

The Soon Coming Kingdom of God

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In the beginning was the Word,
and **the Word was with God,**
and **the Word was God.**

He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him,
and without him was not any thing made that was made.
(John 1:1-3 ESV)

[YHWH]¹ by wisdom founded the earth;
by understanding he established the heavens;

[YHWH] possessed me² at the beginning of his work, **the first of his acts of old.**
Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
(Proverbs 3:19, 8:22-23 ESV)

[YHWH] of hosts has sworn:

“As I have planned, so shall it be,
and **as I have purposed, so shall it stand ...**

[YHWH], you are my God;
I will exalt you; I will praise your name,
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
(Isaiah 14:24, 25:1 ESV)

And in the days of those kings
the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed,
nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.
It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end,
and **it shall stand forever ...**
(Daniel 2:44 ESV)

Then **the seventh angel blew his trumpet,**
and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,
“The kingdom of the world
has become **the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,**
and he shall reign forever and ever.”
(Revelation 11:15 ESV)

Then comes the end,
when **he delivers the kingdom to God the Father**
after destroying every rule and every authority and power.
(1 Corinthians 15:24 ESV)

The path to the Kingdom of God is defined by the **Plan of God**. The **Plan of God** has been revealed through **grace** to the **remnant** selected by God at various points in time by God’s prerogative of **election**. The path to the **Kingdom of God** is the **Way of God**.

The **Plan of God** provides for **progressive revelation**³ of the **Way of God** to those persons chosen by God to learn the **Way of God** and to live by the **Way of God** at any point in history. Today, at the end-time, **as we approach the coming of the Kingdom of God**, we have the full revelation of God in the Bible. Through the guide of the **Holy Spirit**, God is bringing us to clearer understanding of the path that remains to be traversed. As we get closer to the **coming of the Kingdom**, we will more and more see the prophecies of the Bible unfold:

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.

¹ The tetragrammaton, יהוה, in the **ESV**, as with most English translations, is rendered LORD or GOD. These translations are ambiguous. It is useful to consider who this Divine Being is when the name is used; hence, in this paper, YHWH, is always substituted.

² “Wisdom”

³ See the discussion in section **4. Progressive Revelation** in the paper “**The Human Condition**” and section **3.3.4 Progressive Revelation** in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

But at that time **your people** shall be delivered,
everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.⁴

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.

And **those who are wise** shall shine like the brightness of the sky above;
and **those who turn many to righteousness**, like the stars forever and ever.

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.**
(Daniel 12:1-4 ESV)

The working out of the **Plan of God** is known as “**salvation history**”.

For a thorough discussion of the concept of “salvation history”, see section **2.3 Salvation History**
in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

This current paper, “**The Soon Coming Kingdom of God**”, demonstrates the continuity of the working out
of the **Plan of God**, by tracing **a thread through salvation history** from the inception of the **Plan of God**,
down through historic times until today, as we approach the end.

Then the **prophecies of the Second Advent** and **the Kingdom of God are examined**.

Please enjoy reading this paper!

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⁴ This is the “**Book of Life**” where God keeps track of those who are **True Worshipers**, i.e., those who have been granted the gift
of the “**indwelling of the Holy Spirit**”; see the discussion in section **9.5 The Book of Life** in the paper “**The Writings of Moses**”
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1. In the Beginning

In the beginning, **two Divine Beings in Eternity, made a Plan:**⁵

In the beginning was **the Word**,
and the Word was **with God**,
and **the Word was God**.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him,
and without him was not any thing made that was made.
(John 1:1-3 ESV)

[YHWH] of hosts has sworn:

“As I have planned, so shall it be,
and as I have purposed, so shall it stand,
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done, saying,
‘My counsel shall stand,
and **I will accomplish all my purpose**’ ...”

(Isaiah 14:24, 46:9b-10 ESV)

The objective of the Plan was to create a Family of Divine beings, like themselves,
to inhabit eternity with the two Divine Planners:

Then God said,

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. ...”

... then the [YHWH] God formed the man of dust from the ground
and breathed into his nostrils **the breath of life**,
and the man became a living creature (nephesh).⁶

So God created man in his own image,

in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

(Genesis 1:26a, 2:7, 1:27 ESV)

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up,

who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:

“I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also **with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit**,
to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. ...”

(Isaiah 57:15 ESV)

⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of the **Plan of God**, see the paper **“Second Pillar - The Plan of God”**
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁶ The Hebrew word, נֶפֶשׁ - nephesh, and the Greek word, ψυχή - psyche, are both correctly translated by the English word “soul”.
However, the English word “soul” has been rendered an unusable word due to the implication of the pagan concept of the “immortal soul”.
Hence, in this paper, a more meaningful word is substituted. The most general word is “being”, but more specific words such as “mind”,
“heart”, “life” are also used. For further discussion, see **Excursus 2 - נֶפֶשׁ and ψυχή** in the paper **“The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle”**
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The Divine Being later known as YHWH, spent time with the newly created human beings⁷ to teach them what it means to be **“of a contrite and lowly spirit”**.

The most important aspect of contrition is to learn to **obey God**, to live by the **Way of God**.

God had instructed Adam and Eve regarding life and death.

The were told to avoid the one tree, lest they die:

And the woman said to the serpent,

“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,

but God said,

‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden,
neither shall you touch it, **lest you die.**”

(Genesis 3:2-3 ESV)

Adam and Eve chose to follow the way of the “serpent”⁸ and decide for themselves

what is right and what is wrong, so they ate from the tree:

So **when the woman saw** that the tree was good for food,

and that it was a delight to the eyes,

and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,

she took of its fruit and ate,

and **she also gave some to her husband** who was with her, and **he ate.**

(Genesis 3:6 ESV)

The choice of Adam and Eve set humanity on a path of sin and death:

Therefore, just as **sin came into the world through one man,**

and **death through sin,**

and so death spread to all men **because all sinned** ...

(Romans 5:12 ESV)

Doubtless **the road to the Kingdom of God** would have been much simpler for humanity had Adam and Eve chosen to follow the **Way of God**. Since Adam, all human beings have lived in the world of Satan the Devil. **Satan’s agenda for all human beings is death**. God has allowed the vast majority of the human race to go the way of Adam and Eve and make their own determinations of right and wrong. The results have always been the same – death. However throughout history, God has always made the knowledge of the **Plan of God** and the **Way of God** available. There has always been a small number of people, **a remnant**, selected by God through **election**, who are willing **to follow God, to obey God**, to live by the **Way of God**. The Bible contains little information on the intervening years, but we find **the remnant** many generations later alive and active in **Noah and his family**.

2. The Flood – A New Beginning

Noah was a ninth-generation descendant of Adam through Seth.⁹ By the time of Noah,

the corruption of Satan the Devil had thoroughly poisoned the human race:

[YHWH] saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth,

and that **every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

Now **the earth was corrupt in God’s sight**, and the earth was filled with violence.

And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

And [YHWH] regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

So [YHWH] said,

“I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land,
man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens,
for I am sorry that I have made them.”

⁷ See Genesis 1:26-30, 2:15-19, 3:8-9

⁸ See Revelation 12:9

⁹ See Genesis 5:6-29

But **Noah found [grace]¹⁰ in the eyes of [YHWH]**.

And God said to Noah,

“I have determined to make an end of all flesh,
for the earth is filled with violence through them.
Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

(Genesis 6:5, 11-12, 6-8, 13 ESV)

When the flood subsided,¹¹ Noah and his family were the only humans remaining alive. The deliverance of Noah and his family was **a demonstration of God’s grace**. God established a covenant with them, intending that through them the covenant would extend into all subsequent human societies. The covenant with Noah and his was also **an expression of God’s grace** – the covenant defines the relationship God desires with humanity:

Then **God said to Noah and to his sons** with him,

“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you ...”

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them,

“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

But **you shall not eat flesh with its life**, that is, **its blood**.

And **for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning:**

from every beast I will require it and from man.

From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

“Whoever sheds the blood of man,

by man shall his blood be shed,

for God made man in his own image.

I establish my covenant with you,

that **never again shall all flesh be cut off** by the waters of the flood,

and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.

(Genesis 9:8-9, 1, 4-6, 11 ESV)

Analysis of the **“Covenant of Justness”**:¹²

- The covenant is for all humanity, **“Noah and to his sons”, “your offspring after you”**
- There are two stipulations on humanity:
 - **“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”**
 - **“you shall not eat flesh with its life, its blood”**
- The benefit of the Covenant is significant, **“never again shall all flesh be cut off”**
- There is a curse for disobedience, **“for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning”**
- The penalty associated with the curse establishes the **“fundamental principle of justice”** for all human society: **“whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed”**

Noah and his family were saved as an act of grace by God.

Their salvation was necessary to ensure the **Plan of God** could continue.

All God’s dealing with humanity have a purpose – to accomplish the **Plan of God**.

The fundamental operative principle by which God deals with human beings is “grace”:

But the free gift is not like the trespass.

For if many died through one man’s trespass,

much more have **the grace of God**

and **the free gift by the grace of that one man** Jesus Christ abounded for many.

And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin.

For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation,

but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man,

much more will those who receive **the abundance of grace**

and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

(Romans 5:15-17 ESV)

¹⁰ The word חֵן - hen, is a normal word for “grace”, see TWOT article 694a page 303.

¹¹ See Genesis chapters 7 and 8

¹² For further discussion of this covenant see section **2. The Covenant of Justness** in the paper **“Covenants of Grace”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

For **the grace of God** has appeared, **bringing salvation for all people** ...
(Titus 2:11 ESV)

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that **by the grace of God** he might taste death **for everyone**.
(Hebrews 2:9 ESV)

All human beings have sinned. Sin incurs the penalty of death. **All human beings deserve to die:**

For **when you were slaves of sin**, you were free in regard to righteousness.
But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed?

For **the end of those things is death.**

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

For **the wages of sin is death**,
but **the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 6:20-23 ESV)

For there is no distinction:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
and are **justified by his grace as a gift**,
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood,
to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness,
because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.
(Romans 3:22b-25 ESV)

With Noah's descendants, the earth began to be repopulated. God had established "**grace**" as his fundamental principle of dealing with humanity. God is completely fair in all his dealings with people – this is the character attribute of "**justness**". God has always made knowledge of the **Plan of God** and the **Way of God** available, but as prior to the flood, soon after the flood, Satan the Devil led humanity down the path of sin and death. Men built cities.¹³ They attempted to build a tower to defy God.¹⁴ God realized this would lead to destruction, so God stopped it:

And [YHWH] said,

"Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language,
and this is only the beginning of what they will do.

And **nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.** ..."

So [YHWH] dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.
(Genesis 11:6, 8 ESV)

The majority of humanity continued on its own way, the way of sin and death, rejecting the revelation of God and refusing to live by the **Way of God**. But the **Plan of God** continued to unfold. God identified a man through whom **he would build a "remnant" nation** – a small nation in the world, that would become **an example nation for all other nations**. The man was **Abram**, later to be known as **Abraham**. The nation would become known as **Israel**. With Abram God began another demonstration of his prerogative of "**election**".

¹³ See Genesis 10:9-12

¹⁴ See Genesis 11:1-4

3. Abraham – The Father of the Faithful

The road to the Kingdom of God converges on the man, Abram. Abram was a tenth-generation descendant of Noah through Shem.¹⁵ Abram originated in the southern **Sumerian city of Ur**, but migrated with his father, **Terah**, to the northern **city of Haran**.

From Haran, God told Abram to go to Canaan for a purpose:

Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they **went forth together from Ur** of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when **they came to Haran, they settled there**.

Now [YHWH] said to Abram,

“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house **to the land that I will show you.**

And **I will make of you a great nation,**

and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse,

and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they **set out to go to the land of Canaan**.

When they came to the land of Canaan ...

Then [YHWH] appeared to Abram and said,

“To your offspring I will give this land.”

So he built there an altar to [YHWH], who had appeared to him.

(Genesis 11:31, 12:1-3, 5, 7 ESV)

The two main promises to Abram were:¹⁶

- **“I will make of you a great nation”** with a territory **“to your offspring I will give this land”**
- **“in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”**

The promise of the **“nation”** and the **“land”** was fulfilled in type by the **conquest of Canaan** under **Joshua**.¹⁷ The ultimate fulfillment will be in the World tomorrow as discussed in section **14.1** :

A long time afterward, when [YHWH] had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies, and **Joshua was old and well advanced in years**,

Joshua summoned all Israel, its elders and heads, its judges and officers, and said to them,

“I am now old and well advanced in years.

And **you have seen** all that [YHWH] your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is [YHWH] your God who has fought for you.

And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and [minds] (nephesh),¹⁸ all of you,

that **not one word has failed** of all the good things

that [YHWH] your God promised concerning you.

All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed. ...”

(Joshua 23:1-3, 14 ESV)

After the conquest, the ancient nation of **Israel quickly fell into apostasy**, and her history became a litany of violations of the Sinai Covenant.¹⁹

The **“families of the earth”** were NEVER blessed by Ancient Israel – she was more blight on the face of the earth.

¹⁵ See Genesis 11:10-26

¹⁶ For more detailed discussion of the promises to Abraham, see section **3. The Covenant of Promise** in the paper **“Covenants of Grace”**; sections **10.5.3 The Promises of God** and **11.2 Abraham and the Promises of God** in the paper **“The Writings of Moses”**; and, sections **1.2 The Promises to Abraham**, **4. The Gospel to the Nations**, and **5. All Nations in the World Tomorrow** in the paper **“God of Every Nation”**; all papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁷ See the Book of Joshua

¹⁸ See footnote **6**

¹⁹ See the next section ...

The **Apostle Paul** is clear and specific that the promise of blessing to Abraham was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Through the New Testament fulfillments Abraham becomes "**the Father of the Faithful**", the spiritual "father" of all True Worshipers:

Know then that **it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.**
And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying,
"In you shall all the nations be blessed."

So then, **those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham,** the man of faith.
Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.

It does not say,
"And to offsprings,"
referring to many, but **referring to one,**
"And to your **offspring,**"

who is Christ.

But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin,
so that **the promise by faith [of]**²⁰ **Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**
... for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
And **if you are Christ's,** then **you are Abraham's offspring,** heirs according to promise.
(Galatians 3:7-9, 16, 22, 26-27, 29 ESV see also Romans 4:11-18, 9:6-8)

Nevertheless, the **Plan of God** included the election of Abram as **demonstration of God's grace.**
YHWH soon changed his name to Abraham. Twice God unequivocally **demonstrated**
his prerogative of "election" in the immediate family of Abraham:

- Abraham first legitimate son, **Ishamel,** born of his wife Sarah's surrogate slave, Hagar, was passed over by God in favour of Sarah's own child, **Isaac**²¹
- Isaac's firstborn son, **Esau,** was passed over by God in favour of the younger, **Jacob**²²

Jacob went on to have twelve sons who became the eponymous ancestors of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.²³ **By election,** God extended **grace** and chose these descendants of Abraham **to form his example nation, Israel.**

4. Moses and the Beginning of Israel

The Plan of God required the creation of the nation of Israel. The nation was to be born out of a series of acts of Divine Grace. **Jacob's son Joseph** was much younger than most of his brothers. As a youth, Joseph dreamed that he would one day have pre-eminence over his brothers and parents:

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?"

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.**"

²⁰ Faith is a gift from God, NOT something a human being can possess by his/her self; see section **2.1 Faith is a Gift from God** in the paper "**The Inner Workings of Faith**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

²¹ See Genesis 16:1-4, 17:15-19

²² See Genesis 25:21-26

²³ See Genesis 29:31-35, 30:1-13, 18-22, 35:16-18

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 mother²⁴ and your brothers

indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?”

And his brothers were jealous of him, but **his father kept the saying in mind.**

(Genesis 37:5-11 ESV)

These dreams were clearly from God. It was the brothers’ jealousy of Joseph which led them to sell him as slave into Egypt.²⁵ In Egypt, Joseph rose to a position second only to Pharaoh.²⁶

There was severe famine in Canaan, so Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain, in Egypt, the brothers, not recognizing Joseph, indeed bowed down before Joseph.²⁷ Eventually, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers;²⁸ then, **Joseph provided for all of Jacob’s household to come to Egypt.**²⁹

This deliverance from the famine was a clear act of God’s grace. The road to the Kingdom of God required the descendants of Jacob to grow into a large multitude to form the nation of Israel.

Abraham had been told his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land:

Then [YHWH] said to Abram,

“Know for certain that **your offspring will be sojourners** in a land that is not theirs

and will be [slaves]³⁰ there,

and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.³¹

But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve,

and afterward **they shall come out with great possessions.** ... ‘

(Genesis 15:13-14 ESV)

On entry to Egypt, Jacob’s household comprised 70 persons.³² While Joseph lived, and even for a time after his death, the people of Israel lived in freedom and flourished.³³

After the death of Jacob, Joseph’s brothers feared that he might harbour ill feelings toward them, but **Joseph recognized the hand of God in all that had happened:**

His brothers also came and fell down before him and said,

“Behold, we are your servants.”

But Joseph said to them,

“Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?

As for you, you meant evil against me,

but **God meant it for good,**

to bring it about that **many people should be kept alive,** as they are today.

So do not fear; **I will provide for you and your little ones.**”

Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

(Genesis 50:18-21 ESV)

In Egypt, the Israelites grew so much that **a new line of Pharaohs became afraid of them,** so enslaved them; but they continued to multiply:

Now there arose **a new king over Egypt,** who did not know Joseph.

And he said to his people,

“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.”

Therefore **they set taskmasters over them to afflict them** with heavy burdens.

But the more they were oppressed, **the more they multiplied** and the more they spread abroad.

²⁴ This alludes to Leah, Jacobs only living wife. Rachel, Joseph’s actual mother, had died in the birth of Benjamin; see Genesis 35:19.

²⁵ See Genesis 37:12-36

²⁶ See Genesis 41:37-49

²⁷ See Genesis 42:1-6

²⁸ See Genesis 45:1-4

²⁹ See Genesis 45:16-28

³⁰ In this context, the verb אָבַד `avad, is best taken to imply “slavery”; see TWOT article 1553 pages 639-640.

³¹ The period of 400 years covers the time from Abraham to the Exodus; see Exodus 12:40 where the Septuagint reads: “The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt **and in the land of Canaan** was 430 years.” See also Acts 13:17-20 and Josephus Antiquities 2,15,2.

³² See Genesis 46:26-27, Exodus 1:5

³³ See Genesis 47:27, Exodus 1:7

And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel.
So **they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves** ...
(Exodus 1:8-11a, 12-13 ESV)

The stage was set for God to bring Moses onto the scene.

The descendants of Abraham had multiplied as God had promised:³⁴

And he brought him outside and said,
“Look toward heaven, and **number the stars**, if you are able to number them.”

Then he said to him,
“**So shall your offspring be.**”

I will surely bless you,
and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven
and **as the sand that is on the seashore.**
(Genesis 15:5, 22:17a ESV)

The time was right for the next great demonstration of the grace of God.

God was ready to extricate the slaves from Egypt and form them into the “**great nation**”
promised to Abraham. For this task, God carefully prepared Moses.³⁵

God revealed himself to Moses in the **burning bush**³⁶ and told him what he must do:

Then [YHWH] said,
“I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt
and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.
I know their sufferings,
and **I have come down to deliver them** out of the hand of the Egyptians
and **to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land**,
a land flowing with milk and honey ...
And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me,
and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.
Come, **I will send you to Pharaoh**
that you may **bring my people**, the children of Israel, **out of Egypt.**”

But Moses said to God,
“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

He said,
“But **I will be with you**, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you:
when you have brought the people out of Egypt,
you shall serve God on this mountain.”

(Exodus 3:7-8a, 9-12 ESV)

God thrashed Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt,³⁷ brought the people out of Egypt,³⁸ through Yam Suph,³⁹
and to Mount Sinai in Horeb.⁴⁰ **At Mount Sinai, God, as Suzerain, created the nation of Israel
as his vassal nation through the Sinai Covenant.**⁴¹

There Israel encamped before the mountain, while Moses went up to God.

[YHWH] called to him out of the mountain, saying,

“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel:
‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians,
and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.
Now therefore,
if you will indeed **obey my voice** and **keep my covenant**,
you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples,
for all the earth is mine;
and you shall **be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**’

³⁴ The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will be when all persons over the whole world become converted and become spiritual children of the “father of the faithful”; see the discussion in section [14.3 The Millennium](#).

³⁵ See Acts 7:20-29, Josephus Antiquities 2,9,4-7, & 2,10,1-2

³⁶ See Exodus 3:1-6

³⁷ See Exodus chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, and 12:29-32

³⁸ See Exodus 12:33-42,50, 13:17-22

³⁹ See Exodus 14:1-4,15-31; Yam Suph is the Gulf of Aqaba, see the discussion in Fritz.

⁴⁰ See Exodus chapter 19

⁴¹ For further discussion of the Sinai Covenant see section [4 The Covenant of Knowledge](#) in the paper “[Covenants of Grace](#)” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that [YHWH] had commanded him.

All the people answered together and said,

“All that [YHWH] has spoken we will do.”

And Moses reported the words of the people to [YHWH].
(Exodus 19:2b-8 ESV)

There are three stipulations to the Sinai Covenant:

1. The requirement of the people, **“obey my voice”**
2. The relationship between God and the people, **“keep my covenant”**
3. The desired outcome, **“be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”**

If the people of Israel had kept the covenant, the nation would have become God’s **“treasured possession”**. This was just the beginning. God was very patient with Israel.

The **wilderness years** were a time of **trial** and **testing**:

And you shall remember the whole way that [YHWH] your God has led you these **forty years in the wilderness**, that he might humble you, **testing you** to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.
(Deuteronomy 8:2 ESV)

Those who came through the trial, the **“wilderness generation”**, did learn.

The first generation in the promised land is the only generation of the nation of Israel with no castigation. It was a **“Golden Age”**:

Israel served [YHWH] all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that [YHWH] did for Israel.
(Joshua 24:31 ESV)

I remember the **devotion of your youth**, your **love as a bride**, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.

Israel was holy to [YHWH], the firstfruits of his harvest.
(Jeremiah 2:2b-3a ESV)

The period of the Judges, as described in the **Book of Judges**, was about 300 years.

We know little more about the period than can be gleaned from the Book of Judges.⁴²

The whole period is best summarized as a disaster. However, **some lessons can be learned**:

- The period provides an object lesson in human propensity to sin:
 - And **the people of Israel did what was evil** in the sight of [YHWH] and served the Baals. And they abandoned [YHWH], the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked [YHWH] to anger. They abandoned [YHWH] and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.
(Judges 2:11-13 ESV)
 - And **the people of Israel again did what was evil** in the sight of [YHWH], and [YHWH] strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of [YHWH].
(Judges 3:12 ESV)
- See also Judges 3:7-8, 4:1-2, 6:1, 10:6-7, 13:1

⁴² The period of the Judges is briefly discussed in section **1.1 The King of Israel (Joshua and Judges)** in the paper **“To Be a King”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca; scholarly speculation on the period leaves much to be desired, see Bright pages 144-182.

- The period highlights the need of Holy Spirit
 - without the Holy Spirit, the people of Israel could NOT serve YHWH as king:

And [YHWH] said to Samuel,
 “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you,
 for they have not rejected you,
 but **they have rejected me from being king over them. ...**”
 (1 Samuel 8:7 ESV)

What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me,
 and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?

They did not say,
 ‘Where is [YHWH] who brought us up from the land of Egypt,
 who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits,
 in a land of drought and deep darkness,
 in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?’

And I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things.
 But when you came in, **you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.**
 (Jeremiah 2:5-7 ESV)

But **they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit;**
 therefore he turned to be their enemy,
 and himself fought against them.
 (Isaiah 63:10 ESV)

For **those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh,**
 but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

For to set the mind on the flesh is death,
 but **to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**
 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God,
 for it does not submit to God’s [nomos];⁴³ indeed, it cannot.

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
 (Romans 8:5-8 ESV)

- In the end, the period precursors the need for a human king in Israel:

In those days **there was no king in Israel.**
Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
 (Judges 17:6, 21:25 ESV see also 18:1, 19:1)

When **Samuel** became old, he **made his sons judges** over Israel.
 Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain.

They took bribes and perverted justice.

Then **all the elders of Israel** gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him,
 “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways.
 Now **appoint for us a king** to judge us like all the nations.”

(1 Samuel 8:1, 3-5 ESV)

The first King, **Saul**, turned out to be a tragic figure. **Saul was granted the Holy Spirit,**
 but he neglected the relationship God offered him and **the Holy Spirit was withdrawn:**

When he turned his back to leave Samuel, **God gave [Saul] another heart.**

And all these signs came to pass that day.

When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him,
 and **the Spirit of God rushed upon him,** and he prophesied among them.

Now **the Spirit of [YHWH] departed from Saul,**
 and a harmful spirit from [YHWH] tormented him.

(1 Samuel 10:9-10, 16:14 ESV)

For further discussion of Saul, see section **2.2.1 King Saul** in the paper “**To Be a King**”
 located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. After Saul, **David became King of Israel.**

In contrast to Saul, David proved to become a “man after God’s own heart”

– **he learned to live by the Way of God.**

⁴³ The Greek word, νόμος – nomos, can be correctly translated as “law”; however, it should NEVER be used in relation to the Writings of Moses, or any part of the Old Testament. The Old Testament comprises *torah*, NOT *nomos*; hence, in this paper, the transliteration, *nomos*, is always used. For further discussions see *Excursus 8 - torah and nomos* in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**”

and section **11.6 Paul and nomos** in the paper “**The Writings of Moses**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

5. David and the Kingdom of Israel

God had prepared David from birth to be King of Israel. In the end, David was eminently successful. Through many trials, David maintained his relationship with God, and he is one of the very few people for whom it is verified in the Bible, that God the Father has made the decision to grant to David **the gift of eternal life:**

For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together **in my mother's womb.**
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my [mind] (nephesh)⁴⁴ knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.

Search me, O God, and **know my heart!**

Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and **lead me in the way everlasting!**

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;

you discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, [YHWH], you know it altogether.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

I awake, and I am still with you.

(Psalm 139:13-16, 23-24, 2-4, 17-18 ESV)

The **Prophet Hosea** prophesizes the New Israel after the Second Exodus⁴⁵ with a **resurrected David as King:**

For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince,
without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods.
Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek [YHWH] their God,
and **David their king,**
and they shall come in fear to [YHWH] and to his goodness **in the latter days.**
(Hosea 3:4-5 ESV)

The prophets **Jeremiah** and **Ezekiel** report the words of YHWH confirming Hosea's prophecy:

But they shall serve [YHWH] their God and **David their king,**
whom I will raise up for them.
(Jeremiah 30:9 ESV)

And **I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David,**
and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.

And I, [YHWH], will be their God,
and **my servant David shall be prince among them.**

I am [YHWH]; I have spoken.

My servant David shall be king over them,

and they shall all have one shepherd.

They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived.

They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever,

and **David my servant shall be their prince forever.**

(Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24a,25 ESV)

David's life and his reign as King of Israel are thoroughly discussed in the paper "**David – A Man After My Own Heart**" and in section **2.2.2 King David** in the paper "**To Be a King**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁴⁴ See footnote 6

⁴⁵ See section **14.1 The Example Nation**

5.1 A Remnant of True Worshipers

In the Davidic Psalms, **King David makes note of a new phenomenon in God's dealing with Israel.** Certainly, at the time of David, God was still dealing with the whole nation – he had NOT yet written-off the nation as incorrigible and marked it for destruction. But, David recognized that within Israel there was a **remnant of True Worshipers** who were distinct from the nation as a whole, chosen through “**election**” by God’s “**grace**”. David took great pains to prepare for the Temple that Solomon would build. He no doubt believed that through the Temple all Israel would be purified and return whole heartedly to True Worship of God. No doubt, David looked to this group of True Worshipers to lead the way.

David uses two words to describe this group:

- **חסיד** - *hasid*, a masculine adjective, related to *hesed*,⁴⁶ **BDB** defines *hasid* as “the active practice of *hesed*”;⁴⁷ used of persons it is usually translated “saints” or “the godly”
- **קדוש** - *qadosh*, a masculine adjective, related to *qodesh*, “holiness”, used of persons it is usually translated “saints” or “the godly”
- David identifies these people as special to God:
 - But know that **[YHWH] has set apart the [hasid] for himself;**
(Psalm 4:3a ESV)
 - As for **the [qadosh]** in the land, **they are the excellent ones**, in whom is all my delight.
(Psalm 16:3 ESV)
 - With the [hasid] you show yourself merciful;**
with the blameless man you show yourself blameless;
with the purified you show yourself pure;
(Psalm 18:25-26a ESV)
 - For **[YHWH] loves [mish^epat];**⁴⁸ he **will not forsake his [hasid].**
They are preserved forever ...
(Psalm 37:28a ESV)
- David calls on these people to praise God:
 - Sing praises to [YHWH], O you his [hasid],** and give thanks to his holy name.
(Psalm 30:4 ESV)
 - Therefore **let everyone who is [hasid] offer prayer to you**
at a time when you may be found ...
(Psalm 32:6a ESV)
 - All your works shall give thanks to you, [YHWH],
and **all your [hasid] shall bless you!**
(Psalm 145:10 ESV)
- David enjoins these people to reverence God:
 - Oh, **fear [YHWH], you his [qadosh],** for those who fear him have no lack!
(Psalm 34:9 ESV)
 - Love [YHWH], all you his [hasid]!**
[YHWH] preserves the faithful ...
(Psalm 31:23a ESV)
- David identifies himself with these people:
 - Preserve my life, for I am [hasid];**
save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.
(Psalm 86:2 ESV)

⁴⁶ The most important word for understanding the Nature of God is *hesed*. Briefly, *hesed* is the expression of God's covenantal commitment to fulfill his side of a covenant agreement. See section **1.4.3 Attributes of God's Character** in the paper “**First Pillar - The Nature of God**” and **Excursus 2 - hesed** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁴⁷ See **BDB** page 339, see also Holladay page 111

⁴⁸ The most important meaning of the noun **מִשְׁפָּט** - *mish^epat*, is the character attribute of “justness”, but it also frequently is used to mean the abstract concept of “justice”; other nuances also exist. In Psalm 37:28, the entire range of meaning is encompassed.

The meaning of *mish^epat* is thoroughly explored in the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

I will thank you forever, because you have done it.⁴⁹

I will wait for your name, for it is good, **in the presence of the [hasid]**.
(Psalm 52:9 ESV)

For **you will not** abandon my [life] (nephesh)⁵⁰ to [the grave] (sh^eol),⁵¹
or **let your [hasid] see corruption**.
(Psalm 16:10 ESV)⁵²

Clearly the **remnant of True worshippers** identified by David continued to exist throughout the history of Israel – **later Psalmists** echo David's allusions to this remnant of True Worshipers:

Let me hear what God, [YHWH], will speak,
for he **will speak peace to his people, to his [hasid]**;
but let them not turn back to folly.
(Psalm 85:8 ESV)

Our God comes; he does not keep silence;
before him is a devouring fire,
around him a mighty tempest.

He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
"Gather to me my [hasid], who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"
(Psalm 50:3-5)

Precious in the sight of [YHWH] is the death of his [hasid].
(Psalm 116:15 ESV)

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness,
and **let your [hasid] shout for joy**.

Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
and **her [hasid] will shout for joy**.
(Psalm 132:9, 16 ESV)

O you who **love [YHWH]**, hate evil!
He preserves the lives of his [hasid];
he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
(Psalm 97:10 ESV)

Praise [YHWH]!
Sing to [YHWH] a new song, his praise **in the assembly of the [hasid]!**
Let the [hasid] exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.
This is honor for all his [hasid].
Praise [YHWH]!
(Psalm 149:1, 5, 9b ESV)

The remnant of True Worshipers continued,
but over the years, following their leaders, **the majority of the nation fell into apostacy**.

5.2 The Failure of the Davidic Line

King David's son, **Solomon**, started well but eventually fell into apostacy:⁵³

For when Solomon was old **his wives turned away his heart after other gods**,
and his heart was not wholly true to [YHWH] his God, as was the heart of David his father.
For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians,
and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

So **Solomon did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH]**
and did not wholly follow [YHWH], as David his father had done.
(1 Kings 11:4-6 ESV)

⁴⁹ This is an allusion to the First Resurrection, see Psalm 22:31, Isaiah 44:23, Revelation 16:17, 21:6;
as an integral component of the **Plan of God**, even in David's time, the First Resurrection was as good as accomplished, "God has 'done it'".

⁵⁰ See footnote 6

⁵¹ The Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל - sh^eol, should always be translated "death", "grave", or a synonym. To transliterate as "Sheol" implies that there is a place of consciousness where the "dead" go, "Dante's Hell". This is a pagan concept. See **TWOT** article 2303c pages 892-893.

⁵² The Synoptist Luke reports the Apostle Paul applying this verse to the resurrection of Jesus Christ; see Acts 13:35.

⁵³ The reign of Solomon is discussed in section **2.2.3 King Solomon** in the paper "**To Be a King**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

Sadly, Solomon's apostasy set the pattern for the majority of Kings of Israel. The books of **1 Kings**, **2 Kings**, and **2 Chronicles** report **very few the kings of Israel to have been True Worshippers of God**. Most of them were heavily into apostasy. Each of the kings of Israel is discussed in sections **2.3 The Northern Kingdom** and **2.4 The Southern Kingdom** in the paper "**To Be a King**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The author of **Book of 2 Kings** summarizes the apostasy and resulting destruction of the Northern Kingdom:

And this occurred because **the people of Israel had sinned against [YHWH] their God**, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had **feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations** whom [YHWH] drove out before the people of Israel, and in **the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced**.

And **the people of Israel did secretly against [YHWH] their God things that were not right**. They built for themselves high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city. They set up for themselves pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, and there they made offerings on all the high places, as the nations did whom [YHWH] carried away before them.

And they did wicked things, provoking [YHWH] to anger, and **they served idols**, of which [YHWH] had said to them,
"You shall not do this."

Yet [YHWH] warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying,
"Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the [torah]⁵⁴ that I commanded your fathers, and that **I sent to you by my servants the prophets**."

But **they would not listen, but were stubborn**, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in [YHWH] their God.

They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and **they followed the nations that were around them**, concerning whom [YHWH] had commanded them that they should not do like them. And they abandoned all the commandments of the [YHWH] their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and **worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal**. And they **burned their sons and their daughters as offerings** and used divination and omens and **sold themselves to do evil in the sight of [YHWH], provoking him to anger**.
(2 Kings 17:7-17 ESV)

The Prophet Jeremiah assesses the Southern Kingdom to have become even worse:

[YHWH] said to me in the days of King Josiah:

"Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and **there played the whore**?⁵⁵

And I thought,

'After she has done all this she will return to me,'

but she did not return, and **her treacherous sister Judah saw it**. She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce.

Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but **she too went and played the whore**. Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree.

Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares [YHWH]."

⁵⁴ The Hebrew word תּוֹרָה - torah, means "teaching", "instruction", "direction". There is almost no overlap of meaning with the English word "law"; hence, in this paper the transliteration is always used. For further discussion, see **Excursus 3 - torah** and **Excursus 5 - torah and nomos** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁵⁵ See section **6. Spiritual Whoredom** in the paper "**The Human Condition**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

And [YHWH] said to me,

“Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. ...”

(Jeremiah 3:6-11 ESV)

As with the period of the Judges, **the period of the Monarchy was a failure.**

Not that the **Plan of God** had failed, but **the people failed to respond to the grace** that God held out to them. Starting with the **Prophet Samuel**, **God had sent one prophet after another** to explain the **Plan of God** and the **Way of God** to Israel. **The people of Israel by and large did NOT get it.** Again, without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, human beings cannot please God.

6. The Prophets – Demise and Hope

Throughout the period of the Monarchy, the prophets and their disciples formed the nucleus of the **remnant of True Worshipers**. However, there is little explicit information on the remnant.

In the **time of Elijah**, it is confirmed to be in existence:

Now Obadiah feared [YHWH] greatly, and when Jezebel cut off **the prophets of [YHWH]**, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.

Obadiah speaking

Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of [YHWH], how I hid a hundred men of [YHWH’s] prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water?

YHWH speaking

Yet I [have left]⁵⁶ seven thousand in Israel,

all the knees that have not bowed to Baal,
and every mouth that has not kissed him.

(1 Kings 18:3b-4, 13, 19:18 ESV)

For general discussions of “**prophecy**” and the Biblical “**prophets**”, see section **2.4 The Role of Prophecy** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”, section **3.4.2 The Writing Prophets** in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**”, and section **2. Prophecies Concerning the Nations** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**”; all the papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

6.1 Samuel and the Prophetic Institution

God had revealed to Moses that there would be a “Prophetic Institution”:

I will raise up for them a prophet⁵⁷ like you from among their brothers.

And I will put my words in his mouth, and **he shall speak to them all that I command him.**

And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.

And if you say in your heart,

‘How may we know the word that [YHWH] has not spoken?’

—when a prophet speaks in the name of [YHWH],

[if it is NOT a word that comes from, or has been spoken by, YHWH]⁵⁸

the prophet has spoken it presumptuously.

You need not be afraid of him.

(Deuteronomy 18:18-22 ESV)

⁵⁶ The Hebrew is הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ - w^hish^e ar^eti, “verb, hiphil, waw-consecutive + perfect first common singular” (www.esv.org Hebrew Grammar); “hiphil” implies causative action; “perfect” implies the action is completed; therefore, English past tense “have left” is preferable over future tense “will leave”. Also, “will leave” make no sense contextually.

⁵⁷ This prophecy is of course dual, there would be a “Prophetic Institution”, but the prophecy is also Messianic, see John 1:21,25, 6:14, 7:40.

⁵⁸ This phrase is poorly translated in most English Bibles. **The measure of a prophet’s word is whether or NOT it is consistent with the teaching of God.** Most of what prophets say is didactic. The predictive value of a prophet’s word is secondary. False prophets can make “true” predictions (see Deuteronomy 13:1-2), but their teaching is NOT consistent with the teaching of God. See the detailed discussion of this passage in section **2.4.1.3 False Prophets** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

It was the Prophet Samuel who formally initiated the “Prophet Institution” in Israel.⁵⁹

In the early days of the New Testament Church, the **Apostles Peter and John** were teaching in the Temple and made allusion to **Moses’ prophecy** and the **work of Samuel**:

But **what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets**, that his **Christ would suffer**, he thus fulfilled.

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until **the time for restoring all the things** about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

Moses said,

‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.

You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.

And it shall be that every [person] (psyche)⁶⁰ who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’

And **all the prophets** who have spoken,

from Samuel and **those who came after him**, also proclaimed these days.

(Acts 3:18-24 ESV)

The life and work of Jesus Christ are the pivotal events in the Plan of God.⁶¹ All the prophets look to the First Advent, “**Christ would suffer**”. **The outcome of the First Advent will be the Second Advent, “the time for restoring all the things”.**⁶² A fundamental purpose of the “**Prophetic Institution**” was to reveal the **Plan of God**. The **Writings Prophets** have given us God’s revelation laying out the **Plan of God**. The **Former Prophets** dealt with Israel as the **Plan of God** unfolded for the nation. Their main function was to try to get the people of Israel to live by the **Way of God**.

When the nation proved incorrigible, God sent the **Writing Prophets** to document the **nation’s demise** and present the **Plan of God** with the **hope for the future**.

6.2 The Former Prophets

We have only incidental records of the teaching of the Former Prophets⁶³ scattered throughout the historical books. However, the **author of the Books of Kings** and the **Chronicler** are explicit that the Former Prophets (and also the Writing Prophets for the later kings) preserved much of their source material, for example:

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, from first to last, are they not **written in the history of Nathan the prophet**, and in **the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite**, and in **the visions of Iddo the seer** concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? (2 Chronicles 9:29 ESV)

Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, behold, they are **written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel**. (1 Kings 14:19 ESV)

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, from first to last, are written in **the chronicles of Jehu the son of Hanani**, which are recorded in **the Book of the Kings of Israel**. (2 Chronicles 20:34 ESV)

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, are they not written in **the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah**? (1 Kings 22:45 ESV)

See also **1 Kings** 14:29, 15:7,31, 16:5,14,20,27, 22:39, **2 Kings** 1:18, 8:23, 10:34, 12:19, 13:8,12, 14:15,18,28, 15:6,11,15,21,26,31,36, 16:19, 20:20, 21:17,25, 23:28, 24:5

⁵⁹ For a discussion of this, see section “*Samuel and the Prophetic Schools*” in Freeman pages 28-34.

⁶⁰ See footnote 6

⁶¹ See section 8. *The First Advent*

⁶² See section 13. *The Second Advent*

⁶³ For a list of the Former Prophets see section 2.4.1.1 *The Former Prophets* in the paper “*Second Pillar - The Plan of God*” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

1 Chronicles 9:1, 29:29

2 Chronicles 12:15, 13:22, 16:11, 24:27, 25:26, 27:7, 28:26, 32:32, 33:18-19, 35:26-27, 36:8

The **Prophets Gad and Nathan** both worked with King David. Only Nathan is reported to have continued with King Solomon. **Gad joined David was in the Judean Wilderness**, while David avoided King Saul.⁶⁴ Towards the end of his life, when David insisted on Joab to perform a census,⁶⁵ it is **through Gad** that God communicates **the punishment**.⁶⁶ Finally, Gad instructs David to **build the altar** on the site of the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite,⁶⁷ the site where the Temple would be built.

We first encounter the **Prophet Nathan** when David is King in Jerusalem:

Now when **the king lived in his house**

and [YHWH] had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies,
the king said to Nathan the prophet,

“See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.”

And **Nathan said to the king,**

“Go, **do all that is in your heart**, for [YHWH] is with you.”

(2 Samuel 7:1-3 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:1-2)

Later, **God gave Nathan the details of his Plan**: David would NOT build the Temple,⁶⁸ it would be built by his son, and the promise to Abraham of the **blessing of all nations** would be particularized to a descendant of David who would **perpetuate the throne of David forever, the Messiah**.⁶⁹

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers,

I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name,⁷⁰

and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.**⁷¹

I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my [hesed]⁷² will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me.

Your throne shall be established forever.

(2 Samuel 7:12-16 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:11-14)

We next encounter the **Prophet Nathan in the aftermath of the Bathsheba/Uriah incident**.⁷³

Nathan presents David with a moving scenario of gross injustice.⁷⁴ David’s anger is raised,

then **Nathan informs David that he is of the perpetrator of the injustice**.

David immediately repents, but consequences will follow:

Nathan said to David,

“**You are the man!**

Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel,

‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. ...

Now therefore **the sword shall never depart from your house,**

because you have despised me

and have taken the wife (ishshah)⁷⁵ of Uriah the Hittite to be your [woman] (ishshah).’⁷⁶

David said to Nathan,

“**I have sinned against [YHWH].”**

⁶⁴ See 1 Samuel 22:5

⁶⁵ See 2 Samuel 24:1-9, 1 Chronicles 21:1-6

⁶⁶ See 2 Samuel 24:10-14, 1 Chronicles 21:7-13

⁶⁷ See 2 Samuel 24:18-19, 1 Chronicles 21:18-19

⁶⁸ See 2 Samuel 7:4-11 // 1 Chronicles 17:3-10

⁶⁹ For more detailed discussion of this prophecy, see section **2.2.2 King David (The Dynasty of David)** in the paper “**To Be a King**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁷⁰ This is a prophecy of Solomon.

⁷¹ This implies the Messiah: only one who is immortal can reside forever.

⁷² See footnote **46**

⁷³ See 2 Samuel chapter 11

⁷⁴ See 2 Samuel 12:1-6

⁷⁵ The noun **אִשָּׁחָה** - ‘ishshah, can mean “wife” but most generally means “woman”; see Holladay page 29.

⁷⁶ The sin was taking Bathsheba in adultery while Uriah was alive.

Once Uriah was dead, and the sin had been forgiven, there was no problem to take Bathsheba as a wife.

And Nathan said to David,
“[YHWH] also has put away your sin; you shall not die.
(2 Samuel 12:7, 10, 13 ESV)

The entire Bathsheba/Uriah incident and its aftermath⁷⁷ is a telling **object lesson for all True Worshipers of God**. David had wandered away from fidelity to the **Way of God**. He fell victim to the human propensity to sin. His sin was grievous. Many people suffered. Both David and Bathsheba were under a death sentence. David repented, as presumably did Bathsheba, but the consequences of the sin were allowed to run their course.
Repentance brings forgiveness but NOT removal of penalty.

On David’s death bed the final act of repercussion for his sin played out. David’s oldest surviving son, **Adonijah**, took steps to usurp the throne in place of **Solomon**.⁷⁸ With the help of Bathsheba, **Nathan informed David** of what was occurring.⁷⁹ David immediately took steps to confirm Solomon as king,⁸⁰ and **Nathan was instrumental in carrying out the plan**:
So Zadok the priest, **Nathan the prophet**, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David’s mule and brought him to Gihon.
Then Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon.
Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said,
“**Long live King Solomon!**”
(1 Kings 1:38-39 ESV)

The **Plan of God** required Solomon to be king. Circumstances and events came close to thwarting God’s purpose. **God is very careful to observe events on earth and make sure things unfold as he desires**:

And the word of [YHWH] came to me, saying,
“Jeremiah, what do you see?”

And I said,
“**I see an almond**⁸¹ **branch.**”

Then [YHWH] said to me,
“You have seen well, for **I am watching**⁸² **over my word to perform it.**”
(Jeremiah 1:11-12 ESV)

After the apostasy of King Solomon,⁸³ the **Prophet Ahijah** presented God’s offer to Jeroboam.⁸⁴ The benefit to Jeroboam was **contingent upon his embracing the Way of God** as David had done:

And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your [heart] (nephesh)⁸⁵ desires, and **you shall be king over Israel.**

And **if you will listen to all that I command you**, and will **walk in my ways**, and **do what is right** in my eyes by **keeping my statutes and my commandments**, as David my servant did,

I will be with you and will **build you a sure house**, **as I built for David**, and I will give Israel to you.
(1 Kings 11:37-38 ESV)

⁷⁷ See 2 Samuel chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19

⁷⁸ See 1 Kings 1:5-10

⁷⁹ See 1 Kings 1:11-27

⁸⁰ See 1 Kings 1:28-37

⁸¹ Hebrew: שָׁקֵד - shaqed

⁸² Hebrew: שֹׁקֵד - shoqed; a powerful play on words

⁸³ See 1 Kings 11:1-13

⁸⁴ See 1 Kings 11:26-36

⁸⁵ See footnote 6

Jeroboam did NOT embrace the Way of God.⁸⁶

So, **Ahijah was given a scathing condemnation to deliver to Jeroboam from God:**

Go, tell Jeroboam,

‘Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel:

“Because **I exalted you** from among the people
and made you leader over my people Israel
and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you,
and yet **you have not been like my servant David**,
who kept my commandments and **followed me with all his heart**,
doing only that which was right in my eyes,
but **you have done evil** above all who were before you
and have gone and made for yourself other gods and metal images,
provoking me to anger, and have cast me behind your back,
therefore behold, **I will bring harm upon the house of Jeroboam**
and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, both bond and free in Israel,
and will burn up the house of Jeroboam, as a man burns up dung until it is all gone.
Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs shall eat,
and anyone who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat.”⁸⁷

for [YHWH] has spoken it.’

(1 Kings 14:7-11 ESV)

Throughout the history of Israel, the **Former Prophets** continued to perform the **Work of God** to carry out the **Plan of God**. Many appear only once. Many are unnamed.

There are a few brief recorded statements from some of the **Former Prophets**. Consider these **pithy statements from some Former Prophets regarding the Plan of God and the Way of God:**

- **Azariah** to King Asa:

The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded,
and he went out to meet Asa and said to him,

“Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin:

[YHWH] is with you while you are with him.

If you seek him, he will be found by you,
but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. ...”

(2 Chronicles 15:1-2 ESV)

- **Hanani** to King Asa:

At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him,

“Because you relied on the king of Syria,
and did not rely on [YHWH] your God,
the army of the king of Syria has escaped you.

Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army
with very many chariots and horsemen?

Yet because you relied on [YHWH], he gave them into your hand.

For **the eyes of [YHWH] run to and fro throughout the whole earth,
to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.**

You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.”

(2 Chronicles 16:7-9 ESV)

- **Micaiah** to Ahab

And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him,

“Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king.
Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably.”

But Micaiah said,

“As [YHWH] lives, what [YHWH] says to me, that I will speak.”⁸⁸

(1 Kings 22:13-14 ESV // 2 Chronicles 18:12-13)

⁸⁶ See 1 Kings 12:26-33

⁸⁷ See also 1 Kings 16:1-4 where the same curse is put on Baasha for following in the way of Jeroboam.

⁸⁸ This speaks loudly to anyone attempting to teach from the Bible: only teach what the Bible actually says.

- **Jehu** to Jehoshaphat
Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem.
But Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him
and said to King Jehoshaphat,
“**Should you help the wicked and love those who hate [YHWH]?**
Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from [YHWH]. ...”
(2 Chronicles 19:1-2 ESV)
- **Eliezer** to Jehoshaphat
After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah
joined with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted wickedly.
He joined him in building ships to go to Tarshish,
and they built the ships in Ezion-geber.
Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Mareshah
prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying,
“**Because you have joined with Ahaziah,**⁸⁹
[YHWH] will destroy what you have made.”
And the ships were wrecked and were not able to go to Tarshish.
(2 Chronicles 20:35-37 ESV)
- **Zechariah** to Joash
Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest,
and he stood above the people, and said to them,
“Thus says God,
“**Why do you break the commandments of [YHWH],
so that you cannot prosper?**
Because you have forsaken [YHWH], he has forsaken you.”
(2 Chronicles 24:20 ESV)

The two **Former Prophets** about whom we have the most information are **Elijah and Elisha**.
The two men were contemporaries – Elijah was older and recruited Elisha to work with him.
Elijah was active from about 875BC to about 850BC. Elisha was recruited in about 860BC,
and he was active until about 790BC. Elijah’s career is discussed in the paper “**The Work of Elijah**”
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. The chronological chart “**Life and Times of Elijah**”
provides a summary of the events around Elijah and Elisha; it is located at
<https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>.

King Ahab of North Israel and his wife **Jezebel** were two of the vilest rulers known to history:

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah,
Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel,
and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.
And **Ahab** the son of Omri **did evil** in the sight of [YHWH],
more than all who were before him.

And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,
he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians,
and went and **served Baal and worshiped him.**
He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria.
And Ahab made an Asherah.

Ahab did more to provoke [YHWH], the God of Israel,
to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.
There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of [YHWH] like Ahab,
whom **Jezebel his wife incited.**
(1 Kings 16:29-33, 21:25 ESV)

In God’s eyes, North Israel had been in a state of apostasy since the innovations of Jeroboam.⁹⁰

However, many people believed they were still worshipping YHWH. Indeed, there were still remaining
True Worshipers of God in the northern kingdom. **Jezebel’s goal was to eradicate all worship of YHWH**
and make the worship of Ba`al the official religion.

⁸⁹ See the previous statement to Jehoshaphat.

⁹⁰ See section **2.3.1 The Jeroboam Dynasty** in the paper “**To Be a King**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
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It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider all the details,
but **God commissioned Elijah to prevent Jezebel's objective:**

And [YHWH] said to him,

“Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus.

And when you arrive, you shall **anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.**

And **Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel,**

and **Elisha** the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint **to be prophet in your place.**

And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death,

and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death.

(1 Kings 19:15-17 ESV)

It was Jehu that put an end to Jezebel and her intentions:

When **Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it.**

And she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out of the window.

And as Jehu entered the gate, she said,

“Is it peace, you Zimri, murderer of your master?”

And he lifted up his face to the window and said,

“Who is on my side? Who?”

Two or three eunuchs looked out at him.

He said,

“Throw her down.”

So they threw her down.

And some of **her blood spattered on the wall** and on **the horses**, and they **trampled on her.**

Then Jehu assembled all the people and said to them,

“Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve him much.

Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his worshipers and all his priests.

Let none be missing, for I have a great sacrifice to offer to Baal.

Whoever is missing shall not live.”

But **Jehu did it with cunning in order to destroy the worshipers of Baal.**

So as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering,

Jehu said to the guard and to the officers,

“Go in and strike them down; let not a man escape.”

So when **they put them to the sword** ...

(2 Kings 9:30-33, 10:18-19, 25a ESV)

Thus Jezebel and her worship of Ba`al was stopped,

but **Jehu did NOT stop the innovations of Jeroboam:**

Thus **Jehu wiped out Baal from Israel.**

But **Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam** the son of Nebat,

which he made Israel to sin—that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan.

And [YHWH] said to Jehu,

“Because **you have done well** in carrying out what is right in my eyes,

and have done **to the house of Ahab** according to all that was in my heart,

your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.”

But **Jehu was not careful to walk in [torah]⁹¹ of [YHWH]**, the God of Israel, with all his heart.

He did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam, which he made Israel to sin.

(2 Kings 10:28-31 ESV)

Elijah was taken out of active service by God, and Elisha inherited the work they had started.⁹²

Elisha revived the prophetic schools started by Samuel to train men to teach the people.

Elisha's work with the schools of the prophets⁹³ no doubt created a healthier environment in North Israel for the worship of YHWH, but the nation remained in apostasy due to the innovations of Jeroboam. The last kings of the North Israel, and apparently most of the people, willingly remained in apostasy, so God began to send the **Writing Prophets** to warn Israel of impending destruction. But they also carried a message of “hope”; the **Plan of God** will be accomplished!

⁹¹ See footnote 54

⁹² See 2 Kings 2:1-14

⁹³ See 2 Kings 2:15-25, all of chapter 4, and 6:1-7

6.3 The Early Writing Prophets

The two earliest Writing Prophets, **Obadiah and Joel**,⁹⁴ had been active in the South Israel during the times of Elijah and Elisha in the North Israel. The **Prophets Amos and Hosea**⁹⁵ were sent to North Israel around 760BC, about a generation after the death of Elisha. The **Prophet Jonah**⁹⁶ was also active in the North Israel about this time. Hosea appears to have ended his career in South Israel – he identifies with southern kings and directs many prophecies to the South Israel. Soon after Amos and Hosea, the **Prophets Isaiah and Micah**⁹⁷ were sent to the South Israel. However, both Isaiah and Micah also presented prophecies pertaining to North Israel. All these prophets contributed to the warning of the “**demise**” of Israel, and all contributed to message of “**hope**” – **the unfolding of the Plan of God**.

Joel and Obadiah

The **Book of Joel**⁹⁸ describes a **locust plague**, which the prophet casts as a **punishment on the nation** calling the people to **repentance**:

Hear this, you elders; give ear, all inhabitants of the land!
Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers?
For **a nation has come up against my land**, powerful and beyond number;
its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness.
Before them peoples are in anguish; all faces grow pale.
Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns.
The land is like the garden of Eden before them,
but behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them.
What the cutting **locust** left, the swarming **locust** has eaten.
What the swarming **locust** left, the hopping **locust** has eaten,
and what the hopping **locust** left, the destroying **locust** has eaten.
(Joel 1:2, 6, 2:6, 3, 1:4 ESV)

Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth.
Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar.
Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God!

“Yet even now,”
declares [YHWH],
“**return to me with all your heart**,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
and rend your hearts and not your garments.”

Return to [YHWH] your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in [hesed],⁹⁹
and he relents over disaster.
(Joel 1:8, 13a, 2:12-13 ESV)

The Prophet Joel looks to the “hope” held out by YHWH when the end result of the repentance occurs, and YHWH relents of the disaster. The ultimate fulfilment of this prophecy is in the World Tomorrow:¹⁰⁰

For behold, in those days and at that time, **when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem ...**
[YHWH] answered and said to his people,
“Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and **you will be satisfied**;
and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.

⁹⁴ For further discussion see section [2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets \(Prophets Obadiah, Joel, and Jonah\)](#) in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁹⁵ For further discussion see section [2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets \(Prophets Amos and Hosea\)](#) in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁹⁶ For further discussion see section [2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets \(Prophets Obadiah, Joel, and Jonah\)](#) in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁹⁷ For further discussion see section [2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets \(Prophets Isaiah and Micah\)](#) in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁹⁸ For further discussion, see section [2.2.1 Joel](#) in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁹⁹ See footnote [46](#)

¹⁰⁰ See section [14.3 The Millennium](#)

The threshing floors shall be full of grain;
the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.
I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you.
You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
and praise the name of [YHWH] your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you.
And my people shall never again be put to shame.
You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
and that I am [YHWH] your God and there is none else.
And my people shall never again be put to shame. ...”

Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in [YHWH] your God,
for he has given the early rain for your vindication;
he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before.
And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk,
and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water;
(Joel 3:1, 2:19, 24-27, 23, 3:18a ESV)

In the **Book of Obadiah**,¹⁰¹ the message of “**demise**” is specifically directed to the nation of **Edom** as a “type” of all nations of the world, “**world city**”.¹⁰² But the message of “**hope**” is directed to Israel, specifically **New Israel** after the establishment of the Kingdom of God:

Thus says the Lord [YHWH] concerning Edom:
We have heard a report from [YHWH],
and **a messenger has been sent among the nations:**
“Rise up!
Let us rise against her for battle!”

For the day of [YHWH] is near upon all the nations.

As you have done, it shall be done to you;
your deeds shall return on your own head.

But **in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape**, and it shall be holy,
and the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions.
Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau,
and **the kingdom shall be [YHWH's].**
(Obadiah 1, 15, 17, 21 ESV)

These earliest Writing Prophets set the themes of demise and hope.

Due to apostacy and without repentance, Israel’s demise was certain.
However, the Plan of God also contains “hope”, which the prophets continued to express.

Amos, Hosea, and Jonah

The **Prophet Amos**¹⁰³ apparently had a brief career entirely in North Israel, although he was native to South Israel.¹⁰⁴ During the reign of **Jeroboam II**, North Israel had attained a level of wealth and prosperity not seen since the days of Solomon.¹⁰⁵ Due to the religious disfunction of the nation, this wealth led to **severe social degeneracy**. Amos inveighs against both **apostacy** and **social crimes** which have made the **demise of the nation inevitable**:

Thus says [YHWH]:
For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, **I will not revoke the punishment,**
because **they sell the righteous** for silver, **and the needy** for a pair of sandals
—those who **trample the head of the poor** into the dust of the earth
and **turn aside the way of the afflicted;**
a man and his father go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned;
they lay themselves down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge ...
(Amos 2:6-8a ESV)

¹⁰¹ For further discussion, see section **2.1.1 Obadiah** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁰² See section **3.1.2.2 World City** in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁰³ For further discussion, see section **2.3.1 Amos** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁰⁴ See Amos 1:1, “Tekoa” was a small village southeast of Bethlehem.

¹⁰⁵ See Bright pages 256-259

They hate him who reproves in the gate, and **they abhor him who speaks the truth.**
Therefore because **you trample on the poor** and you exact taxes of grain from him,
you have built houses of hewn stone, but **you shall not dwell in them;**
you have planted pleasant vineyards, but **you shall not drink their wine.**
For **I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins**
—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate.
(Amos 5:10-12 ESV)

Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches,
and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall,
who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp
and like David invent for themselves instruments of music,
who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils,
but **are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!**

Therefore **they shall now be the first of those who go into exile,**
and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away.
(Amos 6:4-7 ESV)

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
An adversary shall surround the land
and bring down your defenses from you,
and your strongholds shall be plundered.

Hear this word that I take up over you in lamentation, O house of Israel:
Fallen, no more to rise, is the virgin Israel;
forsaken on her land, with none to raise her up.
(Amos 3:11, 5:1-2 ESV)

Amos stresses God's grace in the **election** of Israel
and **the tragedy of Israel's rejection of God's grace:**

Hear this word that [YHWH] has spoken against you,
O people of Israel,
against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt:
You only have I known of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.
(Amos 3:1-2 ESV)

Despite the inevitable destruction of the nation, **God will retain a remnant:**

Behold, the eyes of the Lord [YHWH] are upon the sinful kingdom,
and I will destroy it from the surface of the ground,
except that **I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,** declares [YHWH].

For behold, I will command, and shake the house of Israel among all the nations
as one shakes with a sieve, but no pebble shall fall to the earth.

All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say,
'Disaster shall not overtake or meet us.'
(Amos 9:8-10 ESV)

The **Book of Amos** ends with a **promise of hope in the World Tomorrow.**¹⁰⁶

In that day **I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen**
and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old,
that they may possess the remnant of Edom¹⁰⁷ [even]¹⁰⁸ all the nations who are called by my name,
declares [YHWH] who does this.

Behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH],
when **the plowman shall overtake the reaper** and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.

I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,
and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.

¹⁰⁶ See section **14.3 The Millennium**

¹⁰⁷ Edom is a type of the nations of the world.

¹⁰⁸ The Hebrew particle ׀ - waw, has several meanings. The most common is as a conjunction, "and", "but". Very importantly to be distinguished is when it identifies "apposition" – in these cases, this paper substitutes "even".

I will plant them on their land,
and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,
says [YHWH] your God.
(Amos 9:11-15 ESV)

The **Prophet Hosea**¹⁰⁹ was a contemporary of Amos, although his career seems to have been considerably longer starting in North Israel and ending in South Israel. It is no where stated, but most commentators suggest he was native to North Israel.

The main theme of the **Book of Hosea** is “**spiritual whoredom**”, **idolatry**.

Because of Israel’s idolatry, the destruction of the nation is inevitable:

They shall eat, but not be satisfied;

they shall play the whore,¹¹⁰ but not multiply,
because **they have forsaken [YHWH] to cherish whoredom**,
wine, and new wine, which take away the understanding.

My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles.

For **a spirit of whoredom** has led them astray, and they have left their God to **play the whore**.

They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills,
under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good.

Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn;
can [YHWH] now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?

Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone.

When their drink is gone, **they give themselves to whoring**;
their rulers dearly love shame.

A wind has wrapped them in its wings,
and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

(Hosea 4:10-13a, 16-19 ESV)

I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me;
for now, O Ephraim, **you have played the whore**; **Israel is defiled**.

Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God.

For **the spirit of whoredom is within them**, and they know not [YHWH].

The pride of Israel testifies to his face;

Israel [even]¹¹¹ Ephraim shall stumble in his guilt;

Judah also shall stumble with them.

With their flocks and herds **they shall go to seek [YHWH]**,¹¹²

but they will not find him; he has withdrawn from them.

(Hosea 5:3-6 ESV)

Rejoice not, O Israel!

Exult not like the peoples; for **you have played the whore**, forsaking your God.

You have loved a prostitute’s wages on all threshing floors.

Threshing floor and wine vat shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail them.

They shall not remain in the land of [YHWH],

but Ephraim shall return to Egypt,

and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria.

The days of punishment have come;

the days of recompense have come; Israel shall know it.

The prophet is a fool; the man of the spirit is mad,

because of your **great iniquity** and **great hatred**.

The prophet is the watchman of Ephraim with my God;

yet a fowler’s snare is on all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God.

They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah:

he will remember their iniquity; **he will punish their sins**.

(Hosea 9:1-3, 7-9 ESV)

¹⁰⁹ For further discussion, see section **2.2.2 Hosea** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹¹⁰ See footnote **55**

¹¹¹ See footnote **108**

¹¹² Perfunctory worship is NOT acceptable to God.

The inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf of Beth-aven.¹¹³
 Its people mourn for it, and so do its idolatrous priests
 —those who rejoiced over it and over its glory—for it has departed from them.
 The thing itself shall be carried to Assyria as tribute to the great king.
 Ephraim shall be put to shame, and **Israel shall be ashamed of his idol.**
Samaria's king shall perish like a twig on the face of the waters.
The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, **shall be destroyed.**
 Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars,
 and they shall say to the mountains,
 "Cover us,"
 and to the hills,
 "Fall on us."
 (Hosea 10:5-8 ESV)

Hosea reports God's longing for a restored relationship with Israel,
 which will occur with the final **remnant** after the **Second Exodus:**¹¹⁴

How can I give you up, O Ephraim?
 How can I hand you over, O Israel?
 How can I make you like Admah?
 How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.
 I will not execute my burning anger; **I will not again destroy Ephraim;**
 for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and **I will not come in wrath.**
 They shall go after [YHWH]; he will roar like a lion;
 when he roars, **his children shall come trembling from the west;**
 they shall come trembling like birds **from Egypt,**
 and like doves **from the land of Assyria,**
 and I will return them to their homes, declares [YHWH].
 So you, by the help of your God, return,
hold fast to [hesed]¹¹⁵ and [justness] (mish'pat),¹¹⁶ and wait continually for your God.
 (Hosea 11:8-11, 12:6 ESV)

As did the **Book of Amos**, so does the **Book of Hosea**, end with **messages of hope:**

I am [YHWH] your God from the land of Egypt;
 I will again make you dwell in tents, as in the days of the appointed feast.
 Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
 and **bring her into the wilderness,** and **speak tenderly to her.**
 And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor **a door of hope.**
 And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth,
 as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.
 (Hosea 12:9, 2:14-15 ESV)

Return, O Israel, to [YHWH] your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.
 Take with you words and return to [YHWH]; **say to him,**
 "**Take away all iniquity;** accept what is good,
 and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips.
 Assyria shall not save us;
 we will not ride on horses;
 and we will say no more,
 'Our God,'
 to the work of our hands.
 In you the orphan finds mercy."

I will heal their apostasy;
I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.
 I will be like the dew to Israel;
 he shall blossom like the lily;
 he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; his shoots shall spread out;
 his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon.

¹¹³ "Beth-aven" means "house of evil"; it is a pejorative epithet for "Beth-el" where Jeroboam put a calf.

¹¹⁴ See section [14.1 The Example Nation](#)

¹¹⁵ See footnote [46](#)

¹¹⁶ See footnote [48](#)

They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow;

they shall flourish like the grain;
they shall blossom like the vine;
their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.
(Hosea 14:1-7 ESV)

The following verse looks to the “**resurrection**”,¹¹⁷

and finally to the day when **there will be no more “death”**:¹¹⁸

I shall ransom them from the power of [the grave] (sh^e’ol);¹¹⁹
I shall redeem them from Death.

O Death, where are your plagues?
O [grave] (sh^e’ol), where is your sting?
Compassion is hidden from my eyes.¹²⁰
(Hosea 13:14 ESV)

The **Prophet Jonah**¹²¹ was a contemporary of Amos and Hosea:

[Jeroboam II] restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah,
according to the word of [YHWH], the **God of Israel**,
which he spoke by **his servant Jonah** the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.
(2 Kings 14:25 ESV)

The **Book of Jonah** never mentions Israel. **Jonah’s message was for Nineveh.**

Jonah’s fate to be swallowed by a large fish is one of the most famous incidents from the Bible,¹²²
but **the real significance of the Book of Jonah is its portent for the First Advent:**

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying,
“Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.”

But he answered them,

**“An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign,
but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.**

For just **as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish,
so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it,
for they repented at the preaching of Jonah,
and behold, **something greater than Jonah is here. ...”**

(Matthew 12:38-41 ESV)

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came,
and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.
He answered them,

“When it is evening, you say,
‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’

And in the morning,
‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’

You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky,
but **you cannot interpret the signs of the times.**

**An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign,
but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.”**

So he left them and departed.

(Matthew 16:1-4 ESV)

¹¹⁷ See section **2.1.3 The Resurrection of the Dead** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹¹⁸ See Revelation 21:4, 1 Corinthians 15:26,53-55

¹¹⁹ See footnote **51**

¹²⁰ This translation is almost contradictory. The Hebrew of this line is נֹחַם יִסְתַּר מֵעֵינַי - noham yissather me`enay; “noham” occurs only in this verse; it is a derivative noun from the root נָחַם -naham, “repent”, “relent” (see TWOT article 1344 pages 570-571). The best translation is probably “repentance” (see KJV). The verb יִסְתַּר - sathar, can carry a sense of “protection” (see TWOT article 1551 page 636).

If the preposition מִן - min is taken as ablative, cause, “by”, the phrase could be translated “**repentance is protected by my eyes**”.

¹²¹ For further discussion, see section **2.1.2 Jonah** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹²² See Jonah chapter 1

When the crowds were increasing, he began to say,

“This generation is an evil generation.

It seeks for a sign, but **no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.**

For **as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh,**
so will the Son of Man be to this generation.

The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they **repented at the preaching of Jonah,** and behold, **something greater than Jonah is here.**

(Luke 11:29-32 ESV)

On three different occasions, Jesus made reference to the Prophet Jonah, each time stressing that **“Jonah”** was a sign, **the only sign, of Jesus’ Messiahship.** The sign of Jesus’ Messiahship must be analyzed on several levels. First, Jesus establishes his contemporary generation to be an **“evil generation”**. Jesus cites the **“repentance of the Ninevites”** and **“quest of the Queen of Sheba”** to demonstrate the evil of Jesus’ contemporaries. The ready acceptance of the teaching of God by these “Gentiles” portends the readiness by which the Gentiles would accept the Gospel in contrast to the “Jews”, who rejected the Gospel and killed Jesus.

But, far more importantly is **“how” Jonah was a sign for Jesus’ Messiahship.** Jonah was thrown into the ocean and drowned. The fish swallowed him. Three days later, Jonah was restored to life and vomited onto land. Then Jonah went on to accomplish the purpose God had for him.¹²³ Jesus died in the crucifixion late in the afternoon on Wednesday Nisan 14.¹²⁴ He was placed in the tomb, **“so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”**.

After the three days and nights, late on the Sabbath, Jesus was resurrected and left the tomb.

It is **Jesus’ death and resurrection** which have allowed him to go on and accomplish the work God the Father has given him to do:

... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us.**

Since, therefore, **we have now been justified by his blood,** much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

For if while we were enemies **we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,** much more, now that we are reconciled, **shall we be saved by his life.**

(Romans 5:8-10 ESV)

Soon after these northern Prophets, **God raised up the Prophets Isaiah and Micah in South Israel.**

Isaiah and Micah

The **Prophet Isaiah** stands as a giant among the prophets, even a giant of humanity.

Only the **Psalms** contain more **Messianic prophecies** than the **Book of Isaiah.**¹²⁵

The number of **New Testament** quotations from the **Book of Isaiah** and from the **Psalms** is about equal.¹²⁶ Many of the prophecies of Isaiah are discussed in some detail in section **2.6 Isaiah** in the paper **“God of Every Nation”**; Isaiah chapters 7 through 12 are discussed in detail in **Excursus 1 – The Immanuel Cycle** in the paper **“To Be a King”**; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. This current paper surveys some of the prophecies related to the themes of this section – **“demise”** and **“hope”**. Isaiah was active from about 745BC until into the reign of Manasseh, so about 680BC.

¹²³ For further discussion on the Book of Jonah, see section **2.1.2 Jonah** in the paper **“God of Every Nation”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹²⁴ For the timeline of the crucifixion, see the chart **“Jesus Last Ten Days”** located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>

¹²⁵ See the chart in section **2.4.3 The Centrality of Jesus Christ** in the paper **“Second Pillar - The Plan of God”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹²⁶ See **“Index of Quotations”** pages 897-920 in **The Greek New Testament**

Isaiah commences his book with **a castigation of Israel** from YHWH:

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for [YHWH] has spoken:

“Children have I reared and brought up, but **they have rebelled against me.**

The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s crib,

but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”

Ah, **sinful nation**, a people **laden with iniquity**,

offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly!

They have forsaken [YHWH],

they have despised the Holy One of Israel, **they are utterly estranged.**

Why will you still be struck down?

Why will you continue to rebel?

The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it,

but bruises and sores and raw wounds;

they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil.

(Isaiah 1:2-6 ESV)

YHWH promises **punishment** on those who refuse to repent,

but **restoration** through purging for those who do repent:

How the faithful city has become a whore.¹²⁷

she who was full of [justness] (mish^epat)!¹²⁸

Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers.

Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water.

Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves.

Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts.

They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow’s cause does not come to them.

Therefore the Lord declares, [YHWH] of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel:

“Ah, I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes.

I will turn my hand against you

and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy.

And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning.

Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”

Zion shall be redeemed by [justness] (mish^epat),

and those in her who repent, by righteousness.

But rebels and sinners shall be broken together,

and those who forsake [YHWH] shall be consumed.

(Isaiah 1:21-28 ESV)

Isaiah proceeds to catalogue and lament **sins of Israel** and **resulting punishments**:

For behold, **the Lord [YHWH] of hosts is taking away** from Jerusalem and from Judah

support and supply, all support of bread, and all support of water;

the mighty man and the soldier, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder,

the captain of fifty and the man of rank,

the counselor and the skillful magician and the expert in charms.

My people—**infants are their oppressors**, and women rule over them.

O my people, **your guides mislead you** and they have swallowed up the course of your paths.

And I will make **boys their princes**, and infants shall rule over them.

And **the people will oppress one another**, every one his fellow and every one his neighbor;

the youth will be insolent to the elder, and the despised to the honorable.

For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen,

because **their speech and their deeds are against [YHWH]**, defying his glorious presence.

For the look on their faces bears witness against them;

they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it.

Woe to them!

For they have brought evil on themselves.

(Isaiah 3:1-3, 12, 4-5, 8-9 ESV)

¹²⁷ See footnote 55

¹²⁸ See footnote 48

[YHWH] has taken his place to contend; he stands to judge peoples.

[YHWH] will enter into judgment with the **elders** and **princes** of his people:

“It is you who have devoured the vineyard,

the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?”

declares the Lord [YHWH] of hosts.

Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field,
until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,

who put darkness for light and light for darkness,

who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!

Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink,

who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!

Therefore my people go into exile for lack of knowledge;

their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst.

(Isaiah 3:13-15, 5:8, 20-23, 13 ESV)

In contrast with the first part of the book, which opened with a message of castigation,
the second part of the Book of Isaiah starts with a message of “hope”:

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,

and cry to her that her warfare is ended,

that her iniquity is pardoned,

that she has received from [YHWH’s] hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries:

“In the wilderness **prepare the way of [YHWH],**¹²⁹

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

And the glory of [YHWH] shall be revealed,¹³⁰

and all flesh shall see it together,

for the mouth of [YHWH] has spoken.”

A voice says,

“Cry!”

And I said,

“What shall I cry?”

All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of [YHWH] blows on it;

surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades,

but **the word of our God will stand forever.**

Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news;

lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news;

lift it up, fear not; **say to the cities of Judah,**¹³¹

“Behold your God!”

Behold, **the Lord [YHWH] comes with might,** and **his arm rules for him,**¹³²

behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

He will tend his flock like a shepherd;¹³³

he will gather the lambs in his arms;

he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

(Isaiah 40:1-11 ESV)

¹²⁹ This looks to John the Baptist.

¹³⁰ This looks to the Second Advent.

¹³¹ This looks to the First Advent.

¹³² This looks to the Second Advent.

¹³³ The “Good Shepherd”; see Ezekiel 34:11-15, John 10:1-18

All three Synoptists allude to this passage to define the work of **John the Baptist** in preparing the way for the Messiah, the **First Advent**, **the pivotal event in the Plan of God**:

The beginning of **the gospel of Jesus Christ**, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way, (alluding to Malachi 3:1)
the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” (alluding to Isaiah 40:3)

John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness
and proclaiming a baptism of **repentance** for the forgiveness of sins.
(Mark 1:1-4 ESV)

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,
“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’” (alluding to Isaiah 40:3)
(Matthew 3:1-3 ESV)

... the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.
And he went into all the region around the Jordan,
proclaiming a baptism of **repentance** for the forgiveness of sins.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,
“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (citing Isaiah 40:3)

Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall become straight,
and the rough places shall become level ways,
and **all flesh shall see the salvation of God.**” (alluding to Isaiah 40:4-5)

(Luke 3:2b-6 ESV)

All three Synoptists identify the role of John was to prepare for the Messiah, **“prepare the way of the Lord”**. All three Synoptists identify “repentance” as the basis of John’s message, **“repent”**, **“repentance”**. Each of the Synoptists identifies a **different aspect of the Plan of God** as the outcome of John’s effort. Mark looks to the teaching that Jesus will bring, **“the gospel of Jesus Christ”**. Matthew notes that Jesus’ work will open the door for the Kingdom of God to arrive, **“the kingdom of heaven is at hand”**. Luke sees the end result, all human beings will be given the opportunity for salvation, **“all flesh shall see the salvation of God”**, which, of course, occurs **after the Second Advent**. Luke’s wording is based on the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text is more explicit in looking to the Second Advent: **“the glory of YHWH shall be revealed, “all flesh shall see it together”**:

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man,
and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn,
and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

For **as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west,**
so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
(Matthew 24:30, 27 ESV)

Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and **every eye will see him,**
even those who pierced him,
and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.

Even so.

Amen.

(Revelation 1:7 ESV)

Although the message of John the Baptist focused on repentance, **the passage in Isaiah does NOT explicitly mention “repentance”**, but it is explicit about **the vast gulf that exists between God and human beings, “all flesh is grass”**. Human life is transitory, the Plan of God is eternal, **“the word of our God will stand forever”**. Understanding this gulf is the **basis of repentance**:

Then Job answered [YHWH] and said:

“I know that you can do all things, and that **no purpose of yours can be thwarted.**

‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

'Hear, and I will speak;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.'

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;
therefore **I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**"

(Job 42:1-6 ESV)

The message of the Bible requires those persons called by God to repent. Ancient Israel as a whole did never respond positively. The prophets Isaiah and Micah faithfully delivered God's message, but it largely fell on deaf ears. The **Prophet Micah** was contemporary with Isaiah, but he probably had a significantly shorter career.¹³⁴ Micah pulls no punches. He looks straight to **the Day of YHWH** and identifies **the sin of Israel as the cause** that has made the Day of YHWH inevitable.

If Israel had been faithful to the Sinai Covenant, world history could have been very different.

The **ancient destruction** of Israel was the punishment for this failure:

For behold, **[YHWH] is coming out of his place,**

and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth.

All this is for the transgression of Jacob [even]¹³⁵ for the sins of the house of Israel.

What is the transgression of Jacob?

Is it not **Samaria?**

And what is the high place of Judah?

Is it not **Jerusalem?**

Therefore I will make Samaria **a heap in the open country,** a place for planting vineyards,
and I will pour down her stones into the valley and uncover her foundations.

All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces,

all her wages shall be burned with fire, and all her idols I will lay waste,

for from the fee of a prostitute she gathered them, and to the fee of a prostitute they shall return.

For this I will lament and wail;

I will go stripped and naked;

I will make lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches.

For **her wound is incurable,** and **it has come to Judah;**

it has reached to the gate of **my people,** to **Jerusalem.**

(Micah 1:3, 5-9 ESV)

Micah inveighs against the social and religious sins of Israel:

Woe to those who devise wickedness and **work evil** on their beds!

When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand.

They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them away;

they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.

(Micah 2:1-2 ESV)

And I said:

Hear, you **heads of Jacob** [even] **rulers** of the house of Israel!

Is it not for you to know [mish^epat]?¹³⁶

—you who hate the good and love the evil,

who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones,

who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them,

and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in a pot, like flesh in a cauldron.

Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob [even] rulers of the house of Israel,

who detest [mish^epat] and **make crooked all that is straight,**

who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity.

Its **heads** give judgment for a bribe;

its **priests** teach for a price;

its **prophets** practice divination for money;

¹³⁴ See section **2.2.3 Micah** in the paper "**God of Every Nation**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹³⁵ See footnote **108**

¹³⁶ See footnote **48**; in this passage the whole range of meaning of *mish^epat* is implied.

yet they lean on [YHWH] and say,
“Is not [YHWH] in the midst of us?
No disaster shall come upon us.”
(Micah 3:1-3, 9-11 ESV)

Because Israel refused to repent, Micah reports **God’s stern and sure indictment of Israel:**

Therefore thus says [YHWH]:
behold, against this family I am devising disaster,
from which you cannot remove your necks,
and you shall not walk haughtily, for it will be a time of disaster.
(Micah 2:3 ESV)

Hear what [YHWH] says:
Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.
Hear, you mountains, **the indictment of [YHWH]**,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for [YHWH] has an indictment against his people,
and **he will contend with Israel.**

(Micah 6:1-2 ESV)

The voice of [YHWH] cries to the city
—and it is sound wisdom to fear your name:
“Hear of the rod and of him who appointed it!
Can I forget any longer the **treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked**,
and the scant measure that is accursed?
Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights?
Your rich men are full of violence;
your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

Therefore **I strike you with a grievous blow**, making you desolate because of your sins. ...”
(Micah 6:9-13 ESV)

However, the Plan of God requires the continuance of a “remnant”. Micah is explicit that **God will continue to work through a “remnant”**, and ultimately the “remnant” will be formed into New Israel:

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob;
I will gather the remnant of Israel;
I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men.

In that day, declares [YHWH], I will assemble the lame
and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted;
and the lame I will make **the remnant**, and those who were cast off, **a strong nation;**
and **[YHWH] will reign** over them in Mount Zion **from this time forth and forevermore.**

Then **the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples** like dew from [YHWH],
like showers on the grass, which delay not for a man nor wait for the children of man.
And **the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations**, in the midst of many peoples,
like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,
which, when it goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver.¹³⁷
(Micah 2:12, 4:6-7, 5:7-8 ESV)

Micah was given the famous prophecy which identified “**Bethlehem**” as the **birthplace of the Messiah:**

But you, O **Bethlehem** Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time **when she who is in labor has given birth**;¹³⁸
then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and **shepherd his flock** in the strength of [YHWH],
in the majesty of the name of [YHWH] his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now **he shall be great to the ends of the earth.**
And he shall be their peace.
(Micah 5:2-5a ESV)

¹³⁷ This alludes to the “conquest” of the world with the Gospel in the World Tomorrow; see *Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence* in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹³⁸ See Revelation 12:1-6

When **Herod the king** heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he **inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.**

They told him,

“In **Bethlehem** of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:
‘And you, O **Bethlehem**, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”
(alluding to Micah 5:2)

(Matthew 2:3-6 ESV)

When they heard these words, some of the people said,

“This really is the Prophet.”

Others said,

“This is the Christ.”

But some said,

“Is the Christ to come from Galilee?”

Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from **Bethlehem**, the village where David was?”

(John 7:40-42 ESV)

The **Book of Micah** ends with a **doxology extolling God and the accomplishment of the Plan of God:**

Who is a God like you,
pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?

He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in [hesed].¹³⁹

He will again have compassion on us;

he will tread our iniquities underfoot.

You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

You will show faithfulness to Jacob and [hesed] to Abraham,
as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

(Micah 7:18-20 ESV)

The **early Writing Prophets** all had messages of “demise” and “hope”. Isaiah and Micah saw the actual “demise” of the North Israel, but both continued the message of “hope”.

Although the realization of “hope” remained long in the future. The later Writing Prophets witnessed the final “demise” of the nation of Israel, but their **messages of “hope” also continued.**

6.4 Prophets of the Destruction

The destruction of Ancient Israel was carried out over long period of time, demonstrating the patience of God. North Israel had been in official apostasy since its inception. God made two significant efforts to reform the nation: the **purge of Jehu** failed to eliminate the innovations of Jeroboam. After that, God left the two **Prophets Elijah and Elisha** to reform the nation. They met with some success, but the sins of Jeroboam remained very much in effect when **Jeroboam II** reigned:

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah,
Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, **began to reign in Samaria**,
and he reigned forty-one years.

And **he did what was evil** in the sight of [YHWH].

He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.

(2 Kings 14:23-24 ESV)

The material prosperity gained under **Jeroboam II** led to such religious and social degeneracy that destruction was inevitable. The kings after Jeroboam II were even worse than he, and the destruction began in 732BC with the advance of **Tiglath-pilser, King of Assyria**, and it ended some ten years later with the **destruction of the City of Samaria**.¹⁴⁰ The **Prophets Amos and Hosea** had given North Israel its last warning, but the warning fell on deaf ears.

¹³⁹ See footnote 46

¹⁴⁰ See Bright pages 269-276

The **Prophet Hosea** continued to hold out some hope for **South Israel** as he continued his career in the south:

Though you play the whore,¹⁴¹ O Israel, **let not Judah become guilty.**

Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit, but **Judah still walks with God** and is **faithful to the Holy One.**

(Hosea 4:15a, 11:12 ESV)

Indeed, after the fall of North Israel, there were very serious attempts at reform in South Israel by **King Hezekiah**¹⁴² and **King Josiah**.¹⁴³ The **Prophet Isaiah** worked closely with **King Hezekiah**.¹⁴⁴ Both kings were moderately successful while they lived, but their sons reversed all the good they had done and **the people in general did NOT repent** – which rendered the **destruction of South Israel inevitable**. After the destruction of North Israel, **God sent four prophets to warn South Israel**. The **Prophet Nahum**¹⁴⁵ came first at about 650BC. His message was mostly about Assyria, but there were implication for South Israel. The **Prophet Zephaniah**¹⁴⁶ was active during the reign of **Josiah**. There is no record of Zephaniah having any direct interaction with Josiah, but certainly Josiah would have been aware of Zephaniah's prophecy. The **Prophet Habakkuk**¹⁴⁷ is difficult to date, but the most likely date is the brief period between the death of Josiah in 609BC and the vassalage under King Nebuchadnezzar in 605BC. The **Prophet Jeremiah**¹⁴⁸ was active from 627BC to about 575BC. Jeremiah was contemporary with Zephaniah and Habakkuk. **Jeremiah was in the City of Jerusalem when it was sacked and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's armies**, in 586BC.

Nahum

For Israel, the **prophecy of Nahum** would have been primarily **a message of "hope"**: the yoke of Assyria was going to be removed. When the **Prophet Nahum**¹⁴⁹ was active there were no signs of Assyrian collapse. Assurbanipal was firmly in control, and the empire appeared strong.

Looking at this vast empire, **God pronounced his judgement on Nineveh** and promised Israel relief:

Behold, **I am against you, declares [YHWH] of hosts,**

and will lift up your skirts over your face;

and I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame.

I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle.

And all who look at you will shrink from you and say,

"Wasted is Nineveh; who will grieve for her?"

Where shall I seek comforters for you? ..."

[YHWH] has given commandment about you:

"No more shall your name be perpetuated;

from the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the metal image.

I will make your grave, for you are vile."

(Nahum 3:5-7, 1:14 ESV)

Addressed to Israel

Thus says [YHWH],

"Though they are at full strength and many, they will be cut down and pass away.

Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more.

And now **I will break his yoke from off you** and will burst your bonds apart."

(Nahum 1:12-13 ESV)

¹⁴¹ See footnote 55

¹⁴² See 2 Kings 18:3-7, 20:3, 2 Chronicles 29:3-36 all of chapters 30 and 31;

for a summary, see the chronological chart "**The Reform of Hezekiah**" located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>

¹⁴³ See 2 Kings 22:3-6, 23:1-25, 2 Chronicles 34:2-7, 29-33, 35:1-19

¹⁴⁴ See 2 Kings 19:1-7, 20, 20:1-11, 14-19 // Isaiah 37:1-7,21, 38:1-7, 39:3-8

¹⁴⁵ For further discussion see section **2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets (The Prophet Nahum)**

in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁴⁶ For further discussion see section **2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets (Prophets Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah)**

in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁴⁷ For further discussion see section **2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets (Prophets Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah)**

in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁴⁸ For further discussion see section **2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets (Prophets Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah)**

in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁴⁹ For further discussion, see section **2.1.3 Nahum** in the paper "**God of Every Nation**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

When Josiah came to the throne, Nahum may have still been active.

In any case, he would have been the **most recent active prophet**.

Nahum's words almost certainly would have **encouraged Josiah in his desire to reform**:

[YHWH] is a jealous and avenging God;

[YHWH] is avenging and wrathful;

[YHWH] takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.

[YHWH] is slow to anger and great in power,

and [YHWH] will by no means clear the guilty.

His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

Who can stand before his indignation?

Who can endure the heat of his anger?

His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces by him.

[YHWH] is good, **a stronghold in the day of trouble;**

he knows those who take refuge in him.

(Nahum 1:2-3, 6-7 ESV)

For **[YHWH] is restoring the majesty of Jacob** as the majesty of Israel,

for plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches.

Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace!

Keep your feasts, O Judah; **fulfill your vows,**

for **never again shall the worthless pass through you;** he is utterly cut off.

(Nahum 2:2, 1:15 ESV)

There is no way to be sure how much Nahum's prophecies affected Josiah, but it is very likely they were a motivating factor in Josiah's reform. While the **Prophet Zephaniah** was almost certainly active during Josiah's reform, he does NOT explicitly allude to it. Josiah was most likely dead, and his reform in tatters, by the time the **Prophet Habakkuk** was active.

Zephaniah and Habakkuk

The **Prophet Zephaniah**¹⁵⁰ no doubt provided additional encouragement for **Josiah's reform** with his prophecy of the **destruction of Assyria**:

And **he will** stretch out his hand against the north and **destroy Assyria,**

and he will make **Nineveh a desolation,** a dry waste like the desert.

Herds shall lie down in her midst, all kinds of beasts;

even the owl and the hedgehog shall lodge in her capitals;

a voice shall hoot in the window;

devastation will be on the threshold;

for her cedar work will be laid bare.

This is the exultant city that lived securely, that **said in her heart,**

"I am, and there is no one else."

What a desolation she has become, a lair for wild beasts!

Everyone who passes by her hisses and shakes his fist.

(Zephaniah 2:13-15 ESV)

Zephaniah also had **explicit warnings for Israel**. Zephaniah identifies a problem of syncretistic idolatry among the ruling classes, "**officials and the king's sons**". This was born out by the sons of Josiah who, upon his death, took the vestigial nation steeply back into idolatry:

I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal

and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,

those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens,

those who bow down and swear to [YHWH] and yet swear by Milcom,

those who have turned back from following [YHWH],

who do not seek [YHWH] or inquire of him.

And on the day of [YHWH's] sacrifice

—I will punish the officials and the king's sons

and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

¹⁵⁰ For further discussion, see section **2.3.2 Zephaniah** in the paper "**God of Every Nation**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold,
and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud.
(Zephaniah 1:4-6, 8-9 ESV)

Zephaniah further castigates all classes of society for lack of adherence to the Way of God,
"men who are complacent", "do not draw near to her God":

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and **I will punish the men who are complacent**, those who say in their hearts,
'[YHWH] will not do good, nor will he do ill.'

Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city!
She listens to no voice; she accepts no correction.
She does not trust in [YHWH];

she does not draw near to her God.¹⁵¹

Her **officials** within her are roaring lions;
her **judges** are evening wolves that leave nothing till the morning.

Her **prophets** are fickle, treacherous men;
her **priests** profane what is holy; they do violence to [torah].¹⁵²
(Zephaniah 1:12, 3:1-4 ESV)

The **Prophet Habakkuk**¹⁵³ focuses on the imminent **punishment of Israel by the Chaldeans.**
The prophecy is cast as **dialogue between the prophet and YHWH:**

Habakkuk

Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong?
Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.
(Habakkuk 1:3 ESV)

YHWH

For behold, **I am raising up the Chaldeans**, that bitter and hasty nation,
who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own.

They are dreaded and fearsome;
their justice and dignity go forth from themselves.
Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves;
their horsemen press proudly on.
Their horsemen come from afar;
they fly like an eagle swift to devour.
They all come for violence, all their faces forward.
They gather captives like sand.
At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh.
They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it.
Then they sweep by like the wind and go on,
guilty men, whose own might is their god!
(Habakkuk 1:6-11 ESV)

Habakkuk

Are you not from everlasting, [YHWH] my God, my Holy One?
We shall not die.¹⁵⁴
[YHWH], **you have ordained them [for justice] (l^e mish^epat)**,¹⁵⁵
and you, O Rock, **have established them for reproof.**
(Habakkuk 1:12 ESV)

Both **Zephaniah** and **Habakkuk** focused on the problems of Israel; but also, both looked
to the larger world around Israel, and the impact it was having upon Israel.

The **Prophet Jeremiah** also embraced these themes and powerfully took God's word
to all classes of society – **especially the apostate sons of Josiah.**

¹⁵¹ This alludes to the failure of Josiah's reform.

¹⁵² See footnote 54

¹⁵³ For further discussion, see section 2.3.4 **Habakkuk** in the paper "God of Every Nation" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁵⁴ The Hebrew is לֹא נָמוּת - lo namuth, literally, "not shall we die"; this could be cast as a question: "Shall we NOT die?"

¹⁵⁵ See footnote 48

Jeremiah

The **Prophet Jeremiah**¹⁵⁶ became active during **Josiah's reform**. He observed the failure of Josiah's reform and the total reversal, by the sons of Josiah, of all the good Josiah had intended. Jeremiah preached vehemently against the evil introduced by **Jehoiakim** and **Zedekiah**. During the siege of Jerusalem, he **repeatedly warned Zedekiah** to surrender or suffer his fate.¹⁵⁷ After the siege, he witnessed the folly of the few people left alive in the Land of Israel and warned them to repent and return to serving God.¹⁵⁸ Even after all this, **the people spurned God and dragged Jeremaih off to Egypt**.¹⁵⁹

During his commissioning, **Jeremiah was given a vision of "boiling pot"** foreboding disaster. Many times Jeremiah alludes back to this vision in his warnings to the people:

The word of [YHWH] came to me a second time, saying,
"What do you see?"

And I said,
"**I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.**"

Then [YHWH] said to me,
"**Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land.**
For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares [YHWH],
and they shall come,
and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem,
against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah.
And I will declare my [mish^epatim]¹⁶⁰ against them, **for all their evil in forsaking me.**
They have made offerings to other gods and **worshiped the works of their own hands.** ..."

(Jeremiah 1:13-16 ESV)

Declare in Judah, and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say,
"Blow the trumpet through the land; cry aloud and say,
'Assemble, and let us go into the fortified cities!'
Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, stay not,
for **I bring disaster from the north**, and **great destruction**.

(Jeremiah 4:5-6 ESV)

Flee for safety, O people of Benjamin, from the midst of Jerusalem!
Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and raise a signal on Beth-haccherem,
for **disaster looms out of the north**, and **great destruction**.
The lovely and delicately bred I will destroy, the daughter of Zion.

Thus says [YHWH]:

Behold, **a people is coming from the north country**,
a great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth.
They lay hold on bow and javelin;
they are **cruel and have no mercy**;
the sound of them is like the roaring sea;
they ride on horses, set in array as a man for battle,
against you, O daughter of Zion!

We have heard the report of it; **our hands fall helpless**;
anguish has taken hold of us, pain as of a woman in labor.

A voice, a rumor!

Behold, it comes!

—**a great commotion out of the north country**
to make the cities of Judah a desolation, a lair of jackals.

(Jeremiah 6:1-2, 22-24, 10:22 ESV)

¹⁵⁶ For further discussion, see section **2.8 Jeremiah** in the paper "God of Every Nation" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁵⁷ See Jeremiah 21:1-10, 32:1-5, 34:1-7, 37:3-10, 38:14-23

¹⁵⁸ See Jeremiah chapters 40, 41, and 42

¹⁵⁹ See Jeremiah chapters 43 and 44

¹⁶⁰ The word מִשְׁפָּטִים - mish^epatim is the plural of the singular noun מִשְׁפָּט - mish^epat, but it carries a completely different range of meaning. There is no English word into which *mish^epatim* can be translated.

The simplest description of its meaning is "**the understanding, wisdom, and discernment that come from a life lived by the Way of God**".

The meaning of *mish^epatim* is thoroughly explored in the paper "Godly Character" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

[YHWH] said,

“Have I not set you free for their good?

Have I not pleaded for you before the enemy in the time of trouble and in the time of distress?

Can one break iron, iron from the north, and bronze?

Your wealth and your treasures I will give as spoil, without price,

for all your sins, throughout all your territory.

I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know,

for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever.”

(Jeremiah 15:11-14 ESV)

You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear,

although [YHWH] persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets,¹⁶¹ saying,

“Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds,

and dwell upon the land that [YHWH] has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever.

Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them,

or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands.

Then I will do you no harm.”

Yet you have not listened to me, declares [YHWH],

that you might **provoke me to anger** with the work of your hands to your own harm.

Therefore thus says [YHWH] of hosts:

“Because you have not obeyed my words,

behold, **I will send for all the tribes of the north**, declares [YHWH],

and for **Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon**, my servant,

and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants,

and against all these surrounding nations.

I will devote them to destruction,¹⁶²

and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.

Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness,

the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride,

the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp.

This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste ...”

(Jeremiah 25:4-11a ESV)

All of these warnings, over a period of some forty years, **fell on deaf ears**. Almost no one in Jerusalem repented as a result of Jeremiah’s preaching. Finally in 586, the armies of Nebuchadnezzar administered the final destruction to the Nation of Israel. **Jeremiah suffered greatly during the siege of Jerusalem**,¹⁶³

but when the city fell, God saw to it that Jeremiah was freed to continue to do the Work of God:

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave command concerning Jeremiah

through Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, saying,

“Take him, look after him well, and do him no harm,

but **deal with him as he tells you**.”

So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, Nebushazban the Rab-saris, Nergal-sar-ezer the Rab-mag, and all the chief officers of the king of Babylon sent and **took Jeremiah from the court of the guard**.

They entrusted him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, that he should take him home.

So he lived among the people.

(Jeremiah 39:11-14 ESV)

With the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Nation of Israel, God was ready to proceed with **the next phase of the Plan of God**. Among those people taken captive to Babylon, God had some of their number identified as people he would call to be **True Worshipers**. These people would return to the Land of Israel and form a **remnant community to prepare for the First Advent**. The restoration from exile is discussed section **2.3.3 The Purpose of the Restoration** in the paper **“Second Pillar - The Plan of God”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹⁶¹ This alludes to Zephaniah and Habakkuk, and perhaps others.

¹⁶² See **Excursus 1 – Devoted to Destruction: haram** in the paper **“Third Pillar - The Way of God”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁶³ See Jeremiah 37:11-21, 38:1-13

7. Preparation for the First Advent

After the captives were taken to Babylon in 597BC, **Jeremiah** was given a **vision of two baskets of figs**.

The purpose of the vision was to reveal God's intentions for those people taken captive:

After Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken into exile from Jerusalem **Jeconiah** the son of Jehoiakim, **king of Judah**, together with the officials of Judah, the craftsmen, and the metal workers, and had brought them to Babylon,

[YHWH] showed me this vision:

behold, **two baskets of figs** placed before the temple of [YHWH].

One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs,

but **the other basket had very bad figs**, so bad that they could not be eaten.

And [YHWH] said to me,

“What do you see, Jeremiah?”

I said,

“Figs, the good figs very good,

and the bad figs very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten.”

Then the word of [YHWH] came to me:

Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel:

Like these good figs, so **I will regard as good the exiles from Judah**,

whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans.

I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land.

I will build them up, and not tear them down;

I will plant them, and not pluck them up.

I will give them a heart to know me, that I am [YHWH],

and they shall be my people and **I will be their God**,

for **they shall return to me with their whole heart**.

But thus says [YHWH]:

Like the bad figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten,

so will I treat **Zedekiah the king of Judah**, his officials,

the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land,

and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. ...

(Jeremiah 24:1-8 ESV)

From among the exiles God would call people to conversion, “**I will give them a heart to know me**”, “**I will be their God**”, “**they shall return to me with their whole heart**”. These True Worshipers would form the remnant community to prepare for the First Advent. Later, **Jeremiah sent a letter to the exiles** to encourage them to accomplish God's purpose:

These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and **all the people**, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

It said:

Thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel,

to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce.

Take wives and have sons and daughters;

take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage,

that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and **do not decrease**.

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile,

and **pray to [YHWH]** on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

For thus says [YHWH]:

When seventy years¹⁶⁴ are completed for Babylon,

I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.

For **I know the plans I have for you**, declares [YHWH],

plans for welfare and not for evil, **to give you a future and a hope**.

¹⁶⁴ 609BC-539BC; see the discussion of this “time period” in section *Precise Time Periods of Excursus 2 – Time, Times, and Half a Time*.

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.
You will seek me and find me, when you **seek me with all your heart**.
I will be found by you, declares [YHWH] ...

(Jeremiah 29:1, 3b-7, 10-14a ESV)

The purpose for the calling of the **Prophet Ezekiel** in Babylon was to **identify the people being called by God** and **bring them to repentance** so they could **from the remnant community**. **Ezekiel was successful** because the return from exile occurred; and, when the First Advent occurred, the New Testament is clear and specific that the remnant community was alive and well and ready to receive the Messiah – see the discussion in section **8.1 The Remnant Community**.

7.1 The Work of Ezekiel

The **Prophet Ezekiel**¹⁶⁵ is the only prophet who is explicitly told that some people would respond to his preaching, **“they hear”**, **“he who will hear”**:

And he said to me,

Son of man, **I send you to the people of Israel**,
to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me.
They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day.
The descendants also are impudent and stubborn:

I send you to them, and **you shall say to them**,
‘Thus says the Lord [YHWH].’

And whether **they hear** or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house)
they will know that a prophet has been among them.

And you shall **speak my words to them**,
whether **they hear** or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.

And **go to the exiles**, to your people, and speak to them and say to them,
‘Thus says the Lord [YHWH],’

whether **they hear** or refuse to hear.

He who will hear, let him hear.¹⁶⁶
and he who will refuse to hear, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.
(Ezekiel 2:3-5, 7, 3:11, 27b ESV)

For nearly ten years, the focus of **God’s message through Ezekiel** to the exiles was that indeed **Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed**.

The destruction of the city and the Temple was something that no Israelite could fathom as possible. During this time, there was apparently very little progress in bringing anyone to repentance.

Ezekiel’s first sign act was to make a model of Jerusalem and lay siege to it:

And you, son of man, take a brick and lay it before you, and engrave on it a city, even **Jerusalem**.
And **put siegeworks against it**, and build a **siege wall** against it, and cast up a **mound** against it.
Set **camps** also against it, and plant **battering rams** against it all around.
And you, take an iron griddle, and place it as an iron wall between you and the city;
and set your face toward it, and **let it be in a state of siege**, and press the siege against it.
This is a sign for the house of Israel.

And you, O son of man, take a sharp sword.

Use it as a barber’s razor and pass it over your head and your beard.

Then take balances for weighing and divide the hair.

A third part you shall **burn in the fire in the midst of the city**, when the days of the siege are completed.

And a third part you shall take and **strike with the sword all around the city**.

And a third part you shall **scatter to the wind**, and I will unsheathe the sword after them.

And you shall **take from these a small number** and bind them in the skirts of your robe.

And of these again you shall take some

and **cast them into the midst of the fire and burn them in the fire**.

From there **a fire will come out into all the house of Israel**.

(Ezekiel 4:1-3, 5:1-4 ESV see also 6:8-10)

¹⁶⁵ For further discussion see section **2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets (The Prophet Ezekiel)** in the paper **“Second Pillar - The Plan of God”** and section **2.10 Ezekiel** in the paper **“God of Every Nation”**; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁶⁶ This phraseology is repeatedly used to designate “conversion”; see Isaiah 50:4, Mark 4:9,23, Matthew 11:15, Luke 8:8, 14:35.

God specifically indicates that **a small remnant will be preserved, “take from these a small number”**.

Most of those to form the remnant community were already in exile with Ezekiel, but God would preserve a few from the final destruction of the nation:

The word that came to Jeremiah from [YHWH] after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he took him bound in chains along **with all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon**.

This is the number of the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive:

in the seventh year <597BC>, **3,023 Judeans**;

in the eighteenth year <586BC> of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away **captive from Jerusalem 832 persons**;

in the twenty-third year <582BC> of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away **captive of the Judeans 745 persons**;

all the persons were 4,600.

(Jeremiah 40:1, 52:28-30 ESV)

During the First Temple Vision,¹⁶⁷ **Ezekiel witness a scene foreshadowing the destruction of Jerusalem**.

The purpose of the vision was **to impress upon the exiles** the totality and the finality of the destruction:

Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying,

“Bring near the executioners of the city,
each with his destroying weapon in his hand.”

And behold, **six men came** from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, **each with his weapon for slaughter in his hand**, and with them was a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist.

And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub on which it rested to the threshold of the house.

And he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing case at his waist.

And [YHWH] said to him,

“Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.”

And to the others he said in my hearing,

“Pass through the city after him, and strike.

Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity.

Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but **touch no one on whom is the mark**.

And begin at my sanctuary.”

So they began with the elders who were before the house.

Then he said to them,

“Defile the house,
and fill the courts with the slain.
Go out.”

So they went out and struck in the city.

And **the Spirit** lifted me up

and **brought me** in the vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, **to the exiles**.

Then **the vision that I had seen went up from me**.

And **I told the exiles all the things that [YHWH] had shown me**.

(Ezekiel 9:1-7, 11:24-25 ESV)

Soon after this, Ezekiel was given another sign act to demonstrate the destruction of Jerusalem.

The purpose of the sign act is to teach the exiles, to inform them about God’s purpose,

“I did as I was commanded”, “I am a sign for you”, “perhaps they will understand”:

The word of [YHWH] came to me:

“Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, **who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not**,¹⁶⁸ for they are a rebellious house.

¹⁶⁷ See Ezekiel chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11

¹⁶⁸ This is an indication that so far, the exiles were NOT responding to the messages from God.

As for you, son of man, prepare for yourself an exile's baggage,
and go into exile by day in their sight.
You shall go like an exile from your place to another place in their sight.

Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious house. ...”

And **I did as I was commanded**.

I brought out my baggage by day, as baggage for exile,
and in the evening I dug through the wall with my own hands.
I brought out my baggage at dusk, carrying it on my shoulder in their sight.
In the morning the word of [YHWH] came to me:

“Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you,
‘What are you doing?’”

Say to them,

‘Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

This oracle concerns the **prince in Jerusalem** and **all the house of Israel who are in it.**’

Say,

‘I am a sign for you: as I have done, so shall it be done to them.

They shall go into exile, into captivity.’

And I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare.
And I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans,
yet he shall not see it, and he shall die there.

And I will scatter toward every wind all who are around him, his helpers and all his troops,
and **I will unsheathe the sword after them.**

(Ezekiel 12:1-3, 7-11, 13-14 ESV)

Soon God gave Ezekiel another **message for the exiles** concerning **Jerusalem and the remnant**.
God indicates some of the survivors will respond to Ezekiel’s teaching, **“you will be consoled”**,
“they will console you”. It was after the destruction of Jerusalem and the arrival in Babylon
of the few survivors, that some of the exiles, as called by God, did begin to respond:

And the word of [YHWH] came to me:

Son of man, **when a land sins** against me by acting faithlessly,
and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it,
and **cut off from it man and beast**,
even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it,
they would deliver but their own lives (nephesh)¹⁶⁹ by their righteousness,
declares the Lord [YHWH].

For thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

How much more **when I send upon Jerusalem**
my four disastrous acts of judgment, sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence,
to cut off from it man and beast!

But behold, **some survivors will be left in it**,
sons and daughters who will be brought out;
behold, when they come out to you, and you see their ways and their deeds,
you will be consoled for the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem,
for all that I have brought upon it.

They will console you, when you see their ways and their deeds,
and **you shall know** that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it,
declares the Lord [YHWH].

(Ezekiel 14:12-14, 21-23 ESV)

In late 588BC, Nebuchadnezzar set out with his armies against Jerusalem.
God gives Ezekiel a message for the exiles: **the sword of God is in the hand of Nebuchadnezzar**
to render final destruction to Jerusalem, the Temple, and the nation:

The word of [YHWH] came to me:

Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries.
Prophesy against the land of Israel and say to the land of Israel,
Thus says [YHWH]:

Behold, I am against you
and will **draw my sword from its sheath**
and will cut off from you both righteous and wicked.

¹⁶⁹ See footnote 6

As for you, son of man, **groan**;
with breaking heart and **bitter grief**, groan **before their eyes**.

And when they say to you,
'Why do you groan?'

you shall say,

'Because of the news that it is coming.

Every heart will melt, and all hands will be feeble; every spirit will faint,
and all knees will be weak as water.

Behold, it is coming, and it will be fulfilled,'
declares the Lord [YHWH].

So **the sword is given to be polished**, that it may be grasped in the hand.

It is sharpened and polished to be **given into the hand of the slayer**.

Cry out and wail, son of man, for **it is against my people**.

It is against all the princes of Israel.

They are delivered over to the sword with my people.

Strike therefore upon your thigh.

The word of [YHWH] came to me again:

As for you, son of man, **mark two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to come**.

Both of them shall come from the same land.

And make a signpost; make it at the head of the way to a city.

Mark a way for the sword to come to Rabbah of the Ammonites
and to Judah, **into Jerusalem** the fortified.

For **the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way**,
at the head of the two ways, to use divination.

He shakes the arrows; he consults the teraphim; he looks at the liver.

Into his right hand comes the divination for Jerusalem ...

(Ezekiel 21:1-3, 6-7, 11-12, 18-22a ESV)

In early January of 587BC, the siege of Jerusalem began.

Ezekiel was told that a messenger would come from the siege to tell the exiles when the siege was over.

The messenger came in early January 585BC, some six months after the fall of the city:

In the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month,
the word of [YHWH] came to me:

"Son of man, write down the name of this day, this very day.

The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day. ..."

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

"Woe to the bloody city ...

For the blood she has shed is in her midst ...

On account of your unclean lewdness,
because I would have cleansed you and you were not cleansed from your uncleanness,
you shall not be cleansed anymore till **I have satisfied my fury upon you**.

I am [YHWH].

I have spoken; it shall come to pass; I will do it.

I will not go back; I will not spare; **I will not relent**;

according to your ways and your deeds you will be judged,
declares the Lord [YHWH]."

As for you, son of man,

surely on the day when I take from them their stronghold,
their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes and their [heart's] (nephesh)¹⁷⁰ desire,
and also their sons and daughters,

on that day a fugitive will come to you to report to you the news.

In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month,
a fugitive from Jerusalem came to me and said,

"The city has been struck down."

(Ezekiel 24:1-2, 6a, 7a, 13-14, 25-26, 33:21 ESV)

For some ten years, Ezekiel had been telling the exiles that God was actually going to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple and terminate the nation. **Until it happened**, apparently, **very few believed Ezekiel**. Nevertheless, Ezekiel remained true to his commission – he maintained

¹⁷⁰ See footnote 6

a call to repentance. Those persons whom God was calling, to become **True Worshipers** and form the remnant community, **had to respond and repent**. Ezekiel was told that his position was like that of a “**watchman**” on a city wall prepared to warn the city of impending danger. Those who listen to the “**watchman**” and respond to his warnings, i.e., “**repent**”, **will live**. Those who **refuse to “repent”, will die**:

And at the end of seven days, the word of [YHWH] came to me:

“Son of man, **I have made you a watchman** for the house of Israel.

Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.

If I say to the wicked,

‘You shall surely die,’

and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life,

that wicked person shall die for his iniquity,
but **his blood I will require at your hand.**

But if you warn the wicked,

and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way,

he shall die for his iniquity,
but **you will have delivered your [life] (nephesh).**¹⁷¹

Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, **he shall die.**

Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin,
and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered,
but **his blood I will require at your hand.**

But **if you warn the righteous person not to sin,** and **he does not sin,**
he shall surely live, because he took warning,
and **you will have delivered your [life] (nephesh).”**

(Ezekiel 3:16-21 ESV see also 33:1-9)

Ezekiel repeatedly called the exiles to repentance. Ezekiel’s preaching was being noticed by the people, but they were NOT taking it to heart, NOT repenting:

Then certain of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me.

And the word of [YHWH] came to me:

“Son of man, **these men have taken their idols into their hearts,**
and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces.
Should I indeed let myself be consulted by them?

Therefore speak to them and say to them,

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Any one of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart
and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face,
and yet comes to the prophet,

I, [YHWH], will answer him as he comes with the multitude of his idols,
that I may lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel,
who are all estranged from me through their idols.

Therefore say to the house of Israel,

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Repent and turn away from your idols,
and turn away your faces from all your abominations. ...”

(Ezekiel 14:1-6 ESV)

But **if a wicked person turns away from all his sins** that he has committed
and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right,
he shall surely live; he shall not die.

None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him;
for the righteousness that he has done he shall live.

Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked,

declares the Lord [YHWH],

and not **rather that he should turn from his way and live?**

¹⁷¹ See footnote 6

Again, **when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness** he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life (nephesh). **Because he considered and turned away** from all the transgressions that he had committed, **he shall surely live**; he shall not die.

Therefore **I will judge you**, O house of Israel, **every one according to his ways**, declares the Lord [YHWH].

Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and **make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!**

Why will you die, O house of Israel?

For **I have no pleasure in the death of anyone**, declares the Lord [YHWH]; **so turn, and live.**

(Ezekiel 18:21-23, 27-28, 30-32 ESV)

The **destruction of the nation** and **worldwide scattering of the people of Israel** was required by the **covenant curses**¹⁷² attached to the Sinai Covenant:

And I will **lay your cities waste** and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your pleasing aromas.

