting comment on Genesis 1:11...

<Fruit trees: That the taste of the tree should be like the taste of the fruit. It [the earth] did not do so, however, but "the earth gave forth, etc., trees producing fruit," but the trees themselves were not fruit. Therefore, when man was cursed because of his iniquity, it [the earth] too was punished for its iniquity... -- [from Gen. Rabbah 5:9] (chabad.org)

What Rashi seemingly means is that in nearly a "Willy Wonka" sort of way the original trees were meant to be edible. We see a picture of this with heaven's fruit trees which will always be in season, blossoming abundantly year-round (cf. Revelation 22:2).

Now the motif from Genesis of land being separated from water is as Israel being called forth from the nations; for indeed, the mega-theme of the entire book is the forming of the twelve tribes of Israel and their being distinguished from the other peoples (see also Revelation 17:15 where the nations are equated to water). The fruit of trees have a special designation as that which is eaten in Paradise (see Genesis 2:9, Revelation 22:2, and Isaiah 4:2 which gives a Messianic prophecy concerning fruit).

The Messiah therefore is the fruit-tree that springs from his true mother, Israel (see Revelation 12), the nation itself having been separated from the gentiles. So considering Rashi's comment, God called for trees that for all intents and purposes were fruit intrinsically, but the earth instead produced trees that gradually bore fruit. Likewise, God calls all of mankind to be perfect in righteousness, yet the Messiah

of Israel is the only one who has fulfilled this, as he is the only one obedient through and through, a completely perfect servant of God, his homogenized ministry a sacrifice fit for continual consumption by the Father of Lights.

The best we can hope for is to emulate him by observing his commandments and teachings, being empowered by his Spirit. We can bear deeds of righteousness in many seasons if we continue on with the Lord...

<Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of [Lit from] itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither [can] you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. -- John 15:4-5

This idea of emulation is prominent in the Calvary-scene above. John was instructed to look to the mother of the Christ as his own mother, and the mother was commanded to look to John as her own son, a representative of the one she was about to lose. Even now, the Lord's interests are to be our own interests, and this not only includes a personal knowledge of his person and work (as Mary to John), but also includes seeking the blessing of his people (as John to Mary)...

<**Remember Jesus Christ**, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which [Lit in which] I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason **I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen**, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus [and] with [it] eternal glory. -- 2 Timothy 2:8-10

D. Beacons

Having been justified by his blood-red righteousness, through which also we receive our separation and new vocation, next

we must seek the greenness of growth so that we may blossom into a branch that is regularly bearing fruit. In order to do this we need the Lord to constantly guide us.

Although we can be sure of all things working together for good to those who believe, we still have to come to terms with how this translates to everyday life. Figuring out how to receive guidance after becoming a Christian is perhaps the most difficult of disciplines to be initiated into. When the joy of salvation has waned, there can set in an overwhelming confusion and second-guessing on just how to proceed. We must first understand that Christianity is not “wisdom for living,” but a new creation. As was stated before, we are to die to our old selves and look unto Christ for the “renewing of {our} mind” (Romans 12:2).

This must practically be worked out by engaging in personal, Christ-centred Bible study and prayer...

<With [Lit Through] all prayer and petition pray [Lit praying] at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be [Lit being] on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints... -- Ephesians 6:18

<So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, [then] you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” -- John 8:31

Now simply telling people to read the Bible isn't enough, as it is a complex book and easy to get lost thereby. The most important thing when reading the Scriptures is to have the proper magnetic North constantly in mind, which is *salvation by grace through faith in Christ*. There are a lot of legalistic statements that can confuse Christians if they are not properly orientated. The Bible must be considered as a composite whole; for not every single doctrine can be stated every single time it might be applicable. For example, when the Lord

Jesus taught people about the prodigal son there was no mention of the Cross. The son simply repented and returned and the father accepted him. Are we to take by this that the Lord Jesus viewed his own sacrifice as meaningless? Of course not; we understand that for the sake of brevity and stressing a different point he simply left it out of this story.

Another example is Paul. After listing many common transgressions in Galatians 5 he writes, "That those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (verse 21). Now we cannot take that to mean that whoever has committed these things can't be forgiven, nor are we to take it to mean that those who have been forgiven will not still struggle with these sins; it is just a sharp, direct statement that needs to be placed into his broader theology.

Some legal sayings in the Scriptures are surprisingly direct, yet direct sayings shouldn't cause problems because they normally don't day-to-day. Think about it. If you are in a building and someone asks you for directions you may say, "Go straight down that hall, turn left, and then right." So off they go; but wait, they can't go "straight" down the hall, for there is a mop-bucket in the way, so they have to curve a bit. Then they make their first left, but when they do so, someone rushes by them, and they must turn their body left again to dodge the passer-by. Okay, so instead of walking straight down the hall they've curved down it; instead of making one left they've made two lefts; surely they are at the end of their journey. Not so; for they must walk ten feet before they make their next right. That wasn't in the instructions! You see, such things can be confusing if common sense is dispensed with. We must study the denotative whole.

And with that said, in studying the Bible we must also separate the dispensations properly. The Bible spans quite a large time period, so there needs to be an understanding of how to divide it. It begins with the account of origins in Genesis and then from Exodus to Acts the dominant theme is

the nation of Israel. From Acts to Jude the dominant theme is the New Testament church (*on a sidenote, many have pointed out the interesting parallel of Isaiah's first 39 chapters with the 39 books of the Old Testament and the remainder of his 27 chapters with that of the 27 New Testament books*). It concludes with the book of Revelation, which describes the Lord physically returning to restore creation to its original pristine glory.

There are four types of laws presented in the Scripture against two major backdrops (Israel and the church) and three minor backdrops (Eden [Genesis 1-3], the Messianic Age [Ezekiel 40-48], and Heaven [Revelation 21-22]). We'll leave the lesser backdrops out of the discussion for time's sake, yet they too hold to the same pattern.

The first type is the civil law. This is the secular system of how to run a group justly. In the Old Testament this is presented in the form of a national law. In the New Testament it appears in an ecclesiastical form, that is, how to run a church.

The second type of law is the ceremonial. This is instruction concerning the administration of symbolic religious sacraments. In the Old Testament it was (mainly) animal sacrifice and circumcision. In the New Testament it is carried out by the Lord's Supper and baptism.

The third type of law is the eternal moral law. While civil and ceremonial laws change from dispensation to dispensation, the moral law never changes. The general laws that are given in the Old Testament that also appear in the New are therefore a part of the unchangeable code: you shall not murder, commit adultery, steal, etc.

The fourth type of law really isn't a law but a provision. We all break the moral law and therefore deserve condemnation. Yet we can be forgiven of all things through faith in the

atoning life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah, Job's Redeemer, the Serpent's Crusher, the One True God.

So it is important for the modern believer to understand where he or she fits in. We are convicted of sin through the moral law, saved through the great provision, and then we should strive to follow the moral, civic, and ceremonial laws of today (*the civic and ceremonial laws of yesterday are also very edifying to reflect on of course*). The full account of these precepts is found in the letters to the churches, the Epistles, the books ranging from Romans to Jude. This is the bedrock doctrine for every Christian, the lens through which we should see the rest of the Word and the world.

So moving on, having a vibrant personal relationship with the Godhead is the goal. It is when we are faithfully participating in this relationship that we will have the mind of Christ more and more, and therefore be in a proper position to make prudent decisions. I wish that there was some other fool-proof way of communication which was based on sight and not faith, but there isn't.

Some claim an open source of direct access to divine information; if such existed it would actually be slavery, not freedom. It would be a torturous thing if we had to cast a lot every time we walked out of the door instead of prayerfully using the minds which God gave us...

<So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation {*J.I. Packer points out that this means to "express it in action," to keep living out the salvation you've received*1*} with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for [His] good pleasure. -- Philippians 2:12-13

The best decision we can make at any given time is that which is most holy and sensible according to our sanctified understanding; that's all God can ask from us, and that's all he ever does ask. He can, has, and shall, occasionally break into people's time and space to relate directional information, but this is rare, and really only happens for the sake of comfort and encouragement. What kind of Creator would he be if he constantly had to sort us out through audible voices or visible signs? Is it not a greater majesty for him to be silent and invisible?

This all fits into the theme of the fourth set of sayings from Genesis and the Gospels...

<Then God said, "Let there be lights [Or luminaries, light-bearers] in the expanse [Or firmament] of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights [Or luminaries, light-bearers] in the expanse [Or firmament] of the heavens to give light on the earth;" and it was so. -- Genesis 1:14-15

<When the sixth hour [I.e. noon] came, darkness fell [Or occurred] over the whole land until the ninth hour [I.e. 3 p.m.]. At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME {Psalm 22:1}?" -- Mark 15:33-34

God created the sun, moon, and stars to give light upon the earth. Thanks to these points of brightness we can have organized calendars and sailors from ancient times have been able to navigate the seas. God kindly appointed order and direction for fallen man, yet Christ, with our sins upon him, was completely given up to darkness and despair.

E. Godly Service

Let's begin by looking at the fifth set of creation and redemption sayings...

<Then God said, "Let the waters teem [Or swarm] with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open [Lit on the face of] expanse [Or firmament] of the heavens." God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. -- Genesis 1:20-21

<After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine {or, "vinegar"} was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine {or, "vinegar"} upon [a branch of] hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. -- John 19:28-29

At first glance these two passages do not appear to have any significant relationship. Yet if we think of all the different places in Scripture where birds and fish play a prominent role, something does present itself, and that something is *provision*.

When God delivered Israel from the midst of Egypt they were led in the wilderness for forty years. On two special occasions God caused a great number of quail to come and fall upon the camp in order to feed the people. Elijah in the book of 1 Kings had to dwell beside a stream for a while, being fed by birds that carried food in their beaks.

In the New Testament Jesus Christ commanded the disciples on two separate occasions to let down a net into the sea to bring up a tremendous quantity of fish. At two other times Christ fed extremely large crowds with just a few loaves of bread and a few fish. Once Peter needed to pay a tax, and having no money, the Lord commanded him to go fishing

with a hook, and the first fish he brought up had sufficient money in its mouth.

It's also interesting that not only are fish and birds used to provide for God's people in the above examples, but I can think of no other animals that were used this way. The children of Israel never happened upon a flock of antelope, nor did the disciples ever receive a bag of grain from the mouth of a deer. For some reason God chose the bird and the fish to be the emblems of service.

To put it simply, we should all strive to serve God, to organize personal ministries or belong to someone else's, in an effort to spread the knowledge of God throughout the world. If we keep busy in the faith, troubles and temptations of this age are easier to bear. Not out of compulsion, but out of gratitude and the hope of a gracious reward, we should seek to repay the one who agonizingly served the Father on our behalf..

<The utterance of "I thirst" brought out a type of man's treatment of his Lord. It was a confirmation of the Scripture testimony with regard to man's natural enmity to God. According to modern thought man is a very fine and noble creature, struggling to become better. He is greatly to be commended and admired, for his sin is said to be seeking after God, and his superstition is a struggling after light. Great and worshipful being that he is, truth is to be altered for him, the gospel is to be modulated to suit the tone of his various generations, and all the arrangements of the universe are to be rendered subservient to his interests. Justice must fly the field lest it be severe to so deserving a being; as for punishment, it must not be whispered to his ears polite. In fact, the tendency is to exalt man above God and give him the highest place. But such is not the truthful estimate of man according to the Scriptures: there man is a fallen creature, with a carnal mind which cannot be reconciled to God; a worse than brutish creature, rendering evil for good, and treating his God with

vile ingratitude. Alas, man is the slave and the dupe of Satan, and a black-hearted traitor to his God. Did not the prophecies say that man would give to his incarnate God gall to eat and vinegar to drink? It is done. He came to save, and man denied him hospitality: at the first there was no room for him at the inn, and at the last there was not one cool cup of water for him to drink; but when he thirsted they gave him vinegar to drink. This is man's treatment of his Saviour. Universal manhood, left to itself, rejects, crucifies, and mocks the Christ of God (Spurgeon; from "The Shortest of the Seven Cries").

F. Rest and Rewards

We first considered justification through the redness of our Saviour's blood, then we touched on the greenness of growing in the Christian faith; lastly we are going to focus on the purple, which in Scripture is used as a symbol of royalty. There comes a season for the people of God when they shall be crowned victors and rule the kingdom until the very end; just as Mordecai, after caring for his cousin and defeating the enemy Haman through his steadfastness, was given the chief place of the kingdom...

<Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue [Or violet] and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. -- Esther 8:15

Richard Dawkins made a very good point in his book *The Greatest Show on Earth*. Nature is locked in a futile arms race; even the very trees seem to be selfishly competing unto the heavens. Nature cannot remain in peace and prosper, for of a necessity the game of cat and mouse dominates...

<Predators and prey are locked in an arms race in which each side is unwittingly pressing the other to shift its optimum -- in the economic and risk compromises of life -- further and further in the same direction: either literally in the same

direction, for example towards increased running speed; or in the same direction in the looser sense of being aimed at the predator/prey arms race rather than some other department of life such as milk production.*2

Yet there comes a day when nature will no longer be separate from much of the wisdom and care of its Creator...

<For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation [Or in hope; because the creation] itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. -- Romans 8:19-22

This was the plan for man all along, as we see in the sixth day of creation...

<Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their [Lit its] kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their [Lit its] kind;" and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their [Lit its] kind, and the cattle after their [Lit its] kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky [Lit heavens] and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." -- Genesis 1:24-26

God desired to entrust all things into our hands, as it is written...

<{Jesus said} But seek His kingdom, and {some manuscripts have, "But seek the kingdom of God, and all"} these things will be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your

Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. -- Luke 12:31-32

Through Jesus Christ this privilege has been restored, for he who was the sole heir of creation gave his inheritance back to his Father upon the Cross. In the book of Exodus, God was angry with his people and told Moses that he was going to destroy them and make a nation out of him instead (32:10). The patriarch rejected this offer however and prevented the impending destruction through his intercession, even volunteering his own demise on their behalf (32:32; *of course this latter offer was rebuffed, for no man but the Lord Jesus has the righteousness to save another*). In the same way, Christ chose to die for us rather than reign without us...

