God of Every Nation

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> **Fear not**, for you will not be ashamed;
> **be not confounded**, for you will not be disgraced;
> for you will forget the shame of your youth,
> and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.
>
> **For your Maker is your husband**, [YHWH][1] of hosts is his name;
> and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, **the God of the whole earth he is called**.
> (Isaiah 54:4-5 ESV)
>
> Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, **devout men from every nation under heaven**.
>
> So Peter opened his mouth and said:
>
> > "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality,
> > but **in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him**. …"
>
> And **he made from one man every nation of mankind** to live on all the face of the earth …
> (Acts 2:5, 10:34-35, 17:26a ESV)
>
> And they sang a new song, saying,
>
> > "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,
> > for you were slain, and by your blood **you ransomed people for God**
> > **from every tribe and language and people and nation**,
> > and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
> > and they shall reign on the earth."
>
> (Revelation 5:9-10 ESV)
>
> After this I looked, and behold, **a great multitude** that no one could number,
> **from every nation**, **from all tribes and peoples and languages**,
> standing before the throne and before the Lamb,
> clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice,
>
> > "**Salvation belongs to our God** who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
>
> (Revelation 7:9-10 ESV)
>
> Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead,
> with [the][2] **eternal gospel** to proclaim to those who dwell on earth,
> **to every nation and tribe and language and people**.
> And he said with a loud voice,
>
> > "**Fear God** and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come,
> > and **worship him** who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."
>
> (Revelation 14:6-7 ESV)

The Bible describes the working out of the Plan of God. Originally, God worked through individuals, the Patriarchs; then through a single nation, Israel; today God works through a small number of people, the **New Testament Church**.[3] However, **God's objective in this work has always been all humanity**. God created human beings to live a short physical life so that each person can make the decision to aspire to the God Family, or NOT. **God's purpose for human beings** is to be transformed from perishable physical life into immortal, unperishable, eternal beings, like God, and **be members of the God Family**.[4]

God's purpose for those he has worked through over human history has been to carry the message of God, the truth of God, the word of God, contained in the Bible to the rest of humanity. The Patriarchs were preparatory for the Nation of Israel. The ancient Nation of Israel failed to accomplish its purpose. The New Testament Church will NOT fail. Soon **the King of kings will return to earth**, establish the Kingdon of God, create a New Nation of Israel, and **take the Truth of God**, **the Gospel**, **to all humanity**.

The purpose of this paper is to sketch, **from the Bible**, **how God's focus has always been all humanity**. The history of God's working with human beings has always been with an eye to the overall purpose for

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[1] The tetragrammaton, יְהוָה , 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] The Greek phrase is εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον - euangelion aiōnion, "gospel eternal"; there is no article – "an" is provided by the translator, but there is only one gospel (see Galatians 1:6-9), so "the" is preferable.

[3] The True Church of God is distinguished from "mainstream Christianity", which is just another religion of the world.

[4] See section ***2.1 The Family of God*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

human life. **The Plan of God will unfold exactly as God intends**. Each and every person who has ever lived will be given the opportunity for salvation.

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1. All the Earth is Mine

God's purpose for the nation of Ancient Israel was universal. God's purpose in exercising his right of election[5] is always with a view to his overall purpose to bring "**many sons to glory**",[6] to maximize the number of people to whom he can ultimately grant the gift of eternal life:

> 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." (citing Isaiah 25:8)
> "O death, where is your victory?
> O death, where is your sting?" (citing Hosea 13:14)
> (1 Corinthians 15:54-55 ESV see also Hebrews 2:14-15, Revelation 20:14, 21:4)

God was explicit about this when he created the nation of Ancient Israel through the **Sinai Covenant**:

> [YHWH] called to [Moses] 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.'
> These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."
> (Exodus 19:3b-6 ESV see also 9:29, Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2)

YHWH asserts that the entire earth, everyone and everything in it, belongs to him, "**all the earth is mine**". Because of this, YHWH is able to make the promise to Israel that the nation would be "**my treasured possession among all peoples**". The universality of the Dominion of God is attested throughout the Bible, and for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, "general revelation"[7] screams loudly about the universality of the power of the God of Creation. This paper picks up the Biblical revelation after the Great Flood at the time of Noah.

1.1 Fill the Earth

After the Ark rested in the Mountains of Ararat, and the waters subsided from the earth, Noah and his family came out of the Ark, and God established with them the "**Covenant of Justness**":[8]

> And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them,
> "**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth**.
> The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth
> and upon every bird of the heavens,
> upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea.
> **Into your hand they are delivered**.
> Every moving thing that lives shall be **food for you**.
> And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.
> 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.
> And you, **be fruitful and multiply**, **increase greatly on the earth** and multiply in it."
> Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him,
> "Behold, **I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you** …"
> (Genesis 9:1-9 ESV)

The most important aspect of **this covenant** is that its scope **encompassed all humanity**, Noah's sons and their descendants, "**you and your offspring after you**". Humanity was given "stewardship" over all

[5] See section ***2.3.1 Election*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[6] See Hebrews 2:10
[7] See section ***3.2 General Revelation*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[8] See section ***2. The Covenant of Justness*** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

living creatures, "**into your hand they are delivered**". The covenant stipulated the fundamental principle of justice by which God expected all human societies should be organized: human life is inviolable; murder requires death of the murderer. The requirement of the covenant is "**be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth**", "**increase greatly on the earth**". God requires a large population of human beings to potentially attain "sonship" in the Family of God.[9]

God's interest in all humanity, all peoples, all nations, is next made manifest in the "**Table of Nations**".[10] Thankfully, this remarkable document was included by Moses when he assembled the Book of Genesis.[11] For each of the sons of Noah, the document lists several generations of their descendants. Many of the names assume the forms later used of the Nations for which the persons were eponymous ancestors. The Table of Nations contains the identifiable names of many ancient nations. This follows directly from God's instruction to Noah in the Covenant of Justness.

The Table of Nations also gives us the first hints at the establishment of "human society", "**world city**",[12] the beginnings of the nations departing from the Way of God:

> Cush fathered **Nimrod**; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man.
> He was a mighty hunter before [YHWH].
>
> Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod **a mighty hunter** before [YHWH]."
>
> The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, **in the land of Shinar**.
>
> **From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh**,
> Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is **the great city**.
> (Genesis 10:8-12 ESV)

Nimrod became a "big man", "**a mighty hunter**". The implication is that he departed from the Way of YHWH. Being only four generations removed from Noah, given that Noah was still alive, Nimrod was clearly familiar with the Way of God but chose to reject it.

The phrase, "**from that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh**", requires some analysis. The Hebrew is:

מִן־	הָאָרֶץ	הַהִוא	יָצָא	אַשּׁוּר	וַיִּבֶן	אֶת־	נִינְוֵה
min	ha´aretz	hahi´	yatza´	´ashshur	wayyiven	´eth	nin^{e}weh
from	the land	the this	he went out	Ashshur	and built		Nineveh

Literally: from the land the this he went out Ashshur and built Nineveh

The second son of Shem is אַשּׁוּר - ´ashshur, "Ashshur".[13] He is the eponymous ancestor of Assyria. **It is much more natural to translate verse 11 as referring to the man NOT the later nation**. It is clear that Ashshur, like Nimrod, rejected the Way of God and went about establishing "world city". This is made clear in chapter 11:

> Now **the whole earth had one language and the same words**.
>
> And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in **the land of Shinar** and settled there.
>
> And they said to one another,
> "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly."
>
> And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.
> Then they said,
> "Come, **let us build ourselves a city** and a tower with its top in the heavens,
> and let us **make a name for ourselves**,
> lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."
>
> And [YHWH] came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.
> 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**.

[9] See section ***2.1 The Family of God*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[10] See Genesis chapter 10, much of the material is mirrored in 1 Chronicles 1:1-23
[11] See section ***3. The Early Parts of Genesis*** in the paper "**The Writings of Moses**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[12] See section ***3.3.2.2 World City*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[13] See Genesis 10:22

Come, **let us go down and there confuse their language**,
so that they may not understand one another's speech."

So [YHWH] dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.
(Genesis 11:1-8 ESV)

The "**land of Shinar**" is **Sumer**, the region at the north end of the Persian Gulf, the area where Nimrod built cities. The area where Ashshur bult cities is further north along the Tigres River. There was a uniform culture and common language over the whole area. Given this, the technological advances that would be made, "**nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible**", were beyond what God was willing to allow at that time. The confusion of the languages slowed down the material progress of humanity. Nevertheless, **we have here the beginning of "human society", "world city", with its two foci in Sumer/Babylon and Assyria**. From there, human civilization spread to Egypt.

1.2 The Promises to Abraham

Abram originated in the **Sumerian city of Ur**. He migrated north with his family to the area of **Haran**. It was in Haran that God called Abram and instructed him to migrate to the Land of Canaan:

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**."

So Abram went, as [YHWH] had told him …
(Genesis 12:1-4a ESV)

The two main promises to Abram are given:

1. I will make of you a great nation
2. in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed

These promises are refined and elaborated on several later occasions:

After these things the word of [YHWH] came to Abram in a vision:
"Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; **your reward shall be very great**."

And he said to him,
"I am [YHWH] who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to **give you this land to possess**."

On that day **[YHWH] [cut] (karath)**[14] **a covenant with Abram**, saying,
"To your offspring **I give this land**, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,
(Genesis 15:1, 7, 18 ESV)

When Abram was ninety-nine years old [YHWH] appeared to Abram and said to him,
"I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,
that I may **make**[15] **my covenant** between me and you, and may **multiply you greatly**."

Then Abram fell on his face.
And God said to him,
"Behold, **my covenant is with you**, and you shall be the **father of a multitude of nations**.
No longer shall your name be called Abram, but **your name shall be Abraham**,
for **I have made you the father of a multitude of nations**.
I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and **I will make you into nations**,
and kings shall come from you.
And I will establish[16] my covenant between me and you
and your offspring after you throughout their generations for **an everlasting covenant**,
to be God to you and to your offspring after you.
And **I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land** of your sojournings,
all the land of Canaan, **for an everlasting possession**, and I will be their God."
(Genesis 17:1-8 ESV)

And [YHWH] appeared to [**Isaac**] and said,
"Do not go down to Egypt; **dwell in the land** of which I shall tell you.
Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you,

[14] The Hebrew כָּרַת - karath, "to cut", is the technical term for creating a "new covenant", see **TWOT** pages 456-457.

[15] The Hebrew נָתַן - natan, "to give", implies elaborating on an existing covenant, see **TWOT** pages 608-609.

[16] The verb here is a hiphil form of קוּם - qum, "establish", "perform", "carry out"; see Holladay page 316

for to you and **to your offspring I will give all these lands**,
and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father.
I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands.
And **in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**,
because Abraham obeyed my voice
and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, [even][17] my [torah]."[18]
(Genesis 26:2-5 ESV)

Then **Isaac** called **Jacob** and blessed him and directed him,
"You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women.
Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father,
and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

God Almighty bless you and **make you fruitful and multiply you**,
that you may become a company of peoples.
May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you,
that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!"
(Genesis 28:1-4 ESV)

And God said to him,
"Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob,
but **Israel shall be your name**."[19]

So he called his name Israel.
And God said to him,
"I am God Almighty: **be fruitful and multiply**.
A nation and a company of nations shall come from you,
and kings shall come from your own body.
The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you,
and **I will give the land to your offspring after you**."
(Genesis 35:10-12 ESV)

Analysis of the first promise to Abraham:

- The promise of the land, is at first only implicit, "**I will make of you a great nation**": a "great nation" requires a location, i.e., a land
- The "promise" of a great nation was formalized into a covenant, "**YHWH cut a covenant with Abram**", which explicitly included the land, "**give you this land to possess**", "**I give this land**"
- The covenantal promise of possession of the land was extended into perpetuity, "**I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land**", "**for an everlasting possession**"
- The covenantal promise of the land was particularized to Isaac and his descendants, "**dwell in the land**", "**to your offspring I will give all these lands**"
- Isaac prayed that God would extend the covenantal promise of the land to Jacob, "**God Almighty bless you**", "**that you may take possession of the land**"
- God did respond and particularize the covenantal promise of the land to the descendants of Jacob, "**I will give the land to your offspring after you**"

God fulfilled his promise. The land of Abraham's sojourning was given to the Nation of Israel.[20] The history of Israel is a litany of apostacy resulting in the destruction of the nation and the expulsion from the land. **Israel's apostacy was foreshadowed by the Golden Calf incident at Horeb**.[21] In the aftermath of the apostacy, Moses intervenes on behalf of the people, and God acquiesces:

The next day Moses said to the people,
"You have sinned a great sin.
And now I will go up to [YHWH];
perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

[17] The Hebrew particle וְ - 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".

[18] 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.

[19] See Genesis 32:24-28; יִשְׂרָאֵל - yisᵉra´el, means "he strive with God"; see **ESV** footnote

[20] See the Book of Joshua

[21] See Exodus chapter 32

And [YHWH] said to Moses,
"**This very thing that you have spoken I will do**,
for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."
(Exodus 32:30, 33:17 ESV)

After this, God gives Moses a personal theophany[22] and **cuts a new convent**, "**The Covenant of Performance**", with Moses:[23]

And he said,
"Behold, **I am [cutting] (karath)[24] 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**. …"
And [YHWH] said to Moses,
"**Write these words**,
for in accordance **with these words I have [cut] (karath) a covenant with you and with Israel**."
(Exodus 34:10, 27 ESV)

The implications of this covenant are staggering:

- It is a new and distinct covenant, independent of all other covenants, "**I am cutting a covenant**"
- Only Moses and perhaps Joshua[25] are on the mountain with YHWH – no one else is privy to the original delivery of this covenant, but the covenant is for posterity, "**write these words**", "**with these words I have cut a covenant with you and with Israel**"
- There are no stipulations to the covenant – it comprises only a promise from God, "**I will do marvels**"
- The promise is particularized to being accomplished through Israel, "**it is an awesome thing that I will do with you**"
- The effect of God's work promised in the covenant, will be universal, for all humanity, "**all the people**", "**shall see the work of YHWH**"

The Golden Calf incident did NOT take God by surprise. **God was well aware of the proclivity of Israel to sin requiring the destruction of the nation**:

[YHWH] saw it and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.
And he said,
"**I will hide my face from them**; I will see what their end will be,
for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness.
And I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend my arrows on them;
For **they are a nation void of counsel**, and there is no understanding in them.
If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end! …"
(Deuteronomy 32:19-20, 23, 28-29 ESV see also 28:15-68, Leviticus 26:14-39)

How then does God promise to accomplish his purpose for humanity through Israel? This paper discusses this topic further in section ***5.1 The Restoration of the Land of Israel***.

The second promise to Abraham is more complicated:

- The blessing upon and through Abram is at first very general, "**in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed**"
- God increases the "mystery" by promising a reward[26] to Abram, "**your reward shall be very great**"
- Next Abram is told he will have abundant descendants, "**multiply you greatly**"
- In **Genesis chapter 17**, the second promise is included in God's covenant with Abram, "**my covenant is with you**", and God promises the covenant in perpetuity, "**an everlasting covenant**"

[22] See Exodus 34:1-9
[23] For further discussion on this covenant see section ***9.3 The Covenant of Performance*** in the paper "**True Worship of the True God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
[24] See footnote ***14***
[25] See Exodus 24:13
[26] See section ***11.4 Christian Rewards*** in the paper "**True Worship of the True God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

- The promise of the blessing is particularized by specifying that Abram will become the Father of Nations, "**I will make you into nations**", "**the father of a multitude of nations**" and Abram's name is changed, "**your name shall be Abraham**"[27]
- God explicitly reiterates the promises to Isaac, "**I will multiply your offspring**", "**in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**"
- Isaac prays for the promise to be passed on to Jacob, "**God Almighty bless you**", "**make you fruitful and multiply you**"
- God gives Jacob's an alternate name, "**Israel shall be your name**", the eponymous name of the "**great nation**" originally promised to Abram
- Jacob is told that in addition to the "**great nation**", other nations will come to be designated by his name, "**a company of nations shall come from you**"

The meaning of the promised blessing was never manifest in Ancient Israel. With a few brief exceptions, the nation's apostacy rendered Ancient Israel a blight on the world, a curse, not a blessing. **God had very high intentions for the ancient Nation of Israel**, but the true import of the blessing promised through Abram can only be understood through **the New Testament documents**. This topic is taken up again in sections ***4. The Gospel to the Nations*** and ***5.2 The Blessing to All Nations***.

1.3 The Purpose of Ancient Israel

The **Sinai Covenant contains three stipulations** which were laid onto the Nation of Israel:

> [YHWH] called to [Moses] 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**.'
> These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."
> (Exodus 19:3b-6 ESV see also Deuteronomy 28:1, 10)

1. obey my voice
2. keep my covenant
3. be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation

The third stipulation specifies God's purpose for the Nation, "**be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**". Israel was to be an example nation for all the nations of the world to observe, and, from Israel, to learn the Way of God. Stipulation one, "**obey my voice**", specifies how Israel was to become "**a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**". Stipulation two, "**keep my covenant**", defines the relationship God required with the Nation. Had Israel attained stipulation three, all nations of the world would have come to understand stipulation one and could have come under stipulation two. **But Israel failed**.

God's promises to Abraham and his dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are clear and specific that what God was doing was NOT for the benefit of the elected ones. The elected ones, including the Nation of Israel, were chosen for a purpose – to bring the Way of God to all nations, to all peoples, to each and every person on the earth. **God will NOT be thwarted in this purpose**:

> I know that you can do all things, and that **no purpose of yours can be thwarted**.
> (Job 42:2 ESV)
>
> Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but **it is the purpose of [YHWH] that will stand**.
> (Proverbs 19:21 ESV)
>
> [YHWH] of hosts has sworn:
> "**As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand** … "
>
> This is **the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth**,
> and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.

[27] Loosely, "Abram" means "exalted father"; "Abraham" means "father of a multitude"; see ESV footnotes for Genesis 17:5.

For [YHWH] of hosts has purposed, and **who will annul it**?
His hand is stretched out, and **who will turn it back**?
(Isaiah 14:24, 26-27 ESV)

… 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 46:9b-10 ESV)

… so shall **my word** be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty, but it **shall accomplish that which I purpose**,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
(Isaiah 55:11 ESV)

When God was preparing to extract the Israelites from Egypt, he struck Egypt with the ten plagues. **A purpose of these plagues was to create a permanent memorial of God's Plan**:

And [YHWH] said to Moses,
"When you go back to Egypt,
see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power.
But **I will harden his heart**, so that he will not let the people go. …"

Then [YHWH] said to Moses,
"Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him,
'Thus says [YHWH], the God of the Hebrews,
"Let my people go, that they may serve me.
For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself,
and on your servants and your people,
so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.
For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you
and your people with pestilence,
and you would have been cut off from the earth.
But **for this purpose I have raised you up**, to show you my power,
so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. …"'"
(Exodus 4:21, 9:13-16 ESV)

As emphasized to Pharoah, **God's purpose is universal**. The Plan of God is to bring the opportunity for salvation to each and every person who has ever lived. By "**The Covenant of Performance**", discussed briefly in section ***1.2 The Promises to Abraham***, God unequivocally promised to accomplish his Plan through the Nation of Israel. The topic of Salvation History[28] deals with God's effort to work with the Nation of Israel and its ultimate replacement by the New Testament Church. Along side of "Salvation History", the Bible records that God has always had an eye on the nations of the world, in particular, "**the mainstream of civilization**"[29] – those nations with whom Israel and the New Testament Church have had the closest contact. The writing prophets chronicled Israel's dealing with the nations around Israel in the ancient world. The prophecies concerning the nations give us insight into the working out of the Plan of God.

2. Prophecies Concerning the Nations

God's interest in the nations of the world is two-fold:

1. On occasion, God must intervene in history to ensure it unfolds according to his Plan, and
2. God's dealing the nations, demonstrate to the elect (Israel and the Church) that in fact God is in control of history.

Every one of the Old Testament writing prophets was given revelations regarding "the nations". These revelations are now analyzed from the perspective of God's purpose.

[28] See section ***2.3 Salvation History*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[29] See the discussion in section ***2.12.1 The Period of World Empires***

2.1 Obadiah, Jonah, & Nahum

These three Prophets are similar in that each of their messages is entirely directed to one particular nation. Obadiah's message is directed to Edom; Jonah's and Nahum's, to Assyria.

2.1.1 Obadiah

Obadiah was likely the earliest of the writing prophets. The name "Obadiah" is attested for at least a dozen individuals in the Bible; none of whom can be certainly identified as the **Prophet Obadiah**. The most likely candidate is the Steward of Ahab.[30] This would make Obadiah active in the **middle of the ninth century**.[31] His message is **the prototypical prophecy regarding the nation of Edom** – later prophets generally reflect a familiarity with Obadiah's brief prophecy. There was a long history of enmity between Israel and Edom – this is discussed in section ***3.1.1 Edom***. Obadiah's brief prophecy is born out by subsequent history and is elaborated upon by many later prophets.

The historical setting in which Obadiah lived is during the time of **Jehoram / Joram ben Jehoshaphat king of the Southern Kingdom, 848-841BC**. He was an evil king, so God inflicted punishment upon him:

> In his days **Edom revolted** from the rule of Judah and **set up a king of their own**.
> Then Jehoram passed over with his commanders and all his chariots,
> and he rose by night and struck the Edomites who had surrounded him and his chariot commanders.
> So **Edom revolted** from the rule of Judah **to this day**.
> At that time Libnah also revolted from his rule,
> **because he had forsaken [YHWH]**, the God of his fathers.
> (2 Chronicles 21:8-10 ESV // 2 Kings 8:20-22)

> And **[YHWH] stirred up against Jehoram**
> the anger of the **Philistines** and of the **Arabians** who are near the [Cushites].[32]
> And **they came up against Judah and invaded it**
> and **carried away all the possessions** they found that belonged to the king's house,
> and **also his sons and his wives**, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, his youngest son.
> (2 Chronicles 21:16-17 ESV)

That these depredations were severe is reflected by the comment of the Chronicler:

> Yet **[YHWH] was not willing to destroy the house of David**,
> because of the covenant that he had made with David,
> and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.
> (2 Chronicles 21:7 ESV // 2 Kings 8:19)

As is common with the prophecies about the nations, it is doubtful that Obadiah's message was ever presented to Edom; however, much of the verbiage does "rhetorically" address Edom. **The message from God is that Edom will be punished**. Edom's inveterate attitude of hatred towards Isarel would NOT go unpunished. The prophecy begins to identify "**Edom**" as **a type of the nations of the world in opposition to God**. The prophecy briefly looks to the solution to the problem in the establishment of the New Israel.

The **first four verses** provide an **introduction** and an **overview**:

> The **vision** of Obadiah.
>
> 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**!"
> >
> > Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be utterly despised.
> > The **pride of your heart** has deceived you,
> > **you who live in the clefts of the rock**, in your lofty dwelling,
> > who say in your heart,
> > "**Who will bring me down to the ground**?"

[30] See 1 Kings 18:3-16

[31] See Freeman pages 140-141, **KD10** pages 227-234

[32] The Hebrew is כּוּשִׁי - kushi, "Cushites"; the modern term "Ethiopians" is an anachronism.

Though you soar aloft like the eagle,
though your nest is set among the stars,
from there **I will bring you down**,
declares [YHWH].
(Obadiah 1-4 ESV)

God's purpose for Edom is destruction, "**I will bring you down**", "**rise against her for battle**". The arrogance of Edom, "**pride of your heart**", and her supposed impregnable fortress city, Petra, "**clefts of the rock**", make her feel she is invincible, "**who will bring me down**".

Verses 5 to 7 prophesize the **treachery and betrayal** that Edom will eventually incur:

If **thieves** came to you,
if **plunderers** came by night—how you have been destroyed!—
would they not steal only enough for themselves?

If grape gatherers came to you, **would they not leave gleanings**?

How **Esau has been pillaged**, his treasures sought out!
All your allies have driven you to your border;
those at peace with you have deceived you;
they have prevailed against you;
those who eat your bread have set a trap beneath you—**you have no understanding**.
(Obadiah 5-7 ESV)

Verses 8 and 9 make it clear that God is behind the punishment of Edom. Edom's vaunted "wisdom tradition"[33] will not help her, "**you have no understanding**":

Will I not on that day, declares [YHWH],
destroy the wise men out of Edom, and **understanding out of Mount Esau**?

And your **mighty men shall be dismayed**, O Teman,
so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter.
(Obadiah 8-9 ESV)

Verses 10 and 11 allude to the **contemporary revolt of Edom** and the **pillage of Jerusalem**:[34]

Because of the **violence done to your brother Jacob**,
shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever.

On the day that **you stood aloof**, on the day that **strangers carried off his wealth**
and **foreigners entered his gates** and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them.
(Obadiah 10-11 ESV)

Verses 12 to 14, "**rhetorically**", but also **prophetically warn Edom** against future atrocities against Israel:

But **do not gloat** over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune;
do not rejoice over the people of Judah **in the day of their ruin**;
do not boast in the day of distress.

Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity;
do not gloat over his disaster in the day of his calamity;
do not loot his wealth in the day of his calamity.

Do not stand at the crossroads to **cut off his fugitives**;
do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress.
(Obadiah 12-14 ESV)

Verses 15 and 16 raise **Edom to a type of the nations** of the world opposed to God, "world city",[35] who will meet God at the Day of YHWH:[36]

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.
For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, **so all the nations shall drink** continually;
they shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been.
(Obadiah 15-16 ESV)

[33] See Jeremiah 49:7, Genesis 36:10-11, Job 4:1
[34] See 2 Chronicles 21:8,17
[35] See footnote ***12***
[36] See section ***2.4.4.3 The Day of YHWH*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" see also the paper "**The Day of YHWH**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

Verses 17 to 21 comprise the "solution" – the "remnant" of Israel, "**the house of Jacob**", those called to the New Israel, will "**consume**" the nations of the world, "**the house of Esau**", with **the Gospel**, "**a fire**", "**a flame**":

> 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**.
>
> The house of Jacob shall be **a fire**, and the house of Joseph **a flame**,
> and **the house of Esau stubble**; they shall burn them and **consume** them,
> and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau, **for [YHWH] has spoken**.
>
> Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau,
> and those of the Shephelah shall possess the land of the Philistines;
> they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria,
> and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.
>
> The **exiles** of this host of the people of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath,
> and the **exiles** of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the Negeb.
>
> **Saviors** shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau,
> and **the kingdom shall be [YHWH's]**.
> (Obadiah 17-21 ESV)

The **metaphor of violence**[37] in the World Tomorrow is taken up by many later prophets. It is clearly a metaphor because the King of kings will utterly defeat the nations at the Battle of Armageddon.[38] It would be a great inconsistency to take literally the need for ongoing violence against the nations when all the prophecies of the World Tomorrow look to universal peace. **The need for "violence" is to have a "violent hatred of sin"**. Jesus addressed this on two occasions:

> From the days of John the Baptist until now **the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence**,
> and **the violent take it by force**.
> (Matthew 11:12 ESV)
>
> … **the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached**, and **every man enters violently into it**.
> (Luke 16:16b Robertson page 136)

From the perspective of universality, the main contribution of Obadiah's prophecy is that Edom is used as a type of all the nations in opposition to God, "world city", "**the day of [YHWH] is near upon all the nations**", "**let us rise against her for battle**", "**so all the nations shall drink**".

2.1.2 Jonah

It is very likely that the **Prophet Jonah** is identified as being active during the reign of Jeroboam II, 782-753BC:[39]

> Now the word of [YHWH] came to **Jonah the son of Amittai**, saying …
> (Jonah 1:1 ESV)
>
> [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.[40]
> (2 Kings 14:25 ESV)

The story of Jonah is very famous. God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and warn it of destruction due to the evil of the people. In fear, Jonah tries to escape on a ship to Tarshish. God threatens the ship by a vile storm; Jonah is thrown overboard; drowns; is shallowed by a large fish; after three day he is resurrected; and, is vomited onto land. Then he does as God required. The people of Nineveh "repent", and God relents of the destruction. Jonah, in anger, positions himself outside of the city, to observe the fate of the city; God causes a large plant to grow, giving Jonah shade from the hot sun. The next day God kills the plant and challenges Jonah over his pity for the plant but NOT for the people of Nineveh. **These events are pregnant with symbols and types of God's Plan of Salvation for all humanity**.

[37] See ***Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence***
[38] See Revelation 9:16, 16:16, 19:11-21; see also the discussion in section ***2.2.1 Joel***
[39] See Young (**IOT**) page 261, Freeman page 166, Harrison (**IOT**) page 905, **KD10** page 255
[40] Gath-heper is in Northern Israel, about 12 miles west of the south end of the Sea of Galilee.