And I myself will **devastate the land**, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it.

And **I will scatter you among the nations**,

and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.

(Leviticus 26:31-33 ESV)

[YHWH] will cause you to be **defeated before your enemies**.

You shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them.

And you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

[YHWH] will bring **you and your king** whom you set over you **to a nation** that neither you nor your fathers have known.

And there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone.

They shall **besiege you in all your towns**,

until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land.

And they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which [YHWH] your God has given you.

And [YHWH] will **scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other**,

and there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known.

(Deuteronomy 28:25, 36, 52, 64 ESV)

When God calls people to participate in the Second Exodus to form the New Israel,¹⁷³ the people called are coming from the four corners of the earth, **“from one end of the earth to the other”**. Ezekiel is explicit that the people called to the New Israel will come to repentance, **“they will be loathsome in their own sight”**, **“you shall loathe yourselves”**:

He will raise a signal for the nations and will **assemble the banished of Israel**, and gather the dispersed of Judah **from the four corners of the earth**. (Isaiah 11:12 ESV)

Yet I will leave some of you alive.

When you have among the nations some who escape the sword,

and **when you are scattered through the countries**,

then **those of you who escape will remember me** among the nations where they are carried captive, how I have been broken over their whoring heart that has departed from me and over their eyes that go whoring after their idols.

And **they will be loathsome in their own sight**

for the evils that they have committed, for all their abominations.

(Ezekiel 6:8-9 ESV)

¹⁷² See *Excursus 3 – The Covenant Blessings and Curses*

¹⁷³ See section 14.1

For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, declares the Lord [YHWH], there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land. There I will accept them, and there I will require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your sacred offerings.¹⁷⁴ As a pleasing aroma I will accept you, **when I bring you out from the peoples** and gather you out of the **countries where you have been scattered**. And I will manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. And you shall know that I am [YHWH], when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country that I swore to give to your fathers. And there **you shall remember your ways and all your deeds** with which you have defiled yourselves, and **you shall loathe yourselves** for all the evils that you have committed. And you shall know that I am [YHWH], when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the Lord [YHWH]. (Ezekiel 20:40-44 ESV see also 36:22-32 especially verse 31)

After the fall of Jerusalem, the **Book of Ezekiel** contains no dated prophecies for the exiles, until chapter 40,¹⁷⁵ which is the beginning of the **Second Temple Vision**.

It is dated some fourteen years after the fall of Jerusalem, 573BC:

In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, **in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down**, on that very day, the hand of [YHWH] was upon me, and he brought me to the city. **In visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel ...** (Ezekiel 40:1-2a ESV)

Chapters 34 through 39 of the **Book of Ezekiel** all focus on events in the World Tomorrow – after the establishment of the Kingdom of God. There is no more discussion of Ancient Israel or the sins of the people. With the prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem, from the first ten years of Ezekiel's career, having been fulfilled, it is likely that during the intervening fourteen years, **some people began to respond**. This is hinted at in a couple of places:

And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: **'Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us,** and we rot away because of them. **How then can we live?'**

Say to them, 'As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH], **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,** but that the wicked turn from his way and live; **turn back, turn back from your evil ways,** for why will you die, O house of Israel?'

As for you, son of man, **your people** who talk together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses **say to one another**, each to his brother, **'Come, and hear what the word is that comes from [YHWH].'** (Ezekiel 33:10-11, 30 ESV)

Clearly Ezekiel was successful in bringing people to repentance to form remnant community, because the return from exile occurred and **the remnant community was alive and well and ready for the First Advent**.

¹⁷⁴ See the discussion in section **14.1.3 The New Temple**

¹⁷⁵ There are two prophecies concerning Egypt which are dated just after the message of the fugitive, see Ezekiel 32:1,17; and, in 571BC Nebuchadnezzar is promised Egypt as spoil, see Ezekiel 29:17-20.

7.2 The Remnant Community

All that can be said about the remnant community, beginning from the time of Ezekiel, is that it came to exist. The **Book of Jeremiah** contains some further information about events in the Land of Israel, and in Egypt, but sheds no light on the exiles. The **Book of Daniel** describes events within the Babylonian Empire, but it again sheds no light on the remnant community.

Some Psalms were written in exile, presumably by persons who were be part of the remnant community; for example, consider **Psalm 137**:

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when **we remembered Zion**.

On the willows there we hung up our lyres.

For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying,

“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

How shall we sing [YHWH's] song in a foreign land?

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!

Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you,

if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!

Remember, [YHWH], against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said,

“Lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations!”

O daughter of Babylon, doomed to be destroyed,

blessed shall he be who repays you with what you have done to us!

Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!

(Psalm 137:1-9 ESV)

Psalm 137 is the most famous exilic Psalm, but **other exilic Psalms** make it clear that they were written by members of the Remnant Community in **a repentant state**:

But you have rejected us and disgraced us and have not gone out with our armies.

You have made us turn back from the foe, and those who hate us have gotten spoil.

You have made us like sheep for slaughter and have **scattered us among the nations**.

You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them.

You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the derision and scorn of those around us.

You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples.

All day long my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face

at the sound of the taunter and reviler, at the sight of the enemy and the avenger.

All this has come upon us, though **we have not forgotten you**,

and **we have not been false to your covenant**.

Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way;

yet you have broken us in the place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death.

If we had forgotten the name of our God

or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God discover this?

For **he knows the secrets of the heart**.

Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long;

we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

Awake!

Why are you sleeping, O Lord?

Rouse yourself!

Do not reject us forever!

Why do you hide your face?

Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?

For our [life] (nephesh)¹⁷⁶ is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground.

Rise up; come to our help!

Redeem us for the sake of your [hesed]!¹⁷⁷

(Psalm 44:9-26 ESV)

O God, why do you cast us off forever?

Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?

Remember your congregation,

which you have purchased of old,

which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!

¹⁷⁶ See footnote 6

¹⁷⁷ See footnote 46

Remember Mount Zion, where you have dwelt.
Direct your steps to the perpetual ruins;
the enemy has destroyed everything in the sanctuary!
Your foes have roared in the midst of your meeting place; they set up their own signs for signs.
They were like those who swing axes in a forest of trees.
And all its carved wood they broke down with hatchets and hammers.
They set your sanctuary on fire;
they profaned the dwelling place of your name, bringing it down to the ground.
They said to themselves,
 "We will utterly subdue them";
they burned all the meeting places of God in the land.

We do not see our signs;
there is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long.
How long, O God, is the foe to scoff?
Is the enemy to revile your name forever?
Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand?
Take it from the fold of your garment and destroy them!
Yet **God my King is from of old, working salvation** in the midst of the earth.
(Psalm 74:1-12 ESV see also 77:7-9)
O God, the nations have come into your inheritance;
they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins.
They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the heavens for food,
the flesh of your faithful to the beasts of the earth.
They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem,
and there was no one to bury them.
We have become a taunt to our neighbors, mocked and derided by those around us.
How long, [YHWH]?
Will you be angry forever?
Will your jealousy burn like fire?
Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you,
and on the kingdoms that do not call upon your name!
For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation.
Do not remember against us our former iniquities;
let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for **we are brought very low.**
Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name;
deliver us, and **atone for our sins,** for your name's sake!
Why should the nations say,
 "Where is their God?"
Let the avenging of the outpoured blood of your servants be known among the nations before our eyes!
Let the groans of the prisoners come before you;
according to your great power, preserve those doomed to die!
(Psalm 79:1-11 ESV see also 80:3-7, 85:4-7, 102:1-14)

These Psalms all reflect a sitz-im-leben of a True Worshipper in the Exile.

These can only be the people who responded to the preaching of Ezekiel,
or their successors in the **Remnant Community.**
When the end of the period of the Exile was approaching,
the **Sage Daniel** became involved in facilitating the return from Exile.

7.3 Daniel and the Return from Exile

During the 70 years of Babylonian hegemony, the **Sage Daniel** maintained a position of influence
in the Babylonian hierarchy.¹⁷⁸ When the Persians, under **Cyrus the Great,** assumed control
of the Babylonian Empire in 539BC, **Daniel observed that prophecies of Jeremiah had been fulfilled.**¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ For further discussion see section **2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets (The Prophet Daniel)** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" and section **2.12 Daniel** in the paper "**God of Every Nation**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁷⁹ See Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10, Daniel 9:2; the 70 years being 609BC to 539BC.

Daniel continued to maintain his influence during the early years of the Persian administration;¹⁸⁰ but also, **Daniel prayed for the restoration from exile to occur:**

Then I turned my face to the Lord God,
seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.
I prayed to [YHWH] my God and made confession, saying,
“O Lord, the great and awesome God,
who keeps covenant and [hesed]¹⁸¹ with those who love him and keep his commandments,
we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled,
turning aside from your commandments and [mish^cpatim].¹⁸²

We have not listened to your servants the prophets,
who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers,
and to all the people of the land.

All Israel has transgressed your [torah]¹⁸³ and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice.
And **the curse and oath** that are written in [torah] of Moses the servant of God
have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.

As it is written in [torah] of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us;
yet we have not entreated the favor of [YHWH] our God,
turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth.

Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy,
and for your own sake, O Lord,
make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. ...”

(Daniel 9:3-6, 11, 13, 17 ESV)

Clearly Daniel feels that the **majority of the exiles** remain in an **unrepentant** state: **“yet we have not entreated the favor of [YHWH] our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth”**. Ezekiel was aware of Daniel,¹⁸⁴ but Daniel may NOT have had knowledge of what Ezekiel had accomplished. In any case, those persons who would form the remnant community were probably NOT recognizable as a “group” within the exiles. In addition to praying, **Daniel almost certainly used his influence with the Persian authorities to make it possible for the exiles to commence the return to the Land of Israel.**

While Daniel was praying **the angel Gabriel** came to him¹⁸⁵ with a message regarding the First Advent and the Second Advent. The message starts out by outlining the purpose of each Advent:

Seventy periods are decreed about your people and your holy city:

First Advent

To shut up the rebellion
and to seal up sins
and to make atonement for iniquity;

Second Advent

And to bring in everlasting righteousness
and to seal vision and prophet
and to anoint most holy ones.

(Daniel 9:24 author’s translation)

This prophecy is discussed in detail in the paper **“The Seventy Periods Prophecy”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

In 539/538BC, as prophesized by Isaiah,¹⁸⁶ **King Cyrus** issued the decree¹⁸⁷ authorizing a return to the Land of Israel by any Israelite within the Persian Empire for the purpose of **building a Temple** and **rebuilding the City of Jerusalem.**

¹⁸⁰ See Daniel 6:1-3,28, 10:1

¹⁸¹ See footnote [46](#)

¹⁸² See footnote [160](#)

¹⁸³ See footnote [54](#)

¹⁸⁴ See Ezekiel 14:14,20, 28:3

¹⁸⁵ See Daniel 9:20-23

¹⁸⁶ See Isaiah 41:2-4, 44:28, 45:1-7, 46:11

¹⁸⁷ See 2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4

The first six chapters of the **Book of Ezra** describe the early years of the return.¹⁸⁸

At first, a small group returned under **Sheshbazzar**:

Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, **everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of [YHWH] that is in Jerusalem.**

And all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered.

Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of [YHWH] that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to **Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.**
(Ezra 1:5-8 ESV)

However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree that this house of God should be rebuilt. And the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought into the temple of Babylon, these Cyrus the king took out of the temple of Babylon, and **they were delivered to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;** and he said to him,

“Take these vessels, go and put them in the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its site.”

Then **this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God** that is in Jerusalem, and from that time until now it has been in building, and it is not yet finished.
(Ezra 5:13-16 ESV)

Before long a larger group of exiles returned under **Zerubbabel**. Ezra chapter 2 recounts some of the names. With Zerubbabel, there was a **High Priest, Jeshua/Joshua**. The first thing they did was build an altar and **commenced sacrifices**. Then, they **kept the Feast of Tabernacles**:

Then arose **Jeshua** the son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel with his kinsmen, and **they built the altar of the God of Israel**, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in [torah]¹⁸⁹ of Moses the man of God.

They set the altar in its place, for fear was on them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings on it to [YHWH], burnt offerings morning and evening.

And **they kept the Feast of Booths**, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to (custom) [mish'pat],¹⁹⁰ as each day required,¹⁹¹ and after that the [daily]¹⁹² burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moon and at all appointed (times) [mo'ed],¹⁹³ and the offerings of everyone who made a freewill offering to [YHWH]. From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to [YHWH].
(Ezra 3:2-6a ESV)

Early in the next year, **construction of the Temple commenced**,

but it was not long before **local opposition put a stop to the construction**:

Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, **Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning**, together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to supervise **the work of the house of [YHWH]**.

¹⁸⁸ Note that Ezra 4:7-23 relate the period after 465BC when Artaxerxes I is king.

The issue is the ongoing reconstruction of the city and the city wall. This is a prelude to the work of Nehemiah.

For the chronology of this period, see the chart “**Restoration from Exile**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>

¹⁸⁹ See footnote 54

¹⁹⁰ See footnote 48

¹⁹¹ This alludes to Numbers chapters 28 and 29

¹⁹² The phrase is וְעֹלֹת יוֹם בְּיוֹם - w'e'olah yom b'yom, literally “and burnt offering day by day”; the word “regular”, in this context, is normally translated from “tamid”; see *Excursus 1 – The Meaning of tamid*.

¹⁹³ See the discussion of mo'ed in section *Time Periods in Daniel* in *Excursus 2 – Time, Times, and Half a Time*

And **when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of [YHWH]**,¹⁹⁴ the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise [YHWH], according to the directions of David king of Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised [YHWH], because **the foundation of the house of [YHWH] was laid**. (Ezra 3:8, 10, 11b ESV)

Then **the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah** and made them afraid to build and **bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose**, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even **until the reign of Darius king of Persia**. (Ezra 4:4-5 ESV)

The Temple construction was hindered for some 15 years. Then in 520BC, the **Prophet Haggai** and the **Prophet Zechariah** arrived and encouraged the people to get on with building the Temple:

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, **the word of [YHWH] came by the hand of Haggai the prophet** to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

“Thus says [YHWH] of hosts:

These people say the time has not yet come to **rebuild the house of [YHWH]**.”

Then the word of [YHWH] came by the hand of Haggai the prophet,

“Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while **this house lies in ruins?**

Now, therefore, thus says [YHWH] of hosts:

Consider your ways.

Go up to the hills and bring wood and **build the house**,

that I may take pleasure in it and **that I may be glorified**, says [YHWH]. ...”

(Haggai 1:1-5, 8 ESV)

In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius,

the word of [YHWH] came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying,

“[YHWH] was very angry with your fathers.

Therefore say to them,

Thus declares [YHWH] of hosts:

Return to me, says [YHWH] of hosts,

and **I will return to you**, says [YHWH] of hosts. ...”

(Zechariah 1:1-3 ESV)

Now the prophets, **Haggai** and **Zechariah** the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them.

Then **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel and **Jeshua** the son of Jozadak arose and **began to rebuild the house of God** that is in Jerusalem, and **the prophets of God were with them, supporting them**.

(Ezra 5:1-2 ESV)

Despite continued local opposition,¹⁹⁵ **the Temple was completed by 515BC**, and there was a dedication ceremony. However, the most important event, from the dedication of the Tabernacle¹⁹⁶ and Solomon’s temple,¹⁹⁷ did NOT occur – **the glory of YHWH did NOT fill the Temple:**

And **the elders of the Jews built and prospered**

through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo.

They finished their building by decree of the God of Israel

and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia;

and **this house was finished** on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

And the people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, **celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy**.

(Ezra 6:14-16 ESV)

¹⁹⁴ Note that Sheshbazzar had already started the foundation; see Ezra 5:16.

¹⁹⁵ See Ezra 5:3-17, 6:1-12

¹⁹⁶ See Exodus 40:34-38

¹⁹⁷ See 1 Kings 8:10-11

The Prophet Haggai spoke to the lack of glory:

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of [YHWH] 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?

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares [YHWH].

Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest.

Be strong, all you people of the land, declares [YHWH].

Work, for I am with you, declares [YHWH] of hosts,

according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt.

My Spirit remains in your midst.

Fear not.

For thus says [YHWH] of hosts:

Yet once more, in a little while,

I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land.

And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in,

and **I will fill this house with glory**, says [YHWH] of hosts. ...”

(Haggai 2:1-7 ESV)

The prophecy of Malachi later elaborated:

And **the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple;**

and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight,

behold, he is coming, says [YHWH] of hosts.

(Malachi 3:1b ESV)

The Glory of YHWH came to the Second Temple in the person of Jesus Christ, YHWH incarnate:

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.

And making a whip of cords, **he drove them all out of the temple**, with the sheep and oxen.

And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.

And he told those who sold the pigeons,

“Take these things away; **do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.**”

(John 2:13-16 ESV)

And they came to Jerusalem.

And **he entered the temple** and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

And **he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.**

(Mark 11:15-16 ESV see also Matthew 21:12-13, Luke 19:45-46)

For about the next 70 years, there is very little information on the restored community around Jerusalem.¹⁹⁸ The **Book of Ezra** informs us that reconstruction of the city proceeded, and an attempt was made to **rebuild the walls of the city**. This incurred **further local opposition**, and the Persian King, **Artaxerxes I, ordered the construction stopped:**

To Artaxerxes the king:

Your servants, the men of the province Beyond the River, send greeting.

And now be it known to the king that the Jews

who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem.

They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city.

They are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations.

We make known to the king that **if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished,**

you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River.

The king sent an answer:

And I made a decree, and search has been made,

and it has been found that this city from of old has risen against kings,

and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it.

¹⁹⁸ The events recorded in the **Book of Esther** also occur during this period; see the discussion in section **7.5.1 Under the Persian Empire**.

And mighty kings have been over Jerusalem,
who ruled over the whole province Beyond the River,
to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid.

Therefore **make a decree that these men be made to cease,**
and **that this city be not rebuilt,** until a decree is made by me.

(Ezra 4:11b-12, 16-17a, 19-21 ESV)

These events set the stage for the work of Nehemiah and Ezra.

7.4 The Work of Nehemiah and Ezra

Nehemiah¹⁹⁹ was a Jew located in the **City of Susa**,²⁰⁰ one of the capitals of the Persian Empire.

Nehemiah had worked himself into the position of “**cupbearer**” to **King Artaxerxes I**.²⁰¹

Late in 446BC, **Nehemiah’s brother, Hanani**, brought some **news about Jerusalem** to Nehemiah.

This was after Artaxerxes had ordered cessation of construction in Jerusalem:

Now it happened in the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel,
that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah.

And **I asked them** concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile,
and **concerning Jerusalem**.

And they said to me,

“The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame.

The **wall of Jerusalem is broken down**, and **its gates are destroyed by fire.**”

(Nehemiah 1:1b-3 ESV)

As did Daniel when he perceived the situation he faced, **Nehemiah prayed** for forgiveness of the people for past sins and for God’s assistance in his undertaking.²⁰² **Nehemiah presented to Artaxerxes**

his request to go to Jerusalem,²⁰³ and **it was granted**:

And I said to the king,

“If it pleases the king,

let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River,

that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah,

and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king’s forest,

that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple,

and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.”

And **the king granted me what I asked**, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king’s letters.

Now **the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen**.

(Nehemiah 2:7-9 ESV)

The letters from Artaxerxes effectively overturned his previous decree to cease construction.

The accompaniment of imperial troops, no doubt, also helped. Nehemiah found the wall in ruins²⁰⁴

and the city small but inhabited.²⁰⁵ He quickly got the people working on the wall,

and despite continued opposition²⁰⁶ **a rudimentary wall was completed in 52 days**.²⁰⁷

During this time, Nehemiah also dealt with **a serious problem within the community**

– certain persons had grown wealthy by oppressing others. They were **enslaving people over debts**.

Nehemiah put a stop to this.²⁰⁸ At his time Nehemiah must also have observed that the **Temple service**

needed improvement and that **the people needed instruction in the Way of God**. In 432BC, Nehemiah

went back to see Artaxerxes and requested help in these areas.²⁰⁹ Nehemiah remained in Persia

¹⁹⁹ For further discussion of Nehemiah and Ezra, see section 10.3 The Restoration of Nehemiah and Ezra and section 10.4 The Reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra in the paper “The Writings of Moses” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

²⁰⁰ See Nehemiah 1:1

²⁰¹ See Nehemiah 1:11

²⁰² See Nehemiah 1:4-11a

²⁰³ See Nehemiah 2:1-6

²⁰⁴ See Nehemiah 2:11-18

²⁰⁵ See the references to inhabited houses in Nehemiah chapter 3

²⁰⁶ See Nehemiah chapter 2:19, 4:1-5,7-9, 6:1-14

²⁰⁷ See Nehemiah chapter 3, 4:6,10-23, 6:15-16;

see also Josephus Antiquities 11,5,8 where a duration of two years and four months is cited for wall completion.

²⁰⁸ See Nehemiah 5:1-13

²⁰⁹ See Nehemiah 13:6-7

for some time, then he returned to Jerusalem for his second term as Governor.

At this time, Nehemiah focused on certain problem within the community:

- Temple storage areas were being improperly used, see Nehemiah 13:4-6, 8-9
- The Levites were NOT being properly provisioned through grain tithes, see Nehemiah 13:10-13
- The Sabbath was being violated by people working and carrying on commerce, see Nehemiah 13:15-22
- There were marriages to foreign women who were raising their children according to their foreign culture, see Nehemiah 13:23-27

Meanwhile, back in Babylon, the Persian King, **Artaxerxes I**, had given **Ezra permission to organize a return party of Priests and Levites** to restore the Temple Service and teach the people the **Way of God**, as revealed to Moses.²¹⁰ Ezra was a priest and a scribe.²¹¹ It is possible that the **Prophet Ezekiel** lived to see the earliest returns of Sheshbazzar and possibly Zerubbabel. Ezekiel would have been around 90 years old. Nehemiah and Ezra were active 75 to 100 years later. **The Bible gives us no information as to exactly how Ezra and his fellow scribes became organized.** Almost certainly it was an outgrowth of the work of Ezekiel. In any case, during the hundred odd years between the earliest returns and the time of Ezra, several generations of scribes had worked to standardize the text of the Writings of Moses, and probably the rest of the Old Testament. In any case, the Bible is explicit that **the major contribution of Ezra**, to the working out of the **Plan of God**, **was his bringing back to the community the standardized Writings of Moses.** Using this text, **the Temple Service was organized**, and **the people were taught the Way of God:**

And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And **they told Ezra the scribe to bring [documentation]²¹² of [torah]²¹³ of Moses** that [YHWH] had commanded Israel.

So Ezra the priest brought the [torah] before the assembly, both men and women and **all who could understand** what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month.²¹⁴

And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand.

And the ears of all the people were attentive to [documentation] of the [torah].

They read from [documentation], from [torah] of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, **so that the people understood the reading.** (Nehemiah 8:1-3, 8 ESV)

The teaching of Ezra and access to the written documentation of the Old Testament, no doubt, were instrumental in solidifying the Remnant Community of True Worshipers for the difficult years ahead. Ezra himself was almost certainly a True Worshiper of God. He may well have been instrumental in organizing the Remnant Community for the difficult years ahead. The last prophetic book of the Old Testament is the **Book of Malachi**. It is NOT clear whether “Malachi” is a name or a title – it means “my messenger”.²¹⁵ The Targum adds the clause “**who name is Ezra, the scribe**”.²¹⁶

In any case, **the Book of Malachi makes explicit reference to the Remnant Community of True Worshipers:**

Then **those who feared [YHWH]** spoke with one another. [YHWH] paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of **those who feared [YHWH] and esteemed his name.**

²¹⁰ For the return of Ezra and his party and the commission given to him by Artaxerxes, see Ezra chapters 7 and 8.

The date in Ezra 7:7-8 of “the seventh” year is almost certainly incorrect. The most likely actual date is the thirty-seventh year, 428BC. For a discussion of the chronology of this period, see Bright pages 391-402.

²¹¹ See Ezra 7:1-6

²¹² The word סֵפֶר - sepher, means “written material”, see Holladay page 259; since the Writings of Moses comprise five scrolls, “documentation” is a better translation than “book”.

²¹³ See footnote 54

²¹⁴ This is the Day of Trumpets; see Leviticus 23:23-25.

²¹⁵ The term “messenger” is frequently used of those carrying God’s message: see Isaiah 42:19, 44:26, Ezekiel 30:9, Obadiah 1, Haggai 1:13, Malachi 2:7, 3:1. The Septuagint translates it as “his messenger”.

²¹⁶ See Jacobs, NICOT, page 154

They shall be mine, says [YHWH] of hosts, in the day when I make up **my treasured possession**, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him.

Then once more **you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked**, between **one who serves God** and one who does not serve him.
(Malachi 3:16-18 ESV)

The material we have in the **Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles** was probably also assembled about this time.²¹⁷ Many scholars contend that Ezra is also the author of this material.²¹⁸ With the guidance of God through the Holy Spirit, **those people called by God to be True Worshipers and form the Remnant Community did exist and did survive the difficult times over 400 odd years until the First Advent.**
The written materials God provided through Ezra were no doubt of great help.

7.5 The Dark Years

Over the period from about 400BC until the First Advent, the Bible is mostly silent. However, **traces of the Remnant Community of True Worshipers can be found** – even in the darkness, God shines a light. Some of the **Psalms** appear to have been written in this period.²¹⁹ The various **Psalms** over the years were clearly **True Worshipers** of God – they were inspired by the Holy Spirit to produce written material containing the teaching of God. The **Book of Esther** provides some insight into general conditions under the Persian Empire. From secular sources, there is considerable information on general conditions in the world under the various empires, but **the world takes no notice of the Remnant Community**. Clearly, God had been working with the entire group of returnees through the time of Nehemiah and Ezra. There is no way to know if the Remnant Community of True Worshipers was in any way organized or even aware of itself as a “group” within the larger community. What is certain is that **God knew who he was calling to be True Worshipers** and that **the Remnant Community did exist** throughout this whole period.

Josephus provides some information on the history of the Jews in the later Persian period in Antiquities book 11 chapters 7 and 8; and, on the early Greek period in Antiquities book 12 chapters 1 through 5. The books of the **Maccabees** provide the best information on the crisis under Antiochus Epiphanes. For general histories, **Bright** and **Bruce (Nations)** are consulted as well as **Cambridge Ancient History volume VI, “The Forth Century B.C.”**, chapters 3 and 8.

7.5.1 Under the Persian Empire

After the restoration and reforms under Nehemiah and Ezra, **for the rest of the Persian period**, there is virtually no specific information available concerning the post-exilic community.

John Bright expresses it this way:

Such then was the world situation during **the first two thirds of the fourth century**.

But **what do we know of the Jews in this period? Almost nothing!**

One can, in fact, scarcely lay a finger on a single event and say with assurance that it happened.
(Bright page 408)

The events of the **Book of Esther** take place under Xerxes, Ahasuerus, in the period 486-465BC. The book of Esther speaks to the **wide spread of Israelites²²⁰ over the Persian Empire**, and the fact that **they were an identifiable group**, but provides no specific information on the community in Judea:

Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus,

“There is **a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom**.

Their laws (dath)²²¹ are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king’s laws (dath), so that it is not to the king’s profit to tolerate them.

(Esther 3:8 ESV)

²¹⁷ In 1 Chronicles 3:19-24, the descendants of David are carried for four generations after Zerubbabel.

²¹⁸ See Merrill pages 43-46, Fensham, **NICOT**, pages 1-4

²¹⁹ See Psalms 106:47, 126:1-3, 136:23-24, 147:2

²²⁰ Most of whom were probably descended from North Israel.

²²¹ Aramaic דַּתְּ - dath, “law”, see Holladay page 403

Many of the Psalms make allusions that could be taken to assert **exilic or post-exilic settings**.

In general, it is NOT possible to be certain when or where any particular Psalm originated, but many of the later Psalmists express ideas that are consistent with the perspective of a **True Worshipper of the Remnant Community**; for example:

- Some later Psalms speak in the “plural” indicating a **community consciousness**:
May God **be gracious to US** and **bless US** and make his face to **shine upon US**, Selah that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!
The earth has yielded its increase;
God, **our God, shall bless US**.
God shall bless US; let all the ends of the earth fear him!
(Psalm 67:1-7 ESV)
We give thanks to you, O God;
we give thanks, for your name is near.
We recount your wondrous deeds.
(Psalm 75:1 ESV)
[YHWH], you were favorable to your land; **you restored the fortunes of Jacob**.
You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin. Selah
You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.
Restore US again, O God of OUR salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us!
Will you be angry with **US** forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
Will you not **revive US again**, that your people may rejoice in you?
Show US your [hesed],²²² [YHWH], and **grant US your salvation**.
(Psalm 85:1-7 ESV)
When [YHWH] restored the fortunes of Zion, **WE were like those who dream**.
Then **our** mouth was filled with laughter, and **our** tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
“[YHWH] has done great things for them.”
[YHWH] has done great things for US; WE are glad.
(Psalm 126:1-3 ESV)
- Some later Psalms allude to the **restoration of the post-exilic community**, among whom the **Remnant Community** resides:
You have made us like sheep for slaughter and have **scattered us among the nations**.
All this has come upon us, though **we have not forgotten you**,
and **we have not been false to your covenant**.
Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way;
(Psalm 44:11, 17-18 ESV)
But you, [YHWH], are enthroned forever;
you are remembered throughout all generations.
You will arise and have pity on Zion;
it is the time to favor her; the appointed time has come.
For **your servants hold her stones dear** and have pity on her dust.
Nations will fear the name of [YHWH], and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory.
(Psalm 102:12-15 ESV)
- Some later Psalms look forward to the task of passing True Worship, **the Way of God**, on to succeeding generations:
My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your **deeds of salvation** all the day,
for their number is past my knowledge.

²²² See footnote 46
Tuesday, April 21, 2026

With the mighty deeds of the Lord [YHWH] I will come;
I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.

O God, from my youth you have taught me, and **I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.**
So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me,
until **I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.**
(Psalm 71:15-18 ESV)

But **we your people,** the sheep of your pasture, **will give thanks to you forever;**
from generation to generation we will recount your praise.
(Psalm 79:13 ESV)

- Some later Psalms express True Worship through **reverence, humility, and contrition:**

Shout for joy in [YHWH], **O you righteous!**

Praise befits **the upright.**

Behold, the eye of [YHWH] is on **those who fear him,**

on **those who hope in his [hesed],**²²³

that he may deliver their [life] (nephesh)²²⁴ from death and keep them alive in famine.

Our [being] (nephesh) waits for [YHWH]; he is our help and our shield.

For our heart is glad in him, because **we trust in his holy name.**

Let your [hesed], [YHWH], be upon us, even as **we hope in you.**

(Psalm 33:1, 18-22 ESV)

Do not deliver the [life] (nephesh) of your dove to the wild beasts;

do not forget the life of your poor (‘ani)²²⁵ forever.

Have regard for the covenant,

for the dark places of the land are full of the habitations of violence.

Let not the downtrodden turn back in shame;

let the poor (‘ani) and needy (‘ev‘yon) praise your name.

(Psalm 74:19-21 ESV)

- Some later Psalms look back to the **devastation of 586BC** and the **current state**
of the exilic or post-exilic community among whom the **Remnant Community** resides:

O God, why do you cast us off forever?

Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?

Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!

Remember Mount Zion, where you have dwelt.

Direct your steps to **the perpetual ruins;**

the enemy has **destroyed everything in the sanctuary!**

They set your sanctuary on fire;

they profaned the dwelling place of your name, bringing it down to the ground.

They said to themselves,

“We will utterly subdue them”;

they burned all the meeting places of God in the land.

We do not see our signs;

there is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long.

(Psalm 74:1–3, 7-9 ESV see also 77:7-9, 80:4-7, 12-13, 16)

O God, **the nations have come into your inheritance;**

they have **defiled your holy temple;**

they have **laid Jerusalem in ruins.**

They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the heavens for food,

the flesh of your [hasid]²²⁶ to the beasts of the earth.

They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem,

and there was no one to bury them.

We have become a taunt to our neighbors, mocked and derided by those around us.

(Psalm 79:1-4 ESV)

²²³ See footnote 46

²²⁴ See footnote 6

²²⁵ See the discussion of “**contrition**” in section 5.2 *The Human Condition* in the paper “**David – A Man After My Own Heart**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

²²⁶ See the discussion in section 5. *David and the Kingdom of Israel*

Praise [YHWH]!

Oh give thanks to [YHWH], for he is good, for his [hesed]²²⁷ endures forever!

Who can utter the mighty deeds of [YHWH], or declare all his praise?

Blessed are **they who observe [justness] (mish*pat)**,²²⁸ **who do righteousness** at all times!

Remember me, [YHWH], when you show favor to your people; help me when you save them, that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory with your inheritance.

Both **we and our fathers have sinned**;

we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness.

Save us, [YHWH] our God, and **gather us from among the nations**,

that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

(Psalm 106:1-6, 47 ESV)

The Persian Period was brought to a close by Alexander the Great. During the Greek period, more light is shed on the people living in Judea, but it is not until the **Maccabean Rebellion** that we get a possible **glimpse of the Remnant Community**.

7.5.2 The Pressure of Hellenism

When **Alexander the Great** advanced into Palestine, the Jews welcomed him with open arms.²²⁹

Josephus recounts that **the Book of Daniel was shown to Alexander**, and that it prophesized that he, as the King of Greece, would defeat Persia. This prophecy caused **Alexander to treat the Jews with great beneficence**:

In the third year²³⁰ of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, ... I raised my eyes²³⁰ and saw, and behold, **a ram standing on the bank of the canal**. It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.

I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward.

No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power.

He did as he pleased and became great.

As I was considering, behold,

a male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground.

And **the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes**.

He came to the ram with the two horns ... and he ran at him in his powerful wrath.

I saw him come close to the ram,

and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns.

And **the ram had no power to stand before him**,

but he cast him down to the ground and trampled on him.

And there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power.

As for **the ram that you saw with the two horns**, these are **the kings of Media and Persia**.

And **the goat is the king of Greece**.

And **the great horn between his eyes is the first king**.

(Daniel 8:1a, 3-7, 20-21 ESV)

Alexander's defeat of Persia, his death in Babylon, and the division of his empire among his generals is well documented.²³¹ **The Jewish community initially fell under the Ptolemies of Egypt**.

It was Alexander's desire to unite his empire through Greek culture – **Hellenism**.

This process continued after Alexander's death. Israelites of the Diaspora were particularly susceptible to the influence of Hellenism, but those in Judea also fell under the influence of Hellenism.²³²

²²⁷ See footnote 46

²²⁸ See footnote 48

²²⁹ See Josephus 11, 8, 4, 5, and 6

²³⁰ About 550BC

²³¹ See Bruce (**Nations**) pages 116-123, Bright pages 412-416

²³² See Bright page 416-417

The extent of the corruption is summarized in the **Book of 1 Maccabees**:

It was then that **some rebels emerged from Israel**, who succeeded in winning over many people.

They said,

“Let us renew contact with the people around us

for we had endured many misfortunes since we separated from them.”

This proposal was well-received and some eagerly went to the king.

The king authorized them to adopt the customs of the pagan nations.

With his permission, they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem in the pagan style.

And as **they wanted to be like the pagans in everything**,

they made artificial foreskins for themselves

and abandoned the Holy Covenant, sinning as they pleased.

(1 Maccabees 1:11-15 public domain)

This corruption led to severe internal divisions among the Jews. The Seleucid kings took advantage by accepting bribes to appoint High Priests. The priesthood became utterly corrupted.

This resulted in the crises under Antiochus Epiphanes.

7.5.3 The Crisis Under Antiochus Epiphanes

The community in Judea remained under the Ptolemies for about a century. As long as tribute was paid, the colony was apparently left to run itself.²³³ In 198BC, **Antiochus III** defeated Egypt and took control

of **Palestine for the Seleucid Empire**.²³⁴ In 175BC, **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** came to the throne.

Antiochus IV was desperate for money, so he accepted bribes to place different individuals

into the office of High Priest in Jerusalem. The internal divisions in the community resulted

in an insurrection. **Antiochus** put down the insurrection and **robbed the Temple in 169BC**.²³⁵

The Book of 1 Maccabees describes it thus:

In the year one hundred and forty-three,²³⁶

when **Antiochus returned after defeating Egypt**,

he passed through Israel and went up to Jerusalem with a strong army.

He arrogantly broke into the Sanctuary and removed the golden altar,

the lamp stand for the light with all its accessories,

the table for the bread of offering, the libation vessels, the cups,

the golden censers, the curtains and the crowns;

and stripped away all the decorations, the golden moldings that used to cover the temple entrance.

He also took possession of the silver, gold, valuable objects and all the hidden treasures he could find.

He took everything with him and left for his country,

after **shedding much blood** and making arrogant statements.

(1 Maccabees 1:20-24 public domain)

Antiochus continued to press the Jews for more and more money, and he attempted to force the Jews to accept Hellenism. In early 167BC, Antiochus sent **Apollonius** to collect money. He plundered the city and took many people as slaves.²³⁷ Many of the people continued to resist Hellenism, so later in 167BC,

Antiochus issued a decree enforcing acceptance of Hellenism:

Antiochus issued a decree to his whole kingdom.

All the people of his empire had to **renounce their particular customs and become one people.**

All the pagan nations obeyed and respected the king's decree,

and, **even in Israel, many accepted the imposed cult.**

They offered sacrifices to idols and no longer respected the Sabbath.

The king sent messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judea to carry the decree which imposed strange customs.

In accordance with it, burnt offerings, sacrifices and other offerings in the Sanctuary were suppressed.

It also ordered that Sabbaths and sacred feasts be like ordinary days.

The Sanctuary and its ministers were no longer to be regarded sacred.

Instead, **altars**, sacred enclosures and temples **were to be dedicated to idols.**

²³³ See Bright pages 414-415

²³⁴ See Bright pages 415-416

²³⁵ See Bright pages 418-421

²³⁶ The Seleucid Era starting in 312/311BC

²³⁷ See 1 Maccabees 1:29-40, 2 Maccabees 5:24-26

They were to offer pigs and unclean animals in sacrifice,
and not perform on their sons the rite of circumcision.

To sum up, they were to defile themselves by all kinds of impurity and profanity,
to forget the law and change all their customs.

The decree finally declared:

“Anyone who does not fulfill the king’s order shall die.”

(1 Maccabees 1:41-50 public domain)

Next Antiochus attempted to turn the Temple into temple of “Zeus”.²³⁸ Antiochus erected a pagan altar on top of the altar of burnt offering, presumably also with an image, and on Chislev 25,²³⁹ 167BC, Antiochus began to offer pagan scarifies.²⁴⁰ Some 350 years earlier, in 536BC, **Daniel had been given a prophecy looking to these events:**

... and he shall be afraid and withdraw,
and shall turn back and be enraged and **take action against the holy covenant.**

He shall turn back and **pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant.**

Forces from him shall appear and **profane the temple** and fortress,
and shall **take away the [temple service] (tamid).**²⁴¹

And they shall **set up the abomination that makes desolate.**

He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant,
but **the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.**

(Daniel 11:30b-32 ESV)

The people to **“stand firm and take action”** began with **the old Priest, Mattathias, and his sons John, Simon, Judas, Eleazer, and Jonathan.**²⁴² They lived in Modein, about 20 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Antiochus had ordered his officers to go to outlying towns and force pagan sacrifices. Mattathias killed a person attempting to sacrifice, and he killed the officer of Antiochus. After this, Mattathias, his sons, and many who refused to comply with Hellensim, escaped to the hills and formed into a formidable guerilla force.²⁴³ Thus **the Maccabee Rebellion was started.** There is no way to know how many of these people were **True Worshipers of the Remnant Community.** Almost certainly, Mattathias and his sons were, and probably many others. The author of 1 Maccabees mentions a specific group who joined the rebellion, who, again, were most likely among **True Worshipers of the Remnant Community:**

Then there united with them a company of Hasideans,
mighty warriors of Israel,
everyone one who offered himself willingly for the law.

(1 Maccabees 2:42 RSV)

The name “Hasideans” recalls the “*hasid*” identified throughout the Psalms as “the godly”, “saints”, True Worshipers of God and members of the Remnant Community.²⁴⁴ To recount the details of the Maccabean Rebellion is beyond the scope of this paper.²⁴⁵ The success of the rebellion is well known. By 140BC, **only Simon remained alive,** and he was acclaimed **“High Priest”** and **leader:**

In the 170th year, the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel,
and the people began to write in their documents and contracts,

“In the first year of **Simon the great high priest**
and commander and **leader of the Jews.**”

(1 Maccabees 13:41-42 RSV)

When Simon died, his son **John Hyrcanus inherited Simon’s positions.**²⁴⁶

John Hyrcanus is generally recognized the **founder of the Hasmonean Dynasty,**²⁴⁷ although it was his son **Aristobulus** who first assumed the trappings of a **“king”.**²⁴⁸

²³⁸ See 2 Maccabees 6:1-2

²³⁹ Around the 20th of December

²⁴⁰ See 1 Maccabees 1:54,56

²⁴¹ See [Excursus 1 – The Meaning of tamid](#)

²⁴² See 1 Maccabees 2:1-14, 2 Maccabees 5:27

²⁴³ See 1 Maccabees 2:15-41, 2 Maccabees 8:1-18

²⁴⁴ See section [5. David and the Kingdom of Israel](#)

²⁴⁵ See Bright pages 422-427, Bruce ([Nations](#)) pages 144-168

²⁴⁶ See Josephus Antiquities 13, 7, 4, and 13, 8, 1

²⁴⁷ See Bruce ([Nations](#)) pages 169-177

²⁴⁸ See Josephus Antiquities 13, 11, 1

7.5.4 Corruption of the Hasmonean Dynasty

John Hyrcanus continued the policy of his father Simon in **acquiring territory and establishing security** for the Jews. **His descendants**, however, degenerated into nothing better than the **Seleucid tyrant kings** that the Maccabees had fought so fiercely against. They remained “**nominally Jews**”, but their practice became **purely Greek**. The only member of the Dynasty with any merit was **Queen Solome Alexandra** – she at least perpetrated no atrocities on her people. However it was the **infighting of her two sons** after her death which brought **Pompey** upon the Jews in 67BC.

When **Aristobulus I**, son of John Hyrcanus, inherited the kingdom, he took the title of “King”, imprisoned the other sons of John Hyrcanus, starved his stepmother to death, and eventually killed his full brother to whom he had at first shown favour:

NOW when their father Hyrcanus was dead, the eldest son Aristobulus, intending to **change the government into a kingdom**, for so he resolved to do, first of all **put a diadem on his head** ...

This Aristobulus loved his next brother Antigonus, and treated him as his equal; but **the others he held in bonds**.

He also cast his mother into prison, because she disputed the government with him; for Hyrcanus had left her to be mistress of all.

He also proceeded to that degree of barbarity, as to **kill her in prison with hunger**;

and **he was alienated from his brother Antigonus** by calumnies, and **added him to the rest whom he slew**;

(Josephus Antiquities 13, 11, 1)

F.F. Bruce comments:

The **Hasmonean Dynasty**, which had risen to power in a patriotic reaction against Hellenistic domination, now **increasingly adopted the external and material features of Hellenism** ...
(Bruce (**Nations**) page 171)

Aristobulus reigned only one year and was succeeded by **Alexander Jannaeus**.²⁴⁹ Jannaeus was increasingly hated by the people. At a Feast of Tabernacles he was pelted by the people with “citrons” – his guards slaughtered 600 people.²⁵⁰ Later there was an insurrection, which Alexander Jannaeus put down with difficulty; and then, he crucified 800 men who had opposed him and murdered their families before their eyes as they were dying on their crosses.²⁵¹

When Alexander Jannaeus died, his wife **Salome Alexandra** became Queen. She was well-liked by the people and became a good ruler.

She had two sons:

Now, as to these two sons, **Hyrcanus** was indeed unable to manage public affairs, and delighted rather in a quiet life;

but the younger, **Aristobulus**, was an active and a bold man;

and for this woman herself, **Alexandra**, she **was loved by the multitude**,

because she seemed displeased at the offenses her husband had been guilty of.

So **she made Hyrcanus high priest**, because he was the elder,

but much more because he cared not to meddle with politics ...

(Josephus Antiquities 13, 16, 1-2)

When **Saloma Alexandra died**, Aristobulus immediately took steps to seize control from Hyrcanus. Hyrcanus made peace leaving Aristobulus to be both King and High Priest.²⁵² The Idumean, **Antipater**, recognized the opportunity and befriended Hyrcanus.²⁵³ Using Hyrcanus as puppet, he enlisted the Nabatean King, Aretas, to oppose Aristobulus. This brought Pompey into Judea.²⁵⁴ Once again, independence was gone and the **Jews were a subject people** – now **to Rome**.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ He was a half-brother of Aristobulus. Salome Alexander got him out of prison and married him; see Bruce (**Nations**) page 172.

²⁵⁰ See Josephus Antiquities 13, 13, 5

²⁵¹ See Josephus Antiquities 13, 14, 1-2

²⁵² See Josephus Antiquities 14, 1, 1-2

²⁵³ See Josephus Antiquities 14,1,3

²⁵⁴ See Josephus Antiquities 14, 1, 4, and 14, 2, 1-3

²⁵⁵ See Bruce (**Nations**) pages 179-189

Under Rome, **Antipater**, manipulated himself into position of Influence. His son, **Herod**, continued his manipulations and was named “**King of the Jews**” by the Roman Senate.²⁵⁶ Herod married **Mariamne, the last surviving member of the Hasmonean Dynasty**. By this marriage, Herod claimed legitimacy for his kingship.²⁵⁷ **Jesus Christ was born while Herod was King**. The New Testament is clear and specific that **the Remnant Community of True Worshipers was active and ready for the Messiah**.

8. The First Advent

For a general discussion of the First Advent, and the **life and work of Jesus Christ**, see section **2.2.2 The First Advent** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

On the first day of the week, immediately after Jesus had been resurrected late on Sabbath afternoon, **two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus**, about seven miles to the west.

Jesus began to walk with them:

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing together, **Jesus himself drew near and went with them**.

But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them,

“**What is this conversation** that you are holding with each other as you walk?”

And they stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him,

“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

And he said to them,

“What things?”

And they said to him,

“**Concerning Jesus of Nazareth**,

a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ...”

(Luke 24:13-20 ESV)

These two disciples were clearly True Worshipers of the Remnant Community.

They did NOT understand how things had worked out. Jesus was crucified, died, and was placed in tomb, but now **some of the disciples were affirming that he was alive:**

Moreover, **some women of our company** amazed us.

They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, **who said that he was alive**.

Some of **those who were with us** went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.

(Luke 24:22-24 ESV)

It took **Jesus’ personal explanation** of the “**Scriptures**” for these two True Worshipers to begin **to understand what had taken place:**

And he said to them,

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

And beginning with **Moses** and all the **Prophets**,

he interpreted to them in **all the Scriptures the things concerning himself**.

(Luke 24:25-27 ESV)

The “**Scriptures**” are what we call the **Old Testament**.

The **Synoptist Luke** specifically alludes to the **Writings of Moses** and the writings of the **Prophets** as the source by which Jesus was able **to explain his crucifixion and resurrection**.

²⁵⁶ See Josephus Antiquities 14, 14, 4

²⁵⁷ See Bruce (NT) pages 14

In the **Book of Acts**, Luke repeatedly reports incidents where the “**Scriptures**” were used to teach the truth of Jesus’ sacrifice. **Consider Philip and the Ethiopian**:

Now **an angel of the Lord said to Philip**,

“Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”

This is a desert place.

And he rose and went.

And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and **he was reading the prophet Isaiah**.

And the Spirit said to Philip,

“Go over and join this chariot.”

So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked,

“**Do you understand what you are reading?**”

And he said,

“How can I, unless someone guides me?”

And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Now **the passage of the Scripture** that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.” (citing Isaiah 53:7b-8a **LXX**)

And the eunuch said to Philip,

“About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this,
about himself or about someone else?”

Then Philip opened his mouth,

and **beginning with this Scripture** he told him the **good news about Jesus**.

(Acts 8:26-35 ESV)

In the synagogue in **Pisidian Antioch**,

Luke reports the **First Sermon of the Apostle Paul** on his first missionary journey:

... **he raised up David to be their king**, of whom he testified and said,

‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’
(alluding to Psalm 89:20, 1 Samuel 13:14, 16:7)

Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.

Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God,
to us has been sent **the message of this salvation**.

For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers,
because they did not recognize him nor **understand the utterances of the prophets**,
which are read every Sabbath, **fulfilled them by condemning him**.

And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death,
they asked Pilate to have him executed.

And when they had carried out **all that was written of him**,
they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

But God raised him from the dead ...

And **we bring you the good news** that what God **promised to the fathers**,
this he has **fulfilled** to us their children **by raising Jesus**,
as also it is written in the second Psalm,

‘You are my Son, today I have begotten (gennaō)²⁵⁸ you.’ (citing Psalm 2:7b)

And as for the fact that **he raised him from the dead**,

no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’ (alluding to Isaiah 55:3b **LXX**)

²⁵⁸ The verb γεννάω - gennaō, carries a very broad range of meaning, “procreate”, “give birth”, “be born”, “bring forth”; see GEL pages 154-155;

The Hebrew root, יָלַד - yalad, used in Psalm 2:7, carries a similar range of meaning; see Holladay pages 134-135.

Therefore he says also in another psalm,
'You will not let your Holy One see corruption.' (alluding to Psalm 16:10b)
(Acts 13:22b-23, 26-30, 32-35 ESV)

Later, during his second missionary journey,

Paul has the same message in the synagogue in Thessalonica; Luke summarizes:

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia,
they came to **Thessalonica**, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.
And Paul went in, as was his custom,
and on three Sabbath days **he reasoned with them from the Scriptures**,
explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead,
and saying,

"This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."

(Acts 17:1-3 ESV see also 18:5, 28)

As a prisoner of the Romans, **Paul was taken to Rome**, where he was allowed to live in his own house
and continue to preach. He first invited the **local Jewish leaders**:

After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews,

and when they had gathered, he said to them,

"Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers,
yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you,
since it is because of **the hope of Israel** that I am wearing this chain."

When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers.

From morning till evening he expounded to them,
testifying to the **kingdom of God** and trying to **convince them about Jesus**
both from the [nomos]²⁵⁹ of **Moses** and from the **Prophets**.

And **some were convinced** by what he said, but **others disbelieved**.

He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him,
proclaiming the **kingdom of God** and teaching about the **Lord Jesus Christ**
with all boldness and without hindrance.

(Acts 28:17, 20, 23-24, 30-31 ESV)

The **good news about the Kingdom of God** and the **truth about Jesus Christ** are the heart and core
of the Gospel.²⁶⁰ This is what Jesus taught. This what the Apostles taught and what is recorded
in the New Testament. However, as shown the above quotations from the **Book of Acts**,
the proof of Jesus Messiahship is in the Old Testament documents. **In the words of both Jesus and Paul**,
"Moses" and the **"Prophets"** must be consulted **to understand the First Advent**.

The other Old Testament documents, especially the **Psalms**, also must be considered.

There are hundreds of correlations between the Old Testament and the New Testament
regarding the Messiah. For a comprehensive list of these correlations,

see section **2.4.3 The Centrality of Jesus Christ** in the paper **"Second Pillar - The Plan of God"**
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. Some of these correlations are included in the above
quotations; more are discussed in section **8.3 Fulfillment of Prophecy**.

8.1 The Remnant Community

The first members of the **Remnant Community of True Worshipers** to be identified
in the **New Testament** are the **parents of John the Baptist**:

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named **Zechariah**, of the division of Abijah.

And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was **Elizabeth**.

And they were **both righteous before God**,

walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

(Luke 1:5-6 ESV)

²⁵⁹ See footnote **43**

²⁶⁰ For further discussion see section **3 Kerygma** in the paper **"The Inner Workings of Faith"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

Next, we meet **Mary** and **Jospeh**, Jesus' parents. Mary and Elizabeth were likely cousins:²⁶¹

In the sixth month²⁶² the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was **Joseph**, of the house of David.

And the virgin's name was **Mary**.

And he came to her and said,

"Greetings, **O favored one, the Lord is with you!**"

And Mary said,

"Behold, **I am the servant of the Lord;**

let it be to me according to your word."

And the angel departed from her.

(Luke 1:26-28, 38 ESV)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.

When his mother **Mary** had been betrothed to Joseph,

before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband **Joseph**,

being **a just man** and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

(Matthew 1:18-19 ESV)

There may have been a significant number of **True Worshipers in the hill country** around where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived:

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.

And her neighbors and relatives heard that **the Lord had shown great mercy to her**, and they rejoiced with her.

And **fear came on all their neighbors**.

And all **these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea**,

and **all who heard them laid them up in their hearts**, saying,

"What then will this child be?"

For the hand of the Lord was with him.

(Luke 1:57-58, 65-66 ESV)

When Jesus was born, the **shepherds**, to which the angels spoke, were certainly prepared for the Messiah:

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them,

and **they were filled with great fear**.

And the angel said to them,

"**Fear not**, for behold, **I bring you good news** of great joy that will be for all the people.

For **unto you is born** this day in the city of David **a Savior**, who is **Christ** the Lord.

And this will be a sign for you:

you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

(Luke 2:8-12 ESV)

Soon after the birth of Jesus, Jospheh, Mary, and Jesus, fled to Egypt until Herod died.²⁶³

When they returned, Mary took a purification sacrifice to the Temple.²⁶⁴ In the Temple,

they encountered a True Worshiper named **Simeon** and a "prophetess" named **Anna**,

who **spread the word of the arrival of the Messiah among the Remnant Community**:

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was **Simeon**,

and **this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel**,

and **the Holy Spirit was upon him**.

And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that **he would not see death**

before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

(Luke 2:25-26 ESV)

And there was a prophetess, **Anna**, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.

She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,

and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.

²⁶¹ See Luke 1:36

²⁶² Of Elizabeth's pregnancy ...

²⁶³ See Matthew 2:13-15

²⁶⁴ See Luke 2:22-24

She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up **at that very hour she began to give thanks to God** and **to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem**.
(Luke 2:36-38 ESV)

The **disciples of John the Baptist** were clearly among the Remnant Community. They unhesitatingly accepted Jesus as the Messiah:

The next day again **John was standing with two of his disciples**, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said,
“Behold, the Lamb of God!”

The two disciples heard him say this, and they **followed Jesus**. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them,
“What are you seeking?”

And they said to him,
“**Rabbi**” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”

He said to them,
“Come and you will see.”

So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was **Andrew**, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him,
“**We have found the Messiah**” (which means Christ).
(John 1:35-41 ESV)

Again, **the others Jesus called to be his first disciples**, were among The Remnant Community:

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found **Philip** and said to him,
“Follow me.”

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found **Nathanael** and said to him,

“**We have found him of whom Moses in the [nomos]²⁶⁵ and also the prophets wrote**, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Nathanael said to him,
“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said to him,
“Come and see.”

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him,
“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”

Nathanael said to him,
“How do you know me?”

Jesus answered him,
“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

Nathanael answered him,
“Rabbi, **you are the Son of God!**
You are the King of Israel!”

(John 1:43-49 ESV)

Others among the Remnant Community, could include:

- Mary, Martha, and Lazarus: Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-44
- Joseph of Arimathea: Mark 15:43, Matthew 27:57, Luke 23:50, John 19:38
- Simon of Cyrene: Mark 15:21, Matthew 27:32, Luke 23:26
- Nicodemus: John 3:1-9, 7:50-51, 19:39
- Mary, mother of John Mark: Acts 12:12

Ever since the time of the Prophet Ezekiel, **God had carefully prepared and maintained a Remnant Community of True Worshipers** to prepare for the First Advent.

When the Messiah came to earth as a helpless baby, the **Remnant Community** fulfilled its purpose of providing a safe and nurturing environment in which the child could grow up.

²⁶⁵ See footnote 43

When Jesus began to preach, all of these people were certainly among his disciples.

They were the first to believe the message of Jesus Christ.

8.2 The Message of Jesus Christ

At the first Passover in Jerusalem, **Jesus fulfilled the prophecies** of Haggai and Malachi²⁶⁶ by **presenting himself in the Temple as the Son of God**. Jesus actions bore immediate fruit:

The **Passover** of the Jews was at hand, and **Jesus went up to Jerusalem**.

In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.