<And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT {*Psalm 31:5*}." Having said this, He breathed His last. -- Luke 23:46

He willingly forfeited the kingdom and obediently *delivered up* his Spirit during his first advent so his brothers and sisters could *be given* the king's bounty at his return.

G. True Finality

<Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By {*literally, "in" or "on"*} the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made [Lit to make]. -- Genesis 2:1-3

<Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine {*or, "vinegar"*}, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. -- John 19:30

It's unclear if John's final statement was spoken before or after Luke's (*i.e.*, "*Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit*"). It's also possible that there was just one literal statement and one Spirit-led paraphrase/redaction, though I personally believe that both were uniquely spoken and that John's was last. Whatever the case, the two statements were obviously meant to be understood as one final component: thus when Christ delivered up his Spirit, redemption was finished.

The composite essence of all the colours can be summed up similarly: if we give up our grip on our lives and ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit through the sinless sacrifice of Jesus, we too have committed our spirits to God, and will one day receive the promised rest.

2. The Rib

Let's move on to our next pattern. When God created Adam he appointed him to be his companion for the sake of sharing and enjoying his glory. The Godhead knew however that in the days of his tending Eden mankind would not be satisfied with majestic communion only, but would also be benefited by a helper in the flesh. God formed and brought near every animal for Adam to name but also for him to see if there was a helper suitable among all the known creation. Every animal was viewed but no helper was found. God at this point could have simply created another being out of the dust in front of Adam's eyes, but instead he did something peculiar...

<So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned [Lit built] into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. -- Genesis 2:21-22

Man was deep asleep when his side was opened and a bone was extracted. It was through this operation that his wife was formed and thus a helper and companion given.

After many generations and many families, after the flood, and after society was built up again, God visited the human race once more. This time however he didn't call upon a man whom he walked with in Paradise; rather through the Holy Spirit he reached out to a believer who lived in Babylonia, whose name was Abram (Abraham). Instead of driving Adam out he sought to bring Abraham in. His journey was to be based on faith, and at times his assurance waivered. God had promised him a land and a progeny but as the years ticked by both pledges seemed to be hollow.

Several times throughout the journey God especially tested the belief of Abraham and also especially reassured him. During one such episode the Almighty told the patriarch to prepare sacrifices by cutting them in half. This was an ancient way covenants were established among people, as is also seen in Jeremiah 34:18. They would cut an animal in half and then walk through its midst. Thus in Genesis 15:18, where the NASB has that God "made" a covenant with Abraham, the term literally means "cut;" "cutting" a covenant is a popular Biblical idiom.

Now I have no idea just what the halved animals signified and there is much conjecture among expositors, but there is a lot to glean by just viewing Genesis 15 as it stands. First note the nature of the sacrifices...

<And He took him {*Abram/Abraham*} outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants [Lit seed] be." Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess [Or inherit] it." He

said, "O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess [Or inherit] it?" So He said to him, "Bring [Lit Take] Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought [Lit took] all these to Him and cut them in two [Lit in the midst], and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. -- verses 5-10

There were five animals in all. Three he divided into two pieces while the birds were left intact (and were probably laid opposite each other as well), so thus there were eight pieces arranged on the ground in couplets. The configuration when viewed from above would have probably looked something like a menorah or a bush; hence the burning bush of Moses in Exodus and the burning Levitical menorah might be prefigured here.

Another possible semblance would be the ribcage. Although there are typically 24 ribs (i.e., 12 sets) in a skeleton, only eight (i.e., four sets with left and right "sides") are joined solely to the body of the sternum (the main bone that protects the heart). Rib-set one is attached to the manubrium above the body of the sternum. Rib-set two is located between the manubrium and the sternum. **Ribs three through six are attached to the body of the sternum (so these would total eight pieces, counting left and right sides)**. Rib seven is attached between the body of the sternum and the xiphoid process; the rest are well below the sternum, sharing the attachment of the seventh (*this is the way I interpret it anyway having studied pictures from Google images and Gray's Anatomy; I might be speaking anatomically incorrect a bit*).

There's more in the Bible to commend this interpretation, for several times in the Old Testament men were jabbed in the side with swords and spears resulting in a telling anatomical description (*all the following quotes are from the mYLT*)...

*...and Abner smites him with the hinder part of the spear unto **the fifth [rib]**, and the spear comes out from behind him, and he falls there, and dies under it... -- 2 Samuel 2:23*

*And Abner turns back to Hebron, and Joab turns him aside unto the midst of the gate to speak with him quietly, and smites him there in **the fifth [rib]** -- and he dies... -- 2 Samuel 3:27*

*...and thither they have come, unto the midst of the house, taking wheat, and they smite him unto **the fifth [rib]**... -- 2 Samuel 4:6*

*...and Amasa has not been watchful of the sword that [is] in the hand of Joab, and he smites him with it unto **the fifth [rib]**, and sheds out his bowels to the earth, and he has not repeated [it] to him, and he dies... -- 2 Samuel 20:10*

The “fifth rib” was therefore probably tantamount to saying “unto the heart.”

Moving on, it is clear from Jeremiah 34:18 that those who were making a pledge were to pass through the midst of the animals. So Abraham waited, and waited, and waited. Would God really show up and walk through a row of rotting carcasses? The patriarch waited until he fell asleep, and then God did show up...

<Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror [and] great darkness [Or a terror of great darkness] fell upon him. [God] said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants [Lit seed] will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed [Lit and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them] four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many [Lit great] possessions”...It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, [there appeared] a

smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants [Lit seed] I have given this land..." -- verses 12-14, 17-18

Here again we have the emblems of life, death, and new life, just as with Adam's surgery. Abram's and Adam's slumber can both be equated with death. Furthermore, the rib was taken from Adam while asleep, just as when Abram was given the bad news that his progeny would be taken to a foreign land and made to serve. Out of the midst of this captured seed however would spring forth the people of God, a company redeemed and blessed, just as the rib was formed into a fitting helper and bride.

<Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day [Lit for the day of that Sabbath was great]), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and [that] they might be taken away...But coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out...For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN [Or crushed or shattered] {*Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20*}." And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED {*Zechariah 12:10*}."-- John 19:31-37; portions

Just as Adam and Abraham were slumbering as God formed a wife and promised progeny, so was the Son of Man dead when the Father pierced his heart with a spear, providing cleansing and sanctification for his children, the Lamb's bride.

3. The Trinity Mainframe

Esteemed scientists like Albert Einstein have stated the insufficiency of mere elements to explain the human experience:

<...The concepts which arise in our thought and in our linguistic expressions are all -- when viewed logically -- the free creations of thought which cannot inductively be gained from sense experiences. This is not so easily noticed only because we have the habit of combining certain concepts and conceptual relations (propositions) so definitely with certain sense experiences that we do not become conscious of the gulf -- logically unbridgeable -- which separates the world of sensory experiences from the world of concepts and propositions.*3

Einstein's comments are expounded upon in an article by PhD linguist John Oller...

<A small part of the evolutionists' problem is that hard objects are never observed spontaneously to transform themselves (on their own recognizance) into abstract ideas. The sun cannot sky-write the fact that it is about 93,000,000 miles from the earth. Neither do events transform themselves automatically into propositions. The meteor that collided with the earth leaving the crater out near Winslow, Arizona, cannot appear on CNN to tell of its journey, or to announce how hot it got streaking across the sky. Nor do space-time relations perceive, define, or narrate their unfolding over time. Events and relations between objects in time and space do not come stamped with date, time, and place of manufacture. While the earth may be affected by the moons of Jupiter in ways that science might detect, a planet is no more able to announce its age or recount its history, or declare the forces to which it is subject, than a dog can recite his pedigree or pronounce his mother's name.*4

Thoughts, even the ability to reason about simple facts such as colours or shapes, are not physical properties, and

therefore materialistic evolution (real “orthodox” evolution) is unable to explain them. This is rarely understood among evolutionary scientists simply because they do not really hold themselves to a strict naturalistic interpretation as much as they profess to.

I think the best way to feel the force of this argument is to offer an allegory from the Bible, our next pattern. It is clear from the Scriptures that man consists of a body, soul, and spirit. The fact that man has a soul *and* a spirit might not be common knowledge and even disputed within church circles, but Paul makes it abundantly clear...

<For the word of God [is] living and effective and sharper than every double-edged sword and [is] penetrating as far as [the] division of **both soul and spirit**, of both joints and marrow, and [is] able to discern [the] thoughts and intentions of the heart. -- Hebrews 4:12; [ALT3]

We all know what the body is, but what about the soul and spirit? I’ll attempt a general definition, but of course to be dogmatic about such things borders on arrogance.

The soul is best described as the “animating principle,” true life, consciousness. The Hebrew term *nephesh* appears about 750 times in the Old Testament: 475 times in the *King James Version* it is translated “soul,” 117 times it is translated “life,” 29 times “person,” 15 “mind,” 15 “heart,” along with a handful of minor uses. In order for the dust of the earth to be a living, conscious person, it needs a soul..

<And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. -- Genesis 2:7; *Revised Version; this action was probably ceremonial, just as the Lord Jesus blew on the disciples several days before they received the Holy Spirit (John 20:22)*

The spirit on the other hand is best described as the information of an individual, its “personal principle”...

<But God revealed [them] to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all [things], even the depths of God. For who among people knows the [things] of the person, except the spirit of the person, the [one] in him? In the same way also no one knows the [things] of God, except the Spirit of God. -- 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; [ALT3]

Look at a computer; it is made up of three parts. First is the hardware, which is everything you see physically from the monitor to the mouse, printer, microphone, speakers, etc. Then there is the software which consists of two essential types. The most vital is the operating system, that which controls the whole computer, such as Windows or Linux or Mac OS. Then there are the individual data files, the programs that you run on the computer.

So the hardware is the body, the operating system the soul, and the files/programs the spirit. (Incidentally, the fact that the operating system is itself a collection of data files is comparable to the terms *soul* and *spirit* sometimes being interchangeable in the Bible.)

Let's see if this fits the Scriptural model by looking at the ultimate triple-person, God. The Godhead consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, exactly the same as to their essence, but different as to their roles.

The Father is as the soul, the one who gives life and operates all..

<For even as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave also to the Son to be having life in Himself. -- John 5:25; [ALT3]

<*{The following passage comes at the end of a statement directly describing the Trinity; after mentioning the Holy*

Spirit and the Son it is written concerning the Father}...And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. -- 1 Corinthians 12:6; [KJV]

The Son, Jesus Christ the Righteous, has the role of being the physical member of the Trinity; he represents divinity to all of creation...

<...Because in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. -- Colossians 2:9; [ALT3]

This is why the hardware of the computer exists -- to turn the software into a form that can be interacted with.

Last is the Holy Spirit, and we have already seen from 1 Corinthians above that he is said to know all the thoughts of the Godhead.

Yet there is one more piece to the computer puzzle: what are the processors, memory, and all such necessary internal components? They're technically a part of the hardware but are also where the software is located and utilized; ah, these things are the brain. We have spiritual properties, and their home is in the mind. The brain is the medium of communication internally and externally, but not the originator of the thought process itself. Science in doing away with the existence of the spiritual is left with a body on one side, information on the other, without any way to combine the two.

<{*Quoting from a book by Eccles and Popper*}...In this section, I have talked of physical states and of mental states. I think, however, that the problems with which we are dealing can be made considerably clearer if we introduce a tripartite division. First, there is the physical world -- the universe of physical entities...this I will call "World 1." Second, there is the world of mental states, including states of consciousness and psychological dispositions and unconscious states; this I

will call “World 2.” But there is also a third such world, the world of the contents of thought, and indeed, of the products of the human mind; this I will call “World 3”...*5

If two of the most esteemed scientific philosophers in history need three worlds to explain existence, is it any wonder that man consists of three parts? World 1 is the body, World 2 the soul, and World 3 the spirit.

4. The Lily

<{*Jesus said*} Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. -- Luke 12:27

The Lord didn't say, “Consider the flowers.” Had he done so there probably wouldn't be any point in applying his instruction in a very specific manner; however, he didn't give a general term, but named a specific flower, *the lily*. Why? It is because the general structure of the lily contains a wondrous picture-lesson about the Lord Jesus.

(Again, the following comes from studying internet pictures; I could be a bit off with the technical terminology.) If you look at a budded lily, at the base are six large tepals (which would commonly be called simply *petals*). In the middle there are six long filaments that shoot up to the sky, each capped with a stamen which resembles a crown. In the middle of these filaments, directly in the centre of the flower, is another long filament (called a “style”) which rises even higher than the six stamens. At the very tip of this style, at the very top of the lily, high above the filaments and tepals, is the stigma. This stigma looks like a small bulb that has been spliced into three, equal faces.

Men and women are tepals, the lowest and the quickest to wilt. Above man is the angel, the filaments, the spirits of the

air who help rule over our affairs. Above them is God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the great and everlasting stigma...

It is the Spirit of the reverent Christ (*who has also been perfect angel and perfect man*), the Spirit of the living God, in the midst of the “tepals” and “filaments,” that completes man and angel.

This can be extended to enjoin the depiction of the cherubim as given in Ezekiel 1. There’s a peculiar description in that chapter regarding their wings...

Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each had two touching another [being,] and two covering their bodies. -- 1:11

This is how the verse is rendered in the NASB. A better rendering is found in the mYLT...

And their faces and their wings are separate from above, to each [are] two joining together, and two are covering their bodies.

It is the first part I’m concerned with -- “and their faces and their wings are separate from above,” as opposed to -- “such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above...”