Jonah is the most prominent in a long line of reluctant servants of God. **Moses** balked because he was poor speaker.[41] **Gideon** saw himself as "least in his father's house" which was the "weakest in Manasseh". Only several miraculous signs from God convinced Gideon to serve.[42] **Amos** claimed he did NOT have proper training.[43] **Isaiah** felt he was unworthy.[44] **Jeremiah** felt insecure due to his youth.[45] In this, **Jonah is clearly symbolic of Ancient Israel who refused to serve God and become an example to the nations of the world**:

> Like a stubborn heifer, **Israel is stubborn**;
> 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;
> But like Adam **they transgressed the covenant**; there they dealt faithlessly with me.
> Israel is swallowed up;
> already **they are among the nations as a useless vessel**.
> (Hosea 4:16a, 5:3-5a, 6:7, 8:8 ESV)
>
> But you, **Israel**, **my servant**, Jacob, whom I have chosen,
> the offspring of Abraham, my friend;
> you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners,
> saying to you,
> "**You are my servant**, I have chosen you and not cast you off";
> (Isaiah 41:8-9 ESV)
>
> Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see!
> **Who is blind but my servant**, or deaf as my messenger whom I send?
> Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of [YHWH]?
> **He sees** many things, **but does not observe** them;
> his ears are open, but **he does not hear**.
> (Isaiah 42:18-20 ESV)

Like Israel, **Jonah** had a clear purpose from God, but he **rejected God's calling**:

> Now **the word of [YHWH]** came **to Jonah** the son of Amittai, saying,
> "Arise, **go to Nineveh**, that great city,
> and **call out against it**, for their evil has come up before me."
>
> **But Jonah rose to flee** to Tarshish from the presence of [YHWH].
> He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish.
> So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish,
> **away from the presence of [YHWH]**.
> (Jonah 1:1-3 ESV)

In his flight, **God forces Jonah to provide a witness to the ship's crew**, men of the nations:

> So the captain came and said to him,
> "What do you mean, you sleeper?
> Arise, **call out to your god**!
> Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish."
>
> And he said to them,
> "**I am a Hebrew**,
> and **I fear [YHWH]**, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."
>
> Then **the men were exceedingly afraid** and said to him,
> "What is this that you have done!"
>
> For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of [YHWH],
> because he had told them.
>
> **So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea**, and the sea ceased from its raging.
>
> Then **the men feared [YHWH]** exceedingly,
> and they offered a sacrifice to [YHWH] and made vows.
> (Jonah 1:6, 9-10, 15-16 ESV)

[41] See Exodus 4:10-17
[42] See Judges 6:11-15,19-21,36-40
[43] See Amos 7:14-15
[44] See Isaiah 6:5
[45] See Jeremiah 1:6

This incident is a good example of the value of "witnessing" to people at large. The ship's crew were not called to conversion, but **Jonah's words to them brought them to some cognizance of the existence of the True God**. The nature of their "vows" was probably of "worldly grief", but for some it may be a start:

> For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret,
> whereas **worldly grief** produces death.
> (2 Corinthians 7:10 ESV)

Having been thrown into the ocean, **Jonah drowns**. Later, **when he composed his Psalm**, Jonah recounts his distress, his reaching out to God as he died, and his joy in the salvation of God as he is "resurrected", brought back to physical life:

> (2) **I called out** to [YHWH], out of my distress, and he answered me;
> out of the belly of [death] (sh^{e}ʹol)[46] I cried, and **you heard my voice**.
>
> (3) For **you cast me into the deep**, into the heart of the seas,
> and the flood surrounded me;
> all your breakers and your waves passed over me.
>
> (4) Then I said,
> '**I am driven away from your sight**;
> yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.'
>
> (5) The **waters closed in over me to take my life**;
> the deep surrounded me;
> weeds were wrapped about my head.
>
> (6) To the roots of the mountains I went down,
> to the land whose bars **closed upon me forever**.
>
> **Yet you brought up my life from the pit**,[47] [YHWH] my God.
>
> (7) **When my life was fainting away**, I remembered [YHWH],
> and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.
>
> (8) **Those who pay regard to vain idols** forsake their hope of [ḥesed].[48]
>
> (9) But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you;
> **what I have vowed I will pay**.
>
> **Salvation belongs to [YHWH]**!
> (Jonah 2:2-9 ESV)

In verses 2 and 3, Jonah recalls his first thoughts at being tossed into the ocean, "**you cast me into the deep**", "**I called out**". Only later did he realize that God had heard him, "**you heard my voice**". Jonah is clear and specific that he died, drowned in the ocean, "**waters closed in over me to take my life**", "**closed upon me forever**", "**when my life was fainting away**". Verse 6b is clear and specific that Jonah recognized that he was "resurrected", brought back to physical life, "**yet you brought up my life from the grave**". In verse 8, Jonah acknowledges his commission to the nations, "**those who pay regard to vain idols**", and in verse 9, Jonah commits to serve God, "**what I have vowed I will pay**".

Verse 4 requires some analysis; the Hebrew of the first clause is:

נִגְרַשְׁתִּי	מִנֶּגֶד	עֵינֶיךָ
nig^{e}rash^{e}ti	minneged	`eneka
I am driven away	from before	your eyes

Literally: **I am driven away from before your eyes**.

The Hebrew of the second clause is:

אַךְ	אוֹסִיף	לְהַבִּיט	אֶל־	הֵיכַל	קָדְשֶׁךָ
ʹak	ʹosiph	l^{e}habbit	ʹel	hekal	qad^{e}sheka
indeed	shall I do again	to gaze	upon	temple	your holy

---

[46] The Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל - sh^{e}ʹol, 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.

[47] The Hebrew word is שַׁחַת - shahath, "pit", "grave"; see Holladay page 367.

[48] The most important word for understanding the Nature of God is *ḥesed*. Briefly, *ḥesed* 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 - ḥesed*** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Literally: Indeed, shall I do again to gaze upon temple your holy?

Smoother: Indeed, **shall I again gaze upon your holy temple**?

The second clause should clearly be rendered a rhetorical question. **As Jonah is dying, he recognizes the opportunity given to him and grieves its loss**. After being brought back to life, Jonah goes to Nineveh, delivers his message, and **the people**, **from the King down**, "**repent**", and **God relents** of the impending punishment:

> Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey.
> And he called out,
> "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"
> And **the people of Nineveh believed God**.
> They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, **from the greatest of them to the least of them**.
> When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way,
> **God relented** of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.
> (Jonah 3:4-5, 10 ESV)

The ready acceptance of the Word of God by the people of Nineveh foreshadows the experiences of the Apostle Paul in taken the Gospel to "Gentile" cities.[49] The repentance of the people of Nineveh was clearly NOT "repentance to conversion". At the time of Jonah, the Assyrian Empire was just a few years away from its period of greatest expansion – a period of extreme brutality and evil. God's relenting at the repentance of the people of Nineveh is a demonstration of God's forbearance[50] towards people who are NOT at that time being given the opportunity for salvation. God's forbearance is a demonstration of his love for each and every human being.[51] All persons will be given the opportunity for salvation at the appropriate time.

The time of **King Jeroboam II** was a time of great material prosperity in Israel. This was the environment in which Jonah lived. He had prophesized to Jeroboam that he would restore the lands of Israel to the east of the Jordan River.[52] It is NOT expressly stated, but the plant that God gratuitously gave Jonah is analogues the prosperity given to Israel. Israel did NOT learn from the wealth given to them. Jonah did NOT have a correct attitude of service. When God relented of the destruction of Nineveh, Jonah tried to justify his original action by blaming God:

> But it displeased **Jonah** exceedingly, and he **was angry**.
> And he prayed to [YHWH] and said,
> "[YHWH], is not this what I said when I was yet in my country?
> That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish;
> for **I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful,**
> **slow to anger and abounding in [ḥesed],**[53] **and relenting from disaster**.
> Therefore now, [YHWH], please take my life from me,
> for it is better for me to die than to live."
> And [YHWH] said, "**Do you do well to be angry**?"
> (Jonah 4:1-4 ESV)

As an object lesson, God gave Jonah the shading plant, despite his poor attitude. When the plant died, God drove home to Jonah what it really means to be "**a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in ḥesed**", understanding that the nation of Israel never acquired:

> But God said to Jonah, "**Do you do well to be angry for the plant**?"
> And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die."
> And [YHWH] said,
> "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow,
> which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

[49] This is discussed in section ***4.3 The Journeys of Paul***.
[50] See Romans 2:4, 3:25
[51] See John 3:16
[52] See 2 Kings 14:25
[53] See Exodus 34:6; see also footnote ***48***

> And **should not I pity Nineveh**, that great city,
> in which there are more than 120,000 persons
> who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"
> (Jonah 4:9-11 ESV)

There are several object lessons to be learned from Jonah:

- The reluctant servant: God did NOT let Jonah off the hook
- Witnessing by words and actions: Jonah's forced witnessing was far more painful than if he had willingly done what God required
- Repentance of Nineveh: Jonah needed to accept God's mercy
- Jonah's anger: Jonah need to learn the Nature of God

2.1.3 Nahum

The Prophet Nahum was active about 650BC,[54] about a century later than Jonah. The Assyrian Empire was at the height of its power. Since the time of Jonah, a series of aggressive Assyrian Kings had extended the empire over the whole "civilized world". **Assurbanipal**, the last of these strong kings, was on the throne when Nahum was active. **There were no visible signs that the mighty Assyrian Empire was about to collapse**. Nahum's prophecy would have seemed incredible to most people. Whereas Jonah explicitly was told to take his message to Nineveh, **Nahum's message is simply stated to be "concerning Nineveh"**.[55] This is the common situation – it is doubtful that many of the prophecies concerning the various nation were presented to them. **Nahum's message was delivered in the Southern Kingdom**, most likely in the Temple precincts where it would be heard by those in leadership positions. Certainly, the king would have become aware of Nahum's prophecy.

Some 50 years earlier, the **Prophet Isaiah** had lain out in considerable detail God's plan for the end of the "Assyrian Period" of human history.[56] **Nahum's message is that the transition is about to occur**. **Manasseh** was the on the throne of the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom was now an Assyrian province. Manasseh was a willing Assyrian vassal, and **Nahum was almost certainly one of the "prophets" who spoke against Manasseh**:

> And he built altars in the house of [YHWH], of which [YHWH] had said,
> "In Jerusalem will I put my name."
> And he built altars for all the host of heaven[57] in the two courts of the house of [YHWH].
> And **[YHWH] said by his servants the prophets**,
> "Because Manasseh king of Judah has committed these abominations
> and has done things more evil than all that the Amorites did,
> who were before him, and has made Judah also to sin with his idols,
> therefore thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel:
> Behold, I am bringing upon Jerusalem and Judah such disaster
> that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. …"
> (2 Kings 21:4-5, 10-12 ESV)

Nahum's prophecy of the impending destruction of Manasseh's Suzerain, **would NOT have been welcome to Manasseh**. Such messages could easily be taken by the Assyrians to mean that a vassal was involved in plotting rebellion. At some point, the Assyrians did become suspicious of Manasseh's loyalty:

> [YHWH] spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they paid no attention.
> Therefore [YHWH] brought upon them **the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria**,
> who **captured Manasseh** with hooks and **bound him with chains** of bronze and **brought him to Babylon**.
> (2 Chronicles 33:10-11 ESV)

Nahum pulls no punches in relaying God's wrath against Nineveh:

> **Woe to the bloody city**, all full of lies and plunder—no end to the prey!
> And **all for the countless whorings of the prostitute**, graceful and of deadly charms,
> who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms.

[54] See Freeman page 226
[55] See Nahum 1:1
[56] See section ***2.6 Isaiah***
[57] Assyrian astral deities

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?
All your fortresses are like fig trees with first-ripe figs—if shaken they fall into the mouth of the eater.

Behold, your troops are women in your midst.
The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has devoured your bars.

Your shepherds are asleep, **O king of Assyria**; your nobles slumber.
Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them.
There is no easing your hurt; **your wound is grievous**.
All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you.
For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil?
(Nahum 3:1, 4-7, 12-13, 18-19 ESV)

The destruction of the city is graphically described as though it was already accomplished:

The scatterer has come up against you.
Man the ramparts; watch the road; dress for battle; collect all your strength.
The shield of his mighty men is red; his soldiers are clothed in scarlet.
The chariots come with flashing metal on the day he musters them; the cypress spears are brandished.
The chariots race madly through the streets; they rush to and fro through the squares;
they gleam like torches; they dart like lightning.

Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away.
"Halt! Halt!" they cry, but none turns back.

Plunder the silver, **plunder the gold**!
There is no end of the treasure or of the wealth of all precious things.
Desolate! **Desolation and ruin**!
Hearts melt and knees tremble; anguish is in all loins; all faces grow pale!

Where is the lions' den, the feeding place of the young lions,
where the lion and lioness went, where his cubs were, with none to disturb?
The lion tore enough for his cubs and strangled prey for his lionesses;
he filled his caves with prey and his dens with torn flesh.

Behold, I am against you, declares[YHWH] of hosts,
and I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions.
I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall no longer be heard.
(Nahum 2:1, 3-4, 8-13 ESV)

If the words of Nahum had gotten to **Assurbanipal**, the King of Assyria in Nineveh, he would certainly have been disturbed. **Nahum's message from God is that the destruction of the Assyrian Empire is certain and imminent – it is as good as accomplished**. The reaction of Manasseh, the King of Israel, would have been fear that he would be under suspicion of rebellion. **The real import of Nahum's message to his contemporaries relates to the Nature of God and the Plan of God**. God is in control of history. Nations rise and fall according to his desire. God was about to step into human history and make a significant change in the flow of history. The last vestiges of the Nation of Israel were in abject violation of their covenant responsibilities to YHWH their God. Nahum reminds his contemporaries who is their God and warns them vicariously through Assyria that God will also punish them:

[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.

But **with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries**,
and will pursue his enemies into darkness.
(Nahum 1:2-3, 6, 8 ESV)

Nahum also conveyed a message of hope: **God's Plan is inviolable**. He will accomplish his purpose. Despite Israel's covenant violation and apostacy, **there will be a restoration**:

> For **[YHWH] is restoring the majesty of Jacob as the majesty of Israel**,
> for plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches.
>
> [YHWH] is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; **he knows those who take refuge in him**.
>
> 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."
>
> 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, 1:7, 12-13, 15 ESV)

The Book of Nahum is unique. Despite its being explicitly addressed to Nineveh, its message is universal. Nineveh was "world city".[58] The Plan of God is explicit: "world city" will be eradicated as Nineveh was.

2.2 Joel, Hosea, & Micah

These three prophets are similar in that **their focus is explicitly Israel**, but in dealing with Israel, there are **significant passing reference concerning various nations**.

2.2.1 Joel

The date of the **Book of Joel** is much disputed.[59] **An early date is clearly preferable**. **Isaiah and Amos both quote from Joel**:

> Alas for the day!
> **For the day of [YHWH] is near**, and **as destruction from the Almighty** it comes.
> (Joel 1:15 ESV)
>
> Wail, **for the day of [YHWH] is near**; **as destruction from the Almighty** it will come!
> (Isaiah 13:6 ESV)
>
> **[YHWH] roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem**,
> and the heavens and the earth quake.
> But [YHWH] is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.
> (Joel 3:16 ESV)
>
> And he said:
>
> > "**[YHWH] roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem**;
> > the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers."
>
> (Amos 1:2 ESV)
>
> 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;
> and a fountain shall come forth from the house of [YHWH] and water the Valley of Shittim.
> (Joel 3:18 ESV)
>
> "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.
> (Amos 9:13 ESV)

Keil points out that the enemies listed by Joel do NOT include the Arameans[60] who mustered a major attack on the Southern Kingdom at the end of the reign of **King Joash** (835-796BC):

> At the end of the year **the army of the [Arameans] (ʿaram)**[61] **came up against Joash**.
> They came to Judah and Jerusalem and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus.
> Though the army of the [Arameans] (ʿaram) had come with few men,
> [**YHWH] delivered into their hand a very great army**,
> because Judah had forsaken [YHWH], the God of their fathers.

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[58] See footnote ***12***

[59] See Freeman pages 147-149, **KD10** pages 111-112

[60] See Joel 3:4

[61] Many English translations use the modern term "Syria" for אֲרָם - ʿaram; this is an anachronism.

Thus they executed judgment on Joash.
(2 Chronicles 24:23-24 ESV)

Keil settles on a date during "the first thirty years the reign of Joash"; Freeman suggests 835BC. However, **the date of the locust plague**[62] might be slightly earlier:

And **a letter came to [Jehoram] from Elijah the prophet**, saying,
"Thus says [YHWH], the God of David your father,
'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father,
or in the ways of Asa king of Judah,
but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel
and have enticed Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem into whoredom,
as the house of Ahab led Israel into whoredom,
and also you have killed your brothers,
of your father's house, who were better than you,
behold, **[YHWH] will bring a great plague on your people**,
your children, your wives, and all your possessions …"
(2 Chronicles 21:12-14 ESV)

The sins of Jehoram (848-841BC),[63] his wife, Athaliah (841-835BC),[64] and their son, Ahaziah (841BC),[65] could very easily have brought on God's wrath in the plague of the locusts. This would provide the setting of the locust plague and establish **the Book of Joel as prophetic support for the reforms of the High Priest Jehoiada**.[66] This period of reform is suggested by Keil as the most likely environment for the Book of Joel.[67]

The primary theme of the Book of Joel for his contemporaries is **the call to repentance**:

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!
Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God.
Consecrate a fast; **call a solemn assembly**.
Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of [YHWH] your God,
and **cry out to [YHWH]**.
(Joel 1:13-14 ESV see also 2:12-17)

Almost imperceptibly intertwined with the contemporary setting, **Joel reports the visions he has seen of the Day of YHWH**.[68] It is in the context of the Day of YHWH that Joel turns his attention to the nations of the world:

(2) **I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat**.
And I will enter into judgment with them there,
on behalf of **my people and my heritage Israel**,
because **they have scattered them among the nations** and have divided up my land,
(3) and have cast lots for my people, and have **traded a boy** for a prostitute,
and have **sold a girl** for wine and have drunk it.

(4) What are you to me, O **Tyre** and **Sidon**, and all the regions of **Philistia**?
Are you paying me back for something?
If you are paying me back, I will return your payment on your own head swiftly and speedily.
(5) For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples.
(6) You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to [**Javan**][69]
in order to remove them far from their own border.

(7) Behold, **I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them**,
and I will return your payment on your own head.
(8) I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah,
and they will sell them to the **Sabeans**, to a nation far away, for [YHWH] has spoken.

(9) **Proclaim this among the nations**: **Consecrate for war**; stir up the mighty men.
Let all the men of war draw near; let them come up.

[62] See Joel 1:2-12, 16-20
[63] See 2 Kings 8:18, 2 Chronicles 21 1-6, 11
[64] See 2 Kings 11:1 // 2 Chronicles 22:10
[65] See 2 Kings 8:26-27, 2 Chronicles 22:3-4
[66] See 2 Kings 11:17-20, 12:4-16, 2 Chronicles 23:16-21, 24:4-14
[67] See **KD10** page 112
[68] See Joel 2:1-2, 2:30-31, 3:9-16a
[69] See the discussion below in "Analysis"

(10) Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears;
let the weak say, "**I am a warrior**."

(11a) Hasten and come, **all you surrounding nations**, and **gather yourselves** there.

(11b) **Bring down your warriors, [YHWH]**.

(12) Let **the nations** stir themselves up and come up to the **Valley of Jehoshaphat**;
for there **I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations**.

(13) Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.
Go in, tread, for **the winepress is full**.
The vats overflow, for their evil is great.

(14) Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision!
For **the day of [YHWH] is near in the valley of decision**.
(Joel 3:2-14 ESV)

Analysis of Joel 3:2-14:

- The **context** is established by Joel chapter 2

  And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth,
  blood and fire and columns of smoke.
  The sun shall be turned to darkness, and **the moon to blood**,
  before the great and awesome **day of [YHWH]**.
  (Joel 2:30-31 ESV)

  This looks to the "**heavenly signs**", the sixth seal:

  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.
  (Revelation 6:12-13 ESV)

  The "seventh seal" comprises the **Day of YHWH**.[70] This context is explicitly alluded to in Joel:

  For behold, **in those days and at that time** …
  (Joel 3:1a ESV)

- **Verse 2** looks to the **Day of YHWH**: God addresses the nations of the world, "**I will gather all the nations**"; God alludes to the working out of his Plan, specifically the New Israel, "**my people and my heritage Israel**"; ancient Israel was destroyed, "**scattered them among the nations**";[71] after the Second Advent, God will create a New Nation of Israel.[72]
- The **Valley of Jehoshaphat** is עֵמֶק יְהוֹשָׁפָט - `emeq j$^{e}$hoshaphat; *`emeq* is the normal term for "valley";[73] j^{e}hoshaphat means "YHWH judges"[74] it is derived from the root שָׁפַט - shaphat, "to judge", "to decide", "to make decisions".[75] **The phrase occurs only in this passage**. Attempts have been made to associate it with a specific geographic location, but it is most likely just a mnemonic for God's action in the Day of YHWH.
- **Verses 3-8** apply mostly to Israel's situation contemporary with Joel: God rhetorically asks Israel's traditional ally, Phoenicia (Tyre and Sidon), and Israel's traditional enemy, Philistia, if they have something against him, "**are you paying me back for something**". The **slave trade**, "**traded a boy**", "**sold a girl**", was thriving in the ancient world.[76] God threatens to pay back Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia in kind by having their sons and daughter sold off the **Sabeans**.[77] To translate יָוָנִי - y^{e}wani, as "Greeks" is presumptuous. **Javan** was a son of Japheth.[78] Some of his descendants were known to occupy the area we call "Turkey" today.[79] At a date much later than Joel, some of these peoples may have been identified as "Ionian Greeks", but in almost all cases,

[70] See Revelation chapters 8, 9, and 16
[71] This was accomplished in two phases: first, the termination of the nation of Ancient Israel between about 730BC and 580BC; secondly, the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem between 70AD and 135AD.
[72] See sections ***2.4.5.1 The Second Exodus*** and ***2.4.5.2 The New Israel*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
[73] See Holladay page 277
[74] See **KD10** page 145-146, Allen page 109, Nogalski page 151
[75] See Holladay pages 380-381
[76] See, for example, Amos 1:6,9, 2:6, Hosea 3:2
[77] Likely in "Sheba", far off in southern Arabia; see **ESV** comment.
[78] See Genesis 10:2, 1 Chronicles 1:5
[79] See Ezekiel 27:12-25, **HAB** page 22

the transliteration ,"Javan", is preferred. **Verse 7** may perhaps be taken as looking to the Second Exodus, "**I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them**".

- Starting in **verse 9**, the focus reverts to **the Day of YHWH**, "**proclaim this among the nations**", "**consecrate for war**". Today the nations ARE preparing for war as never before. Nuclear weapons are proliferating.
- **Verse 10** even small nations are being forced by today's global geopolitical machinations to prepare for war, "**let the weak say**", "**I am a warrior**". The fifth and sixth trumpets, which are part of the seventh seal, look to Satan's dragging the world into a nuclear world war just prior to the Second Advent.[80]
- **Verse 11a** looks to the **assembling of the armies for the Battle of Armageddon**. When the King of kings appears on his earth entry, the nations of the world, "**all you surrounding nations**", will cease to fight each other and will attempt to fight God:

  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.
  And **they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon**.
  (Revelation 16:12-14, 16 ESV)

- **Verse 11b** looks to the returning King of kings. **The Battle of Armageddon is very short**:

  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 …

  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."
  (Revelation 19:11-15a, 17-18 ESV)

- **Verse 12** is the net effect of the Battle. The King of kings utterly defeats the armies of the world, "**the nations**", "**all the surrounding nations**". The scene is again the "**Valley of Jehoshaphat**".
- **Verse 13** looks to the fulfilment of series of prophecies alluding to the "**winepress of wrath**":

  Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his **who treads in the winepress**?
  "**I have trodden the winepress** alone, and from the peoples no one was with me;
  I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath;
  their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.
  For **the day of vengeance** was in my heart,
  and **my year of redemption** had come. …
  I trampled down the peoples in my anger;
  I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."
  (Isaiah 63:2-4, 6 ESV)

  The Lord rejected all my mighty men in my midst;
  he summoned an assembly against me to crush my young men;
  the Lord has trodden as in a winepress the virgin daughter of Judah.
  (Lamentations 1:15 ESV)

  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,

[80] See Revelation chapter 9; for further discussion see the paper "**The Olivet Prophecy**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca and the **Blog** entry "**To Be a King**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/my-blog/f/to-be-a-king.

"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**.
(Revelation 14:17-19 ESV)

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 19:15b-16 ESV)

- **Verse 14** is the concluding summary. The scene of the battle is now called "**the valley of decision**", confirming that "**Valley of Jehoshaphat**" is just a mnemonic. The Prophet Jeremiah similarly uses the phrase "**Valley of Slaughter**" in Jeremiah 7:32 and 19:6.

The final summary of the Book of Joel makes further allusion to the nations:

So you shall know that I am [YHWH] your God,
who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain.
And **Jerusalem** shall be holy, and **strangers shall never again pass through it**.

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**;
and a **fountain** shall come forth from the house of [YHWH] and **water the Valley of Shittim**.

Egypt shall become a **desolation** and **Edom** a **desolate wilderness**,
for the **violence** done to the people of Judah,
because they have **shed innocent blood** in their land.

But Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations.
I will avenge their blood, **blood I have not avenged**, **for [YHWH] dwells in Zion**.
(Joel 3:17-21 ESV)

This final summary, of course, looks to the World Tomorrow when the King of kings, YHWH, has established his earthly throne in **Jerusalem**. In the World Tomorrow all persons of all nations will be offered salvation. They will be welcomed to Jerusalem as "pilgrims", visitors of the King of kings, none will be considered enemies, "**strangers shall never again pass through it**". In the World Tomorrow there will be universal abundance, "**mountains shall drip sweet wine**", "**streambeds … shall flow with water**".

Prior to the conquest of Canaan, the location of the Israelite camp east of the Jordan River was "**the Valley of Shittim**".[81] This area was once part of the nation of **Moab**. This area **will be restored to verdure**. The "**fountain**" alludes to the **River of Life**, which has both physical a spiritual significance:[82]

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold,
water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east).
The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.
… and **it was a river** that I could not pass through, for the water had risen.
It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through.

Then he led me back to the bank of the river.
As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other.
And he said to me,

"This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah,
and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh.
And **wherever the river goes**, **every living creature that swarms will live**,
and there will be very many fish.
For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh;
so **everything will live where the river goes**.

(Ezekiel 47:1, 5, 6b-9 ESV)

On that day **living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem**,
half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea.
It shall continue in summer as in winter.
(Zechariah 14:8 ESV)

Then the angel showed me **the river of the water of life**, bright as crystal,
flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city;
also, on either side of the river, **the tree of life** with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.

[81] See Numbers 25:1, 33:49, Joshua 2:1, 3:1
[82] See also Isaiah 12:3, Jeremiah 2:13, 17:13, Psalms 36:9, 46:4, 65:9, 68:26, John 4:10, 7:38

The leaves of the tree were for the **healing of the nations**.
(Revelation 22:1-2 ESV)

The nations of "**Egypt**" and "**Edom**" are NOT otherwise mentioned by Joel.[83] In this context, it is best to take them symbolically as representative of the nations of the world in opposition to God. The nations have indeed done "**violence**" and "**shed innocent blood**". God will administer retributive justice,[84] "**avenge their blood**", to the nations on the Day of YHWH. But, there is also spiritual significance implied. The nations of the world are spiritually a "**desolate wilderness**". They will come to see this in the World Tomorrow. The true "**avenging of blood**" by Jesus Christ is through his sacrifice. All nations of the world, "**blood I have not avenged**", will come to understand this when "**Jesus Christ dwells in Zion**".

2.2.2 Hosea

The dates during which Hosea was active are identified by five kings: of North Israel, **Jeroboam II** (782-753BC);[85] of South Israel **Uzziah** (767-739BC), **Jotham** (740-731BC), **Ahaz** (732-715BC), and **Hezekiah** (716-686BC). This would imply a period of activity of about fifty years: 760-710BC. The book is no where explicit, but most commentators suggest the prophet originated in the North, since that is the main focus of his message. The many references to the Southern Kingdom would suggest that Hosea ended his career in the South. **A main theme of the Book of Hosea is Spiritual Whoredom**. This topic is discussed in some detail in section ***6. Spiritual Whoredom*** in the paper "**The Human Condition**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The first three chapters of the Book of Hosea describe **the infidelity of Hosea's wife Gomer**. Gomer's infidelity is **symbolic of Israel's infidelity to YHWH** – **spiritual whoredom**. Five times in chapter two, the term "**lovers**" is used to describe the object of Israel's infidelity. In chapter eight, it is explicit that "Assyria" is among these "lovers":

For **their mother has played the whore**; she who conceived them has acted shamefully.
For she said,
'**I will go after my lovers**,
who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'
(Hosea 2:5 ESV see also verses 7, 10, 12, and 13)

Israel is swallowed up;
already they are **among the nations** as a useless vessel.

For **they have gone up to Assyria**, a wild donkey wandering alone;
Ephraim has **hired lovers**.
Though they **hire allies among the nations**, I will soon gather them up.
(Hosea 8:8-10a ESV)

The **nations of the world**, under the influence of Satan the Devil, **have devised innumerable varieties of "idolatry"**. This was true in the ancient world, and it is true today. The people of Ancient Israel, once they entered into the land of Canaan, were quickly seduced by the culture and idolatry of the Canaanites.

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)

Hosea alludes to this inherent propensity to infidelity, "**whoredom**", by reference to "**Gilgal**', the site of the first Israelite camp in Canaan under **Joshua**:[86]

Though you **play the whore**, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty.
Enter not into Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-aven,[87] and swear not, "As [YHWH] lives."

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[83] See Joel 3:19
[84] See ***Excursus 1 – Retributive Justice***
[85] There is no explicit reason given as to why other kings of North Israel are NOT mentioned, but Hosea's scope of activity include all six of the final kings of the Northern Kingdom.
[86] See Joshua 4:19
[87] Beth-aven means "house of evil"; here it serves as a pejorative name for Bethel, which means "house of God"; see **ESV** comment.

Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal; there I began to hate them.
Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of my house.
I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels.