And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen.

And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.

And he told those who sold the pigeons,

“Take these things away;

do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.”

His disciples remembered that it was written,

“Zeal for your house will consume me.” (citing Psalm 69:9a)

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast,

many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.

(John 2:13-17, 23 ESV)

While in Jerusalem at the Passover, Jesus spoke with Nicodemus, and explained to him

one of the most profound mysteries of the Kingdom of God – the nature of the Resurrection:

Now there was **a man of the Pharisees** named **Nicodemus**, a ruler of the Jews.

This man came to Jesus by night and said to him,

“Rabbi, **we know that you are a teacher come from God,**

for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”

Jesus answered him,

“Truly, truly, I say to you,

unless one is born (gennaō)²⁶⁷ again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus said to him,

“How can a man be born (gennaō) when he is old?

Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born (gennaō)?”

Jesus answered,

“Truly, truly, I say to you,

unless one is born (gennaō) of water and the Spirit,

he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

That which is born (gennaō) of the flesh is flesh,

and **that which is born (gennaō) of the Spirit is spirit.**

(John 3:1-6 ESV)

On the way back to Galilee, Jesus talked to **the woman at the well near Sychar**.

Jesus explained to the woman that the Truth of his message is the “**water of life**”.

Jesus explained that to be a True Worshipper of God, a person must **have the Holy Spirit**

and **live by the Truth, the Way of God:**

So **he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar,**

near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well.

It was about the sixth hour.

A woman from Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her,

“Give me a drink.”

(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him,

“How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?”

(For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

²⁶⁶ See the discussion of these prophecies in section [7.3 Daniel and the Return from Exile](#)

²⁶⁷ See footnote [258](#)

Jesus answered her,
“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you,
‘Give me a drink,’
you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

Jesus said to her,
“Woman, believe me,
the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.
You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.
But the hour is coming, and is now here,
when **the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth,**
for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.
God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

(John 4:5-10, 21-24 ESV)

The focus of Jesus’ message is the Kingdom of God. The path to the Kingdom of God is through the Son of God, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. To participate in the Kingdom of God, a person must be **transformed into spirit** through the resurrection of the dead. To become a candidate for transformation, a person must be **“born of water”**, baptised, and become a **True Worshiper of God**, living by the **Truth of God**, the **Way of God**.

When Jesus got back to Galilee and commenced the **Great Galilean Ministry**, his message continued to focus on the **Kingdom of God**:

Now after John was arrested, **Jesus came into Galilee**,
proclaiming **the gospel of God**, and saying,
“The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand**;
repent and believe in the gospel.”

(Mark 1:14-15 ESV)

During his first tour of Galilee, Jesus continued to emphasize the **Kingdom of God**:

And **he went throughout all Galilee**,
teaching in their synagogues and **proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom**
and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

(Matthew 4:23 ESV)

Still in Galilee, **during the Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus provides the disciples with a model prayer. Again, a considerable time later in Judea, the disciples request guidance in prayer.

On both occasions, **Jesus emphasizes the Kingdom of God**:

And **when you pray**,
do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do,
for they think that they will be heard for their many words.
Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Pray then like this:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

(Matthew 6:7-13 ESV)

Now **Jesus was praying in a certain place**,
and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him,
“Lord, **teach us to pray**, as John taught his disciples.”

And he said to them,
“When you pray, say:
Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And lead us not into temptation.”

(Luke 11:1-4 ESV)

In the introduction to the **Book of Acts**, Luke asserts that the **Kingdom of God** was Jesus' main theme of his teaching in the **post-resurrection appearances**:

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with **all that Jesus began to do and teach**, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and **speaking about the kingdom of God**.
(Acts 1:1-3 ESV)

Jesus also used many parables to illustrate the nature of the Kingdom of God. For a fuller discussion of the Kingdom of God, including the parables, see section **2.3.5 The Kingdom of God** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

On the night of the first Christian Passover, **Jesus focused on what his life and work implied for the apostles**, and therefore what he expected them to instill in those they taught:

A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**:
just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
By this all people will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.
(John 13:34-35 ESV)

On that night, Jesus went on to elaborate **the importance of "love" for discipleship**, but it was NOT a new theme. **In the Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus had made a point of the necessity of **Christian Love**:

You have heard that it was said,
'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'²⁶⁸
But I say to you,
Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.
For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good,
and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?
Do not even the tax collectors do the same?
And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?
Do not even the Gentiles do the same?
You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
(Matthew 5:43-48 ESV see also Luke 6:27-36)

Towards the end of his public ministry, in the Temple Court in Jerusalem, during a public dialogue, Jesus takes the opportunity to establish **the necessity of acquiring Christian Love** to be considered a candidate for the gift of eternal life and **participate in the Kingdom of God**:

And **one of the scribes** came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him,
"Which commandment is the most important of all?"
Jesus answered,
"The most important is,
'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.
And **you shall love the Lord your God**
➤ with all your heart and
➤ with all your [being] (psyche)²⁶⁹ and
➤ with all your mind and
➤ with all your strength.' (alluding to Deuteronomy 6:4-5)
The second is this:
'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (citing Leviticus 19:18b)
There is no other commandment greater than these."
And the scribe said to him,
"You are right, Teacher.
You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him.

²⁶⁸ This must be a Pharisaic maxim; nowhere in the Old Testament does it say to hate enemies.

²⁶⁹ See footnote 6

And **to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength,**
and **to love one's neighbor as oneself,**

is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." (alluding to 1 Samuel 15:22a)

And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him,

"You are not far from the kingdom of God."

And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

(Mark 12:28-34 ESV see also Matthew 22:34-40)

Back to the night of the **first Christian Passover**, Jesus went on to greatly elaborate
what it means to have Christian Love:

- First Jesus promises **the Holy Spirit as a "helper"** without which Christian love is NOT possible:
If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Helper**,²⁷⁰ to be with you forever,
even **the Spirit of truth**, [which]²⁷¹ the world cannot receive,
because it neither sees [it] nor knows [it].
You know [it], for [it] dwells with you and will be in you.
Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.
And **he who loves me will be loved by my Father,**
and **I will love him and manifest myself to him.**
(John 14:15-17, 21 ESV)
- Only through the Holy Spirit is it possible "**keep my word**", live by the **Way of God:**
Jesus answered him,
"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,
and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.
Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.
And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me
These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.
But the **Helper**, the **Holy Spirit**, [which] the Father will send in my name,
[it] will teach you all things
and **bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ..."**
(John 14:23-26 ESV)
- **Christian unity** results from unity with Jesus Christ and God the Father
through the love imparted by the Holy Spirit – **abide in Jesus' love:**
Abide in me, and I in you.
As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine,
neither can you, unless you abide in me.
I am the vine; you are the branches.
Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit,
for apart from me you can do nothing.
As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.
Abide in my love.
If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.
These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.
(John 15:4-5, 9-11 ESV)
- Christian Love is **manifest in serving:**
This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends if you **do what I command you.**
You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you
that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide,
so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
These things I command you, **so that you will love one another.**
(John 15:12-14, 16-17 ESV)

²⁷⁰ The Greek word is παράκλητος - paraklētōs, a masculine noun, "helper", "advocate";
there are five occurrences John 14:16,26, 15:26, 16:7, 1 John 2:1

²⁷¹ The Holy Spirit is the power of God. It is NOT sentient being; therefore, it should always be referenced with neuter pronouns.
See section **1.5 The Holy Spirit** in the paper "**First Pillar - The Nature of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
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- Christian Love is **from God the Father**:

I have said these things to you in figures of speech.

The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father.

In that day you will ask in my name,

and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf;

for **the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me**

and have believed that I came from God.

I came from the Father and have come into the world,

and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

(John 16:25-28 ESV)

I in them and you in me, that **they may become perfectly one**,

so that the world may know that **you sent me and loved them even as you loved me**.

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am,

to see my glory that you have given me

because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you,

and these know that you have sent me.

I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known,

that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

(John 17:23-26 ESV)

God is love.²⁷² God’s love extends to each and every human being who has ever lived.²⁷³

The purpose of our short human life is for each person to determine whether or NOT

he/she would like to **participate in the Kingdom of God** and be granted **the gift of eternal life**.

Those who choose life,²⁷⁴ must **respond to the calling of God**²⁷⁵ and learn to **live by the Way of God**.

Fundamental to living by the Way of God is to replace sinning human nature by **Godly Character**²⁷⁶

– **to attain the love of God**:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand,

and **we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

and hope does not put us to shame,

because God’s love has been poured into our hearts

through the Holy Spirit [which]²⁷⁷ has been given to us.

(Romans 5:1-5 ESV)

8.3 Fulfillment of Prophecy

The purpose of this section is to examine a few Messianic Prophecies related to the First Advent.

For a general discussion of the role of prophecy in carrying out the **Plan of God**,

see section **2.4 The Role of Prophecy** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”

located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

One of the earliest Messianic prophecies is in the **Book of Numbers**:

The oracle of [Bil^e`am]²⁷⁸ the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,

the oracle of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High,

who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down with his eyes uncovered:

I see him, but not now;

²⁷² See 1 John 4:7-21

²⁷³ See John 3:16-20

²⁷⁴ See section **5. The Covenant of Life** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

²⁷⁵ See section **11.1 Christian Calling**

²⁷⁶ For a full discussion of this, see the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

²⁷⁷ See footnote **271**

²⁷⁸ The traditional transliteration, “Balaam”, is NOT even close to correct.

I behold him, but not near:

a star shall come out of Jacob, and **a scepter shall rise out of Israel**;
it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.
Edom shall be dispossessed; Seir also, **his enemies**, shall be dispossessed.

Israel is doing valiantly.

And one from Jacob shall **exercise dominion** and destroy the **survivors of cities!**

(Numbers 24:15b-19 ESV)

The “star” and the “scepter” look to the Messiah:

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.

I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

(Revelation 22:16 ESV)

The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end,
to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron,
as when earthen pots are broken in pieces,
even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

And I will give him the morning star.

(Revelation 2:26-28 ESV)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king,
behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying,

“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?”

For **we saw his star** when it rose and have come to worship him.”

(Matthew 2:1-2 ESV)

And we have **the prophetic word** more fully confirmed,
to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place,
until the day dawns and **the morning star** rises in your hearts ...

(2 Peter 1:19 ESV)

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;

(Psalm 45:6 ESV)

[YHWH] sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your enemies!

(Psalm 110:2 ESV)

But **of the Son he says**,

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,

the scepter of uprightness is **the scepter of your kingdom**. (citing Psalm 45:6)

(Hebrews 1:8 ESV)

Bil^eam was looking long into the future and he saw the Messiah only dimly, **“I see him, but not now”**:

But **when the fullness of time had come**,

God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the [nomos]²⁷⁹ ...

(Galatians 4:4 ESV)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,
according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us,
in all wisdom and insight making known to us **the mystery of his will**, according to his purpose,
which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time,
to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.

(Ephesians 1:7-10 ESV)

And **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**,

and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:14 ESV)

This prophecy sets a pattern followed by several other prophecies of looking to **First Advent**
then seamlessly flowing into the **Second Advent**. “Moab”, “Edom”, “sons of Sheth”, “Seir”,
are used typically to represent the nations of the world in opposition to God, **“his enemies”**,
to be defeated at the Day of YHWH, **“it shall crush the forehead”**. The King of kings, Jesus Christ,
will **“exercise dominion”**. The phrase, **“survivors of cities”**, alludes to **“world city”**, the embodiment
of the world of Satan the Devil, this world.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ See footnote 43

²⁸⁰ See section 3.1.2.2 **World City** in the paper “**Pillar Three - The Way of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
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Micah chapter 5 contains the famous prophecy naming **Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah**.

This prophecy is also discussed in section *Isaiah and Micah*. It follows this pattern of looking to the **First Advent** and the **Second Advent**, as do of **three other prophecies**:

First Advent

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, **from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel**, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Second Advent

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

And **he shall stand and shepherd his flock**²⁸¹ in the strength of [YHWH], in the majesty of the name of [YHWH] his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

And **he shall be their peace**.

(Micah 5:2-5a ESV)

First Advent

The Spirit of the Lord [YHWH] is upon me, because [YHWH] has anointed me **to bring good news to the poor**; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; **to proclaim the year of [YHWH's] favor**,

Second Advent

and the **day of vengeance of our God**;

to comfort all who mourn;

to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,

the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;

that they may be called oaks of righteousness,

the planting of [YHWH], that he may be glorified.

They shall build up the ancient ruins;

they shall raise up the former devastations;

they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

(Isaiah 61:1-4 ESV)

First Advent

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold,

I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares [YHWH].

Second Advent

And **many nations shall join themselves to [YHWH]** in that day, and **shall be my people**.

And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that [YHWH] of hosts has sent me to you.

And [YHWH] will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land,

and will **again choose Jerusalem**.

(Zechariah 2:10-12 ESV)

First Advent

Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me.

And **the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple**;

and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight,

behold, he is coming, says [YHWH] of hosts.

Second Advent

But **who can endure the day of his coming**, and **who can stand when he appears?**

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.

He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver,

and **he will purify the sons of Levi** and refine them like gold and silver,

and they will bring offerings in righteousness to [YHWH].

Then **the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to [YHWH]**

as in the days of old and as in former years.

(Malachi 3:1-4 ESV)

²⁸¹ "The Good Shepherd", see, for example, Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34:11-16, John 10:1-16

The First Advent is the pivotal event of the Plan of God, the pivotal event of all human history. Everything before the First Advent was leading up to it. The First Advent has made possible the rest of the working out of the **Plan of God**. **The First Advent has made the Second Advent possible**.

9. Preparation for the Second Advent

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the climax of the First Advent, the pivotal event in the existence of the human race. The Old Testament sacrifices were efficacious for Ancient Israel to provide “atonement” for sin. “Atonement” for sin allowed God to account the nation and the people “holy”, so that a relationship with God was possible.²⁸² The instructions for the **Sin Offering** and the **Guilt Offering** are specific that **the purpose of the sacrifices was to provide “atonement”, and the sin would be forgiven:**

If he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering,

he shall bring a female without blemish and lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering.

Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of its blood at the base of the altar.

And **the priest shall make atonement** for him for the sin which he has committed, and **he shall be forgiven.**

(Leviticus 4:32-34, 35b ESV see also 4:20, 26, 31, 5:10, 13, 18, 6:7)

The **Book of Hebrews** is clear and specific that **animal sacrificed CANNOT “take away sin”**: the **Apostle John** affirms that **only the sacrifice of Christ can “take away sin”**:

For **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

But when **Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins ...**

You know that **he appeared in order to take away sins**, and in him there is no sin.

(Hebrews 10:4, 11-12a, 1 John 3:5 ESV)

The Apostle Paul puts it this way:

... the righteousness of God through faith [of]²⁸³ Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

and are justified by his grace as a gift,

through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood,

to be received by faith.

This was to show God’s righteousness,

because **in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.**

(Romans 3:22-25 ESV see also Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10)

The “**atonement**” made possible by animal sacrifices merely push the sins aside.

God “**passed over former sins**” to make it possible for the nation and people of Israel

to have a relationship with God. The “**true atonement**” made possible by the blood of Christ

is “**propitiation**”, the complete removal of sin, “**he appeared in order to take away sins**”.

This made the creation of the **New Testament Church** possible. This has made the **Second Advent**

possible. This has made possible the **fulfillment of the Plan of God:**

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist,

in bringing many sons to glory,

should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

(Hebrews 2:10 ESV)

²⁸² For further discussion, see section **10. The Role of Sacrifices** in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

²⁸³ See footnote **20**

In order to carry out the **Plan of God, the New Testament Church was required.**
Jesus left the creation of the Church to the Apostles and disciples, **through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.** Jesus' death made the indwelling of the Holy Spirit possible.
Jesus' life, through power of the Holy Spirit, **makes it possible** for human beings to live by the **Way of God** and thus **carry out the Plan of God.**

9.1 The Training of the Apostles

Jesus was very careful in his selection and training of the men who would become Apostles.

The New Testament documents explicitly record the recruitment of only seven of the twelve who became Apostles: six are identified by Jesus soon after his baptism:

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,
and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said,
"Behold, the Lamb of God!"

The **two disciples** heard him say this, and they **followed Jesus.**

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was **Andrew**, Simon Peter's brother.
He first found his own brother Simon and said to him,
"**We have found the Messiah**" (which means Christ).

He brought him to Jesus.
Jesus looked at him and said,
"You are **Simon** the son of John.
You shall be called **Cephas**" (which means Peter).

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee.
He found **Philip** and said to him,
"Follow me."

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
Philip found **Nathanael** and said to him,
"**We have found him** of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote,
Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
(John 1:35-37, 40-45 ESV)

The other of the "**two disciples**" was almost certainly **John** the brother of James, sons of Zebedee.
John is explicitly mentioned by all three Synoptists when the four were leaving their fishing business:
Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee,
he saw **Simon** and **Andrew** the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.
And **Jesus said** to them,
"**Follow me**, and I will make you become fishers of men."
And immediately **they left their nets** and followed him.
And going on a little farther, he saw **James** the son of Zebedee and **John** his brother,
who were in their boat mending the nets.
And immediately he called them,
and **they left their father Zebedee** in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.
(Mark 1:16-20 ESV // Matthew 4:18-22 see also Luke 5:1-11)

Some or all of these six disciples had accompanied **Jesus** when he preformed his **first miracle at Cana:**
On the third day there was a **wedding at Cana in Galilee,**
and the mother of Jesus was there.
Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.
(John 2:1-2 ESV)

The only other reported recruitment is of Levi, better known as, Matthew:

He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them.
And as he passed by, he saw **Levi** the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth,
and **he said** to him,
"**Follow me.**"
And he **rose and followed him.**
(Mark 2:13-14 ESV see also Matthew 9:9, Luke 5:27-28)

There is no information on the recruitment of **Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Judas (Thaddaeus), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot**. There were also **other disciples** who were with Jesus from the beginning:

After this the **Lord appointed seventy-two others** and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.
(Luke 10:1 ESV)

In those days **Peter** stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and **said**,

“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

So **one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time** that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **beginning from the baptism of John** until the day when he was taken up from us —one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”

(Acts 1:15-16, 21-22 ESV)

When it was **time to appoint the Twelve**, Jesus spent the night in prayer:

In these days **he went out to the mountain to pray**, and **all night he continued in prayer** to God.

And when day came, **he called his disciples and chose from them twelve**,

whom he named **apostles**:

Simon, whom he named Peter, and
Andrew his brother, and
James and
John, and
Philip, and
Bartholomew, and
Matthew, and
Thomas, and
James the son of Alphaeus, and
Simon who was called the Zealot, and
Judas the son of James, and
Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

(Luke 6:12-16 ESV see also Mark 3:13-19)

Immediately after this Luke reports the **Sermon on the Mount**,²⁸⁴ some of which was probably public, but **the real focus of the teaching was the disciples, especially the Apostles**.

This was Jesus’ modus operandi – he would teach publicly but always with the aim of teaching the disciples, especially the Apostles. An example of this is Jesus’ public presentation of the parable of the **Sower and the Seed**.²⁸⁵ Once they were alone, the disciples, specifically the Twelve, requested an explanation:

And when he was alone, **those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables**.

And he said to them,

“To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God,

but for those outside everything is in parables, so that

‘they may indeed see but not perceive,

and may indeed hear but not understand,

lest they should turn and be forgiven.” (alluding to Isaiah 6:9-10)

And he said to them,

“Do you not understand this parable?

How then will you understand all the parables?

(Mark 4:10-13 ESV see also Matthew 13:10-18, Luke 8:9-10)

Late in his ministry, as Jesus knew his death was imminent, Jesus focused on teaching his disciples **humility** – probably **the most important lesson for them to learn**. Little children inherently look up to their parents, recognizing the vast gulf between them. As God’s children, we must recognize the vast gulf between us and God:

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and **the disciples rebuked them**.

²⁸⁴ See Luke 6:17-49, Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7

²⁸⁵ See Mark 4:3-9, Matthew 13:3-9, Luke 8:5-8

But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them,
“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them,
for to such belongs the kingdom of God.
Truly, I say to you,
whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

(Mark 10:13-15 ESV see also Matthew 19:13-14, Luke 18:15-17)

And Jesus called them to him and said to them,
“You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,
and their great ones exercise authority over them.

But it shall not be so among you.
But **whoever would be great among you must be your servant,**
and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

For even **the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,**
and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

(Mark 10:42-45 ESV // Matthew 20:25-28)

On the night of the First Christian Passover, just before his crucifixion, Jesus gave the Apostles their final instructions and **prayed to the Father about building the New Testament Church:**

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth:

it is to your advantage that I go away,
for **if I do not go away, the Helper²⁸⁶ will not come to you.**

But if I go, I will send [it]²⁸⁷ to you.

And when [it] comes, [it] will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:
concerning sin, because they do not believe in me;
concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;
concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

When the Spirit of truth comes, [it] will guide you into all the truth,

for [it] will not speak on [its] own authority,
but whatever [it] hears [it] will speak,
and [it] will declare to you the things that are to come.

[It] will glorify me, for [it] will take what is mine and declare it to you.

All that the Father has is mine;

therefore I said that [it] will take what is mine and declare it to you.

(John 16:7-15 ESV)

I have given them your word,

and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

And for their sake I consecrate myself, that **they also may be sanctified in truth.**

I do not ask for these only,

but also for those who will believe in me through their word,

that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you,

that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

(John 17:14-21 ESV)

The Gospels (and the letters of John and Peter) contain the **distillation of the entire teaching that Jesus gave the Apostles.** Paul spent three years in the desert (perhaps also in Damascus) being taught by Jesus.²⁸⁸ He received the same teaching as the other Apostles. **Paul's letters** and the record of his sermons in the **Book of Acts** contain **Paul's distillation of the teaching of Jesus.** The teaching is consistent throughout. This is the teaching upon which the New Testament Church was built.

²⁸⁶ See footnote [270](#)

²⁸⁷ See footnote [271](#)

²⁸⁸ See Galatians 1:11-18, Acts 9:19b-26

9.2 Building the New Testament Church

The **inception of the New Testament Church** on the **Day of Pentecost** in the early 30's AD, is one of the most famous incidents in the Bible. **Peter's sermon** immediately brought 3000 people into the New Testament Church:

When **the day of Pentecost arrived**, they were all together in one place.

And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**

and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And Peter said to them,

“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off,

everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”

So those who received his word were baptized,

and **there were added that day about three thousand [persons] (psyche).**²⁸⁹

(Acts 2:1-4, 38-41 ESV)

The Church in Jerusalem grew very quickly:

And **they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**.

And awe came upon every [person] (psyche),

and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

And day by day, **attending the temple together** and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people.

And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

(Acts 2:42-47 ESV)

And as **they were speaking to the people**,

the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and **proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.**

And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

But **many of those who had heard the word believed**,

and **the number of the men came to about five thousand.**

(Acts 4:1-4 ESV see also 5:14, 6:1, 7)

By the time the **Apostle Paul** had finished his three missionary journeys and **came to Jerusalem** in the mid 50's AD, James summarized the **size of the Church in Jerusalem** as **“many thousands”**:

When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.

On the following day **Paul went in with us to James**, and all the elders were present.

After greeting them,

he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

And when they heard it, they glorified God.

And they said to him,

“You see, brother, **how many thousands** there are **among the Jews** of those **who have believed.** ...”

(Acts 21:17-20a ESV)

²⁸⁹ See footnote 6

Meanwhile, the Church outside of Jerusalem had also grown:

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and **they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria**, except the apostles. Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And **the crowds with one accord paid attention** to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.
(Acts 8:1b, 4-6 ESV)

So **the church** throughout all **Judea**²⁹⁰ and **Galilee** and **Samaria** had peace and **was being built up**. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, **it multiplied**.
(Acts 9:31 ESV see also 11:1)

The carrying of the Gospel to Gentiles, began with **Philip** and **Peter**, but it was the **Apostle Paul** that took the Gospel into the greater **Roman Empire**. Philp's instruction of the Ethiopian is discussed in section **8. The First Advent**. The incident ends with **the Ethiopian's baptism**, and notes **Philip's subsequent efforts, mostly among Gentiles**:

And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and **the eunuch said**,
"See, here is water!
What prevents me from being baptized?"

And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, **Philip** and the eunuch, and he **baptized him**.

And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

But **Philip found himself at Azotus**, and as he passed through **he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea**.
(Acts 8:36-40 ESV)

The incident of **Peter and the household of Cornelius**, the Centurion, is discussed at some length in section **4.2 Beginnings of Worldwide Evangelism** in the paper "**God of Every Nation**" and in section **3.4.3.5 The Universal Saviour** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. The **Synoptist Luke** presents this incident as **a watershed in the growth of the New Testament Church**.

At the **Jerusalem Conference of 49AD**, Luke reports **Peter's statement**:

The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.

And **after there had been much debate**,

Peter stood up and said to them,

"Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that **by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe**.

And **God**, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he **made no distinction between us and them**, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

But **we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus**, just as they will."

(Acts 15:6-11 ESV)

The Jerusalem Conference of 49AD had been precipitated by the success of Paul's first missionary journey in 46-47AD. Paul had started several Churches in Southern Galatia with large numbers of Gentile converts. He had clearly taught them that **circumcision was NOT necessary to become a Christian**. Christians DO NOT have to be Jews. The result of the conference was an endorsement of Paul's position; this is discussed in more detail in section **4.4.4 Galatians** in the paper "**God of Every Nation**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Paul's missionary journeys and the **Epistles** he wrote to the various Churches are discussed in section **4.3 The Journeys of Paul** and section **4.4 The Epistles of Paul** in the same paper. **It was through Paul's work that New Testament Church was established as a viable entity in the Roman Empire**.

The growth of the New Testament Church was NOT without challenges. The most significant early challenge was the persecution of **Saul the Pharisee** (before he was converted and became Paul the Apostle). Saul was instrumental in the **killings of Stephen**²⁹¹ and posed a great threat to the whole Church:

Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him.

And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul
And **Saul approved of his execution.**

And **there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem,**

and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.
Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

But **Saul was ravaging the church,** and entering house after house,
he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

(Acts 7:58, 8:1-3 ESV)

This persecution caused some from Jerusalem to go to **Antioch in Syria where the Gospel spread to “Hellenists”**. The term, “Hellenists”, primarily meant “Greek speaking”. In Acts 6:1, the “Hellenists” were part of the Christian community, “widows”. In Acts 9:29, the “Hellenists” were Greek speaking Jews to whom the newly converted “Saul” was trying to preach. In Acts 11:20, they are apparently Greek-speaking non-Jews (note the contrast with Jews in verse 19):

Now **those who were scattered** because of the persecution that arose over Stephen
traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, **speaking the word to no one except Jews.**

But there were **some of them**, men of Cyprus and Cyrene,

who on **coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also**, preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them,

and **a great number who believed turned to the Lord.**

(Acts 11:19-21 ESV)

The Church in Syrian Antioch was Paul’s home base, as well as the home base of many others:

Now there were **in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers,**

Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene,

Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

(Acts 13:1 ESV)

... and from there **they sailed to Antioch,**

where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled.

And when **they arrived and gathered the church together,**

they **declared all that God had done with them,**

and how he had opened a door of **faith to the Gentiles.**

And they remained no little time with the disciples.

(Acts 14:26-28 ESV)

Paul worked with many other people: Silas,²⁹² Timothy,²⁹³ Aquila and Priscilla,²⁹⁴

Gaius and Aristarchus,²⁹⁵ Sopater, Secundus, Tychicus, and Trophimus,²⁹⁶ Titus,²⁹⁷ Epaphras,²⁹⁸ Justus,²⁹⁹

Demas,³⁰⁰ Silvanus,³⁰¹ Erastus,³⁰² Artemas,³⁰³ Zenas and Apollos,³⁰⁴ Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus,³⁰⁵

and Onesimus.³⁰⁶

²⁹¹ See Acts chapter 7

²⁹² See Acts 15:40

²⁹³ See Acts 16:1

²⁹⁴ See Acts 18:2

²⁹⁵ See Acts 19:29

²⁹⁶ See Acts 20:4

²⁹⁷ See Galatians 2:1

²⁹⁸ See Colossians 1:7

²⁹⁹ See Colossians 4:11

³⁰⁰ See Colossians 4:14

³⁰¹ See 1 Thessalonians 1:1

³⁰² 2 Timothy 4:20

³⁰³ See Titus 3:12

³⁰⁴ See Titus 3:13

³⁰⁵ See Philemon 1-2

³⁰⁶ See Philemon 10

Most historians accept that Paul was executed under Nero in the mid 60's AD.³⁰⁷

The continued growth of the Church was ensured by these people with whom Paul had worked; and, no doubt, there were many others we know nothing about.

The last explicit mention of the Church in Jerusalem is the occasion of Paul's visit after his third journey in the mid 50's AD:

After these days we got ready and **went up to Jerusalem.**

And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.

(Acts 21:15-17 ESV)

Some ten years later, in AD66, **the First Jewish War** broke out. Jesus in the **Olivet Prophecy**³⁰⁸ had warned the Church to flee from Jerusalem when it was surrounded by armies:

But **when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies,** then know that its desolation has come near.

Then let those who are in Judea **flee to the mountains,** and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, for **these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.**

(Luke 21:20-22 ESV)

When **Vespasian** arrived at Jerusalem with three legions,³⁰⁹ **the Jerusalem Church did flee to Pella,** a Greek city east of the River Jordan about 30 miles south of the Sea of Galilee.³¹⁰

These people are the most likely candidates to be the immediate audience of the **Book of Hebrews.**³¹¹

From here, the Jerusalem Church is lost to history. Descendants of these people likely appear later in the sects of the **Ebionites**³¹² and the **Nazarenes.**³¹³ When the Jerusalem Church fled to Pella, the **Apostle John** apparently went to Ephesus.³¹⁴ **John's extant writings,** the gospel and three epistles, were written in Ephesus likely around 90AD. Shortly after that, John was given the visions and instructions reported in the **Book of Revelation.** With these documents,³¹⁵ God's revelation to the New Testament Church was complete.

9.3 Corruption of the Visible Church

The origin of the Church in Rome is obscure. The **Synoptist Luke** reports the presence of **people from Rome** in Jerusalem on the **first Christian Pentecost:**

Now there were dwelling **in Jerusalem** Jews, devout **men from every nation under heaven.** Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and **visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,** Cretans and Arabians ...
(Acts 2:5, 9-11a ESV)

Nearly twenty years later, the **Apostle Paul** encountered **Aquila and Priscilla** in Corinth.

They were **Christians of some knowledge from Rome.** They had left Rome due to **Claudius' expulsion of Jews.**³¹⁶ Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul to **Ephesus** where they encountered **Apollos:**

After this **Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.**

And he found a Jew named **Aquila,** a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife **Priscilla,** because **Claudius** had commanded all the **Jews to leave Rome.**

³⁰⁷ See Bruce (NT) pages 364-367

³⁰⁸ See Mark chapter 13, Mathew chapter 24, Luke 21:5-36

³⁰⁹ See Bruce (NT) pages 379-383

³¹⁰ See *Excursus Three – The Destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD* in the paper "The Olivet Prophecy"

located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³¹¹ See *Excursus 2 – The Book of Hebrews* in the paper "Third Pillar - The Way of God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³¹² See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebionites>

³¹³ See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_\(sect\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_(sect))

³¹⁴ See Irenaeus "Against Heresies" book 3 chapter 1 section 1, in Roberts (ANF), volume 1 page 414; Eusebius "Church History" book 3 chapter 1 section 1, in Schaff (NPNF), second series volume 1 page 132.

³¹⁵ Including the letters of James and Jude, brothers of Jesus

³¹⁶ See Bruce (NT) pages 295-299

Now **a Jew named Apollos**, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus.

He was an eloquent man, **competent in the Scriptures**.

He had been instructed in the way of the Lord.

And being fervent in spirit, **he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus**, though he knew only the baptism of John.

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue,

but when **Priscilla and Aquila** heard him,

they **took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.**

(Acts 18:1-2a, 24-26 ESV)

So, over a period of about two decades the **Church of Rome** had grown and prospered, apparently, **without any apostolic guidance**. About five years later, about 57AD, Paul wrote to the **Church of Rome** expressing his desire to visit them and **commending them on their advanced state of knowledge**:

This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.

But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions,

and since I have longed for many years to come to you,

I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain,

and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers,

that **you yourselves are full of goodness,**

filled with all knowledge and **able to instruct one another.**

(Romans 15:22-24, 14 ESV)

When Paul finally approached Rome as a prisoner in about 60AD, **the brethren were eager for his visit**:

Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.

And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium.

And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli.

There **we found brothers** and were **invited to stay with them for seven days.**

And so **we came to Rome.**

And the **brothers** there, when they heard about us,

came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns **to meet us.**

On seeing them, **Paul thanked God and took courage.**

(Acts 28:12-15 ESV)

After two years, **Paul was freed and continued his ministry**, possibly travelling to Spain.

While Paul was free, the **great fire of Rome occurred**. **Nero blamed “Christians”**

and commenced killing thousands.³¹⁷ **Probably most of the original members of the Church of Rome were killed or fled the city.** Nothing more is known about the Church in Rome until **Clement**³¹⁸

writes his letter to Corinth in the late 90'sAD. There is nothing in Clement's letter that conclusively

demonstrated that he was corrupted – **he may well have been a True Christian**. The exact source

and time of the corruption of the Church of Rome is impossible to pin down. It seems to have happened

gradually over time; however, **the New Testament documents provide ample solid evidence**

of various heresies developing almost from the very start throughout the New Testament Church.

9.3.1 Heresy and Schism in the New Testament

The **first heretic** identified in the Bible is **Simon Magus**.³¹⁹ There are many fantastic legends

of his involvement in the Church of Rome, and there may be some kernel of truth in some

of the legends.³²⁰ **Eusebius** summarizes the general opinion of Simon Magus:

“We have understood that **Simon was the author of all heresy.**”

(Church History, 2, 13, 6, in Schaff (**NPNF**), second series volume 1 page 114)

³¹⁷ See Schaff (**History**) volume 1 pages 376-385, Bruce (**NT**) pages 399-402

³¹⁸ See Holmes pages 33-131

³¹⁹ See Acts 8:9-24

³²⁰ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Magus

The **first schism** in the Church was the “**circumcision party**”:

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, **the circumcision party criticized him**, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

(Acts 11:1-3 ESV)

But when Cephas came to Antioch,

I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came **he drew back** and separated himself,

fearing the circumcision party.

(Galatians 2:11-12 ESV)

For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers,

especially those of the circumcision party.

(Titus 1:10 ESV)

The “**circumcision party**” were people who had been “Pharisees” and now were part of the Church, or, **pretended to be part of the Church**. These are the people who had stirred up the trouble in **Southern Galatia**,³²¹ and they also caused issues in **Rome**.³²² **Some of them came to Antioch**, where they were opposed by Paul and Barnabas. This resulted in the Jerusalem conference of 49AD, at which it was determined that Christians DO NOT have to be Jews:

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers,

“**Unless you are circumcised** according to the custom of Moses, **you cannot be saved.**”

And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them,

Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.

When they came to Jerusalem,

they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.

But **some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees** rose up and said,

“**It is necessary to circumcise** them and to order them to keep the [nomos]³²³ of Moses.”³²⁴

(Acts 15:1-2, 4-5 ESV)

Most of Paul's letters contain explicit reference to emerging heresies, for example:³²⁵

But I am afraid that **as the serpent deceived Eve** by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

For **if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus** than the one we proclaimed,

or if you receive **a different spirit** from the one you received,

or if you accept **a different gospel** from the one you accepted,

you put up with it readily enough.

(2 Corinthians 11:3-4 ESV)

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia,

remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons **not to teach any different doctrine**,

nor to devote themselves to **myths** and **endless genealogies**,

which promote **speculations** rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

(1 Timothy 1:3-4 ESV)

Formerly, when you did not know God, **you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.**

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God,

how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world,

whose slaves you want to be once more?

(Galatians 4:8-9 ESV)

³²¹ See section **11.1 False Teachers in Galatia** in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³²² Ibid. section **11.2 Heresy in Rome**

³²³ See footnote **43**

³²⁴ For discussion of the resolution to this issue see section **4.4.1 Galatians** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³²⁵ For more similar scriptures, see the “**Bible Study Notes**”, *The Mystery of Iniquity*, located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/bible-study-notes>

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,
rooted and built up in him and established in the faith,
just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
See to it that no one takes you captive by **philosophy** and **empty deceit**,
according to **human tradition**,
according to the **elemental spirits of the world**,
and not according to Christ.
(Colossians 2:6-8 ESV)

By the time the **Apostle John** wrote his Epistles, heresies had crystalized into identifiable forms.

John looks to the end-time and coins the title, "**antichrist**",

for the individual called by the **Apostle Paul**, "**the man of lawlessness**".

John then goes on to use this title to identify **the attitude of the persons who were spreading heresy**:

Now **concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**

and our being gathered together to him,
we ask you, brothers, **not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed**,
either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us,
to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

Let no one deceive you in any way.

For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first,
and **the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction,
who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship,
so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, **proclaiming himself to be God**.
(2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 ESV)

Children, **it is the last hour**, and **as you have heard that antichrist is coming**,
so **now many antichrists have come**.

Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

They went out from us, but they were not of us;
for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.
But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

Who is the liar but **he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?**

This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.
(1 John 2:18-19, 22 ESV)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit,
but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,
for **many false prophets have gone out into the world**.

By this you know the Spirit of God:

every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,
and **every spirit that does not confess Jesus** is not from God.

This is the spirit of the antichrist,
which you heard was coming and **now is in the world already**.

(1 John 4:1-3 ESV see also 2 John 7)

When **Jesus delivered his final messages to the New Testament Church**,

as reported by the **Apostle John** in the **Book of Revelation**, **several instance of heresies are identified**:

I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance,
and how you cannot bear with those who are evil,
but have tested **those who call themselves apostles and are not**,
and found them to be false.

I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)
and the slander of **those who say that they are Jews and are not**,
but are a synagogue of Satan.

But I have a few things against you:

you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam,³²⁶
who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel,
so that they might **eat food sacrificed to idols** and **practice sexual immorality**.

So also **you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans**.

³²⁶ See the discussion of the "teaching of Bil'am" in section **3.1.2.3 The Way of the World** in the paper "**Third Pillar The Way of God**"
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

But I have this against you, that **you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess** and is **teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality** and to **eat food sacrificed to idols**. I gave her time to repent, but **she refuses to repent** of her sexual immorality. (Revelation 2:2, 9, 14-15, 20-21 ESV)

Almost from the very inception of the New Testament Church, Satan made attempts to corrupt the Church. **Satan found an ample tool in the hatred of the Jews towards Christianity.** After the destruction of the Temple in 70AD, **antisemitism increased in the Roman Empire,** and the Visible Church, in particular the Church of Rome, became more and more **hostile to any association with Judaism.**

9.3.2 Antisemitism

Judea's status as a **Temple State**³²⁷ within the Roman Empire was NOT unique. What was unique was the religion of the Jews. The **Jews**, then as now, paid lip service to the Bible but **based their practice on their own traditions.** They nevertheless were **adamant against idolatry.** Idolatry is the foundation of all pagan religions. **Idolatry was at the heart of the Roman Empire.**

Through the service to **Julias Caesar**, of **Antipater**, father of Herod "the great", the Jews gained great privilege within the Roman Empire.³²⁸ **Herod** continued the policy of loyalty to Rome and continued to be granted privilege from Rome.³²⁹ Judea was surrounded by pagan, idolatrous, neighbours.³³⁰ There was even penetration of "**Hellenism**" into Jewish areas.³³¹ This led to **official opposition of the Jews to all things "Hellenistic"**³³² – the cultural basis of the pagan, idolatrous, Roman Empire. **These tensions naturally led to growing "antisemitism" within the Roman Empire.**

Twice Jews were banished from Rome: under **Tiberius** in about 27AD then under **Claudius** in 49AD.³³³ Antisemitism came to a head with the Jewish wars of 66AD and 132AD.³³⁴ In the early years, Christians had used their association with Judaism to their advantage, due to the privileges provided to the Jews. For example, in Corinth, **Gallio**, the proconsul, **refused to examine Paul:**

But when **Gallio was proconsul of Achaia,**
the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying,
"This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the [nomos]."³³⁵

But when **Paul was about to open his mouth,**
Gallio said to the Jews,
"If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews,
I would have reason to accept your complaint.
But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own [nomos],
see to it yourselves.
I refuse to be a judge of these things."

(Acts 18:12-15 ESV)

As antisemitism increased, **the Church withdrew more and more from association with Judaism.** Conversely, **the Jews actively persecuted Christianity.** Towards the end of the First Century, the Jews took steps to exclude Christians from the synagogue.

At that time the **Twelfth Benediction** of the Shemoneh Esreh read:

For the **apostates** let there be no hope,
and the kingdom of arrogance do Thou speedily uproot in our day;
and let the **Nazarenes** and **heretics** (minim) perish as in a moment;

³²⁷ See Bruce (NT) page 19

³²⁸ See Schürer first division volume 1 pages 376-390

³²⁹ See Schürer first division volume 1 pages 426-429, 451-454

³³⁰ See Schürer second division volume 1 pages 11-29

³³¹ See Schürer second division volume 1 pages 29-51

³³² See Schürer second division volume 1 pages 51-56

³³³ See Bruce (NT) pages 295-299

³³⁴ See Bacchiocchi pages 165-170

³³⁵ See footnote 43

let them be blotted out of the book of life and not be enrolled with the righteous.
Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.
(Bruce (NT) page 386 see also Barrett pages 166-167, Schürer second division volume 2 pages 85-88)

This **separation of Christianity from Judaism** set the stage for “Christianity”, led by the **church of Rome**, to begin to introduce **innovations which are contradictory to the teaching of the Bible**.

This hatred between “Jews” and “Christians” was the work of Satan the Devil.

We are at war – Satan the Devil wants **death for human beings**, but more importantly, he wants to **compromise True Christians** to miss out on eternal life:

For **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood**,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
(Ephesians 6:12 ESV)

Since the Graden of Eden, Satan has done, and will continue to do, **everything in his power to thwart the Plan of God**, to cause compromise and death. The corruption of visible “Christianity” was a ploy of Satan – he could NOT stop the spread of the Gospel, so he endorsed it and corrupted it. Today billions of people are deceived into thinking they are worshipping Jesus Christ and God the Father, but, in fact, **the whole basis of their worship is lies and corruption**. The mainstream of Christianity today pays lip service to the Bible while in fact basing their practice on tradition.

9.3.3 The Establishment of Tradition

The book written by **Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday***, “A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity”, does an excellent job of **analyzing the forces at play at the close of the First Century and through the Second Century by which the church of Rome was able to gain primacy**³³⁶ and force the innovations which so thoroughly corrupted the New Testament Church. Bacchiocchi suggests that even before the destruction of the original Church of Rome by Nero, the composition of the Church was predominantly Gentile.³³⁷ Due to increasing hostility between Jews and Christians, after the death of Nero, as the Church of Rome regrouped, there would have been even fewer Jewish converts. Bacchiocchi documents the **increasing hostility towards Jews** culminating in the war of 132AD.³³⁸ Bacchiocchi then goes on to describe how **this hostility caused the church of Rome to reject and reproach anything they considered “Jewish”**,³³⁹ hence, the transference of worship to the pagan day of “sun worship” – Sunday.³⁴⁰

The seventh-day Sabbath, as instituted by God at the time of Creation, is the cornerstone of the **Way of God**.³⁴¹ **To live by the Way of God, requires keeping the Sabbath**. To understand the **Nature of God** and the **Plan of God**, requires keeping the Sabbath. **By rejecting the Sabbath**, the Church of God in Rome transformed itself into **the church of Satan the Devil**.

The agency of all the evil to be found in this world since that time. All of the other innovations of the Church of Rome followed naturally, as inspired by Satan the Devil. The church of Rome is the **“great prostitute”, the religious motivator of the end-time beast power**,³⁴² to be destroyed by Jesus Christ at the Second Advent:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me,
“Come, I will show you **the judgment of the great prostitute** who is seated on many waters,
with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality,
and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority,
and the earth was made bright with his glory.
And he called out with a mighty voice,

³³⁶ See Bacchiocchi pages 184-187

³³⁷ See Bacchiocchi pages 164-166

³³⁸ See Bacchiocchi pages 166-173

³³⁹ See Bacchiocchi page 173-180, 215-228

³⁴⁰ See Bacchiocchi page 239-249

³⁴¹ See section 8. *When to Worship – the Sabbath* in the paper “True Worship of the True God” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁴² See section 12.3 *The Little Horn of Daniel*

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!

She has become a dwelling place for demons,
a haunt for every unclean spirit,
a haunt for every unclean bird,
a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

For **all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality,**
and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her,
and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.”

(Revelation 17:1-2, 18:1-3 ESV)

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, **a white horse!**

The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.
His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems,
and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.
He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood,
and the name by which he is called is **The Word of God.**

And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.
From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations,
and he will rule them with a rod of iron.
He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

And I saw **the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies**
gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

And **the beast** was captured,
and with it the **false prophet** who in its presence had done the signs
by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image.
These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

And **the rest were slain** by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse,
and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

(Revelation 19:11-15, 19-21 ESV)

Once traditions become part of a culture, they can be very difficult to break away from.

Under the sway of Satan the Devil, the church of Rome went down a path of trusting its own innovations, rather than adhering to the actual teaching of the Bible. From the early years of the Second Century, the church of Rome more and more tried to impose its will on others. To this day, mainstream “Christianity” adheres to the innovations, the traditions, of the church of Rome.

9.3.4 The Years of Confusion

From the middle of the Second Century until the Council of Nicaea in 325AD, there is much confusion. The church in the West seems to have more or less uniformly followed Rome. In the East, it appears that there was more adherence to the actual teaching of the Bible. The best example of this is the, so called, **“Quartodeciman Controversy”**. One of the biggest lies promulgated by the church of Rome is the **“Good Friday - Easter Sunday”** tradition. It is clear from the Gospel accounts that the Resurrection occurred late Sabbath afternoon three days and three nights after Jesus’ death which occurred late **“Wednesday”** afternoon, Nisan 14.³⁴³

The church of Rome promoted **“Easter”** on a fixed **“Sunday”**; whereas, **the teaching of the Bible is to keep Passover on the evening of the 14th of Nisan,** that is, the evening as the sunsets on the 13th of Nisan and the 14th begins. This is when Jesus ate the last supper with the Apostles. This was the last official observance of the Old Testament Passover. **After that meal, Jesus inaugurated the New Covenant** instituting the **New Testament Passover** with the new symbols of **foot-washing, broken unleavened bread,** and **wine,** to be **commemorated once a year, on Passover, Nisan 14, as a memorial of the death of Jesus Christ.** There is NO command, or even a suggestion, in the New Testament to commemorate the Resurrection.

³⁴³ See the chronological chart **“Jesus’ Last Ten Days”** located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>
Tuesday, April 21, 2026

The lies of the church of Rome, include the celebration of the Resurrection on a Sunday.

The death of Christ is ignored, even though Jesus explicitly said to observe it:

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying,

“This is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Luke 22:19 ESV)

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you,
that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,
and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said,

“This is my body, which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying,

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, **in remembrance of me.”**

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,

you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV)

An additional lie of the church of Rome is that **two of the symbols of the New Testament Passover are corrupted into a weekly observance**, and the third symbol is ignored. In typical and growing arrogance and belligerence, the church of Rome proceeded to try to force its lies on all “Christians”.

In the early 150’s AD **Polycarp**, “bishop” of Smyrna went to Rome to discuss the issue with **Anicetus**.³⁴⁴ Polycarp was martyred in 155AD at the age of 86, to make his birth in 69AD – his life clearly overlapped the life of the Apostle John. He was personally acquainted with the **Apostles John and Philip** and perhaps others.³⁴⁵ **Polycarp was adamant to keep the Passover according to Biblical teaching.** He and Anicetus agreed to disagree.

Around 190AD, **Victor of Rome** attempted to force the tradition of Rome onto all “Christians”.

Polycrates, “bishop” of Ephesus, a pupil of Polycarp, adamantly opposed him,

Eusebius has preserved the letter of Polycrates to Victor:

We observe the exact day; neither adding nor taking away.

For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the Lord’s coming. ...

Among these **Phillip**, one of the twelve apostles ...

and, moreover, **John** who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined on the bosom of the Lord ...

He fell asleep in Ephesus.

And **Polycarp** in Smyrna , who was both a bishop and martyr; ...

All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the Gospel,

deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. ...

I, therefore, brethren, ... have met with brethren throughout the world,

and have gone through every Holy Scripture, am not affrighted by terrifying words.

For those greater than I have said,

‘We ought to obey God rather than man’. (citing Acts 5:29)

(Eusebius Church History, 5, 24, 2-7, in Schaff (**NPNF**), second series volume 1 page 242

Upon receiving the letter, **Victor demonstrated the true nature of his office and the power behind it, the power of Satan the Devil**, by attempting to excommunicate all who would not comply with him:

Thereupon Victor ... immediately attempted to cut off all the parishes of Asia,

with the churches that agreed with them, ...

and he wrote letters and declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicated.

(Eusebius Church History 5, 24, 9, in Schaff (**NPNF**), second series volume 1 page 242

During this period of confusion, **Satan’s attack on the Plan of God was also directed by the Roman government**. Once the Roman government clearly recognize Christianity

as distinct from Judaism, it was branded as illegal and Christians were liable to capital punishment.

The state religion of the Roman Empire was integral to their concept of government.

Because Christianity inherently refused to acknowledge pagan deities, it was considered anathema.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ See Schaff (**History**) volume 2 page 213

³⁴⁵ See Schaff (**History**) volume 2 pages 51-52, 213; Eusebius Church History, 5, 24, 2-4, in Schaff (**NPNF**), second series volume 1 page 242

³⁴⁶ See Schaff (**History**) volume 2 pages 40-44

The confusion during this **period of martyrdom** arises because **many of those who died had clearly embraced the corrupted teachings of the church of Rome**, and, therefore, were **NOT in fact True Christians**.³⁴⁷ When these people come up in the **Second Resurrection**, their suffering will certainly be to their credit, and they will no doubt quickly accept the truth when they are taught. However, there is no doubt that **many True Christians also suffered martyrdom – they will participate in the First Resurrection**.

The state of confusion lasted until the Council of **Nicaea in 325AD** when Constantine made “Christianity”, as defined the church of Rome, the official religion of the empire.

9.3.5 Carte Blanche to the Church of Satan

With the **Council of Nicaea**, in 325AD, the church of Rome had the full backing of the government to enforce its teachings. **Anyone who opposed the teaching of the church of Rome was banded a “heretic”**. All “heretics” were subjected to persecution and death – **the agenda of Satan the Devil**. **Clearly all True Christians had to now operate “under ground”**.

The killings inflicted by the persecutions of the “pagan” government of Rome, would be palled into insignificance by the killings of the church of Rome.

Tracing the **existence of True Christians** is virtually impossible for at least the next thousand years. **Clearly God maintained a remnant**, a “little flock”,³⁴⁸ to carry the truth through these dark years. To find any echoes of the existence of True Christians, it is necessary to **“look in the shadows”**, at the groups and individuals labelled as **“heretics”** by the church of Satan. Given the ambiguities, **it is impossible to be sure about the identity of True Christians**, but **Jesus Christ**, being the **“Good Shepherd”**, has always, and will always, care for his flock:

I am the good shepherd.

I know my own and my own know me,

just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;

and I lay down my life for the sheep.

(John 10:14-15 ESV)

During this period, the church of Rome became more and more arrogant and more and more brutal. It is impossible to know how many True Christians were killed, but their names remain written in the **Book of Life!**³⁴⁹

9.3.6 Atrocities of the Church of Satan

The satanic brutality of the “popes” and their “inquisitors” is thoroughly documented in **Foxe’s Book of Martyrs**.³⁵⁰ Foxe describes many sad killings of innocent people over nothing more than their opposition to the vile teachings of the church of Rome. Some examples from Foxe’s book are now discussed – the book, and the extensions to it, contain many dozens more.

According to Foxe,³⁵¹ the group that became known as the **Waldenses** or **Waldensians** had its origin in about 1000AD. **Peter Waldo** became associated with them about 1150AD; hence, the name that has come down to us. They flourished in the area we call Sothern France, around Lyons. Waldo’s preaching was very successful in weaning people way from the lies of church of Rome. The local bishop and the pope, **Alexander III** (1159-1181), declared him and all that followed him excommunicated and to be exterminated. The **King of France, Philip**, sent in troops and killed many. Some Waldenses escaped to Spain, but the persecution there became even more intense. The persecution of the Waldenses continued unabated for several hundred years – thousands were burned, frozen in the mountains, suffocated in caves, and hacked to pieces by swords.

³⁴⁷ See summary of martyrdom in Schaff (**History**) volume 2 pages 45-80, Gibbon chapter 14, and King (Foxe’s Book of Martyrs)

³⁴⁸ See Luke 12:32

³⁴⁹ See footnote 4

³⁵⁰ See King; and, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foxe%27s_Book_of_Martyrs

³⁵¹ See King pages 39-45

Finally in 1598, **Louis XII**, King of France, **put an end to the killing**, but **NOT with the cooperation of the church of Satan**. Congregations of Waldensians continue to exist today.³⁵²

Concurrent with the Waldensians, in Albi, in what is Southwest France today, a group to be known as the “**Albigensians**” came to exist.³⁵³ **Alexander III** (1159-1181) at the **Council of Lateran** condemned them and declared “holy war” on them. The city of Breziers had a large population of Albigensians, but as many adherents of the church of Rome. **The army of the “pope” showed no mercy**: the city was burned and raised; **60,000 people were slaughtered**. The war continued and several other cities were destroyed.³⁵⁴ Foxe recounts two martyrdoms of Albigensians a late as 1620.³⁵⁵

Foxe attributes the origin of the Spanish Inquisition to **Innocent III** (1198-1216) to deal with Waldensians who had fled to Spain.³⁵⁶ Foxe details the brutality and ruthlessness of the inquisitors.³⁵⁷

The commission given to the inquisitors is Satanic to the core:

The pope gave the inquisitors the most unlimited powers, **as judges representing his person**: they were permitted to excommunicate, or sentence to death, whom they thought proper, upon the slightest information of **heresy**; ... which comprises **all that is spoken or written against any of the articles of the creed, or the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church**. ... There are two things which incur the most severe punishment – to disapprove of an action done by the Inquisition, or disbelieving anything said by an inquisitor.

(King pages 58, 59)

The operations of the “**inquisitors**” was to the letter to **enforce the agenda of Satan the Devil**. Before they killed their victims, the whole purpose of the tortures was to force the victims to “recant”, to **compromise their faith**, to deny their previous beliefs and declare allegiance to the church of Satan. The Wikipedia article, “**Spanish Inquisition**”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Inquisition, contains much background information and statistics on the torture and deaths. The Spanish Inquisition was finally terminated under **Charles IV (1788–1808)**.

10. Emergence of Religious Freedom

Today, at least in Western Civilization, freedom of religion is an assumed right. True Christians are free to teach the truth of the Bible without hinderance. However, the forces of Satan the Devil are only being held in abeyance. **Satan’s leftist elites**, who have hijacked the social and political agenda of Western Civilization, are constantly making moves to suppress the teaching of the Bible.

In their **love of perversion and corruption**, these agents of Satan the Devil would make it illegal to even speak against their disgusting practices – **shades of the Spanish Inquisition**.

The weapons of Satan the Devil are fear, uncertainty, and doubt. **The more confusion Satan can create, the more he can draw people into his pernicious traps:**

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, **for he is a liar and the father of lies**.

(John 8:44 ESV)

For **God is not a God of confusion** but of peace.