The reason why the NASB splices the sentence is probably because the statement is confusing otherwise; also it may be because there is an accent in the Hebrew which divides the verse at this point. Accent markings however are not divinely inspired; how could they be? Ezekiel didn’t write them, nor is it possible that scribes were able to perfectly recount a sea of minor inflections over hundreds of years.

Yet what does Young’s translation really mean? What is the significance in stating that the faces and wings are separate

from above? Let's turn again to the Bible's great answer key, the book of Revelation...

<...In the center and around [Lit middle of the throne and around] the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first creature [was] like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature [was] like a flying eagle. -- 4:6-7

In the earthly scene of Ezekiel these cherubim were all joined together. In the heavenly scene of Revelation they are separate. There are not four with similar faces, but four unique creatures. Thus they are "separate from above," as the *stigma* at the tip of a *style*. Whether there are actual creatures that look like the cherubim in Ezekiel and Revelation I do not know; either way, as the "Beginning" of Genesis, they have their noblest fulfilment as pictures of the Godhead in Christ. How can it be otherwise, seeing that they are "in the midst of the throne," and also have eyes that seemingly signify omniscience?

The lion is as the Father's royal seat. The calf is the Son in priesthood. The Holy Spirit is the fluttering bird of ethereal revelation, just as he is described in Genesis 1 and at the baptism of Christ. On earth these are joined together in the person of Christ, the real man born in Bethlehem, reared in Nazareth, killed near Jerusalem, resurrected and lifted up to the throne of his former cherubic station. When reflecting on Heaven however it is common to separate them, to refer individually to the members of the Godhead, just as the spliced stigma over the lily.

Chapter 7. Eschatology (End Times Prophecy)

<In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was taken [Lit struck], on that same day the hand of the LORD was upon me and He brought me there...and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze, with a line of flax and a measuring rod [Lit reed] in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway. The man said to me, "Son of man, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and give attention to all that I am going to show you; for you have been brought here in order to show [it] to you. Declare to the house of Israel all that you see." -- Ezekiel 40:1-4; portions

At the end of the visions of Ezekiel we see the man of metal once again, although now he is no longer glowing. In the book of Revelation there is a sea near the throne of God, reminiscent of the bronze laver that was found at the Temple to ceremonially wash...

<...And [there were] seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne [there was something] like a sea of glass, like crystal... -- 4:5-6

At one point in Revelation, at the fullness of God's fury, this sea took on a different form..

<Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, [which are] the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished. And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over [Lit from] the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. -- 15:1-2

In Ezekiel 40 the metal-man is no longer glowing because the LORD of Glory is no longer angry. His wrath having been justly vented and his righteousness perfectly vindicated, he is

ready to reinstate his worship from Jerusalem. Before we get to this point however there are times of trouble to endure, which prophets have warned us about from the dawn of time; moreover, out of the midst of the trouble shall sprout eternal life for many. This is why there's a special blessing promised to those who read the book of Revelation. It will be a future key to unlock the hearts of multitudes.

If you don't have time to read the rest of this book, which walks through Revelation, at least read the following list of mega-signs that God has given us in his Word to confirm the veracity of his reality and of his revealed truth.

1. The rapture of the church. Millions of people will disappear in the blink of an eye as Christians are taken to Heaven before the last years of tribulation come to pass (Revelation 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Job 36:20; Isaiah 57:1; Psalms 12:1, etc.). This doctrine is hated by just about everyone these days, including sound Christians; it is a necessary event however to understand the epochs of God, as we'll discuss later.

Now the rapture is such a great sign that it would seemingly convert the world, yet such will not be the case. One of the major stumbling-blocks will probably be that many people who don't appear to be saved will be raptured. It's possible to call on Christ for salvation with no one knowing and to afterwards backslide and live a fairly carnal life.

Moreover, I don't think children will be raptured, although most dispensationalists teach that they will; that could add to the confusion. Ultimately, there are numerous other culprits that could be blamed for the disappearances, such as UFOs, terrorism, radiation, or large scientific experiments gone wrong (plus based upon Isaiah 28:9 and Leviticus 19:9 I've wondered if some Christians will be allowed to remain behind).

2. Israeli wars. These may even precede the rapture. They will probably involve Lebanon and Syria first (Isaiah 17), and then probably Libya, Turkey, Sudan, and Iran (Ezekiel 38-39). It is my belief that Isaiah and Ezekiel describe two separate skirmishes although some reject this. Also some teach that the war described in Ezekiel is actually synonymous with Armageddon, although I strongly doubt it.

3. Europe will arise as the world superpower, taking its first final form as a ten-nation federation (Daniel 2:40-43, 7:7; some try to flake and form the modern E.U. to fit the prophecy, but I think there will be a new alignment in the future).

4. An eleventh ruler will come along, the Antichrist, and depose three of the ten rulers (Daniel 7:8).

5. The Antichrist will sign a covenant that includes the nation of Israel (Daniel 9:27).

6. A Temple/Tabernacle will be built in Jerusalem (Revelation 11:1-2).

7. There will be lots of famines, earthquakes, and pestilences (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6).

8. There will be a religious leader (or two) who will fool the world with false signs in order to glorify the Antichrist (Revelation 13:11-16).

9. A new economic system will be put in place where people will have to get a mark on their hand or forehead to conduct business transactions. The growth of such things as implantable computer-chips and the move towards a cashless society are stark reminders that the prophetic future is moving closer to being realized (Revelation 13:16-18; *many squabble over the Greek preposition, wondering if the mark will be "on" or "in;" I don't think there's much of a difference, for*

anything implanted or etched will be under the skin yet near the surface).

10. There will be a monstrous world church/religion that shall lead in the satanic deceptions (Revelation 17:1-6).

11. The Antichrist will recover from a head injury and become the ruler of the world (Revelation 13:1-8; although I believe the Antichrist will rise from the dead before the seven-year period begins, most place it towards the middle).

12. The Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and set up an abomination in the Temple/Tabernacle (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-22; *although the more I study the rest of Daniel 8-12 the less I see animal sacrifices and the more I see Gospel proclamation; point being, animal sacrifices this side of the Second Coming will not please God, regardless of the weird trends among dispensationalists who have made the Antichrist into a Muslim and the witnesses into Temple builders*).

13. An asteroid (or whatever is the proper scientific name depending on its consistency) or two will fall to the earth (Revelation 8).

14. Strange demonic creatures will terrorize the people of earth (Revelation 9; some faithful expositors think much of the language is allegorical for warfare, but I don't think such fits the pattern of increasing severity).

15. All the waters of the planet will turn to blood (Revelation 16).

16. The world's armies will converge on Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:1-5).

17. The Lord Jesus will return and slaughter the warriors at the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-21; note that the

Messiah from Heaven fights his own wars, and not his servants).

1. “All Scripture is...Profitable”

[Throughout the rest of the book the mYLT is used for the Old Testament and the ALT3 is used for the New Testament unless otherwise stated.]

A. The Disclosure of the Future

<[The] revelation of [or, disclosure from] Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show to His slaves what [things are] necessary to occur with quickness. And He made [it] known, having sent through His angel [or, messenger, and throughout book] to His slave John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, as many [things] as he also saw. Fortunate [or, Blessed] is the one reading aloud [to the assembly] and the ones hearing the words of the prophecy and keeping [or, obeying] the [things] having been written in it, for the time [is] near! -- Revelation 1:1-3

In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, wrote the following...

See, this alone I have found, that God made man upright, and they -- they have sought out many devices. -- 7:29

Never have his words proved truer than when considering the various modes of interpretation expositors have proposed while handling the book of Revelation. It's clear that the Torah books are histories, that the Psalms are songs, that the Epistles are letters written to assemblies, etc.; so why can't the book of Revelation simply be what it claims to be?

*Fortunate [or, Blessed] is the one reading aloud [to the assembly] and the ones hearing the words of **the prophecy**... - - 1:3*

*And listen! I am coming quickly! Fortunate [is] the one keeping the words of **the prophecy of this scroll**. -- 22:7*

*And he says to me, “Do not seal the words of **the prophecy of this scroll**, for the time is near.” -- 22:10*

*I testify to everyone hearing **the words of the prophecy of this scroll**, if anyone shall add to them, God [is prepared] to add to him the plagues, the ones having been written in this scroll. And if anyone shall take away from the **words of the scroll of this prophecy**, may God take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, the [things] having been written in this scroll. -- 22:18-19*

Also, in case anyone is to be contentious over what the word “prophecy” means, it’s clear that the focal point throughout is nothing short of the second coming of the Messiah:

“Look! He is coming with the clouds,” [Dan 7:13] and “every eye will see Him, even [the ones] who pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth will beat their breasts [fig., mourn] because of Him.” [Zech 12:10] Yes indeed! So be it! - 1:7

I am coming quickly! Be holding fast what you have... -- 3:11

And the angel whom I saw having stood on the sea and on the land, lifted up his right hand to heaven and took an oath by the One living into the ages of the ages [fig., forever and ever], who created heaven and the [things] in it, and the land and the [things] in it, and the sea and the [things] in it, that [there] will be time [fig., delay] no longer. -- 10:5-6

Listen! I am coming like a thief! Fortunate [is] the one keeping watch and keeping his clothes, lest he be walking about naked, and they shall be seeing his shame. -- 16:15

Listen! I am coming quickly! And My reward [is] with Me, to render [or, to repay] to each as his work will be [fig., according to his deeds]. I [am] the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and End. -- 22:12-13

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Be coming!" And the one hearing, let him say, "Be coming!" And the one thirsting, let him come. The one desiring, let him take [the] water of life without cost...The One testifying to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly!" So be it! Yes, be coming, Lord Jesus! -- 22:17, 20

Yet despite all the internal evidence, some claim this is just a history lesson, an encouraging commentary on current events in the time of the early church.

God could have included a world of books in the canon of Scripture, yet he chose just 66. Why wasn't the authentic book of Enoch as mentioned by Jude preserved (see Jude 1:14-15)? What of "the book of the Upright" referenced in Joshua 10:13? What of Paul's letter to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16), or of his missing Corinthian writing(s)? Why were only a few weeks of the life of the Messiah recorded?

The canonical books were chosen because of their special inspiration and purpose, and thus they are bound to have an intentional timeless relevance to the assembly of the LORD. Those who propose that Revelation was only fully discernible to the early Christians are either stating a lack of belief in divine providence or a lack of belief in divine common sense.

B. The Time of the End

A more difficult falsehood to dispute is the belief that Revelation is a prophecy which stretches out over a vast expanse of time, as opposed to describing an apocalypse [using the term in its "cataclysmic" sense throughout] just

prior to the Lord's return. There are many small things within the book that argue against this, but just a couple of the larger points of evidence shall be covered at this time.

(1) Tick-Tock

The book of Revelation comes equipped with a concrete chronology:

*And leave out the court, the [one] outside of the temple, and do not measure it, because it was given to the nations [or, Gentiles], and they will trample the holy city **forty and two months** [i.e., 3½ years]. -- 11:2*

*And I will give [power] to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy **a thousand, two hundred [and] sixty days** [i.e., 3½ years], having been clothed with sackcloth. -- 11:3*

*And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has there a place having been prepared by God, so that there they shall be nourishing her **a thousand, two hundred [and] sixty days** [i.e., 3½ years]. -- 12:6*

*And a mouth was given to it speaking great [things] and blasphemy, and authority was given to it to make war **forty-two months** [i.e., 3½ years]. -- 13:5*

These times wouldn't seem to describe a long or indefinite period, if God's Word means anything. Also, the significance of the above numbers will come into play again in the next point...

(2) Daniel the Prophet

If the Bible consisted of ninety-nine beatitudes and one small prophecy, then perhaps the prophecy wouldn't be what it seems. The Bible however consists of many different genres of writing and countless prophecies, many of which find their

match in the book of Revelation. The closest brother to the book of Revelation is the book of Daniel.

Because the book of Daniel is such a powerful testimony to the reality and power of God, in that it gives so many precise predictions that have proven true with the passing of time, it is an object of revulsion among liberal scholars. They say the book was written after the era of Daniel by several hundreds of years, its purpose being to encourage the Israelites during a time of hardship (sound familiar?). This is worthless conjecture, and for true Christians, it is also of a blasphemous nature, for such speculation directly contradicts the words of the Lord Jesus Christ:

<Therefore, when you* see the ‘abomination of the desolation’ [or, the ‘detestable thing that causes desecration’ - Daniel 8:13, LXX; 9:27, LXX; 12:11] {*also 11:31*}, the one having been spoken [of] through Daniel the prophet, having stood in [the] holy place (the one reading, let him be understanding [or, be paying attention]), then the [people] in Judea must be fleeing to the mountains. -- Matthew 24:15-16

The Lord Jesus called Daniel a prophet, and spoke of him as being the author of the book, even its latter parts. The details of the “70 weeks” prophecy was recounted earlier, but it’s so important that it needs to be reviewed.

Gabriel visited Daniel and told him that seventy weeks would transpire to bring in everlasting righteousness and redemption. Sixty-nine weeks (or “sevens,” indicating a seven-year period) expired right when the Messiah came; the last week will commence when the Little Horn makes a covenant with Israel, which he breaks halfway through. This would seem to be the obvious explanation for the references to three-and-a-half years in Revelation {*although I’ve toyed with the idea that three periods are described in Revelation, one period being a forerunner, thus giving ten years/the Days of Awe; time will tell, as with all our poor attempts of*

prediction; the important thing is that the prophetic variables are being made known, even if we're not completely sure of their value or where they fit into the equation}. There will be three-and-a-half years of relative peace under the Antichrist; then he betrays his pact and proclaims himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2). After this there are three-and-a-half years of great distress throughout the entire world...