If there is iniquity in Gilead, they shall surely come to nothing: **in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls**;
their altars also are like stone heaps on the furrows of the field.
(Hosea 4:15, 9:15, 12:11 ESV)

The **Prophet Micah** explains how "**Gilgal**" became an **epithet for apostasy and idolatry**, "whoredom":[88]

O my people, remember what **Balak king of Moab** devised,
and what **Balaam (Bil^{e}`am)**[89] **the son of Beor** answered him,
and what happened **from Shittim to Gilgal**,
that you may know the righteous acts of [YHWH]."
(Micah 6:5 ESV)

Israel was seduced into idolatry in the Plains of Moab, **Shittim**, by Moabite and Midianite women. The scheme was devised by Bil^{e}`am.[90] **This was a harbinger of future infidelity to God**. Repeatedly Israel's infidelity was instigated by the nations around – Israel constantly "whored" to be just like the other nations. For this idolatry and its influence on Israel, God regarded these nations his "enemies", "the wicked". The Book of Hosea goes on to report **instances of Israel's "whoring" with Assyria**:

When **Ephraim saw his sickness**, and **Judah his wound**,
then Ephraim **went to Assyria**, and **sent to the great king**.
But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound.
(Hosea 5:13 ESV)

Pul the king of Assyria came against the land,
and **Menahem** gave Pul a thousand talents of silver,
that he might help him to confirm his hold on the royal power.
(2 Kings 15:19 ESV)

So **Ahaz** sent messengers to **Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria**, saying,

> "I am your servant and your son.
> Come up and rescue me from the hand of the king of [Aram] (´aram)[91]
> and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me."

(2 Kings 16:7 ESV)

"Pul" is a hypocoristic for Tiglath-pileser. Neither Menahem (North Israel) nor Ahaz (South Israel) looked to God. Both tried to solve their problem by political entanglement with Assyria – "spiritual whoredom". Hosea reports the end result of the "whoredom" – Assyria would turn on Israel and destroy the Northern Kingdom:

You have plowed iniquity;
you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies.

Because **you have trusted in your own way** and in the multitude of your warriors,
therefore the tumult of war shall arise among your people,
and **all your fortresses shall be destroyed**,
as **Shalman**[92] destroyed Beth-arbel[93] on the day of battle;
mothers were dashed in pieces with their children.

Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel, because of your great evil.
At dawn **the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off**.
(Hosea 10:13-15 ESV)

The inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf of Beth-aven.
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.
(Hosea 10:5-6 ESV)

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[88] During the period of the Judges, idols were set up near Gilgal; see Judges 3:19.

[89] The transliteration "Balaam" is not even close for בִּלְעָם - bil^{e}`am.

[90] See Numbers 25:1-5, 31:8

[91] See footnote ***61***

[92] "Shalman" is an otherwise unknown name but may refer to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V (727–722 B.C.), who besieged Samaria from 725 to 723. (ESV comment)

[93] "Beth-arbel", like "Beth-aven", is most likely a pejorative epithet for Bethel, were a golden calf was located.

Both North Israel and South Israel repeatedly vacillated between Assyria and Egypt. Hosea alludes to this several times:

> Ephraim is like a dove, silly and without sense,
> **calling to Egypt**, **going to Assyria**.
>
> Ephraim feeds on the wind and pursues the east wind all day long;
> they multiply falsehood and violence;
> they make **a covenant with Assyria**, and **oil is carried to Egypt**.
> (Hosea 7:11, 12:1 ESV)

The historic enslavement of Isreal in Egypt is used as "type" of the actual exile of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria:

> Now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins;
> **they shall return to Egypt**.
> (Hosea 8:13b ESV see also 7:16, 9:6)
>
> They shall not remain in the land of [YHWH],
> but **Ephraim shall return to Egypt**, and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria.
> (Hosea 9:3 ESV)
>
> **They shall not return to the land of Egypt**, but **Assyria shall be their king**,
> because they have refused to return to me.
> (Hosea 11:5 ESV)

Hosea is also clear that other nations had continuing influence on Israel:

> **Ephraim mixes himself with the peoples**;
> Ephraim is a cake not turned.
>
> **Strangers devour his strength**, and he knows it not;
> gray hairs are sprinkled upon him, and he knows it not.
> (Hosea 7:8-9 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.
> (Hosea 9:1 ESV)

Lessons from the Book of Hosea:

- Cultural and religious involvement with "the nations" leads to idolatry, "spiritual whoredom"
- "Spiritual whoredom" is an ingrained proclivity from which Ancient Israel was never able to recover
- Although God used the nations to punish Isreal, he does not hold them blameless
- The nations were, perhaps unwittingly, the agents of Satan the Devil in corrupting Israel
- **Corollary**: the nations of the world, "world city",[94] remain the agents of Satan the Devil in his efforts to thwart the Plan of God

2.2.3 Micah

The date range of Miach's activity is identified by three southern kings: **Jotham** (740-731BC), **Ahaz** (732-715BC), and **Hezekiah** (716-686BC) – a range of between 25 and 50 years. **Micah addresses his message to humanity at large** – he looks immediately to the Second Advent:

> **Hear**, **you peoples**, all of you;
> **pay attention**, **O earth**, 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.
> (Micah 1:2-3 ESV)

Miach pulls no punches; he **goes straight to the cause of the world's plight** – **the failure of Israel to live up to her requirements under the Sinai Covenant**. He particularizes the failure to the leadership of North Israel and the leadership of South Israel:

> All this is for the **transgression of Jacob** [even][95] for the **sins of the house of Israel**.

[94] See footnote ***12***
[95] See footnote ***17***

What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not **Samaria**?
And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not **Jerusalem**?

And I said:

Hear, you **heads of Jacob** [even] **rulers of the house of Israel**!
Is it not for you to know justice?
—you who hate the good and love the evil …

(Micah 1:5, 3:1-2a ESV see also 3:9-11)

Micah's universal perspective is solidified by the seminal prophecy of the World Tomorrow:

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],[96] [even] 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** [have walked][97] each in the name of its god,
but **we**[98] will walk in the name of [YHWH] our God forever and ever.
(Micah 4:1-5 ESV)

Micah returns to the **contemporary situation** with **Ahaz** threatened by several neighbouring nations, and warns of the **impending captivity to Babylon**:

Then **Rezin king of [Aram] (´aram)**[99] and **Pekah** the son of Remaliah, **king of Israel**,
came up to wage war on Jerusalem, and they besieged Ahaz but could not conquer him.
(2 Kings 16:5 ESV)

For the **Edomites** had again invaded and defeated Judah and carried away captives.
And the **Philistines** had made raids on the cities in the Shephelah and the Negeb of Judah …
(2 Chronicles 28:17-18a ESV)

Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor,
for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; **you shall go to Babylon**.

Now **many nations are assembled against you**, saying,

"Let her be defiled, and let our eyes gaze upon Zion."

(Micah 4:10a, 11 ESV)

Micah uses the current situation as "type" of the end-time. The nations will be gathered to the Battle of Armageddon;[100] then, **in the World Tomorrow all nations will be "conquered" by the Gospel**:[101]

But they do not know the thoughts of [YHWH];
they do not understand his plan, that he has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor.

Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion,
for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoofs bronze;
you shall beat in pieces many peoples;
and shall devote their gain to [YHWH], their wealth to **the Lord of the whole earth**.
(Micah 4:12-13 ESV see also 5:5-8)

[96] See footnote ***18***
[97] The verb is "imperfect"; "walk" is a valid translation, but "have walked" better fits the parallel "will walk".
[98] The "we" implies all nations, all peoples.
[99] See footnote ***61***
[100] See footnote ***38***
[101] See ***Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence***

As he began, **Micah ends his book on a universal note**. First, he laments that among humanity the Way of God has perished; then, he looks to the Day of YHWH and the affect of the Gospel in the World Tomorrow:

> **The godly has perished from the earth**, and **there is no one upright among mankind**;
> they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net.
> But **the earth will be desolate** because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their deeds.
>
> As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,
> "**I will show them marvelous things**."[102]
>
> **The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might**;
> they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf;
> (Micah 7:2, 13, 15-16 ESV)

Micah's message concerning "the nations" is almost entirely about the World Tomorrow. This is God's perspective in the world today. **God has left "hands off"** with the nations of the world to let people try every philosophy, every system of government, every type of social organization, every economic system, and every form of religion **to prove that nothing can work except the Way of God**.

2.3 Amos, Zephaniah, & Habakkuk

These three prophets are similar in that they aimed their message at Israel, but each of them formally incorporated messages concerning other nations. The messages concerning the nations are integral to the message to Israel.

2.3.1 Amos

The **Prophet Amos** was from South Israel, but his work was almost entirely focused on North Israel. His career seems to have been short – the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam overlapped from 767BC to 753BC:

> The words of **Amos**, who was among the shepherds of **Tekoa**,[103]
> which he saw concerning Israel
> in the days of **Uzziah** king of Judah and in the days of **Jeroboam** the son of Joash, king of Israel,
> two years before the earthquake.[104]
> (Amos 1:1 ESV)

The Book of Amos contains the first instance of a formal literary device encompassing foreign nations. The discussion of each selected nation is very brief, but the same structure is carefully used for each nation. The structure is called the "x // x+1 formula".[105] Amos reports the words of YHWH regarding Israel's six immediate neighbour nations: **Aram**, **Philistia**, **Phoenicia**, **Edom**, **Ammon**, and **Moab**. Each nation is castigated for crimes related to warfare:

- **Aram**:
  Thus says [YHWH]:
  > "For three transgressions of Damascus,
  > and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
  > because **they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron**.[106] …"

  (Amos 1:3 ESV)
- **Philistia**:
  Thus says [YHWH]:
  > "For three transgressions of Gaza,
  > and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
  > because **they carried into exile** a whole people to deliver them up to Edom. …"

  (Amos 1:6 ESV)
- **Phoenicia**:
  Thus says [YHWH]:
  > "For three transgressions of Tyre,
  > and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,

[102] This is an allusion to the Covenant of Performance, Exodus 34:10
[103] Tekoa was a small village southeast of Bethlehem in Judah. (ESV comment)
[104] There is evidence of this earthquake in about 760BC, see Carroll page 6.
[105] See Carroll pages 129-130; other examples are Job 5:19, Proverbs 30:15-16,18-19,21-23,29-31
[106] This alludes to dragging a threshing sledge across the wounded after a battle to finish them off.

because **they delivered up a whole people** to Edom,
and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. …"
(Amos 1:9 ESV)

- **Edom**:
Thus says [YHWH]:
"For three transgressions of Edom,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
because **he pursued his brother with the sword** and cast off all pity,
and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever. …"
(Amos 1:11 ESV)

- **Ammon**:
Thus says [YHWH]:
"For three transgressions of the Ammonites,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
because **they have ripped open pregnant women** in Gilead,
that they might enlarge their border. …"
(Amos 1:13 ESV)

- **Moab**:
Thus says [YHWH]:
"For three transgressions of Moab,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
because **he burned to lime the bones** of the king of Edom. …"
(Amos 2:1 ESV)

Matching the 3 // 3+1 pattern, **only Edom has four identifiable transgressions**. Philistia, Phoenicia, and Ammon have two transgressions. Aram and Moab have one. However, the x // x+1 pattern is extended to 7 // 7+1. **The seventh is South Israel and eighth is North Israel**. South Israel is castigated for apostacy:

- **South Israel**:
Thus says [YHWH]:
"For three transgressions of Judah,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
because **they have rejected [torah]**[107] of [YHWH], and have not kept his statutes,
but their **lies have led them astray**, those after which their fathers walked. …"
(Amos 2:4 ESV)

North Israel is castigated for moral and social crimes, as well as apostacy. **The castigation of North Israel serves as an introduction the contents of the Book of Amos**:

- **North Israel**:
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,
and in the house of their [god][108] they drink the wine of those who have been fined. …"
(Amos 2:6-8 ESV)

True to God's principle of "**retributive justice**"[109] each of the "seven" is promised a fitting punishment. Each punishment is identified with the same phrase, "**I will send fire upon** …"; Ammon is slightly altered, "**I will kindle a fire in** …". The punishments are in kind for the transgressions for the "six" – war crimes will be punished by destruction in war. Although **South Israel** is NOT castigated for war crimes, she also

[107] See footnote ***18***

[108] **ESV** has "God". The Hebrew is אֱלֹהִים - ´elohim, which of course can be the True God, but the previous line refers to multiple alters, and there was no temple of the True God in North Israel. The temples at Dan and Bethel had the golden calves in them. Some people may have thought they were worshipping the True God, but they were not.

[109] See ***Excursus 1 – Retributive Justice***

will be punished by war, as prescribed by the "**covenant curses**".[110] The punishment of the "eighth", North Isreal, is prescribed in the rest of the Book of Amos:

- **Aram**:
  So I will send a fire upon the house of Hazael, and it shall **devour the strongholds** of Ben-hadad.
  I will break the gate-bar of Damascus,
  and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter from Beth-eden;
  and **the people of [Aram] (ʿaram)**[111] **shall go into exile to Kir**, says [YHWH].
  (Amos 1:4-5 ESV)
- **Philistia**:
  So I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, and it shall **devour her strongholds**.
  I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod, and him who holds the scepter from Ashkelon;
  I will turn my hand against Ekron,
  and **the remnant of the Philistines shall perish**, says the Lord [YHWH].
  (Amos 1:7-8 ESV)
- **Phoenicia**:
  So I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall **devour her strongholds**.
  (Amos 1:10 ESV)
- **Edom**:
  So I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall **devour the strongholds** of Bozrah.
  (Amos 1:12 ESV)
- **Ammon**:
  So I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall **devour her strongholds**,
  with shouting on the **day of battle**, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind;
  and their king shall **go into exile**, he and his princes together, says [YHWH].
  (Amos 1:14-15 ESV)
- **Moab**:
  So I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall **devour the strongholds** of Kerioth,
  and Moab shall **die amid uproar**, amid shouting and the sound of the trumpet;
  I will **cut off** the ruler from its midst, and will **kill** all its princes with him, says [YHWH].
  (Amos 2:2-3 ESV)
- **South Israel**:
  So I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall **devour the strongholds** of Jerusalem."
  (Amos 2:5 ESV)

The overriding point of grouping these eight nations together is that **God regards all nations the same**. Israel was in no way special or better then any other nation. Only because of God's sovereign choice by "election" was Israel any different. The concept of "election" is discussed in some detail in section ***2.3.1 Election*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Amos reports God's words making this point:

> 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 see also 6:2, 9:7)

The sins of Israel were so overwhelming that God rhetorically called upon her neighbours, near and far, to take a seat on the mountains of Israel and observe the ongoing kerfuffle:

> Proclaim to the strongholds in **Ashdod** and to the strongholds in the land of **Egypt**, and say,
> "**Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria**,
> and see the great tumults within her, and the oppressed in her midst."
> "**They do not know how to do right**," declares [YHWH],
> "those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds."
> (Amos 3:9-10 ESV)

[110] See Leviticus 26:16-33, Deuteronomy 28:16-68
[111] See footnote ***61***

After the sins of Israel are documented and her punishment declared, the **Book of Amos** ends with **promises from God for universal abundance in the World Tomorrow**:

> "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. …"
> (Amos 9:13 ESV)

That **these blessings are for all nations** is made clear by the previous verses:

> (11) In that day I will raise up the booth (sukkah) of David that is fallen
> and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old,
> (12) that they may possess **the remnant of Edom**
> [even][112] **all the nations** who are called by my name,
> declares [YHWH] who does this.
> (Amos 9:11-12 ESV)

The word "booth" is from סֻכָּה - sukkah, literally a "hut" or "booth".[113] Here it is clearly being used metaphorically for the "**house of David**", the **Davidic Dynasty**.[114] The physical "Dynasty of David" was terminated with the final destruction of Israel in 586BC. However, the human line continued unbroken through to Jesus' legal father Joseph.[115] **Jesus of Nazareth**, as the son of David,[116] has qualified to be **King of kings** and the **Dynasty of David continues through Jesus in perpetuity**. Amos 9:11-12 is clearly a **Messianic prophecy** looking the establishment of **the Kingdom of God**[117] in the World Tomorrow. Verse 12 is clear and specific that the Kingdom of God will encompass all humanity. The nation of "**Edom**" is representative of the "neighbours" and "enemies" of Israel, as clearly laid out in the Book of Amos. But not just those nations, but "**all the nations**" of the whole world will come to be "**called by God's name**" in the World Tomorrow. Amos continues the tradition of considering "Edom" to be a "type" of the "nations of the world". The Prophecy of Obadiah began to look at **"Edom" as a "type" of the nations of the world** opposed to God who will meet God at the Day of YHWH:

> For **the day of [YHWH] is near upon all the nations**.
>
> **As you (Edom) have done**, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.
> For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, **so all the nations shall drink** continually;
> they shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been.
> (Obadiah 15-16 ESV)

This prophecy of Amos is quoted in the Book of Acts:

> And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul
> as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the **Gentiles**.
> After they finished speaking, James replied,
>
> > "Brothers, listen to me.
> > Simeon has related how God first visited the **Gentiles**, to take from them a people for his name.
> > And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,
> >
> > > 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen;
> > > I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it,
> > > that **the remnant of mankind** may seek the Lord,
> > > and all the **Gentiles** who are called by my name,
> > > says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.' …"
>
> (Acts 15:12-18 ESV)

The Septuagint translation of the verses in Amos is:

> (11) On that day I will raise up the tent of Dauid that is fallen
> and rebuild its ruins and raise up its destruction,
> and rebuild it as in days of old
> (12) in order that **those remaining of humans**
> and all **the nations** upon whom my name has been called
> might seek out me,

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[112] See footnote ***17***

[113] See Holladay pages 255-256

[114] See the discussion in section ***2.2.2 King David (The Dynasty of David)*** in the paper "**To Be a King**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

[115] See Matthew 1:6-16, Luke 3:23-31

[116] See Matthew 1:1, 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30-31, 21:9,15, Mark 10:47-48, 12:35, Luke 18:38-39

[117] See section ***2.3.5 The Kingdom of God*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

says the Lord who does these things.
(Amos 9:11-12 NETS page 795)

The following chart compares the three versions of the prophecy:

Acts 15:16-18 ESV	Amos 9:11-12 Hebrew (MT) ESV	Amos 9:11-12 Greek (LXX) NETS
After this I will return,	In that day	On that day
and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen;	I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen	I will raise up the tent of Dauid that is fallen
	and repair its breaches,	and rebuild its ruins
I will rebuild its ruins,	and raise up its ruins	and raise up its destruction,
and I will restore it,	and rebuild it as in the days of old,	and rebuild it as the days of old
that the remnant of mankind	that they may possess the remnant of Edom	**in order that those remaining of the humans**
may seek the Lord,		
and all the Gentiles who are called by my name,	and all the nations who are called by my name,	and all the nations upon whom my name has been called
		may seek me out
says the Lord, who makes these things	declares the LORD who does this.	says the Lord who does these things.
known from of old.		

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Analysis of the three versions of the prophecy:

- The Septuagint is clearly based on the Masoretic Text – only the phrase "**may seek me out**" is added as an explanation, which the New Testament picks up
- The New Testament translation is rather "free":
  - "In that day" is changed to "After this I will return" making it an explicit allusion to the Second Advent
  - The "repair/rebuild" clauses are simplified
  - "nations" is replaced by "Gentiles" to fit the context of the Jerusalem conference
  - "known from of old" is appended, possibly alluding to Isaiah 45:21
- The most important point is that the **Septuagint has substituted "humans" for "Edom"**; the "type" has been replaced by the "antitype"; and, **the New Testament follows the Septuagint**, making it even more general, "**mankind**"

The Book of Amos contains the oldest instance of a formal section addressing "foreign nation". The Book uses a very formal structure to make the point that YHWH is the **God of Every Nation**. Israel was chosen through God's sovereign choice of "election" for a very important mission to the nations of the world. **The Book of Amos is clear and specific that in God's eyes Israel is no different from any other nation**; in fact, due to Israel's apostacy, her condemnation is all the greater. Nevertheless, God will accomplish his Plan – **all nations in the World Tomorrow will come under the Kingdom of God**. All persons in all nations will be given the opportunity for salvation. All persons in all nation will participate in the abundance, the peace, the order, the good government, and the freedom imparted by the Kingdom of God.

2.3 2 Zephaniah

The **Prophet Zephaniah** was active in South Israel during the reign of Josiah (641-609BC). The reference to Nineveh in chapter 2 verse 13 restricts his activity to prior to the fall of Nineveh in 612BC. Zephaniah was a fourth generation descendent of King Hezekiah:

> **The word of [YHWH]** that came to Zephaniah
> the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, **son of Hezekiah**,
> **in the days of Josiah** the son of Amon, king of Judah.
> (Zephaniah 1:1 ESV)

Like the Prophet Micah, **Zephaniah starts immediately quoting YHWH with a universal perspective**:

> "**I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth**," 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.
>
> **I will cut off mankind** from the face of the earth," declares [YHWH].
> (Zephaniah 1:2-3 ESV)

This utter destruction may appear hyperbolic, but it is precisely what happened in **the days of Noah**,[118] and precisely what God warns of in the **Book of Malachi**:

> "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of [YHWH] comes.
> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers,
> **lest I come and strike the [earth] (ʹeretz)**[119] **with a decree of utter destruction**."
> (Malachi 4:5-6 ESV see also Zechariah 14:11)

Chapter 1 of the Book of Zephaniah goes on to castigate the sins of Israel. The Day of YHWH is explicitly mentioned three times.[120] Again echoing the Prophet Micah, it is because of the failure of Israel to fulfill its mission to the nations of the world, that the Day of YHWH is inevitable. The chapter ends again with the universal perspective:

> I will stretch out my hand **against Judah** and against all the **inhabitants of Jerusalem**;
>
> **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 shall be consumed**;
> for **a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth**.
> (Zephaniah 1:4a, 17-18 ESV)

The Day of YHWH is the day of God's wrath on mankind in general. **God does not accept "ignorance" of his Way as an excuse for sin**. The Book of Amos is clear and specific that God holds the nations responsible for their crimes. The Book of Zephaniah reinforces this. The "**day of the wrath of YHWH**" will fall on "**all the inhabitants of the earth**".

The complete destruction of the surface of the earth, "**all the earth shall be consumed**", appears to be planned for just before God the Father takes up residence on the earth:

> 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.
> (2 Peter 3:7 ESV)
>
> 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 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. …"
>
> And he who was seated on the throne said,
> > "Behold, **I am making all things new**."

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[118] See Genesis 6:5-8,11-13, 7:21-23

[119] The noun אֶרֶץ - ʹeretz, can be translated "land" or "earth", depending on the context; see Holladay page 28.

[120] See Zephaniah 1:7,14

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is **the Lord God the Almighty** and **the Lamb**.
(Revelation 21:1, 3, 5a, 22 ESV)

Chapter 2 of the Book of Zephaniah follows the pattern of the Book of Amos with a formal section on foreign nations. The neighbour nations of **Philistia**, **Moab**, and **Ammon** are addressed, as are distant nations **Cush** and **Assyria**. **Philistia will be destroyed. The land of the Philistines will revert to Israel in the World Tomorrow**:

For **Gaza** shall be deserted, and **Ashkelon** shall become a **desolation**;
Ashdod's people shall be driven out at noon, and **Ekron** shall be **uprooted**.
Woe to you inhabitants of the seacoast, you **nation of the Cherethites**!
The word of [YHWH] is against you, O Canaan, **land of the Philistines**;
and **I will destroy you until no inhabitant is left**.

And you, O seacoast, shall be pastures, with meadows for shepherds and folds for flocks.
The seacoast shall become the possession of the remnant of the house of Judah,
on which they shall graze, and in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening.
For [YHWH] their God will be mindful of them and restore their fortunes.
(Zephaniah 2:4-7 ESV)

Moab and Ammon are jointly castigated for enmity towards Israel. Their **destruction is prophesized**; however, **Jeremiah prophesizes restoration for both**; in view of which **Zephaniah** looks to their conversion, "**plunder**", through the Gospel,[121] and **general conversion of all nations**:

"I have heard the taunts of **Moab** and the revilings of the **Ammonites**,
how they have taunted my people and made boasts against their territory.
Therefore, as I live," declares [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel,
"**Moab shall become like Sodom**, and **the Ammonites like Gomorrah**,
a land possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a waste forever.
This shall be their lot in return for their pride,
because they taunted and boasted against the people of [YHWH] of hosts."
(Zephaniah 2:8-9a, 10 ESV)

Yet **I will restore the fortunes of Moab** in the latter days, declares [YHWH].

But afterward **I will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites**, declares [YHWH].
(Jeremiah 48:47a, 49:6 ESV)

The remnant of my people shall plunder them,
and the survivors of my nation shall possess them.

[YHWH] will be awesome against them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth,
and **to him shall bow down**, each in its place, **all the lands of the nations**.
(Zephaniah 2:9b, 11 ESV)

The reference to Cush is very brief. The Twenty-fifth Dynasty was from Cush. Therefore, Egypt in general is probably the target of the prophecy:

You also, O Cushites, shall be slain by my sword.
(Zephaniah 2:12 ESV)

The prophecy against Assyria is particularly scathing, but given the imminent destruction of Nineveh, it is very appropriate:

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)

In **Chapter 3**, **Zephaniah integrates prophecies of the New Israel and the conversion of the world showing that to God they are both parts of the same whole**. God will create the New Israel so that she

[121] See ***Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence***

can fulfill the original purpose of Ancient Isarel to be an example nation to the world. God explicitly states his sovereignty and control over all nations. After the Day of YHWH, all peoples will learn to worship him:

> "**I have cut off nations**; their battlements are in ruins;
> I have laid waste their streets so that no one walks in them;
> their cities have been made desolate, without a man, without an inhabitant. …"
>
> "Therefore wait for me," declares [YHWH],
> "for the day when I rise up to seize the prey.
> For **my decision is to gather nations**, to assemble kingdoms,
> to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger;
> for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.
>
> For at that time I will change the speech of **the peoples** to a pure speech,
> that **all of them may call upon the name of [YHWH]** and **serve him with one accord**. …"
> (Zephaniah 3:6, 8-9 ESV)

The Book of Zephaniah emphasizes the Day of YHWH and its impact on the nations of the world. But as with other prophets, the Book looks beyond to the World Tomorrow when all nations will learn the Way of God.

2.3.4 Habakkuk

The Book of Habakkuk has no official dating formula. The only one clear allusion to a date:

> For behold, **I am raising up the Chaldeans**, that bitter and hasty nation …
> (Habakkuk 1:6a ESV)

This places the career of Habakkuk prior to the dominance of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 605BC. Beyond that many dates have been explored.[122] Keil argues for a date late in the reign of Manasseh.[123] Robertson settles on a date between 608BC and 605BC.[124] Renz considers a date as late as 597BC to be possible.[125]

The Book of Habakkuk comprises **two prayers** of **the Prophet** in which he **implores God to give him understanding**. In each case, God responds revealing to Habakkuk what he is doing to work out his Plan. The last chapter of the book is **a Psalm** in which **Habakkuk extolls God for carrying out his Plan**. The main theme of the book is **God's use of the Chaldeans to punish Israel**. This demonstrates God's control of history. World powers rise and fall at the behest of God. God is NOT averse to using a "wicked" nation to punish the "wickedness" of his people, but in the end, the "wicked" nation will also receive retributive justice.[126]

In his first prayer, Habakkuk looks at the religious, social, and political state of South Israel and pleads with God for understanding of how long God will tolerate the state of the nation:

> [YHWH], **how long shall I cry for help**, and you will not hear?
> Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?
>
> 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.
>
> So **[torah][127] is paralyzed**, and justice never goes forth.
> For the wicked surround the righteous; so **justice goes forth perverted**.
> (Habakkuk 1:2-4 ESV)

God assures Habakkuk that everything is under control. Punishment of the sins of the people of Israel will occur – but, the agent of punishment may unbelievable:

> "**Look among the nations**, and see; wonder and be astounded.
> For **I am doing a work** in your days that **you would not believe** if told.
>
> 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.

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[122] See the survey of proposed dates in Freeman pages 252-255.
[123] See KD10 pages 387-389
[124] See Roberston (**NICOT**) pages 34-37
[125] See Renz pages 207-211
[126] See ***Excursus 1 – Retributive Justice***
[127] See footnote ***18***

They are dreaded and fearsome; **their justice and dignity go forth from themselves**.
Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, **guilty men**, **whose own might is their god**!"
(Habakkuk 1:5-7, 11 ESV)

Like the Assyrians before them, the Chaldeans believe they are power unto themselves, "**their justice and dignity go forth from themselves**". God freely acknowledges the depravity of the people he is using, "**guilty men**". Their arrogance is manifest in that they worship their own accomplishments,[128] "**whose own might is their god**".

Clearly Habakkuk has some familiarity with the Chaldeans. In his second prayer, he expresses his disbelief that God will use such a vile nation:

Are you not from everlasting, [YHWH] my God, my Holy One?
We shall not die.[129]

[YHWH], **you have ordained them [for justice] (l^{e} mish^{e}pat)**,[130]
and you, O Rock, **have established them for reproof**.
You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong,
why do you idly look at traitors
and remain silent when **the wicked swallows up the man more righteous** than he?
(Habakkuk 1:12-13 ESV)

In God's response to Habakkuk, God lists **five "woes" on Babylon**, which may be taken more generally as **God's measuring stick for the nations of the world**. Ignorance of the Way of God is not acceptable to God as an excuse for sin. God reserves retributive justice for all nations.[131] **Ancient Babylon would answer for her sins**, **as will all the nations of the world**:

"**Woe to him** **who heaps up what is not his own**—for how long?—and loads himself with pledges!"
Because you have plundered many nations,
all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you,
for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

"Woe to him **who gets evil gain** for his house, to set his nest on high,
to be safe from the reach of harm!"

"**Woe to him** **who builds a town with blood** and founds a city on iniquity!"
Behold, is it not from [YHWH] of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire,
and nations weary themselves for nothing?

"**Woe to him** **who makes his neighbors drink**—
you pour out your wrath and make them drunk,
in order to gaze at their nakedness!"
The cup in [YHWH's] right hand will come around to you,[132]
and utter shame will come upon your glory!

"**Woe to him** who says to a wooden thing, Awake; to a silent stone, Arise!"
What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies?
For **its maker trusts in his own creation** when he makes speechless idols!
(Habakkuk 2:6b, 8-9, 12-13, 15, 16b, 19a, 18 ESV)

God also made it clear to **Habakkuk** that he **was to preserve the revelation** from God because the **Plan of God** will come to complete fruition, and the prophecies are to teach all peoples of all times:

And [YHWH] answered me:
"**Write the vision**;
make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

For still **the vision awaits its appointed time**;
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.
If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

For **the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of [YHWH]**
as the waters cover the sea."