(1 Corinthians 14:33a ESV)

³⁵² See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waldensians>

³⁵³ See King pages 45-55

³⁵⁴ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albigensian_Crusade

³⁵⁵ See King pages 54-55

³⁵⁶ See King pages 58-82

³⁵⁷ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albigensian_Crusade

The church of Satan is based on lies. Satan's objective is confusion – he doesn't care what the lies are as long as people are kept from the Truth. **God has given humanity the Truth,** but the majority continue to prefer the lies of Satan the Devil:

I have given them your word,
and the world has hated them because they are not of the world,
just as I am not of the world.
I do not ask that you take them out of the world,
but that you **keep them from the evil one.**
They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
(John 17:14-17 ESV)

When God removes the binders from **Satan the Devil,** Satan **will restore the power of his agents on earth,** and **the Truth will again be officially suppressed.**

The agents of Satan the Devil will again be given the backing of governments to suppress the Truth and kill those who promote the Truth:

And **the great dragon was thrown down,** that ancient serpent, who is called **the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world**—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!
But woe to you, O earth and sea,
for **the devil has come down to you in great wrath,**
because **he knows that his time is short!**
(Revelation 12:9, 12 ESV)

It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence,
and makes the earth and its inhabitants **worship the first beast,**
whose mortal wound³⁵⁸ was healed.
... and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast

it deceives those who dwell on earth,
telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.
And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast,
so that the image of the beast might even speak³⁵⁹
and might **cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.**

It opened its mouth to **utter blasphemies against God,**
blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.
Also it was allowed to **make war on the saints and to conquer them.**
And **authority was given it** over every tribe and people and language and nation,
and **all who dwell on earth will worship it ...**
(Revelation 13:12, 14-15, 6-8a ESV)

The religious freedom we enjoy today was long in coming. The church of Rome maintained a tight grip on Western Civilization until the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation.

10.1 True Worshipers through the Middle Ages

From our perspective it is impossible to positively identify any True Christians through the Middle Ages. There are no extant documents that were actually written by groups like the **Waldensians**³⁶⁰ or the **Albigensians** describing their beliefs. We have no way to know what they actually believed. However, from what their enemies said about them, it is clear that they had some knowledge of some aspects of the Truth among these groups. It is almost certain that among these groups God did preserve some True Christians – maybe NOT the mainstream of the groups, but likely smaller groups or individuals around the edges. **The most recognizable contribution of the Waldensian's is the Bible translation produced by them in their vernacular language.** Copies of the Waldensian Bible translation still exist.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Could this represent the current "binding of Satan agents"?

³⁵⁹ Could this be an AI driven holographic image?

³⁶⁰ A Waldensian poem, "**La nobla leycon**", does continue to exist, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_nobla_leycon

³⁶¹ See Schaff (**History**) volume 5 pages 495, 506; see also <https://www.djspeckhals.com/posts/2022-03-01-journey-into-a-waldensian-bible/>

Throughout the Middle Ages, **the church of Rome became obviously more and more corrupt.** Thinking people could NOT help but to take notice.³⁶² Schaff (**History**) in volume 6 chapter 4 discusses a movement fuelled by the corruption of the church of Rome – **German Mysticism**. The movement managed to avoid being declared “heretical”.³⁶³ It was active throughout the 13th and 14th Centuries: The movement arose like a root out of dry ground at a time of great corruption and distraction in the Church. ... Its chief centers were Strassburg and Cologne; ... **the Church seemed to be hopelessly undermined with formalism, clerical corruption and hierarchical arrogance and worldliness.** ...

The mystics along the Rhine formed groups which, however, were **not bound together by any formal organization.** ... Without disparaging the sacraments or disputing the authority of the Church, the German mystics sought a better way. ... By preaching, by writing and circulating devotional works, and especially by their own examples, they made known the secret and the inner peace of life. ... The word love figures prominently in their writings. (Schaff (**History**) volume 6 page 237-239, 242)

Some documents from these groups have survived – many sermons and some books. The two most notable books are “**The German Theology**”³⁶⁴ and “**The Imitation of Christ**”.³⁶⁵ It is beyond the scope of this paper to summarize or analyze these books. The significance of these books is that despite the dominance, power, and brutality, of the church of Rome, there were groups and individuals who opposed the church of Rome and survived. **It is very likely that there were True Christians among these groups.**

John Wycliff (died 1384) was one of the most prominent “anti-papists” of the Middle Ages: ... in one of his tracts, he styles the **bishop of Rome**, “the **anti-Christ**, the proud, worldly priest of Rome, and the most cursed of clippers and cut-purses.” (Schaff (**History**) volume 6 page 316)

Wycliff, like the reformers who came after him, was appalled the corruption of the church of Rome, the papacy, the hierarchy, and all their representatives. **Wycliff challenged the church of Rome on many points**, and he was NOT without support in England:

Pope Gregory XI, himself took notice of the offender in a document condemning 19 sentences from his writings as erroneous and dangerous to Church and state. (Schaff (**History**) volume 6 page 317)

At **Oxford**, the **masters of theology pronounced the nineteen condemned propositions true** ... (Schaff (**History**) volume 6 page 318)

True to the satanic nature of the church of Rome and its agents, when opportunity arose, after Wycliff’s death, his writings were suppressed and indignities were perpetrated on his buried bones:

They burnt his bone to ashes and cast them into the Swift ... Thus this brook has carried the ashes to the Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean.

And thus **the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine**, which is now **dispersed the whole world over.** (Schaff (**History**) volume 6 page 325)

Wycliff’s main contribution to the advance of freedom and knowledge was the **translation of the Bible into the English language**. His translation was from the **Latan Vulgate** into contemporary English. The church of Rome, in their satanic effort to suppress the truth, had officially “**forbidden the use of the Bible to laymen**” at the Council of Toulouse in 1229.³⁶⁶

³⁶² See Schaff (**History**) volume 6 chapters 1, 2, and 3

³⁶³ Some individuals associated within the movement were declared “heretics” (see Schaff (**History**) volume 6 pages 343-346); but, likely because the movement was loosely organized, the movement itself avoided attention.

³⁶⁴ S. Winkworth, translator, “Theologica Germanica”, Scriptoria Books, Mesa, Arizona, 2010

³⁶⁵ P. Northcutt, translator, “The Imitation of Christ”, modernsaints.com, 2023

³⁶⁶ See Schaff (**History**) volume 6 page 341, see also page 344

Wycliff's greatest failing, and again the failing of reformers who came after him, was that he, and they, **did NOT see to the depths of the lies of the church of Rome**. He saw the **corruption**.

He saw the **satanic demeanor** of the papacy. He saw the **arrogance** in the self aggrandizing of the church of Rome. But he, and the reformers to follow all adhered to

the most pernicious lies of the church of Rome: Sunday worship, Good Friday-Easter Sunday, the trinity,³⁶⁷ pagan holidays, infant baptism,³⁶⁸ the immortal soul,³⁶⁹ heaven-hell-purgatory.

10.2 The Protestant Reformation

The Book of Revelation is clear and specific of God's description of the church of Rome and the "churches" which sprang from her in "protest", the mainstream "**Protestant Churches**":

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me,
"Come, I will show you **the judgment of the great prostitute** who is seated on many waters,
with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality,
and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk."

And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness,
and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names,
and it had seven heads and ten horns.

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls,
holding in her hand **a golden cup full of abominations** and the impurities of her sexual immorality.

And on her forehead was written a name of mystery:
"Babylon the great, **mother of prostitutes** and of earth's abominations."

And I saw the woman, **drunk with the blood of the saints**, the **blood of the martyrs of Jesus**.
(Revelation 17:1-6a ESV)

In God's eyes the "Protestant Churches" are simply the "daughter prostitutes" of the "great prostitute", because they continue to adhere to the foundational lies of the church of Rome: Sunday worship, Good Friday-Easter Sunday, the trinity, pagan holidays, infant baptism, the immortal soul, heaven-hell-purgatory. The Protestant Reformation only succeeded in clearing up administrative and organizational problems of the church of Rome. The fundamental lies of the church of Rome were taken over intact – **the only exception being the overt worship of idols**.

A case in point is the **Anabaptist Controversy**.³⁷⁰ The Anabaptists rightly recognized that the Bible teaches only baptism of adults upon repentance. **Infant baptism is an vile innovation of the church of Rome**. Being not really in tune with the teaching of the Bible, the reformers, notably **Luther and Zwingli, opposed the Anabaptists**:

Roman Catholics and Protestants alike persecuted the Anabaptists,
resorting to torture and execution in attempts to curb the growth of the movement.
The Protestants under Zwingli were the first to persecute the Anabaptists,
with Manz becoming the first Anabaptist martyr in 1527.

On May 20 or 21, 1527, Roman Catholic authorities executed Michael Sattler.
King Ferdinand declared drowning (called the third baptism) "the best antidote to Anabaptism".
The Tudor regime, even the Protestant monarchs (Edward VI of England and Elizabeth I of England),
persecuted Anabaptists as they were deemed too radical and therefore a danger to religious stability.)
(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anabaptism>, section "Persecutions and migrations")

Another case in point is **Calvin's execution of Servetus**.³⁷¹ **Servetus correctly recognized that the doctrine of the trinity to be a lie of the church of Rome**. The reformers, being led by the same spirit as the church of Rome, endorsed the false doctrine. Calvin presided over his trial and execution. Based on the material in Schaff, Servetus does appear to have been incorrect in many of his assessments, but he was correct in condemning the false doctrine of the trinity.

³⁶⁷ See section **1.5 The Holy Spirit** in the paper "First Pillar - The Nature of God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁶⁸ See section **11.3 Christian Baptism and Laying on of Hands**

³⁶⁹ See section **2.1.2 The Nature of Man** in the paper "Second Pillar - The Plan of God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁷⁰ See Schaff (**History**) volume 7 page 606-611

³⁷¹ See Schaff (**History**) volume 8 pages 712-719, 783-786

The fact that there was continued opposition to the lie of the trinity, demonstrates that there was knowledge of the truth extant among some people.

Once **Luther** got himself into a position of power, he **demonstrated himself to be nothing more than a “little pope”**. He arrogantly refused to have anything to do with the Swiss reformers asserting that his reformation was the only valid one.

In 1527, **a controversy arose between Luther and the Swiss reformers**, headed by Zwingli:

Zwingli combatted Luther’s view vigorously, but respectfully ...

Luther appeared ... in a very different tone ...

he derives the Swiss view directly from the inspiration of the Devil. ...

Luther goes on to trace the workings of the Devil from the first corruptions of the gospel by the heretics, popes, and councils, down to ... the Zwinglians ...

He compares the writings of his opponents to venomous adders. ...

Luther ... opposed every alliance with the Zwinglians; ...

He calls them heretics, hypocrites, liars, blasphemers, soul-murderers, sinners unto death, bedeviled all over.

(Schaff (**History**) volume 7 pages 623, 627, 632, 656)

Similarly, when **John Calvin** attained power in Geneva, he turned it into a **“terror state”** that any “inquisitor” would have been proud of:

Calvin succeeded after a fierce struggle in infusing the Church of Geneva with his views on discipline. ...

Dancing, gambling, drunkenness, the frequentation of taverns, profanity, luxury, excess at public entertainment, extravagance and immodesty in dress, licentious or irreligious songs were forbidden, and punished by censure or fine or imprisonment.

Even the number of dishes at meals was regulated. ...

Several women ... were imprisoned for dancing ...

Three men who had laughed during the sermon were imprisoned ...

Three children were punished because they remained outside of church during the sermon ...

A girl was beheaded for striking her parents ...

more than twenty men and women were burnt for witchcraft ...

During the years 1558 and 1559 the cases of various punishments for all sorts of offenses amounted to 414 – **a very large proportion for a population of 20,000.**

(Schaff (**History**) volume 8 pages 489-493)

Despite their failings, **the reformers did introduce into Western Civilization an environment where study of the Bible could be pursued without the heavy-handed regulation by the church of Rome.** All of the reformers endorsed the primacy of Scripture over tradition and rejected the claims to authority of the “papacy”. It was in this environment that **Erasmus of Rotterdam** thrived.³⁷² His many works provided much food-for-thought for the reformers, but he never officially joined the reform movement. His most notable contribution was his various printed editions of the **Greek New Testament.** For the basis of his text, Erasmus used certain manuscripts from the University Library at Basel. These manuscripts were derived from the textual tradition created by the scribes of Constatine. Erasmus’ Greek New Testament came to be regarded as the “textus receptus” – it is the text upon which the King James New Testament was based. To this day, some contend it to be the best Greek text available. But, many older instances of manuscripts and papyri are now known. Modern English translations are based on eclectic texts which are based on all available manuscripts and papyri.

The significance of Erasmus Greek New Testament was that it stimulated the study of the Greek language and the use of Greek in the study of the New Testament. This led to interest in the study of the Old Testament in Hebrew, by non-Jews. Jewish scholars had, of course, had maintained the study of Hebrew since the days of the Masoretes.³⁷³ The study of the Old Testament in Hebrew lagged behind the study of the New Testament in Greek. The study of Hebrew by non-Jews is relatively recent.³⁷⁴

³⁷² See Schaff (**History**) volume pages 399-427

³⁷³ See Saenez-Badillos pages 202-263

³⁷⁴ See Saenez-Badillos pages 267-272, Tov pages 19-20

The intellectual environment which fostered the Protestant Reformation also fostered the “Renaissance”:

The movement, to which the name **Renaissance** has been given, was a larger and far more successful effort, **achieving freedom from the intellectual bondage** to which the individual man had been subjected by the theology and hierarchy **of the Church**. (Schaff (**History**) volume 6 page 559)

From the 16th Century until the modern world, the forces of the Reformation and the Renaissance have grown into the **intellectual freedom** which first became evident in the 19th Century. As with everything man has done since the Garden of Eden, there has been “**good and evil**”. The “**evil**” includes **Darwin’s fantasies** which appeared as the “**theory of evolution**”, which has crippled modern education. Even more damaging has been the “**Documentary Hypothesis**”, the so called **Graf-Wellhausen Theory**, which has crippled the minds of thousands of Bible scholars and Bible Students.³⁷⁵ **The “good” has been widespread study of the Bible with increasing support of scholarly tools, such as , histories, commentaries, lexicons, Bible dictionaries, Bible maps, and in recent years computer-based tools.**

The fruit of this intellectual freedom has been borne in the recognition of the true Sabbath, the seventh day of the week as laid out at creation.

10.3 Recognition of the Sabbath

The **Sevent Day Adventist Church** had its beginnings with **William Miller** in 1830:

In the 1830s, a farmer, military veteran, and devout Baptist named **William Miller** continued the fervor of the spiritual “awakening” and sought to deepen his Bible study. Especially after returning from war and being frequently reminded of the fragility of life and the mystery of beyond, he **focused on studying prophecy** in Daniel and Revelation. He eventually concluded **Christ’s Second Coming would be a literal event** rather than a figurative or spiritual event, which had been the popular reasoning at the time. (article: **Laying the Groundwork for Adventism: The “Millerites” and the Second Coming**, located at <https://adventist.org/identity/history>)

As have many other people, **Miller become convinced that he had determined when Christ would return**. When his prediction failed, his followers, called “Millerites”, were greatly disappointed, as many others have been. Some continued to study the Bible and came upon **a far more valuable truth** than projections of when the Second Advent would occur:

The seventh day, Saturday, is God’s Sabbath.

The Fourth Commandment’s instruction to celebrate and keep it remains literal to this day (along with the rest of the Ten Commandments). (Loc. cit.)

The subsequent history of the Seventh Day Adventist Church is detailed on their website:

<https://adventist.org/>

The Sabbath is the cornerstone of understanding the Plan of God:³⁷⁶

- The Sabbath was instituted once for all time for all people at the re-creation: Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And **on the seventh day God finished his work** that he had done, and **he rested on the seventh day** from all his work that he had done. So **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy**, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:1-3 ESV)

³⁷⁵ See section 1. *The Documentary Hypothesis* in the paper “The Writings of Moses” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁷⁶ See section 8. *When to Worship – the Sabbath* in the paper “True Worship of the True God” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

- The Sabbath is a memorial of creation:
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,
but the seventh day is a Sabbath to [YHWH] your God.
On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter,
your male [slave],³⁷⁷ or your female [slave],³⁷⁸ or your livestock,
or the sojourner who is within your gates.
For in six days [YHWH] made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them,
and rested on the seventh day.
Therefore [YHWH] blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
(Exodus 20:8-11 ESV)
- The Sabbath is a memorial of freedom from slavery and sin:
Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as [YHWH] your God commanded you.
Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
but the seventh day is a Sabbath to [YHWH] your God.
On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter
or your male [slave] (‘eved) or your female [slave] (‘amah),
or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock,
or the sojourner who is within your gates,
that your male [slave] (‘eved) and your female [slave] (‘amah) may rest as well as you.
You shall remember that you were a slave (‘eved) in the land of Egypt,
and [YHWH] your God brought you out from there
with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.
Therefore [YHWH] your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.
(Deuteronomy 5:12-15 ESV)
- The Sabbaths³⁷⁹ are a sign identifying the people of God, True Worshipers:
And [YHWH] said to Moses,
“You are to speak to the people of Israel and say,
‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths,
for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations,
that you may know that I, [YHWH], sanctify you.
You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you.
Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death.
Whoever does any work on it,
that [person] (nephesh)³⁸⁰ shall be cut off from among his people.
Six days shall work be done,
but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to [YHWH].
Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death.
Therefore the people of Israel³⁸¹ shall keep the Sabbath,
observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever.
It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel
that in six days [YHWH] made the heavens and the earth,
and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”
(Exodus 31:12-17 ESV see also Ezekiel 20:12, 20)
- The Sabbath looks to the Kingdom of God:
Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands,
let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.
For good news came to us just as to them,
but the message they heard did not benefit them,
because they were not united by faith with those who listened.
For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,
“As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest,’” (citing Psalm 95:11)

³⁷⁷ Hebrew עֶבֶד - ‘eved, “male slave”, see Holliday page 262

³⁷⁸ Hebrew אַמָּה - ‘amah, “female slave”, see Holliday page 19

³⁷⁹ Note that the plural explicitly includes “weekly Sabbath”, שַׁבָּת, - shabbath; “feasts”, חַג - hag; and, “appointed times”, מוֹעֵד - mo’ed; see Leviticus chapter 23.

³⁸⁰ See footnote 6

³⁸¹ Note that the New Testament designates True Christians as the “Israel of God”; see Galatians 6:16, Ephesians 2:12.

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.
For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way:

“And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” (citing Genesis 2:3)

And again in this passage he said,

“They shall not enter my rest.”

Since therefore it remains for some to enter it,
and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience,
again he appoints a certain day,³⁸²

“Today,”

saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” (citing Psalm 95:7b-8a)

For if Joshua had given them rest,

God would not have spoken of another day later on.³⁸³

So then, **there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,**

for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

(Hebrews 4:1-10 ESV)

There are many groups today, like the Seventh Day Adventist, who acknowledge the Sabbath. Sadly there are still many who believe the lie of the church of Rome that the pagan day of sun worship, “Sunday”, is the Sabbath. Despite this and other lies of the church of Rome, **Western Civilization has historically received many “divine blessings” leading to the extraordinary success of Western Civilization.**

10.4 The Judaeo-Christian Ethic

The term “Judeo-Christian Ethic” refers to a loosely defined concept which describes the moral and ethical basis of Western Civilization. Reduced to its simplest form, **the Judeo-Christian Ethic implies the fundamental belief that the Ten Commandments define the best moral and ethical basis for individuals and for nations.** The term apparently was first used in the 19th Century.³⁸⁴ For a good article listing some of the expanded moral and ethical tenets of the Judeo-Christian Ethic see:

<https://www.answerthebible.com/what-is-the-judeo-christian-ethic/>

The following is excerpted from this article:

In summary, the Judeo-Christian ethic

encompasses a comprehensive moral vision for human life and society.

It combines ethical teachings on the dignity of human life, marriage and family, sexuality, social justice, honesty, compassion, and other virtues and principles.

This ethic has profoundly shaped Western civilization
and continues to influence the moral landscape today.

The success of Western Civilization is largely due to the Judeo-Christian Ethic. This is because living by the Ten Commandments automatically brings blessings from God. Violating the Ten Commandments automatically brings curses.³⁸⁵ It is in **Western Civilization** that God has maintained the connected stream of True Worshipers who have carried the **Truth of the Bible** from ancient times until today. **The True Church of God has always existed,** however small in numbers, and however scattered the groups and individuals may have been. Luke and John report **Jesus’ own words promising the continuance of the True Church,** and the author of Hebrews applies to the words of YHWH, **Jesus Christ, to True Worshipers,** that his presence **would be ever with them:**

Fear not, little flock,

for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

I will not leave you as orphans;

I will come to you.

(Luke 12:32, John 14:18 ESV)

³⁸² The emphasis on “today” is to point out that for those called by God, “today” is the day of salvation; see Isaiah 49:8, 2 Corinthians 6:2.

³⁸³ The “rest” from Joshua was a type of the true rest, **the Kingdom of God,** to which the “Sabbath rest” also looks.

³⁸⁴ See section “History” in the article <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judeo-Christian>

³⁸⁵ See **Excursus 3 – The Covenant Blessings and Curses**

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said,
“**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**” (citing Joshua 1:5, see also Deuteronomy 31:6, 8)
So **we can confidently say**,
“The Lord is my helper; (alluding to Psalm 27:1, 118:6)
I will not fear; what can man do to me?” (alluding to Psalm 56:4, 11)
(Hebrews 13:5-6 ESV)

Jesus prophesized his post-resurrection role as High Priest at the right hand of God the Father providing ongoing advocacy and intercession for True Christians. The New Testament authors affirm that Jesus has assumed this role and position:

Again the high priest asked him,
“**Are you the Christ**, the Son of the Blessed?”
And Jesus said,
“I am,
and **you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power**,
and coming with the clouds of heaven.”
(Mark 14:61b-62 ESV // Matthew 26:63b-64, see also Luke 22:67-69)

So then the Lord **Jesus**,
after he had spoken to them,
was taken up into heaven and **sat down at the right hand of God**.
(Mark 16:19 ESV see also Acts 5:31)

But [**Stephen**], full of the Holy Spirit,
gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God,
and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.
And he **said**,
“Behold, **I see** the heavens opened,
and **the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.**”
(Acts 7:55-56 ESV)

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you,
not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience,
through the resurrection of **Jesus Christ**,
who **has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God**,
with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.
(1 Peter 3:21-22 ESV)

Now the point in what we are saying is this:
we have such a high priest,
one who is **seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven** ...
(Hebrews 8:1 ESV see also 1:3, 10:12)

Who is to condemn?
Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised
—who **is at the right hand of God**,
who **indeed is interceding for us**.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?
(Romans 8:34-35 ESV see also Ephesians 1:16-23, Colossians 3:1)

Jesus Christ our High Priest, Advocate, and Intercessor, has maintained down through the centuries, his Church and the individual persons which comprise the Church. Today as we get closer to the Second Advent, the prophesized “work of Elijah”³⁸⁶ is in progress. **The Truth of the Bible is freely available to all persons. God the Father is calling people** at his discretion to become True Christians and participate in this work.

³⁸⁶ See the paper “**The Work of Elijah**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
Tuesday, April 21, 2026 The Soon Coming Kingdom of God

11. True Christians in the Modern World

Only God knows who has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit identifies a True Christian. The **Apostle Paul** defines a True Christian:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,
if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But **if Christ is in you**, although the body is dead because of sin,
the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will **also give life to your mortal bodies**
through his Spirit [which]³⁸⁷ dwells in you.
(Romans 8:9-11 ESV)

How does a person become a “True Christian”? What is the process by which God the Father is willing to give to a person the “indwelling of the Holy Spirit”? To become a True Christian starts

with the **“calling of God”**. Those who respond to the “calling” are led to **repentance** through the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, **God opens the mind of the called person** so that he/she can begin to understand the Bible. Understanding the Bible is essential to understand the commitment required to follow God’s calling. Upon demonstration of repentance and knowledge of the **commitment** required to be a True Christian, the person goes through **rite of Baptism** followed by anointing and **laying on of hands**. At that point, if God the Father accepts the repentance and commitment, the person is begotten by the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The person is now an unborn member of the Family of God, a child of God, a True Christian.

This is the process of salvation. Once a person is a member of the God Family, **a new life begins** – the person has become a Christian, **a candidate for the gift of eternal life**.³⁸⁸ To remain a candidate for the gift of eternal life, a Christian must learn to **live by the Way of God**,³⁸⁹ **conquering sin**, and developing **Godly Character**.³⁹⁰ Those unidentifiable Christians, for whom we have been searching, down through the ages, have gone through this process. **We will meet them in the First Resurrection.** Each and every person who has ever lived will, in due time, be given the opportunity to go through the process of salvation.

11.1 Christian Calling

In explaining the **Parable of the Sower**³⁹¹ to his disciples, Jesus reveals **how the Christian Calling occurs:**

The sower sows the word.

And these are **the ones along the path**, where the word is sown:
when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

And these are **the ones sown on rocky ground**:
the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.
And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while;
then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word,
immediately they fall away.

And others are **the ones sown among thorns**.
They are those who hear the word,
but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches
and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word,
and it proves unfruitful.

³⁸⁷ See footnote 271

³⁸⁸ See section 2.2.4 **Eternal Life** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁸⁹ See the paper “**Pillar Three - The Way of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁹⁰ See the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁹¹ See Mark 4:3-20, Matthew 13:3b-23, Luke 8:5-15

But **those that were sown on the good soil** are the ones who **hear the word and accept it** and **bear fruit**, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. (Mark 4:14-20 ESV see also Matthew 13:18b-23, Luke 8:11-15)

In another parable, Jesus makes clear **the significance of Christian Calling**:

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there **a man who had no wedding garment**.

And he said to him,

'Friend, **how did you get in here without a wedding garment?**'

And he was speechless.

Then the king said to the attendants,

'Bind him hand and foot and **cast him into the outer darkness**.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

For **many are called**, but **few are chosen**.

(Matthew 22:11-14 ESV)

God's calling goes out through the preaching of the Gospel,³⁹² **"the sower sows the word"**.

Many people hear the Gospel, **"many are called"**, and are drawn to it, **"along the path"**, **"on rocky ground"**, **"among thorns"**. None of these is among the **"few that are chosen"**.

What is the difference between these and the ones who **"bear fruit"**?³⁹³ This question gets to the essence of the Calling of God. **How does God decide who he will call?** God unequivocally retains the right to decide who he will call and when he will call any given person:³⁹⁴

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering **for the gospel** by the power of God,

who saved us and **called us to a holy calling**,

not because of our works

but **because of his own purpose and grace**,

which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began ...

(2 Timothy 1:8-9 ESV see also Galatians 1:6)

God is very careful who he calls, because once started on the process of salvation,

there is no turning back:

For **the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable**.

(Romans 11:29 ESV)

Jesus said to him,

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

(Luke 9:62 ESV)

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to **confirm your calling** and election, for if you practice these qualities **you will never fall**.

(2 Peter 1:10 ESV)

As obedient children, **do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance**,

but as **he who called you is holy**, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written,

"You shall be holy, for I am holy." (citing Leviticus 11:44)

(1 Peter 1:14-16 ESV)

God has a purpose for each and every person to whom he extends the Christian Calling:

But when **he who had set me apart** before I was born, and **who called me by his grace**, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, **in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles**, I did not immediately consult with anyone;

(Galatians 1:15-16 ESV see also Romans 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:1)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,

for **those who are called according to his purpose**.

(Romans 8:28 ESV)

³⁹² See 2 Thessalonians 2:14

³⁹³ For further discussion, see section **7. The Fruit of Godly Character** in the paper **"Godly Character"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁹⁴ See the discussion in section **2.3.1 Election** in the paper **"Second Pillar - The Plan of God"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

For **consider your calling**, brothers:
not many of you were wise according to worldly standards,
not many were powerful,
not many were of noble birth.

But God chose what is foolish in the world **to shame the wise**;
God chose what is weak in the world **to shame the strong**;
(1 Corinthians 1:26-27 ESV)

For freedom Christ has set us free;
stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

For you were called to freedom, brothers.
Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh,
but through love **serve one another**.
(Galatians 5:1, 13 ESV)

Only let each person **lead the life that the Lord has assigned** to him,
and **to which God has called him**.

This is my rule in all the churches.
So, brothers, in **whatever condition each was called**, there let him **remain with God**.
(1 Corinthians 7:17, 24 ESV)

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.
And I will raise him up on the last day.
(John 6:44 ESV)

Today the **New Testament Church** comprises small groups and scattered individuals
over many countries of the earth. **God the Father knows who has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**.
The Good Shepherd knows his sheep. Collectively, the New Testament Church comprises
the last remnant of True Worshipers, "**the saints**", whose purpose is to **prepare for the Second Advent**:

So too **at the present time there is a remnant**, chosen by grace.
(Romans 11:5 ESV)

... including you who are **called to belong to Jesus Christ**,
to all those in Rome who are loved by God and **called to be saints**:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
(Romans 1:6-7 ESV see also 9:11)

To the church of God that is in Corinth,
to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called to be saints** together with all those
who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours ...
... so that you are not lacking in any gift, **as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ**,
who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
(1 Corinthians 1:2, 7-9 ESV)

And let the **peace of Christ** rule in your hearts,
to which indeed you were called in one body.
And be thankful.
(Colossians 3:15 ESV)

Fight the good fight of the faith.
Take hold of the **eternal life to which you were called**
and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
(1 Timothy 6:12 ESV see also Ephesians 1:18, 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, Hebrews 9:15, 1 Peter 5:10)

This is the point of **Parable of the Wedding Garment**. Somehow, a person got into the wedding
without having been invited, "**a man who had no wedding garment**". This is like someone
attempting to gain eternal life without going through the process of salvation – which begins
with the **Christian Calling**. In the parable, the person is sent to "**outer darkness**". In reality, if a person
accepts the **Christian Calling**, but **refuses to follow the path of salvation**, his/her fate is much worse,
"in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth":

And **if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life**,³⁹⁵
he was thrown into the lake of fire.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,

when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets
in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.
(Revelation 20:15, Luke 13:28 ESV)

The **Christian Calling** is a very serious matter. The **Truth of God** has been available to humanity in the Bible for thousands of years. **The Gospel is being preached, “the sower sows the word”**. Those who respond, **“many are called”**, must understand the commitment, **“few are chosen”**.

11.2 Christian Repentance

The appropriate response to the Christian Calling is Christian Repentance. The word “repentance” is used glibly in the world without understanding of its true meaning. No person can come freely to God of his/her own accord and declare their own repentance. **Christian Repentance is a gift from God through the Holy Spirit.** The gift is granted only when a person responds positively to the Calling of God. This is made clear by the **speech of Peter** to the Sanhedrin **in the early days of the Jerusalem Church:**

And someone came and told them,

“Look!

The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.”

Then **the captain with the officers went and brought them,**

but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

And when they had brought them, they **set them before the council.**

And the high priest questioned them, saying,

“We strictly charged you not to teach in this name,
yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching,
and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.”

But Peter and the apostles answered,

“We must obey God rather than men.

The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.

God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior,

to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit,
[which]³⁹⁶ God has given to those who obey him.”

(Acts 5:25-32 ESV see also Acts 20:21)

Many years later the **Apostle Paul** is giving final instructions to **Timothy.**

Paul admonishes **“gentleness”** with opponents **in the hope that God will grant repentance:**

And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach,
patiently enduring evil, **correcting his opponents with gentleness.**

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,
and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil,
after being captured by him to do his will.

(2 Timothy 2:24-26 ESV see also Romans 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9)

James, the **brother of Jesus,** affirms that **God’s gifts, including repentance,**

are given for the purpose of accomplishing the **Plan of God** to bring **“many sons to glory”**:³⁹⁷

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,

coming down from the Father of lights,

with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth,

that **we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.**

(James 1:16-18 ESV)

³⁹⁶ See footnote 271

³⁹⁷ See Hebrews 2:10

When God makes the decision to call any person, God is sure that if the person responds, he/she has a chance to attain repentance and become a candidate for the gift of eternal life. Before the call of God, **the life of every human being is of no value**. For each of us, before calling, the sum total of our existence was “**dead works**”. Through the **Prophet Ezekiel**, God expresses that “**repentance from dead works**” results in loathing one’s former self:

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of **repentance from dead works** and of faith toward God ... (Hebrews 6:1 ESV)

Then you will remember your evil ways,
and your deeds that were not good,
and **you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations**.
(Ezekiel 36:31 ESV see also 6:9, 20:43)

As human beings, we are capable of recognizing past misdeeds and feeling “**grief**” over them. This is a level of repentance, but “**godly repentance**” goes much deeper.

Godly repentance leads to a transformation of the innermost being:

As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved,
but because **you were grieved into repenting**.
For you felt a **godly grief**, so that you suffered no loss through us.
For **godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation** without regret,
whereas **worldly grief produces death**.
(2 Corinthians 7:9-10 ESV)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
from whom [whole]³⁹⁸ family in heaven and on earth is named,
that according to the riches of his glory
he may grant you to **be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being**,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love ...
(Ephesians 3:14-17 ESV)

So we do not lose heart.
Though our outer self is wasting away, **our inner self is being renewed day by day**.
(2 Corinthians 4:16 ESV)

Behold, **you delight in truth in the inward being**,
and **you teach me wisdom in the secret heart**.
(Psalm 51:6 ESV)

For I delight in the [nomos]³⁹⁹ of God, in my inner being ...
(Romans 7:22 ESV)

Godly repentance leads to an understanding of the vast gulf that exists between human beings and God. This includes understanding the **enormity of the love of God** to hold out to human beings the potential of joining the God Family in eternity. This is the thesis of the **Book of Job**.⁴⁰⁰ Job was righteous and blameless from a human perspective, but he did NOT see himself in proper relation to God, until the very end of the book.

The best we can do as human beings is worthless compared to God:

But, as it is written,
“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him” (alluding to Isaiah 64:4)

—**these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit**.
For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.
(1 Corinthians 2:9-10 ESV)

Then Job answered [YHWH] and said:
“I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’

³⁹⁸ The Greek is πᾶς - pas, “wholeness (all)”; there is only one Family of God.

³⁹⁹ See footnote 43

⁴⁰⁰ See the paper “**Analysis of the Book of Job**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

‘Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you make it known to me.’

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but **now my eye sees you;**
therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

(Job 42:1-6 ESV)

We have all become like one who is unclean,
and **all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment**.
We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
(Isaiah 64:6 ESV)

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.
In this the love of God was made manifest among us,
that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us
and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.
And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.
Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.
God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

By this is love perfected with us,
so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment,
because as he is so also are we in this world.
(1 John 4:8-10, 13-17 ESV)

Christian Repentance is a lifelong process. Full understanding of the need to purify the inner being
requires a life of living by the **Way of God**. But, as human beings, we can never be perfect.

Sin is inherent in human nature. Daily repentance is required to transform sinning human nature
into Godly Character:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick;
who can understand it?
“**I, [YHWH], search the heart and test the mind**,
to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”
(Jeremiah 17:9-10 ESV)

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another,
and **the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin**.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins,
he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and **his word is not in us**.
(1 John 1:7-10 ESV)

So we do not lose heart.
Though our outer self is wasting away, **our inner self is being renewed day by day**.
(2 Corinthians 4:16 ESV)

When God the Father grants repentance to a called person, and the person comes
to **understand the commitment**, the next step is Baptism and the Laying on of Hands.

11.3 Christian Baptism and Laying on of Hands

John the Baptist set the pattern for Christian Baptism; however, John’s baptism was only preparatory
for the baptism of Jesus Christ:

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** before your face,
who will prepare your way, (alluding to Malachi 3:1)
the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,” (alluding to Isaiah 40:3)

John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness
and proclaiming **a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.**
(Mark 1:1-4 ESV see also Matthew 3:1-6, Luke 3:3-6, Acts 13:24, 19:4)

John was sent as a messenger, “**I send my messenger**”, to foreshadow the life and work of Jesus Christ, “**prepare your way**”. Many of the people that John baptized were, no doubt, among the faithful remnant of True Worshipers discussed in section **8.1 The Remnant Community**. Many of these same people would, no doubt, be among the thousands who quickly were converted following the inception of the New Testament Church, as discussed in section **9.2 Building the New Testament Church**. John’s baptism was for “**repentance for the forgiveness of sins**”. The “**forgiveness of sins**” was in the same sense that animal sacrifices had brought forgiveness, as discussed in section **9. Preparation for the Second Advent**. John’s teaching of “**repentance**” was anticipatory of Christian Repentance to become available through the life and work of Jesus Christ.

The **method of John’s baptism** set the standard for Christian Baptism, **total immersion in water: no other form of baptism is acceptable**. John baptized in the River Jordan because the waster was deep enough to immerse people. When Jesus’ disciples were baptizing, they did the same:

And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him
and were being **baptized by him in the river Jordan**, confessing their sins.
(Mark 1:5 ESV see also Matthew 3:6)

After this **Jesus and his disciples** went into the Judean countryside,
and he remained there with them and was **baptizing**.
John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim,
because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized
(John 3:22-23 ESV see also 4:1-2)

When **Jesus** was baptized, he **was fully immersed**:

And **when Jesus was baptized**, immediately **he went up from the water**,
and behold, the heavens were opened to him,
and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;
and behold, a voice from heaven said,
“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”
(Matthew 3:16-17 ESV see also Mark 1:10)

After the inception of the New Testament Church, when **the Ethiopian eunuch requests baptism**
from Philip, **it is done where there is sufficient water**:

And as they were going along the road **they came to some water**, and the eunuch said,
“See, here is water!
What prevents me from being baptized?”

And he commanded the chariot to stop, and **they both went down into the water**,
Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

And **when they came up out of the water**,
the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.
(Acts 8:36-39 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** explains **the significance and necessity of complete immersion in baptism**:

What shall we say then?
Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?
By no means!

How can we who died to sin still live in it?

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death,
in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,
we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been **united with him in a death like his**,
we shall certainly be **united with him in a resurrection like his.**

We know that **our old self was crucified with him**
in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing,
so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.
For one who has died has been set free from sin.

Now if **we have died with Christ**, we believe that **we will also live with him**.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and **alive to God in Christ Jesus**.
(Romans 6:1-11 ESV)

Analysis:

- Immersion is symbolic of complete burial after death,
“we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death”
- To become a True Christian, is to entirely give up the “sinful” pre-conversion life,
“our old self was crucified with him”, **“how can we who died to sin still live in it”**
- Coming up out of the water is symbolic of participating in the resurrection,
“we too might walk in newness of life”, **“resurrection like his”**
- Acceptance of Jesus’ sacrifice releases a person from the penalty of sin,
“so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin”,
“so you also must consider yourselves dead to sin”
- Jesus’ sacrifice is efficacious to bring life to all who accept it,
“for the death he died he died to sin, once for all”, **“we will also live with him”**
- To participate in the life given by Christ, we must participate in his death through immersion,
“we have died with Christ”, **“united with him in a death like his”**

Paul elsewhere affirms there is only one valid method of baptism:

There is one body and one Spirit—just as **you were called to the one hope** that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, **one baptism**, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
(Ephesians 4:4-6 ESV)

John’s baptism was a baptism of “repentance” to prepare people for the baptism of Christ.

The baptism of Christ embarks a person on a new life, through the Holy Spirit, ultimately leading to eternal life. It is a baptism **“in the name of Jesus Christ”** and **“into Jesus Christ”**:

I baptize you with water for repentance,

but **he who is coming after me is mightier than I**, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

(Matthew 3:11 ESV)

And Peter said to them,

“Repent and be baptized every one of you **in the name of Jesus Christ**

for the forgiveness of your sins,

and **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**.”

(Acts 2:38 ESV see also Acts 10:48)

For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have **put on Christ**.

(Galatians 3:27 ESV)

... having been **buried with him in baptism**,

in which **you were also raised with him** through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

(Colossians 2:12 ESV)

Baptism, which corresponds to this, **now saves you**,⁴⁰¹

not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience,

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God,

with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

(1 Peter 3:21-22 ESV)

⁴⁰¹ At baptism, past sins having been repented of, are “washed away”, saving the person from the death penalty. The process of salvation is just beginning.

Paul asserts that True Christians are “**baptized into Christ**” which means to “**put on Christ**”. This opens up **two metaphors** which describe the **relationship between Christ and True Christians** and the **relationships among True Christians**. The first metaphor is that **the Church is the “body”** of which **Jesus is the “head”**. The second metaphor is that **the Church is the True Temple of God**.

Jesus Christ is the King of kings. As such, his dominion includes all things, except God the Father:

But I want you to understand that **the head of every man is Christ**,
the head of a wife is her husband,
and **the head of Christ is God**.

You heard me say to you,
'I am going away, and I will come to you.'

If you loved me, you would have rejoiced,
because I am going to the Father,
for **the Father is greater than I**.

(1 Corinthians 11:3, John 14:28 ESV see also Colossians 2:9-10, Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:15)

With Christ as the “head”, the metaphor of a “body” follows naturally:

For the husband is the head of the wife
even as **Christ is the head of the church, his body**, and is himself its Savior.

And **he is the head of the body, the church**.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Let no one disqualify you ... and **not holding fast to the Head**,
from whom the whole body,

nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.
(Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18, 2:18a, 19 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** explains the **significance of the metaphor**. As all the components of a human body work together in unity to promote the benefit of the person, **all members of the body of Christ are to work together in unity** to accomplish the **Plan of God**:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world,
but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind**,
that by testing you may **discern what is the will of God**,
what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For as in one body we have many members,
and the members do not all have the same function,
so we, though many, are **one body in Christ**,
and **individually members one of another**.

(Romans 12:1-2, 4-5 ESV)

The concept of the “Church” being a unified “body” leads naturally to the concept of the “Church” as the “Temple of God”. God has always “dwelt” with his people in a “Temple”. **Jesus Christ “dwells” with True Christians now as the “spiritual Temple” of the Church**. The “indwelling” of the Holy Spirit renders True Christians as the Temple of God. At the first Passover during his ministry, in Jerusalem, **Jesus is confronted by the Temple authorities**:

So the Jews said to him,
“What sign do you show us for doing these things?”

Jesus answered them,
“**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**”

The Jews then said,
“It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?”

But **he was speaking about the temple of his body**.
(John 2:18-21 ESV see also Mark 14:58, Matthew 26:61)

As God, Jesus is inherently “Holy”. Christians with the indwelling of the “Holy Spirit” are accounted “holy” by God through faith; hence, as Jesus, as a human, was the “Temple of the Holy Spirit”, so Christians are the “temple of the Holy Spirit”:

Do you not know that **you are God’s temple** and that **God’s Spirit dwells in you**?
If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him.

For **God’s temple is holy**, and **you are that temple**.
(1 Corinthians 3:16-17 ESV see also 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,
but you are fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God**,
built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
in whom the **whole structure**, being joined together,
grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
In him you also are being **built together** into a **dwelling place for God by the Spirit**.
(Ephesians 2:19-22 ESV)

This is the realization of the Plan of God. A Family “dwells together”. God symbolically dwelt with Israel in the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple. God’s dwelling with the Church looks to the First Resurrection, when those persons to whom God the Father grants the gift of eternal life, will become full members of the God Family and inhabit eternity with God the Father and Jesus Christ – **dwelling together as one Family**. A person enters the Family of God through the rite of Baptism. The baptism ceremony also includes “**laying on of hands**” and **anointing with oil**. It is through the “laying on of hands” that the **Holy Spirit is passed to the baptized person**.

The oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit:

Therefore **let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity**,
not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,
and of instruction about [baptism],⁴⁰² **the laying on of hands**,
the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
(Hebrews 6:1-2 ESV)

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God,
they sent to them Peter and John,
who came down and prayed for them **that they might receive the Holy Spirit**,
for [it]⁴⁰³ had not yet fallen on any of them,
but **they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**.
Then **they laid their hands on them** and **they received the Holy Spirit**.
(Acts 8:14-17 ESV see also 9:17, 19:6)

And it is **God who establishes us with you in Christ**, and **has anointed us**,
and who has also put his seal on us and **given us his Spirit** in our hearts as a guarantee.
(2 Corinthians 1:21-22 ESV)

But **you have been anointed by the Holy One**, and you all have knowledge.
I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it,
and because no lie is of the truth.

But **the anointing that you received from him abides in you**,
and you have no need that anyone should teach you.
But as **his anointing teaches you about everything**,
and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.
(1 John 2:20-21, 27 ESV)

With the laying on of hands, a person receives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the process of salvation is underway. **The physical anointing with oil is a type of the true anointing by the Holy Spirit**. All True Christians down through the ages have followed this process of salvation. We cannot identify these people, but **we can pick up the thread in modern times**.

⁴⁰² Greek βαπτισμός - baptisimos, “washing (ceremonial cleansing for ritual purity), **baptism**”; see www.esv.org “Lexical Form”

⁴⁰³ See footnote 271

11.4 Herbert Armstrong and Oregon Church of God

As has been discussed in previous sections of this paper, the Truth of God always been alive and well on this earth. **The attack on Satan’s way will never stop until Satan is defeated** – although for most of the last two thousand years, True Christians have had to operate from the shadows, underground:

And I tell you, you are Peter (small stone),
and on this Rock (large Rock⁴⁰⁴ – Jesus Christ) I will build my church,
and **the gates of [the grave] (hadēs)⁴⁰⁵ shall not prevail against it.**
(Matthew 16:18 ESV)

**Now is the judgment of this world;
now will the ruler of this world be cast out.**
(John 12:31 ESV)

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
(1 Corinthians 15:26 ESV)

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
and **death shall be no more,**
neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore,
for the former things have passed away.
(Revelation 21:4 ESV)

While it is impossible to trace the flow of God’s Truth through history, we can pick up the thread in modern times. It all began about 1925 when God began to call a man named **Herbert W. Armstrong.** Armstrong was originally from Iowa. His parents were Quakers.⁴⁰⁶ By 1925 he had relocated to Portland, Oregon.⁴⁰⁷ In Oregon, **Armstrong’s wife became interested in the Bible and challenged him over the Sabbath.** This caused Armstrong to engage in a detailed study of the Bible. God revealed to him the **Truth of Creation**, in contrast with the lie of evolution; the **Truth of the Sabbath**, in contrast with the lie of Sunday worship; and many other fundamental **Truths of the Bible** in contrast with the lies of “traditional Christianity”.⁴⁰⁸

Soon, Armstrong came into contact with an **“almost unknown little Church of God with its small publishing house in Stanberry, Missouri.”**⁴⁰⁹ This group was found to **“keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”**⁴¹⁰ Armstrong believed he had found a Church of True Worshipers of God.⁴¹¹ Armstrong found a small group of people in Oregon who were affiliated with the Stanberry Church but had been meeting on their own for Bible Study on the Sabbath. He began to work with them.⁴¹² They became known as the **“Oregon Conference of the Church of God”**.⁴¹³ From this simple beginning, a few years later, **Armstrong began to speak on radio** – with considerable success,⁴¹⁴ and a magazine, **“The Plain Truth”**, was started and advertised over the radio.⁴¹⁵ The magazine grew to a worldwide circulation of many millions.

The point of all this is that **down through history God has maintained True Worshipers and some form of the New Testament Church.** The Stanberry Church, no doubt, in its early years had made contact with earlier individuals or groups of True Worshipers. Through the efforts of Herbert Armstrong, God created the **“Radio Church of God”** which became the **“Worldwide Church of God”**, which eventually grew to about 150,000 attendees worldwide. **Herbert W. Armstrong died on January 16, 1986.**⁴¹⁶ Sadly, his work did NOT survive his death. Within ten years of his death,

⁴⁰⁴ See 1 Corinthians 10:4, Romans 9:33, 1 Peter 2:6-8, Isaiah 8:14, 2 Samuel 22:1b-2, Deuteronomy 32:4,15,18

⁴⁰⁵ The Greek word ἄδης - hadēs, is the equivalent of the Hebrew *sh’ol*; *hadēs* should always be translated by “death” or “grave”, or similar; see footnote 51.

⁴⁰⁶ See Armstrong volume 1 page 11

⁴⁰⁷ See Armstrong volume 1 pages 264-285

⁴⁰⁸ See Armstrong volume 1 pages 288-321

⁴⁰⁹ See Armstrong volume 1 page 356

⁴¹⁰ Revelation 12:17a

⁴¹¹ See Armstrong volume 1 pages 356-359

⁴¹² See Armstrong volume 1 pages 367-368

⁴¹³ See Armstrong volume 1 pages 425, plate after page 504

⁴¹⁴ See Armstrong volume 1 pages 529-534

⁴¹⁵ See Armstrong volume 1 pages 537-544

⁴¹⁶ See Armstrong volume 2 page 646

individuals greedy for personal gain, got control of the organization, and forced its breakup, with themselves retaining the material assets. **Today there are many scattered groups whose origins were the Worldwide Church of God.** Most of these groups continue to comprise “True Worshipers” who “**keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**” Sadly, many individuals lost their faith and simply drifted back into Satan’s world.⁴¹⁷

The Truth of God is recorded in the Bible. True Worship of God must be done in accordance with the Bible. **Human innovations have no place in the Worship of God.**

11.5 True Christianity is Bible Based

Jesus Christ is the living Word of God. The Bible is the written Word of God. Jesus Christ, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is the author of **the whole Bible** – NOT just certain sections of the Bible.

The Bible is the Truth of God:

In the beginning was **the Word**,
and **the Word** was with God,
and **the Word** was God.
(John 1:1 ESV)

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse!
The **one sitting on it is called Faithful and True**,
and in righteousness he judges and makes war.
His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems,
and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.
He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood,
and **the name by which he is called is The Word of God.**
(Revelation 19:11-13 ESV)

Sanctify them in the truth; **your word is truth.**

Jesus said to him,
“**I am** the way, and **the truth**, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him,
“If you **abide in my word**, you are truly my disciples,
and **you will know the truth**,
and **the truth will set you free.**”
(John 17:17, 14:6, 8:31-32 ESV)

The goal of the Christian life is to be “**set free**” from the curse of death. The Truth of the Bible is the only way to attain eternal life. **Becoming a True Christian makes a person a candidate for the gift of eternal life.** The Bible contains the detailed specification of the **Way of God**. The Christian life is to learn to live by the **Way of God**. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ has made it possible for human beings to become True Christians. The written Word of God specifies God’s requirements – the **Way of God**. The **living Word of God, Jesus Christ**, our saviour, High Priest, and advocate, **makes it possible**, through the Holy Spirit, for human beings to attain to God’s requirements:

For while we were still weak, at the right time **Christ died for the ungodly.**

For one will scarcely die for a righteous person
—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die
—but God shows his love for us in that **while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Since, therefore, **we have now been justified by his blood**,
much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,
much more, now that we are reconciled, **shall we be saved by his life.**
(Romans 5:6-10 ESV)

Since **then we have a great high priest** who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus, the Son of God, **let us hold fast our confession.**

For we do not have a **high priest** who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but one **who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

⁴¹⁷ For a first-hand account of these events see <https://kubik.org/ground-zero-88/>

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,
that **we may receive mercy and find grace** to help in time of need.
(Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV)

If we **“hold fast our confession”**, retain our candidacy for the gift of eternal life,
learn to live by the **Way of God**, indeed, **“we may receive mercy and find grace”**:

For when **you were slaves of sin**, you were free in regard to righteousness.
But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed?
For **the end of those things is death**.

But now that **you have been set free from sin** and have **become slaves of God**,
the fruit you get **leads to sanctification** and its end, **eternal life**.

For the wages of sin is death,
but **the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**.
(Romans 6:20-23 ESV)

Throughout the Bible, **true worship of God is centered on the Sabbath**.
True Christians must follow this teaching. Keeping the Sabbath is the key to understanding the Bible.

11.5.1 The Sabbath

The most fundamental aspect of living by the Way of God is keeping the Sabbath.⁴¹⁸

God created the Sabbath with “love” by putting his presence into the day making it “holy”.
The Sabbath was created as a blessing for humanity to rest and draw closer to God:

So **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy**,
because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.
(Genesis 2:3 ESV)

And he said to them,
“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.
So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”
(Mark 2:27-28 ESV see also Matthew 12:8, Luke 6:5)

A Psalm.

A Song for the Sabbath.

It is good to give thanks to [YHWH], to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
to declare your [hesed]⁴¹⁹ in the morning, and your faithfulness by night,
to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

For you, [YHWH], have made me glad by your work;
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.
How great are your works, [YHWH]!

Your thoughts are very deep!

The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
They are planted in the house⁴²⁰ **of [YHWH]**; they flourish in the courts of our God.
They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green,
to declare that [YHWH] is upright;
he is my Rock,⁴²¹ and there is no unrighteousness in him.

(Psalm 92:1-5, 12-15 ESV)

The Book of Leviticus is a specification of “holiness”.⁴²² Chapter 19 contains instructions
on **“Christian living”**. YHWH, Jesus Christ, opens the chapter by enjoining “holiness”.

Then he alludes to the two sections of the Ten Commandments in a way that emphasizes
the “family” nature of God’s calling. First, he alludes to the **fifth commandment,**
the cornerstone of happy relationships within a human family; secondly, he alludes to
the **fourth commandment, the cornerstone of a happy relationship with God the Father**:

And [YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying,
“Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them,

⁴¹⁸ See also section **8 When to Worship – the Sabbath** in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**”
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴¹⁹ See footnote **46**

⁴²⁰ The New Testament Church

⁴²¹ Jesus Christ

⁴²² See section **6. Holiness** in the paper “**To Be a Priest**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

You shall be holy, for I, [YHWH] your God, am holy.
Every one of you shall **revere his mother and his father**,
and you shall **keep my Sabbaths**: I am [YHWH] your God. ...”

(Leviticus 19:1-3 ESV)

Again, to the **Prophet Isaiah**, YHWH, Jesus Christ, emphasizes the importance of the Sabbath for **relationships within the Family of God**:

Thus says [YHWH]:

“Keep [justice] (mish^epat),⁴²³ and do righteousness,
for **soon my salvation will come**, and my righteousness be revealed.

Blessed is the man who does this, **and the son** of man who holds it fast,
who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.”

Let not the **foreigner** who has joined himself to [YHWH] say,
“[YHWH] will surely separate me from his people”;

and let not the **eunuch** say,
“Behold, I am a dry tree.”

For thus says [YHWH]:

“**To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths**,
who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant,
I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

And the foreigners who join themselves to [YHWH],
to minister to him, to love the name of [YHWH], and to be his servants,
everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it,
and holds fast my covenant—**these I will bring to my holy mountain**,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”

(Isaiah 56:1-7 ESV)

Jesus Christ holds out the promise of salvation, “soon my salvation will come”,
to those who keep the Sabbath, **“who keeps the Sabbath”**. Salvation is by grace, NOT race, **“foreigner”**,
or position, **“eunuch”**. All who are called and learn to live by the **Way of God**,
“the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths”, **“and the foreigners”**, **“everyone who keeps the Sabbath”**,
are candidates for the gift of eternal life, **“these I will bring to my holy mountain”**:

If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
and **call the Sabbath a delight** and **the holy day of [YHWH] honorable**;
if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;
then you shall take delight in [YHWH],
and **I will make you ride on the heights of the earth**;
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of [YHWH] has spoken.
(Isaiah 58:13-14 ESV)

The Sabbath is a weekly memorial of creation, and it looks forward to the “true rest”
– **the Kingdom of God**. The annual cycle of “Holy Days” fills out the details of the **Plan of God**:

11.5.2 The Holy Days

The Holy Days are the other “Sabbaths”. For a more complete discussion of the “Holy Days”,
see section **9. When to Worship – Feasts and Appointed Times**
in the paper **“True Worship of the True God”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The yearly Holy Day cycle is a living reminder of the Plan of God:

- **The first three Holy Days represent things that are now in progress ...**
- **Passover** is the pivotal event of the **Plan of God**: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ makes everything else possible

See: Exodus 12:1-13, 21-27; Leviticus 23:4-5; Numbers 9:1-14, 28:16;

⁴²³ See footnote **48**
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Deuteronomy 16:1-3a, 5-7; Matthew 26:17-19, 26-29; Mark 14:12-16, 22-25;
Luke 2:41-47, 22:7-20; John 2:13, 23, 4:45, 5:1,⁴²⁴ 6:4, 11:56, 12:1, 13:1-19;
1 Corinthians 11:23-29;

- The **Feast of Unleavened Bread** teaches the essence of living by the **Way of God**:
leaven represents sin; the objective of living by the Way of God is to overcome sin
and replace sinning human nature by Godly Character
See: Exodus 12:14-20, 13:3-10, 23:15, 34:18; Leviticus 23:6-14; Numbers 28:17-25;
Deuteronomy 16:3b-4, 8; Acts 20:5-6; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
- **Pentecost, Feast of Harvest, Feast of Weeks**, is a memorial of the beginning
of the New Testament Church, the making available of the Holy Spirit to those called by God
– the Holy Spirit makes it possible to live by the Way of God
See: Exodus 23:16a, 34:22a; Leviticus 23:15-22; Numbers 28:26-31; Deuteronomy 16:9-12;
Acts 2:1-4, 20:16; 1 Corinthians 16:8
- **The last four Holy Days look to things are yet to come ...**
- The **Day of Trumpets** looks to the Day of YHWH and the Second Advent
See: Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 29:1-6; Matthew 24:30-31; Mark 14:26-27;
Luke 17:24, 21:27-28 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17;
Revelation 11:15, 19:11-16
- The **Day of Atonement** looks to the day when Satan the Devil will be constrained
so that he can no longer influence human beings
See: Leviticus chapter 16, 23:26-32; Numbers 29:7-11; Acts 27:9; Revelation 20:1-3
- The **Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Ingathering, Feast of Booths**, looks to the wonderful
World Tomorrow when the Kingdom of God will be established to govern the entire planet
under Jesus Christ as the King of kings
See: Exodus 23:16b, 34:22b; Leviticus 23:33-36a, 39-43; Numbers 29:12-34;
Deuteronomy 16:13-15; John 7:2-14
- The **Eighth Day, Last Great Day**, looks to the time of the Second Resurrection
when each and every human being who has ever lived will be restored to physical life
and be given the opportunity to learn the Way of God
and become a candidate for the gift of eternal life
See: Leviticus 23:36b; Numbers 29:35-38; John 7:37⁴²⁵

By living through these Holy Days each year, True Worshipers of God come to an ever-deepening
appreciation of the **beauty of the Plan of God** and of the **depth of love** which God the Father
and Jesus Christ have for the human beings which they created. When the Nation of Ancient Israel
broke the Sinai Covenant, just days after they had agreed it, and set up golden calf to worship,⁴²⁶
the nation became “unclean”, and God could have nothing do with it:

[YHWH] said to Moses,

“Depart; go up from here,
you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt,
to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying,
‘To your offspring I will give it.’