<At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt... But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, **until the time of the end**. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase... And from the time that the regular {} burnt offering{} is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days... -- Daniel 12:1-2, 4, 11 [ESV]

2. The Throne

A. The Consummation of Redemption

<After these things I saw, and look!, a door having been opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard [was] like a trumpet-blast speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show to you what must occur after these [things]." And immediately I came to be in spirit [or, in [the] Spirit]. And look! A throne was standing in heaven (and [Someone was] sitting on the throne), similar in appearance to a jasper stone and to a sardius, and [there was] a rainbow around the throne, likewise [there was the] appearance of emeralds. And around the throne [were] twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones the twenty-four elders [were] sitting, having been clothed in white garments, and on their heads [were] golden

victor's wreaths...And I saw in the right hand of the One sitting on the throne a scroll having been written inside and outside, having been sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?" And no one in the heaven above nor on the earth nor under the earth was being able to open the scroll, nor to be looking at it. And I began weeping greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll, nor to be looking at it. And one of the elders says to me, "Stop weeping! Listen! The Lion overcame, the One from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the One opening the scroll and its seven seals." And I saw in [the] middle of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in [the] middle of the elders, a Lamb having stood as if having been slain [i.e., Jesus, cp. John 1:29], having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits [fig., which is the seven-fold Spirit] of God being sent into all the earth. And He came and has taken out of the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. -- Revelation 4:1-4, 5:1-7

On the sixth day of creation God made man from the dust of the earth and charged him to have dominion over all (Genesis 1:27-28). He then put this first man, Adam, in the Garden of Eden, and caused him to be a keeper of this special place of communion between the human race and God (Genesis 2). The man would not fulfil his duties however; the creation (i.e., Eve and the serpent) ruled over him to everyone's demise, and the place of the communion of the Lord quickly became the place of the curse. But God did not give up; he promised that a child would one day be born through whom redemption would come (Genesis 3:15). Thus there began two great thoughts that echoed throughout the pages of the Old Testament: the promised offspring and the act of redemption.

The problem with the redeeming of the earth and the restoration of intimacy between God and mankind was the lack of a perfect son of Adam. The blessing was forfeited

with the first transgression; therefore someone with moral perfection was needed to qualify as an adequate heir (and propitiation was needed to satisfy the meted punishment). This is where the promised seed comes in.

Apart from Genesis 3:15 (which was actually directed to the serpent), Abraham was the first man to receive the promise of being a progenitor of this perfect descendant, with Isaac and Jacob being given the same word of blessing...

<{*God speaking to Isaac*}...Sojourn in this land, and I am with you, and bless you, for to you and to your seed I give all these lands. And I have established the oath which I have sworn to Abraham your father; and I have multiplied your seed as stars of the heavens, and I have given to your seed all these lands. And blessed themselves in your seed have all nations of the earth. -- Genesis 26:3-4

A further oath of exclusive kingship would be given to the tribe of Judah and then specifically to the House of David. Thus the Lord Jesus, a distant son of David and Abraham (Matthew 1:1), through his sinlessness, through his complete submission to the will of the Father, even unto the atoning death on a Cross, was fit to receive for mankind the authority that Adam lost at the dawn of the age. This is obvious given his speech upon the morning of his resurrection (see Matthew 28).

Thus it is Christ who has had all things put in subjection to him, and it is Christ who also is able to lead us to the Tree of Life (which is himself, by way of penal substitution, by way of being “hanged on a tree” [Acts 5:30]). These benefits are expressly demonstrated in Revelation by the presence of the twenty-four elders. Various interpretations have been suggested as to their identity, but there is enough evidence to be certain that they are simply representatives of all the men and women justified by faith in the Messiah.

1. They are wearing victor's wreaths and white robes; the believers in Jesus are promised such crowns (Revelation 2:10) and garments (Revelation 3:5).
2. The number twenty-four appears again in Revelation 21. There the twelve gates of Heaven have the names of the twelve patriarchs of Israel and the wall has the names of the twelve apostles. Implicitly these are synonymous with the twenty-four elders; for the city is literal, but also calls to mind certain groups of God's saints described elsewhere in the book. For example, the wall is said to measure 144,000 cubits, doubtless in reference to the 144,000 tribulation missionaries of Revelation 7.
3. Israelite rulers in the Old Testament and church officials in the New Testament are called "elders."
4. In 1 Chronicles 24 the priests were divided into twenty-four courses, represented by twenty-four chiefs. In Revelation 1:6 the saved are said to have been made a kingdom of priests (or "*kings and priests*").
5. They would seem to be comparable to the ten world kings who shall support the Beast. In Revelation 17 these are described as kings without a kingdom who reign with the Beast for an hour. The twenty-four elders in contrast have been given an enduring kingdom. Also, the ten kings give their authority to the Beast, just as the twenty-four elders cast their crowns at the feet of the Lord (Revelation 4:10).
6. The twenty-four elders sing of being saved by the Lamb:

<And they sing a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and You redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." -- 5:9

So with the Lamb taking the scroll he is taking the reins of the kingdom that he alone has the right to, as one of the names given him in Revelation 19 so poignantly declares...

<And out of His mouth proceeds a sharp, double-edged sword, so that with it He should strike down the nations. And He will shepherd them with an iron staff. And He Himself treads the winepress of the wine of the rage of the wrath of God, the Almighty. And He has on the robe and on His thigh a name having been written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. -- verses 15-16

B. The Seal Judgments

When the dust settles after the rapture of the church and the Middle Eastern wars, mankind will think to have found itself in a most favourable climate, as if it has braved Judgment Day and made it safely through. It shall be ready to form once and for all the "brave new world"....

<Why have nations tumultuously assembled? And do peoples meditate vanity? Station themselves do kings of the earth, and princes have been united together, against Hashem, and against his Messiah: "Let us draw off their cords, and cast from us their thick bands." -- Psalm 2:1-3

It's amazing that society is stable at all. There are enough weapons of mass destruction and enough psychotic people willing to use them that the relative tranquillity which many nations enjoy is both a miracle and a gift from God. Many have come to take it for granted. I remember hearing a smarmy atheist stating adamantly that there will never be another European war, that the type of atrocities which the continent faced in the 20th Century are gone forever.

Wake up dreamer! We may now have central heating and satellite television, yet mankind has not evolved. It is the complete and utter grace of God that keeps society together.

What would happen if he began to leave us more and more to ourselves?

<Let no one in any way deceive you, for [it will not come] {i.e., *the day of the LORD*} unless the apostasy [Or falling away from the faith] comes first, and the man of lawlessness {*some manuscripts have "sin"*} is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god [Or everyone who is called God] or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God {*some manuscripts add, "as God"*}, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains [will do so] until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming [Or presence]; [that is,] the one whose coming [Or presence] is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs [Or attesting miracles] and false wonders... -- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9; [NASB]

There's not another fitting explanation for the above passage other than that it is the Holy Spirit who restrains lawlessness now, and therefore he must be the one to be taken away before lawlessness fully blooms with the man of sin; yet what does this really imply? Many evangelicals have gone astray via this passage as it is a typical oil-slick of dispensationalism. Some have imagined that because the Holy Spirit is taken away then no one can be saved during the apocalypse, or if they are saved, it has more to do with their efforts than of grace, etc. etc. All such talk is nonsense.

Mankind has been the same since Adam, God has been the same from eternity past, and the way of salvation has been the same since the dawning of creation. Nothing regarding the justification of sinners ever changes. It is always based

simply upon repenting of being a sinner and accepting the sacrifice of God, his slain Messiah, and receiving the gift of eternal forgiveness, thereby being sealed by the Holy Spirit for redemption, and being filled by the Holy Spirit for guidance and sanctification.

What some Christian teachers fail to grasp is that just because the Holy Spirit is taken away doesn't mean that he must stay away. There will be a second key outpouring. The first dynamic outpouring happened at Pentecost in the book of Acts. The Lord Jesus ascended to Heaven and ten days later the apostles and their friends received the overflowing presence of the divine person in their midst.

Now it is helpful to understand that there are two aspects of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. One is the daily sustenance, the daily light from on high we all need to be guided and to grow, comparable to Elijah's cruse of oil. Every believer from the beginning of time has received this same portion. The other aspect is the powerful, dynamic influence that is characteristic of the Christian dispensation, as described by Joel and in the book of Acts, comparable to Elisha's overflowing vessels. Don't get me wrong; there are not two blessings that individual believers must seek in some sort of judicial way. All things are given to the believer for life and for piety at the moment of salvation; yet apart from personal religion, corporate ministries overflowing with divine blessings are something to be sought, just as farmers await rainfall.

So the first Pentecost will expire at the time of the rapture. Before the end times begin in full swing the Lord Jesus will call his people home to be with him, as related in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, etc. This will be the "removal" of the Holy Spirit. Yet even right after this time, when people repent and call on Jesus they will be given the "cruse of Elijah" so to speak; they will still be "saved," sealed and personally filled by the Holy Spirit of God. There may be a season however

between the rapture and between the second great Pentecost, the second great outpouring as in Acts.

Actually, the before mentioned passage from Joel denotatively describes this second outpouring. Also note how Jeremiah 16:16 clearly calls for two separate body of evangelizing believers, the “fishers” and the “hunters”...

<Lo, I am sending for many fishers, an affirmation of Hashem, and they have fished them; **and after this** I send for many hunters, and they have hunted them from off every mountain, and from off every hill, and from holes of the rocks.

Just as two leavened (signifying sin) loaves were waived by the priests at Pentecost (see Leviticus 23:17-20), so are there two assemblies [*similar to the two exilic sons of Joseph and Moses*]. Since there are two, there must be a divider, and that divider is the end of the parenthesis, the rapture of the church. It is obvious that the first harvest has already commenced:

<Now walking about by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother, [that is] Simon’s [brother], casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Come after Me, and I will make you* to become fishers of people.” -- Mark 1:16-17 [NASB]

The “hunters” can only begin after the “fishers” are taken out of the way. In addition, there are many references throughout the Bible to there being “latter” and “early” rain, spring and fall rain. The first “rain” fell during the spring of the Lord’s death, resurrection, and ascension; the second “rain” may come in the fall.

Moving on, as we noted in the opening list, great wars with Israel will probably happen very early during this period and precede the opening of the seals. Isaiah 17 describes a major northern war involving Syria and Lebanon which closes with

the reference to a massive invasion, tantamount to a tsunami of warriors. The Gog/Magog war is the great prophetic tidal wave that shall wash ashore the sands of Israel. It's described in detail by Ezekiel in his 38th and 39th chapters. Let's note the beginning of his discourse which highlights the nations that shall be involved...

<And the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Son of man, set your face toward **Gog** of the land of **Magog**, the prince of **Rosh, Meshech** [Or chief prince of Meshech] and **Tubal**, and prophesy against him and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech [Or chief prince of Meshech] and Tubal. I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired [Or clothed in full armor], a great company [with] buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords; **Persia**, Ethiopia [Lit **Cush**] and **Put** with them, all of them [with] shield and helmet; **Gomer** with all its troops; **Beth-togarmah** [from] the remote parts of the north with all its troops -- many peoples with you. Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword..."'" -- 38:1-8; [NASB]

A few of the nations are very easy to identify...

<Libya (Put) remains today, bearing the same name, lying just west of Egypt. Persia, also remaining to the present, is now known as Iran. Biblical Ethiopia (Cush, KŠ) is not the Ethiopia of today but rather the land just to the south of Egypt, Northern Sudan.*1

Gomer and Beth-togarmah are a bit more obscure, but both were most likely located in or around modern Turkey (ancient "Asia Minor")...

<Togarmah (TGRM) presents only a little more difficulty. Togarmah was a descendant of Noah through Japheth then Gomer (Gen.10:1-3). He is known to Assyrian records as Tilgarimmu (TLGRM). The inserted “L” is not uncommon and, more than likely, was silent. Tilgarimmu was a city state in Eastern Anatolia (Asia Minor, modern Turkey), more specifically, as Ryrie states, “the southeastern part of Turkey near the Syrian border.” This identification is generally acknowledged by all.

...GMR {*Gomer*} is well known to the ancient world as Gimarraï (GMR) of north central Asia Minor (Cappadocia). These people are also known as the Cimmerians (KMR, note the change in gutturals from “G” to “C”). This seems to be the simplest, most obvious interpretation.*1

So up to this point we’ve identified Turkey (which lies north of Israel), Sudan (which lies south), Libya (which lies west), and Iran (which lies east). This fits the Biblical concept of “Gog/Magog” perfectly. In the book of Revelation it is written that after the 1,000 year Messianic Age there will be a second Gog/Magog war which will completely end the world. It’s worth noting how this battle is described...

<When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore [Lit sea]. -- 20:7-8; [NASB]

Here Gog/Magog is comparable to the “four corners of the earth,” which confirms our Turkey, Iran, Sudan, and Libya interpretation. Now these nations probably just describe the outer limits, and don’t mention exhaustively every participating people. In other words, in our language Ezekiel might just simply say *North Africa and the Middle East*.

What's a bit more difficult to identify is just who's being described at the opening of chapter 38; i.e., Gog, Magog, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. Because Ezekiel lumps all these proper nouns together it's most likely that all the titles are describing just one place; but where? It's argued back and forth, but Magogites were probably Scythians, modern day Russians, as related by Josephus. Now many spiritually-inclined commentators run with this and then see *Rosh* as a predictive name for "Russia," *Meshech* for "Moscow," and *Tubal* for "Tobolsk." I'm not really sure if this is right; I'm completely undecided.

Before moving on with the list of the seven seals let's take a quick look at what is said to transpire in this war.

1. Chapter 38

Verse 10: Thoughts arise in Gog's heart to go against Israel "on that day."

13: Some nearby nations question Gog's intentions.

15-16: Gog and his hoards come upon Israel as a cloud.

18-20: The Almighty is enraged at Gog and sends a mighty earthquake upon Israel.

21-22: The Almighty calls for a sword upon Gog, as there is mention of a fiery fight that finishes the armies off.

2. Chapter 39

After a few words of introduction the theme from 38:21-22 is picked up again..