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[128] This smacks of the leftist elites who are driving the social and political agenda in modern times.
[129] This clause would perhaps be better cast as a question, "Shall we not die?"
[130] The word מִשְׁפָּט - mish^{e}pat, is usually best translated by "**justice**" or "**justness**": "justness" is best when the meaning is a "character attribute", commonly used with "righteousness"; when it is used more abstractly, "justice" is best; see ***Excursus 1 - mish^{e}pat*** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**", ***Excursus 4 – David's Use of mish^{e}pat*** in the paper "**David – A Man After My Own Heart**", and section ***1.4.3 Attributes of God's Character*** in the paper "**First Pillar - The Nature of God**"; all papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[131] See ***Excursus 1 – Retributive Justice***
[132] See Jeremiah 25:15-29

But [YHWH] is in his holy temple; **let all the earth keep silence before him**.
(Habakkuk 2:2-3, 14, 20 ESV)

The ESV translation of **Habakkuk's Psalm in chapter 3** contains many verbs in the "past tense" which have been translated from "imperfect" verbs in the Hebrew. This make it seem like Habakkuk is strictly looking to "past" events. When the imperfect verbs are properly translated into current or future activity,[133] it is clear that Habakkuk is looking to the **ongoing working-out of the Plan of God**. This includes retributive justice for the nations on the Day of YHWH followed by salvation for all humanity:

You [will march] through the earth in fury; you [will thresh] the nations in anger.
… yet **I will rejoice in [YHWH]**; I will take joy in **the God of my salvation**.
(Habakkuk 3:12, 18 ESV)

The Book of Habakkuk is about the working out of the Plan of God. God has used vile sinning nations to meet out punishment on Israel, but these nations in turn met their fate. Willful ignorance is no excuse for sin. All nations are accountable and will be finally punished in the Day of YHWH before salvation can be offered to all humanity.

2.4 Haggai, Zechariah, & Malachi

These three prophets are similar in that their main focus is the remnant community formed by God after the exile. The purpose of the remnant community was to prepare for the First Advent. **The old "neighbour" nations of Israel are gone**, and the world power is now **Persia**, the second World Empire.[134]

2.4.1 Haggai

The recorded messages of the **Prophet Haggai** were given over a four-month period in 520BC – the second year of the **Persian King**, **Darius**.[135] Haggai's messages to his contemporaries had as a primary objective: to encourage them complete the construction of the Temple.[136] Haggai makes two rather cryptic prophecies about the "nations", both of which must have remained enigmatic to his contemporaries.

First, in the context of continuing to work on the Temple, "**work**, **for I am with you**", God promises future glory for the Temple, "**I will fill this house with glory**":

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.
The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares [YHWH] of hosts.
The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says [YHWH] of hosts.
And **in this place I will give peace**,
declares [YHWH] of hosts.
(Haggai 2:4b-9 ESV)

God gives encouragement to the people by alluding to his commitment to the Sinai Covenant,[137] "**according to the covenant**", and promising his ongoing presence, "**my Spirit remains in your midst**". From God's perspective, because there is no time in eternity, this prophecy will occur "**in a little while**", which must have been confusing to Haggai's contemporaries. The real focus of the prophecy is the World Tomorrow, "**in this place I will give peace**"; that is when God "**will shake all nations**" – Haggai's contemporaries were almost certainly expecting something closer to their own time. The Second

[133] See the translations in Robertson (**NICOT**) and Renz
[134] See section ***2.12.1 The Period of World Empires***
[135] See Haggai 1:1, 2:1,10,20
[136] See Haggai 1:4,7-9, 2:4-5
[137] Although the Nation of Israel had broken the covenant, the author of Hebrews affirms that in God's eyes it did not "end" until the death of Jesus Christ when it was replaced the New Covenant; see Hebrews 9:15-17.

Temple did NOT receive the glory of God as did the Tabernacle and the First Temple.[138] Jesus Christ, in person, arriving at the Second Temple, fulfilled the prophecy to "**fill this house with glory**".[139]

Similarly, Haggai's second prophecy concerning the "nations" must have been confusing to his contemporaries – **the focus is again the Day of YHWH and the role of Jesus Christ**:

> "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying,
> **I am about to shake the heavens and the earth**,
> and to **overthrow the throne of kingdoms**.
> I am about to **destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations**,
> and overthrow the chariots and their riders.
> And the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his brother.
> On that day, declares [YHWH] of hosts,
> **I will take you, O Zerubbabel** my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares [YHWH],
> and make you like a signet ring, for **I have chosen you**,
> declares [YHWH] of hosts."
> (Haggai 2:21-23 ESV)

Haggai's contemporaries, no doubt, hoped for the "**overthrow the throne of kingdoms**" in their time thus freeing the remnant community from Persian rule; but clearly, the first part of the prophecy looks to the Day of YHWH, "**destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations**". The ultimate fulfillment of the second part of the prophecy would appear to be that Zerubbabel will participate in First Resurrection; however, it is also **Messianic** looking to **the role of Zerubbabel in the lineage of Jesus Christ**:[140]

> **The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ**, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
> And **David** was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam …
> And after the deportation to Babylon:
> Jechoniah {Jehoiachin} was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of **Zerubbabel** …
> … and Jacob the father of **Joseph** the husband of Mary, of whom **Jesus** was born, who is called **Christ**.
> (Matthew 1:6b-7a, 12, 16 ESV)
>
> **Jesus**, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age,
> being the son (as was supposed) of **Joseph** …
> … the son of **Zerubbabel**, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri {Jehoiachin}…
> … the son of Nathan, the son of **David**,
> (Luke 3:23a, 27b, 31b ESV)

The Book of Haggai emphasizes the purpose of the post-exilic remnant community to **prepare for the First Advent**. The people are enjoined to finish the Temple construction, and two specific Messianic prophecies are given. The prophecies heavily look to the role of the nations in the Plan of God.

2.4.2 Zechariah

The career of the **Prophet Zechariah** began while Haggai was also active – during the eighth month of the second year of the **Persian King**, **Darius**, 520BC.[141] His career apparently lasted many years, as Nehemiah lists him as the second-generation head of the house of his grandfather, Iddo.[142] **The Book of Zechariah** is one of the hardest parts of the Bible to understand – it **contains many enigmas**. It is beyond the scope of this paper to do an analysis of all the contents of the book of Zechariah;[143] however, **it is very clear from the book that God's perspective includes all humanity**. The prophecies in the Book of Zechariah relate to all nations, all the earth – **The God of Every Nation**.

The first part of the Book of Zechariah contains eight visions, all of which explicitly have **a universal perspective**:

- Vision 1 – **The Horsemen**:

  > So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered,
  > '**These are they whom [YHWH] has sent to patrol the earth (ʿeretz)**.'

[138] See Exodus 40:34-35, 1 Kings 8:10-11, Ezra 6:14-18
[139] See Malachi 3:1bα, Mark 11:15-17 // Matthew 21:12-13 // Luke 19:45-46, John 2:13-16
[140] See also Ezekiel 17:22-24
[141] See Zechariah 1:1
[142] See Nehemiah 12:16
[143] Please consult the commentaries: Boda, **KD10** pages 501-630, **JFB** pages 844-868, **NBC** pages 786-803

And they answered the angel of [YHWH] who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said,
'**We have patrolled the earth (´eretz)**,
and behold, **all the earth (´eretz) remains at rest**.'

And **I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease**;
for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster.
(Zechariah 1:10-11, 15 ESV)

The visions start out with **God's taking reconnaissance of the status the world**, "**we have patrolled the earth**", and states God's displeasure with the nations, "**I am exceedingly angry with the nations**".

- Vision 2 – **The Horns**:

And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, **four horns**!
And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?"

And he said to me, "**These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem**."

Then [YHWH] showed me **four craftsmen**.
And I said, "What are these coming to do?"

He said,

"These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one raised his head.
And **these have come to terrify them**,
to cast down the horns of the nations
who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it."
(Zechariah 1:18-21 ESV)

The "craftsmen" are God's agents, presumably angelic, **who punish the nations**, the "horns", which scattered Israel.

- Vision 3 – **The Measuring Line**:

And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, **a man with a measuring line in his hand**!

Up! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.
For thus said [YHWH] of hosts, after **his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you**,
for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye:

"Behold, I will shake my hand over them,
and they shall become plunder for those who served them.
Then you will know that [YHWH] of hosts has sent me. …"

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.

Be silent, **all flesh**, **before [YHWH]**, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.
(Zechariah 2:1, 7-9, 11, 13 ESV)

This vision looks to the World Tomorrow, "**many nations shall join themselves to YHWH in that day**", when all nations will acknowledge YHWH, "**be silent**, **all flesh**, **before YHWH**".

- Vision 4 – **Joshua the High Priest**:

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you,
for they are men who are a sign: behold, **I will bring my servant the Branch**.
For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes,
I will engrave its inscription, declares [YHWH] of hosts,
and **I will remove the iniquity of [the whole earth] (kol ha´aretz)**[144] **in a single day**.
(Zechariah 3:8-9 ESV)

Joshua is a "type" of Jesus Christ, "the Branch".[145] The crucifixion occurred "**in a single day**".[146]

- Vision 5 – **The Golden Lampstand**:

And he said to me, "What do you see?"
I said,

"**I see**, and behold, **a lampstand all of gold**, with a bowl on the top of it,
and **seven lamps on it**, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.

Then the word of [YHWH] came to me, saying,

" … **These seven are the eyes of [YHWH]**,
which range through the whole earth (kol ha´aretz)."

[144] This is a "construct" form of *´eretz*; see footnote ***119***
[145] See ***Excursus 3 – The Branch*** in the paper "**The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
[146] See Mark 15:1-39 // Matthew 27:1-54 // Luke 22:66-71, 23:1-47 // John 18:28-40, 19:1-37

Then I said to him,
"What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?"
And a second time I answered and said to him,
"What are these two branches of the olive trees,
which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?"
He said to me, "Do you not know what these are?"
I said, "No, my lord."
Then he said,
"**These are the two anointed ones**
who stand by the Lord of the whole earth (kol ha´aretz)."[147]
(Zechariah 4:2, 8, 10b-14 ESV)

Again, God is taking reconnaissance of the world, "**these seven are the eyes of YHWH**, **which range through the whole earth**". The identity of "**the two anointed ones**" is NOT made explicit, but the **Book of Revelation** picks up the vision:

And I will grant authority to **my two witnesses** …
These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.
(Revelation 11:3a, 4 ESV)

- Vision 6 – **The Flying Scroll**:

And he said to me, "What do you see?"
I answered, "**I see a flying scroll**. Its length is twenty cubits, and its width ten cubits."
Then he said to me,
"**This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole [earth] (kol ha´aretz)**.
For **everyone who steals**
shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side,
and **everyone who swears falsely**
shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side. …"
(Zechariah 5:2-3 ESV)

The "**flying scroll**" identifies the ethical and moral sins of humanity, "**everyone who steals**", "**everyone who swears falsely**", violations of the last six commandments.

- Vision 7 –**The Woman in a Basket**:

And I said, "What is it?"
He said, "**This is the basket that is going out**."
And he said, "**This is their iniquity in all the [earth] (´eretz)**."
And behold, the leaden cover was lifted, and there was **a woman**[148] **sitting in the basket**!
And he said, "This is **Wickedness**."
And he thrust her back into the basket, and thrust down the leaden weight on its opening.
Then I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they taking the basket?"
He said to me,
"**To the land of Shinar**,[149] to build a house for it.
And when this is prepared, they will set the basket down there on its base."
(Zechariah 5:6-8, 10-11 ESV)

The "**woman sitting in the basket**" represents "false religion", "**wickedness**", violations of the first four commandments.

- Vision 8 – **The Four Chariots**:

Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, **four chariots** came out from between two mountains.
And the mountains were mountains of bronze.
And the angel answered and said to me,
"**These are going out to the four winds of heaven**,
after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth (´eretz). …"
When the strong horses came out, **they were impatient to go and patrol the earth (´eretz)**.
And he said, "**Go, patrol the earth (´eretz)**."
So they patrolled the earth (´eretz).
(Zechariah 6:1, 5, 7 ESV)

[147] See Revelation 11:4
[148] See Revelation 17:1-4
[149] See Revelation 17:5-6; Babylon is located in the "land of Shinar", see Genesis 10:10, 11:2, Daniel 1:2.

The visions end emphasizing the universality of the Dominion of God, "**after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth**", and with God again taking reconnaissance of the world, "**go, patrol the earth**".

The seminal scripture on the World Tomorrow, Micah chapter 4 verses 1-5, is quoted in section ***2.2.3 Micah***. Zechariah contains a similar prophecy:

Thus says [YHWH] of hosts:
> **Peoples shall yet come**, even the inhabitants of many cities.
> The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying,
> > 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of [YHWH]
> > and to seek [YHWH] of hosts;
> > I myself am going.'
>
> **Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek [YHWH] of hosts**
> in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of [YHWH].

Thus says [YHWH] of hosts:
> In those days
> ten **men from the nations of every tongue** shall take hold of the robe of a Jew,[150] saying,
> > 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

(Zechariah 8:20-23 ESV)

Chapter 9 contains a summary of foreign nations similar to chapter 2 of Zephaniah. Some of the old neighbours of Israel are gone, so Zechariah looks at Aram, Phoenicia, and Philistia – all of which were under Persian overlordship. No particular sin of the **Aramean cities** is mentioned:

The oracle of the word of [YHWH] is against the land of **Hadrach**
and **Damascus** is its resting place.
For [YHWH] has an eye on mankind and on all the tribes of Israel,
and on **Hamath** also, which borders on it …
(Zechariah 9:1-2a ESV)

Phoenicia is threatened with destruction and, again, no particular sin is identified:

Tyre and **Sidon**, though they are very wise.
Tyre has built herself a rampart
and heaped up silver like dust, and fine gold like the mud of the streets.
But behold, the Lord will strip her of her possessions and strike down her power on the sea,
and **she shall be devoured by fire**.
(Zechariah 9:2b-4 ESV)

Philistia is castigated for **pride**, **violence**, and "**abominations**"; assimilation by Israel is prophesized:

Ashkelon shall see it, and be afraid;
Gaza too, and shall writhe in anguish;
Ekron also, because its hopes are confounded.

The king shall perish from **Gaza**;
Ashkelon shall be uninhabited;
a mixed people shall dwell in **Ashdod**,
and **I will cut off the pride of Philistia**.

I will take away its **blood** from its mouth,
and its **abominations** from between its teeth;
it too shall be a remnant for our God;
it shall be like a clan in Judah,
and **Ekron** shall be like the Jebusites.
(Zechariah 9:5-7 ESV)

The end of war and the **universal dominion of the King of kings** is prophesized:

I will **cut off the chariot** from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and **the battle bow** shall be cut off,
and **he shall speak peace to the nations**;
his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River **to the ends of the earth**.
(Zechariah 9:10 ESV)

[150] A spiritual "Jew", see Romans 2:28-29, 1 Corinthians 7:19, Galatians 5:6, 6:15, Philippians 3:3, Colossians 2:11

In **Chapter 10**, **Zechariah, apparently anachronistically, refers to Assyria**. Egypt was still a player on the world scene in Zechariah's time, but Assyria was a distant memory:

> Though **I scattered them among the nations**,
> yet in far countries they shall remember me,
> and with their children **they shall live and return**.
>
> **I will bring them home** from the land of **Egypt**, and gather them from **Assyria**,
> and I will bring them to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon, till there is no room for them.
>
> He shall pass through the sea of troubles and strike down the waves of the sea,
> and all the depths of the Nile shall be dried up.
>
> **The pride of Assyria shall be laid low**, and **the scepter of Egypt shall depart**.
>
> I will make them strong in [YHWH], and they shall walk in his name, declares [YHWH].
> (Zechariah 10:9-12 ESV)

This is looking to the **Second Exodus**,[151] the return to the Land of Israel by those called to the New Isreal, "**they shall live and return**", "**I will bring them home**". Anciently, **Egypt** and **Assyria**, were among the places to which Israel was scattered. In Zechariah's time Assyria was gone, but the ancient cultural and religion developed in Assyria was assimilated by Babylon, later by Persia, Greece, and Rome.[152] The same culture and religion permeates the modern world. That culture and religion are the "**the pride of Assyria**". At the Second Advent, the whole world order "**shall be laid low**". The nations of this world will no longer have hegemony, "**the scepter of Egypt shall depart**".

Chapter 12 is enigmatic. The overall theme is **Jerusalem**, and the **ongoing impact of Jerusalem on the nations of the world**:

> (2a) Behold, **I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples**.
>
> (2b) The **siege of Jerusalem** will also be against Judah.
>
> (3a) On that day **I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples**.
> All who lift it will surely hurt themselves.
> (3b) And **all the nations of the earth will gather against it**.
>
> (6) On that day I will make **the clans of Judah** like a blazing pot in the midst of wood,
> like a flaming torch among sheaves.
> And they shall devour to the right and to the left **all the surrounding peoples**,
> while **Jerusalem shall again be inhabited** in its place, in Jerusalem.
>
> (9) And **on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem**.
> (Zechariah 12:2-3, 6, 9 ESV)

Analysis of the prophecy of Jerusalem:

- **Verses 2a and 3a** describe the ongoing status of Jerusalem over the last 2500 years, "**a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples**", "**a heavy stone for all the peoples**"
- **Verses 2b and 3b** introduce the theme which is climaxed in **verse 9**, "**siege of Jerusalem**", "**all the nations of the earth will gather against it**", "**I will seek to destroy all the nations**"
- This prophecy looks to two possible events: the **Battle of Armageddon**[153] or the **Attack of Gog**[154]
- **Verse 6 is rooted in Zechariah's own time**: Jerusalem was in ruins and largely uninhabited, but the prophecy says that would change, "**Jerusalem shall again be inhabited**"; and, over the years, Jerusalem has been more than once devastated, but it remains "**inhabited**"
- The actions of "**the clans of Judah**" were certainly fulfilled at the time of the Maccabees;[155] but it also sounds very much like the successes of the modern State of Israel; which makes sense in an end-time context

[151] See footnote ***72***
[152] See Daniel 7:12
[153] See footnote ***38***
[154] See Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39
[155] Some of the prophecies in this section of Zechariah seem best applied to time of the Maccabees; see section ***2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets (Prophets Haggai, Zechariah, & Malachi)*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Chapters 13 and 14 very much focus on the Day of YHWH, the Second Advent, and the World Tomorrow. On the Day of YHWH, **the nations will be gathered at Jerusalem to fight against the arriving King of kings**:

> Behold, **a day is coming for [YHWH]**, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst.
>
> For **I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle**,
> and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped.
> Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
>
> Then **[YHWH] will go out and fight against those nations** as when he fights on a day of battle.
>
> On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost.
> And **there shall be a unique day**, which is known to [YHWH],
> neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.
> (Zechariah 14:1-3, 6-7 ESV)
>
> And **this shall be the plague**
> with which **[YHWH] will strike all the peoples** that wage war against Jerusalem:
> their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet,
> their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.
>
> And on that day a great panic from [YHWH] shall fall on them,
> so that each will seize the hand of another,
> and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other.
> **Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem**.
> (Zechariah 14:12-14a ESV)
>
> **In the whole [earth] (ʹeretz)**,[156] declares [YHWH],
> two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and **one third shall be left alive**.
> (Zechariah 13:8 ESV)

The **Second Advent** will be accompanied by earth shattering events:[157]

> On that day **his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives**[158] that lies before Jerusalem on the east,
> and **the Mount of Olives shall be split in two** from east to west by a very wide valley,
> so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.
>
> **The whole land shall be turned into a plain** from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem.
> But **Jerusalem shall remain aloft** on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate,
> to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.
>
> **And [YHWH] will be king over all the earth**.
> On that day [YHWH] will be one and his name one.
> (Zechariah 14:4, 10, 9 ESV)

The King of kings will quickly consolidate his rule; begin to heal humanity; and, create the utopia of the wonderful World Tomorrow **for all persons in all nations over the whole world**:

> And I will put this third into the fire,
> and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested.
>
> They will call upon my name, and I will answer them.
> I will say,
> '**They are my people**';
> and they will say,
> '**[YHWH] is my God**.'"
> (Zechariah 13:9 ESV)
>
> On that day **living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem**,
> half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea.
> It shall continue in summer as in winter.
>
> And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction.
> **Jerusalem shall dwell in security**.
>
> 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 14:8, 11, 16 ESV)

[156] See footnote ***119***
[157] See Revelation 8:5, 11:13,19, 16:18
[158] See Acts 1:9-11

The Book of Zechariah integrates God's perspective on Israel with a universal perspective. The eight visions all look to God's dealings with nations of the world. Chapter 9 considers some neighbour nations of post-exilic Israel. The main focus of chapters 10 through 14 is the World Tomorrow and the incorporation of all nations under the Kingdom of God.

2.4.3 Malachi

The Book of Malachi is the last prophetic writing of the Old Testament. It was most likely written during the time of Nehemiah and Ezra, about 425BC, about a century after Haggai and Zechariah. In many respects, the Book of Malachi contains "**God's last word**" until the First Advent.

The Book of Malachi opens with **God's last word on Edom**. During the Exile, Nabatean Arabs moving west pushed many Edomites out of their homeland south of the Dead Sea. They occupied the relatively empty territory of South Israel up to a point north of Hebron.[159] **God uses this situation to drive home to the Israelite remnant community his prerogative of "election"**:

> "**I have loved you**," says [YHWH].
>
> But you say, "How have you loved us?"
>
> "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares [YHWH].
>
> "Yet **I have loved Jacob** but **Esau I have hated**.
> I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert."
>
> If Edom says, "We are shattered but **we will rebuild the ruins**,"
> [YHWH] of hosts says,
> "They may build, but **I will tear down**,
> and they will be called '**the wicked country**,'
> and 'the people with whom [YHWH] is angry forever.'"
>
> Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say,
> "**Great is [YHWH] beyond the border of Israel**!"
> (Malachi 1:2-5 ESV)

In arrogance, Edom insists they are in control, "**we will rebuild the ruins**". YHWH responds that the fate of Edom is his doing – he is in control, "**I will tear down**". Edom's fate is their due, "**the wicked country**". The objective of the dialogue is the Israelite remnant community, "**I have loved you**". The election of Israel is purely God's sovereign choice, "**I have loved Jacob**". It was purely his choice to reject Edom, "**Esau I have hated**". The purpose of God's election of Israel was so that Israel would come to know God, serve him faithfully, and carry his teaching to all the nations of the world, "**great is YHWH beyond the border of Israel**".

God goes on to **castigate the Priests of the Second Temple** for slack service in how they present offerings.[160] He contrasts their failure with the World Tomorrow when pure offerings will be universal, and **all nations will learn to reverence the True God**:

> Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors,
> that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain!
>
> **I have no pleasure in you**, says [YHWH] of hosts,
> and I will not accept an offering from your hand.
>
> **For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations**,
> and **in every place incense will be offered to my name**, and **a pure offering**.
> For my name will be great among the nations, says [YHWH] of hosts.
>
> For **I am a great King**, says [YHWH] of hosts, and **my name will be feared among the nations**.
> (Malachi 1:10-11, 14b ESV)

God uses the example of economic reform to show that Israel will become the example nation he requires. Instead of the onerous tax regimes the world suffers from today, **God's simple system of "tithing" will provide abundance for all humanity**:

> For **I, [YHWH], do not change**; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.
> From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them.

[159] See Bright pages 377-378, **IDB** volume 3 article "Nabateans" pages 491-493
[160] See Malachi 1:6-9

Return to me, and I will return to you, says [YHWH] of hosts.
But you say, 'How shall we return?'

Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me.

But you say, 'How have we robbed you?'
In your tithes and contributions.

You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you.
Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.
And thereby put me to the test, says [YHWH] of hosts,
if I will not **open the windows of heaven** for you and **pour down for you a blessing**
until there is no more need.
I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil,
and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says [YHWH] of hosts.

Then **all nations will call you blessed**, for **you will be a land of delight**, says [YHWH] of hosts.
(Malachi 3:6-12 ESV)

The final prophecy of Malachi is one of the most profound in all the Bible:

For behold, **the day is coming**, burning like an oven,
when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble.
The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says [YHWH] of hosts,
so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

But for **you who fear my name**, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.
You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.
And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet,
on the day when I act, says [YHWH] of hosts.

Remember [torah][161] **of my servant Moses**,
the statutes and [mish^{e}patim][162] that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

Behold, I will send you **Elijah the prophet** before the great and awesome **day of [YHWH]** comes.
And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers,
lest I come and strike the [earth] (ʿeretz)[163] **with a decree of utter destruction**.
(Malachi 4:1-6 ESV)

Thrice God alludes to the day, "**the day is coming**", "**the day that is coming**", "**on the day**", before he is explicit that the prophecy is for the "**day of YHWH**". God is specifically addressing the prophecy to True Worshippers, "**you who fear my name**". God reminds one last time, that it is his teaching, the Way of God, that is required by all the world, "**remember *torah* of my servant Moses**". Before the Day of YHWH there will be a work of "**Elijah the prophet**"[164] that will be **critical to the survival of humanity**. Should the work of Elijah fail, all humanity would perish, "**strike the earth with a decree of utter destruction**".

2.5 Assessment of the Minor Prophets

The writings that have come down to us from **the minor prophets** are each very minimal. Our knowledge of each of the minor prophets is exceedingly scant. Yet taking their writings as a whole, we have a very significant revelation from God concerning his dealings with Israel and **the nations of the world over about a four-hundred-year period**.

From the Minor Prophets it is clear that **the Plan of God has always included the nations of the world**, not just Israel. Israel was to be God's representative to the nations. Israel failed, but God has continued to deal with the nations. From the minor prophets it is clear that **God's focus for the nations is the World Tomorrow**. The True God is the **God of Every Nation**. Every person in every nation of the whole world will be given the opportunity for salvation.

[161] See footnote ***18***
[162] See the discussion of ***mish^{e}patim*** under **Isaiah chapter 26** in section ***God's Perspective***
[163] See footnote ***119***
[164] For a discussion of the work of Elijah the prophet and further discussion of this prophecy, see the paper "**The Work of Elijah**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

2.6 Isaiah

With the **Prophet Isaiah** we have a large amount information at our disposal. He was contemporary with the **Prophet Micah**, and his early career overlapped the later career of the **Prophet Hosea**. The historical times of Isaiah are well documented in the books of Kings and Chronicles as well as external sources. The **Book of Isaiah** itself contains significant material about Isaiah, his life, and his times.[165] **Isaiah was active during the reigns of four kings of Israel**:

> The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz,
> which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem
> in the days of **Uzziah**, **Jotham**, **Ahaz**, and **Hezekiah**, kings of Judah.
> (Isaiah 1:1 ESV)

Isaiah likely began his career as a prophet in the last years of Uzziah, say about 745BC. His prophecies are NOT individually dated, but there are **many chronological notices** throughout the Book of Isaiah. Much of the material in the book is grouped somewhat chronologically. Over the first 35 chapters, **Assyria** is the major player on the world scene, but **Egypt**, as a wannabe, is also constantly interfering with Israel. **Chapters 36-39** are very important in the structure of the Book of Isaiah, and in God's revelation of the working out of his Plan. Chapters 36-39 are **a harbinger of the end of the Assyrian Period** of world history and the transition to the period of successive world empires.[166]

The **destruction of the Assyrian army under Sennacherib** before Jerusalem in about 688BC was the beginning of the end for the Assyrian Empire. The actual end would NOT come until 609BC, but in God's eyes it was fait-accompli. Chapters 36-39 describe this destruction and introduce **Babylon as the first of the successive world empires**. **Chapters 40-66** of the Book of Isaiah go on from there. Assyria is out of the picture. Babylon is assumed throughout. There is even a glimpse of the second world empire in the prophecies of Cyrus.[167] The details of the successive empires would later be revealed to Daniel.[168]

2.6.1 The Assyrian Period

The first five chapters of the Book of Isaiah comprise a summary of Isaiah's preaching. The main focus in these chapters is the sins of Israel and the need for punishment, but **the agency of the nations is NOT ignored**. The material is undated but there are tantalizing **historical allusions**, for example:

> Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire;
> in your very presence **foreigners devour your land**;
> it is desolate, as **overthrown by foreigners**.
>
> And the **daughter of Zion** is left like a booth in a vineyard,
> like a lodge in a cucumber field, like **a besieged city**.
> (Isaiah 1:7-8 ESV)

This is almost certainly an allusion to **Sennacherib's first attack in 701BC**:

> In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah,
> **Sennacherib** king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.
> And **Hezekiah** king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying,
> > "I have done wrong; withdraw from me.
> > **Whatever you impose on me I will bear**."
>
> And the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah
> **three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold**.
> (2 Kings 18:13-14 ESV)
>
> But as for **Hezekiah the Jew** who did not bow in submission to my yoke,
> forty-six of his strong walled towns and innumerable smaller villages in their neighbourhood,
> **I besieged and conquered** …
> I made to come out from them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female …
> **He himself I shut up like a caged bird within Jerusalem**, his royal city. …
> As for Hezekiah, the awful splendour of my lordship overwhelmed him …
> together with **30 talents of gold**, **300 talents of silver**, …

[165] See the chronological chart "**Isaiah - Life and Times**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts
[166] See the chronological chart "**Summary of History**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts
[167] See section ***Babylon & Persia***
[168] See section ***2.12 Daniel***

as well as his daughters, **concubines**, male and female musicians he sent to me later in Nineveh.
(**DOTT** page 67, inscription of Sennacherib from Taylor Prism)

Isaiah goes onto repeat the **seminal scripture about the World tomorrow**,[169] emphasizing the universal nature of the Plan of God:

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 shall be lifted up above the hills;
and **all the nations shall flow to it**, and **many peoples 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**][170], [even][171] **the word of [YHWH]** from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations, and shall **decide disputes for many peoples**;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.
(Isaiah 2:2-4 ESV)

Citing the influence of foreign nations on Israel, Isaiah goes on to emphasize **the universal nature of the Day of YHWH**:

For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob,
because they are full of **things from the east** and of fortune-tellers like **the Philistines**,
and they strike hands with **the children of foreigners**.
(Isaiah 2:6 ESV)

So **man is humbled**, and each one is brought low—do not forgive them!
Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of [YHWH],
and from the splendor of his majesty.
The **haughty looks of man** shall be brought low,
and the **lofty pride of men** shall be humbled,
and [YHWH] alone will be exalted **in that day**.
For **[YHWH] of hosts has a day** against all that is proud and lofty,
against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;
And the idols shall utterly pass away.
And **people** shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground,
from before **the terror of [YHWH]**, and from the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to terrify the earth.
(Isaiah 2:9-12, 18-19 ESV)

After laying out the sins of Israel in detail, Isaiah reports **God's planned punishment of Israel** – **destruction by foreign nations**, which would be Assyria and Babylon:

He will raise a signal for **nations far away**,
and whistle for them **from the ends of the earth**;
and behold, quickly, speedily they come!
None is weary, none stumbles, none slumbers or sleeps,
not a waistband is loose, not a sandal strap broken;
their arrows are sharp, all their bows bent,
their horses' hoofs seem like flint, and their wheels like the whirlwind.
Their roaring is like a lion, like young lions they roar;
they growl and seize their prey; they carry it off, and none can rescue.
They will growl over it on that day, like the growling of the sea.
And if one looks to the land, behold, darkness and distress;
and the light is darkened by its clouds.
(Isaiah 5:26-30 ESV)

[169] See section ***2.2.3 Micah***
[170] See footnote ***18***
[171] See footnote ***17***

Chapter 6 contains an account of **Isaiah's commissioning**. It is dated to the year Uzziah died, 740/739BC. It is likely that Isaiah was already active when this occurred. Isaiah would have grown up during the "Golden Age" under Uzziah – he clearly had an affinity for Uzziah:

> Now **the rest of the acts of Uzziah**, from first to last,
> **Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz wrote**.
> (2 Chronicles 26:22 ESV)

The scene is the **Throne Room of God in eternity**. The focus of Isaiah's commission is the Nation of Israel, but **the universal nature of the dominion of YHWH is also emphasized**:

> In the year that King Uzziah died **I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne**, high and lifted up;
> and the train of his robe filled **the temple**.
> Above him stood the seraphim.
> Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
>
> And one called to another and said:
>
> > "Holy, holy, holy is [YHWH] of hosts;
> > **the whole earth is full of his glory**!"
>
> And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called,
> and the house was filled with smoke.
>
> And I said:
>
> > "Woe is me!
> > For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips,
> > and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
> > for **my eyes have seen the King {of kings}**,[172] [YHWH] of hosts!"
>
> (Isaiah 6:1-5 ESV)

Chapters 7-12 contain "The Immanuel Cycle". This is discussed in detail in "***Excursus 1 – The Immanuel Cycle***" in the paper "**To Be a King**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. The focus of these chapters is the Messiah. **Chapter 7** recounts the attack of Aram and North Israel on Ahaz of South Israel and his subsequent appeal to Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria. The Assyrian attack on North Israel during 735-732BC is discussed in **Chapters 7 and 8**. **Chapters 9 and 11**[173] are about the Messiah.