**I will send an angel before you ... but I will not go up among you,
lest I consume you** on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.

Say to the people of Israel,

‘You are a stiff-necked people;

if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you.”

(Exodus 33:1-2a, 3b, 5aβ ESV)

⁴²⁴ This may have been another Holy Day, but it was most likely Passover.

⁴²⁵ This could be either the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles or the Last Great Day.

⁴²⁶ See Exodus 32:1-24

Moses successfully intervened⁴²⁷ God provided the Nation with a means to atone for their sin and be again accounted “holy” by God so that a relationship was possible. The “means” was **the sacrificial system** laid out in the **Book of Leviticus** chapters 1 through 7.

Chapter 9 of the Book of Leviticus describe the **purification ceremony** by which the nation was cleansed. In the meantime, Moses had gone back up Mount Sinai to be with God. YHWH graced him with a personal theophany.⁴²⁸ Subsequent to the theophany, God made a far-reaching promise to Moses, and through him, the promise extends to all True Worshipers down through history, and, in fact, to all humanity:

God freely committed himself to the Covenant of Performance:⁴²⁹

And he said,

“Behold, **I am [cutting] (karath)**⁴³⁰ **a covenant.**

Before all your people **I will do marvels,**
such as have not been created **in all the earth** or in any nation.

And **all the people** among whom you are **shall see the work of [YHWH],**
for it is an awesome thing that **I will do with you.**

(Exodus 34:10 ESV)

By this covenant, **God unequivocally committed to accomplish his Plan, “I will do marvels”, “in all the earth”.** God committed to accomplish his Plan using the Nation of Israel, **“I will do with you”.** This is **a brand-new covenant, “I am cutting a covenant”,** unrelated to the Sinai Covenant and all other covenants. God promises that all humanity, **“all the people”,** will witness the accomplishment of the **Plan of God, “shall see the work of YHWH”.** There are no constraints to this covenant – Israel is NOT required to do anything. **God will perform his purpose.**

What is most significant is that immediately after the covenant, **God discusses the Holy Day cycle.** It is through the Holy Day cycle that a deep understanding of the **Plan of God** is attained. The implication being that the **teaching of the Holy Day Cycle** and the faithful keeping of the **Holy Day Cycle** are **critical to understanding the Plan of God and to living by the Way of God.**

You shall keep the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you,
at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt.

Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest.
In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

You shall observe the **Feast of Weeks**, the firstfruits of wheat harvest,
and the **Feast of Ingathering** at the year’s end.

Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord [YHWH], the God of Israel.

For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders;
no one shall covet your land,
when you go up to appear before [YHWH] your God three times in the year.

Exodus 34:18, 21-24 ESV)

The **Plan of God** is **all about “love”** – God’s love for human beings in offering us salvation.

The Holy Day cycle teaches human beings about “love” – how to reciprocate God’s love and how to develop **“godly love”** for other human beings.

⁴²⁷ See Exodus 32:30-32, 33:12-23

⁴²⁸ See Exodus 34:1-9

⁴²⁹ See section **9.3 The Covenant of Performance** in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴³⁰ The Hebrew root קָרַת - karath, mean literally “to cut”; see Holladay page 165;
it is used as a technical term for “creating”, “cutting”, a new covenant.

11.5.3 Love of Brethren

Jesus' teaching on love was discussed in section **8.2 The Message of Jesus Christ**.

In that section, we commented on Jesus "new commandment":

A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**:
just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.
(John 13:34-35 ESV see also 1 John 3:23, 4:21)

After many years of reflection, the **Apostle John** comments on the "new commandment":

Beloved, **I am writing you no new commandment**,
but an old commandment that you had from the beginning.
The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

At the same time, **it is a new commandment** that I am writing to you,
which is true in him and in you,
because the darkness is passing away and **the true light is already shining**.

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.
(1 John 2:7-10 ESV see also 2 John 5)

Jesus taught love from the beginning. **Love never grows old**. By the time John was writing this letter, the Gospel had spread far and wide, "**the true light is already shining**", so the message of "love" was continuing to bring "new light" to the world:

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,
that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness,
we lie and do not practice the truth.

But **if we walk in the light**, as **he is in the light**,

we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
(1 John 1:5-7 ESV)

The New Testament authors unanimously identify "**brotherly love**" as an **identifying sign** of **True Worshipers**.

The most important characteristic of "**brotherly love**" is that it **is demonstrated by actions**:

And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works**,
not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some,
but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
(Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV)

For you were called to freedom, brothers.
Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh,
but **through love serve one another**.
(Galatians 5:13 ESV)

We ask you, brothers, to **respect those who labor among you**
and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,
and to **esteem them very highly in love** because of their work.
Be at peace among yourselves.
(1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 ESV)

Let love be genuine.
Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.
Love one another with brotherly affection.

Outdo one another in showing honor.
(Romans 12:9-10 ESV)

For **if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love**.
By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.
(Romans 14:15 ESV)

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling**
to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience,
bearing with one another in love,
eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
(Ephesians 4:1-3 ESV)

Rather, **speaking the truth in love**,
we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,
from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped,
when each part is working properly,
makes **the body grow so that it builds itself up in love**.
(Ephesians 4:15-16 ESV)

And **walk in love**,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
(Ephesians 5:2 ESV)

And it is my prayer that **your love may abound more and more**,
with knowledge and all discernment,
so that you may approve what is excellent,
and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,
filled with the fruit of righteousness⁴³¹
that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.
(Philippians 1:9-11 ESV)

The end of all things is at hand;
therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.
Above all, **keep loving one another** earnestly,
since love covers a multitude of sins.

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

As **each has received a gift**, use it **to serve one another**,
as good stewards of God's varied grace:

whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God;

whoever serves, as one who serves **by the strength that God supplies**

—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(1 Peter 4:7-11 ESV)

Love is patient and kind;

love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-7 ESV)

Learning “love” is the most important outcome of the Way of God.

True Christians in the modern world are tasked with learning “love” in a world
that is more and more being drawn into the hate of Satan the Devil.

As we get closer to the end of this age, the responsibility of True Christians
to **prepare for the Second Advent** becomes more and more critical.

12. Prophecies of The Second Advent

The purpose of the New Testament Church is to prepare for the Second Advent.

For two thousand years, God has been calling people to the New Testament Church

– **NOT because any person is worthy of the calling**, but because God sees in any given called person
the potential to be able to serve in the Kingdom of God:

For **by grace** you [are being]⁴³² saved through faith.

And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God**,

not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

For **we are his workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**,

which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

(Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV)

⁴³¹ See section 7. *The Fruit of Godly Character* in the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴³² The Greek verb is ἐστέ - este, “second plural, **present active** indicative”; from εἶμι - eimi, “to be”;
salvation is a process to be completed at the First Resurrection – no one is “saved” until then.

Of this gospel I was made a minister **according to the gift of God's grace**, which was given me **by the working of his power**. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, **this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles** the unsearchable riches of Christ ... (Ephesians 3:7-8 ESV)

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering **for the gospel by the power of God**, who [is saving] us and called us to a holy calling, **not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace**, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began ... (2 Timothy 1:8-9 ESV)

The **Apostle Peter** affirms that the Old Testament prophets eagerly desired to understand the things that are revealed through the New Testament. The **Sage Daniel** was promised that understanding would be given as the end approaches:

Concerning this salvation, **the prophets** who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours **searched and inquired carefully**, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when [it]⁴³³ predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

It was revealed to them that **they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced** to you through those who preached **the good news** to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. (1 Peter 1:10-12 ESV)

“... And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.⁴³⁴

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**.”

I heard, but I did not understand.

Then I said,

“O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?”

He said,

“Go your way, Daniel, for **the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end**. ... **those who are wise shall understand**. ...”

(Daniel 12:3-4, 8-9, 10b ESV)

We are in the **“time of the end”**. We can look back over many centuries of prophecies being fulfilled. We see the prophecies playing out today at an ever-accelerating rate. **We pray for discretion to understand what we see, “knowledge shall increase”**.

12.1 The Mainstream of Civilization

In the second year of his reign, **Daniel was given understanding of a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar**. The King had a fantastic dream of a great image,⁴³⁵ as seen in the artist's depiction.

The **mainstream of civilization** has always flowed through the nations and individuals with which God has worked.

Nebuchadnezzar's image is a depiction of the mainstream of civilization from his time until the Second Advent.

The head represents the **Neo-Babylonian Empire**,⁴³⁶ the chest and arms represent the **Medo-Persian Empire**,⁴³⁷



⁴³³ See footnote 271

⁴³⁴ This alludes to the First Resurrection.

⁴³⁵ See Daniel 2:1, 31-35

⁴³⁶ See Daniel 2:37-38

⁴³⁷ See Daniel 2:39a, 8:20

the middle and thighs represent the Greek empires,⁴³⁸ and the legs represent the Roman Empire with the feet and toes being Western Civilization at the end-time.

The “flaming rock” is the kingdom of God, “a stone cut by no human hand”,

which destroys and supersedes all these kingdoms:

And as you saw the feet and toes,
partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron,
it shall be a divided kingdom,
but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it,
just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.

And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay,
so **the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle**.

As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage,⁴³⁹
but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

And in the days of those kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom** that shall **never be destroyed**,
nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and **it shall stand forever**,
just as you saw that **a stone was cut** from a mountain **by no human hand**,
and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.

A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this.

The dream is certain, and **its interpretation sure**.

(Daniel 2:41-45 ESV)

The identity of the “fourth kingdom” was never revealed to Daniel.

However, he was given some understanding of its nature:

And there shall be a **fourth kingdom**, strong as **iron**,
because iron **breaks to pieces** and shatters all things.
And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.
(Daniel 2:40 ESV)

The understanding of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was just the beginning.

Daniel would have other visions which provided much more information
on **the mainstream of civilization** and the **Kingdom of God**.

12.2 Daniel’s Fourth Beast and the Beasts of Revelation

Some fifty years later, **Daniel was given a vision which provided considerably more information**
about the fourth kingdom:

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon,
Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed.
Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter.
Daniel declared,

“I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.
And **four great beasts** came up out of the sea, different from one another.

The first was **like a lion** and had eagles’ wings.
Then as I looked its wings were plucked off,
and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man,
and the mind of a man was given to it.

And behold, another beast, a second one, **like a bear**.
It was raised up on one side.
It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told,
‘Arise, devour much flesh.’

After this I looked, and behold, another, **like a leopard**, with four wings of a bird on its back.
And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, **a fourth beast**,
terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong.
It had great **iron** teeth;
it devoured and **broke in pieces** and stamped what was left with its feet.

⁴³⁸ See Daniel 2:39b, 8:21-22

⁴³⁹ Alluding to treaties and international agreements, such as EU, NATO, Free Trade, etc.

It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had **ten horns**.
I considered the horns, and behold,
there came up among them **another horn, a little one**,
before which **three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots**.
And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and **a mouth speaking great things.**"

(Daniel 7:1-8 ESV)

As in Nebuchadnezzar's dream the first three beasts represent the **Neo-Babylonian Empire**, the **Medo-Persian Empire**, and the **Greek empires**. The "fourth beast" remains a mystery.

In vision, **Daniel is able to make an inquiry about the "beasts"**:

As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and **the visions of my head alarmed me**.
I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this.

So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things.

'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. ...'

Then **I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast**,

which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze,
and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet,

and **about the ten horns that were on its head**,

and **the other horn** that came up and before which three of them fell,

the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things,

and that seemed greater than its companions.

(Daniel 7:15-17, 19-20 ESV)

Thus he said:

'As for **the fourth beast**,

there shall be **a fourth kingdom** on earth,

which shall be different from all the kingdoms,

and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces.

As for the **ten horns**,

out of this kingdom **ten kings** shall arise,

and **another shall arise after them**;

he shall be **different from the former ones**, and shall put down three kings.

He shall speak words against the Most High,

and shall wear out the saints of the Most High,

and shall think to change the times and the law (dath);⁴⁴⁰

and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.⁴⁴¹

But the court shall sit in judgment,

and **his dominion shall be taken away**, to be **consumed and destroyed** to the end.

(Daniel 7:23-26 ESV)

This explanation of the "fourth beast" only thickens the mystery. The "fourth kingdom" gives rise to ten kings, as well as "**another**" who is "**different from the former ones**". Clearly, the "fourth kingdom" is active at the time of the arrival of the Kingdom of God, "**his dominion shall be taken away**", "**consumed and destroyed**". The "**stone cut by no human hand**" in Nebuchadnezzar's dream is alluded to:

And **the kingdom and the dominion**

and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven

shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;

his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom,

and all dominions shall serve and obey him.'

(Daniel 7:27 ESV)

Daniel remained confused. To understand the vision, we must go to the **Book of Revelation**, where the **Apostle John** is given visions which explain Daniel's visions:

Here is the end of the matter.

As for me, Daniel, **my thoughts greatly alarmed me**, and my color changed,

but I kept the matter in my heart.

(Daniel 7:28 ESV)

⁴⁴⁰ See footnote 221

⁴⁴¹ See *Excursus 2 – Time, Times, and Half a Time*

And I saw **a beast** rising out of the sea, with **ten horns** and **seven heads**, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

And the beast that I saw was **like a leopard**; its feet were **like a bear's**, and its mouth was **like a lion's mouth**.

And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.

One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and **the whole earth** marveled as they **followed the beast**.

And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they **worshiped the beast**, saying,

“Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”

And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.⁴⁴²

It opened its mouth to **utter blasphemies against God**, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

Also it was allowed to **make war on the saints** and to **conquer them**.

And **authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation**, and all who dwell on earth will worship it,

everyone whose name has not been written

in the book of life⁴⁴³ of the Lamb who was slain [from the foundation of the world].⁴⁴⁴

(Revelation 13:1-8 ESV)

The **Apostle John** is seeing a different vision from what Daniel saw, but the object of the vision is the same. John sees “**a beast**”. It has “**ten horns**”, just like Daniel’s fourth beast. John’s beast has characteristics of Daniel’s first three beasts, “**lion**”, “**bear**”, and “**leopard**”. Daniel’s beast “**had great iron teeth; it devoured**” the first three beasts consuming their characteristics. Just prior to this vision, John reports a vision involving a “**dragon**”, Satan the Devil:

And **the great dragon was thrown down**,

that ancient serpent, who is called **the devil and Satan**, the **deceiver of the whole world**

—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

(Revelation 12:9 ESV)

The “beast” that John sees is empowered by Satan the Devil, “**to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority**”. Using this power and authority from the “**deceiver of the whole world**”, the beast causes “**the whole earth**” to “**follow the beast**” and “**worship the beast**”. The beast is allowed to “**make war on the saints**” and to “**conquer them**”. This is the “**great tribulation**” that **Jesus warned** would come upon True Worshipers just before the Second Advent:

For then **there will be great tribulation**,

such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

(Matthew 24:21 ESV)

For in those days **there will be such tribulation**

as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be.

(Mark 13:19 ESV)

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.⁴⁴⁵

(Daniel 12:1 ESV)

⁴⁴² See *Excursus 2 – Time, Times, and Half a Time*

⁴⁴³ See footnote 4

⁴⁴⁴ The ESV translation places this clause in the wrong location.

⁴⁴⁵ The Book of Life, where God identifies True Worshipers; see section *9.5 The Book of Life* in the paper “*The Writings of Moses*” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying,
“Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?”
 I said to him,
 “Sir, you know.”
 And he said to me,
“These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.
 They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ...”
 (Revelation 7:13-14 ESV)

To execute the **“Great Tribulation”** the beast is given **“authority over every tribe and people and language and nation”**. The world has witnessed a trial run of this in the “COVID plan-demic”. Nation after nation bowed down to the “World Health Organization” and relinquished their authority as the nefarious lies were spread. Only True Worshipers will be able to resist the deception of Satan the Devil and the power of the beast. The rest of humanity will be deceived, **“everyone whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb”**, but many True Worshipers will suffer:

If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes;
 if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

(Revelation 13:9-10 ESV)

The **mystery of the Fourth Beast remains**; this is what we know:

- The **Fourth Beast** absorbs the previous three beasts, **“it devoured and broke in pieces”**
- The **Fourth Beast** has **“ten horns”** which are **“ten kings”**
- The **Fourth Beast** has **“another horn, a little one”**
- The **“little horn”** usurps three others **“three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots”**
- The **“little horn”** has **“a mouth speaking great things”**
- The **Fourth Beast** is destroyed by the **“stone cut by no human hand”**
- The **Fourth Beast** is the same as John’s **“first beast”**
- John’s **“first beast”** is empowered by Satan the Devil,
“the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority”
- John’s **“first beast”** dominates **“the whole earth”**,
“authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation”
- John’s **“first beast”** is the perpetrator of the **“Great Tribulation”**,
“make war on the saints”, “conquer them”
- John’s **“first beast”** opens its “mouth to **utter blasphemies against God”**

12.3 The Little Horn of Daniel

The true nature of the **“Beast Power”** is only realized by examining the **“little horn”** of Daniel’s vision:

I considered the horns, and behold,
 there came up among them **another horn, a little one**,
 before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots.
 And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and **a mouth speaking great things.**

... and **another shall arise after them;**

he shall be **different from the former ones**, and shall put down three kings.

He shall speak words against the Most High,

and **shall wear out the saints of the Most High,**

and shall think to change the times and the law (dath);⁴⁴⁶

and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.⁴⁴⁷

(Daniel 7:8, 24b-25 ESV)

⁴⁴⁶ See footnote 221

⁴⁴⁷ See *Excursus 2 – Time, Times, and Half a Time*

John's vision of the "**Beast Power**" includes a **second beast** which corresponds to the "**little horn**" of Daniel's vision:

Then I **saw another beast rising out of the earth.**

It had two horns **like a lamb** and it spoke **like a dragon.**

It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.

It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast

it deceives those who dwell on earth,

telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

And it was allowed to **give breath to the image of the beast,**

so that **the image of the beast might even speak**

and might **cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.**

Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead,

so that **no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark,**

that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

This calls for wisdom:

let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

(Revelation 13:11-18 ESV)

The second beast is a religious authority, it pretends to be a "**lamb**"; in fact, it claims to be the "**vicar**" of the Lamb, but in reality, it is empowered by Satan the Devil, "**like a dragon**", "**it exercises all the authority of the first beast**". Satan empowers this entity to perform "miracles", "**it performs great signs**" by which "**it deceives those who dwell on earth**" to worship an idol, "**an image for the beast**". The "**image of the beast**" appears to be alive, "**give breath to the image of the beast**", "**the image of the beast might even speak**". The image of the beast is able to initiate actions, "**cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain**". This functionality of an idol is NOT difficult to imagine for a holographic image powered by artificial intelligence.

The "**Beast Power**" uses economic means to force compliance, "**no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark**". Again, the world has seen the trial run of this enforced compliance during the "COVID plan-demic". Those who refused to comply with the lies of the World Health Organization, were interdicted. Many lost jobs; some merchants refused the business of the non-compliant; some public places were off limits. The climax was the legal and peaceful demonstration in Ottawa against the outrageous policies of the government as dictated by the World Health Organization. Some demonstrators were murdered by the government. Others, who financially supported the demonstrators, had their bank accounts frozen by the ever-so compliant banking industry. If governments get their desired implementation of digital currencies, there will be no stopping them.

The number of the "Beast" will only become meaningful when it actually happens.

Many ingenious suggestions have been put forward over the centuries, but none has proven true.

However, **John leaves no doubt as to the provenance of the "Beast Power":**

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me,

"Come, I will show you the judgment of **the great prostitute** who is **seated on many waters**, with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk."

And the angel said to me,

"The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, **are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.**

And **the woman** that you saw **is the great city** that has **dominion over the kings of the earth."**

(Revelation 17:1-2, 15, 18 ESV)

At the time when John wrote this, **Rome was the undisputed metropolis of the world.**

All kings bowed to the emperor. The "great prostitute" was not yet visible. The "**other horn, a little one**" only came into existence when three previous horns were uprooted, "**three of the first horns were**

plucked up by the roots". This occurred in 325AD when Constantine made the church of Rome the official religion of the empire. There are various suggestions as to which three emperors are represented by the three overturned horns. Over the centuries, the church of Rome has ruled over **"peoples and multitudes and nations and languages"** and has had **"dominion over the kings of the earth"**. At the end, **just before the Second Advent, the full display of the "Beast Power" will occur.**

12.4 Rise of the Beast Power

In the **Olivet Prophecy**,⁴⁴⁸ Jesus outlined the mainstream of civilization from his time until the Second Advent. Jesus' introductory summary defines the steady state of the world.

Jesus calls it **"the beginning of the birth pains"**:

And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple,
Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,
"Tell us, when will these things be,
and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"

And Jesus began to say to them,
"See that no one leads you astray.
Many will come in my name, saying,
'[That]⁴⁴⁹ I am he!'

and **they will lead many astray.**

And when you hear of **wars** and **rumors of wars**, do not be alarmed.
This must take place, but the end is not yet.

For **nation will rise against nation**, and **kingdom against kingdom.**

There will be **earthquakes** in various places; there will be **famines.**

These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

(Mark 13:3-8 ESV see also Matthew 24:3-8, Luke 21:7-11a)

The **new element in world history** over the last 2000 years has been the New Testament Church. Jesus' first point is a warning to True Christians to avoid compromise, **"see that no one leads you astray"**. Satan's efforts to compromise True Christians began immediately and have continued unabated, as discussed in section **9.3 Corruption of the Visible Church**. Jesus then lists the common elements of human experience, **"wars"**, **"rumors of wars"**, **"nation will rise against nation"**, **"earthquakes"**, **"famines"**. These things describe the last 2000 years of history.

In the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John reports a vision which dovetails Jesus' description of **"the beginning of the birth pains"**. The context of the Book of Revelation is the **Day of YHWH**, the time of the **Second Advent**. The focus of the visions given to John is the events leading up to and occurring during that time:

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation
and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus,
was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

I was in the Spirit on the [day of the Lord],⁴⁵⁰

and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying,
"Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches,
to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis
and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

(Revelation 1:9-11 ESV)

⁴⁴⁸ See the paper **"The Olivet Prophecy"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁴⁹ The ESV translation ignores the particle ὅτι - hoti, "that"; Jesus' point is that the deceivers will acknowledge Jesus as the Christ and will use that to deceive. The church of Rome has always acknowledged Jesus as the Christ.

⁴⁵⁰ The phrase ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ, en te kuriake hemera, is incorrectly translated in the ESV and other English Translations. It refers to the **"day of YHWH"** not any specific day. See the discussion of this phrase in the paper **"The Day of YHWH"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

12.4.1 The Four Horsemen

The **action of the Book of Revelation** commences when Jesus is selected to remove seven seals from a scroll. As the seals are removed one by one, John, in vision sees events unfolding. The events of the **first four seals correspond to the steady state of the world** as Jesus described in the Olivet Prophecy. Given the context of Revelation, the Day of YHWH, it is safe to assume the implication that the **events prophesized will reach a climax just before the Day of YHWH:**

Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne
a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice,

“Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?”

And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

And one of the elders said to me,

“Weep no more;

behold, the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**, the **Root of David**, **has conquered**,

so that **he can open the scroll and its seven seals.**”

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders

I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain,

with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And **he went and took the scroll** from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.

(Revelation 5:1-7 ESV)

Now I watched when **the Lamb opened one of the seven seals**,

and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder,

“Come!”

And I looked, and behold, a **white horse!**

And its **rider** had a **bow**, and a **crown** was given to him,

and **he came out conquering**, and **to conquer**.

When **he opened the second seal**,

I heard the second living creature say,

“Come!”

And out came **another horse, bright red.**

Its rider was permitted to **take peace from the earth**,

so that people should slay one another, and he was given **a great sword**.

When **he opened the third seal**,

I heard the third living creature say,

“Come!”

And I looked, and behold, a **black horse!**

And **its rider had a pair of scales** in his hand.

And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying,

“A quart of **wheat** for a denarius,

and three quarts of **barley** for a denarius,

and do not harm the **oil** and **wine!**”

When **he opened the fourth seal**,

I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say,

“Come!”

And I looked, and behold, a **pale horse!**

And **its rider’s name was Death**, and [the grave] (hadēs)⁴⁵¹ followed him.

And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth,

to **kill with sword** and with **famine** and with **pestilence** and by **wild beasts** of the earth.

(Revelation 6:1-8 ESV)

Analysis:

- **First seal:** the “**white horse**” implies feigned purity, **religious deception**, “**they will lead many astray**”; Satan has used many and varied methods, “**bow**”, “**crown**”, down through the centuries to compromise True Christians, “**he came out conquering**”, “**to conquer**”; **this will climax in the Great Tribulation**

⁴⁵¹ See footnote 405

- **Second seal:** “another horse, bright red” represents war, “a great sword”, “take peace from the earth”; war has never stopped but at the Second Advent there will be **a war that threatens all human life**:
And **when you hear of wars and rumors of wars**, do not be alarmed.
This must take place, but the end is not yet.
(Mark 13:7 ESV // Matthew 24:6 see also Luke 21:9)
And if the Lord had not cut short the days,
no human being would be saved.
But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.
(Mark 13:20 ESV see also Matthew 24:22)
- **Third seal:** the “**black horse**” represents shortages of basic necessities, “**wheat**”, “**barley**”, “**oil**”, “**wine**”; what there is must, be measured carefully, “**a pair of scales**”; these conditions result from trade disruptions, supply chain interruptions, bad government policy, “**nation will rise against nation**”, “**kingdom against kingdom**”; today we are experiencing this more and more
- **Fourth seal:** the “**pale horse**” results from the previous horses in death, “**its rider's name was Death**”, more killing, “**kill with sword**”, starvation, “**famine**”, epidemics, “**pestilence**”, disease, “**wild beasts**”, and natural disasters; these have always occurred, but they will get worse:
There will be **earthquakes** in various places; there will be **famines**.
(Mark 13:8b ESV // Mathhew 24:7b)
There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and **pestilences**.
(Luke 21:11a ESV)

12.4.2 The Seven Heads of the Beast

With all of these forces coming together, a geo-political climate will arise that allows Satan to empower the “Beast” and the “False Prophet” to deceive the world into the worship of the “image of the beast”.

There will be some kind of international agreement⁴⁵² legitimizing the “Beast Power”:

And **he shall make a strong covenant with many for one [period] (shavua`)**,⁴⁵³
and for half of the [period] (shavua`) he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate,
until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.
(Daniel 9:27 ESV)

When the Western Roman Empire fell in 476AD, the church of Rome became the de facto governing authority in the West. It controlled the “kings” and people of the West – there is good reason why these were called the “dark ages”. In the East, the Roman Empire continued in Constantinople until 1453AD. In the West, the secular kings eventually coalesced into the “**Holy Roman Empire**” which was **dominated by the church of Rome**:

Holy Roman Empire, the varying complex of lands in western and central Europe ruled by the Holy Roman emperor,
a title held first by Frankish and then by German kings for 10 centuries.

The Holy Roman Empire existed from 800 to 1806.

(<https://www.britannica.com/place/Holy-Roman-Empire>)

On 25 December 800, **Pope Leo III** crowned **Charlemagne** (the Frankish king) Roman emperor, reviving the title more than three centuries after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476. The title lapsed in 924 but was revived in 962 when **Otto I** was crowned emperor by **Pope John XII**, as Charlemagne's and the Carolingian Empire's successor.

From 962 until the 12th century, the empire was one of the most powerful monarchies in Europe. It depended on cooperation between emperors and vassals;
this was disturbed during the Salian period.

The empire reached the apex of territorial expansion and power under the **House of Hohenstaufen** in the mid-13th century, but overextension led to a partial collapse.

⁴⁵² Most likely involving the “United Nations” or an agency of it, such as World Health Organization; or perhaps an agreement among the “big religions” – see <https://www.abrahamicfamilyhouse.ae/?lang=en>

⁴⁵³ A “shavua” is NOT a “week”; it is a non-determined period of time; see *Excursus 2 – Time, Times, and Half a Time*.

The imperial office was traditionally elective by the mostly German prince-electors.
In theory and diplomacy,
the emperors were considered the **first among equals of all of Europe's Catholic monarchs**.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire)

Th vacillations in secular leadership of the Holy Roman Empire are represented in Daniel's vision
by **the seven horns which coexist with the "little horn"**:

I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one,
before which **three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots**.
And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.
(Daniel 7:8 ESV)

These seven horns are also represented in John's visions:

And I saw a beast rising out of the sea,
with **ten horns** and **seven heads**,
with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.
(Revelation 13:1 ESV)

But the angel said to me,
"Why do you marvel?
I will tell you the mystery of the woman,
and of **the beast** with **seven heads** and **ten horns** that carries her.
The beast that you saw was, and is not,
and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction.
And the dwellers on earth
whose names have not been written in the book of life⁴⁵⁴ from the foundation of the world
will marvel to see the beast,
because it was and is not and is to come.
This calls for a mind with wisdom:
the **seven heads** are seven mountains⁴⁵⁵ on which the woman is seated;
they **are also seven kings**, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come,
and when he does come he must remain only a little while.
As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven,
and it goes to destruction.
And the **ten horns** that you saw are **ten kings who have not yet received royal power**,
but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.
These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast.
They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them,
for he is Lord of lords and King of kings,
and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."
(Revelation 17:7-14 ESV)

Analysis:

- Daniel's "beast" starts with "**ten horns**" three of which "**were plucked up by the roots**" leaving **seven horns**
- John's "beast" has "**ten horns**" and "**seven heads**"
- In John's vision "the **ten horns** are **ten kings who have not yet received royal power**" so all ten will be extant to "**make war on the Lamb**" – they are extant at the Second Advent; so they are NOT the same as the "**ten horns**" of Daniel's vision
- The **seven remaining horns of Daniel's vision** correspond to the "**seven heads**" of John's vision
- The "**seven heads**" of John's vision are "**are ... seven kings**"
- The symbolism of the expression "**five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come**" is difficult; but, given the focus of the Book of Revelation as the time leading up to the Second Advent, it is clear that "**five of whom have fallen**" are historic kings. It has been suggested that the "**one is**" represents the Hitler-Mussolini alliance of World War Two.
- Clearly the king referred to as "**the other has not yet come**" will be the final incarnation of the "beast" and "**will make war on the Lamb**" and "**the Lamb will conquer them**"

⁴⁵⁴ See footnote 4

⁴⁵⁵ This alludes to the "seven hills" of the city of Rome.

12.5 End-time Event Flow

Jesus was more than once clear and specific that

there is no way to determine or calculate the date upon which the Second Advent will occur:

But **concerning that day or that hour,**

no one knows,

not even the angels in heaven,

nor the Son,

but **only the Father.**

(Mark 13:32 ESV // Matthew 24:36)

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

(Matthew 25:13 ESV)

He said to them,

“It is not for you to know times or seasons

that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

(Acts 1:7 ESV)

Jesus was equally firm in asserting that we can know **when the time is close:**

From the fig tree learn its lesson:

as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves,

you know that summer is near.

So also, **when you see these things taking place,**

you know that he is near, at the very gates.

(Mark 13:28-29 ESV // Matthew 24:32-33, see also Luke 21:29-31)

12.5.1 The Great Tribulation

Indeed, the events of the Olivet Prophecy are coming to life at an ever-increasing rate. The events associated with the opening of the **Fifth Seal** will set in motion **the final march to the Second Advent:**

When he opened the fifth seal,

I saw under the altar the [persons] (psyche)⁴⁵⁶

who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

They cried out with a loud voice,

“O Sovereign Lord, holy and true,

how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

Then they were each given a white robe and told to **rest a little longer,**

until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete,

who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

(Revelation 6:9-11 ESV)

This is the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Before this happens, the **Beast Power** must gain control of **Western Civilization** and must be in a position of authority of over the whole world:

And **authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,**

and all who dwell on earth will worship it ...

It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence,

and **makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast,**

whose mortal wound was healed.

(Revelation 13:7b-8a, 12 ESV)

During the Great Tribulation, all who will not worship **“the image of the beast”**⁴⁵⁷ will be subject to **persecution and death:**

Then **the dragon became furious** with the woman

and **went off to make war on the rest of her offspring,**

on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

(Revelation 12:17a ESV)

As I looked, **this horn made war with the saints** and prevailed over them ...

(Daniel 7:21 ESV)

⁴⁵⁶ See footnote 6

⁴⁵⁷ The “image of the beast” is the “abomination of desolation”; there is no way to tell what it will be, but probably something based on the standard idols of the church of Rome; see [Excursus 1 – The Meaning of tamid](#); see also [Excursus 2 The Abomination of Desolation](#) in the paper “[The Olivet Prophecy](#)” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

Also it **was allowed to make war on the saints** and to conquer them.
(Revelation 13:7a ESV)

And I saw **the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.**
(Revelation 17:6 ESV)

It is going to be **a very ugly world** under the control of the Beast Power. While many are being mercilessly killed, those who participate in the economy and the **worship of the Beast Power** will be revelling in a period of **brisk international trade, prosperity, and luxury:**

And **the kings of the earth,**

who committed sexual immorality and **lived in luxury with her,**
will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.
They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,

“Alas!

Alas!

You great city, you mighty city, Babylon!

For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

And **the merchants of the earth** weep and mourn for her,

since **no one buys their cargo** anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and **slaves**, that is, **human [lives] (psyche).**⁴⁵⁸

“The fruit for which your [being] (psyche) longed has gone from you,
and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you,
never to be found again!”

The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her,

will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

“Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen,
in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!

For **in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.**”

And **all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea,**

stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning,

“What city was like the great city?”

And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out,

“Alas, alas, for the great city

where **all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth!**

For in a single hour she has been laid waste.”

Rejoice over her, O heaven,

and you saints and apostles and prophets,

for God has given judgment for you against her!

(Revelation 18:9-20 ESV)

12.5.2 The Heavenly Signs

The Great Tribulation will be of relatively short duration. The **Sixth Seal** is a harbinger of the **Day of YHWH**. The Sixth Seal is commonly called the **“heavenly signs”**.

Jesus clearly outlines it in the Olivet Prophecy, and Old Testament prophets also saw its occurrence:

When **he opened the sixth seal,**

I looked, and behold, there was a **great earthquake,**

and the **sun became black** as sackcloth,

the **full moon became like blood,**

and the **stars of the sky fell** to the earth

as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.

The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up,⁴⁵⁹

and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

⁴⁵⁸ See footnote 6

⁴⁵⁹ This alludes to a “rift” between the physical universe and eternity allowing people on earth a brief glimpse into eternity to see “the face of him who is seated on the throne”.

Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks,

“Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and **from the wrath of the Lamb**, for **the great day of their wrath has come**, and who can stand?”

(Revelation 6:12-17 ESV)

But in those days, **after that tribulation**, the **sun** will be darkened, and the **moon** will not give its light, and the **stars** will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

(Mark 13:24-25 ESV // Matthew 24:29, see also Luke 21:25-26)

Behold, the day of [YHWH] comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the [earth] (‘eret⁴⁶⁰) a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the **stars** of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the **sun** will be dark at its rising, and the **moon** will not shed its light.

(Isaiah 13:9-10 ESV)

Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision!

For the day of [YHWH] is near in the valley of decision.

The **sun** and the **moon** are darkened, and the **stars** withdraw their shining.

(Joel 3:14-15 ESV)

12.5.3 The Day of YHWH

The Seventh Seal is the Day of YHWH. The Seventh Seal comprises Seven Trumpets,

the first four of which are “**cosmic disturbances**” which punish the earth,

presumably focused on the Beast Power:

When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Then I **saw the seven angels who stand before God**, and **seven trumpets were given to them**.

Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

The first angel blew his trumpet,

and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood,

and these were thrown upon the earth.

And a third of the earth was burned up,

and a third of the trees were burned up,

and all green grass was burned up.

The second angel blew his trumpet,

and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea,

and a third of the sea became blood.

A third of the living creatures in the sea died,

and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The third angel blew his trumpet,

and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch,

and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

The name of the star is Wormwood.

A third of the waters became wormwood,

and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

The fourth angel blew his trumpet,

and a third of the sun was struck,

and a third of the moon,

and a third of the stars,

so that a third of their light might be darkened,

and a third of the day might be kept from shining,

and likewise a third of the night.

(Revelation 8:1-2, 6-12 ESV)

⁴⁶⁰ The noun עֵרֶץ - ‘eret⁴⁶⁰, can be translated “land” or “earth”, depending on the context; see Holladay page 28.

The last three trumpet blasts are set off in the Book of Revelation as **“three woes”** on the whole earth and all of humanity:

Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead,
“Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth,
at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”
(Revelation 8:13 ESV)

Trumpets five and six are Satan’s last-ditch effort to destroy humanity and thwart the **Plan of God**. The whole world is drawn into a **state of war – presumably nuclear**. The **Sage Daniel** was given information on the start of this war and **Jesus warned of the consequences** if he doe NOT intervene:

At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him,
but the **king of the north** shall rush upon him like a whirlwind,
with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships.

And **he shall** come into countries and shall overflow and pass through.
He shall come into **the glorious land**.
And tens of thousands shall fall,
but these shall be delivered out of his hand:

Edom and **Moab** and the main part of the **Ammonites**.

He shall stretch out his hand against the countries,
and the **land of Egypt** shall not escape.
He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver,
and all the precious things of **Egypt**,
and the **Libyans** and the **Cushites** shall follow in his train.

But **news from the east and the north shall alarm him**,
and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction.

And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the **glorious holy mountain**.
Yet **he shall come to his end, with none to help him**.
(Daniel 11:40-45 ESV)

And **if the Lord had not cut short the days,**
no human being would be saved.

But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.
(Mark 13:20 ESV // Matthew 24:22)

The **“king of the north”** is the end-time **Beast Power**. The **“king of the south”** is a coalition of Middle Eastern nations: **“Edom”**, **“Moab”**, **“Ammonites”** – these territories are mostly in the modern state of Jordan; the territory of **“Egypt”** is well defined; the territory of **“Libyans”** is across North Africa; the territory of **“Cushites”** is to the south of Egypt. The **“glorious holy mountain”** is the Land of Israel, territory mostly controlled by the **modern state of Israel**.

In some way, **Satan instigates** the “king of the south” to attack the “king of the north”, **“the king of the south shall attack him”**. The Beast Power retaliates and crushes the coalition, **“the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind”, “he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through”**. Now Satan plays his biggest card: the “king of the south” has backing from other nations and Satan instigates them to enter the fray; the Beast Power reacts with fear, **“news from the east and the north shall alarm him”** – the ensuing war is devastating, **“he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction”**. From the information given to Daniel, the action now skips to the end when Jesus has **“cut short”** the war, **“he shall come to his end, with none to help him”**. **The Book of Revelation provides more details of this war:**

And the fifth angel blew his trumpet,

and I saw **a star fallen from heaven** to earth,
and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.
He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit,
and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace,
and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth,
and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.
They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree,
but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle:

on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold;
their faces were like human faces,
their hair like women's hair,
and their teeth like lions' teeth;
they had breastplates like breastplates of iron,
and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.
They have tails and stings like scorpions,
and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails.

They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit.

His name in Hebrew is **Abaddon**, and in Greek he is called **Apollyon**.
(Revelation 9:1-11 ESV)

The "**star fallen from heaven**" is an "angel" – "**he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit**" unleashing the war. The details of the war and its destruction will only be fully understandable when they occur. Clearly, in vision, **John is seeing modern weapons of war** which he can only describe in terms with which he is familiar, "**in appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle**". The final interpretation of the vision is clear – **Satan is responsible**, "**they have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit**". The **fifth trumpet** is the attack of the "king of the south" on the Beast Power. The **sixth trumpet** includes the retaliation by the "king of the north":

Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet,

and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God,
saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet,

"Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

So the four angels, **who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year**, were released to kill a third of mankind.

The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand;
I heard their number.

And **this is how I saw the horses in my vision** and those who rode them:

they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur,
and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads,
and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths.

By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed,
by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths.
For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails,
for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues,

did not repent of the works of their hands

nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood,
which cannot see or hear or walk,

nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

(Revelation 9:13-21 ESV)

With the sixth trumpet larger forces are at play, "release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates". These angels have been under the personal control of God the Father, waiting, since only he knows, "**the hour, the day, the month, and the year**". Again, John describes the modern weapons he sees, "**this is how I saw the horses in my vision**". The final summary of the sixth trumpet sets the stage for the **seventh trumpet**, "**the rest of mankind**", "**did not repent**".

13. The Second Advent

The Synoptists all report Jesus' words in the Olivet Prophecy:

And then **they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.**

And then **he will send out the angels and gather his elect** from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

(Mark 13:26-27 ESV see also Luke 21:27)

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man,

and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn,

and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

And **he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call,**

and **they will gather his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

(Matthew 24:30-31 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** had explained all this to the newly formed **Church in Thessalonica,**

but there was apparently some confusion, so **Paul reiterated in both his letters to the Thessalonians:**

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus,

God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

For **this we declare to you** by a word from the Lord,

that we who are alive, who are left until **the coming of the Lord,**

will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command,

with the voice of an archangel,

and **with the sound of the trumpet** of God.

And **the dead in Christ will rise first.**

Then we who are alive, who are left,

will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,

and so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore encourage one another with these words.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ESV)

Now **concerning the times and the seasons,** brothers,

you have no need to have anything written to you.

For you yourselves are fully aware that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.**

While people are saying,

“There is peace and security,”

then sudden destruction will come upon them

as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman,

and they will not escape.

But **you are not in darkness,** brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

(1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 ESV)

Now **concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** and **our being gathered together to him,**

we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed,

either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us,

to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

Let no one deceive you in any way.

For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first,⁴⁶¹

and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship,

so that he takes his seat in the temple of God,⁴⁶²

proclaiming himself to be God.

Do you not remember that **when I was still with you I told you these things?**

And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.

⁴⁶¹ This most likely alludes to the rise of the Beast Power.

⁴⁶² This most likely alludes to the “government”, the Beast Power, extending control over non-compliant religions, including True Worshipers. See the discussion of the “New Testament Temple” in section [So, What is tamid?](#) of Excursus 1.

Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.⁴⁶³

And then **the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill** with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan

with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, **because they refused to love the truth** and so be saved.

Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 ESV)

Analysis of the descriptions of the Second Advent:

- The Second Advent will be globally witnessed event, **“they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory”**
- The Second Advent will be heralded by a trumpet blast, **“he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call”, “with the sound of the trumpet”**
- At the trumpet blast, the First Resurrection will occur, **“they will gather his elect”, “the dead in Christ will rise first”, “then we who are alive”**
- No one can predict when the Day of YHWH will come, but when it comes, it will come suddenly, **“concerning the times and the seasons”, “the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night”**
- Prophesized events will unfold according to the **Plan of God**, **“for that day will not come”, “unless the rebellion comes first”, “by the activity of Satan”**
- The enemies of God will be destroyed in the Day of YHWH, **“whom the Lord Jesus will kill”, “because they refused to love the truth”**

13.1 The Seventh Trumpet

At the **“seventh trumpet”** the **First Resurrection** occurs and Jesus prepares to come to earth as **King of kings**:

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet,

and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

And the twenty-four elders

who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying,

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for **rewarding your servants**, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for **destroying the destroyers of the earth.”**

(Revelation 11:15-18 ESV)

Then I looked, and behold, **a white cloud**, and **seated on the cloud one like [Son of Man]**,⁴⁶⁴ with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.

And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud,

“Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.”

So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

(Revelation 14:14-16 ESV)

⁴⁶³ The Greek here is obscure: μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται, monon ho katechon arti'ek mesou genetai; literally “only the restrains now until from among it is”. The ESV translation makes it look like it alludes to a specific person, “he who”. More likely, the allusion is to the working out of geo-political events as allowed by the Plan of God.

⁴⁶⁴ ESV has “a son of man”, but this is clearly Jesus Christ.

Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb,
and **with him 144,000 who had his name** and **his Father's name written on their foreheads**.

And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder.
The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps,
and they were singing a new song before the throne
and before the four living creatures and before the elders.

No one could learn that song except the 144,000 **who had been redeemed** from the earth.

It is these **who have not defiled themselves with women**, for they are virgins.

It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

These have been redeemed from mankind as **firstfruits for God and the Lamb**,

and in their mouth no lie was found, for **they are blameless**.

(Revelation 14:1-5 ESV)

“The harvest of the earth” represents the **“dead”**. All persons since Abel who have had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at death, and to whom God the Father has decided to grant the gift of eternal life. Those **“who had been redeemed”** represent the **“living”**. Those living persons who comprise the New Testament Church at the time of the Second Advent. They are among⁴⁶⁵ the **“firstfruits for God and the Lamb”**, **“they are blameless”**⁴⁶⁶. They **“have not defiled themselves with women”**, - this, of course, alludes to **“spiritual whoredom”**, specifically, NOT participating in the worship of “the image of the beast”. The number “144,000” is probably symbolic of “completeness”.

Just as much of the action in the **Book of Revelation** is centered in Throne Room in eternity, so the **Sage Daniel** was given a **glimpse of the Throne Room**.

Daniel reports it in chapter 7 immediately after seeing the vision of the four beasts:

As I looked, **thrones were placed**,
and **the Ancient of Days took his seat**;
his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.

A stream of fire issued and came out from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;

the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened.

(Daniel 7:9-10 ESV)

The **“Ancient of Days”** is God the Father. The significance of this vision is **“the court sat in judgment”**.

This implies the oversight of God the Father as all the prophecies unfold from the time of Daniel until the Second Advent. There is ambiguity in the statement, **“the books were opened”**.

The same phrase occurs in the **Book of Revelation** where it is **contrasted with the Book of Life**.⁴⁶⁷

As in the **Book of Revelation**, so also in the **Book of Daniel**, **“books were opened”**, most likely applies to the **increasing understanding of the Bible** as the end gets closer, as explicitly promised in Daniel 12:4:

And I saw the dead, great and small,
standing before the throne, and **books were opened**.

Then **another book** was opened, which is **the book of life**.

And **the dead were judged by what was written in the books**,
according to what they had done.

(Revelation 20:12 ESV)

⁴⁶⁵ Many of the “dead” are also considered “firstfruits”.

⁴⁶⁶ “Blameless” implies “justified”, “pure”, sins propitiated by the blood of Christ; therefore accounted “holy” through faith while human; but after the First Resurrection, truly “holy”.

⁴⁶⁷ See footnote 4

Also in chapter 7, Daniel reports a vision of the **Second Advent**:

I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came **one like [Son of Man]**,⁴⁶⁸
and **he came to the Ancient of Days** and was presented before him.⁴⁶⁹

And **to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom**,
that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
(Daniel 7:13-14 ESV)

A Psalmist and several Old Testament Prophets report the “**blast of the trumpet**”
in association with the **Day of YHWH**:

For **[YHWH]**, the Most High, is to be feared, a **great king over all the earth**.

God has gone up with a shout, **[YHWH] with the sound of a trumpet**.

Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm!

God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.

(Psalm 47:2, 5-8 ESV)

All you inhabitants of the world, you who dwell on the earth,
when a signal is raised on the mountains, look!

When a trumpet is blown, hear!

In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt
[YHWH] will thresh out the grain, and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel.

And **in that day a great trumpet will be blown**,
and those who were lost in the land of Assyria
and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt
will come and worship [YHWH] on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.⁴⁷⁰
(Isaiah 18:3, 27:12-13 ESV)

Set up a standard on the earth (‘eretz),⁴⁷¹

blow the trumpet among the nations;

prepare the nations for war against her;
summon against her the kingdoms, Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz;
appoint a marshal against her; bring up horses like bristling locusts.

Prepare the nations for war against her,
the kings of the Medes, with their governors and deputies,
and every land under their dominion.

The [earth] (‘eretz) trembles and writhes in pain,
for [YHWH’s] purposes against Babylon stand,
to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without inhabitant.⁴⁷²
(Jeremiah 51:27-29 ESV)

Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the [earth] (‘eretz) tremble,
for the day of [YHWH] is coming; it is near,
a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people;
their like has never been before, nor will be again after them
through the years of all generations.
(Joel 2:1-2 ESV)

⁴⁶⁸ ESV has “son of man”; but, this is clearly the King of kings, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

⁴⁶⁹ This is an allusion to Jesus’ presentation of himself to the Father after the Resurrection; see John 20:17.

⁴⁷⁰ This is a prophecy of the Second Exodus, which occurs after the Trumpet blast; see section [14.1](#)

⁴⁷¹ See footnote [460](#)

⁴⁷² This prophecy is specifically for ancient Babylon; but in “type”, it applies to end-time Babylon.

The great day of [YHWH] is near, near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of [YHWH] is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.
A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness, **a day of trumpet blast** and battle cry
against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind,
because they have sinned against [YHWH];
their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.
Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them
on **the day of the wrath of [YHWH]**.

In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth ('eretz)⁴⁷³ shall be consumed;
for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth ('eretz).
(Zephaniah 1:14-18 ESV)

Before the King of kings actually comes to earth,
an event occurs in eternity: the marriage of the Lamb.

13.2 The Marriage Feast

After the First Resurrection has occurred, the angels are sent out to gather those who have been resurrected. These angels will show the newly born spirit beings how to traverse the gap between the physical universe and eternity. Guided by these angels, all will gather before God the Father in eternity, for the **Marriage Supper of the Lamb**.

This is the event that human marriage was designed to look forward to from the very beginning:

Then [YHWH] God said,

"It is not good that the man should be alone;
I will make him a helper fit for him."

So [YHWH] God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man,
and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

And **the rib** that [YHWH] God had taken from the man
he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Therefore **a man shall leave his father and his mother**
and **hold fast to his wife,**
and **they shall become one flesh.**

(Genesis 2:18, 21-24 ESV)

But from the beginning of creation,

'God made them male and female.'
'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother
and hold fast to his wife,
and the two shall become one flesh.'

So they are no longer two but one flesh.

What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

(Mark 10:6-9 ESV see also Matthew 19:4-6)

A human marriage brings two people together and "**they shall become one flesh**". This implies **complete unity based on commitment, love, and respect**. A marriage is an indissoluble working relationship whereby two become one. A marriage transforms two individuals into a family.

This looks to the "marriage" of Jesus Christ and the New Testament Church. This marriage produces a family of fully committed individuals who are combined into one working unit under God the Father to accomplish his purpose. **The "marriage" of Jesus Christ and the New Testament Church defines the working relationship of the Kingdom of God:**

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude,
like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,
"Hallelujah!"

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,
for **the marriage of the Lamb has come,**
and **his Bride has made herself ready;**
it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure
—for the fine linen is the **righteous deeds of the saints.**”

And the angel said to me,

“Write this:

Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

And he said to me,

“These are the true words of God.”

(Revelation 19:6-9 ESV)

Note that there are two groups involved in the marriage supper: the Bride, **“his Bride has made herself ready”**; and the invited guests, **“those who are invited to the marriage supper”**.

The Bride is the New Testament Church. The guests are those righteous individuals from Abel until the inception of the New Testament Church to whom God the Father sees fit to grant the gift of eternal life.

The Apostle Paul defines the “marriage” relationship:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife
even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

Now **as the church submits to Christ,**

so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives,

as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

that he might sanctify her, **having cleansed her** by the washing of water **with the word,**

so that he might present the church to himself in splendor,

without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,

that she might be holy and without blemish.

In the same way **husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.**

He who loves his wife loves himself.

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it,

just as Christ does the church, because **we are members of his body.**

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother

and hold fast to his wife,

and the two shall become one flesh.”

This mystery is profound, and I am saying that **it refers to Christ and the church.**

However, **let each one of you love his wife as himself,**

and **let the wife see that she respects her husband.**

(Ephesians 5:22-33 ESV)

Earlier, Paul had expressed concern for **the people in Corinth** because they **lacked commitment,** which **Paul compared to the purity of a virgin bride:**

For I feel a divine jealousy for you,

since **I betrothed you to one husband,**

to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning,

your thoughts will be **led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.**

For **if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus** than the one we proclaimed,

or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received,

or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted,

you put up with it readily enough.

(2 Corinthians 11:2-4 ESV)

Paul similarly exhorted the Church at Philippi:

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more,
with **knowledge** and all **discernment**,
so that you may approve what is excellent,
and so **be pure and blameless for the day of Christ**,
filled with the **fruit of righteousness** that comes **through Jesus Christ**,
to the glory and praise of God.
(Philippians 1:9-11 ESV)

The author of the Book of Hebrews describes how spiritual purity is attained:

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places **by the blood of Jesus**,
by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,
and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,
with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience
and **our bodies washed with pure water**.
(Hebrews 10:19-22 ESV)

The **Apostle Peter** elaborates explaining that **living by the Way of God**, the **“word of God”**,
is **the only way to attain spiritual purity**. **The Apostle John concurs:**

Having **purified** [yourselves] (psyche)⁴⁷⁴ by your **obedience to the truth** for a sincere brotherly love,
love one another earnestly from **a pure heart**, [since you have been begotten again] (anagennaō),⁴⁷⁵
not of perishable seed but of imperishable, **through the living and abiding word of God**; for
“All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
but **the word of the Lord remains forever.**” (citing Isaiah 40:6b, 8)

And **this word is the good news that was preached to you**.
(1 Peter 1:22-25 ESV)

Beloved, **we are God’s children now**, and what we will be has not yet appeared;
but we know that **when he appears we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is.

And **everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure**.
(1 John 3:2-3 ESV)

Just before his crucifixion, **Jesus himself delivered to the disciples a parable**
to emphasize **the need for spiritual purity through the Holy Spirit:**

Then **the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins**
who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.
For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,
but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.
But at midnight there was a cry,
‘Here is the bridegroom!
Come out to meet him.’

Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.
And **the foolish said to the wise**,
‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’

But the wise answered, saying,
‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you,
go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’

And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came,
and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.
Afterward the other virgins came also, saying,
‘Lord, lord, open to us.’

But he answered,
‘Truly, I say to you, **I do not know you.**’

⁴⁷⁴ See footnote 6

⁴⁷⁵ The verb ἀναγεννάω - anagennaō, specifically means “beget again”; see GEL page 51; it occurs only twice, in 1 Peter 1:3,23.
Peter uses it to emphasize that receiving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of a spiritual life.

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.
(Matthew 25:1-13 ESV see also Luke 13:22-30)

All ten start out well; they are “**pure**”, “**ten virgins**”. The “foolish” were NOT living by the **Way of God**; and thus, **their supply of the Holy Spirit was low**, “**our lamps are going out**”. Each individual must renew daily contact with God through living by the **Way of God**, “**go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves**”. The foolish had lost contact with Jesus Christ, “**I do not know you**”.

To participate in the marriage feast a person must be granted the gift of eternal life by God the Father. Only those persons who know Jesus and are known by Jesus remain candidates for the gift of eternal life:

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
(Romans 6:22-23 ESV)

Jesus said to him,
“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.
If you had known me,
you would have known my Father also.
From now on you do know him and have seen him.”
(John 14:6-7 ESV)

With the Marriage Feast over, Jesus is ready to come to earth.