Verse 6: Since Magog was responsible for the war, an unnamed "coastland" nation will "send fire" against it, a probable reference to missile attacks.

9-16: Israel will be left with a giant mess on its hands after this huge assemblage is slaughtered, thus a massive clean-up effort is described. There is also an important chronological note tucked away here. It is written that the weapons from this war will be burned for seven years. These seven years should probably be seen as occurring before the Second Coming, which would seem to place the war as transpiring early in the tribulation period.

17-20: God calls for a massive swarm of birds to feed on all the dead carcasses.

21-24: The nations of the world have had their eyes open to the fact that there is a God who fights for Israel. After the Jews were treated horrifically during WWII the nations had a bit of compassion and philo-Semitism became honourable. Now-a-days anti-Semitism is growing to gargantuan proportions again and the Jews find themselves being hated afresh. Similarly, after Gog/Magog the nations will probably cosy up a bit to Israel, hence the Antichrist's Zionist overtures. The Jews should not be deceived; this "goodwill" shall be very short-lived.

This closes the judgment section of Ezekiel, as the rest of the book describes the Messianic Age. It is tempting based upon the quick succession of the description of glory in the following chapters to assume that immediately after the war of Gog/Magog is the reign of the Christ. Many Jewish and Christian commentators interpret Ezekiel in this fashion, but I think it is a mistake. Later in Revelation we are given a fuller picture of Armageddon (the *real* final battle) and the two wars are nothing alike. Even those of Judaism should be very wary of this oversimplification; for like I wrote above, has it been the experience of the Jew that the goodwill of gentiles lasts? Certainly not. The gentiles need a change of heart, and not just a temporal change in the tone of liberal news outlets. Also, in the Old Testament the battle of Armageddon is

described as well (see the last chapter of Joel), and again, the two events seem nothing alike.

So anyway, if I'm right and the rapture and the War of Gog/Magog both precede the opening of the seals than there shall be many hopeful, unregenerate people with false dreams of the future at that time. Oblivious to them shall be the fact that the heavenly Father has just given his beloved Son the sole title deed (see Jeremiah 32 for a semblance), and he shall waste no time in opening this seven-sealed book, unleashing judgment after judgment upon mankind.

Also, as we go along considering the descriptions of such, note that all the events of this particular block are very earth-bound, the Lord just using "natural phenomena" to accomplish his will. The next block will be greater and heavenly in origin; the last will be as great and powerful as can be imagined, showcasing divinity. So let us now consider the things that shall occur with the opening of the scroll in Heaven, which ultimately leads to the breaking of the Antichrist's messianic-styled covenant with Israel..

(1) <And I saw that the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, like a voice of thunder, "Be coming and see!" And look! A white horse, and the one sitting on it having a bow, and a victor's wreath was given to him, and he went out conquering, and so that he should conquer. -- Revelation 6:1-2

<When this action starts on earth, the Lamb is in heaven at the coronation ceremony. The Lamb is the Lord and he is holding the little book, the title deed of earth, in his hand. As he breaks the first seal, the rider on the white horse makes his appearance on the earth below. Therefore, the rider cannot be the true Christ. However he comes in imitation of the true Christ. In chapter 19 we shall see that Christ comes riding out of heaven in mighty power on a white horse...so here we have

his imitator coming on a white horse. He is the Wicked One, the Lawless One, the Son of Perdition...*2

(2) <And when He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Be coming!" And another horse, fiery [red], went out. And it was given to the one sitting on it to take peace from the earth, so that [people] should slay one another. And a great sword was given to him. -- Revelation 6:3-4

<The first horse couldn't be Christ, could it? Because when he brings peace to this earth it's going to be permanent. This was short-lived. Immediately after the first horse rode, the white horse, then here comes the red horse of war on the earth. You see the peace which the rider on the white horse brought to the earth, it was temporary and it was counterfeit. The Antichrist presents himself as a ruler who brings peace to the world but he cannot guarantee it, for God says, "There's no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."*3

(3) <And when He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Be coming and see!" And look! A black horse, and the one sitting on it having a balance in his hand. And I heard a voice in [the] midst of the four living creatures saying, "A choenix [about one quart or one liter] of wheat for a denarius [i.e., one day's wages], and three choenixes of barley for a denarius, and you shall not damage the olive oil and the wine!" -- Revelation 6:5-6

<The rider on the black horse is commanded to leave untouched the luxuries of the rich, but the staples, the wheat and barley of the poor, these are to be weighed out a pinch at a time.*4

<The price of wheat (good food) and barley (cheap cattle food) will be very high. A quart of wheat would provide one meal, but it would cost a whole day's wages. In John's day a

denarius would purchase 8 to 16 times as much food as what he said it will purchase in the future.*5

(4) <And when He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Be coming and see!” And look! A pale [fig., sickly] green horse, and the one sitting on it, [the] name to him [is] Death, and The Realm of the Dead [Gr., Hades] was following him. And authority was given to him over the fourth of the earth to kill with sword and with famine and with death {i.e., plagues}, and by the wild animals of the earth. -- Revelation 6:7-8

Here would be a good time to pause and reflect upon the two other prominent places these seal judgments are alluded to in Scripture.

The first is in the book of Zechariah, chapters 1 and 6. Coloured horses with chariots are mentioned as going forth throughout the earth at the command of God. It’s hard to know if the Holy Spirit intends us to view these chapters (particularly Zechariah 6 and Revelation 6) as one comprehensive unit or not. If so, “the fourth of the earth,” would not mean that a fourth of the population is killed, but that a quarter of the earth is affected by the fourth judgment. The chariots of Zechariah (for the most part) go in different directions; therefore, if this is the same scene as described in Revelation 6, then the first four seal judgments might just impact specific quarters, and not the entire globe. This would be sensible as well, given that many of the subsequent trumpet judgments are meted out by thirds.

Secondly, the disciples asked the Christ about the end days, and his response strikingly follows the book of Revelation (even though it was given over half a century before Revelation was written):

<And answering, Jesus said to them, “Be watching lest anyone leads you* astray [fig., deceives you*]. For many will

come in My Name, saying, 'I am the Christ' -- and they will lead many astray [fig., will deceive many] {*seal 1*}. But you* will begin to be hearing of wars and rumors of wars {*seal 2*}. Take care! Stop being alarmed! For it is necessary [for] all [these things] to take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will be raised up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and [there] will be famines {*seal 3*} and plagues {*seal 4*} and earthquakes in [various] places. But all these [things are the] beginning of birth pains [fig., of great sufferings]. Then they will deliver you* up to tribulation [or, affliction] and will kill you*, and you* shall be hated by all the nations on account of My name {*seal 5*}. -- Matthew 24:4-9

As we shall see with the forthcoming description of the fifth seal, the persecution of Christians begins even before the midway point...

(5) <And when He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of the ones having been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony of the Lamb which they were holding. And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Until when [fig., How long], O Master [or, Sovereign], the Holy and the True, do You not judge [fig., until You judge] and avenge our blood from the ones dwelling on the earth?" And a long, white robe was given to each of them. And it was said to them that they should rest themselves yet a time [fig., a while longer], until which [time] also their fellow-slaves and their brothers [and sisters] and the ones being about to be killed even as they [had been] shall complete [their course; or, their number]. -- Revelation 6:9-11

The root cause of so many great persecutions has proven to be the fear of defeat. Pharaoh, when seeing the greatness of the Hebrews in his kingdom, said:

<...Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they

multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land. -- Exodus 1:9-10; [ES V]

Pharaoh really had nothing to fear concerning a violent revolt, that is, until he actually started to persecute; for then God intervened and overthrew Egypt himself. So the Beast will be paranoid over dissent. Everyone must bow to his will, be consolidated under his power, or he shall feel that all is lost. But in persecuting the servants of God his sole accomplishment is the overthrow of his kingdom:

<But shall not God surely execute justice for His chosen ones, the ones crying out to Him day and night? And is He [not] waiting patiently by them? I say to you*, He will execute justice for them with quickness... -- Luke 18:7-8

In the fifth seal they cry out, and with the next few judgments they are powerfully vindicated, leaving the Beast no choice but to destroy the false religious system, casting off all pretences. His mask shall then be removed, and so shall the remnant of God's restraint.

(6) <And I saw when He opened the sixth seal, and a great earthquake occurred, and the sun became black as sackcloth [made] of hair, and the whole moon became like blood. And the stars of the sky [i.e., possibly meteors or comets] fell to the earth like a fig tree having cast its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind. [cp. Joel 2:10; 2:31; Matt 24:29] And the sky was split [fig., receded] like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. [cp. Isaiah 34:4] And the kings of the earth and the nobles and the commanding officers [or, Chiliarchs; i.e., military officers in charge of 600-1000 soldiers] and the rich and the strong and every slave and free person hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. And they say to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from [the] face of the One sitting on the throne and from the

wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath came, and who is being able to stand?" -- Revelation 6:12-17

It's important to establish exactly what did and didn't happen with the breaking of this seal. What didn't happen: the end of the age...

<Men's hearts are now failing them with fear as they look at what is coming on the earth. They feel that the day of wrath has come. In this they are wrong, for these things are only 'the beginning of sorrows' (Matthew 24:8).*6

Some commentators see similarities with the sixth seal and the seventh bowl (the very last judgment) and conclude that they are both the same thing. They then have to contrive a very strange parallelism theory with the judgments of Revelation that makes a complete mind-boggling mystery of things. The seventh bowl causes thus: "every island fled away, and mountains were not found" (Revelation 16:20). The sixth seal causes thus: "every mountain and island were moved out of their places." So it is obvious that the sixth seal is a lighter precursor to the great judgment to come.

What did happen: the end of the Lord's low-key dealings...

He ruled the world with a rod of iron, causing the natural order to trouble people heatedly, that they might consider their ways. He upheld society graciously, giving everyone space to seek him. And what did they do? They slew hoards of his faithful servants. So now the Lord will increase the signs and judgments; all heaven and Hell shall break loose, society shall crumble and become chaotic, and the wild beast will act tamely no more; but having broken his covenant and declared himself to be God, he will begin to be filled with false gods and become a walking mass of the deepest darkness. The great tribulation will truly be upon the world.

Before considering this time period I want to quickly note the fact that we don't have to wait to see the foretaste of the prophesied shaking of the natural world. For the past few decades most secular scientists of the environment have been decrying the dangers that are facing global climate, just as the Bible predicted a few thousand years ago.

C. Empty Boasts (The False King)

A lot has already been said about the Antichrist throughout this book, but there are a few more things that need to be stated to round out the picture of the rider on the white horse.

<...And the dragon gave to it his power and his throne and great authority. And one of its heads [was] as [if] having been slain to death [fig., mortally wounded], and its wound of death [fig., fatal wound] was healed. And the whole earth marveled after the beast. And they prostrated themselves in worship [or, reverence, and in all references to the beast or dragon] before the dragon, the one having given the authority to [the] beast; and they prostrated themselves in worship before the beast, saying, "Who [is] like the beast, and who [is] able to wage war with it?" -- Revelation 13:2-4

It has been stated already that a slain leader shall arise from the dead and drive Europe to world domination. We can see from the quote how people will boast and take confidence in his unmatched power and success. Another king was once so lauded of his people...

<And Samuel brings near the whole tribes of Israel, and the tribe of Benjamin is captured { *selected by divine lot* }, and he brings near the tribe of Benjamin by its families, and the family of Matri is captured, and Saul son of Kish is captured, and they seek him, and he has not been found. And they ask again at Hashem, "Has the man yet come hither?" And Hashem says, "Lo, he has been hidden near the vessels {Hebrew, "*kaleem*" [utensils/implements/vessels/tools]}."

And they run and bring him thence, and he stationed himself in the midst of the people, and he is higher than any of the people from his shoulder and upward. And Samuel says unto all the people, "Have you seen him on who Hashem has fixed, for there is none like him among all the people?" And all the people shout, and say, "Let the king live!" -- 1 Samuel 10:20-24

Saul was a sight to see, but he had a weak heart, and would eventually become obsessed with hatred of David. Samuel's words, "there is none like him," shall be as the flattery offered the Antichrist. But what does God say? *Behold, he is hiding himself among the "kaleem"* [utensils/implements/vessels/tools]. What does that mean?

<...All Israel went down to the Philistines, each to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, and his hoe. The charge was two-thirds of a shekel [Hebrew *pim*] for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to fix the hoes. -- 1 Samuel 13:20-21 [NASB]

Jay Green's *Literal Version*, the *Revised Standard Version*, and the *New King James Version* leave the term "pim" untranslated, while many others give a monetary figure; it's mainly the older Bibles such as the *King James Version* and *Young's Literal Translation* that are at a loss to translate it properly. It has become clear through archaeology that a "pim" was a coin worth two-thirds of a shekel, i.e., 66.6%. The two Beasts will initially claim to be of God the Father and will claim to be doing exploits through the Holy Spirit, even causing another Temple/Tabernacle to be constructed in Jerusalem [a Temple is most likely, yet the Greek word given in relevant prophecies isn't specific]; but they will deny the Son. Regarding the Godhead, two out of three aren't enough:

<Who is the liar, except the one denying that Jesus is the Christ [or, the Messiah]? This one is the antichrist, the one

denying the Father and the Son. Everyone denying the Son neither has the Father. -- 1 John 2:22-23

The title of a book released decades ago was *666/1000*, obviously contrasting the Beast's number to the years of the future reign of the Lord Jesus. The Antichrist falls well short of being able to deliver a Messianic Age.