In **chapter 10**, **God addresses Assyria as his unknowing agent**:

> **Woe to Assyria**, **the rod of my anger**; the staff in their hands is my fury!
>
> Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him,
> to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
>
> But **he does not so intend**, and **his heart does not so think**;
> but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few;
>
> When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem,
> **he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria**
> and the boastful look in his eyes.
> For he says:
>
> > "**By the strength of my hand** I have done it, and by my wisdom, for **I have understanding**;
> > I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures;
> > like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones. …"
>
> **Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it**, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?
> As if a rod should wield him who lifts it, or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood!
> (Isaiah 10:5-7, 12-13, 15 ESV)

In the working out of the Plan of God, **the nations of the world are like chess pieces to God**. God manipulates them as necessary to accomplish his purpose. The mistake of the rulers of the nations is manifest in the King of Assyria – his **power and success made him arrogant**. He did NOT recognize or acknowledge God.

[172] See 1 Timothy 6:15, Revelation 17:14, 19:16

[173] Isaiah 11:14 contains an allusion to Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon; see the discussion in ***Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence***.

The Immanuel Cycle ends in **chapter 12** with "**The Song of the Returness**". The song expresses the joy and gratitude of those called to the New Israel; but, most importantly, the returness recognize the **purpose of their calling**, to **bring the Gospel to all humanity**:

> And you will say in that day:
> "Give thanks to [YHWH], call upon his name,
> **make known his deeds among the peoples**, **proclaim that his name is exalted**.
> Sing praises to [YHWH], for he has done gloriously;
> **let this be made known in all the earth**. …"
> (Isaiah 12:4-5 ESV)

In his prophecies during the Assyrian period, **Isaiah clearly reports the universal nature of the Plan of God**. Isaiah is clear and specific that the focus of the Day of YAHWH is all the nations of the world and that the purpose of New Israel is to bring the Gospel to all the nations of the world.

2.6.2 Prophecies Concerning the Nations

The Book of Isaiah sets the pattern for the Major Prophets by including a collection of prophecies specifically concerning the nations. **Chapters 13 through 23** contain the prophecies concerning the various nations around Israel. **Chapters 24 through 29** take a universal perspective; then, **chapters 30 and 31** deal with Egypt; and finally, **chapters 32 through 35** return to a universal perspective.

Babylon & the King of Babylon

Chapter 13 explicitly states that it concerns **Babylon**; **specifically its destruction**, and the role the **Medes** in the destruction:

> **The oracle concerning Babylon** which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.
>
> On a bare hill raise a signal; cry aloud to them;
> wave the hand for them to enter the gates of the nobles.
> **I myself have commanded my consecrated ones**,
> and have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger, my proudly exulting ones.
>
> Behold, **I am stirring up the Medes against them**,
> who have no regard for silver and do not delight in gold.
>
> Their bows will slaughter the young men;
> they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children.
>
> And **Babylon**, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans,
> **will be like Sodom and Gomorrah** when God overthrew them.
> It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations;
> no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there.
> (Isaiah 13:1-3, 17-20 ESV see also 14:22-23)

The fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the destruction of ancient Babylon is complicated. It is discussed in section ***2.4.2 Fulfilled Prophecy*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. However, **chapter 13** also takes **ancient Babylon as a type of end-time "Babylon"** (see section ***3.3 Babylon the Great***) and looks to its destruction on the Day of YHWH:

> Wail, for **the day of [YHWH] is near**; as **destruction from the Almighty** it will come!
>
> Therefore all hands will be feeble, and **every human heart will melt**.
> They will be dismayed: pangs and agony will seize them;
> they will be in anguish like a woman in labor.
> They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame.
>
> Behold, **the day of [YHWH] comes**, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger,
> **to make the [earth] (´eretz)**[174] **a desolation** and **to destroy its sinners** from it.
> (Isaiah 13:6-9 ESV)

[174] See footnote ***119***

Chapter 14 continues the **end-time perspective** of "Babylon" for which ancient Babylon was a "type". Verses 1 and 2 look to the establishment of the New Israel. Then the **persons called to the New Israel will taunt "the king of Babylon"**:

> When [YHWH] has given you rest from your pain and turmoil
> and the hard service with which you were made to serve,
> **you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon**:
>
> > "How **the oppressor has ceased**, the insolent fury ceased!
> > [YHWH] has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers,
> > that struck the peoples in wrath with unceasing blows,
> > that ruled the nations in anger with unrelenting persecution.
> >
> > **The whole earth is at rest and quiet**; they break forth into singing. …"
>
> (Isaiah 14:3-7 ESV)

In an end-time context, the "**king of Babylon**" is the political leader identified as "**the beast**" in the Book of Revelation.[175] This individual is killed at the Second Advent.[176] **This individual is clearly a proxy of Satan the Devil**. **Chapter 14** of the Book of Isaiah goes on to use the "**king of Babylon**" as a "**type**" of **Satan the Devil**:

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

It is beyond the scope of this paper to engage in further discussion of the role of Satan the Devil. For further discussion see section ***1. The Foundation of the World*** and section ***2. The Plan of God*** in the paper "**The Human Condition**"; see also the paper "**Analysis of the Book of Job**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

In Isaiah **chapter 14**, the antitype merges back into the type starting in verse 15. The "king of Babylon" is killed, and Satan is banished to the "bottomless pit":[177]

> But **you are brought down to [death] (sh^{e}ʹol)**,[178] **to the far reaches of the pit**.
> Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you:
>
> > 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms,
> > who **made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities**,
> > who did not let his prisoners go home?'
>
> (Isaiah 14:15-17 ESV)

Assyria, Egypt, & Other Nations

Verse 24 of chapter 14 starts a section of specific prophecies concerning various nation. First, the destruction Sennacherib's army is prophesized, "**I will break the Assyrian**":

> [YHWH] of hosts has sworn:
>
> > "**As I have planned**, **so shall it be**,
> > and **as I have purposed**, **so shall it stand**,
> > that **I will break the Assyrian** in my land, and on my mountains trample him underfoot;
> > and his yoke shall depart from them, and his burden from their shoulder."
>
> This is the purpose that is purposed concerning **the whole earth**,
> and this is the hand that is stretched out over **all the nations**.
>
> For [YHWH] of hosts has purposed, and **who will annul it**?
> His hand is stretched out, and **who will turn it back**?
> (Isaiah 14:24-27 ESV)

God emphasizes the pivotal nature of this event by tying it to the **Plan of God**, "**as I have planned**", "**as I have purposed**". The **Plan of God** encompasses "**the whole earth**", "**all the nations**". The Plan of

[175] See Revelation 13:1-8, 17:8-14
[176] See Revelation 19:19-20
[177] See Revelation 20:2-3
[178] See footnote ***46***

God is inexorable, "**who will annul it**", "**who will turn it back**". Next, God goes on to prophesize about some neighbours of Israel, **Philistia**, **Moab**, and **Aram**. The first one is dated to 715BC, "**the year that King Ahaz died**":

> In **the year that King Ahaz died** came this oracle:
>
> Rejoice not, O **Philistia**, all of you, that **the rod that struck you** is broken,
> for from the serpent's root will come forth **an adder**,
> and its fruit will be a flying **fiery serpent**.
>
> And **the firstborn of the poor** will graze, and the needy lie down in safety;
> but I will kill your root with famine, and your remnant it will slay.
>
> Wail, O gate; cry out, O city; **melt in fear, O Philistia**, all of you!
> For smoke comes out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks.
>
> What will one answer the **messengers of the nation**?
> "**[YHWH] has founded Zion**, and in her **the afflicted** of **his people** find refuge."
> (Isaiah 14:28-32 ESV)

In 715BC, Sargon king of Assyria was occupied with rebellions in the east. Interpreting this as an opportunity to gain freedom, "**the rod that struck you**", **Philistia planned rebellion, and tried to draw into it the other nations**, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and even Israel.[179] Assyria would be back, "**an adder** // **fiery serpent**", "**melt in fear, O Philistia**". In response to the "**messengers of the nation**", from Philistia, the prophecy contrasts ultimate hope for God's people, "**YHWH has founded Zion**", and King Hezekiah did NOT commit to the rebellion.

Chapters 15 and 16 consider Moab. The prophecy is undated, but its inclusion in this section would suggest the same general period as the Philistia prophecy. The prophecy appears to have originally been given earlier but it was later tied to this specific time:

> This is the word that [YHWH] spoke concerning Moab **in the past**.
> **But now** [YHWH] has spoken, saying,
> "**In three years**, like the years of a hired worker,
> **the glory of Moab will be brought into contempt**,
> in spite of all his great multitude, and those who remain will be very few and feeble."
> (Isaiah 16:13–14 ESV)

The prophecy is very general in predicting a destruction of Moab. The cities of Moab are listed as destroyed and the **survivors are described fleeing to the south**:

> **An oracle concerning Moab**.
>
> Because **Ar of Moab is laid waste** in a night, Moab is undone;
> because **Kir of Moab is laid waste** in a night, Moab is undone.
>
> My heart cries out for Moab;
> **her fugitives flee to Zoar**, to Eglath-shelishiyah.
> For at the ascent of Luhith they go up weeping;
> on the road to Horonaim they raise a cry of destruction;
> Therefore **the abundance they have gained** and what they have laid up
> **they carry** away over the Brook of the Willows.[180]
> (Isaiah 15:1, 5, 7 ESV)

The objective of the flight of the people of Moab would be to South Israel. Under David, Moab had been made a vassal of Israel, but Moab had gained freedom over the years. Now **the Moabites are enjoined to provide the "tribute"** that had been withheld:

> **Send the lamb to the ruler** of the land, from Sela, by way of the desert,
> **to the mount of the daughter of Zion**.
> Like fleeing birds, like a scattered nest,
> so are the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.
> (Isaiah 16:1-2 ESV)

The recipient of the tribute is enjoined to accept the Moabites, but the focus changes to the **ultimate acceptance by the Kingdom of God of all peoples, all nations**, of whom Moab serves is a "type":

> ... let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you;
> be a shelter to them from the destroyer.

[179] See Bright page 281; see also Psalms 60:8 // 108:9

[180] The "Brook Zered" at the south end of the Dead Sea.

When **the oppressor** is no more, and destruction has ceased,
and he who tramples underfoot **has vanished from the [earth] (´eretz)**,[181]
then **a throne will be established in [hesed]**,[182]
and on it will sit **in faithfulness** in the tent[183] of David
one who judges and **seeks justice** and is swift to **do righteousness**.
(Isaiah 16:4-5 ESV)

Chapter 17 contains a very brief prophecy concerning **Aram**. The focus is **the destruction of Aram by Tiglath-pileser in 732BC**, at which time, **North Israel was reduced to a vassal of Assyria**:

An oracle concerning Damascus.

Behold, **Damascus** will cease to be a city and **will become a heap of ruins**.[184]
The cities of Aroer[185] are deserted;
they will be for flocks, which will lie down, and none will make them afraid.

The fortress will disappear from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus;
and the remnant of [Aram] (´aram)[186] will be like the glory of the children of Israel,
declares [YHWH] of hosts.

And in that day **the glory of Jacob will be brought low**, and the fat of his flesh will grow lean.
(Isaiah 17:1-4 ESV)

Chapter 17 then makes **a general observation of human reaction to destruction** – when threatened, people look to God, even when they have ignored God during their lives:

In that day man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will look on the Holy One of Israel.[187]
He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands,
and he will not look on what his own fingers have made,
either the Asherim or the altars of incense.

In that day their strong cities will be like the deserted places of the wooded heights and the hilltops,
which they deserted because of the children of Israel,[188] and **there will be desolation**.
(Isaiah 17:7-9 ESV)

The last verses of chapter 17 are ambiguous. They clearly can be taken as the advance of **Sennacherib's army** in 701 and 688, followed by its destruction in 688. They may also be looking forward to the **Battle of Armageddon**[189] or the **attack of Gog**:[190]

Ah, **the thunder of many peoples**; they thunder like the thundering of the sea!
Ah, **the roar of nations**; they roar like the roaring of mighty waters!
The nations roar like the roaring of many waters,
but **he will rebuke them**, and they will flee far away,
chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind and whirling dust before the storm.

At evening time, behold, terror!
Before morning, **they are no more**!
This is the portion of those who loot us, and the lot of those who plunder us.
(Isaiah 17:12-14 ESV)

Chapter 18 deals with Cush, otherwise known as Nubia, the vast region to the south of Egypt in which rise the various rivers that form the Nile:

(1) Ah, **land of whirring wings** that is beyond the rivers of **Cush**,
(2a) **which sends ambassadors** by the sea, in vessels of papyrus on the waters!

(2b) **Go, you swift messengers**,
to **a nation tall and smooth**, to a people feared near and far,
a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide.

(3) **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!

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[181] See footnote ***119***
[182] See footnote ***48***
[183] The "tent of David" is the "house of David", the Davidic Dynasty, carried in perpetuity by Jesus Christ.
[184] This occurred in 732BC, but the city was soon rebuilt.
[185] This is an unidentified toponym; see Oswalt (**IS1**) footnote 3 page 348.
[186] See footnote ***61***
[187] This is a direct allusion to the Day of YHWH, see Revelation 1:7
[188] His is an allusion to the failure of Ancient Israel (see verse 10) which rendered the Day of YHWH inevitable.
[189] See footnote ***38***
[190] See Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39

(4) For thus [YHWH] said to me:
"**I will quietly look from my dwelling** like clear heat in sunshine,
like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
(5) For before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and **the flower becomes a ripening grape**,
he cuts off the shoots with pruning hooks, and the spreading branches he lops off and clears away.
(6) They shall **all of them** be **left to the birds of prey** of the mountains and to the **beasts of the earth**.
And the birds of prey will summer on them, and all the beasts of the earth will winter on them.
(7) At that time **tribute will be brought to [YHWH] of hosts**
from **a people tall and smooth**, from a people feared near and far,
a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide,
to Mount Zion, the place of the name of [YHWH] of hosts.
(Isaiah 18:1-7 ESV)

Analysis of the prophecy concerning Cush:

- Verse 1: "**whirring wings**" may be an allusion to insects, or it may be a metaphor for the **sails of boats** on the Nile. The 25th Dynasty was from Cush. By 716BC Piankhi had swept through all Egypt to the Delta and established the 25th Dynasty. The next king, Shabaqo pursued an aggressive policy of fomenting rebellion against Assyria on the part of the minor nations, Phoenicia, Philistia, Moab, Amon, and Israel.[191]
- Verse 2a: the "**ambassadors**" are from Shabaqo to organize rebellion.
- Verse 2b: the prophecy changes perspective – "**you swift messengers**" are being sent to Cush, "**a nation tall and smooth**"; who are these "**swift messengers**"? The identity of the "**swift messengers**" is made clear in verse 7.
- Verse 3: the perspective of the prophecy becomes clear – God is now addressing "**all you inhabitants of the world**", all humanity, and looks to the **Second Advent**, "**a trumpet is blown**":

  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.
  (1 Thessalonians 4:16 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)

- Verse 4: YHWH, Jesus Christ, the King of kings, waiting to return, is in eternity waiting patiently, "**I will quietly look from my dwelling**", until God the Father makes the decision that the Second Advent is on:

  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)

  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)

- Verses 5-6: these verses can be considered "dual" or "general". They apply to the historic situation in that **when God is ready Assyria will be terminated**. But also, they apply to the end-time, **when God is ready, the Parousia will occur**:

  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)

  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."
  (Revelation 19:17-18 ESV)

[191] For a summary of the history of this period, see Bright pages 280-282, 284-286.

- Verse 7: this verse clinches the identity of the "**swift messengers**" in verse 2. This verse looks to the World Tomorrow when "**tribute will be brought to YHWH of hosts**".[192] The identity of the tribute bearers is the people of Cush, "**a nation tall and smooth**", "**a people tall and smooth**". The "**swift messengers**" are **those who carry the Gospel to the people of Cush**.

Chapter 19 verses 1-15 concern Egypt. The oracle may have been given earlier,[193] but Isaiah includes it here to apply it to the same historical situation as chapter 18. **God passes judgement on Egypt by striking the Nile** – the source of all abundance in Egypt:

> **An oracle concerning Egypt**.
>
> Behold, **[YHWH] is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt**;
> and the **idols of Egypt will tremble** at his presence,
> and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.
> and the spirit of the Egyptians within them will be emptied out,
> and **I will confound their counsel**;
>
> And the waters of the sea will be dried up,
> and **the river will be dry and parched**, and its canals will become foul,
> and the branches of **Egypt's Nile will diminish** and dry up, reeds and rushes will rot away.
> (Isaiah 19:1, 3a, 5-6 ESV)

In the current context, **God particularly castigates the counselors of Egypt**, who claim to be wise but are foolish for attempting to entice Israel into rebellion against Assyria:

> The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish; the **wisest counselors of Pharaoh give stupid counsel**.
>
> How can you say to Pharaoh,
> "I am a son of the wise, a son of ancient kings"?
>
> Where then are your wise men?
> Let them tell you that they might know what **[YHWH] of hosts has purposed against Egypt**.
> And **there will be nothing for Egypt** that head or tail, palm branch or reed,[194] may do.
> (Isaiah 19:11-12, 15 ESV)

The immediate fate of Egypt was destruction, "**there will be nothing for Egypt**", but **Chapter 19 verses 16-25 concern** what "**YHWH of hosts has purposed**", **in the future**. At the time of Isaiah, the Nation of Israel was in the last stages of being punished; the Nation of Assyria had been designated for destruction; the Nation of Egypt had been relegated to obscurity. In contrast, God uses these three nations to exemplify the World Tomorrow – **God's purpose for all nations of the world**:

> In that day there will be five **cities in the land of Egypt**
> that speak the language of Canaan and **swear allegiance to [YHWH] of hosts**.
>
> In that day there will be an altar to [YHWH] in the midst of the land of Egypt,
> and a pillar to [YHWH] at its border.
> It will be a sign and a witness to [YHWH] of hosts in the land of Egypt.
>
> When they cry to [YHWH] because of oppressors,
> he will send them a savior and defender, and deliver them.
>
> And **[YHWH] will make himself known to the Egyptians**,
> and the Egyptians will know [YHWH] in that day and worship with sacrifice and offering,
> and they will **make vows** to [YHWH] and **perform them**.
> And [YHWH] will strike Egypt, **striking and healing**,[195] and **they will return to [YHWH]**,
> and he will listen to their pleas for mercy and heal them.
>
> In that day there will be **a highway from Egypt to Assyria**,
> and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria,
> and **the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians**.
>
> In that day **Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria**, a blessing in the midst of the earth,
> whom [YHWH] of hosts has blessed, saying,
> "**Blessed be Egypt my people**, and **Assyria the work of my hands**, and **Israel my inheritance**."
> (Isaiah 19:18a, 19-25 ESV)

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[192] See Haggai 2:7, Zechariah 14:14

[193] Verse 2 describes the internecine fighting that occurred under the rival Dynasties 22, 23, and 24, before Piankhi established the 25th Dynasty.

[194] This metaphor is explained by Isaiah 9:14-15: "So [YHWH] cut off from Israel **head and tail**, **palm branch and reed** in one day—the elder and honored man is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail;" (ESV)

[195] See ***Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence***

Chapter 20 contains the final results of Egypt's fomenting of rebellion against Assyria. In 714BC, with promises of Egyptian support, Ashdod took the lead and rebelled against Assyria. In 711BC, Assyria crushed the rebellion. **God told Egypt and Cush they would similarly be crushed**:[196]

> In the year that the commander in chief, who was sent by Sargon the king of Assyria,
> came to **Ashdod** and fought against it and captured it …
>
> … **so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptian captives and the Cushite exiles** …
> Then they shall be dismayed and ashamed because of Cush their hope and of Egypt their boast.
> (Isaiah 20:1, 4a, 5 ESV)

World City: Babylon & Tyre

Chapter 21 verses 1-10 report a vision which Isaiah saw:

> **The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea**.
>
> As whirlwinds in the Negeb sweep on,
> **it comes from the wilderness**, from a terrible land.
>
> **A stern vision is told to me**;
> the traitor betrays, and the destroyer destroys.
> Go up, O **Elam**; lay siege, O **Media**;
> **all the sighing she has caused I bring to an end**.
> (Isaiah 21:1-2 ESV)

The phrase "**wilderness of the sea**" is used nowhere else in the Bible. The southern part of Babylonia at the head of the Persian Gulf was known as "**The Sealand**". This is the original territory of the **Chaldean tribes** from which **Nabopolassar** derived. **Isaah's is overtaken by a vision** from "**the wilderness**". He has already prophesized the **destruction of Babylon at the hand of the "Medes"**.[197] In the current vision, Isaiah is told there will be an end to "world city",[198] "**all the sighing she has caused I bring to an end**". Then Isaiah sees **the world preparing for war**; he is told to set a "**watchman**" to look for a particular sign. When the "watchman" sees the sign, it will mean the end of "world city":

> They prepare the table, they spread the rugs, they eat, they drink.
> Arise, O princes; **oil the shield**![199]
>
> For thus the Lord said to me:
>
> > "Go, **set a watchman**; let him announce what he sees.
> > **When he sees** riders, horsemen in pairs, riders on donkeys, riders on camels,
> > let him listen diligently, very diligently."
>
> Then **he who saw cried out**:[200]
>
> > "**Upon a watchtower I stand**, O Lord, continually by day,
> > and at my post I am stationed whole nights.
> > And behold, **here come riders**, **horsemen in pairs**!"
>
> And he answered,
>
> > "**Fallen**, **fallen is Babylon**;
> > and all the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground."
> (Isaiah 21:5-9 ESV)
>
> 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)

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[196] It would be some 40 years before this prophecy was fulfilled. Between 671BC and 663BC Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal conquered Egypt; see Bright page 311.

[197] See Isaiah 13:17 and the discussion in section ***Babylon & the King of Babylon***.

[198] See footnote ***12***

[199] Prepare for battle!

[200] The role of "the watchman" has now passed to the Newt Testament Church, the end-time remnant of True Worshippers preparing for the Second Advent.

Isaiah's vision is for end-time True Worshippers of God, the New Testament Church, without the Book of Revelation, it could NOT be understood:[201]

> O **my threshed and winnowed one**,
> what I have heard from [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel, **I announce to you**.
> (Isaiah 21:10 ESV)

Next in **chapter 21**, is an obscure oracle concerning **Edom**:

> **The oracle concerning Dumah**.[202]
>
> **One is calling to me from Seir**,
>
> "**Watchman**, what time of the night?
> Watchman, what time of the night?"
>
> **The watchman says**:
>
> "**Morning comes**, and **also the night**.
> If you will inquire, inquire; **come back again**."
> (Isaiah 21:11-12 ESV)

"**One is calling**" to the "**watchman**". This ties the oracle back to the previous oracle, in particular verses 6 and 10:

> Go, **set a watchman**; let him announce what he sees.
>
> O **my threshed and winnowed one** …

The "**one**" calling from Edom is seeking to understand the message of the "**watchman**". The "**one**" inquires, "**what is the time of the night**?" The "**one**" seeks to know when the vision of the watchman will become reality – **when will the Parousia occur**? The "watchman" alludes back to chapter 18 verse 4, "**I will quietly look from my dwelling**": "**morning comes, and also the night**" – the day and the hour are known only to God the Father, it is his decision.[203] Everyone else must be patient and wait. However, if the "**one**" is sincere, "**if you will inquire**", "inquire" sincerely, and "**come back (shuv)**[204] **again**", **repent**. Taking "**Edom**" as symbolic of the nations of the world, "**world city**", God is saying to the people of the world that **it is futile to seek special knowledge**, but **the path to God starts with "repentance"**. In the World Tomorrow all will be led to the path of repentance.

The next oracle in **chapter 21** is even more obscure:

> **The oracle concerning Arabia**.
>
> In the thickets in Arabia you will lodge, **O caravans** of Dedanites.
>
> To the thirsty bring water;
> **meet the fugitive** with bread, O inhabitants of the land of Tema.
>
> **For they have fled from the swords**, from the drawn sword,
> from the bent bow, and from the press of battle.
>
> For thus the Lord said to me,
>
> "**Within a year**, according to the years of a hired worker,
> all the glory of Kedar will come to an end.
> And the remainder of the archers of the mighty men of the sons of Kedar will be few,
> **for [YHWH], the God of Israel, has spoken**."
> (Isaiah 21:13-17 ESV)

This oracle seems to focus on the contemporary disruption of trade carried on by the "**caravans**" which crossed the Arabian desert. There may be an allusion to the plight of Moab: "**meet the fugitive**", may allude to Isaiah 15:5 and 16:2-4. The problem is ongoing war, "**for they have fled from the swords**".[205] The chronological marker, "**within a year**", also ties this oracle to the previous ones. The significant statement is by YHWH that all this is happening under his control, "**for YHWH, the God of Israel, has spoken**".

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[201] The "horsemen" Isaiah saw are possibly a harbinger of the "four horsemen"; see Revelation 6:1-8.

[202] The noun דּוּמָה -dumah, means "silence"; see Holladay page 69, Psalms 94:17, 115:17. The use of dumah is likely a play on words with the sound of אֱדוֹם - ´edom; "Dumah" is parallel to "Seir", Edom.

[203] See Matthew 24:36, Acts 1:7

[204] The verb שׁוּב - shuv, includes in its range of meaning, "repent"; see Isaiah 1:27, Jeremiah 5:3, 34:15.

[205] The Assyrians apparently carried their late 8th Century conquests into Arabia; see Young (**IS2**) page 80, **KD7** pages 252-253.