13.3 Earth Entry

The marriage supper takes place in eternity – outside of time and all constraints of the physical universe. Once the ceremony is over, Jesus will be ready to enter the physical universe and proceed to earth. In the Olivet Prophecy, **Jesus had foretold that all would see him at his return.**

At the Ascension, the angel had told the disciples how Jesus would return:

For **as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west**, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then **all the tribes of the earth** will mourn, and they **will see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
(Matthew 24:27, 30 ESV see also Mark 13:26 // Luke 21:27)

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, **he was lifted up**, and **a cloud took him out of their sight**. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said,
“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?
This **Jesus**, who was taken up from you into heaven, will **come in the same way as you saw him go** into heaven.”
(Acts 1:9-11 ESV)

Then **I saw heaven opened**, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and **in righteousness he judges and makes war**. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is **The Word of God**.

And **the armies of heaven**, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **King of kings and Lord of lords**.
(Revelation 19:11-16 ESV)

All the earth will be aware of Jesus' presence. The armies of the earth, who have been engaged in lethal combat with each other, will turn as one and attempt to fight against the returning Jesus Christ. **This is the Battle of Armageddon.** This is how Jesus "**cuts short**" the war which would destroy all humanity. **Jesus destroys the armies of the earth:**

Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle,

"Put in your sickle and **gather the clusters from the vine of the earth**, for its grapes are ripe."

So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it **into the great winepress of the wrath of God.**⁴⁷⁶

And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia. (Revelation 14:17-20 ESV)

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

And I saw **the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies** gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

And **the beast was captured**, and **with it the false prophet** who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image.

These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

And **the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse**, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (Revelation 19:17-21 ESV)

Prior to "earth entry", events on earth had been proceeding.

13.4 The Assumption of Kingship

While the marriage supper was occurring in eternity, events on earth continued.

The First Resurrection and the marriage supper had no impact on anything happening on earth. The "**seventh trumpet**" heralded the First Resurrection, but also it signalled the beginning of the final event of the **Day of YHWH**. The **seventh trumpet** comprises **seven last plagues** which are **the wrath of God on sinning human beings**.

Six of these are administered by angels before earth entry:

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with **seven plagues**, which are the last, for with them the **wrath of God** is finished.

After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, and out of the sanctuary came **the seven angels with the seven plagues**, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests.

And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels **seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God** who lives forever and ever, and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished. (Revelation 15:1, 5-8 ESV)

⁴⁷⁶ See Isaiah 63:1-6, Lamentations 1:15, Revelation 19:15

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels,
“Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”

So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth,
and harmful and painful sores came upon the people
who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea,
and it became like the blood of a corpse,
and every living thing died that was in the sea.

The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water,
and they became blood.

And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say,
“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was,
for you brought these judgments.
For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
and you have given them blood to drink.
It is what they deserve!”

And I heard the altar saying,
“Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”

The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun,
and it was allowed to scorch people with fire.
They were scorched by the fierce heat,
and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues.

They did not repent and give him glory.

The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast,
and its kingdom was plunged into darkness.
People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores.
They did not repent of their deeds.

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates,
and its water was dried up, **to prepare the way for the kings from the east.**

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 spirits like frogs.

For they are demonic spirits, performing signs,
who go abroad to **the kings of the whole world,**
to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.

(“Behold, I am coming like a thief!
Blessed is the one who stays awake,
keeping his garments on,
that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”)

And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.
(Revelation 16:1-16 ESV)

This is the point at which earth entry occurs. One bowl remains to be poured out:

The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air,
and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying,
“It is done!”⁴⁷⁷

And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder,
and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth,
so great was that earthquake.

The great city was split into three parts,
and the cities of the nations fell,
and **God remembered Babylon the great,**
to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found.

And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people;
and **they cursed God for the plague of the hail,** because the plague was so severe.

(Revelation 16:17-21 ESV)

⁴⁷⁷ See footnote 49
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After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory.

And he called out with a mighty voice,

"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!

She has become a dwelling place for demons,
a haunt for every unclean spirit,
a haunt for every unclean bird,
a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

For **all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality,**
and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her,
and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living."

(Revelation 18:1-3 ESV)

After this I heard what seemed to be **the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven,** crying out,

"Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,

for his judgments are true and just;
for he has judged the great prostitute
who corrupted the earth with her immorality,
and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

Once more they cried out,

"Hallelujah!

The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying,

"Amen.

Hallelujah!"

And from the throne came a voice saying,

"Praise our God, all you his servants,
you who fear him, small and great."

(Revelation 19:1-5 ESV)

And the King of kings will establish the Kingdom of God:

Lift up your heads, O gates!

And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that **the King of glory may come in.**

Who is this King of glory?

[YHWH], strong and mighty, [YHWH], mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates!

And lift them up, O ancient doors, that **the King of glory may come in.**

Who is this King of glory?

[YHWH] of hosts, he is the King of glory!

(Psalm 24:7-10 ESV)

And in the days of those kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom**
that shall never be destroyed,
nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end,
and **it shall stand forever ...**

(Daniel 2:44 ESV)

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end ...

(Isaiah 9:7a ESV)

14. The Gospel to all the World

With the **establishment of the Kingdom of God**, Jesus Christ will commence his work through his “Bride”, his team of Kings and Priests, now full members of the Family of God, spirit beings like Jesus Christ. **The world is a devastated mess**: there has been nuclear war; the trumpet plagues and the seven last plagues have destroyed all the enemies of God, “**the destroyers of the earth**”.⁴⁷⁸

Several Old Testament prophets saw this devastation:

Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong;
for **I have heard a decree of destruction**
from the Lord [YHWH] of hosts **against the whole [earth] (‘eretz)**.⁴⁷⁹

Behold, [YHWH] will empty the earth (‘eretz) and make it desolate,
and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.

And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest;
as with the slave, so with his master;
as with the maid, so with her mistress;
as with the buyer, so with the seller;
as with the lender, so with the borrower;
as with the creditor, so with the debtor.

The earth (‘eretz) shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered;

for [YHWH] has spoken this word.

The earth (‘eretz) mourns and withers;
the world (tevel)⁴⁸⁰ languishes and withers;
the highest people of the earth (‘eretz) languish.
The earth (‘eretz) lies defiled under its inhabitants;
for **they have transgressed [torah]**,⁴⁸¹ violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.⁴⁸²

Therefore a curse devours the earth (‘eretz), and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
therefore the inhabitants of the earth (‘eretz) are scorched, and few men are left.
(Isaiah 28:22, 24:1-6 ESV)

I looked on **the earth (‘eretz)**,⁴⁸³ and behold, it **was without form and void**;
and to the heavens, and they had no light.

I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro.
I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the air had fled.

I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert,
and **all its cities were laid in ruins**
before [YHWH], before his fierce anger.
(Jeremiah 4:23-26 ESV)

Hear, **you peoples**, all of you; pay attention, **O earth (‘eretz)**, and all that is in it,
and let the Lord [YHWH] be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.

For behold, **[YHWH] is coming out of his place**,
and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth (‘eretz).

And the mountains will melt under him, and the valleys will split open,
like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place.
(Micah 1:2-4 ESV)

I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth (‘adamah),⁴⁸⁴
declares [YHWH].

I will sweep away man and beast;
I will sweep away the birds of the heavens
and the fish of the sea,
and the rubble with the wicked.

⁴⁷⁸ See Revelation 11:18

⁴⁷⁹ See footnote [460](#)

⁴⁸⁰ The Hebrew תֵּבֵל - tevel, “world”, is more or less synonymous with ‘eretz in referring to the whole earth.

⁴⁸¹ See footnote [54](#)

⁴⁸² See [Excursus 3 – The Covenant Blessings and Curses](#)

⁴⁸³ See footnote [460](#)

⁴⁸⁴ The Hebrew אֲדָמָה - ‘adamah, “earth”, is more or less synonymous with ‘eretz in referring to the whole earth.

I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth ('adamah),
declares [YHWH].
(Zephaniah 1:2-3 ESV)

There will no doubt need to be **miraculous regeneration of the earth's atmosphere**
as occurred in the recreation described in Genesis chapter 1:

The earth ('eretz) was without form and void,
and **darkness** was over the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.
And **God said,**
 "Let there be light,"
and there was light.
And God saw that the light was good.
And God separated the light from the darkness.
(Genesis 1:2-4 ESV)

Then the real work begins. The **survivors** of the holocaust over the whole earth will require attention. They **will require food, shelter, and hope.** Presumably with angelic assistance, the members of the God Family will fan out over the whole world and explain to the survivors what has happened. Exactly how this will occur, we will find out when the time comes. The fact of **the universal government of the King of kings** is the most important thing the survivors will need to know. Miracles will probably be required to initially provide food. The survivors will have to be organized to provide shelter for themselves. And most importantly, **people will be taught the Way of God,** the gospel:

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that **the mountain of the house of [YHWH]**
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;
and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come, and say:
 "Come, let us go up to the mountain of [YHWH], to the house of the God of Jacob,
 that he may **teach us his ways** and that we may **walk in his paths.**"

For out of Zion shall go forth [torah]⁴⁸⁵ [even]⁴⁸⁶ the word of [YHWH] from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore;
but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree,
and no one shall make them afraid,
for the mouth of [YHWH] of hosts has spoken.

For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god,⁴⁸⁷
but **we will walk in the name of [YHWH] our God forever and ever.**
(Micah 4:1-5 ESV // Isaiah 2:2-5)

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain;
for **the earth ('eretz)⁴⁸⁸ shall be full of the knowledge of [YHWH] as the waters cover the sea.**
(Isaiah 11:6-9 ESV)

While God's focus is all humanity over the whole world,
his purpose will be accomplished through a reconstituted nation of Israel.

⁴⁸⁵ See footnote [54](#)

⁴⁸⁶ See footnote [108](#)

⁴⁸⁷ This is an allusion to the past.

⁴⁸⁸ See footnote [460](#)

14.1 The Example Nation

While first contact is underway with the survivors of the holocaust, **God will be preparing a new Nation of Israel** to be an example nation for all other nations of the world.

This was the purpose of Ancient Israel, but it failed.⁴⁸⁹ At the center of the world will be a **new Temple** in the new Nation of Israel. **All the world will come to his Temple to learn “holiness”**.

All the world will come to Jerusalem to worship God:

Then **everyone who survives** of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem **shall go up year after year to worship the King**, [YHWH] of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.
(Zechariah 14:16 ESV)

For further discussion of these topics please see the following:

- Section **4. Ezekiel’s Preaching: Hope Realized** in the paper “**Tragedy, Faith, and Hope**”
- Section **5.1 The Restoration of the Land of Israel** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**”
- Section **2.4.5 The World Tomorrow and Beyond** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”
- These papers are all located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

The first promise to Abraham,⁴⁹⁰ “**I will make of you a great nation**”, with a territory, “**to your offspring I will give this land**”, was fulfilled in type under Joshua.⁴⁹¹

The real fulfillment occurs with the Second Exodus and the New Israel.

The “promised land” was taken away from Ancient Israel for violations of the Sinai Covenant.⁴⁹²

New Israel will possess the “promised land” in peace, safety, and obedience for a thousand years!

14.1.1 The Second Exodus

To create the new Nation of Israel, God will call people from the four corners of the earth to the Land of Israel in a “**Second Exodus**”:

In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time

to recover the remnant that remains of his people,
from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath,
and from the coastlands of the sea.

He will raise a signal for the nations and will **assemble the banished of Israel**,
and **gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth**.

(Isaiah 11:11-12 ESV see also Zechariah 10:6-10)

Therefore, behold, **the days are coming**, declares [YHWH],
when it shall no longer be said,

‘As [YHWH] lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’
but

**‘As [YHWH] lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country
and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’**

For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers.

Behold, I am sending for many fishers, declares [YHWH], and they shall catch them.

And afterward I will send for many hunters,
and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill,
and out of the clefts of the rocks.

(Jeremiah 16:14-16 ESV)

⁴⁸⁹ See section **1.3 The Purpose of Ancient Israel** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” and section **2.3.2 The Purpose of Israel** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁹⁰ For more detailed discussion of the promises to Abraham, see section **3. The Covenant of Promise** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**”; sections **10.5.3 The Promises of God** and **11.2 Abraham and the Promises of God** in the paper “**The Writings of Moses**”; and, sections **1.2 The Promises to Abraham**, **4. The Gospel to the Nations**, and **5. All Nations in the World Tomorrow** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**”; all papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁹¹ See section **3. Abraham – The Father of the Faithful**

⁴⁹² See section **6.4 Prophets of the Destruction**; see also **Excursus 3 – The Covenant Blessings and Curses**

In that day the **remnant of Israel** [even]⁴⁹³ the **survivors of the house of Jacob**

will no more lean on him who struck them,
but will lean on [YHWH], the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, **to the mighty God**.

For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return.
(Isaiah 10:20-22a ESV)

Fear not, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the **east**, and from the **west** I will gather you.

I will say to the **north**, Give up, and to the **south**, Do not withhold;
bring my **sons** from afar and my **daughters** from the end of the earth,

everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.

And **the ransomed of [YHWH]** shall return and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
(Isaiah 43:5-7, 51:11 ESV)

Behold, I will bring them **from the north country**
and gather them **from the farthest parts of the earth**,

among them the blind and the lame,
the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back,

I will make them walk by brooks of water,

in a straight path in which they shall not stumble,

for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

(Jeremiah 31:8-9 ESV)

Then **the eyes of the blind shall be opened**,

and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

then shall the lame man leap like a deer,

and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water;

in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called **the Way of Holiness**;

the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to **those who walk on the way**;

even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;

they shall not be found there, but **the redeemed shall walk there**.

And **the ransomed of [YHWH]** shall return and come to Zion with singing;

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

(Isaiah 35:5-10 ESV see also 41:17-20)

Go through, go through the gates;

prepare the way for the people;

build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the peoples.

Behold, [YHWH] has proclaimed to the end of the earth:

Say to the daughter of Zion,

“Behold, your salvation comes;

behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.”

And they shall be called **The Holy People, The Redeemed of [YHWH]**;

and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

(Isaiah 62:10-12 ESV)

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

‘Though I removed them far off among the nations,

and though I scattered them among the countries,

yet **I have been a sanctuary to them** for a while in the countries where they have gone.’

⁴⁹³ See footnote 108

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

'I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and **I will give you the land of Israel.'**

And **when they come there,**

they will **remove** from it all its **detestable things** and all its **abominations.**

And **I will give them one heart,** and **a new spirit** I will put within them.

I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

that they may **walk in my statutes** and **keep my [mish*patim]**⁴⁹⁴ and **obey them.**

And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

(Ezekiel 11:16-20 ESV)

Those called to the Second Exodus, **"everyone who is called"**, will come from everywhere on earth, **"the four corners of the earth"**, **"the farthest parts of the earth"**. All are called to conversion, **"the ransomed of YHWH"**, to become **"Holy People"**, **"the Redeemed of YHWH"**. They will learn to live by the **Way of God**, **"walk on the way"**, **"the Way of Holiness"**, **"the redeemed shall walk there"**.

14.1.2 The New Israel

The people who return will be constituted into the **new Nation of Israel**. Each person who is called to the New Israel will also be called to conversion. At the start of World Tomorrow, **the New Israel and the New Testament Church will be coterminous**. The prophecies of the **New Covenant** are framed in the context of New Israel:

For on my holy mountain, **the mountain height of Israel**, declares the Lord [YHWH], there **all the house of Israel**, all of them, **shall serve me** in the land.

There **I will accept them**, and there I will require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your sacred offerings.

As a pleasing aroma I will accept you,

when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered.

And **I will manifest my holiness** among you in the sight of the nations.

And you shall know that I am [YHWH],

when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country that I swore to give to your fathers.

And there **you shall remember** your ways and all **your deeds** with which **you have defiled yourselves**, and **you shall loathe yourselves** for all the evils that you have committed.

And **you shall know that I am [YHWH]**, when I deal with you for my name's sake,

not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds,

O house of Israel, declares the Lord [YHWH].

(Ezekiel 20:40-44 ESV)

Behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH],

when **I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day

when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt,

my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares [YHWH].

For **this is the covenant that I will make** with the house of Israel after those days, declares [YHWH]:

I will put my [torah]⁴⁹⁵ **within them,**

and **I will write it on their hearts.**

And **I will be their God,** and **they shall be my people.**

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying,

'Know [YHWH],'

for **they shall all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest, declares [YHWH].

For **I will forgive their iniquity,** and **I will remember their sin no more.**

(Jeremiah 31:31-34 ESV see also 32:37-40, Ezekiel 16:59-63, 34:26-30, 36:22-32)

The New Covenant is a covenant of conversion, **"I will put my torah within them"**, **"I will write it on their hearts"**. The New Covenant requires repentance, **"you shall remember"**, **"you have defiled yourselves"**, **"you shall loathe yourselves"**, and subsequent forgiveness, **"I will forgive their iniquity"**,

⁴⁹⁴ See footnote 160

⁴⁹⁵ See footnote 54

“I will remember their sin no more”. It is a covenant of True Worship, **“I will be their God”**, **“they shall be my people”**, **“they shall all know me”**.

The people of New Israel, living under the New Covenant, will fulfill the intent of the Sinai Covenant, to be the example nation of God to all the world,

“YHWH has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel”:

Now therefore,
if you will indeed **obey my voice**
and **keep my covenant**,
you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;
and **you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**.
(Exodus 19:5-6a ESV)

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that **she has received from [YHWH's] hand double for all her sins**.
(Isaiah 40:1-2 ESV)

Remember these things, O Jacob, [even]⁴⁹⁶ Israel, for **you are my servant**;
I formed you; you are my servant;
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.
I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist;
return to me, for **I have redeemed you**.

Sing, O heavens, for [YHWH] has done it;⁴⁹⁷
shout, O depths of the earth;
break forth into singing, O mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it!

For **[YHWH] has redeemed Jacob**, and **will be glorified in Israel**.
(Isaiah 44:21-23 ESV see also Ezekiel 37:15-28)

Using metaphoric language, alluding the **first exodus** and the **Feast of Tabernacles**,
God promises protection and blessing for the New Israel:

In that day the branch of [YHWH] shall be beautiful and glorious,
and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.

And **he who is left** in Zion and remains in Jerusalem **will be called holy**,
everyone who has been recorded for life⁴⁹⁸ in Jerusalem,
when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion
and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst
by a spirit of [justness] (mish^epat)⁴⁹⁹ and by a spirit of burning.

Then [YHWH] will create over the whole site of Mount Zion
and over her assemblies **a cloud by day**,
and smoke and the shining of a flaming **fire by night**;
for over all the glory there will be **a canopy**.
There will be **a booth for shade** by day from the heat,
and for **a refuge** and **a shelter** from the storm and rain.
(Isaiah 4:2-6 ESV)

The new Nation of Israel will be **blessed by God** and will be **taught by God**,
and the people will reciprocate by **serving God**:

For [YHWH] will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel,
and will set them in their own land,
and sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob.

In that day [YHWH] of hosts will be a crown of glory,
and a diadem of beauty, **to the remnant of his people**,
and a **spirit of justice (mish^epat)** to him who sits in judgment,
and strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.
(Isaiah 14:1, 28:5-6 ESV)

⁴⁹⁶ See footnote [108](#)

⁴⁹⁷ See footnote [49](#)

⁴⁹⁸ See footnote [4](#)

⁴⁹⁹ See footnote [48](#)

Therefore [YHWH] waits to be **gracious to you**,
and therefore he exalts himself to show **mercy to you**.
For [YHWH] is a God of [justness] (**mish^epat**); blessed are all those who wait for him.
For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more.
He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry.
As soon as he hears it, he answers you.

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction,
yet your **Teacher** will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your **Teacher**.
And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying,
“**This is the way, walk in it,**”

when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.
(Isaiah 30:18-21 ESV)

... until **the Spirit is poured upon us from on high**,
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

Then [justness] (**mish^epat**) will dwell in the wilderness,
and **righteousness** abide in the fruitful field.
And the effect of righteousness will be **peace**,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and **trust** forever.

My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.
(Isaiah 32:15-18 ESV)

[YHWH] is exalted, for he dwells on high;
he will fill Zion with [justness] (**mish^epat**) and righteousness,
and he **will be the stability of your times**,
abundance of salvation, **wisdom**, and **knowledge**;
the [reverence for]⁵⁰⁰ [YHWH] is Zion's treasure.

Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty;
they will see a land that stretches afar.

Your heart will muse on the terror:
“Where is he who counted,
where is he who weighed the tribute?
Where is he who counted the towers?”

You will see no more the insolent people,
the people of an obscure speech that you cannot comprehend,
stammering in a tongue that you cannot understand.

Behold Zion, **the city of our appointed [times] (mo`ed)**!⁵⁰¹
Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent,
whose stakes will never be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken.⁵⁰²

But there [YHWH] in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams,
where no galley with oars can go, nor majestic ship can pass.

For [YHWH] is our judge;
[YHWH] is our lawgiver;
[YHWH] is our king;
he will save us.

(Isaiah 33:5-6, 17-22 ESV)

At that time, declares [YHWH],
I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and **they shall be my people**.

Thus says [YHWH]:
“The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest, [YHWH] appeared to him from far away.
I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my [hesed]⁵⁰³ to you.

⁵⁰⁰ Hebrew יִרְאָה - yir^eah, “fear”, “reverence”; with respect to God, “reverence” is preferred.

See Excursus 5 – **Reverence** יִרְאָה in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁵⁰¹ See footnote **193**

⁵⁰² This is in contrast with the “movable” Tabernacle, where the worship of God started.

⁵⁰³ See footnote **46**

Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel!

Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines
and shall go forth in the dance of the merry-makers.

Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria;
the planters shall plant and shall enjoy the fruit.

For there shall be a day when watchmen will call in the hill country of Ephraim:

‘Arise, and **let us go up to Zion, to [YHWH] our God.**”

(Jeremiah 31:1-6 ESV)

The Prophet Isaiah looks to Israel’s success, **“fill the whole world with fruit”**,
and the second **Servant Song**⁵⁰⁴ explicates Israel’s role as example to the nations:

In days to come Jacob shall take root,
Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots
and **fill the whole world with fruit.**

(Isaiah 27:6 ESV)

It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel;

**I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.**

(Isaiah 49:6 ESV)

The New Israel will serve as the example nation in True Worship of God. At the center the nation
will be the New Temple – **the focal point from which “holiness” will be taught to all humanity.**

14.1.3 The New Temple

Of all the prophets of the Old Testament, **the Prophet Ezekiel was given the most detailed
and most specific vision of the World Tomorrow.** Chapters 40 through 48 of the Book of Ezekiel contain
the report of the vision. For further discussion of this vision, see section **2.4.5.3 The New Temple**
in the paper **“Pillar Two - The Plan of God”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca;
see also the presentations, **“Ezekiel - Land, City, & Temple”** and **“Ezekiel - The Temple Service”**
located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations>.

Briefly the vision contains the following elements:

- An **architectural sketch** of the New Temple is provided in Ezekiel 40:5-49
and all of chapters 41 and 42
- The **consecration ceremony** for the altar of burnt offerings is discussed in Ezekiel 43:13-27
- The role of **“the prince”** is discussed in Ezekiel 44:1-3, 45:7-8, 13-17, and 46:1-10
- The role of the restored **Levitical Priesthood** is discussed in Ezekiel 44:15-31
- The layout of the **City of Jerusalem** and its environs is discussed in Ezekiel 45:1-8, and 48:30-35
- The **allotment of the Land** to the twelve tribes of the New Israel is discussed
in Ezekiel 47:13-23, and 48:1-29
- The **“River of Life”** is discussed in Ezekiel 47:1-12

This Temple will be the Throne of the King of kings from which the Kingdom of God will bring peace,
order, good government, prosperity, health, freedom, and most importantly, **the Way of God,**
to each and every person on planet earth. From this Temple, the teaching will go out
that provides **to each and ever human being the opportunity for salvation:**

And behold, **the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east.**

And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.

And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city,
and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal.

And I fell on my face.

As the glory of [YHWH] entered the temple by the gate facing east,
the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court;
and behold, **the glory of [YHWH] filled the temple.**

⁵⁰⁴ See Isaiah 49:1-7

While the man was standing beside me,
I heard one speaking to me out of the temple, and he said to me,
“Son of man, **this is the place of my throne** and the place of the soles of my feet,
where **I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever**,
and the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name ...”
(Ezekiel 43:2-7a ESV)

The Temple is “holy” because God, YHWH, Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is present in the Temple:

Now when he had finished measuring the interior of the temple area,
he led me out by the gate that faced east, and **measured the temple area all around**.
He measured it on the four sides.
It had a wall around it, 500 cubits long and 500 cubits broad,
to make a separation between the holy and the common.
(Ezekiel 42:15, 20 ESV)

The purpose of the “holiness” of the Temple is first to teach the people of New Israel, “holiness”;
then **to teach all people in every nation of the world, “holiness”**:

As for you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple,
that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and **they shall measure the plan**.
And **if they are ashamed** of all that they have done, **make known to them the design of the temple**,
its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, that is, its whole design;
and make **known to them as well all its statutes** and **its whole design** and **all its [toroth]**,⁵⁰⁵
and write it down in their sight,
so that **they may observe all its [design]**⁵⁰⁶ and **all its statutes** and **carry them out**.

This is [torah] of the temple:

the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy.

Behold, this is [torah] of the temple.

(Ezekiel 43:10-12 ESV)

But **the Levitical priests**, the sons of Zadok,
who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me,⁵⁰⁷
shall come near to me to minister to me.
And they shall stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord [YHWH].
They shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me,
and **they shall keep my charge**.

They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common,
and show them **how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean**.⁵⁰⁸

In a dispute, they shall act as judges, and **they shall judge it according to my [mish`patim]**.⁵⁰⁹
They shall **keep my [toroth]**⁵¹⁰ and **my statutes** in all **my appointed [times] (mo`ed)**,⁵¹¹
and **they shall keep my Sabbaths holy**.

(Ezekiel 44:15-16, 23-24 ESV)

My dwelling place shall be with them, and **I will be their God**, and **they shall be my people**.

Then **the nations will know that I am [YHWH]** who sanctifies Israel,
when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh,⁵¹²
of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel,
shall enter my sanctuary.

(Ezekiel 37:27-28, 44:9 ESV)

- The physical properties of the Temple are there to teach “holiness”,
“make known to them the design of the temple”,
“they shall measure the plan”, **“its whole design”**.

⁵⁰⁵ Plural of *torah*; see footnote 54

⁵⁰⁶ ESV has “laws, but the Hebrew is צִוִּיּוֹת - tzurah, “design”; as in several other places in this passage.

⁵⁰⁷ It is NOT clear to what this is historically alluding; it MAY allude to Zadok’s loyalty to David in the Absalom rebellion; see 2 Samuel 15:24-29.

⁵⁰⁸ See Leviticus 10:10-11

⁵⁰⁹ See footnote 160

⁵¹⁰ Plural of *torah*; see footnote 54

⁵¹¹ See footnote 193

⁵¹² Physical circumcision as a religious rite is, of course, rendered obsolete by the Jerusalem Conference of 49AD; therefore, “circumcision in the flesh” has to be taken metaphorically;

see section 4.4.1 *Galatians* in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

- “Holiness” is defined by the teachings of God, **“all its toroth”, “all its statutes”, “observe all its design”, “carry them out”**.
- Nothing that is “unclean” can come into contact with anything in the sanctuary, **“the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy”, “teach my people the difference between the holy and the common”, “between the unclean and the clean”**.
- Only people with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will be allowed in the Temple Courts, **“no foreigner”, “uncircumcised in heart”, “shall enter my sanctuary”**.
- The Way of God will be taught from the Temple, **“the Levitical priests”, “shall keep my Sabbaths holy”, “keep my toroth”, “my statutes”, “my appointed times”**.
- God’s objective is to teach all humanity, **“the nations will know that I am YHWH”**.

However, the Bible does contain the warning that the teaching of “holiness”, the **Way of God**, will NOT go completely smoothly over the whole world.

There will remain yet some resistance to the Kingdom of God.

14.2 The Nations on the Periphery

Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream image, discussed in section **12.1 The Mainstream of Civilization**, identified the peoples and nations in which the work of God would be carried out from Daniel’s time until the inception of the Kingdom of God. Even in Daniel’s time, however, the Bible is clear that there were **nations and peoples outside of the mainstream of civilization**.

The Hebrew word for these nations is יָם - ‘iy, “coast”, “island”;⁵¹³ usually translated **“coastland”** in the ESV. The word is first used in **Table of Nations**:

The **sons of Japheth**: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

The **sons of Gomer**: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

The **sons of Javan**: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

From these the coastland (‘iy) peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.
(Genesis 10:2-5 ESV)

The superscription of **Psalms 72** contains לִישׁוֹמָה - lish^alomah, “of/for Solomon”.

Assuming it was written by David, or a contemporary, it is an ancient Psalm.

The theme of the Psalm is **Solomon’s Kingship as a type of the Kingship of the Messiah, Jesus Christ**.

This Psalm contains the next instance of “‘iy”:

May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!

May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust!

May **the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands (‘iy)** render him tribute;

may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!

May all kings fall down before him, **all nations serve him!**

(Psalm 72:8-11 ESV)

Similarly, the **Prophet Isaiah** reports YHWH looking to the **“nations on the periphery”**:

For **I know their works and their thoughts**,

and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues.

And they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them.

And from them I will send survivors to the nations,

to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan,

to the coastlands (‘iy) far away,

that have not heard my fame or seen my glory.

And **they shall declare my glory among the nations**.

(Isaiah 66:18-19 ESV)

⁵¹³ See Holladay page 12
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Ezekiel chapter 38 starts by identifying a group of nations among the “coastlands”,

nations on the periphery of the mainstream of civilization:

The word of [YHWH] came to me:

“Son of man, **set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog,**
the chief prince of **Meshech** and **Tubal**, and prophesy against him and say,
Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.

Persia, Cush, and **Put** are with them, all of them with shield and helmet;

Gomer and all his hordes;

Beth-togarmah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes

—**many peoples are with you.**

(Ezekiel 38:1-3, 5-6 ESV)

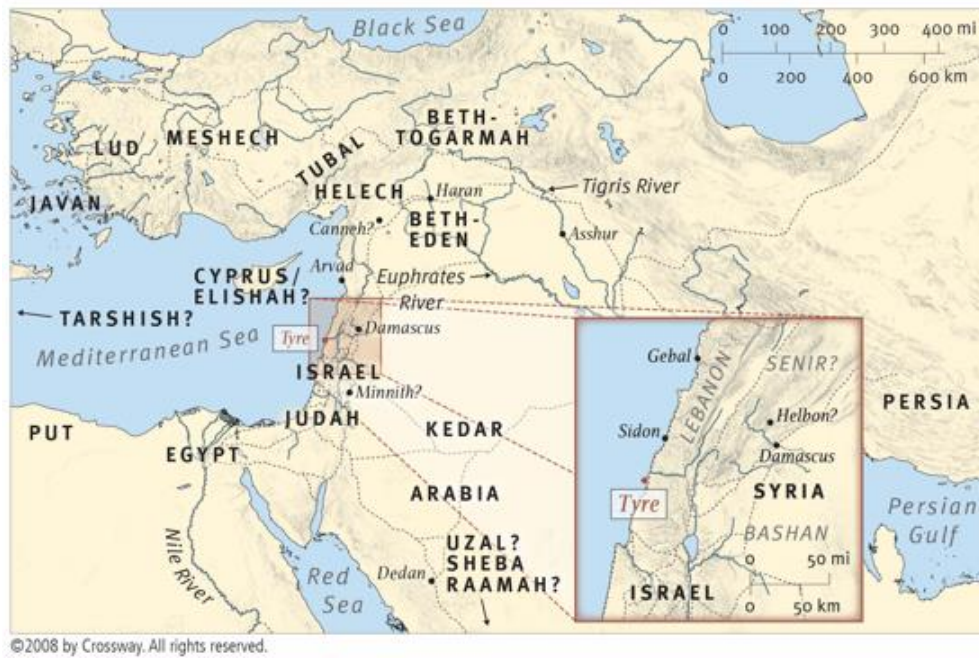
The following maps show **the geographic relationship of these “nations on the periphery”**

with the mainstream of Civilization. At the time of Ezekiel, Babylon was the mainstream of civilization.

The Median Empire did NOT enter the mainstream until it merged with Persia and assumed hegemony

over the Babylonian Empire. **At the time of Ezekiel the nations listed in Ezekiel chapter 38 were**

mostly within the Median Empire or to the west of it:



Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 then describe **an event which will occur after the establishment of the Kingdom of God**. This is made clear by the following facts:

- The New Nation of Israel has been established:
After many days you will be mustered.
In the latter years you will go against **the land that is restored from war**,
the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel,
which had been a continual waste.
Its people were brought out from the peoples and **now dwell securely**, all of them.
(Ezekiel 38:8 ESV)
- The people of New Israel are living in peace and safety:
Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
On that day, thoughts will come into your mind,
and you will devise an evil scheme and say,
'I will go up against **the land of unwalled villages**.
I will fall upon the **quiet people who dwell securely**,
all of them **dwelling without walls**, and **having no bars or gates**' ...
(Ezekiel 38:10-11 ESV)
- New Israel has been established long enough for the people to acquire wealth:
... **to seize spoil and carry off plunder**,
to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited,
and **the people** who were gathered from the nations,
who **have acquired livestock and goods**, who dwell at the center of the earth.
(Ezekiel 38:12 ESV)

Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 then describe **an attack by a vast hoard** led by "Gog of the land of Magog"
upon the New Israel. YHWH, **Jesus Christ**, the King of kings, **utterly destroys the hoard**:

And 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 clothed in full armor,
a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords.

You will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north,
you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army.
You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land.

In the latter days I will bring you against my land,
that the nations may know me,
when through you, O Gog, **I vindicate my holiness before their eyes**.
(Ezekiel 38:4, 15-16 ESV)

But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel,
declares the Lord [YHWH], **my wrath will be roused in my anger**.

I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord [YHWH].
Every man's sword will be against his brother.
With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him,
and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him
torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur.

So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations.
Then they will know that I am [YHWH].

Then I will strike your bow from your left hand,
and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand.

You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you.
I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.
You shall fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Lord [YHWH].

I will send fire on Magog and **on those who dwell securely in the coastlands ('iy)**,
and **they shall know that I am [YHWH]**.

And **my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel**,
and **I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore**.

And **the nations shall know that I am [YHWH], the Holy One in Israel**.
(Ezekiel 38:18, 21-23, 39:3-7 ESV)

God is in complete control of this event, "**I will bring you out**", "**I will bring you against my land**".
God has a purpose in the event, "**that the nations may know me**", "**I vindicate my holiness before their eyes**". God utterly destroys the hoard, "**my wrath will be roused in my anger**",

“I will summon a sword against Gog”, “you shall fall on the mountains of Israel”. Not only that, but God renders punishment on the homelands of the hoard, **“I will send fire on Magog”, “in the coastlands”.** The whole event is an object lesson; first for Israel, **“my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel”**; secondly, for the nations of the world, **“the nations shall know that I am YHWH”, “the Holy One in Israel”.**

The question then is **who are these people? From where does this vast hoard come?**

The ancient peoples, identified in Ezekiel chapter 38, serve as **a type** of **“nations on the periphery”**, nations who are outside of the mainstream of civilization after the establishment of the Kingdom of God. At the end-time, **the mainstream of civilization is Western Civilization**, the “feet and toes” of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream image. The rest of the world is the “nations on the periphery”. The vast hoard is stated to come **“from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north”**. In Ezekiel’s time the **“uttermost parts of the north”** were the areas to the north and east of the Median empire – **areas we call “Asia” today.**

The **Book of Isaiah** looks to this time when Jerusalem is at peace:

Your gates shall be open continually;
day and night they shall not be shut,
that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.
For **the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish;**
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.
(Isaiah 60:11-12 ESV)

After the attack of Gog, **all nations will accept the Kingdom of God.**

14.3 The Millennium

Once all the nations of the world are aligned in serving the King of kings, the **benefits of the Kingdom of God** can begin to accrue **to all peoples** over the whole world:

Behold, **a king will reign in righteousness**, and **princes will rule in [justness] (mish'pat).**⁵¹⁴
Each will be like **a hiding place** from the wind, **a shelter** from the storm,
like **streams of water** in a dry place,
like the **shade** of a great rock in a weary land.

Then **the eyes of those who see will not be closed,**
and **the ears of those who hear will give attention.**

The heart of **the hasty** will understand and know,
and the tongue of **the stammerers** will hasten to speak distinctly.
The fool will no more be called noble, nor the scoundrel said to be honorable.
(Isaiah 32:1-5 ESV)

In that day **the deaf shall hear the words of a book,**
and out of their gloom and darkness **the eyes of the blind shall see.**
The **meek** shall obtain fresh joy in [YHWH],
and the **poor** among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.
(Isaiah 29:18-19 ESV)

The members of the Kingdom of God, **“princes”,** working for Jesus Christ, **“a king”,** will bring great relief to a suffering and war-weary world. The governments of this world under the influence of Satan the Devil regard people as mere objects to be manipulated for the benefit of those in government. The government of God will be characterized by **“righteousness”** and **“justness”**. **Those who administer the government will be motivated by a desire to serve.** In contrast with domineering, manipulative, officials, the members of the God Family will succor and care for the people, **“a hiding place”, “a shelter”, “streams of water”, “shade”.**

Indeed, there will be physical healing of the **“blind”** and the **“deaf”**; but, far more importantly, spiritual blindness and deafness will be removed. **The “calling of God” will be available to all.** Those who begin to see, **“the eyes of those who see will not be closed”,** and hear, **“the ears of those who hear will give attention”,**

⁵¹⁴ See footnote 48
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will not have **“Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them”**.⁵¹⁵ Satan will no longer be able to influence humanity. The lying ways of this world will be gone, **“the fool will no more be called noble”**. People will learn humility, **“meek”**, and contrition, **“poor”**. Most importantly, **the understanding of the Bible will be opened up at all people:**

On this mountain [YHWH] of hosts will make for all peoples **a feast of rich food**, a feast of well-aged wine, of **rich food** full of marrow, of **aged wine** well refined.

And he will swallow up on this mountain **the covering that is cast over all peoples**, **the veil that is spread over all nations**.

He will swallow up death forever;

and the Lord [YHWH] will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for [YHWH] has spoken. It will be said on that day,

“Behold, this is our God;
we have waited for him, that he might save us.

This is [YHWH]; we have waited for him;

let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

(Isaiah 25:6-9 ESV)

Under the Kingdom of God, **“on this mountain”**, indeed there will be physical abundance, **“a feast of rich food”**; but, the **“rich food”** and the **“aged wine”** are really a metaphor for the spiritual food available from the **Word of God**, the **Bible**, which the vast majority of humanity has NEVER been able to understand. People today cannot understand the Bible because they are NOT led by the Holy Spirit, **“the covering that is cast over all peoples”**, **“the veil that is spread over all nations”**.

At Jesus’ death, this veil was symbolically destroyed:

And **Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last**.

And **the curtain of the temple was torn in two**, from top to bottom.

(Mark 15:37-38 ESV // Matthew 27:50-51a see also Luke 23:45b-46)

Jesus’ death makes possible the victory over death, **“he will swallow up death forever”**:

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.” (alluding to Isaiah 25:8)

“O death, where is your victory?”

O death, where is your sting?” (citing Hosea 13:14bα)

(1 Corinthians 15:25-26, 53-55 ESV)

In the Millennium, salvation will be available to each and every person on the planet, **“let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation”**! As the Gospel spreads throughout the world, all people will have the opportunity to seek God, to learn the **Way of God**, and become candidates for the gift of eternal life:

Listen to me, **you who pursue righteousness, you who seek [YHWH]**:

look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.

Look to **Abraham your father**⁵¹⁶ and to Sarah who bore you;

for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him.⁵¹⁷

For [YHWH] comforts Zion:

he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden,

her desert like the garden of [YHWH];

joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁵¹⁵ See Mark 4:15

⁵¹⁶ See section 3. **Abraham – The Father of the Faithful**

⁵¹⁷ All humanity will have the opportunity to claim Abraham as “father of the faithful”.

Give attention to me, **my people**, and give ear to me, **my nation**:
for [torah]⁵¹⁸ will go out from me,
and **I will set my [justness] (mish^epat)⁵¹⁹ for a light to the peoples.**
My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out,
and my arms will judge the peoples;
the coastlands ('iy) hope for me, and for my arm they wait.
Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment,
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner;
but **my salvation will be forever,** and **my righteousness will never be dismayed.**
(Isaiah 51:1-6 ESV)

God is speaking here to those who respond to his calling, "**you who pursue righteousness**", "**you who seek YHWH**". In the Millennium, this will be open to all humanity, "**the coastlands hope for me**". The New Testament Church, the True Church of God, will be universal, "**YHWH comforts Zion**". As people become converted, repent, and receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they will become begotten members of the God Family, "**my people**", "**my nation**". Once converted, people will learn to live by the **Way of God**, "**torah will go out from me**", "**I will set my justness for a light to the peoples**", "**my righteousness will never be dismayed**". Those to whom God sees fit to grant the gift of eternal life will become full members of the God Family, "**my salvation will be forever**".

15. After This ...

The Millennium lasts for a thousand years, after which, all the dead, every person who has lived and died throughout human history, will be restored to physical life and be given the opportunity to attain salvation:

Then I saw thrones,
and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.
They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
This is the first resurrection.
Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!
Over such the second death has no power,
but **they will be priests of God and of Christ,**
and **they will reign with him for a thousand years.**
The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.⁵²⁰
Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.
From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.
And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne,
and **books were opened.**
Then another book was opened, which is **the book of life.**⁵²¹
And **the dead were judged** by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.
And the sea gave up the dead who were in it,
Death and [the grave] (hadēs)⁵²² gave up the dead who were in them,
and **they were judged,** each one of them, according to what they had done.
Then Death and [the grave] (hadēs) were thrown into the lake of fire.
This is the second death, the lake of fire.
And **if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life,**
he was thrown into the lake of fire.
(Revelation 20:4a, 4c, 5b-6, 5a, 11-15 ESV)

The **First Resurrection**, of course occurs at the Second Advent, the beginning of the Millennium.
The **Second Resurrection, a resurrection to physical life**, occurs at the end of the Millennium.

⁵¹⁸ See footnote [54](#)

⁵¹⁹ See footnote [48](#)

⁵²⁰ The Second Resurrection

⁵²¹ See footnote [4](#)

⁵²² See footnote [405](#)

The "**Book of Life**" is where God maintains the identity of all persons who are candidates for the gift of eternal life. The "**opening**" of the **Book of Life** indicates that the resurrected dead are being given the opportunity for salvation. The other books, "**books were opened**", contain the information to teach the dead so that they can make choice as to whether or NOT they desire salvation, "**the dead were judged**". These are the Books of the Bible.

Those who do NOT choose life,⁵²³ go to eternal death, "**this is the second death**".

After this, there will be many millions of "sons" and "daughter" in the Family of God, and we will be ready to **learn from God the Father what are his plans for the Family**.

The **Book of Revelation** gives brief glimpses into these things:

Then I **saw a new heaven and a new earth**,

for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And I **saw the holy city**, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"Behold, **the dwelling place of God is with man**.

He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,

and God himself will be with them as their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,

and **death shall be no more**,

neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

And he who was seated on the throne said,

"**Behold, I am making all things new.**"

Also he said,

"Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

And he said to me,

"**It is done!**"⁵²⁴

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. ..."

(Revelation 21:1-6a ESV)

The **Apostle Peter** suggests that the earth will be purged to prepare for "**making all things new**":

But by the same word **the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire**, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

... **the heavens will pass away with a roar**,

and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved,

and **the earth and the works that are done on it will be burned up**.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved ...

(2 Peter 3:7, 10b-11a ESV)

The **Prophet Isaiah** reports glimpses of these events:

The sun shall be no more your light by day,

nor for brightness shall the moon give you light;

but **[YHWH] will be your everlasting light**, and **your God will be your glory**.

Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself;

for [YHWH] will be your everlasting light,

and your days of mourning shall be ended.

Your people shall all be righteous;

they shall possess the land forever,

the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.

(Isaiah 60:19-21 ESV)

⁵²³ See section 5. *The Covenant of Life* in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁵²⁴ See footnote 49

For behold, **I create new heavens and a new earth**,
and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.
But **be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create**;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.
(Isaiah 65:17-19 ESV)

**Certainly God the Father has plans for the vast physical universe
and for the millions of his sons and daughters:**

For thus says [YHWH],
who created the heavens (he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it
(he established it;
he did not create it empty,
he formed it to be inhabited!):
“I am [YHWH], and there is no other.”
(Isaiah 45:18 ESV)

Jesus Christ is here speaking on behalf of the God Family, “he is God”. Jesus Christ is the One,
who is reported in Genesis chapter 1, to have spoken, “**who created the heavens**”.
God the Father will tell us his plans when the time comes, “**he formed it to be inhabited**”.

For now, we can only speculate ...

Excursus 1 – The Meaning of *tamid*

The Hebrew word **תָּמִיד** - *tamid*, is defined by Holladay as “**continuance**”, “**unceasingness**”.⁵²⁵
BDB defines it as “**continuity**”, “**continuously**”;⁵²⁶ The English translations of this word, particularly
in the **Book of Daniel**, have led to extensive misunderstanding of **Jesus’ words in the Olivet prophecy**:

But when you see the **abomination of desolation**
standing **where he ought not to be**
(let the reader understand) ...
(Mark 13:14a ESV)

So when you see the **abomination of desolation** spoken of by **the prophet Daniel**,
standing **in the holy place**
(let the reader understand) ...
(Matthew 24:15 ESV)

Jesus emphasizes the importance of his statement, “**let the reader understand**”.
The “**abomination of desolation**” is going to be “positioned”, “located”, “standing”,
“**where he ought not to be**”, “**in the holy place**”.

The question is what are we looking for?

How will we recognize it when it occurs?

⁵²⁵ See Holladay page 391

⁵²⁶ See **BDB** page 556

What is an “Abomination”?

The word most often translated “abomination” in the Old Testament is תועבה - to`evah. It occurs 112 times; “abomination” occurs 128 times in the ESV. Holladay defines *to`evah* as “something abominable, detestable”.⁵²⁷ BDB simply says, “abomination”.⁵²⁸

The word “abomination” is used for **the vilest sorts of sin**, for example:

If a man lies with a male as with a woman,
both of them have committed an abomination (to`evah);
they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.
(Leviticus 20:13 ESV see also 18:22)

You shall not worship [YHWH] your God in that way,
for **every abominable (to`evah) thing that [YHWH] hates** they have done for their gods,
for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.
(Deuteronomy 12:31 ESV)

You shall not eat any abomination (to`evah).
(Deuteronomy 14:3 ESV)

“Idolatry” is the worst form of “abomination”:

The **carved images of their gods** you shall burn with fire.
You shall not covet the **silver** or the **gold** that is on them or take it for yourselves,
lest you be ensnared by it,
for **it is an abomination (to`evah) to [YHWH] your God.**
(Deuteronomy 7:25 ESV)

Cursed be the man who makes **a carved or cast metal image,**
an abomination (to`evah) to [YHWH],
a thing made by the hands of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret.
(Deuteronomy 27:15a ESV)

But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek;
then **he forsook God** who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.
They stirred him to jealousy **with strange gods;**
with abominations (to`evah) they provoked him to anger.
(Deuteronomy 32:15-16 ESV)

No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say,
“Half of it I burned in the fire;
I also baked bread on its coals;
I roasted meat and have eaten.

And **shall I make the rest of it an abomination (to`evah)?**
Shall I fall down before a block of wood?”

(Isaiah 44:19 ESV)

They have turned to me their back and not their face.
And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction.
They set up their abominations (shiqquz)⁵²⁹ in the house that is called by my name, to defile it.

They built the **high places of Baal** in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom,
to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech,
though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind,
that they should do **this abomination (to`evah),** to cause Judah to sin.
(Jeremiah 32:33-35 ESV)

Therefore say to the house of Israel,
Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Repent and turn away from your idols,
[even]⁵³⁰ **turn away your faces from all your abominations (to`evah).**

(Ezekiel 14:6 ESV)

⁵²⁷ See Holladay page 388

⁵²⁸ See BDB page 1072

⁵²⁹ The noun שִׁקּוּץ - shiqquz, is more or less synonymous with *to`evah*; it occurs 26 times, most often referring to “idols” or “idolatry”; the only exceptions are Nahum 3:6 and Zechariah 9:7; see BDB page 1055.

⁵³⁰ See footnote 108

Therefore, O prostitute, hear the word of [YHWH]:
Thus says the Lord [YHWH],
Because your lust was poured out
and your nakedness uncovered in **your whorings** with your lovers,
and **with all your abominable (to`evah) idols**,
and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them ...
(Ezekiel 16:35-36 ESV)

The word “abomination” is used only five times in the New Testament.
Mark and Matthew are quoted above. Jesus used it of the **attitude of the Pharisees**,
and it is applied to the “**spiritual whoredom**” of the “Beast Power” in the **Book of Revelation**:
The **Pharisees**, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him.
And he said to them,
“You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts.
For **what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.** ...”
(Luke 16:14-15 ESV)

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls,
holding **in her hand a golden cup full of abominations** and the impurities of her sexual immorality.
And on her forehead was written a name of mystery:
“Babylon the great, **mother of prostitutes** and of **earth’s abominations.**”
(Revelation 17:4-5 ESV)

Idolatry is the mother of all sin. In general, “**abominations**” relate to **idolatry**, directly or indirectly.
So the “**abomination of desolation**” alluded to by Jesus in the Olivet Prophecy almost certainly
relates to “idolatry” that is related to “desolation” or “destruction”.
Matthew’s account gives us the clue to look at “**the prophet Daniel**”.

The Abomination of Desolation

The main characteristics of the **abomination of desolation** are discussed
in **Excursus Two – The Abomination of Desolation** in the paper “**The Olivet Prophecy**”
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. Briefly, **there have been three historic, “typical”,
fulfillments of Daniel’s prophecy**: Antiochus Epiphanes in 167BC,⁵³¹ Pompey in 63BC, and Titus in 70AD.
It is beyond the scope of this paper to do an exegesis of Daniel chapter 11. The historical events
fulfilling the prophecies in verses 2 through 27 are generally well documented.⁵³² Starting in verse 21,
the **King of the North** is fulfilled in **Antiochus Epiphanes**. Verse 27 contains a notice that events are
starting to relate to the end-time, “**the end is yet to be at the appointed time**”. The prophecy
of the profanation of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes occurs in verses 31 through 35.
Jesus’ comment reported by Matthew applies to these verses. At this point, the “**King of the North**”
becomes a type of the end-time “**antichrist**”:

Forces from him shall appear and **profane the temple** and fortress,
and shall **take away the [tamid]**.
And they shall **set up the abomination (shiqqutz) that makes desolate.**
(Daniel 11:31 ESV)

Verses 32-34a prophesize the Maccabean rebellion. Verses 34b and 35a refer to the steady state
of the remnant of True Worshipers from the time of the Maccabean rebellion until
“**the time of the end**”, “**for it still awaits the appointed time**” – verse 35b.

Verses 36-39 prophesize the antitype of the “**King of the North**”,
the “**antichrist**”, “**the man of lawlessness**”,⁵³³ “**the end-time Beast Power**”:

And **the king shall do as he wills**.
He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god,
and shall **speak astonishing things against the God of gods**.
He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished;
for what is decreed shall be done.

⁵³¹ See section **7.5.3 The Crisis Under Antiochus Epiphanes**

⁵³² See the comments in the ESV Study Bible or online at www.esv.org

⁵³³ See section **9.3.1 Heresy and Schism in the New Testament**

He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women.
He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all.
He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these.

A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver,
with precious stones and costly gifts.

He shall deal with the strongest fortresses **with the help of a foreign god**.

Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor.

He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.
(Daniel 11:36-39 ESV)

Analysis of the “end-time Beast Power”:

- It will have extensive power, **“the king shall do as he wills”**,
“authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation”
(Revelation 13:7b)
- It will speak against the True God, **“speak astonishing things against the God of gods”**,
“a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words” (Revelation 13:5aβ)
- The “Great Tribulation” will be a period of luxury and wealth for Satan’s world,
“he shall prosper”, **“she glorified herself and lived in luxury”** (Revelation 18:7α)
- The Beast Power will owe its hegemony to Satan the Devil,
“a god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor”, **“the help of a foreign god”**,
“they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast” (Revelation 13:4a)
- Those who participate in the mark of the beast will participate in the wealth and luxury,
“those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor”,
“the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her”
(Revelation 18:9a)

Daniel chapter 8 also prophesizes the typical events of Antiochus Epiphanies looking to the “end-time Beast Power”.

Verse 8 prophesized the **fate of Alexander** and the rise of the **four Greek empires**:

Then the goat became exceedingly great,
but when he was strong, **the great horn was broken**,
and instead of it there came up **four conspicuous horns** toward the four winds of heaven.
(Daniel 8:8 ESV)

Starting in verse 9, the prophecy looks to **Antiochus Epiphanes as a type of the end-time “antichrist”:**

Out of one of them came a little horn,
which grew exceedingly great **toward the south**, toward the **east**, and toward **the glorious land**.

It grew great, even to the host of heaven.

And **some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them**.

It became great, even as great as the **Prince of the host**.

And the [tamid] was taken away from him,
and **the place of his sanctuary was overthrown**.

And **a host will be given over** to **it** together with the [tamid] **because of transgression**,
and **it will throw truth to the ground**, and **it** will act and prosper.

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke,

“For how long is the vision concerning the [tamid],

the transgression that makes desolate,

and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?”

(Daniel 8:9-13 ESV)

Analysis of verse 9-13:

- The **“little horn”** is Antiochus Epiphanes – the Seleucid Empire held sway to the **“east”**, controlled the land of Israel, **“the glorious land”**, and threatened Egypt, **“toward the south”**
- The pronoun **“it”** refers to the **“little horn”**
- The phrase **“Prince of the host”** is obscure, but it seems to refer to YHWH
- Antiochus claimed “divinity”, **“grew great”**, **“became great”**
- Antiochus desecrated the Temple of YHWH, **“his sanctuary was overthrown”**
- Many people were killed by Antiochus, **“a host will be given over”**

- The teaching of the Bible was outlawed, **“throw truth to the ground”**
- The Hellenism enforced by Antiochus drew many Jews into a state of **“transgression”** that could have led to the collapse of True Worship, **“transgression that makes desolate”**

Antiochus Epiphanes, as a “type” of the end-time “antichrist”, attempted to eradicate the True Worship of God. **His attack was an all-out effort to eradicate the Way of God.**

Daniel is told that **the purpose of the vision is to understand end-time events:**

When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it.

And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.

And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called,

“Gabriel, **make this man understand the vision.**”

So he came near where I stood.

And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face.

But he said to me,

“Understand, O son of man, that **the vision is for the time of the end.**”

He said,

“Behold,

I will make known to you **what shall be at the latter end of the indignation,**
for **it refers to the appointed time of the end.**

(Daniel 8:15-17, 19 ESV)

The phrase, **“the indignation”**, and the phrase, **“transgression that makes desolate”**, probably are synonymous, referring to the corruption introduced by Antiochus, in his time, and the corruption of the “antichrist” at the end-time.

Chapter 8 verses 23 through 25 explain **the end-time implications of the prophecy:**

And **at the latter end of their kingdom,**

when the transgressors have reached their limit,

a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, **shall arise.**

His power shall be great—but **not by his own power;**

and **he shall cause fearful destruction** and shall succeed in what he does,

and **destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints.**

By his cunning he shall **make deceit prosper under his hand,**

and in his own mind he shall become great.

Without warning he shall destroy many.

And **he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes,**

and **he shall be broken**—but **by no human hand.**⁵³⁴

(Daniel 8:23-25 ESV)

Analysis of verses 23-25:

- This looks to the end-time Beast Power, **“at the latter end of their kingdom”**⁵³⁵
- The personage of the political “beast”, the “antichrist”, is **“a king of bold face”**
And **the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words,**
and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.
(Revelation 13:5 ESV)
- The “antichrist” is empowered by Satan the Devil, **“not by his own power”:**
And they worshiped **the dragon,**
for he **had given his authority to the beast,**
and they worshiped the beast, saying,
“Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”
(Revelation 13:4 ESV)

⁵³⁴ This alludes to Daniel 2:45

⁵³⁵ The four kingdoms of Daniel succeeded each other; each absorbing the previous, so that it has been a continuous cultural and religious heritage – the final incarnation is the end product.