3. The Altar

A. The First Three Trumpets

<And when He opened the seventh seal, silence occurred in heaven [for] about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who have stood before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar holding a golden incense burner. And much incense was given to him, so that he should offer [it] with the prayers of all the holy ones on the golden altar, the [one] before the throne. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the holy ones ascended out of [the] hand of the angel before God. And the angel has taken [or, took] the incense burner and filled it from the fire of the altar, and he threw [it] to the earth. And [there] occurred peals of thunder and voices and lightning flashes and an earthquake. And the seven angels, the ones having the seven trumpets, prepared themselves so that they should sound the trumpets. -- Revelation 8:1-6

This matches a second name given to the Lord in Revelation 19:

<...And having been clothed with a robe having been covered with [or, dipped in] blood, and His name is called, The Word of God. -- verse 13

The Beast shall write the terms of his covenant but shall be unable to fulfil them. As soon as it is no longer expedient to side with the Jews, he shall betray them. The Temple or

Tabernacle that he helped construct will be desecrated by him, as he floods the land and chases the believing Jews out into the wilderness.

Yet in contrast to all this is Jesus Christ in Heaven. Unlike the Beast who shall applaud himself at this time, the Lord in Revelation 8 is simply serving his Father. Moreover, being compelled by love, he meekly undertook all the trials and pains of his suretyship, announcing God's Word and proffering God's blood:

<Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life on behalf of his friends. -- John 15:13

Having become the author and finisher of his people's deliverance, here we see him act as their concerned intercessor. They belong to him, and matter to him, and so he pours out their prayers before the throne and casts fire upon the earth. Why the casting of fire?

Well it is written in Revelation 13 that the second Beast, the False Prophet, causes fire to come down out of heaven onto the earth for all to see (verse 13). Such a demonstration is reminiscent of Elijah, who challenged the priests of a false god to a spiritual duel in Israel. The god who answered by fire was the real god. Elijah won this contest of course, yet it appears as if this time the Lord will allow falsehood to win for a short season. Then, after the prayers of the martyrs are offered, he sends forth his own fiery response...

<And the first [one] sounded [his] trumpet, and there occurred hail and fire having been mixed with blood, and it was thrown to the earth; and the third of the earth was burned up, and the third of the trees was burned up, and all green grass was burned up. And the second angel sounded [his] trumpet, and [something] like a great burning mountain was thrown into the sea, and the third of the sea became blood. And the third of the creatures in the sea, the ones having life,

died, and the third of the ships were utterly destroyed. And the third angel sounded [his] trumpet, and a great star fell out of the sky [i.e., possibly a meteor or comet], burning like a torch, and it fell on the third of the rivers and on the springs of the waters. And the name of the star is called Wormwood [“Bitterness”], and the third of the waters became [fig., turned] into wormwood, and many of the people died from the waters, because they were made bitter. -- Revelation 8:7-11

There is a poignant aspect of these judgments that beg to be discussed; however, there needs to be an explanation of the chronology used in this book to properly explain it.

Everyone who literally interprets the book of Revelation understands that there will be the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments, and also understands that they will be unleashed within a seven-year time frame (approximately). The major challenge is just how to construct a specific timeline for these judgments.

It’s not the thing to argue about (!), but it seems most sensible to think that the first three-and-a-half years shall witness the unleashing of the seal judgments; then after the abomination of desolation occurs and the apostate world church is destroyed in favour of worshipping the Beast, the trumpet judgments transpire, spread out over the greater part of the last three-and-a-half years. Finally the bowls are poured out in a very quick manner just before the Lord returns; thus there is a continual increase not only in the power of the judgments but also in the frequency.

Now let’s discuss the intriguing “mountain burning with fire.” This not only points to an “asteroid” strike, but John’s description also sheds light on its spiritual significance. Concerning faith, the Lord Jesus Christ said while travelling to the Temple:

<For positively, I say to you*, whoever says to this mountain, “Be taken up and be cast into the sea” and does not doubt in his heart, but believes [or, has faith] that what he says is going to happen, it will be [granted] to him whatever he says.
-- Mark 11:23

Concerning the great earthquake that shall accompany the resurrection of the witnesses, it is written that “the tenth of the city fell” (11:12). In Ezekiel 45:1 the inhabitants of Israel during the Messianic Age are instructed to set aside a holy place where the Temple can reside with its ministrants. It’s an intriguing possibility that the “tenth” of the city may mean “tithe,” a token portion set aside for the quasi-worship of Hashem. The Lord thus destroys this whole portion, which would probably include Mount Moriah, also causing a great mountain (i.e., an asteroid) to fall into the sea, as if it were Moriah itself.

B. The Last Four Trumpets

<And the fourth angel sounded [his] trumpet, and the third of the sun was struck and the third of the moon and the third of the stars, so that the third of them would be darkened, and the day should not shine [for] the third of it, and the night likewise...And the fifth angel sounded [his] trumpet, and I saw a star having fallen out of the sky to the earth. And the key of the shaft of the bottomless pit [or, of the abyss, and throughout book] was given to him. And he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and smoke ascended out of the shaft like [the] smoke of a burning furnace, and the sun was darkened, also the air, from the smoke of the shaft. And out of the smoke came forth locusts to the earth. And power [to sting] was given to them, as scorpions of the earth have power. And it was said to them that they should not damage the grass of the earth nor any green [plant] nor any tree, except the people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And it was given to them that they should not be killing them, but that they should be tormented five

months...They have over them a king, [the] angel of the bottomless pit...And the sixth angel sounded [his] trumpet, and I heard a voice out of the four horns of the golden altar, the [one] before God, saying to the sixth angel, the one having the trumpet, "Release the four angels, the ones having been bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four angels were released, the ones having been prepared for the hour and for the day and month and year, so that they shall be killing the third of people. And the number of the armies of the horse [fig., of the cavalry] [was] ten thousand [times] ten thousand [i.e., 100 million] {or 200 million}, and I heard the number of them. And I saw the horses in the vision and the ones sitting on them [looking] like this: having breastplates of fiery [red] and hyacinth [blue] and sulfurous [or, brimstone] [yellow]; and the heads of the horses [were] like [the] heads of lions, and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and sulfur [or, brimstone]... -- Revelation 8:12-9:17; portions

The smiting of the heavenly bodies in the fourth seal probably means they are just smitten from sight, and could simply be a consequence of the smoke of the pit. Now there is much debate over just what the creatures described in the fifth and sixth seals truly are. Logic and literalness beg them to be something more than just some great army; logic, because there were already great wars in the first three-and-a-half years, so warfare alone could hardly be an increase of intensity after an asteroid and/or comet; literalness, because the passage describes the locust-like creatures as coming "out of the smoke," and not from any nation's arsenal. I like the words of Jesse Hendley on these subjects...

<{Concerning the locusts} Here is the Lord letting loose hellish, demonic locusts upon people, not to kill them but to torture them. Demons out of hell! You may say, "Well, that's allegorical." But if so, what are you going to make it mean? That is why many people go astray in their Bible study. Take the Word literally. God is going to send an angel to open up

the pit and let loose these demons, these fallen angels, and they will torment people...

{*Concerning the horsemen*} The Euphrates River is literal. These angels are literal. They are bound there because they are destructive. These angels out of hell are going to kill at least a billion people...Somebody said to me one time, "I get frightened when you preach like this. You scare me"...Unsaved people ought to be afraid.*7

The only human appearance in chapter 9 *could* be the army of the 100/200 million, since it isn't stated where they come from; even so, the idea that modern military equipment is being discussed still isn't the best option. In many places contemporary weaponry is spoken of, but in ancient terms (like the Antichrist being slain with "a sword," and the army of Gog/Magog in Ezekiel 38-39 having "horses" and "shields").

It is also worth highlighting that John says the angels at the Euphrates are "the ones having been prepared for the hour and for the day and month and year."

In Genesis 6 many angels fell from their place through lust, and they were to be kept until the Day of Judgment [*which would seem to technically begin just before the Messianic Age and end with its conclusion*]. This is described in the Old and New Testaments...

<{*God speaking to Noah*} An end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth has been full of violence from their presence; and lo, I am destroying them with the earth. -- Genesis 6:13

<...And angels, the ones not having kept their own domain, but having left their own habitation, He has kept under darkness in everlasting chains for [the] judgment of [the] great Day. -- Jude 1:6

Just to round out the picture: the seventh trumpet is blown in Revelation 11:15 and heralds the coming kingdom; for there shall be no more delay, but the bowls shall be poured out with swiftness, bringing the world to the brink. Before considering that time, let us look at the preparations being made by the forces of evil to counter the manifestation of God's will ...

C. The Devil's Response

(1) UAPs/UFOs

A fair amount of attention has been focused on the subject of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP, a more inclusive term than "UFO," which implies a "flying machine") by popular Christian commentators. The major reason for this is that the nature of these strange visitations has proven time and again to mimic classic demonic manifestations.

In this section we shall review evidence for the existence of UAPs, note their characteristics, and highlight their prophetic implications...

(A) Beyond a Reasonable Doubt

In general, the average person is slow to warm to the subject of UAPs. Probably the same psychological processes that fuel the hellish fires of atheism also cause a knee-jerk denial that anything is going on in the skies. We don't particularly want to be pulled from our routine to consider a worldview that is contrary to our accepted norms. Putting it another way, one might say that every individual invisibly writes their own articles of faith and is loathe to part with their pet dogmas, the chief of which is the belief that they are the master of their own destiny. The existence of greater beings of any sort severely threatens the validity of their own self-centred, homemade religion.

However, to deny that these unexplained visitations are occurring is nothing short of ridiculous. The number of credible witnesses is astounding. The physical evidence is also overwhelming. Let's look at one flap that's typical of so many others...

<Major General Wilfried De Brouwer (Ret.):

On November 29, 1989, when I was Head of Operations of the Belgian Air Staff, a total of 143 sightings were reported in a small area around Eupen, Belgium...Two federal policemen, Heinrich Nicoll and Hubert Von Montigny, made the most important report. At 5:15 p.m., while patrolling on the road between Eupen and the German border, they saw a nearby field lit with such intensity that they could read the newspaper in their car. Hovering above the field was a triangular craft with three spotlights beaming down and a red flashing light in the center...

...A total of seventy reported sightings made on November 29 were fully investigated and none of these sightings could be explained by conventional technology.

This was the beginning of a major series of sightings that lasted for a couple of years.

*4 more observations were reported on December 1, including one by an air weather forecaster.

*21 more were reported on December 11, with one coming from a high-ranking civil engineer of the Belgian Army.

*On April 22, 8 more sightings were reported.

*28 sightings were reported between March 12-15, 1991, etc. etc.

Of the approximately 2,000 reported cases registered during the Belgian wave, 650 were investigated and more than 500 of them remain unexplained.

Included as well in the evidence is radar detection, with even a pair of F-16s being scrambled to pursue on one occasion, with the pilots reporting “targets on their radar with unusual behavior, such as jumping huge distances in seconds and accelerating beyond human capacity.”*8 [*the totality of this information is documented to the same source, namely, Leslie Kean*]

(B) Beyond Reasonable Physics

The other case we shall look at picks up where the first left off: the UAPs perform manoeuvres and display characteristics that are physically impossible. People who support the belief that UAPs are alien spaceships will say that these beings are just really advanced, but this is unwise. If a skinny man wants to be able to bench-press 400 pounds people might say his goal to be impossible; with enough time and hard work however he just might be able to pull off such an amazing feat. Yet if this same skinny man wants to lift the Empire State Building he needs his head examined. The “science” of the UAPs excels anything that could be considered as “spacecraft,” regardless of technology and intelligence levels.

<General Parviz Jafari (Ret.), Iranian Air Force:

At about 11:00 p.m. on the evening of September 18, 1976, citizens were frightened by the circling of an unknown object over Tehran at a low altitude...I was ordered to take off in a second jet to approach the object, which I was piloting...I approached, and I got close to it, maybe seventy miles or so in a climb situation. All of a sudden, it jumped about 10 degrees to the right. In an instant! Ten degrees...and then again it jumped 10 degrees, and then again... We kept it

locked on with radar...I thought this was my chance to fire at it. But when it -- whatever it was -- was close to me, my weapons jammed and my radio communications were garbled. We got closer, to 25 miles at our twelve o'clock position. All of a sudden it jumped back to 27 miles in a instant...Then I was startled by a round object which came out of the primary object and started coming straight toward me...I attempted to fire, and looked at the panel to confirm my selection of the missile. Suddenly, nothing was working. The weapons control panel was out...*8

Obviously no craft could move this way; moreover, the intelligence that was manifesting this UAP could read Mr. Jafari's mind, anticipating his use of weapons and shutting down the appropriate systems. UAPs are clearly supernatural, yet are carefully constructed by their authors to appear as natural.

A Solomon of the UFO world is a French scientist named Jacques Vallee. He has done a great job in pointing out the improbability of these sightings having extraterrestrial origins. He uses a key word that surely must come to everyone who looks carefully at all the various reports: *absurd*.

Commenting on such things as Betty Hill's "star map..."

<...What kind of spacecraft pilots are these, if they still have to use maps to navigate?...What kind of doctors are these, who need to induce such trama in hundreds of patients to collect a little blood, a few embryos?...Using the advanced paralyzing devices they possess, it should be simple for them, if they were an extraterrestrial task force, to raid the blood bank of any modern research hospital where they would also find collections of frozen embryos at various stages of development. And what kind of psychologists are they, if any amateur hypnotist can readily uncover from the witness the

details of an abduction that was supposed to be totally erased...

In my view, the interaction remembered by the witnesses, if it was a real occurrence, should be treated at the symbolic level. It does not tell us anything about the extraterrestrial origin of the beings, and the idea that they must perform such experiments to enrich their race is merely another contribution to the absurd character of the entire phenomenon.*9

(C) Pursuing Sanctified Speculation

The book quoted from extensively above is *UFOs: Generals, Pilots and Government Officials Go On the Record*, by Leslie Kean. It employs a host of reputable people to urge international scientific and political action to investigate UFOs. A book like this by a serious journalist is one indication among many that society is starting to change its tone regarding UAPs, a startling prospect given what is soon to transpire.

One event that will baffle many is the rapture of the church, where millions of Christians will disappear in the blink of an eye. Although it's highly doubtful that any proper governmental body will actually declare aliens to be the culprits, yet unofficially such an excuse is bound to top the charts.