Chapter 22 deals mostly with Israel. It seems to relate to Sennacherib's first invasion in 701BC, this is supported by the placement of this oracle at this point in the Book of Isaiah.[206] There is one reference to the nations:

> And **Elam** bore the quiver with chariots and horsemen,
> and **Kir** uncovered the shield.
> (Isaiah 22:6 ESV)

"**Elam**" would become an integral part of the **Persian Empire**. "**Kir**" was the place of origin of **Aram** and the place of their exile:

> "Are you not like the Cushites to me, O people of Israel?" declares [YHWH].
> "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,
> and the Philistines from Caphtor and **the [Arameans] (ʿaram)**[207] **from Kir**?
> (Amos 9:7 ESV)

> "… I will break the gate-bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven,
> and him who holds the scepter from Beth-eden;
> and **the people of [Aram] (ʿaram) shall go into exile to Kir**." says [YHWH].
> (Amos 1:5 ESV)

> And the king of Assyria listened to him.
> The king of Assyria marched up against **Damascus** and took it,
> **carrying its people captive to Kir**, and he killed Rezin.
> (2 Kings 16:9 ESV)

Chapter 23 considers another representative of "world city", **Tyre**. Both **Joel** and **Amos** had brief oracles concerning Tyre, but Isaiah's oracle is the first major oracle concerning Tyre. **Ezekiel** would later have a significant oracle concerning Tyre. The merchant empire of Tyre in the ancient world was every bit as significant as the as the military empires of Assyria and Babylon. **In the late 8th Century, Tyre was at the height of her power**.[208] As an exponent of "world city", God acknowledges her status and passes judgement on Tyre:

> **The oracle concerning Tyre**.
>
> Wail, O ships of Tarshish, for **Tyre is laid waste**,[209] without house or harbor!
> From the land of [Kittim][210] it is revealed to them.
>
> And on many waters your revenue was the grain of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile;
> **you [are]**[211] **the merchant of the nations**.
>
> Is this your exultant city whose origin is from days of old,
> whose feet carried her to **settle far away**?
>
> **Who has purposed this against Tyre**, **the bestower of crowns**,
> whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth?
>
> **[YHWH] of hosts has purposed it**,
> to **defile the pompous pride** of all glory, to **dishonor all the honored of the earth**.
> He has stretched out his hand over the sea; he has shaken the kingdoms;
> [YHWH] has given command concerning Canaan to destroy its strongholds.
> And he said:
>
> > "**You will no more exult**, O oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon;[212]
> > arise, cross over to [Kittim], even there you will have no rest."
>
> (Isaiah 23:1, 3, 7-9, 11-12 ESV)

The objective of the prophecy is to establish the supremacy of YHWH over Tyre, "world city", "**YHWH of hosts has purposed it**". Tyre was arrogant, "**pompous pride**", based on her commercial power, "**merchant of the nations**", "**bestower of crowns**". God's purpose is to bring down "world city", "**dishonor all the honored of the earth**", "**you will no more exult**".

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[206] The events relate to Hezekiah's reform; for a summary, see the chronological chart "**The Reform of Hezekiah**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts.

[207] See footnote ***61***

[208] See article "**Tyre**" in **IDB** volume 4 pages 721-723; see also chapter "**1. Feeding the Beast: The Phoenicians and the Discovery of the West**" in Miles pages 24-57

[209] This is a "prophetic perfect".

[210] The proper noun כִּתִּים - kittim, identifies a son of Javan (Genesis 10:4-5). Some take "Kittim" to mean "Cyprus", but more generally the coastal peoples of the Aegean Sea are implied; see Young (**IS2**) page 123.

[211] This is an "imperfect" verb.

[212] Sidon was anciently the "mother" city of Tyre.

Isaiah returns to his own time with a comment on Babylon, alluding to the sack of Babylon by Sennacherib in 689BC:[213]

> Behold **the land of the Chaldeans**!
> This is the people that was not; **Assyria** destined it for wild beasts.
> They **erected their siege towers**, they stripped her palaces bare, they made her a ruin.
> (Isaiah 23:13 ESV)

Returning to Tyre, Isaiah recounts her future:

> Wail, O ships of Tarshish, for **your stronghold is laid waste**.
>
> In that day **Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years**,[214] like the days of one king.
> At the end of seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the prostitute:
> > "Take a harp; go about the city, O forgotten prostitute!
> > Make sweet melody; sing many songs, that you may be remembered."
>
> At the end of seventy years, **[YHWH] will visit Tyre**,
> and **she will return to her wages**
> and will prostitute herself with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth.
>
> **Her merchandise and her wages will be holy to [YHWH]**.
> It will not be stored or hoarded,
> but her merchandise will supply abundant food and fine clothing for **those who dwell before [YHWH]**.
> (Isaiah 23:14-18 ESV)

Like Babylon, Tyre will suffer destruction, "**your stronghold is laid waste**", "**Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years**", but Tyre will recover, "**YHWH will visit Tyre**", "**she will return to her wages**". In the end, the wealth of all the world will be put to use by God, "**her merchandise and her wages will be holy to YHWH**", to provide for all peoples in the World Tomorrow, "**those who dwell before YHWH**".

God's Perspective

Chapters 24 through 35 of the Book of Isaiah deal less with individual nations and more with **God's perspective on all humanity**: **the working out of the Plan of God**. It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with all these chapters in detail. **Only a few select highlights can be considered**. The selection is based on the thesis of this paper: God is in control of history; all nations, all peoples, are his concern; God will see his Plan worked out, and **every knee will bow to him**.[215]

Chapter 24 looks to the time of the Second Advent:

> The earth **mourns and withers**; the world **languishes** and withers;
> the highest **people** of the earth languish.
> **The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants**;
> for they have transgressed [toroth],[216] violated the statutes,
> **broken the everlasting covenant**.
> Therefore **a curse devours the earth**, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
> (Isaiah 24:4-6a ESV)

The problem is spiritual: it is the people of the earth who "**mourn**" and "**languish**". "**The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants**" because the teaching of God has been ignored. Even the most basic requirement of God placed on human society has been violated, "**broken the everlasting covenant**". This is an allusion to the "**Covenant of Justness**" imposed on humanity at the time of Noah[217] – there is no justice in human society today. The curse that "**devours the earth**" is the automatic outpouring of the curses in Deuteronomy chapter 28 when the Ten Commandments are violated. This is the state of the world today. As a result of this **the Day of YHWH will soon occur**. No social or economic class will be spared – all human beings are equally guilty:

> Behold, **[YHWH] will empty the earth and make it desolate**,
> and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.

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[213] See Saggs page 130

[214] "The seventy years are difficult to identify historically. Some take it as a symbolic expression for a "completed" period of diminished influence; some understand it as the same 70 years of Babylonian reign as represented in Jer. 25:11 ; and some understand it as the period of Assyrian domination, from Sennacherib's campaign in 701 B.C. to the recovery of the strength of Tyre around 630." (ESV comment)

[215] See Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10

[216] Plural of *torah*

[217] See section ***2. The Covenant of Justness*** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

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 shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered;
for [YHWH] has spoken this word.
(Isaiah 24:1-3 ESV)

The visionary nature of this revelation is brought out in verses 14-16. **Isaiah hears joyful singing** in the distance, and he recognizes the tenor of the song:[218]

They lift up their voices, **they sing for joy**;
over the majesty of [YHWH] they shout from the **west**.
Therefore in the **east** give glory to [YHWH];
in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to the name of [YHWH], the God of Israel.
From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One.
(Isaiah 24:14-16a ESV)

This is not just the returnees to the New Israel, this is **the joyous sound of people over the whole world** as the Gospel spreads and people come to understand the truth of God. This causes Isaiah to break into **a heartfelt prayer** of thanks in **chapter 25**:

[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.
For you have made **the city a heap**, the fortified city a ruin;
the foreigners' palace is a city no more; **it will never be rebuilt**.
Therefore **strong peoples will glorify you**; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
(Isaiah 25:1-3 ESV)

God has accomplished a major milestone, "**you have done wonderful things**". The Plan of God has been in place from the foundation of the world, "**plans formed of old**". Now "world city"[219] is destroyed, "**the city a heap**", "**it will never be rebuilt**", and the people of the whole world will learn the Way of God, "**strong peoples will glorify you**". This revelation leads into **one of the most beautiful prophecies of the World Tomorrow**:

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)

This is a picture of the Kingdom of God, "**on this mountain**".[220] Metaphorically, physical food is used to represent the teaching of God, "**for all peoples a feast**", "**rich food**". The peoples of the world today, and for all of human history, the peoples have been cut off from God, unable to understand the Bible, "**the covering that is cast over all peoples**", "**the veil that is spread over all nations**". Only through conversion and the agency of the Holy Spirt can any person understand the Bible. The **Apostle Paul** considers this veil:

But **their minds were hardened**.
For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same **veil remains unlifted**,
because **only through Christ is it taken away**.
Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a **veil lies over their hearts**.
But **when one turns to the Lord**, the **veil is removed**.
(2 Corinthians 3:14-16 ESV)

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[218] See Isaiah chapter 12
[219] See footnote ***12***
[220] See Micah 4:1, Isaiah 2:2

At Jesus' death, **the veil in the Temple** was split symbolizing the fulfillment of this prophecy:

> 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, Luke 23:45b-46)

Through the knowledge of God, the truth of the Bible, all people of all nations over the whole world will come to worship the True God, "**this is our God**". The Way of God will bring salvation to all humanity, "**let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation**". Each and every human being will be given the opportunity to become a candidate for the gift of eternal life, and finally the last enemy will be defeated, "**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**.
>
> **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." (citing Isaiah 25:8)
> "O death, where is your victory?
> O death, where is your sting?" (citing Hosea 13:14)
>
> **The sting of death is sin**, and the power of sin is the [nomos].[221]
> (1 Corinthians 15:25-26, 54-56 ESV)

Chapter 26 is a "song", **a Psalm sung by those persons who participate in the First Resurrection**.[222] The heart of the Psalm relates to the **character of God**, and the desire of the singers to take that understanding to the people of the whole earth:

> **The foot tramples it**, the feet of the **poor**, the steps of the **needy**.[223]
>
> The path of the righteous is level; you make level the way of the righteous.
> **In the path of your [mishᵉpatim]**,[224] [YHWH], we wait for you;
> your name and remembrance are the desire of our [being] (nephesh).[225]
> My [being] (nephesh) yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you.
> For **when your [mishᵉpatim] are in the earth**, **the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness**.
> (Isaiah 26:6-9 ESV)

"**The foot tramples it**" is an allusion to the metaphor of violence.[226] The spreading of the Gospel is frequently related to the feet:

> … and, as **shoes for your feet**, having put on **the readiness given by the gospel of peace**.
> (Ephesians 6:15 ESV)
>
> **How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news**,
> who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation,
> who says to Zion,
>
> "**Your God reigns**."
> (Isaiah 52:7 ESV see also Nahum 1:15, Habakkuk 2:2, Romans 10:15)

The most important word in Isaiah 26:8 and 9 is ***mishᵉpatim***. There is no English word to translate ***mishᵉpatim***. It means the **understanding**, **wisdom**, and **discernment** that come from **living by the Way of God**.[227] Those who participate in the First Resurrection will have attained ***mishᵉpatim***, but more importantly, they yearn to teach the people of the world, to bring each and every person on the plant to the state of having ***mishᵉpatim***, "**when your *mishᵉpatim* are in the earth**", "**the inhabitants of the world**

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[221] 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**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

[222] See Isaiah 26:19

[223] See the discussion of "poor" and "needy" in section ***5.2 The Human Condition*** of the paper "**David – A Man After My Own Heart**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

[224] See the following discussion of *mishᵉpatim* …

[225] 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 world 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.

[226] See ***Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence***

[227] For further discussion see section ***1.4.3 Attributes of God's Character*** in the paper "**First Pillar - The Nature of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

learn righteousness". Then the people of every nation will look to their teachers and joyously exclaim "**your God reigns**"!

Chapter 27 opens with a difficult verse:[228]

> In that day [YHWH] with his hard and great and strong sword
> will punish **Leviathan** the fleeing serpent,
> Leviathan the twisting serpent,
> and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.
> (Isaiah 27:1 ESV)

Who or what is Leviathan? The word itself clearly implies an ancient mythological creature. The key to Isaiah's use of the word is the previous verse:

> For behold, [YHWH] is coming out from his place
> **to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity**,
> and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.
> (Isaiah 26:21 ESV)

The "**iniquity**" of "**the inhabitants of the earth**" is bound up in the "**zeitgeist**", the spirt of the age. Leviathan represents the zeitgeist of "world city". The "spirit of the age" of Satan's world will be eradicated and replaced by a "new spirit". The nation of **New Israel** will be planted and nurtured by God, and the growth, **the spreading of the Gospel over the whole world**, will be **like delicious fruit**, a new "zeitgeist":

> In that day,
>
> > "**A pleasant vineyard**, sing of it!
> > I, [YHWH], am its keeper; every moment I water it.
> > Lest anyone punish it, I keep it night and day; …"
>
> In days to come **Jacob** shall take root,
> **Israel** shall blossom and put forth shoots
> and **fill the whole world with fruit**.
> (Isaiah 27:2-3, 6 ESV)

Chapters 30 and 31 relate to the **attacks of Sennacherib** in 701BC and 688BC, and the **interference of Egypt** with Israel. **God expresses his desire for human beings**, but condemns trust in Egypt and promises destruction for Assyria:

> 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] (mishᵉpat)**;[229]
> blessed are all those who wait for him.
> (Isaiah 30:18 ESV)
>
> "Ah, stubborn children," declares [YHWH],
> "**who carry out a plan**, but not mine,
> and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin;
> **who set out to go down to Egypt**, without asking for my direction,
> to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!
>
> Therefore shall **the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame**,
> and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation. …"
> (Isaiah 30:1-3 ESV see also verses 7, 31:1, 3)
>
> And **the Assyrian shall fall by a sword**, **not of man**;
> and a sword, not of man, shall devour him;
> and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be put to forced labor.
> (Isaiah 31:8 ESV see also 30:31)

Chapter 32 describes **conditions in the World Tomorrow**:

> Behold, **a king will reign in righteousness**, and **princes will rule in [justness] (mishᵉpat)**.
> 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.

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[228] For good general discussions of the verse see Young (**IS2**) pages 232-235, Oswalt (**IS1**) pages 490-491

[229] See footnote ***130***

> Then [**justness**] (**mishᵉpat**) 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 32:1-3, 16-18 ESV)

The King of kings "**will reign in righteousness**"; the "kings" "**will rule in justness**" for the benefit of "**my people**" – all people over the whole world. As the Gospel spreads, all people will come to have "**eyes of those who see**" and "**ears of those who hear**" – all people will be called to conversion. Then "**justness**", "**righteousness**", "**peace**", "**quietness**", and "**trust**" will envelope the whole world.

Chapter 33 considers the **temporal aspects of the working out of the Plan of God**:

> Ah, **you destroyer**, who yourself have not been destroyed,
> you traitor, whom none has betrayed!
> When you have ceased to destroy, **you will be destroyed**;
> and when you have finished betraying, they will betray you.
>
> [YHWH], be gracious to us; **we wait for you**.
> Be our arm every morning, our **salvation** in the time of trouble.
> [**YHWH**] is exalted, for he **dwells on high**;
> **he will fill Zion with [justness] (mishᵉpat) and righteousness**,
> and he will be the stability of your times,
> abundance of **salvation**, wisdom, and knowledge;
> the fear of [YHWH] is Zion's treasure.
>
> "**Now I will arise**," says [YHWH],
> "now I will lift myself up; **now I will be exalted**. …"
>
> For [YHWH] is our judge; [YHWH] is our lawgiver;
> **[YHWH] is our king; he will save us**.
> (Isaiah 33:1-2, 5-6, 10, 22 ESV)

Anciently, God used Assyria and Babylon to punish Israel, "**you destroyer**"; they suffered their fate, "**you will be destroyed**". Similarly, the nations of the world have been left to go their own ways, but they will be punished at the end-time. True Worshippers of God can only "**wait for you**". Jesus Christ, the King of kings, "**YHWH is our king**", waits patiently in eternity, "**dwells on high**". He is now teaching True Worshippers, "**he will fill Zion with justness and righteousness**". When God the Father makes the decision, the Parousia will occur, "**now I will arise**"; Jesus Christ, as King of kings, will establish the Kingdom of God, "**I will be exalted**". "**Salvation**" will spread to the whole planet, "**he will save us**".

Chapter 34 echoes chapter 24 with a general call of **destruction on the nations** on the Day of YHWH:

> Draw near, **O nations**, to hear, and give attention, **O peoples**!
> **Let the earth hear**, and all that fills it; **the world**, and all that comes from it.
> For **[YHWH] is enraged** against all the nations, and furious against all their host;
> he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter.
> Their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their corpses shall rise;
> the mountains shall flow with their blood.
> (Isaiah 34:1-3 ESV)

The prophecies recorded by Isaiah concerning the various nations in many instances look to **the specific historical situation in which Isaiah lived**; but also, the historical situation and the ancient nations themselves are used to look to the future. The "future" being end-time events: the **Day of YHWH**, the **Second Advent**, and the establishment of the **New Israel** to bring **the Gospel to all the nations of the world**.

2.6.3 The Period of World Empires

Chapters 36-37 describe **the destruction of the Assyrian army of Sennacherib at the gates of Jerusalem**. This destruction is a **harbinger of the end of the mighty Assyrian Empire** which had been a major player on the world scene since the flood of Noah's time.[230] The end of the Assyrian Empire was a major

[230] For a summary of this view of history, see the chronological chart "**Summary of History**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts

watershed in world history and also a major watershed in the working out of the Plan of God. After the demise of the Assyrian Empire the world would be dominated by **a series of world ruling empires** starting with Babylon and culminating in Imperial Rome.[231] The **final incarnation of the Roman Empire** is identified in the Book of Revelation as the proxy of Satan the Devil which opposes God and attempts to thwart the Plan of God at the time of the Second Advent.

Chapters 38-39 describe God's **healing of King Hezekiah** from a terminal illness, and the arrival of envoys from Babylon supposedly to honour Hezekiah. Isaiah sees through the façade and prophesizes the **destruction of the Southern Kingdom at the hand of Babylon**. This is a harbinger of the Period of World Empires.

Chapters 40-66 then contain **the greatest out-pouring of prophetic insight God has given to humanity**. The main themes of these chapters include: the **Plan of God**, the **Servant of God**, the **Day of YHWH**, the **Second Exodus**, the **New Israel**, the **Kingdom of God**, and the **World Tomorrow**. A high-level outline of these chapter is:[232]

Chapter 40: Introduction
Chapters 41-48: The Plan of God Unfolds
Chapters 49-56:8 The Work of the Servant of God
Chapters 56:9-59: Conditions During the Time of Manasseh
Chapters 60-62: Jerusalem!
Chapters 63-65: A Plea for God to Act
Chapter 66: Final Summary

It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with all these chapters in detail. **Only a few select highlights can be considered**. The selection is based on the thesis of this paper: God is in control of history; all nations, all peoples, are his concern; God will see his Plan worked out, and **every knee will bow to him**.[233]

The Transition

Sennacherib invaded Israel twice,[234] once 701BC, which is well documented in the Assyrian sources, [235] and once in about 688BC, which is NOT documented in the Assyrian sources. The Book of Kings contains more details on the first attack,[236] but Isaiah only briefly references it:

> In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah,
> Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.
> (Isaiah 36:1 ESV)

With minor differences, **the accounts of the second attack in the Book of Isaiah and the Book of Kings are more or less the same**.[237] Briefly, Sennacherib invests the cities of Israel one by one until only Jerusalem is left. Then, Sennacherib sends his messengers to Jerusalem to demand surrender. **In the name of Sennacherib, the messengers blaspheme YHWH**:

> **Thus says the king**:
> '**Do not let Hezekiah deceive you**, for he will not be able to deliver you.
> **Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in [YHWH]** by saying,
> "[YHWH] will surely deliver us.
> This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."
> Do not listen to Hezekiah.
> For **thus says the king of Assyria**:
> Make your peace with me and come out to me.
> Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of his own fig tree,
> and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern,

[231] For details of this progression, see section ***2.12 Daniel***.
[232] For a summary of these chapters see the Bible Study Notes "**Isaiah Chapters 40 through 66**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/bible-study-notes.
[233] See Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10
[234] See the summary of the history of this period in Bright pages 298-309 and Saggs pages 127-132
[235] See **ANET** pages 287-288, **ANE I** pages 199-201, **DOTT** pages 64-70
[236] See 2 Kings 18:13-16 and the discussion in section ***2.6.1 The Assyrian Period***.
[237] Compare 2 Kings 18:17-37 with Isaiah 36:2-22; and, 2 Kings 19:1-37 with Isaiah 37:1-38

until I come and take you away to a land like your own land,
a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying,
"[YHWH] will deliver us."

Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? …'
(Isaiah 36:14-18 ESV // 2 Kings 18:29-33)

Under inspiration from God, Isaiah responds vigorously to the blaspheming:

When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, **Isaiah said to them**,
"Say to your master,
'**Thus says [YHWH]**:
Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard,
with which **the young men of the king of Assyria have reviled me**.

Behold, I will put a spirit in him,
so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land,
and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.'"

Whom have you mocked and reviled?
Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights?
Against the Holy One of Israel!

Have you not heard that **I determined it long ago**?
I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass,
that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins …

I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me.
Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth,
and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.
(Isaiah 37:5-7, 23, 26, 28-29 ESV // 2 Kings 19:5-7, 22, 25, 27-28)

As a result, **God destroyed the Assyrian army**. Sennacherib went back to Nineveh and was assassinated:

And the angel of [YHWH] went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians.
And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.

Then **Sennacherib king of Assyria** departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh.
And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god,
Adrammelech and Sharezer, **his sons, struck him down with the sword**.
And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, **Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place**.
(Isaiah 37:36-38 ESV // 2 Kings 19:35-37)

The most important point of this is that God was in charge from the beginning, everything was under his control, "**I determined it long ago**". The arrogance of the Assyrians was their undoing – it could NOT go unpunished, "**because you have raged against me**". **World history is unfolding exactly as God intends**. The Assyrian Empire would NOT end for two generations, but the instability evident in the murder of Sennacherib by his sons led to civil war and internal moral bankruptcy of the Empire – its doom was sealed by the will of God.

At some point, **Hezekiah became ill and was threatened by death**. He prayed and in mercy God healed him adding 15 years to his life.[238] On the pretext of congratulating Hezekiah on his recovering, Merodach-baladan, who had briefly been king in Babylon, sent messengers to Hezekiah:

At that time **Merodach-baladan** the son of Baladan, king of Babylon,
sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah,
for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.

And **Hezekiah welcomed them gladly**.
And he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil,
his whole armory, all that was found in his storehouses.
There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

Then **Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him**,
"What did these men say?
And from where did they come to you?"

Hezekiah said, "They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon."

He said, "What have they seen in your house?"

[238] See Isaiah 38:1-6 // 2 Kings 20:1-6a

Hezekiah answered,

"**They have seen all that is in my house**.
There is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them."

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah,

"Hear the word of [YHWH] of hosts:
Behold, the days are coming,
when **all that is in your house**,
and that which your fathers have stored up till this day,
shall be carried to Babylon.
Nothing shall be left, says [YHWH]. …"

(Isaiah 39:1-6 ESV // 2 Kings 20 :12-17)

God's message through Isaiah was that the transition would occur. Assyria would be gone, and **Babylon would initiate a new era in world history**.

The Foundation of the World

There are two aspects to the "foundation of the world": first the **physical creation**, this is discussed in section ***1. The Foundation of the World*** in the paper "**The Human Condition**"; secondly, **the purpose of the physical creation**, this is discussed in section ***2. The Plan of God*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**"; both papers are available at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. **Isaiah makes several references to both of these aspects**.

Isaiah chapter 40 goes straight to a universal perspective: the Plan of God is for "**all flesh**":

(3) **A voice cries**:
"In the wilderness **prepare the way of [YHWH]**;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

(4) 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.

(5) And **the glory of [YHWH] shall be revealed**, and **all flesh shall see it together**,
for the mouth of [YHWH] has spoken."

(6) 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.
(7) The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of [YHWH] blows on it;
surely the people are grass.

(8) The grass withers, the flower fades, but **the word of our God will stand forever**.
(Isaiah 40:3-8 ESV)

Isaiah hears an angelic voice, "**a voice cries**", which announces the **First Advent**, "**prepare the way of the Messiah**".[239] **Verse 4** is best taken metaphorically: all obstacles along the path of the highway of God leading to **salvation for all humanity** will be removed. This culminates in the **Second Advent**, "**the glory of the King of kings shall be revealed**" and "**all flesh shall see it together**".[240] God emphasizes that it is only by his grace that any human being is granted salvation, "**all flesh is grass**"; however, the Plan of God for all humanity will succeed, "**the word of our God will stand forever**". Isaiah goes on to emphasis the **permanency of the Plan of God** in contrast to the ephemeral nature of human institutions:

Do you not know?
Do you not hear?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?[241]

It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;
who brings princes to nothing, and **makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness**.
Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.
(Isaiah 40:21-24 ESV see also 40:15-17, 48:13, 51:12-13, 16)

[239] See Mark 1:2-3, Matthew 3:3, Luke 3:4-6
[240] See Revelation 1:7, Mark 13:26 // Matthew 24:30b
[241] The Apostle Matthew uses this verse combined with Psalm 78:2 to explain Jesus' use of "parables"; see Matthew 13:35.

Repeatedly God asserts his ability to **plan the future course of human history**:

> Who has performed and done this, **calling the generations from the beginning**?
> I, [YHWH], the first, and with the last; I am he.
>
> **All the nations** gather together, and **the peoples** assemble.
> **Who among them can declare this**, and **show us the former things**?
> Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true.
>
> … 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 41:4, 43:9, 46:9b-10 ESV)

In contrast, God mockingly calls on the "idols" of the nations to do anything:

> Set forth your case, says [YHWH]; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob.
> Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen.
> **Tell us the former things**, what they are,
> that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome;
> or **declare to us the things to come**.
> Tell us what is to come hereafter,
> **that we may know that you are gods**;
> **do good**, or **do harm**, that we may be dismayed and terrified.
>
> Behold, **you are nothing**, and your work is less than nothing;
> an abomination is he who chooses you.
> (Isaiah 41:21-24 ESV)

God makes the point that history is at a watershed,[242] "**show us the former things**", "**tell us the former things**". God is in control of history, the "former things", the "Assyrian Period" of history, is about to end, and a new era is about to begin, "**declare to us the things to come**". This theme is repeated several times:

> Behold, the **former things have come to pass**,
> and **new things I now declare**;
> before they spring forth I tell you of them."
> (Isaiah 42:9 ESV)
>
> **All the nations** gather together, and **the peoples** assemble.
> Who among them can declare this, and **show us the former things**?
> **Remember not the former things**, nor consider the things of old.
>
> Behold, **I am doing a new thing**;
> now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
> (Isaiah 43:9a, 18-19a ESV)
>
> … **remember the former things of old**;
> 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 46:9-10 ESV)
>
> **The former things I declared of old**;
> they went out from my mouth, and I announced them;
> **then suddenly I did them**, and they came to pass.
>
> I declared them to you from of old,
> before they came to pass I announced them to you, lest you should say,
> 'My idol did them, my carved image and my metal image commanded them.'
>
> You have heard; now see all this; and will you not declare it?
> **From this time forth I announce to you new things**,
> hidden things that you have not known.
>
> **They are created now**, not long ago;
> before today you have never heard of them, lest you should say,
> 'Behold, I knew them.'

[242] See Isaiah 54:9

You have never heard, **you have never known**,
from of old your ear has not been opened.
(Isaiah 48:3, 5-8a ESV)

The Plan of God was created before the foundation of the earth. All human history has played out under the umbrella of the Plan of God, "**I will accomplish all my purpose**". God has revealed his Plan as necessary for the understanding of human beings to accomplish his purpose. The Plan of God is revealed by **the word of God**, **the Bible**:

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but **it shall accomplish that which I purpose**,
and shall **succeed in the thing for which I sent it**.
(Isaiah 55:10-11 ESV)

Babylon & Persia

After the end of the **Assyrian Period** of world history, God moved on to the period of world empires beginning with the **Babylonian Empire**.[243] Isaiah was given much information on the Babylonian Empire;[244] and, he was even given a glimpse of the next empire, **Persia**, in the prophecies concerning **Cyrus**. When God healed **Hezekiah's illness** and Hezekiah willingly opened up his kingdom to the Babylonian envoys, God made it clear through Isaiah that Babylon would be the first empire to succeed Assyria.[245]

Chapter 47 looks beyond the period of Babylonian hegemony to Babylon's destruction:

Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon;
sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans!
For you shall no more be called tender and delicate.
I will take vengeance, and **I will spare no one**.
Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans;
for **you shall no more be called the mistress of kingdoms**.
(Isaiah 47:1, 3b, 5 ESV)

The sin of Babylon is identified as "**arrogance**"; believing that her accomplishments were her own doing; **failure to recognize God as supreme over history** and what her true place was in the Plan of God:

Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures,
who sit securely, **who say in your heart**,
"**I am**, and **there is no one besides me**;
I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children"

You felt secure in your wickedness; you said,
"No one sees me";

your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart,
"I am, and there is no one besides me."
(Isaiah 47:8, 10 ESV)

The "**wisdom and knowledge**" of Babylon are identified as **empty traditions**, the **lies** foisted off on humanity by Satan the Devil and **carried forward in the mainstream religions of the world today**:

Stand fast in your **enchantments** and your many **sorceries**,
with which you have labored from your youth;
perhaps you may be able to succeed; perhaps you may inspire terror.

You are wearied with **your many counsels**;
let them stand forth and save you,
those **who divide the heavens**, **who gaze at the stars**,
who at the new moons **make known what shall come upon you**.

Behold, **they are like stubble**; the fire consumes them;
they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame.

[243] This is discussed in more detail in section ***2.12 Daniel***.
[244] See also section ***Babylon & the King of Babylon***
[245] See section ***The Transition***

No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before!
(Isaiah 47:12-14 ESV)

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**.
When I saw her, I marveled greatly.
(Revelation 17:1-6 ESV)

The hegemony of Babylon would be ended by the Persian Empire under Cyrus in 539BC. Cyrus is mentioned twice by name as a demonstration of God's control over history:

Assemble, **all of you**, and **listen**!
Who among them has declared these things?