- The “antichrist” eventually drags the world into nuclear war, **“he shall cause fearful destruction”**:
 He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit,
 and **from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace**,
 and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.
 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year,
 were released **to kill a third of mankind**.
 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed,
by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths.
 (Revelation 9:2, 15, 18 ESV)
- The Beast Power persecutes and kills True Worshipers of God,
“destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints”:
 Also **it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them**.
 And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation ...
 And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast,
 so that the image of the beast might even speak
 and might **cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain**.
 And I saw the woman, **drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus**.
 (Revelation 13:7, 15, 17:6a ESV)
- The Beast Power suppresses the Truth and promotes lies, **“make deceit prosper under his hand”**:
It performs great signs,
 even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people,
 and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast
it deceives those who dwell on earth,
 telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.
 (Revelation 13:13-14 ESV)
- The Beast Power attempts to fight the returning King of kings,
“he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes”,
 and is utterly destroyed, **“he shall be broken”**, **“by no human hand”**:
They will make war on the Lamb,
 and **the Lamb will conquer them**,
 for he is Lord of lords and King of kings,
 and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.
 (Revelation 17:14 ESV)

The prototypical **“abomination of desolation”**, perpetrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, under the influence of Satan the Devil was an all-out attack on the **Plan of God**. Antiochus made it illegal to worship the True God. Any person who refused to compromise and refused to submit to the edicts of Antiochus was liable to death. **Antiochus attempted to make it impossible to follow the Way of God**. Antiochus terminated the service of God in the Temple. Antiochus attempted to make the Temple a place of heathen worship. Antiochus corrupted many people to follow his lies. Antiochus killed many people who remained faithful to God and refused pagan worship. **This was the prototypical “abomination of desolation”**.

The Book of Revelation does NOT mention the “abomination of desolation”, but it does describe an environment exactly like that created by Antiochus Epiphanes:
 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent,
 who is called **the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world**
 —he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
 Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!
 But woe to you, O earth and sea,
 for **the devil has come down to you in great wrath**,
 because he knows that his time is short!

And when **the dragon** saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he **pursued the woman** who had given birth to the male child. Then **the dragon became furious with the woman** and **went off to make war on the rest of her offspring**, on **those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus**. (Revelation 12:9, 12-13, 17a ESV)

One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and **the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast**.

And **they worshiped the dragon**, for he had given his authority to the beast, and **they worshiped the beast**, saying,

“Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”

Also **it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them**.

And **authority was given it** over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it,

everyone whose name has not been written in the book of life⁵³⁶ of the Lamb who was slain [from the foundation of the world].⁵³⁷

It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes **the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast**, whose mortal wound was healed.

It performs great signs,

even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast

it deceives those who dwell on earth,

telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead,

so that **no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark**, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

(Revelation 13:3-4, 7-8, 12-14, 16-17 ESV)

This is the prophesized end-time “**abomination of desolation**”.

The focus will be on the “**image of the beast**”. But, behind the façade, is **the final desperate attack of Satan the Devil on the Plan of God**. Satan’s whole effort is to get True Worshipers to compromise, to accept his lies and turn away from the **Way of God**.

Ultimately, Satan plans death for each and every human being.

So, What is tamid?

Daniel uses the word five times:

And **the [tamid] was taken away from him**, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown.

And a **host will be given over to it together with the [tamid]**

because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper.

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke,

“**For how long is the vision concerning the [tamid]**,

the transgression that makes desolate,

and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?”

Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall **take away the [tamid]**.

And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

And **from the time that the [tamid] is taken away**

and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.

(Daniel 8:11b-13, 11:31, 12:11 ESV)

⁵³⁶ See footnote 4

⁵³⁷ The ESV has this clause in the wrong place.

The first four occurrences relate to the prototypical “abomination of desolation”.

The last occurrence looks to the time of the end:

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.

He said,

“Go your way, Daniel, for **the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end**.

Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined,
but the wicked shall act wickedly.

And none of the wicked shall understand,
but **those who are wise shall understand**.

And from the time that **the [tamid] is taken away**
and **the abomination that makes desolate** is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. ...”

(Daniel 12:4, 9-11 ESV)

In all these places, *tamid* is translated “**regular burnt offering**” in the ESV. The KJV and the NKJV translate “**daily sacrifice**”; other English translations are similar. **There is NO justification what-so-ever for associating *tamid* with any particular sacrifice**. Where *tamid* is used definitionally in Exodus 25:30, 27:20, 28:29, 30, 38, 29:38, 42, and 30:8, it is clear, that ***tamid* encompasses the entire temple service**, NOT just any particular sacrifice:

And you shall set the **bread of the Presence** on the table before me **regularly (tamid)**.
(Exodus 25:30 ESV)

You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for **the light**, that **a lamp** may **regularly (tamid)** be set up to burn.
(Exodus 27:20 ESV)

So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of [mish^epat]⁵³⁸ on his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place, to **bring them to regular (tamid) remembrance** before [YHWH].

Thus Aaron shall bear the [mish^epat] of the people of Israel on his heart **before [YHWH] regularly (tamid)**.

You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to [YHWH].’

It shall regularly (tamid) be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before [YHWH].
(Exodus 28:29, 30b, 36, 38b ESV)

Now this is what **you shall offer on the altar**:
two lambs a year old day by day regularly (tamid).

It shall be **a regular (tamid) burnt offering (‘olah)**⁵³⁹ throughout your generations ...
(Exodus 29:38, 42 ESV)

... and when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it,
a regular (tamid) incense offering (q^otoresh)⁵⁴⁰
before [YHWH] throughout your generations.
(Exodus 30:8 ESV)

In these definitional usages, *tamid* is always an adjective which qualifies some aspect of the **Temple Service**. The meaning is always that the qualified item is to be done “**regularly**”, “**continually**”, “**always**”. When it qualifies a sacrifice, the type of the sacrifice is explicitly stated, “**‘olah**”, “**q^otoresh**”. **There is NEVER an instance of *tamid* used alone as noun to imply a particular sacrifice**.

This usage is consistent throughout the Writings of Moses:

Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually (tamid); it shall not go out.
(Leviticus 6:13 ESV see also 24:2-4, 8)

This is the offering that Aaron and his sons shall offer to [YHWH] on the day when he is anointed:
a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a **regular (tamid) grain offering (minhah)**,⁵⁴¹
half of it in the morning and half in the evening.
(Leviticus 6:20 ESV see also Numbers 4:16)

⁵³⁸ See footnote 48; here, the whole range of meaning is implied – there is NO English word to translate this.

⁵³⁹ The noun עֹלָה - ‘olah is the normal word for “burnt offering”; see Holladay page 273.

⁵⁴⁰ The noun קִטְרוֹת - q^otoresh is the normal word for “incense offering”; see Holladay page 317.

⁵⁴¹ The noun מִנְחָה - minhah is the normal word for “grain offering”; see BDB page 585.

And over the table of the **bread of the Presence** they shall spread a cloth of blue and put on it the plates, the dishes for incense, the bowls, and the flagons for the drink offering;
the regular (tamid) showbread (lehem)⁵⁴² **also shall be on it.**
(Numbers 4:7 ESV)

On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony. And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning.

So it was always (tamid):

the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night.
(Numbers 9:15-16 ESV see also Deuteronomy 11:12)

In Numbers chapters 28 and 29, *tamid* is used 17 times; each instance also includes *`olah*. If ever there was a legitimate opportunity to use *tamid* to represent a particular sacrifice, it is in these chapters. The Bible is clear and consistent that **tamid CANNOT be used alone for any particular sacrifice.**

Continuing through the rest of the Old Testament, **tamid is translated in the ESV as follows:**

- “always”, “ever”, “evermore”, “forever”, “every”: 2 Samuel 9:7, 10, 13, Psalm 16:8, 25:15, 35:27, 38:17, 40:11, 51:3, 70:4, 109:19, Proverbs 5:19, 6:21, 28:14, Jeremiah 6:7, Habakkuk 1:17
- “never”, “unceasing”: Isaiah 62:6, Nahum 3:19
- “continual”, “continually”: 1 Kings 10:8, 2 Kings 4:9, 1 Chronicles 16:11, 2 Chronicles 9:7, Psalm 34:1, 40:16, 50:8, 69:23, 71:3, 6, 14, 72:15, 73:23, 74:23, 105:4, 109:15, 119:44, 109, 117, Proverbs 15:15, Isaiah 21:8, 49:16, 51:13, 52:5, 58:11, 60:11, 65:3, Ezekiel 38:8, Hosea 12:7, Obadiah 16
- “regular”, “regularly”: 2 Kings 25:29-30, 1 Chronicles 16:6, 37, 23:31, 2 Chronicles 2:4, 24:14, Jeremiah 52:33-34, Ezekiel 39:14
- With “minḥah”: Nehemiah 10:33, Ezekiel 46:14
- With “`olah”: 1 Chronicles 16:40, Ezra 3:5, Nehemiah 10:33, Ezekiel 46:15

In the five instances of “*tamid*” in the Book of Daniel, a reasonable translation would be “Temple Service” or “worship service”, or perhaps “regular service”:

And **the [Temple Service] (tamid) was taken away from him,**
and the place of **his sanctuary was overthrown.**

And a **host will be given over to it together with the [Temple Service] (tamid)**
because of transgression,
and **it will throw truth to the ground,**
and it will act and prosper.

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke,
**“For how long is the vision concerning the [Temple Service] (tamid),
the transgression that makes desolate,
and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?”**

Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress,
and shall **take away the [Temple Service] (tamid).**

And they shall **set up the abomination that makes desolate.**

And **from the time that the [Temple Service] (tamid) is taken away**
and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.
(Daniel 8:11b-13, 11:31, 12:11 ESV)

In Israel, the Temple Service was the heart of the community. By shutting down the regular service and replacing it with corrupted pagan sacrifices and teaching, Antiochus Epiphanes struck at the heart of the community. The worship of YHWH was taken away, **“the Temple Service was taken away”, “his sanctuary was overthrown”, “it will throw truth to the ground”.** Vile pagan practices were forced on the people, **“the transgression that makes desolate”, “the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot”, “set up the abomination that makes desolate”.**

⁵⁴² The noun **לֶחֶם** - lehem is the normal word for “bread”; here it is special because it is “the bread of the Presence”; see Holladay page 175.
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This is exactly what the **Book of Revelation** depicts for the end-time.

But **what is the end-time “Temple”**? The New Testament is clear and specific

that **the Temple comprises the persons and the collective body of the New Testament Church:**

Do you not know that **you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?**

If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him.

For **God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.**

Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit** within you, [which]⁵⁴³ you have from God?

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.

So glorify God in your body.

(1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20 ESV)

What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

For **we are the temple of the living God;**

as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,

and I will be their God,

and they shall be my people. ...” (alluding to Exodus 29:45 and Leviticus 26:12)

(2 Corinthians 6:16 ESV)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,

but you are fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God,**

built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

in whom the whole structure, being joined together,

grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him you also are being built together into **a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**

(Ephesians 2:19-22ESV)

The one who conquers,

I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.

Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God,

and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem,

which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

(Revelation 3:12 ESV)

The traditional translation of *tamid* in the **Book of Daniel** is incorrect and greatly mis-leading.

The incorrect translation leads to the popular misunderstanding that “the abomination of desolation”

is a single act, the stoppage of some particular sacrifice. As the **Book of Revelation** makes clear that

the end-time actions of “Beast Power” are complicated and far reaching. **No one simple act can be**

designated the “abomination of desolation”. As was the case with the prototypical

“abomination of desolation”, the end-time “abomination of desolation” will be a complicated series

of events aimed at thwarting the **Plan of God** by making it impossible to live by the **Way of God.**

At the end-time, **God is working with a “spiritual temple”**, the New Testament Church.

The focus of the attack of Satan will be the New Testament Church.

Excursus 2 – Time, Times, and Half a Time

Jesus was more than once clear and specific that

there is no way to determine or calculate the date upon which the Second Advent will occur:

But **concerning that day or that hour,**

no one knows,

not even the angels in heaven,

nor the Son,

but **only the Father.**

(Mark 13:32 ESV // Matthew 24:36)

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

(Matthew 25:13 ESV)

⁵⁴³ See footnote 271

He said to them,
“**It is not for you to know times or seasons**
that the Father has fixed by his own authority.
(Acts 1:7 ESV)

This of course begs the question, **why are there given specific numbers of days and apparent durations leading up to the Second Advent?**

Time Periods in Daniel

The first instance is the description of the Fourth Beast of Daniel’s vision.⁵⁴⁴

This part of Daniel is Aramaic:

He shall **speak words against the Most High**,
and shall **wear out the saints of the Most High**,
and shall **think to change the times (zim^enin) and the law (dath)**,⁵⁴⁵
and **they shall be given into his hand**
for a time (‘iddan), times (‘iddanin), and half (p^elag) a time (‘iddan).
(Daniel 7:25 ESV)

The phrase is אֲדִידָן וְעִידָנִין וּפְלַג אִידָנִין - ‘ad ‘iddan u‘iddanin uph^elag iddanu.

The base word is אִידָן - ‘iddan, the base meaning is “time”, “duration”.⁵⁴⁶ The plural is עִידָנִין - ‘iddanin.

The noun פְּלַג - p^elag, occurs only here. The root verb פָּלַג - p^elag, is used in Daniel 2:41, where it is translated “divided”. So, the range of meaning of p^elag would include “something divided”.⁵⁴⁷

An Aramaic word related to ‘iddan is זְמַן z^eman, plural זְמַנִּין - zim^enin, Holladay defines it as “time”.⁵⁴⁸ Both words have very similar range of meaning.

The first occurrence of the word, ‘iddan, is when Nebuchadnezzar has his first dream.

Here the meaning is “**time**” in **a very abstract sense** – there is no concept of any duration:

The king answered and said,
“I know with certainty that **you are trying to gain time (‘iddan)**,
because you see that the word from me is firm
—if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you.
You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me **till the times (‘iddan) change**.
Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.”
(Daniel 2:8-9 ESV)

Next, Daniel is extolling God. Again the meaning is very abstract and obscure – “**‘iddanin**” and “**zim^enin**” are **things that God is free to change as he sees fit**:

Daniel answered and said:
“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.
He changes times (‘iddanin) and seasons (zim^enin);
he removes kings and sets up kings;
he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;
he reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. ...”
(Daniel 2:20-22 ESV)

The next occurrence is when Nebuchadnezzar’s image is set up for worship.

The meaning of ‘iddan is a point in time, “when”:

And the herald proclaimed aloud,
“You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,
that **when (‘iddan) you hear the sound** of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe,
and every kind of music,
you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.
(Daniel 3:4-5 ESV see also verse 15)

⁵⁴⁴ See section [12.2 Daniel’s Fourth Beast and the Beasts of Revelation](#)

⁵⁴⁵ See footnote [221](#)

⁵⁴⁶ See Holladay page 415

⁵⁴⁷ See Holladay page 417

⁵⁴⁸ See Holladay page 404

Next, Nebuchadnezzar is condemned to spend time with the animals.

A duration of time is clearly implied.

Seven periods are designated, but there is **no indication of the length of each period:**

Let his mind be changed from a man's,
and let a beast's mind be given to him;
and **let seven (periods of time)⁵⁴⁹ (‘iddanin) pass over him.**
(Daniel 4:16 ESV see also verses 23, 25, and 32)

The next occurrence may provide **some insight into the nature of these temporal designations:**

I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking.

And as I looked, **the beast was killed,**
and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.

As for **the rest of the beasts,**
their dominion was taken away,
but **their lives were prolonged for a season (z^eman) and a time (‘iddan).**
(Daniel 7:11-12 ESV)

These two verses are essentially an interjection in the flow of Daniel chapter 7. Verses 1 through 8 describe Daniel's vision of the four beasts. Verses 9 and 10 are the glimpse into the throne room in eternity. Verses 13 and 14 continue the glimpse into eternity. Verses 11 and 12 are interjected looking back to the little horn introduced in verse 8 – they look to the end of the fourth beast, **“the beast was killed”**. The other three beasts, **“the rest of the beasts”**, have **“their lives were prolonged”**.

This is a very enigmatic statement. It would seem to refer to the continuous cultural and religious heritage of the nations from ancient time until modern times. The words **“z^eman”** and **“‘iddan”** are the same words as used in chapter 2 verse 21 as something **“God changes”**. This may be the clue to the ambiguity of these words: **the times are under the control of God the Father.** Only he knows the criteria by which he will decide when the **“time is right”**. And, **God reserves the right to change “times and seasons”**.

The original phrase **“time (‘iddan), times (‘iddanin), and half (p^elag) a time (‘iddan)”** is tantalizingly obscure. Could it mean something like “a time”, “it is certain”, **“when the time is right”**; “half a time”, “precision is NOT possible” **“when the time comes, God will decide”**; “times”, **“there could be many intervening periods of time”**?

The “little horn” came into formal existence in 325AD and has consistently spoken **“words against the Most High”**. The “little horn” has always taken steps to **“wear out the saints of the Most High”**. Until modern times True Worshipers of God, **“the saints”**, have been persecuted by the **“little horn”**. The **“little horn”** has utterly corrupted the Truth of God as revealed in the Bible by its lies and traditions, **“change the zim^enin and the dath”**. Since 325AD, indeed, **many ‘iddanin have come and gone.** We are close to the end now, but **only God the Father can decide ‘iddan the time is right.**

The **Book of Daniel** chapter 12 contains the next instance of **“time, times, and half a time”**.

This part of Daniel is in Hebrew:

Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, **two others stood,**
one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream.
And someone said to **the man clothed in linen,** who was above the waters of the stream,
“How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?”

And I heard **the man clothed in linen,** who was above the waters of the stream;
he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever
that **it would be for a time (mo`ed), times (mo`edim), and half a time (hetzi),**
and that **when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end**
all these things would be finished.
(Daniel 12:5-7 ESV)

The material reported in chapters 10, 11, and 12 is a continuous visionary experience of Daniel. The reference to **“the man clothed in linen”** goes back to chapter 10 verse 5, where Daniel is contacted by an angelic being **“a man clothed in linen”**. Now Daniel sees two other angelic beings,

⁵⁴⁹ There is NO justification for the traditional translation of “years”; see Young (DN) page 105.
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“two others stood”, one of whom poses the question, **“how long shall it be till the end of these wonders”**. The Hebrew of this question is:

עַד־מָתִי הַיָּץ הַפְּלֹאוֹת
happ^ela’oth qetz mathay `ad
wonders the end of when until

Literally: “until when end of the wonders”

The question is **“when will it end”**, NOT “how long until the end”. The answer that is given is **“when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end”**.

This is the event that will signal the end, but before that will be **“time, times, and half a time”**.

The Hebrew of the phrase is: כִּי לְמוֹעֵד מְוָעָדִים וְהָצִי - ki l^emo`ed mo`edim wahetzi; *mo`ed* means “appointed time”,⁵⁵⁰ the plural is *mo`edim*, more than one appointed time. The noun *hetzi* means “half” or “middle”⁵⁵¹; it is more or less synonymous with Aramaic *p^elag*. Note that **“a time”** is supplied by the translator. In verses 8:19, 11:27, and 11:35, *mo`ed* is used with *qetz* to refer to **“the appointed time of the end”**; in verse 11:29, it used to refer to an **“appointed time”** as the prophecy is unfolding.

Literally the phrase means, “an appointed time”, *mo`ed*; “two or more appointed times”, *mo`edim*; and “middle” or “half”, *hetzi*. **Most likely the phrase should be taken as synonymous with the Aramaic phrase** – meaning that God will decide when the time is right. A *mo`ed* is an appointed time or place, never a duration of time.⁵⁵² Getting back to the stated answer, **“when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end”**, this is actually alluding to the Second Advent and the First Resurrection – events which are specifically at the discretion of God the Father. Under the persecution of the Beast Power, it will be very difficult to continue to do the Work of God, **“the shattering of the power of the holy people”**. When end-time events play out, and God the Father makes the decision, Jesus Christ will return as King of kings and Satan’s world **“comes to an end”**:

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,
**“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,
and he shall reign forever and ever.”**

(Revelation 11:15 ESV)

The **Book of Daniel** contains **one more non-deterministic temporal designator**:

Seventy [sevens] (shavu`im) are decreed about your people and your holy city,
to finish the transgression,
to put an end to sin,
and to atone for iniquity,
to bring in everlasting righteousness,
to seal both vision and prophet,
and to anoint [most holy ones].

(Daniel 9:24 ESV)

The word שָׁבְעִים - shavu`im, has traditionally been translated “weeks”, it simply means “sevens”.

The prophecy specifies seventy periods of sevens, with **no specific length of time discernable**.

This prophecy is discussed in great detail in the paper **“The Seventy Periods Prophecy”**

located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Time Periods in Revelation

The phrase “a time, and times, and half a time” occurs once in the Book of Revelation:

But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle
so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness,
**to the place where she is to be nourished
for a time (kairon), and times (kairous), and half a time (kairon).**

(Revelation 12:14 ESV)

⁵⁵⁰ See Holladay page 186

⁵⁵¹ See Holladay page 113

⁵⁵² See BDB pages 417-418

The Greek phrase is: ἐκεῖ καιρὸν καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἡμῖς καιροῦ - ekei kairon kai kairous kai hemisy kirou.

The operative word is καιρός - kairos, "time", "season", "opportunity".⁵⁵³

The word, **kairos**, occurs elsewhere in the **Book of Revelation** four times:

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear,
and who keep what is written in it,
for the time (kairos) is near.

(Revelation 1:3 ESV)

The nations raged, but your wrath came,
and the time (kairos) for the dead to be judged,
and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name, both small and great,
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.

(Revelation 11:18 ESV)

Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!

But woe to you, O earth and sea,

for the devil has come down to you in **great wrath**,
because **he knows that his time (kairos) is short!**"

(Revelation 12:12 ESV)

And he said to me,

"Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book,

for the time (kairos) is near. ..."

(Revelation 22:10 ESV)

These four instances pretty much demonstrate the meaning of *kairos*:

- In Revelation 1:3, the reading of the **Book of Revelation** is enjoined because **a point in time** is about to occur, "**the kairos is near**"
- In Revelation 11:18, the Seventh Trumpet has just blown; the First Resurrection has just occurred; and, a very important **period of time, a new season**, is now made possible: "**the kairos for the dead to be judged**"
- In Revelation 12:12, there has been the final war in eternity and Satan the Devil has for the last time been cast down to earth; he is extremely angry, "**great wrath**"; he has only **a very limited period of time, with no specific duration, "his kairos is short"**
- In Revelation 22:10, the angelic guide of the **Apostle John** is summarizing the import of the material reported in the **Book of Revelation**; when all is fulfilled, there will be **a new season, a new opportunity, a new time, "the kairos is near"**

The word, **kairos**, is used 80 times in the New Testament

with **a very clear and consistent range of meaning**, for example:

- One of the most common usages is a "**point in time**":
At that time (kairos) Jesus declared,
"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding
and revealed them to little children; ..."
(Matthew 11:25 ESV)
- It is also used for a "**point in time that has a specific purpose**", an "**opportunity**":
Who then is the faithful and wise servant,
whom his master has set over his household,
to give them their food **at the proper time (kairos)**?
(Matthew 24:45ESV)
And when the devil had ended every temptation,
he departed from him **until an opportune time (kairos)**.
(Luke 4:13 ESV)

⁵⁵³ See www.esv.org "Lexical Form"

And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy.
But these have no root; they believe for a while,
and **in time (kairos) of testing** fall away.
(Luke 8:13 ESV)

- Another common use is a **“season”, “a period of time with no specific duration”**:

And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf,
he went to see if he could find anything on it.
When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves,
for **it was not the season (kairos) for figs**.
(Mark 11:13 ESV)

And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you,
and **you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time (kairos)**.
Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him,
and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.
(Acts 13:11 ESV)

Yet he did not leave himself without witness,
for he did good by **giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons (kairos)**,
satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”
(Acts 14:17 ESV)

Do not deprive one another,
except perhaps by agreement for a limited time (kairos),
that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again,
so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
(1 Corinthians 7:5 ESV)

The word, **kairos**, is used very frequently in **“prophetic contexts”**
or contexts which relate to the **carrying out of the Plan of God**,
but again, always with **a very clear and consistent range of meaning**, for example:

- **The present time:**

And in the morning,
‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’
You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky,
but you cannot interpret **the signs of the times (kairos)**.
(Matthew 16:3 ESV)

... who will not receive a hundredfold **now in this time (kairos)**,
houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions,
and in the age to come eternal life.
(Mark 10:30 ESV)

You hypocrites!
You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky,
but why do you not know how to interpret **the present time (kairos)?**
(Luke 12:56 ESV)

And he said to them,
“Truly, I say to you,
there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children,
for the sake of the kingdom of God,
who will not receive **many times more⁵⁵⁴ in this time (kairos)**,
and in the age to come eternal life.”
(Luke 18:29-30 ESV)

But **stay awake at all times (kairos)**,
praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place,
and to stand before the Son of Man.
(Luke 21:36 ESV)

Besides this **you know the time (kairos)**,
that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.
For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.
(Romans 13:11 ESV)

⁵⁵⁴ This translated from πολλαπλασιῶν - pollaplasión, “more than expected”; it occurs only this once in the Bible.
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This is what I mean, brothers:

the appointed time (kairos) has grown very short.

From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none ...

(1 Corinthians 7:29 ESV)

For he says,

**“In a favorable time (kairos) I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”**

Behold, **now is the favorable time (kairos)**; behold, now is the day of salvation.

(2 Corinthians 6:2 ESV)

You observe days and months and seasons (kairos) and years!

I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

(Galatians 4:10-11 ESV)

Therefore **remember that at one time (kairos)** you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands

—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

(Ephesians 2:11-12 ESV)

For **it is time (kairos) for judgment to begin** at the household of God;

and if it begins with us,

what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

(1 Peter 4:17 ESV)

- **The “end-time”:**

And you know what is restraining him now so that **he may be revealed in his time (kairos)**.

(2 Thessalonians 2:6 ESV)

Now the Spirit expressly says that **in later times (kairos)**

some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons ...

(1 Timothy 4:1 ESV)

But understand this, that **in the last days there will come times (kairos) of difficulty**.

(2 Timothy 3:1 ESV)

- **The First Advent:**

For there is one God,

and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all,

which is **the testimony given at the proper time (kairos)**.

(1 Timothy 2:5-6 ESV)

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ,

for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life,

which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began

and **at the proper time (kairos)** manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

(Titus 1:1-3 ESV)

By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age).

According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered

that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,

but deal only with food and drink and various washings,

regulations for the body imposed **until the time (kairos) of reformation**.

(Hebrews 9:8-10 ESV)

- **The Second Advent:**

Be on guard, keep awake.

For you do not know **when the time (kairos) will come**.

(Mark 13:33 ESV)

And he said,
“See that you are not led astray.
For many will come in my name, saying,
‘I am he!’
and,
‘The time (kairos) is at hand!’

Do not go after them. ...”

(Luke 21:8 ESV)

Therefore do not pronounce judgment **before the time (kairos)**, before the Lord comes,
who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Then each one will receive his commendation from God.
(1 Corinthians 4:5 ESV)

And let us not grow weary of doing good,
for **in due season (kairos) we will reap**, if we do not give up.
So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone,
and especially to those who are of the household of faith.
(Galatians 6:9-10 ESV)

... to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach
until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which **he will display at the proper time (kairos)**
—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords ...
(1 Timothy 6:14-15 ESV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to his great mercy,
[he has caused us to be begotten again] (anagennaō)⁵⁵⁵ to a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,
who by God’s power are being guarded through
faith for **a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (kairos)**.
(1 Peter 1:3-5 ESV)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God
so that **at the proper time (kairos) he may exalt you** ...
(1 Peter 5:6 ESV)

- **The “World Tomorrow”**

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,
that **times (kairos) of refreshing may come** from the presence of the Lord,
and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus ...
(Acts 3:19-20 ESV)

- **The Plan of God:**

And behold, they cried out,
“What have you to do with us, O Son of God?
Have you come here to torment us **before the time (kairos)?**”
(Matthew 8:29 ESV)

He said,
“Go into the city to a certain man and say to him,
‘The Teacher says,
My time (kairos) is at hand.
I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.”
(Matthew 26:18 ESV)

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee,
proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying,
“The time (kairos) is fulfilled,
and the kingdom of God is at hand;
repent and believe in the gospel.”
(Mark 1:14-15 ESV)

⁵⁵⁵ See footnote 475
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And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak
until the day that these things take place,
because you did not believe my words,
which will be fulfilled in their time (kairos).

(Luke 1:20 ESV)

For the days will come upon you,
when your enemies will set up a barricade around you
and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground,
you and your children within you.

And they will not leave one stone upon another in you,
because **you did not know the time (kairos) of your visitation.**

(Luke 19:43-44 ESV)

They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations,
and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles,
until the times (kairos) of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

(Luke 21:24 ESV)

Jesus said to them,

“My time (kairos) has not yet come, but your time (kairos) is always here.

The world cannot hate you,

but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

You go up to the feast.

I am not going up to this feast, for **my time (kairos) has not yet fully come.”**

(John 7:6-8 ESV)

He said to them,

“It is not for you to know times (chronos)⁵⁵⁶ or seasons (kairos)

that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

(Acts 1:7 ESV)

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth,
having determined allotted periods (kairos) and the boundaries of their dwelling place ...

(Acts 17:26 ESV)

... making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose,
which he set forth in Christ as **a plan for the fullness of time (kairos)**,
to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.
(Ephesians 1:9-10 ESV)

Now **concerning the times (chronos) and the seasons (kairos)**, brothers,
you have no need to have anything written to you.

(1 Thessalonians 5:1 ESV)

Concerning this salvation,

the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours

searched and inquired carefully,

inquiring what person or time (kairos) the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating
when [it]⁵⁵⁷ predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

(1 Peter 1:10-11 ESV)

The word, ***kairos***, is **NEVER used with a meaning of specific number of days, months, or years.**

The meaning of ***kairos*** is always an abstract concept of “time”: a point in time, a period of time with no
specific duration, a season, a time period with a specific purpose; but **NEVER with a specified length.**

**According to actual Biblical usage, the phrase “time, times, and half a time” CANNOT be used to define
specific lengths of time.** It should likely be taken as synonymous with the similar phrases
in the Book of Daniel.

⁵⁵⁶ This is translated from χρόνος - chronos, “time”, “age”, “while”

⁵⁵⁷ See footnote 271

Precise Time Periods

The Bible contains **an object lesson regarding the interpretation of given lengths of time.**

The **Prophet Jeremiah** was told in about 605BC the Babylon would have 70 years of hegemony, but it is never stated when the counting of the 70 years should start:

This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste,
and **these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**

Then after seventy years are completed,
I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,
declares [YHWH], making the land an everlasting waste.

For thus says [YHWH]:

When **seventy years are completed for Babylon,**

I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.

(Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10 ESV)

The **Sage Daniel** was familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah, but it was only when the hegemony transferred from Babylon to Medo-Persia in 539BC that he realized the period of 70 years was over:

... in the first year of his reign, **I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years** that,
according to the word of [YHWH] to Jeremiah the prophet,
must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.
(Daniel 9:2 ESV)

Only when the prophecy had been fulfilled was it possible to look back and determine the starting point of 609BC. This lesson should always be borne in mind when attempting to understand the apparent period lengths contained in the **Book of Daniel** and the **Book of Revelation**. Also, it is important to consider the **God retains the right to change “times and seasons”**.

The period lengths in the **Book of revelation** seem the most precise:

... but do not measure the court outside the temple;
leave that out, for it is given over to the nations,
and **they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.**
(Revelation 11:2 ESV)

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

... and the woman fled into the wilderness,
where she has a place prepared by God,
in which **she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.**
(Revelation 12:6 ESV)

And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words,
and **it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.**
(Revelation 13:5 ESV)

It appears to be a simple calculation: 42 months times 30 days per month equals 1260 days.

But **lunar months are not always 30 days; some months are 29 days**. That is why the day of the “new moon” is always noted in the Bible. To actually calculate the number of days in any 42-month period, it would be necessary to identify the 29 day months; also, there could be one or more intercalary month involved. The point being that **these length designators are to some degree symbolic and cannot be taken as strictly literal.**

The “**forty-two months**” of **trampling of the holy city** are most enigmatic. There is no indication when the period of time begins or when it ends. Is it purely symbolic that since the final destruction of Jerusalem in 135AD the city has been under control of “the nations”?⁵⁵⁸

The **1260 days of the two witnesses** appear to have a clear end-point – the death of the two witnesses; but there is no starting point. It will only be possible to identify the period when it is over.

⁵⁵⁸ See Luke 21:24

The immediate context of the **1260 days of protection for the “woman”** would make it purely historic. Verse 5 alludes to the Ascension, so verse six most naturally would apply to the historic New Testament Church, and the fact that as Satan’s church attained hegemony, **the true Church was forced underground, “nourished in the wilderness”**. This would make the period of 1260 days purely symbolic of the period until modern times when the true Church has been able to operate openly.

The **“forty-two months” of hegemony of the Beast Power** are the most specific of these designations. This period would seem to include the time of prosperity and luxury outlined in Revelation chapter 18 and the time of the Great Tribulation – persecution of those who will NOT worship the Beast. But **precision as to the beginning and end of the period is NOT possible**.

The days specified in the **Book of Daniel** are even more enigmatic:

And he said to me,
“For **2,300 evenings and mornings**.
Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.”
(Daniel 8:14 ESV)

And from the time that the [tamid] is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be **1,290 days**.

Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the **1,335 days**.

But go your way till the end.

And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place **at the end of the days**.
(Daniel 12:11-13 ESV)

The **“2,300 evenings and mornings”** could represent 2300 days or 1150 days. A day comprises “one evening and one morning”⁵⁵⁹. So if the 2300 qualifies the whole phrase, it implies 2300 days. If the 2300 qualifies each individual component, it is 1150 days – 1150 evenings and 1150 mornings yield 2300 “evenings and mornings”. Also, the context is far from clear as to whether the time period applies to the prototypical fulfillment, the antitypical fulfillment, or both.

The context of Daniel chapter 12 is clearly the end-time. So in some way the 1290 days and the 1335 days relate to the hegemony and actions of the Beast Power. There is no other information on these periods. Only from the other side, when we look back on them, will we be able to understand to what these periods applied.

The clear and specific statement of the Bible is that there is no way for us to calculate or determine when God the Father is going to act. **Times and dates are strictly the prerogative of God the Father**, and he retains the right to make changes as he sees fit. These apparently precise lengths of time are put out to entice the foolish to try to do what God explicitly says cannot be done – **calculate the “day and the hour”**.

Excursus 3 – The Covenant Blessings and Curses

The **nation of Ancient Israel was created by a treaty** between YHWH and the people of Israel, whereby **YHWH was the Suzerain** and **Israel was the vasa nation**.⁵⁶⁰ **A standard component of ancient treaties was list of blessings and curses**. The “blessings” being the benefits to be provided by the Suzerain to the vasa. The “curses” being the punishments the Suzerain would inflict upon the vasa for covenant violation. The material we have in Leviticus chapter 26 verses 3 through 13 comprises the original covenant “blessings”; and, verses 14 through 39 comprise the original covenant “curses” associated with the Sinai Covenant.

⁵⁵⁹ See Genesis 1:5b,8b,13,19,23,31b

⁵⁶⁰ See Exodus 19:2b-8; see also the discussion section **4.1 The Sinai Covenant** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**” and section **8.2 Deuteronomy as a Covenant Document** in the paper “**The Writings of Moses**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
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First, **consider the “blessings”**:

If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them,

then I will give you your rains in their season,
and the land shall yield its increase,
and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest,
and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing.

And **you shall eat your bread to the full**
and **dwell in your land securely.**

I will give peace in the land,
and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid.

And I will remove harmful beasts from the land,
and **the sword shall not go through your land.**

You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.
Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand,
and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

I will turn to you and **make you fruitful and multiply you**
and will confirm my covenant with you.

You shall eat old store long kept,
and you shall clear out the old to make way for the new.

I will make my dwelling among you, and my [being] (nephesh)⁵⁶¹ shall not abhor you.
And **I will walk among you and will be your God,** and **you shall be my people.**

I am [YHWH] your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
that **you should not be their slaves.**

And **I have broken the bars of your yoke** and made you walk erect.
(Leviticus 26:3-13 ESV)

The “blessings” accrue from fulfilling the covenant stipulations, “**obey my voice**”,⁵⁶² “**walk in my statutes**”, “**observe my commandments**”, “**do them**”. The “blessings” revolve around physical well being for the people, “**eat your bread to the full**”; personal growth leading to national greatness, “**make you fruitful and multiply you**”; and, personal and national safety and security, “ **dwell in your land securely**”, “**the sword shall not go through your land**”. The most important blessing is the living relationship with YHWH, “**I will make my dwelling among you**”, “**I am YHWH your God**”, “**you shall be my people**”. The people are reminded of their former status as slaves in Egypt, “**you should not be their slaves**”, and that YHWH has liberated them, “**I have broken the bars of your yoke**”.

Next, **consider the “curses”**:

But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments,
if you spurn my statutes, and **if your [being] (nephesh) abhors my [mish*patim]**,⁵⁶³
so that you will not do all my commandments, but **break my covenant,**
then I will do this to you:

I will visit you with panic,
with **wasting disease** and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache.

And **you shall sow your seed in vain,** for your enemies shall eat it.

I will set my face against you, and you shall be **struck down before your enemies.**

Those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you.

And if in spite of this you will not listen to me,

then I will discipline you again **sevenfold for your sins,**

and I will break the pride of your power,
and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.

And your strength shall be spent in vain,

for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

⁵⁶¹ See footnote 6

⁵⁶² See Exodus 19:5

⁵⁶³ See footnote 160

Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me,
I will continue striking you, **sevenfold for your sins**.

And I will let loose the wild beasts against you,
which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock
and make you few in number,
so that your roads shall be deserted.

And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me,
then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will strike you **sevenfold for your sins**.

And **I will bring a sword upon you**, that shall **execute vengeance for the covenant**.

And if you gather within your cities, I will send pestilence among you,
and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

When I break your supply of bread,
ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven and shall dole out your bread again by weight,
and you shall eat and not be satisfied.

But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me,
then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline **you sevenfold for your sins**.

You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.

And I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars
and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols,
and my [being] (nephesh)⁵⁶⁴ will abhor you.

And **I will lay your cities waste** and will make your sanctuaries desolate,
and I will not smell your pleasing aromas.

And I myself will devastate the land,
so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it.

And **I will scatter you among the nations**,

and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation,
and your cities shall be a waste.

Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate,
while you are in your enemies' land;

then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths.

As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest,
the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.

And as for those of you who are left,

I will send **faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies**.

The sound of a driven leaf shall put them to flight, and they shall flee as one flees from the sword,
and they shall fall when none pursues.

They shall stumble over one another, as if to escape a sword, though none pursues.

And you shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

And **you shall perish among the nations**, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

And those of you who are left shall **rot away in your enemies' lands** because of their iniquity,
and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them.

(Leviticus 26:14-39 ESV)

The “curses” actually became a prophecy of the history of the nation of Ancient Israel.

The “curses” take effect for covenant violation, “**break my covenant**”. God looks on the heart,
and he specifies a corrupted heart as the ultimate cause of the application of the “curses”,

“**if your being abhors my mish*patim**”. In the first instance, the “curses” systematically reverse
the “blessings”:

- Personal well being is replaced by “**wasting disease**”
- Abundance is replaced by “**sow your seed in vain**”
- Security and safety are replaced by “**struck down before your enemies**”
- National greatness is replaced by “**those who hate you shall rule over you**”

The period of the Judges was a repeated object lesson of this: Israel sinned by falling into idolatry;
God allowed a neighbour nation to dominate Israel; the people repented and God sent a “judge”
to deliver them. And then, they did it again, and again. Next God established the Kingdom of David
as a type of the Kingdom of God with the hope that the kings of David’s line would lead the nation

⁵⁶⁴ See footnote 6

to “**keep my covenant**”.⁵⁶⁵ But the kings and the nation quickly feel into apostasy. This is where the intensification of the “curses” begins to apply, “**sevenfold for your sins**”. The punishments get worse and worse until the final destruction of the nation is inevitable, “**I will bring a sword upon you**”, “**I will lay your cities waste**”, and the surviving people are dispersed in captivity, “**I will scatter you among the nations**”, where they languish, “**you shall perish among the nations**”. **This was the fate of Ancient Israel.**

The Efficacy of the Blessings and Curses

At the end of the wilderness period, when Israel was encamped in the Plains of Moab, Moses delivered a series of speeches that have been assembled into the **Book of Deuteronomy**, as we have it. Among these speeches was **an elaboration and enlargement of the Covenant Blessings and Curses**. It is contained in Deuteronomy chapter 28. **Moses uses an interesting selection of verbs** in describing the actions of the blessings and curses:

And **all these blessings shall come upon you (uva´u `aleka) and overtake (nasag) you**, if you obey the voice of [YHWH] your God.

But if you will not obey the voice of [YHWH] your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then **all these curses shall come upon you (uva´u `aleka) and overtake (nasag) you**.

All these curses shall come upon you (uva´u `aleka) and pursue (radaph) you and overtake (nasag) you till you are destroyed,

because you did not obey the voice of [YHWH] your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that he commanded you. (Deuteronomy 28:2, 15, 45 ESV)

The phrase “**shall come upon**”, is from וַיָּבֹאוּ עָלֶיךָ - uva´u `aleka, “**and come upon you**”, which in itself implies “action” on the part of the “blessings” and the “curses”. But the “**overtake**” is even more interesting. It is from נָשַׁג - nasag. It is a relatively rare verb – occurring only 47 time. Milton Fisher says of this verb:

... often occurring as a complement to *radaph* “pursue.”

Its semantic range in Hebrew, however, lays stress on attainment, achievement, procurement.

... a somewhat figurative adaptation occurs in reference to blessings and curses ...

(TWOT article 1422 pages 602-603)

In verse 45, we have “**pursue**”, from רָדַף - radaph. So what Moses is saying is that the “blessings” and “curses” have an “**active force**” – of and by themselves, they will “**overtake**” and “**come upon**” a person or a nation; they will even “**pursue**” a person or a nation; for good, “**blessing**”, or for evil, “**curse**”.

The fundamental teaching upon which the “blessings and curses” are based, is of course, the Ten Commandments. The active power of the “blessings and curse” come from the fact that the Ten Commandments are “**living principles**” – **obeying them brings automatic blessings; disobeying brings automatic curses**. The most common word for the Ten Commandments is

מִצְוָה - mitz´wah. Moses had previously been specific that the blessing and the curse automatically accrued from living by the Ten Commandments or violating them. Moses is also clear and specific that the Ten Commandments define the **Way of God, “righteousness”**:

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse:

the **blessing**,

if you obey the commandments (mitz´wah) of [YHWH] your God, which I command you today, and the curse,

if you do not obey the commandments (mitz´wah) of [YHWH] your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.

(Deuteronomy 11:26-28 ESV)

⁵⁶⁵ See Exodus 19:5
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And **it will be righteousness for us**,
if we are careful to **do all this commandment (mitz'wah)** before [YHWH] our God,
as he has commanded us.
(Deuteronomy 6:25 ESV)

A Psalmist, a Sage, and the **Prophet Isaiah** echo Moses' statement:
Lead me in **the path of your commandments (mitz'wah)**, for I delight in it.
I have seen a limit to all perfection, but **your commandment (mitz'wah) is exceedingly broad**.
But you are near, [YHWH], and all **your commandments (mitz'wah) are true**.
My tongue will sing of your word, for all **your commandments (mitz'wah) are right**.
(Psalm 119:35, 96, 151, 172 ESV)
For **the commandment (mitz'wah) is a lamp** and the teaching (torah)⁵⁶⁶ a light,
and the reproofs of discipline are **the way of life** ... (Proverbs 6:23 ESV)
Oh that you had **paid attention to my commandments (mitz'wah)**!
Then your peace would have been like a river, and **your righteousness** like the waves of the sea;
(Isaiah 48:18 ESV)

When **King Joash** fell into apostasy,
Zechariah ben Jehoiada warned him of the automatic consequences:
Then the Spirit of God clothed **Zechariah the son of Jehoiada** the priest,
and he stood above the people, and said to them,
"Thus says God,
'Why do **you break the commandments (mitz'wah)** of [YHWH],
so that you cannot prosper?
Because you have forsaken [YHWH], he has forsaken you.'"
(2 Chronicles 24:20 ESV)

The **Way of God** is based on the Ten Commandments. Living by them brings blessings.
Violating them brings curses. But **how does this automatically work?**

The Power Behind the Blessings and Curses

Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God:

In the beginning was **the Word**,
and the Word was with God,
and **the Word was God**.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things were made through him,
and without him was not any thing made that was made.
In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
(John 1:1-5 ESV)
That which was from the beginning,
which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we looked upon and have touched with our hands,
concerning **the word of life—the life was made manifest**,
and we have seen it,
and testify to it and proclaim to you **the eternal life**,
which was with the Father and was made manifest to us ...
(1 John 1:1-2 ESV)
Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse!
The **one sitting on it is called Faithful and True**,
and in righteousness he judges and makes war.
His eyes are like a flame of fire,
and on his head are many diadems,
and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

⁵⁶⁶ See footnote 54
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He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood,
and **the name by which he is called is The Word of God.**
(Revelation 19:11-13 ESV)

The Living Word of God spoke the words reported by Moses in chapter 20 of the Book of Exodus:

And **God spoke all these words,** saying,

“I am [YHWH] your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for yourself a carved image ...
You shall not take the name of [YHWH] your God in vain ...
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
Honor your father and your mother ...
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
You shall not covet ...

(Exodus 20:1-4a, 7a, 8, 12a, 13-17a ESV)

These written words form the basis of the teaching of God, **the Way of God.**

The whole Bible can be described as an elaboration and explanation of these words.

The Bible is the Written Word of God. The Bible reveals the Living Word of God.

The Living Word of God empowers the Written Word of God.

Jesus Christ himself used the power of the Written Word of God to defeat Satan the Devil:

Then **Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**

And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

And the tempter came and said to him,

“If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

But he answered,

“It is written, (citing Deuteronomy 8:3b)

‘Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain
and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said to him,

“All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

Then Jesus said to him,

“Be gone, Satan!

For **it is written, (alluding to Deuteronomy 6:13)**

‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”

Then the devil left him ...

(Matthew 4:1-4, 8-11a ESV)

The **Author of Book of Hebrews** explains **the power of the Written Word of God:**

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest,⁵⁶⁷
so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

For **the word of God is living and active,**

sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing to the division of [body] (psyche)⁵⁶⁸ and of spirit, of joints and of marrow,
and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

(Hebrews 4:11-12 ESV)

⁵⁶⁷ The Author of the Book of Hebrews establishes the Sabbath as a “type” of the True Rest – eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

⁵⁶⁸ See footnote 6

For it is impossible,
in the case of those who have once been enlightened,
who have tasted the heavenly gift,
and have shared in the Holy Spirit,
and have **tasted the goodness of the word of God** and **the powers of the age to come**,
and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance,
since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.
(Hebrews 6:4-6 ESV)

The **Apostle Peter** explains that salvation is only possible through the **Living Word of God**
as reported in the **Written Word of God, the “gospel”**:

Having purified your [hearts] (psyche)⁵⁶⁹ by your obedience to the truth
for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,
[since you have been begotten again] (anagennaō),⁵⁷⁰
not of perishable seed
but of imperishable, through **the living and abiding word of God**; for
All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
but **the word of the Lord** remains forever. (citing Isaiah 40:6b, 8)

And **this word is the good news that was preached to you.**⁵⁷¹
(1 Peter 1:22-25 ESV)

The **Apostle John** reports a saying of Jesus summarizing Jesus’ commission from God the Father.
Jesus’ Words come from the Father – they are **the Words of Eternal Life**.

John commends True Christians, “young men”, for their strength through **the Word of God**:

And Jesus cried out and said,
“Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me.
And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.
I have come into the world as light,
so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.
If anyone hears my words and does not keep them,
I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.
The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge;
the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.
For I have not spoken on my own authority,
but **the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment**
—what to say and what to speak.
And I know that **his commandment is eternal life.**
What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

(John 12:44-50 ESV)

Simon Peter answered him,
“Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life,
and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

I write to you, **young men,**
because you are strong,
and **the word of God abides in you,**
and you have overcome the evil one.

(John 6:68-69, 1 John 2:14b ESV)

Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God. Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
Jesus has inspired the various authors of the Bible to record the **Written Word of God**.
The power of the Holy Spirit flows from the Living Word of God through the Written Word of God.
Living by the **Way of God**, as specified by the Bible, automatically brings “blessings”.
Violating the **Way of God**, automatically brings “curses”.

⁵⁶⁹ See footnote 6

⁵⁷⁰ See footnote 475

⁵⁷¹ The “good news” is the “gospel” as recorded in the New Testament documents.

The Impact of the Blessings and Curses

The covenant blessings and curses were given to Ancient Israel in association with the Sinai Covenant. The nation of Ancient Israel ceased to exist in 586BC. YHWH, as Suzerain, specifically brought the covenant curses upon Ancient Israel for violation of the Sinai Covenant:

The word that came to Jeremiah from [YHWH]:

“Hear **the words of this covenant**,
and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
You shall say to them,

Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel:

Cursed be the man who does not hear the words of this covenant
that I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt,
from the iron furnace, saying,

Listen to my voice,

and do all that I command you.

So shall you be my people,

and I will be your God, that I may confirm the oath

that I swore to your fathers,

to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day.”

Then I answered,

“So be it, [YHWH].”

And [YHWH] said to me,

“Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem:

Hear the words of this covenant and do them.

For I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt,
warning them persistently, even to this day, saying,

‘Obey my voice.’ (citing Exodus 19:5)

Yet **they did not obey** or incline their ear,

but everyone walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart.

Therefore **I brought upon them all the words of this covenant**,

which I commanded them to do, but they did not.”

(Jeremiah 11:1-8 ESV see also 22:1-10)

The Sinai Covenant officially ended with the death of Jesus Christ in the early 30's AD:

In speaking of a new covenant,⁵⁷² he makes the first one obsolete.

And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant (diathēkē),

so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance,

since a death has occurred

that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant (diathēkē).

For **where a will (diathēkē)⁵⁷³ is involved,**

the death of the one who made it must be established.

For a will (diathēkē) takes effect only at death,

since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

(Hebrews 8:13, 9:15-17 ESV)

With the termination of the nation and the end of the Sinai Covenant, **there remains no official situation under which God will again actively apply the “blessings” or the “curses”.** However, the definition of both the “blessings” and the “curses” remains in effect, and **the automatic nature of their application remains in effect. This has been the operative force by which Western Civilization has attained success.** Because Western Civilization, throughout most of its history, had embraced the Judeo-Christian Ethic, **a belief in and active practice of the Ten Commandments,** automatic “blessings” had accrued to Western Civilization. Sadly, for many decades now, Western Civilization has been progressively turning away from the Judeo-Christian Ethic. **Today, the Ten Commandments are officially impugned by governments and little followed by the majority of citizens. Today, Western Civilization is receiving only “curses”.**

⁵⁷² This instance of “covenant” is supplied by the translator; it refers back to *diathēkē* in verse 10.

⁵⁷³ The word, διαθήκη - diathēkē, means both a “will” and a “covenant”.

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List of Referenced Footnotes

- 4 This is the **“Book of Life”** where God keeps track of those who are **True Worshipers**, i.e., those who have been granted the gift of the **“indwelling of the Holy Spirit”**; see the discussion in section **9.5 The Book of Life** in the paper **“The Writings of Moses”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 6 The Hebrew word, נֶפֶשׁ - nephesh, and the Greek word, ψυχή - psyche, are both correctly translated by the English word “soul”. However, the English word “soul” has been rendered an unusable word due to the implication of the pagan concept of the “immortal soul”. Hence, in this paper, a more meaningful word is substituted. The most general word is “being”, but more specific words such as “mind”, “heart”, “life” are also used. For further discussion, see **Excursus 2 - נֶפֶשׁ and ψυχή** in the paper **“The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 20 Faith is a gift from God, NOT something a human being can possess by his/her self; see section **2.1 Faith is a Gift from God** in the paper **“The Inner Workings of Faith”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 43 The Greek word, νόμος – nomos, can be correctly translated as “law”; however, it should NEVER be used in relation to the Writings of Moses, or any part of the Old Testament. The Old Testament comprises *torah*, NOT *nomos*; hence, in this paper, the transliteration, *nomos*, is always used. For further discussions see **Excursus 8 - torah and nomos** in the paper **“True Worship of the True God”** and section **11.6 Paul and nomos** in the paper **“The Writings of Moses”**; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 46 The most important word for understanding the Nature of God is *hesed*. Briefly, *hesed* is the expression of God’s covenantal commitment to fulfill his side of a covenant agreement. See section **1.4.3 Attributes of God’s Character** in the paper **“First Pillar - The Nature of God”** and **Excursus 2 - hesed** in the paper **“Covenants of Grace”**; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 48 The most important meaning of the noun מִשְׁפָּט - mish^epat, is the character attribute of “justness”, but it also frequently is used to mean the abstract concept of “justice”; other nuances also exist. The meaning of *mish^epat* is thoroughly explored in the paper **“Godly Character”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 49 This is an allusion to the First Resurrection, see Psalm 22:31, Isaiah 44:23, Revelation 16:17, 21:6;
- 51 The Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל - sh^eol, should always be translated “death”, “grave”, or a synonym. To transliterate as “Sheol” implies that there is a place of consciousness where the “dead” go, “Dante’s Hell”. This is a pagan concept. See **TWOT** article 2303c pages 892-893.
- 54 The Hebrew word תּוֹרָה - torah, means “teaching”, “instruction”, “direction”. There is almost no overlap of meaning with the English word “law”; hence, in this paper the transliteration is always used. For further discussion, see **Excursus 3 - torah** and **Excursus 5 - torah and nomos** in the paper **“Covenants of Grace”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 55 See section **6. Spiritual Whoredom** in the paper **“The Human Condition”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
- 108 The Hebrew particle ו - waw, has several meanings. The most common is as a conjunction, “and”, “but”. Very importantly to be distinguished is when it identifies “apposition” – in these cases, this paper substitutes “even”.
- 160 The word מִשְׁפָּטִים - mish^epatim is the plural of the singular noun מִשְׁפָּט - mish^epat, but it carries a completely different range of meaning. There is no English word into which *mish^epatim* can be translated. The simplest description of its meaning is **“the understanding, wisdom, and discernment that come from a life lived by the Way of God”**. The meaning of *mish^epatim* is thoroughly explored in the paper **“Godly Character”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 193 See the discussion of *mo’ed* in section **Time Periods in Daniel** in **Excursus 2 – Time, Times, and Half a Time**
- 221 Aramaic דַּת - dath, “law”, see Holladay page 403

- 258** The verb γεννάω - gennaō, carries a very broad range of meaning, “procreate”, “give birth”, “be born”, “bring forth”; see GEL pages 154-155; The Hebrew root, יָלַד - yalad, carries a similar range of meaning; see Holladay pages 134-135.
- 270** The Greek word is παράκλητος - paraklētos, a masculine noun, “helper”, “advocate”; there are five occurrences John 14:16,26, 15:26, 16:7, 1 John 2:1.
- 271** The Holy Spirit is the power of God. It is NOT sentient being; therefore, it should always be referenced with neuter pronouns. See section **1.5 The Holy Spirit** in the paper “**First Pillar - The Nature of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 405** The Greek word ἄδης - hadēs, is the equivalent of the Hebrew *sh’ol*; *hadēs* should always be translated by “death” or “grave”, or similar; see footnote **51**.
- 460** The noun ἔρως - ‘eretz, can be translated “land” or “earth”, depending on the context; see Holladay page 28.
- 475** The verb ἀναγεννάω - anagennaō, specifically means “beget again”; see GEL page 51; it occurs only twice, in 1 Peter 1:3,23. Peter uses it to emphasize that receiving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of a spiritual life.