Also, we've stated that as the tribulation period transpires things will get a lot more heavenly. These demonic creatures that shall roam the earth will surely force people out of their comfort zones. Men and women will have to believe in some sort of intelligent species existing other than themselves, and to a world of atheists, the notion of extraterrestrials shall be more appealing than the belief in spiritual realities.

(2) A Free Slave (The False Priest)

<And I saw another beast rising up out of the earth, and it had two horns { **I've often wondered what this means; could there be two who fill this office?** } like a lamb, and it was speaking like a dragon. And it exercises all the authority of the first beast before it, and it was making the earth and the ones dwelling in it that they should prostrate themselves in worship before the first beast, whose wound of death [fig., fatal wound] was healed. And it performs great signs, so that even fire is coming down from heaven on the earth before the people. And it leads astray [fig., deceives] my own [people] {*i.e., among the visible church probably*}, the ones dwelling on the earth because of the signs which were given it to do before the beast, telling the ones dwelling on the earth to make an image to the beast, the one having the wound of the sword and lived. And it was given to it to give a spirit [or, breath] to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast should both speak and make [it that] as many as would not prostrate themselves in worship before the image of the beast should be killed. And it makes all [people], the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the freemen and the slaves, that they shall give to them marks on their right hand or on their forehead, and that no one is able to buy or to sell, except the one having the mark: the name of the beast or the number of its name...And its number is six hundred sixty-six. -- Revelation 13:11-18; portions

The second Beast is like Aaron, the first chief priest who did all the signs and spoke all the words that God charged his brother Moses with at the Exodus. Moreover, when Moses departed to go up into Sinai to commune with the Lord and receive his commands, this same Aaron led a rebellion against the true God, crafting an idol and declaring it to be their redeemer from bondage (see Exodus 32). So it is evident that one will come along with all the ostensible trappings of piety, while in reality, he steadily leads his followers back into Egyptian slavery. He will look the part, being "as a lamb," but his words and heart will prove him to be something other than "holy unto the LORD."

He shall also be as Adam, for it is written that he will come out of the ground, reminiscent of the creation of man from the dust of the earth. As we have discussed, Adam did a poor job of pointing people to the Tree of Life, just as this False Prophet will direct people away from the Lord Jesus and towards a son of the serpent.

This Beast also seems to be represented allegorically by an ancient enemy of Paul...

<Then having crossed over the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain learned astrologer [or, Magus; cp. Matt 2:1] {or, “*magician*”}, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name [was] Bar-Jesus, who was with Sergius Paulus, the governor of the province [or, the proconsul], an intelligent man. This one having summoned for Barnabas and Saul, sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the learned astrologer {or, “*magician*”} (for so is his name translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the governor of the province away from the faith. But Saul (the [one] also [called] Paul), having been filled of [or, with] [the] Holy Spirit and having looked intently on him {*i.e., seeing past outward appearances*}, said, “O [one] full of all deceit and all lack of principles, son of [the] Devil, enemy of all righteousness, you will not cease distorting the straight ways of [the] Lord, will you?” -- Acts 13:6-10

This false prophet was named “Bar-Jesus,” meaning, “son of Jesus.” He was a man who had some attachment to the truth, but twisted it violently out of its proper shape, using lying carnal credentials and his magic arts in order to pander to the elite.

4. The Sanctuary

A. The Final Scourges

<And after these [things] I saw, and the temple {or, “sanctuary,” specifying the “holy of holies” given the context, and so throughout this chapter} of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And the seven angels, the ones having the seven plagues, came out from the temple, the ones having been clothed in clean, bright linen, and having been wrapped around the chests with golden belts [or, sashes]. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, the One living into the ages of the ages [fig., forever and ever]. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was being able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed. -- Revelation 15:5-8

These judgments answer to the remaining name of Christ given in Revelation 19:

<Now His eyes [are] a flame of fire, and on His head [are] many royal bands [or, diadems] having names having been written [on them], and a name having been written [on them] which no one knows, except Himself. -- verse 12

His eyes being as fire and his head having many diadems are very straightforward symbols. The horns in Revelation 12 and 13 are said to have diadems, but Christ is the sole legitimate king, and the truly meticulous inspector of his kingdom, his vision being “sharper than every double-edged sword and [is] penetrating as far as [the] division of both soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and [is] able to discern [the] thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

The meaning of the name that no one knows is a bit more difficult, but seemingly that’s the whole point...

<I studied this verse for 25 years before I found an explanation that satisfies me...Of all the titles that are His,

there is one that we will never be able to comprehend or understand. That is the title of deity -- God.*10

When opening the seals we saw Christ as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. When summoning the trumpets we saw Christ as a ministering angel; now as God we don't see him at all. Moreover, there are earthly causes for the scourges of the seal judgments, heavenly causes for the scourges of the trumpet judgments; there are no discernible causes for the bowl judgments. There is not one slight hint of an explanation given as to how these great and awesome events come to pass. The Messiah simply does them, exercising his almighty power to the utmost.

(1) <And the first went away and poured out his bowl on the earth, and a foul and malignant ulcerated sore occurred on the people, the ones having the mark of the beast and the ones prostrating themselves in worship before its image. -- Revelation 16:2

<God is the author of good health. He made the body and all the laws that govern its well-being. The human body is the crowning display of the power of the Creator. Imagine a machine that heals its own cuts or dented fenders like our bodies do. No car out of Detroit does that. How often do we thank Him? In our passage here we are told God will, by supernatural power and decree, order the health of Satan-worshipping mortals to be "turned off." When this plague falls upon the earth, the bodies of individuals who have given their allegiance to the devil's Christ are going to be covered with awful, annoying, obnoxious, grievous, painful sores. There will be no cure and there will be no relief. All the doctors and all the nurses and all the miracle drugs will be of no avail. God is the Creator of the body in the first place and He is also the author of health. Now He has decreed at this point that the mortals who are worshipping the Antichrist will, by divine power, be covered with incurable sores, and so it will be.*11

(2) <And the second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood as of [one] dead, and every living soul [or, creature] died in the sea. -- Revelation 16:3

(3) <And the third [angel] poured out his bowl into the rivers and into the fountains of the waters, and it became blood. -- Revelation 16:4

(4) <And the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was given to him to scorch the people with fire. And the people were scorched with great heat, and the people blasphemed the name of God, the One having authority over these plagues, and they did not repent [so as] to give to Him glory. -- Revelation 16:8-9

<This is one of those “signs in the sun” of which the Lord Himself spoke (Luke 21 :25). When God’s Son died upon the cross of Calvary, He put out the sun. Now it will be quickened to renewed and terrible life. *12

(5) <And the fifth [angel] poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom has become darkened. And they began gnawing their tongues from the pain. -- Revelation 16:10

(6) <And the sixth [angel] poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings, the ones from [the] rising of [the] sun [fig., from the east], would be prepared. And I saw [coming] out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet three unclean [or, defiling] spirits like frogs. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole inhabited earth, to gather them together to the battle of that great day of God the Almighty...And they gathered them together to the place, the one being called in Hebrew, Armagedon [or, Mount of Meggido]. -- Revelation 16:12-14, 16

Concerning the frogs, McGee says (quoting Seiss):

<They're spirits, they're unclean spirits, they're demon spirits, they're sent forth into activity by the dragon trinity. They are the elect angels to awaken the world to the attempt to abolish God from the earth. They're froglike in that they come forth out of the pestiferous quagmires of the universe, do their work amid the nations with their noisy demonstrations till they set all the kings and armies of the whole earth in enthusiastic commotion for the final crushing out of the Lamb in all his powers. *13

(7) <And the seventh [angel] poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out from the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It has happened!" And [there] occurred lightning flashes and peals of thunder and voices, and a great earthquake, such as did not occur since the people came on the earth...And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the rage of His wrath. And every island fled away, and mountains were not found. And huge hail, [each] weighing about a talent [about 95 pounds or 42 kilograms], is coming down out of heaven [or, the sky] on the people, and the people blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague is extremely great. -- Revelation 16:17-21; portions

And so it shall finally transpire: the end of this world system, the complete overthrowing of this accursed age...

<...He has promised, saying, "Yet once [more] I am shaking not only the earth, but also the heaven." [Haggai 2:6] Now the [phrase] "Yet once [more]" clearly shows the removal of the [things] being shaken, as of [things] having been created, so that the [things] not being shaken shall remain. -- Hebrews 12:26-27

Note here as well the fall of Babylon, as this city may be literally revived in the near future and become the commercial capital of the world (Zechariah 5:5-11).

B. The Final Plea

Towards the end of this age, when most of the population of the earth is dead, and when Christ is just about to split the sky with glory and indignation, a final word will go forth. It will not be the voice of an evangelist or a missionary bringing the good news of the crucified God of love; rather, it will be a band of demons, stirring up the whole world for the greatest war in history. Whatever the original intent, it is obvious from Revelation 19:19 that ultimately the goal will be to destroy the Messiah himself; this is why Joel in the Old Testament says that the battle will be fought in the “valley of decision,” for it is a decision regarding eternal life versus eternal agony...

<Proclaim you this among nations, Sanctify a war, stir up the mighty ones, come nigh, come up, let all the men of war...Wake and come up let the nations unto the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I sit to judge all the nations around. Send you forth a sickle, for ripened has harvest, come in, come down, for filled has been the press, overflowed have wine-presses, for great [is] their wickedness. Multitudes, multitudes [are] in the valley of decision, for near [is] the day of Hashem in the valley of decision. Sun and moon have been black, and stars have gathered up their shining. -- Joel 2:9-15

Revelation speaks of the outcome of this ghoulish gathering...

<And the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the grapevine of the earth, and he threw [it] into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside of the city, and blood came out from the winepress up to the bridles [i.e., head harnesses] of the

horses, for [a distance of] one thousand, six hundred stadia [about 180 miles or 300 kilometers]. -- 14:19-20

How did the world get to this point? How did this refined, urbane, enlightened generation end up attacking the King of Glory with crude farm tools? How did these mighty intellects with their witty quips against God, his Son, and his church, turn into a pack of crazed idiots, believing they can defeat the Almighty with garden rakes? It all began this way:

...Having known God, they did not glorify [Him] as God nor did they give thanks, but they were given over to deception in their thought processes [or, they became futile in their speculations], and their foolish heart [i.e., entire inner self, including the intellect, volition, and emotions] was darkened.
-- Romans 1:21

This is why the essence of the Gospel is stated in the following terms...

<And I saw an angel flying in midair, having the eternal Gospel [or, Good News] to proclaim...“Fear the Lord and give glory to Him, because the hour of His judgment came, and prostrate yourselves in worship before Him, the One having made heaven and the earth and the sea and springs of waters.” -- Revelation 14:6-7

The outworking of the Gospel message is belief in Jesus Christ; belief that the only true Son of God came into this world, being joined unto our flesh. And having lived the only spotless life, the past, present, and future sins of his people were laid upon him, and he paid the price for these sins when he died on the Cross. Having perfectly completed his course, he arose from the dead and went back to Heaven. And there he remains for now, ready to forgive iniquity and give his righteousness, if only we would simply repent and believe, calling upon his name (Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13).

The reason why the Gospel is said to consist of fearing the Lord and giving him glory is because such is the true essence and the proper attitude, the *only* acceptable attitude. Similarly, when many in Jerusalem are converted it is written: “and the rest became terrified, and they gave glory to the God of heaven” (Revelation 11:13).

We must have the Lamb to be forgiven, but we also have to understand why we need a lamb.

We must forsake ourselves and our abilities and our confidence in the flesh. The Antichrist can't save us from starvation, NASA can't save us from Wormwood, and all the armies of the world can't save us from Christ. That's the message of all these judgments: God alone is sufficient; he alone has honour and might; he alone must save us if we are to be saved.

One of the main arguments against the truth will come in the form of a question: “If God is all powerful and loves us, then why is all this evil happening?” The answer is remarkably simple: God is powerful and loving, but he is also very angry at sin and must judge it (in a general sense for the time being; i.e., recipients of bad are not necessarily the greatest of sinners, it's just that we all deserve judgment -- see Luke 13:1-5). This is the Biblical picture of God, and it is also what we see in nature. He is the God of power and beauty, yet also the creator of volcanoes and earthquakes, deformities and disease:

<I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things. -- Isaiah 45:7 [ESV]

We are going to hell for our sins if we do not repent and trust in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our forgiveness. What would God be like if he didn't afflict us now? What if you lived 120 years of the sweetest bliss and then died and went

to the Lake of Fire? Would you not call God a false prophet? Would you not ask him why he didn't rather make life a misery so at least there would have been knowledge of his awesome wrath? God must bring the worst afflictions upon us, for the sum total of these things don't even begin to portray the full force of the anger set to eternally consume the unrepentant.

God is *true* love, and that is what he is going to show many through this apocalypse, shaking them out of their stupor, and causing them to have a saving willingness to submit to God's incarnate Word...

But about midnight Paul and Silas [were] praying [and] were singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Then suddenly a great earthquake occurred, with the result that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and all of the chains were unfastened! Then the jailor having become aroused from sleep and having seen the doors of the prison having been opened, having drawn a sword, was about to be killing himself, supposing the prisoners to be escaping. [cp. Acts 12:18, 19] But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do nothing harmful to yourself, for we are all here!" Then having asked for a light [fig., a torch], he rushed in. And having become trembling [with fear], he fell down before Paul and Silas. And having brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what is it necessary [for] me to be doing so that I shall be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your house!" -- Acts 16:25-31

Appendix: Pim Fortuyn and Revelation 13

The following appendix is taken from a booklet that I wrote years ago, which was my attempt at identifying the Beast and False Prophet from the book of Revelation. I realize that to do

such a crass thing makes you accursed in most circles (even among prophecy students). In most cases I would agree with such an attitude; yet what if you really think you're right? That's the problem I've wrestled with for years. I fully believe I know who the "Antichrist" is, yet I know it's not grave and respectable to go around vocalizing such a belief. Like I said, originally I attempted to identify both the Beast **and the** False Prophet; I'm not so sure anymore however that I'm right about my ideas on the False Prophet. I never really did feel as if I had received Biblical revelation on that subject, and so I'll leave it out and just restate what I think to be much more certain; namely, that the "Antichrist" is Pim Simon Petrus Fortuyn...