[YHWH] loves him {Cyrus};
he shall perform his purpose on **Babylon**, and his arm shall be against the **Chaldeans**.
I, even I, have spoken and called him;
I have brought him, and he will prosper in his way.
(Isaiah 48:14-15 ESV)

I am [YHWH], **who made all things**,
who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,
who frustrates the signs of liars and makes fools of diviners,
who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish,
who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers, …
who says of Cyrus,
'He is my shepherd, and **he shall fulfill all my purpose**';
(Isaiah 44:24b-26a, 28a ESV)

Thus says [YHWH] to his anointed, **to Cyrus**, whose right hand I have grasped,
to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings,
to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:
"I will go before you and level the exalted places,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron,
I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places,
that you may know that it is I, [YHWH], the God of Israel, **who call you by your name**. …"
(Isaiah 45:1-3 ESV)

The Gospel to All Nations

After the Second Advent, the first major activity will be the **Second Exodus** of people called from the four corners of the earth to form the nation of **New Israel**. For discussion of this see section ***2.4.5.1 The Second Exodus*** and section ***2.4.5.2 The New Israel*** in the paper "**Pillar Two - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. The purpose of the nation of New Israel is to be an example nation for the other nations of the world and to participate in **bringing the Gospel to the world**. Isaiah makes the point that the people of **New Israel will be eager to accomplish this**:

But now **thus says [YHWH]**,
he **who created you**, O Jacob, he **who formed you**, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am [YHWH] your God, the Holy One of Israel, **your Savior**.
I give **Egypt** as your ransom, **Cush** and **Seba** in exchange for you.

Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.

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."
(Isaiah 43:1-7 ESV)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

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 far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory.
And **they shall declare my glory among the nations**.

Their offspring shall be known among the nations,
and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring [YHWH] has blessed.
(Isaiah 52:7, 66:18-19, 61:9 ESV)

In the World Tomorrow, **each and every person** in all nations over the whole world will hear the Gospel and be **given the opportunity to attain salvation**:[246]

Come, **everyone who thirsts**, **come to the waters**;[247]
and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.[248]

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and **come to me**; hear, **that your [being] (nephesh)**[249] **may live**;
(Isaiah 55:1-3a ESV)

Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you **survivors of the nations**!
Listen to me in silence, O coastlands;
let the peoples renew their strength;
let them approach, then let them speak;
let us together draw near for [justice] (mishᵉpat).[250]
(Isaiah 45:20a, 41:1 ESV)

[**YHWH] has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations**,
and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

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 52:10, 62:11-12 ESV)

As a result of the dissemination of the Gospel, **all the world will worship the True God**:

He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

I am [YHWH], and there is no other, besides me there is no God;
I equip you, though you do not know me,
that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west,
that there is none besides me; I am [YHWH], and there is no other.

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[246] See also Isaiah 56:1-8, 58:13-14
[247] See John 4:14, 7:37
[248] "Good food" is a metaphor for the teaching of the truth of God, the Bible; see the discussion of Isaiah 25:6 in section ***God's Perspective***.
[249] See footnote ***225***
[250] See footnote ***130***

Sing to [YHWH] a new song, **his praise from the end of the earth**,
you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants.
Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits;
let the habitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains.
Let them give glory to [YHWH], and declare his praise in the coastlands.

Give attention to me, **my people**, and give ear to me, **my nation**;
for teaching (torah)[251] **will go out from me**,
and I will set my justice (mish^{e}pat) for a light to the peoples.
My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out,
and my arms will judge the peoples;
the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.

Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the **people in whose heart is my teaching (torah)**;
fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings.
(Isaiah 40:11, 45:5-6, 42:10-12, 51:4-5, 7 ESV)

Through true worship **all the world will learn to live by the Way of God** and all people over the whole world will enjoy peace, prosperity, good government, and freedom:

For **as the earth brings forth its sprouts**, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord [YHWH] will cause **righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations**.

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,
but **my [hesed]**[252] **shall not depart from you**,
and **my covenant of peace shall not be removed**,
says [YHWH], who has compassion on you.

For thus says [YHWH]:

> "Behold, **I will extend peace to her like a river**,
> and the glory of **the nations** like an overflowing stream;
> and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees.
> As one whom his mother comforts, **so I will comfort you**;
> you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. …"

For you shall **go out in joy** and be **led forth in peace**;
the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;

Your people shall all be righteous; they **shall possess the [earth] (´eretz)**[253] **forever**,[254]
the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.
Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for **my people who have sought me**.

They shall **build houses** and **inhabit them**; they shall **plant vineyards** and **eat their fruit**.
They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall **long enjoy the work of their hands**.
They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity,
for **they shall be the offspring of the blessed of [YHWH]**, and their descendants with them.
(Isaiah 61:11, 54:10, 66:12-13, 55:12-13a, 60:21, 65:10, 21-23 ESV)

The Sovereignty of God

As the **Creator of the universe**, God is the sovereign owner of the universe. **God is the sovereign owner of the earth, everything on it, and all persons living or dead**. God's sovereignty extends to the control of history and the use of nations and persons as he sees fit to accomplish his Plan. God asserts his sovereignty in no uncertain terms:

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
and marked off the heavens with a span,
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure
and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

Who has measured the Spirit of [YHWH],
or what man shows him his counsel?

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[251] See footnote ***18***
[252] See footnote ***48***
[253] See footnote ***119***
[254] See Matthew 5:5

Whom did he consult, and who made him understand?
Who taught him the path of justice,
and taught him knowledge,
and showed him the way of understanding?

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high and see: **who created these**?
He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name;
by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.
(Isaiah 40:12-14, 25-26 ESV)

Thus says [YHWH], the King of Israel and his Redeemer, [YHWH] of hosts:
"**I am the first and I am the last**; **besides me there is no god**.

Who is like me?
Let him proclaim it.
Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people.
Let them declare what is to come, and **what will happen**.

Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it?
And you are my witnesses!
Is there a God besides me?
There is no Rock; **I know not any**."
(Isaiah 44:6-8 ESV)

In his sovereignty, **God remains committed to his purpose for human beings**: to attain salvation and become members of the God Family.[255] To be considered a candidate for the gift of eternal life, it is essential to come to see oneself in true perspective compared with God. To accomplish this, God promises to work as clay those whom he calls to mold them into beings acceptable to him:

Seek [YHWH] while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to [YHWH], that he may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares [YHWH].
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are **my ways higher than your ways** and **my thoughts than your thoughts**.

But now, [YHWH], you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
(Isaiah 55:6-9, 64:8 ESV see also Jeremiah 18:1-6)

For those who respond to the molding of God, he holds out **the promise of salvation**:

I, I am [YHWH], and **besides me there is no savior**.

… fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed,
for **I am your God**; I will strengthen you, **I will help you**,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

For I, [YHWH] your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you,
"**Fear not**, I am the one who helps you."
(Isaiah 43:11, 41:10, 13 ESV)

The period of world empires began with the Neo-Babylonian Empire, but it continues today. **The final incarnation of the "Roman Empire" will occur in the end-times before the Second Advent**.[256] Isaiah was given insight into working out of the Plan of God covering the transition from the Assyrian period into the period of world empire culminating in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

2.7 Assessment of Isaiah

The scope of the prophecies reported by Isaiah is truly astounding. His dealing with his contemporaries was monumental. He witnessed the death of the Northern Kingdom. He dealt with Ahaz of the Southern Kingdom as Ahaz brought the last vestiges of the nation of God under vassalage. He worked

[255] See section ***2.1 The Family of God*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
[256] See section ***2.12.2 The Fourth Kingdom*** and section ***3.3 Babylon the Great***

with Hezekiah through his reform and stood by Hezekiah to witness the destruction of Sennacherib's army. During the times of Manasseh, Isaiah received and recorded the greatest outpouring of prophetic revelation God has given to humanity. And in the end, **Isaiah's record of the majesty**, **the power**, and the **Sovereignty of God** is unsurpassed.

2.8 Jeremiah

Jeremiah was active about a century after Isaiah. The sins of Israel identified by Isaiah, and other earlier prophets, had fully flowered – **the nation was now incorrigible and doomed to destruction**. Nevertheless, Jeremiah preached tirelessly for some forty years imploring repentance before the final end came. Jeremiah grew up with the whisperings of the death throes of the Assyrian Empire constantly in the background, but when Jeremiah was called in 627BC **Assyria** was still the big dog on the block. Jeremiah would prophesize, and then witness, the passage of hegemony to **Babylon**, which became the instrument of God's final punishment on Israel.

It was likely under the mentorship of **Hilkiah**[257] **the High Priest** that **Josiah developed a deep desire to serve God and to free Israel from foreign domination**. Josiah kept a keen eye on developments in Assyria.[258] When he felt it was safe he struck out for independence. In 629/628BC Josiah commenced his reform. **Jeremiah's early preaching was very much to support Josiah's reform**.[259] When Josiah was killed in 609BC, the reform quickly dissipated, and Jeremiah was left to deal with the apostacy of the sons of Josiah. As with Hezekiah, whose reform was repudiated by his son Manasseh, **Josiah's reform was repudiated by his sons Jehoiakim and Zedekiah**. Under these two kings the majority of the remaining people of Israel were killed, exiled among the nations, or taken captive by Babylon. This was the life of Jeremiah – warning the people of their imminent fate and dealing with the apostate Kings.

2.8.1 A Prophet to the Nations

As we have seen, all of the writing prophets were given revelations concerning the nations of the world; but **Jeremiah** is explicitly commissioned as "**a prophet to the nations**":

> Now the word of [YHWH] came to me, saying,
> "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
> and before you were born I consecrated you;
> **I appointed you a prophet to the nations**."
>
> Then [YHWH] put out his hand and touched my mouth.
> And [YHWH] said to me,
> "Behold, **I have put my words in your mouth**.
>
> See, **I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms**,
> **to pluck up and to break down**,
> **to destroy and to overthrow**,
> **to build and to plant**."
>
> (Jeremiah 1:4-5, 9-10 ESV)

To impress upon Jeremiah the significance of God's commission to him, **God gave Jeremiah two visions**, each of which was overpowering for different reasons. First, God showed Jeremiah an "**almond branch**":

> And the word of [YHWH] came to me, saying,
> "Jeremiah, what do you see?"
>
> And I said,
> "**I see an almond branch**."
>
> Then [YHWH] said to me,
> "You have seen well, for **I am watching over my word to perform it**."
> (Jeremiah 1:11-12 ESV)

An almond tree in full flower is an impressive and beautiful sight, with which Jeremiah would have been familiar. God uses a sophisticated play on words to impress his point on Jeremiah, "**I see an almond branch**" in Hebrew is מַקֵּל שֹׁקֵד אֲנִי רֹאֶה - maqqel shaqed ʹani roʹeh; the phrase "**I am watching**", is

[257] See 2 Kings chapter 22 & 23:1-27, 2 Chronicles chapter 34 & 35
[258] For a summary of the history of this period, see Bright pages 313-331
[259] See Jeremiah chapters 2 through 6

שֹׁקֵד אֲנִי - shoqed ´ani. The word play is on "*shaqed*" and "*shoqed*": the "**almond branch**" that Jeremiah sees is to remain emblazoned on his mind so that he always remembers that God is watching "**over his word to perform it**". God will inexorably accomplish his purpose for Israel and for all the nations of the world.

The second vision is much darker. Jeremiah sees a cauldron, a "**boiling pot**", with its contents spilled out pouring on Israel from the north:

> 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 (´eretz)[260].
> 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. …"
> (Jeremiah 1:13-15 ESV)

The overriding **word of God** for Israel was that her **punishment** to be effected by the nations from the north.[261] This was **the dark message that Jeremiah had to impress upon the people** with the hope of repentance. The first application of "**to pluck up and to break down**, **to destroy and to overthrow**" would be to Israel. Jeremiah would also be told to apply destruction to other nations. But also, God gave Jeremiah encouraging messages of hope for Israel and for all nations, "**to build and to plant**".

Being aware of Isaiah's prophecies, Jeremiah knew that Babylon would eclipse Assyria, but this was far from evident in 627BC when Jeremiah was commissioned. **Almost certainly Jeremiah would have assumed that the "boiling pot" represented Assyria**. Twice Jeremiah alludes to the two traditional "parties" in South Israel:

> And now what do you gain by going to **Egypt** to drink the waters of the Nile?
> Or what do you gain by going to **Assyria** to drink the waters of the Euphrates?
> How much you go about, changing your way!
> You shall be put to shame by **Egypt** as you were put to shame by **Assyria**.
> (Jeremiah 2:18, 36 ESV)

There is only one chronological notice given for the days of Josiah:

> **[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? …
> Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. …"
> (Jeremiah 3:6, 8b ESV)

It is most likely that the material in the first six chapters is from the time of Josiah. Three times in prophecies likely given during Josiah's reign there is allusion to the "**foe from the north**", the "**boiling pot**". Almost certainly Jeremiah assumed this would be Assyria:

> Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, stay not,
> for **I bring disaster from the north**, and great destruction.
> 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.
> Thus says [YHWH]:
> "Behold, **a people is coming from the north country**,
> a great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth. …"
> (Jeremiah 4:6, 6:1, 22 ESV see also 4:16-17, 5:15, 6:18-19)

[260] The translation "land" is reasonable here because the context explicitly refers to "Jerusalem" and "Judah"; however the vision also implies more as later prophecies of Jeremiah explicitly apply the "boiling pot" to the destruction of Babylon; see Jeremiah 50:9,41.
[261] Note that "Babylon" is more or less due east of Jerusalem, but the attack always came down from the north.

Even in prophecies likely given early in the reign of Jehoiakim, the "**foe from the north**" remains ambiguous:

> 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.
>
> **Lift up your eyes and see those who come from the north**.
> Can one break iron, **iron from the north**, and bronze?
> (Jeremiah10:22, 13:20a, 15:12 ESV)

The end of the mighty Assyrian Empire was such an overpowering concept, that until Nebuchadnezzar appeared at the gates of Jerusalem in 605BC, it could not be accepted. The end of the Assyrian Empire is indeed an example of God's ability to "**to pluck up and to break down**, **to destroy and to overthrow**". Once **Jehoiakim** was forced into vassalage under **Nebuchadnezzar**, the identity of the "**foe from the north**" was clear, and Jeremiah pulled no punches:

> Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of [YHWH],
> heard Jeremiah prophesying these things.
> Then Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet,
> and put him in the stocks that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of [YHWH].
>
> The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks,
> **Jeremiah said to him**,
>
> > "[YHWH] does not call your name Pashhur, but Terror on Every Side.
> > For **thus says [YHWH]**:
> >
> > > Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends.
> > > They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on.
> > > And **I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon**.
> > > **He shall carry them captive to Babylon**, and shall strike them down with the sword.
> > >
> > > Moreover, **I will give all the wealth of the city**, all its gains, all its prized belongings,
> > > and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hand of their enemies,
> > > who shall plunder them and seize them and carry them **to Babylon**.
> > >
> > > And **you, Pashhur**, and all who dwell in your house, **shall go into captivity**.
> > > **To Babylon** you shall go, and **there you shall die**, and there you shall be buried,
> > > you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely."
>
> (Jeremiah 20:1-6 ESV)

God also revealed to Jeremiah his intention to punish other nations, "**to pluck up and to break down**, **to destroy and to overthrow**". In no uncertain terms does God claim dominion over each and every nation on the face of the earth:

> Behold, **the days are coming, declares [YHWH]**,
> when **I will punish all** those who are circumcised merely in the flesh
> —**Egypt**, Judah, **Edom**, the sons of **Ammon**, **Moab**,
> and **all who dwell in the desert** who cut the corners of their hair,
> for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.
> (Jeremiah 9:25-26 ESV)
>
> Hear the word that [YHWH] speaks to you, O house of Israel.
> **Thus says [YHWH]**:
>
> > "**Learn not the way of the nations**,
> > nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens because **the nations** are dismayed at them,
> > for the customs of the peoples are vanity.
> >
> > Their **idols** are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak;
> > they have to be carried, for they cannot walk.
> > Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good."
>
> **There is none like you, [YHWH]**; you are great, and your name is great in might.
> Who would not fear you, **O King of the nations**?
>
> For this is your due;
> for **among all the wise ones of the nations** and in all their kingdoms **there is none like you**.
> They are both stupid and foolish; the instruction of **idols** is but wood!
>
> But **[YHWH] is the true God**; he is the living God and the everlasting King.
> At his wrath the earth quakes, and **the nations cannot endure his indignation**.
> (Jeremiah 10:1-3a, 5-8, 10 ESV see also verse 25)

Thus [YHWH], the God of Israel, said to me:
"**Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath**,[262]
and **make all the nations to whom I send you drink it**.
They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them."
So I took the cup from [YHWH']s hand,
and made **all the nations** to whom [YHWH] sent me drink it:
Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and officials,
to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse, as at this day;
Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his officials, all his people,
and **all the mixed tribes** among them;
all the kings of **the land of Uz**
and all the kings of **the land of the Philistines**
(Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod);
Edom, **Moab**, and the sons of **Ammon**;
all the **kings of Tyre**, all the **kings of Sidon**, and the **kings of the coastland** across the sea;
Dedan, **Tema**, **Buz**, and all who cut the corners of their hair;
all the **kings of Arabia** and all the **kings of the mixed tribes** who dwell in the desert;
all the **kings of Zimri**, all the **kings of Elam**, and all the **kings of Media**;
all the kings of the north, far and near, one after another,
and **all the kingdoms of the world that are on the face of the earth**.
And after them the **king of Babylon** shall drink.
(Jeremiah 25:15-26 ESV see also Psalm 75:8)

As revealed to Jeremiah, the dominion of God over all nations is NOT limited to what we would call "history". God controls the actions of nations to ensure history unfolds according to his Plan, but ultimately all nations will come under the Kingdom of God. **God revealed to Jeremiah his intentions for the nations on the Day of YHWH at the Second Advent**. Jeremiah sees a vision of the desolation of the earth when all nations will experience God's ability to "**to pluck up and to break down**, **to destroy and to overthrow**":

I looked on the earth, 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**.
For **thus says [YHWH]**,
"**The whole [earth] (ʹeretz)**[263] **shall be a desolation**; **yet I will not make a full end**.
For this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above be dark;
for I have spoken; **I have purposed**; I have not relented, **nor will I turn back**."
(Jeremiah 4:23-28 ESV see also 25:30-33)

Despite ethe destruction, God promises a new day, "**yet I will not make a full end**". There will be a time "**to build and to plant**". God did also reveal to Jeremiah the prophecies of the Kingdom of God:

At that time **Jerusalem shall be called the throne of [YHWH]**,
and **all nations shall gather to it**, to the presence of [YHWH] in Jerusalem,
and **they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart**.
(Jeremiah 3:17 ESV)

Thus says [YHWH] **concerning all my evil neighbors**
who touch the heritage that I have given my people Israel to inherit:
"Behold, **I will pluck them up from their land**,
and I will pluck up the house of Judah from among them.
And **after I have plucked them up**, **I will again have compassion on them**,
and **I will bring them again each to his heritage and each to his land**.
And it shall come to pass, **if they will diligently learn the ways of my people**,
to swear by my name, 'As [YHWH] lives,' even as they taught my people to swear by Baal,
then **they shall be built up** in the midst of my people.
But **if any nation will not listen**, then **I will utterly pluck it up and destroy it**, declares [YHWH]."
(Jeremiah 12:14-17 ESV)

[262] The metaphor of the "wine cup of wrath" was first used in Isaiah 51:17-23; it is used again in Revelation 14:10, and 16:19.
[263] See footnote ***119***

[YHWH], my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble,
to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and say:

"Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies,
worthless things in which there is no profit.
Can man make for himself gods?
Such are not gods!"

Therefore, behold, **I will make them know**,
this once **I will make them know my power and my might**,
and **they shall know that my name is [YHWH]**.
(Jeremiah 16:19-21 ESV)

And **this city shall be to me a name of joy**,
a praise and a glory **before all the nations of the earth**
who shall hear of all the good that I do for them.
They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.
(Jeremiah 33:9 ESV)

God is sovereign over all the earth, over every nation, and over every person of every nation, living or dead:

Thus says [YHWH]:

"Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom,
let not the mighty man boast in his might,
let not the rich man boast in his riches,
but **let him who boasts boast in this**, **that he understands and knows me**,
that **I am [YHWH] who practices [ḥesed],**[264]
[justness] (mishᵉpat),[265] **and righteousness in the earth**.
For in these things I delight, declares [YHWH]."
(Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV)

Am I a God at hand, declares [YHWH], and not a God far away?
Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares [YHWH].
Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares [YHWH].
(Jeremiah 23:23-24 ESV)

'Ah, Lord [YHWH]!
It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm!
Nothing is too hard for you.

You show [ḥesed] to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them,
O great and mighty God, whose name is [YHWH] of hosts, great in counsel and mighty in deed,
whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man,
rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds.
(Jeremiah 32:17-19 ESV)

The word of [YHWH] came to Jeremiah:

"**Behold**, **I am [YHWH]**, the **God of all flesh**.
Is anything too hard for me? …"
(Jeremiah 32:26-27 ESV)

Jeremiah was commissioned "**a prophet to the nations**" because he was intimately involved in the **transition from the Assyrian Period of history to the Period of World Empires**. Jeremiah had worked with Josiah during his reform. He witnessed the death of Josiah and the collapse of Josiah's reform – the last gasp of hope for the Nation of Israel. Jeremiah observed as Nebuchadnezzar took the first captives to Babylon in 605BC, and he witnessed the final destruction of the nation by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC. **Jeremiah was given many prophecies concerning the fall and restoration of the nations around Israel**.

2.8.2 Egypt & Babylon

Egypt was the perennial nemesis of Israel. God extricated Israel from Egypt and adjured them never to go back there.[266] However, there was always a strong "Egypt Party" – those in Israel who refused to stop looking to Egypt for "salvation". This party was alive and active in the days of Josiah. With the killing of Josiah by **Pharoah Neco** and the subsequent removal of young **King Jehoahaz** as a captive to Egypt, [267]

[264] See footnote ***48***
[265] See footnote ***130***
[266] See Deuteronomy 17:16, 28:68, Exodus 13:17, 14:13
[267] See 2 Kings 23:28-35, 24:7, 2 Chronicles 35:20-24, 36:2-4

there must have been some muting of the desire to look to Egypt. However, the Egyptians did not give up. **Egypt continued to medal with Israel throughout the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah**. In the end, Zedekiah foolishly looked to Egypt for protection from Babylon – it did NOT come.

Hezekiah made the mistake of believing Babylon was a friend of Israel,[268] possibly using the logic that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". This caused him to NOT look solely to God, but to try to enact alliances with other nations. **Josiah apparently fell victim to the same logic**. He made the fatal mistake of supporting Babylon as the Egyptians advanced in support of Assyria to the **Battle of Haran** in 609BC. **Instead of looking solely to God for salvation**, Josiah tried to medal in human alliances, and it cost him his life. After his death, the vestigial Nation of Israel was on its final death spiral.

The prophet Jeremiah painfully witnessed all these events. The Chronicler reports, in the words of Pharoah Neco, **Josiah's folly in opposing Neco**:

> … **Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish** on the Euphrates,
> and Josiah went out to meet him.
>
> But he sent envoys to him, saying,
>
> > "What have we to do with each other, king of Judah?
> > I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war.
> > And God has commanded me to hurry.
> > **Cease opposing God**, who is with me, lest he destroy you."
>
> (2 Chronicles 35:20b-21 ESV)

Jeremiah makes only **two references to Egypt prior to the destruction of Jerusalem**. Both incidentally imply ongoing intercourse between Israel and Egypt:

> 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 24:8 ESV)
>
> There was **another man who prophesied in the name of [YHWH]**,
> **Uriah** the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim.
>
> He prophesied against this city and against this land in **words like those of Jeremiah**.
> And when King Jehoiakim, with all his warriors and all the officials, heard his words,
> the king sought to put him to death.
>
> But when **Uriah** heard of it, he **was afraid and fled and escaped to Egypt**.
> Then **King Jehoiakim sent to Egypt certain men**, Elnathan the son of Achbor and others with him,
> and **they took Uriah from Egypt** and brought him to King Jehoiakim,
> who struck him down with the sword
> and dumped his dead body into the burial place of the common people.
> (Jeremiah 26:20-23 ESV)

During the final siege of Jerusalem, the Egyptian army did make an appearance in Israel. Jeremiah alludes to it briefly and there is no other source of information. The Babylonian army briefly retreated from Jerusalem to engage the Egyptian army, but the siege of Jerusalem was quickly restored – **Egypt was of no help to Israel**:

> Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison.
> **The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt**.
> And when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them,
> they withdrew from Jerusalem.
>
> Then the word of [YHWH] came to Jeremiah the prophet:
>
> > "Thus says [YHWH], God of Israel:
> >
> > > Thus shall you say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me,
> > >
> > > > 'Behold, **Pharaoh's army that came to help you is about to return to Egypt**,
> > > > to its own land.
> > > > And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city.
> > > > They shall capture it and burn it with fire. …'"
>
> (Jeremiah 37:4-8 ESV)

[268] See Isaiah 39:1-6 // 2 Kings 20 :12-17 and the discussion of these verses in section ***The Transition***.

Now **when the Chaldean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh's army**,
Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin
to receive his portion there among the people.
(Jeremiah 37:11-12 ESV)

After the destruction of Jerusalem, a significant group of those left in the Land of Israel were determined to go to Egypt despite **Jeremiah's warnings NOT to go to Egypt**. In the end, **they forced Jeremiah to go to Egypt** with them, and Jeremiah had scathing words for them and for other Israelites already in Egypt:

Then **Johanan** the son of Kareah **and all the leaders** of the forces with him
took from Mizpah **all the rest of the people** whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah …
And they went and stayed at Geruth Chimham near Bethlehem, **intending to go to Egypt** …
(Jeremiah 41:16a, 17 ESV)

At the end of ten days **the word of [YHWH] came to Jeremiah**.
Then **he summoned Johanan** the son of Kareah and all **the commanders** of the forces who were with him,
and **all the people** from the least to the greatest, and said to them,
"Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel,
to whom you sent me to present your plea for mercy before him:
If you will remain in this land, then **I will build you up** and **not pull you down**;
I will plant you, and **not pluck you up**; for I relent of the disaster that I did to you.
But if you say, 'We will not remain in this land,'
disobeying the voice of [YHWH] your God and saying,
'No, **we will go to the land of Egypt**, where we shall not see war
or hear the sound of the trumpet or be hungry for bread,
and we will dwell there,'
then hear the word of [YHWH], O remnant of Judah.
Thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel:
If you set your faces to enter Egypt and go to live there,
then the sword that you fear shall overtake you there in the land of **Egypt**,
and the famine of which you are afraid shall follow close after you to **Egypt**,
and **there you shall die**.
All the men who set their faces to go to **Egypt** to live there
shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence.
They shall have no remnant or survivor from the disaster
that I will bring upon them. …"
(Jeremiah 42:7-10, 13-17 ESV)

But **Johanan** the son of Kareah and **all the commanders** of the forces took **all the remnant** of Judah
who had returned to live in the land of Judah from all the nations to which they had been driven
—the men, the women, the children, the princesses,
and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left
with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan;
also Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah.
And **they came into the land of Egypt**, for **they did not obey the voice of [YHWH]**.
And they arrived at Tahpanhes.
(Jeremiah 43:5-7 ESV)

Then the word of [YHWH] came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes:
"Thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel:
Behold, **I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar** the king of Babylon, my servant …
He shall come and strike the land of Egypt,
giving over to the pestilence those who are doomed to the pestilence,
to captivity those who are doomed to captivity,
and to the sword those who are doomed to the sword. …"
(Jeremiah 43:8, 10a, 11 ESV)

Therefore thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel:
Behold, **I will set my face against you for harm**, to cut off all Judah.
I will take the remnant of Judah **who have set their faces to come to the land of Egypt to live**,
and they **shall all be consumed**.
In the land of Egypt they shall fall; by the sword and by famine they shall be consumed.
From the least to the greatest, they shall die by the sword and by famine,
and they shall become an oath, a horror, a curse, and a taunt.
I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem,
with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence,

so that **none of the remnant of Judah who have come to live in the land of Egypt shall escape**
or survive or return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return to dwell there.
For they shall not return, except some fugitives.
(Jeremiah 44:11-14 ESV)

In contrast to Egypt, which was always an enemy, God used Babylon to further the working out of the Plan of God. As God had used Assyria to punish Israel in the days of Isaiah, **God would use Babylon to punish Israel in the days of Jeremiah**. Again, as Assyria was subsequently punished by God, **so would Babylon be punished**:

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah,
in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah
(that was the **first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon**) … 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. … '

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, and make them a horror, a hissing,
and an everlasting desolation.

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.
(Jeremiah 25:1, 5, 7-9, 12 ESV)

Early in the reign of Zedekiah, he and the nations around were apparently **planning a revolt against Babylon**. They convened in Jerusalem, but **Jeremiah in no uncertain terms warned them of the futility of the venture**:

In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah,
this word came to Jeremiah from [YHWH].

Thus [YHWH] said to me:
"Make yourself straps and yoke-bars, and put them on your neck.
Send word to the **king of Edom**, the **king of Moab**, the **king of the sons of Ammon**,
the **king of Tyre**, and the **king of Sidon** by the hand of the envoys
who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah.

Give them this charge for their masters:
'Thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel:
This is what you shall say to your masters:
"It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth,
with the men and animals that are on the earth,
and I give it to whomever it seems right to me.

Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar,
the king of Babylon, **my servant**,
and I have given him also the beasts of the field to serve him.

All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson,
until the time of his own land comes.
Then many nations and great kings shall make him their slave.

But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon, and **put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon**,
I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence,
declares [YHWH], until I have consumed it by his hand. …"'"
(Jeremiah 27:1-8 ESV)

The nation of Egypt was never used by God – **Egypt was always a proxy for Satan the Devil**. As God used Assyria to punish Israel in the days of Isaiah; so he used Babylon, in the days of Jeremiah. Isaiah prophesized the destruction of Assyria. Jeremiah witnessed the destruction of Assyria. **Jeremiah**

prophesized the destruction of the Neo-Babylonian Empire but did NOT witness it. God's full plans for Babylon would be revealed to a younger contemporary of Jeremiah – Daniel.[269] But **God gave Jeremiah considerable insight into God's plans for the nations around Israel**. Jeremiah's collection of prophecies concerning the nations is very similar to Isaiah's collection.