I remember when Pim was shot. I had normally kept up with the news very regularly but somehow this event slipped by me unnoticed. It was my father at the dinner table who alerted me to his assassination. Later that evening I read up about Fortuyn and was quite shocked by what I found. He was an amazing fit for the Biblical profile of the Beast.

First of all Pim wasn't actually the leader of his nation; rather he was running for election at the time. The Bible states that the Antichrist will be a nobody who quickly becomes a somebody:

<And stood up on his station has a despicable one, and they have not given unto him the honour of the kingdom, and he has come in quietly, and has strengthened the kingdom by flatteries. And the arms of the flood {*maybe Gog/Magog*} are overflowed from before him, and are broken; and also the leader of the covenant. And after they join themselves unto him, he works deceit, and has increased, and has been strong by a few of the nation {*literally, "a small nation;"* this refers to Israel -- see Deuteronomy 7:7}. -- Daniel 11:21-23 [mYLT, *and so throughout for O.T. quotes unless otherwise stated; interpreting Daniel 11:21-45 as referring to someone other than Antiochus Epiphanes is admittedly rare, yet*

considering Daniel 12, the Antichrist must at least be regarded here as a strict doppelganger to Antiochus]

All the speculations about the Beast being this president or that prime minister are always bound to be wrong. The dramatic undertakings of the apocalypse will begin before he rules anybody; in addition, the nation he belongs to will seemingly not be a very big one, as his small horn (nation) will usurp three more prominent ones (Daniel 7:24).

Another point of interest was Pim's lack of desire for women, a characteristic specifically mentioned by Daniel (11:37). He was also a nationalist; most notably, he was extremely opposed to Muslim immigration. In the quote from Daniel above we see that the Beast will "strengthen the kingdom by flatteries," which is how nationalists operate. Also it is written in the next line that he makes friends with Israel (which is stated as well in Daniel 9:27). This would be easy to do if he was somewhat anti-Muslim.

Having glanced at the calendar I also realized that he was shot ten days before the Pharisaic Shavuot (the real date is probably to be rendered differently, as the Karaite Jews do today). Jesus Christ ascended to heaven ten days before Shavuot (a.k.a. "Pentecost"). Of course the most important thing of all was his being shot in the head; for John predicts in Revelation that the Beast will suffer a great wound to the head and then come back to life.

<...And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on its horns ten royal bands, and on its heads names of blasphemy [or, blasphemous names]. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and its feet like [those] of a bear, and its mouth like a mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave to it his power and his throne and great authority. And one of its heads [was] as [if] having been slain to death [fig., mortally wounded], and its wound of death [fig., fatal wound] was healed. And the whole earth marveled

after the beast. -- 13:1-3 [ALT3, *and so throughout for N.T. quotes*]

Not long after his death he was moved from his grave in Holland and flown for burial in Italy. A very prominent feature of the book of Daniel is that a revived Roman Empire will rule the world in the last days; thus it was interesting that he was placed so near unto Rome (*and on a footnote, I balk at the great number of evangelicals who have left the sound idea of a European Antichrist for the fad of looking for an Assyrian one*).

On top of all this he had possessed a magnetism. Many people were attracted to his charismatic persona, and he was also enough of a paradox to excite and inspire a broad spectrum of people.

So having considered this information I was half-expecting his immediate resurrection. Over twelve years have passed now and he's still absent; yet I maintain a belief? Yes, I do. For during this time I've come across Biblical proof which has solidified my position. [*The following information from 1 Samuel 10-13 can be found in chapter 7 of the present work; for that reason I thought about deleting it, but for the sake of the reader not having to leave the appendix I'll just go ahead and be repetitive*].

In the book of Genesis the tribe of Judah was selected prophetically for kingship (49:10). 1 Samuel tells the history of a different inaugural monarchy. The people were tired of being ruled by informal judges and wanted a more formal kingship. God granted their wish and Saul was chosen, who was not of the tribe of Judah but rather of Benjamin (the first hint that something was wrong).

Samuel warned the people that they were acting sinfully; their hearts weren't right. They wanted a king because they no longer wanted God. They longed for some sort of carnal

superhero who would provide for their every need without having to honour and worship the invisible and holy High King of Heaven. This all is comparable to the last days...

<Let no one deceive you* by any means, because [that Day will not come] unless **the apostasy** comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction... -- 2 Thessalonians 2:3

At his coronation ceremony Saul was nowhere to be found...

<And Samuel brings near the whole tribes of Israel, and the tribe of Benjamin is captured { *selected by divine lot* }, and he brings near the tribe of Benjamin by its families, and the family of Matri is captured, and Saul son of Kish is captured, and they seek him, and he has not been found. And they ask again at Hashem, "Has the man yet come hither?" And Hashem says, "Lo, he has been hidden near the vessels { *Hebrew, "kaleem" [utensils/implements/vessels/tools]* }." And they run and bring him thence, and he stationed himself in the midst of the people, and he is higher than any of the people from his shoulder and upward. And Samuel says unto all the people, "Have you seen him on whom Hashem has fixed, for there is none like him among all the people?" And all the people shout, and say, "Let the king live!" -- 1 Samuel 10:20-24

Samuel's words, "there is none like him," shall be as the worship afforded the Antichrist. But what does God say? "Behold, he is hiding himself among the **kaleem** [utensils/implements/vessels/tools]." What does that mean?

<...All Israel went down to the Philistines, each to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, and his hoe. The charge was two-thirds of a shekel [Hebrew **pim**] for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to fix the hoes. -- 1 Samuel 13:20-21 [NASB]

Jay Green's *Literal Version*, the *Revised Standard Version*, and the *New King James Version* leave the term "pim" untranslated, while many others give a monetary figure; it's mainly the older Bibles such as the *King James Version* and *Young's Literal Translation* that are at a loss to render it properly.

It has become clear through archaeology that a "pim" was a coin worth two-thirds of a shekel, i.e., 66.6%. The two Beasts will initially claim to be of God the Father and will claim to be doing exploits through the Holy Spirit, even causing another Temple/Tabernacle to be constructed in Jerusalem [*a Temple is most likely, yet the Greek word given in relevant prophecies isn't specific*]; but they will deny the Son...

<Who is the liar, except the one denying that Jesus is the Christ [or, the Messiah]? This one is the antichrist, the one denying the Father and the Son. Everyone denying the Son neither has the Father. -- 1 John 2:22-23

Right; so now I'd like to add a few supporting elements. Let's journey to another place in Scripture, to the book of 2 Kings...

<And sons of the prophet say unto Elisha, "Lo, we pray you, the place where we are dwelling before you is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray you, unto the Jordan, and we take thence each one beam, and we make for ourselves there a place to dwell there;" and he says, "Go." And the one says, "Be pleased, I pray you, and go with your servants;" and he says, "I -- I go." And he goes with them, and they come in to the Jordan, and cut down the trees, and it comes to pass, the one is felling the beam, and the iron has fallen into the water, and he cries and says, "Alas! my lord, and it asked {*meaning "borrowed"*}!" And the man of God says, "Where has it fallen?" And he shows him the place, and he cuts a stick, and casts [it] there, and causes the iron to swim, and says, "Raise to you;" and he puts forth his hand and takes it. -- 6:1-7

So someone is chopping down a tree and an axe-head falls into the water. A stick is cast into the water and the iron axe-head rises to the surface. The idea of something weak dying and something powerful resurrecting is very Biblical. The Lord Jesus arose and ascended to heaven and will return in great glory, but first died in our weak flesh. The believer presently has a corruptible body but will be renewed with incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:35-49). So the Antichrist, at the time of a great apostasy from the cross (*i.e., the felling of "the beam;" I believe organized Christendom will officially deny a cardinal doctrine about the Lord Jesus in the near future*), will be raised from the waters of death as with the iron axe-head (*the book of Daniel in chapters 4 and 7 represents the last world system as consisting of iron*). Then, just as Moses picked up the serpent in Exodus 4, so shall Israel latch on to infamy incarnate. What makes me come out with this outlandish speculation? The Hebrew Bible.

The man loses the axe-head and then complains to Elisha that it was a borrowed tool. In the original the word translated "asked" is the exact spelling, letter for letter, vowel point for vowel point, of "Saul." The Hebrew *hu Shaul* could therefore be rendered, "He is Saul" (*see also 1 Samuel 28:12-13 for an interesting parallel to Revelation 13:11-18*)...

<All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb; but you are cast out, away from your grave, like a loathed branch, clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a dead body trampled underfoot. -- Isaiah 14:18-19

The Hebrew for "Saul" is also frightfully similar to another word: *Sheol* (only the vowels are different; the consonants are exactly the same). Sheol is the Old Testament name for the place of the dead. Isaiah speaks of the Beast as being the one of Sheol whom the nation of Israel will make a covenant with...

<Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers, who rule this people in Jerusalem! Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement, when the overwhelming whip passes through it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter...” -- 28:14-15 [ESV]

As does Habakkuk...

<Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples. -- 2:5 [ESV]

Like Israel, we all rebel against God and enthrone our base desires as king. The unconverted shall suffer for it eternally; but there's hope...

During the end the Antichrist will storm the nation of Israel and seek to wipe it off the map. At that time they will call out to Jesus Christ and be saved...

<The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry...He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind...And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them. Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. He rescued me from my

strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. -- Psalm 18:4-17; portions [ESV]

Just as the Jews will be saved from the hordes of Armageddon when they cry to their Messiah, so now we may call to Jesus for salvation from all our sins -- past, present, and future; thus forever we may nullify our covenant with death, and in its stead receive the right to take the living fruit from Calvary's cross.

Appendix #2 Dino-flesh; Ussher's Revenge

I haven't yet watched the epic Ham-on-Nye clash that took place recently at the Creation Museum, solely because I don't particularly want to stream three hours of video from YouTube. I've heard commentary about it, and apparently it was a bit of a grudge match, as Nye went for the typical high-handed-scattergun approach.

One comment I heard that Nye purportedly spoke was especially crass; namely, that if Ham could produce some fossil swimming up between layers then he would be the hero of the scientific community. This is the ole "show us a pre-Cambrian rabbit" barb in a different dress. Better yet, how about we just show you the Cambrian explosion! (Of course the new trend for them is to deny the 'explosive' nature of this massive anomaly; surprise surprise).

The truth of the matter is, there are many, many instances where a tree is fossilized within several layers of sediment {*which are supposed to represent eons of time*} and no one seems to care about that, so what would a "swimming" fossil prove? Any anomaly is rejected, overlooked, unpublished, or repressed; Haman will never crown Mordecai willingly.

This same attitude has come to the fore recently with the discovery of soft tissue in dinosaur bones. Where's the ticker-tape parade heralding the young earth creationist? Instead of concession there's a mad rush to try to offer ceaseless phony explanations so the jeers and sneers can go on uninterrupted. This is evolutionary theory in a nutshell. Eventually there will probably be so much pressure and so many excuses from Darwin's children placed on this issue that even creationists will begin to shy away from citing it; the materialists are the new popes of the new Inquisition.

Here's an article about it anyway; enjoy a bit of science before the censors-on-patrol complete their smear campaign...

Dinosaur Soft Tissues: They're Real!

by Brian Thomas, M.S. *

Paleontologist Mary Schweitzer's discoveries of soft blood vessels, proteins, various blood cells, and even DNA inside fossilized dinosaur bones have been met with extreme skepticism from the scientific community. It has been well established that such biological structures and molecules should not last beyond a few tens of thousands of years, and could not possibly survive millions of years. So why are they there?

Scientists have made multiple attempts to debunk Schweitzer's findings. Over the last 15 years, alternate explanations for the soft dinosaur tissue include contamination in the field or in the lab, bacterial activity producing the illusion of blood vessel remains, and the

possibility that protein signatures derived from the tissues are actually just statistical artifacts (i.e., distortions or data errors).

In an effort to answer these objections, Schweitzer's team implemented sterile excavation procedures and had an independent third party analyze their results. They confirmed that the soft tissues could not have come from bacteria. Bacteria do not manufacture products in the shape of vertebrate blood vessels, nor can they produce the kind of collagen found in the dinosaur bones.

The issue has generated such fervor that John Asara of Harvard Medical School, who found clear collagen signatures in Schweitzer's dinosaur tissues (1), placed his data online so that anyone could access it. Researchers from Palo Alto reanalyzed the data and published their report online in the *Journal of Proteome Research* (2). They verified that four of Asara's original seven collagen sequences were clearly legitimate, using different statistical and bioinformatics techniques. So far, there is every indication that the dinosaur soft tissues—incredible as it seems—are real biological leftovers from their once-living hosts.

Three options present themselves for the presence of molecules and blood vessels in creatures that purportedly passed on eons ago. Perhaps the soft tissue is some kind of mistake—it isn't really organic material. But the number of other possible substances it could be is dwindling. Or perhaps there is an entirely unknown natural process that could have preserved soft tissue for millions of years. But

this is a special pleading argument, one with strong laboratory evidence against it. Third, perhaps the soft tissue, and the refore the sedimentary rock that encased it, are thousands—not millions—of years old.

Dinosaur soft tissue leaves the evolutionary paradigm, which must have millions of years in order to achieve even remote plausibility, between a rock and a hard place. However, these dinosaur blood cells and vessels fit perfectly into the biblical history of the world, which indicates that man and dinosaurs both were created on the same day in the relatively recent past (3).

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*** Mr. Thomas is Science Writer at the Institute for Creation Research.**

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