2.8.3 Prophecies Concerning the Nations

Jeremiah chapters 46 to 51 contain collected prophecies concerning various nations. None of the prophecies are explicitly dated, but there are some chronological notices. Most of the prophecies seem to be of a composite nature, i.e., prophecies given at different times concerning the various nations have been collected together.

Chapter 46 verses 2-12 relate to the **Battle of Carchemish** in 605BC, at which Nebuchadnezzar decisively defeated Egypt establishing Babylon as the undisputed superior power:

- The defeat of the Egyptian army is recounted:

  Why have I seen it?
  They are dismayed and have turned backward.
  Their warriors are beaten down and have fled in haste;
  they look not back—terror on every side! declares [YHWH].
  The swift cannot flee away, nor the warrior escape;
  in the north by the river Euphrates they have stumbled and fallen.
  (Jeremiah 46:5-6 ESV)

- The arrogance of Egypt is castigated:

  Who is this, rising like the Nile, like rivers whose waters surge?
  Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers whose waters surge.
  He said,
  'I will rise, **I will cover the earth**,
  I will destroy cities and their inhabitants.'
  (Jeremiah 46:7-8 ESV)

- The battle is declared to be a Day of YHWH:

  That day is the **day of the Lord [YHWH] of hosts**,
  a day of vengeance, to avenge himself on his foes.
  The sword shall devour and be sated and drink its fill of their blood.
  For the Lord [YHWH] of hosts holds a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.
  (Jeremiah 46:10 ESV)

Chapter 46 verses 13-26 relate to the internal weakness of Egypt and the punishment inflicted by Nebuchadnezzar, who is explicitly mentioned in verses 13 and 26.

- The punishment is from God; Nebuchadnezzar is only the instrument:

  As I live, **declares the King**, whose name is [YHWH] of hosts,
  like Tabor among the mountains and like Carmel by the sea, **shall one come**.
  [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel, said:
  "Behold, **I am bringing punishment upon** Amon of Thebes,
  and Pharaoh and Egypt and **her gods** and her kings,
  upon Pharaoh and those who trust in him. …"
  (Jeremiah 46:18, 25 ESV)

- Pharoah is "all talk; no action":

  Call the name of Pharaoh, king of Egypt,
  '**Noisy one who lets the hour go by**.'
  (Jeremiah 46:17 ESV)

- The nation cannot defend itself:

  A beautiful heifer is Egypt, but a biting fly from the north has come upon her.
  Even **her hired soldiers in her midst are like fattened calves**;
  yes, they have turned and fled together; they did not stand,
  for the day of their calamity has come upon them, the time of their punishment.
  (Jeremiah 46:20-21 ESV)

[269] See section ***2.12 Daniel***

Chapter 47 concerns the **Philistia**, but **Tyre** and **Sidon** of **Phoenicia** are also mentioned. There is no certain information as to when "**Pharaoh struck down Gaza**".[270] The destruction will come "**out of the north**"; the destruction will be severe:

> The word of [YHWH] that came to Jeremiah the prophet **concerning the Philistines**, **before Pharaoh struck down Gaza**.
>
> "Thus says [YHWH]:
>
> > Behold, **waters are rising out of the north**, and shall become an overflowing torrent; they shall overflow the land and all that fills it, the city and those who dwell in it.
> >
> > Men shall cry out, and **every inhabitant of the land shall wail**.
> >
> > … the **fathers look not back to their children**, so feeble are their hands, because of the day that is coming to **destroy all the Philistines**, to cut off from **Tyre** and **Sidon** every helper that remains. …"
>
> (Jeremiah 47:1-2, 3b-4a ESV)

The destruction is coming from YHWH:

> Ah, sword of [YHWH]!
> How long till you are quiet?
> Put yourself into your scabbard; rest and be still!
> **How can it be quiet when [YHWH] has given it a charge**?
> (Jeremiah 47:6-7a ESV)

Chapter 48 concerns **Moab**. There are considerable similarities of this chapter with **Isaiah chapters 15 and 16**. Moab suffered under Assyria; she would suffer under Babylon:

- A significant number of toponyms are listed, with some literary dependency:

  > **Heshbon** and **Elealeh** cry out; their voice is heard as far as **Jahaz**;
  > (Isaiah 15:4a ESV)
  >
  > From the outcry at **Heshbon** even to **Elealeh**, as far as **Jahaz** they utter their voice,
  > (Jeremiah 48:34a ESV)
  >
  > For at the **ascent of Luhith** they go up weeping;
  > on the road to **Horonaim** they raise a cry of destruction;
  > (Isaiah 15:5b ESV)
  >
  > For at the **ascent of Luhith** they go up weeping;
  > for at the descent of **Horonaim** they have heard the distressed cry of destruction.
  > (Jeremiah 48:5 ESV)
  >
  > the waters of **Nimrim** are a desolation;
  > (Isaiah 15:6a ESV)
  >
  > For the waters of **Nimrim** also have become desolate.
  > (Jeremiah 48:34b ESV
  >
  > Therefore I weep with the weeping of **Jazer** for the **vine of Sibmah**;
  > (Isaiah 16:9a ESV
  >
  > More than for **Jazer** I weep for you, O **vine of Sibmah**!
  > (Jeremiah 48:32a ESV)
  >
  > Therefore my inner parts moan like a lyre for Moab,
  > and my inmost self for **Kir-hareseth**.
  > (Isaiah 16:11 ESV)
  >
  > Therefore my heart moans for Moab like a flute,
  > and my heart moans like a flute for the men of **Kir-hareseth**.
  > (Jeremiah 48:36a ESV)

  Other common toponyms are mentioned: Dibon, Eglath-shelishiyah, Medeba, Nebo, Zoar

- The arrogance of Moab is castigated:

  > **We have heard of the pride of Moab**—how proud he is!
  > —of **his arrogance**, his pride, and his insolence;
  > in his idle boasting he is not right.
  > Therefore let Moab wail for Moab, let everyone wail.
  > (Isaiah 16:6-7a ESV)

[270] It is possible that it was an Egyption attack on Gaza, with cooperation from Phoenicia, which prompted retaliation by Babylon.

For, because you trusted in your works and your treasures, you also shall be taken;
Make him drunk, because he magnified himself against [YHWH],
so that Moab shall wallow in his vomit, and he too shall be held in derision.

We have heard of the pride of Moab—he is very proud
—of his loftiness, his pride, and **his arrogance**, and the haughtiness of his heart.
I know his insolence, declares [YHWH];
his boasts are false, his deeds are false.
Moab shall be destroyed and be no longer a people,
because **he magnified himself against [YHWH]**.
(Jeremiah 48:7a, 26, 29-30, 42 ESV)

- As in Isaiah, displacement of the population is prophesized:

  My heart cries out for Moab; **her fugitives flee** to Zoar, to Eglath-shelishiyah.
  For at the ascent of Luhith they go up weeping;
  on the road to Horonaim they raise a cry of destruction;

  Like fleeing birds, like a scattered nest,
  so are the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.
  let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you;
  (Isaiah 15:5, 16:2, 4a ESV)

  Moab has been at ease from his youth and has settled on his dregs;
  he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, **nor has he gone into exile**;
  so his taste remains in him, and his scent is not changed.
  Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH],
  when **I shall send to him pourers** who will pour him,
  and **empty his vessels** and break his jars in pieces.

  Stand by the way and watch, O inhabitant of Aroer!
  Ask him who flees and her who escapes; say,
  'What has happened?'

  In the shadow of Heshbon **fugitives stop without strength**,
  for fire came out from Heshbon, flame from the house of Sihon;
  (Jeremiah 48:11-12, 19, 45a ESV)

- Jeremiah is explicit that YHWH is the author of Moab's punishment:

  The destroyer of Moab and his cities has come up,
  and the choicest of his young men have gone down to slaughter,
  declares the King, **whose name is [YHWH] of hosts**.

  And **I will bring to an end in Moab**, declares [YHWH],
  him who offers sacrifice in the high place and makes offerings to his god.

  On all the housetops of Moab and in the squares there is nothing but lamentation,
  for **I have broken Moab** like a vessel for which no one cares, declares [YHWH].

  He who flees from the terror shall fall into the pit,
  and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare.
  For **I will bring these things upon Moab**,
  the year of their punishment, declares [YHWH].
  (Jeremiah 48:15, 35, 38, 44 ESV)

Chapter 49 deals briefly with Ammon, Aram, Kedar, Hazor, and Elam:

- **Ammon** – will be punished by YHWH:

  Therefore, behold, **the days are coming**, **declares [YHWH]**,
  when **I will cause** the battle cry to be heard against Rabbah of the Ammonites;
  it shall become a desolate mound, and its villages shall be burned with fire;

  Behold, **I will bring terror upon you**, declares the Lord [YHWH] of hosts,
  from all who are around you, and you shall be driven out,
  every man straight before him, with **none to gather the fugitives**.
  (Jeremiah 49:2a, 5 ESV)

- **Aram** – will suffer the conquest of Damascus:

  Damascus has become feeble, she turned to flee, and panic seized her;
  anguish and sorrows have taken hold of her, as of a woman in labor.
  Therefore her young men shall fall in her squares,
  and **all her soldiers shall be destroyed** in that day, declares [YHWH] of hosts.
  (Jeremiah 49:24, 26 ESV)

- **Kedar** and **Hazor** – would fall victim to Nebuchadnezzar:

  Thus says [YHWH]:

  "Rise up, **advance against Kedar**!
  Destroy the people of the east!
  Their tents and their flocks shall be taken, their curtains and all their goods;
  their camels shall be led away from them, and men shall cry to them:
  'Terror on every side!'

  Flee, **wander** far away, **dwell in the depths**, O inhabitants of **Hazor**! declares [YHWH].

  For **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon
  has made a plan against you and formed a purpose against you. …"

  (Jeremiah 49:28b-30 ESV)

- **Elam** – would be scattered among the nations by YHWH:

  Thus says [YHWH] of hosts:

  "Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might.
  And I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven.
  And **I will scatter them** to all those winds,
  and **there shall be no nation to which those driven out of Elam shall not come**.

  (Jeremiah 49:35-36 ESV)

The treatment of **Edom in chapter 49** is more extensive. It contains some literary dependency on the prophecy of **Obadiah**, and it ties together two prophecies of **Isaiah**. Verses 14 through 16 are almost **verbatim from the Book of Obadiah**:[271]

I have heard **a message from [YHWH]**,
and **an envoy has been sent among the nations**:

"Gather yourselves together and come against her, and rise up **for battle**!
For behold, I will make you **small among the nations**, despised among mankind.

The horror you inspire has deceived you, and the **pride of your heart**,
you who live in the **clefts of the rock**, who hold the height of the hill.

Though you make **your nest** as high as the eagle's,
I will bring you down from there, declares [YHWH].

(Jeremiah 49:14-16 ESV)

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**!"
Behold, I will make you **small among the nations**; you shall be utterly despised.

The **pride of your heart** has deceived you,
you who live in the **clefts of the rock**, in your lofty dwelling,
who say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?"

Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though **your nest** is set among the stars,
from there **I will bring you down**, declares [YHWH].

(Obadiah 1b-4 ESV)

In **chapter 25**, Edom was mentioned in the "**wine cup of wrath**" prophecy, see verse 21:

Thus [YHWH], the God of Israel, said to me:

"Take from my hand this **cup of the wine of wrath**,
and **make all the nations to whom I send you drink it**. …"

(Jeremiah 25:15 ESV)

Isaiah had previously associated Edom with the related metaphor of the "winepress":

Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah,
he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength?

"It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."[272]

Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress?

"**I have trodden the winepress alone**,[273] and from the peoples no one was with me;
I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath;
their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.
For **the day of vengeance** was in my heart, and **my year of redemption** had come.
I looked, but there was no one to help;

[271] Compare also Jeremiah 49:9 with Obadiah 5

[272] YHWH speaks in the first person in verses 1 through 6.

[273] See Revelation 14:17-20, 19:11-16

I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold;
so **my own arm brought me salvation**, and my wrath upheld me.

I trampled down the peoples in my anger;
I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."
(Isaiah 63:1-6 ESV)

Jeremiah then alludes to these two prophecies and pronounces God's judgement of Edom:

For I have sworn by myself, declares [YHWH],
that **Bozrah shall become a horror**, a taunt, a waste, and a curse,
and **all her cities shall be perpetual wastes**.

Edom shall become a horror.
Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its disasters.
As when Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities were overthrown, says [YHWH],
no man shall dwell there, **no man shall sojourn in her**.

Therefore **hear the plan that [YHWH] has made against Edom**
and the purposes that he has formed against the inhabitants of Teman:
Even the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away.
Surely their fold shall be appalled at their fate.
(Jeremiah 49:13, 17-18, 20 ESV)

Again, **this judgement echoes what God had previously pronounced through Isaiah**:

For **my sword has drunk its fill** in the heavens;
behold, **it descends for judgment upon Edom**,[274]
upon **the people I have devoted to destruction (ḥerem)**.[275]

[YHWH] has a sword; it is sated with blood;
it is gorged with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams.

For **[YHWH] has a sacrifice in Bozrah**, a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
For **[YHWH] has a day of vengeance**, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

And **the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch**, and her soil into sulfur;
her land shall become burning pitch.
Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever.
From generation to generation it shall lie waste;
none shall pass through it forever and ever.
But the hawk and the porcupine shall possess it, the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.

He shall stretch the line of confusion over it, and the plumb line of emptiness.
Its nobles—**there is no one there to call it a kingdom**, and all its princes shall be nothing.
(Isaiah 34:5-6, 8-12 ESV)

There is nowhere a prophecy of restoration for Edom. **The traditional territory of Edom will apparently become a permanent wilderness in the World Tomorrow**. The nations of **Moab** and **Ammon** in particular are prophesized to be restored – see the discussion in sections ***2.2.1 Joel*** and ***2.3 2 Zephaniah***.

2.8.4 An Anthology Concerning Babylon

The Book of Jeremiah **chapters 50 and 51** contain **a carefully arranged anthology of Jeremiah's prophecies concerning Babylon**. The collection ends with a description which is unique among the major prophets. In 593BC Zedekiah was summoned to Babylon. This was possibly precipitated by the meeting described in Jeremah chapter 27.[276] A certain Seraiah, who was a confident of Jeremiah, accompanied Zedekiah. **Jeremiah assembled a scroll of his prophecies to be read in Babylon**. Some or all of the prophecies contained in the anthology that has come down to us were certainly on that scroll:

The word that Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah,
when he went with Zedekiah king of Judah to Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign.
Seraiah was the quartermaster.

Jeremiah wrote in a book all the disaster that should come upon Babylon,
all these words that are written concerning Babylon.

[274] "**Edom**" can be taken here as **typical** of "**all the nations**" (Isaiah 34:2), "**the people**" whom God has "**devoted to destruction**".
[275] See ***Excursus 1 – Devoted to Destruction: ḥaram*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[276] See the discussion in section ***2.8.2 Egypt & Babylon***

And Jeremiah said to Seraiah:

"**When you come to Babylon**, see that you **read all these words**, and say,

'[YHWH], you have said concerning this place that you will cut it off,
so that nothing shall dwell in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate forever.'

When you finish reading this book,
tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, and say,

'**Thus shall Babylon sink**, to rise no more,
because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted.'"

(Jeremiah 51:59–64a ESV)

Chapter 50 exhibits a **pattern** of an **oracle concerning Babylon** followed by an **oracle concerning Israel**. In most cases the oracles concerning Israel clearly relate to the **Second Exodus** and the **New Israel**. This suggests that the **oracles concerning Babylon can also be taken in duality** to apply to final destruction of "**Babylon the Great**"[277] in the Day of YHWH:

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.

As she glorified herself and lived in luxury,
so give her a like measure of torment and mourning,
since **in her heart she says**,

'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.'

For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine,
and she will be burned up with fire;
for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."

(Revelation 18:1-2, 7-8 ESV)

The **theme of this anthology** is explicit in the first verses of chapter 50:

The word that [YHWH] spoke **concerning Babylon**, concerning the land of the Chaldeans,
by Jeremiah the prophet:

"**Declare among the nations** and proclaim,
set up a banner and proclaim, conceal it not, and say:

'Babylon is taken, Bel is put to shame, Merodach is dismayed.
Her images are put to shame, her idols are dismayed.'

For **out of the north** a nation has come up against her,
which shall make **her land a desolation**,[278]
and none shall dwell in it; both man and beast shall flee away."

(Jeremiah 50:1-3 ESV)

The message of this anthology is for "**the nations**" – ancient and modern. The way of the world, as exemplified by "idolatry", is defeated by God, "**her images are put to shame**". While Babylon was the "foe from the north" in the destruction of ancient Israel, another stronger foe, "**out of the north**", would be used by God to punish ancient Babylon.[279]

Chapter 50 verse 4 through 10 relate to Israel. The focus is the **Second Exodus**:

In those days and in that time, declares [YHWH],
the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come,
and they shall seek [YHWH] their God.
They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying,

'Come, let us join ourselves to [YHWH] in **an everlasting covenant**[280] that will never be forgotten.'

(Jeremiah 50:4-5 ESV)

[277] See section ***3.3 Babylon the Great***

[278] See the discussion of the "desolation" of ancient Babylon in section ***2.4.2 Fulfilled Prophecy*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

[279] The "Medes" had already been prophesized by Isaiah as the destroyers of Babylon, see Isaiah 13:17.

[280] This is the **New Covenant**, see Jeremiah 31:31. 32:40, Ezekiel 16:60,62, 36:26-27, 37:26, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

The **judgement of Babylon**, ancient and modern, is returned to in verses 11 through 16. Then verses 17 through 20 return to Israel. Babylon's role as God's punisher, only to be punished, is reiterated, then **Israel's restoration is described in dual terms**:

> Israel is a hunted sheep driven away by lions.
> First the king of **Assyria** devoured him,
> and now at last **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon has gnawed his bones.
>
> Therefore, thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel:
>
> > Behold, **I am bringing punishment** on the king of Babylon and his land,
> > as I punished the king of Assyria.
> >
> > **I will restore Israel** to his pasture, and he shall feed on Carmel and in Bashan,
> > and his desire shall be satisfied on the hills of Ephraim and in Gilead.
> >
> > In those days and in that time, declares [YHWH],
> > **iniquity shall be sought in Israel**, and **there shall be none**,
> > and **sin in Judah**, and **none shall be found**,
> > for **I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant**.
>
> (Jeremiah 50:17-20 ESV)

Only in the New Israel will there be no iniquity and no sin, because all persons in the nation will be under the New Covenant and all transgressions will be repented of and forgiven. The next pericope elaborates on the **destruction of Babylon** looking **primarily to end-time Babylon**:

> (21) **Go** up against the land of Merathaim, and against the inhabitants of Pekod.[281]
> **Kill**, and **devote them to destruction (ḥaram)**, [282] declares [YHWH],
> and **do** all that I have commanded you.
>
> (22) The noise of battle is in the [earth] (´eretz),[283] and great destruction!
> (23a) How the hammer of the whole earth (´eretz) is cut down and broken!
>
> (23b) How **Babylon** has become a horror among the nations!
> (24) **I set a snare for you** and you were taken, O Babylon, and **you did not know it**;
> you were found and caught, because you opposed [YHWH].
> (25) **[YHWH] has opened his armory and brought out the weapons of his wrath**,
> for the **Lord [YHWH] of hosts has a work to do** in the land of the Chaldeans.
> (26) Come against her from every quarter; open her granaries;
> pile her up like heaps of grain, and **devote her to destruction (ḥaram)**; let nothing be left of her.
>
> (27) **Kill all her bulls**; let them go down to the slaughter.
> **Woe to them**, for their day has come, the time of their punishment.
> (Jeremiah 50:21-27 ESV)

Analysis:

- **Verse 21**: the **verbs are all imperative**, but the **subject of the commands is ambiguous**. Previous verses had made reference to the "foe from the north", but this verse makes more sense if the imperatives are taken proleptically to **verse 25**, "**YHWH has opened his armory and brought out the weapons of his wrath**". This brings out the meaning of *ḥaram*: looking to the final end-time destruction of "world city", "Babylon".[284]
- In **verses 22 and 23a**, it is clear that the focus of the prophecy is **the whole earth**, *´eretz*.
- In **verse 23b and 24**, "Babylon" is explicitly named, looking to end-time "**Babylon the Great**";[285] in the end-time the nations which comprise "Babylon" do not realize they are being used by Satan to attempt to thwart the Plan of God, "**you did not know it**". God has set them up for *ḥaram*, "**I set a snare for you**".
- **Verse 25**: the Plan of God will unfold as he intends, "**Lord YHWH of hosts has a work to do**".
- **Verse 26**: Babylon will be destroyed, "**devote her to destruction**".
- **Verse 27**: "Bulls" is a clear metaphor for "**arrogant leaders**", "**kill all her bulls**", "**woe to them**":

> 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.

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[281] Jeremiah is using "word play" here: Merathaim means "double rebellion"; Pekod means "punishment". Merathaim is the region where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers converge. Pekod is a Region in eastern Babylonia. (see ESV footnote and comment)
[282] See ***Excursus 1 – Devoted to Destruction: ḥaram*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[283] See footnote ***119***
[284] See footnote ***12***
[285] See Revelation chapter 18

> 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 19:19-21 ESV)

The summary of this pericope is clearly dual: ancient Babylon's punishment was due for the destruction of the physical Temple in 586BC. **End-time "Baylon the Great" will do much violence to the Spiritual Temple of the New Testament Church**:[286]

> A voice!
> They **flee and escape from the land of Babylon**,
> to declare in Zion **the vengeance of [YHWH] our God**, vengeance **for his temple**.
> (Jeremiah 50:28 ESV see also 50:8, 51:6, 45)
>
> Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,
> "**Come out of her**, **my people**, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;
> for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. …"
> (Revelation 18:4-5 ESV)
>
> 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 2:3-4 ESV)[287]
>
> When he opened the fifth seal, **I saw under the altar the [persons] (psyche)**[288]
> **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.
>
> Also it was allowed to **make war on the saints and to conquer them**.
>
> And I saw the woman, **drunk with the blood of the saints**, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.
> (Revelation 6:9-11, 13:7a, 17:6a ESV see also 18:24)

The next pericope, **verses 29 through 32**, deals primarily with the destruction of ancient Babylon, but the attitude of "**pride**" and "**arrogance**" exhibited by "world city" is common to both ancient Babylon and end-time "Babylon":

> Behold, I am against you, **O proud one**, declares the Lord [YHWH] of hosts,
> for your day has come, the time when I will punish you.
> **The proud one** shall stumble and fall, with none to raise him up,
> and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will devour all that is around him.
> (Jeremiah 50:31-32 ESV)

The next pericope, **verses 33 through 38**, alludes to the captivity of both North and South Israel – their fate being to be scattered among the nation. The **role of YHWH as Redeemer**,[289] to be realized in Jesus Christ, is prophesized. Only through Jesus can the scattered of Israel along with **all humanity find rest**. In contrast, **there is nothing but unrest for "world city" due to idolatry**:

> Their **Redeemer** is strong; **[YHWH] of hosts** is his name.
> He will surely plead their cause, **that he may give rest to the earth**,
> but unrest to the inhabitants of Babylon.
> **A sword against the Chaldeans**, declares [YHWH],
> and against the inhabitants of Babylon, and against her officials and her wise men!

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[286] See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:19-21, 1 Peter 2:4-5

[287] See also Danel 9:26-27 and the discussion of these verses in the paper, "**Seventy Periods Prophecy**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

[288] See footnote ***225***

[289] See section ***5.2 The Blessing to All Nations***

For it is a land of images, and **they are mad over idols**.
(Jeremiah 50:34-35, 38b ESV)

The next pericope, **verses 39 through 43**, deals with the final fate of ancient Babylon as the site sits today in desolation:[290]

Therefore **wild beasts shall dwell with hyenas in Babylon**, and ostriches shall dwell in her.
She shall never again have people, nor be inhabited for all generations.
As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities, declares [YHWH],
so **no man shall dwell there**, and no son of man shall sojourn in her.
(Jeremiah 50:39-40 ESV)

The **summary of chapter 50** refers to the **Plan of God** alluding to how God will fulfill the prophecies for ancient Babylon and for end-time "**Babylon the Great**":[291]

Behold, like a lion coming up from the thicket of the Jordan against a perennial pasture,
I will suddenly make them run away from her, and **I will appoint over her whomever I choose**.

For who is like me?
Who will summon me?
What shepherd can stand before me?
Therefore **hear the plan that [YHWH] has made** against Babylon,
and the purposes that he has formed against the land of the Chaldeans:
Surely the little ones of their flock shall be dragged away;
surely their fold shall be appalled at their fate.

At the sound of the capture of Babylon **the earth shall tremble**,
and **her cry shall be heard among the nations**.
(Jeremiah 50:44-46 ESV)

Most of **chapter 51** deals with the destruction of ancient Babylon, which destruction can also be taken as a type of the destruction of end-time "**Babylon the Great**". In the first pericope, **verses 1 through 5**, YHWH is clear and specific that he is responsible for the destruction of Babylon, and that it is being done according to the Plan of God. The appellative "Leb-kamai"[292] is applied to Babylon:

Thus says [YHWH]:
"Behold, **I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon**,
against the inhabitants of Leb-kamai …

For **Israel and Judah have not been forsaken** by their God, [YHWH] of hosts,
but the land of the Chaldeans is full of guilt against the Holy One of Israel.
(Jeremiah 51:1, 5 ESV)

The second pericope, **verses 6 through 10**, deals with **True Worshippers fleeing Babylon** to avoid her destruction. This has implication for both ancient Babylon and end-time "Babylon the Great". Terminology similar to Revelation chapters 17 and 18 is used. The pericope ends with True Worshippers expressing the need to **declare the work of God**:

Flee from the midst of Babylon;[293] let every one save his life!
Be not cut off in her punishment,
for this is the time of [YHWH's] vengeance, the repayment he is rendering her.

Babylon was **a golden cup** in [YHWH's] hand, **making all the earth drunken**[294]
the nations drank of her wine; therefore the nations went mad.

[YHWH] has brought about our vindication;
come, let us **declare** in Zion **the work of [YHWH]** our God.
(Jeremiah 51:6-7, 10 ESV)

The next pericope, **verses 11 through 14**, deals with God's us of the Medes to destroy ancient Babylon:

[YHWH] has stirred up the spirit of the kings of **the Medes**,
because his purpose concerning Babylon is to destroy it,
for that is **the vengeance of [YHWH]**, the vengeance for his temple.
(Jeremiah 51:11b ESV)

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[290] See the discussion of the "desolation" of ancient Babylon in section ***2.4.2 Fulfilled Prophecy*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
[291] See section ***3.3 Babylon the Great***
[292] "Leb-kamai" means literally "heart of my adversaries"; see ESV footnote and comment.
[293] See Revelation 18:4
[294] See Revelation 17:2,4, 18:3

The next pericope, **verse 15 through 23**, elaborates on **God's prerogative** to control history and control the nations – all is being done according to the Plan of God. The pericope ends with a prophecy of God's use of Israel to "conquer" the nations with the Gospel in the World Tomorrow:[295]

> **It is he who made the earth by his power**,
> who established the world by his wisdom,
> and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.
>
> **Every man is stupid and without knowledge**;
> every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols,
> for his images are false, and there is no breath in them.
>
> Not like these is he who is **the portion of Jacob**, for he is **the one who formed all things**,
> and **Israel is the tribe of his inheritance**; [YHWH] of hosts is his name.
> **You are my hammer** and weapon of war:
> with you I break nations in pieces; with you I destroy kingdoms;
> (Jeremiah 51:15, 17, 19-20 ESV)

The next pericope, **verses 24 through 33**, deals primarily with **the destruction of ancient Babylon**, which destruction can also be taken as a type of the destruction of end-time "Babylon the Great":

> **I will repay Babylon** and **all the inhabitants of Chaldea** before your very eyes
> for all the evil that they have done in Zion, declares [YHWH].
>
> Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, declares [YHWH],
> **which destroys the whole earth (´eretz)**;
> I will stretch out my hand against you,
> and roll you down from the crags, and make you a burnt mountain.
>
> Prepare the nations for war against her,
> the kings of the **Medes**, with their governors and deputies, and **every land under their dominion**.
> (Jeremiah 51:24-25, 28 ESV)

In **verses 34 and 35**, the city of **Jerusalem is personified**:

> "**Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon has devoured me**; he has crushed me;
> he has made me an empty vessel;
> he has swallowed me like a monster;
> he has filled his stomach with my delicacies; he has rinsed me out.
>
> The violence done to me and to my kinsmen be upon Babylon,"
> let the inhabitant of Zion say.
>
> "My blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea,"
> **let Jerusalem say**.
> (Jeremiah 51:34-35 ESV)

Verses 36 through 58 can then be taken as **the response of YHWH**:

> Therefore **thus says [YHWH]**:
> "Behold, **I will plead your cause** and **take vengeance for you**.
> I will dry up her sea and make her fountain dry,
> and Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, the haunt of jackals,
> a horror and a hissing, without inhabitant. …"
> (Jeremiah 51:36-37 ESV)

- Babylon's idolatry will be abolished:

  > And **I will punish Bel in Babylon**, and take out of his mouth what he has swallowed.
  >
  > Therefore, behold, the days are coming when **I will punish the images of Babylon**;
  >
  > Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH],
  > when **I will execute judgment upon her images** …
  > (Jeremiah 51:44a, 47a, 52a ESV)

- The final state of Babylon is specified:

  > The sea has come up on Babylon; she is covered with its tumultuous waves.
  > Her cities have become a horror, a land of drought and a desert,
  > **a land in which no one dwells**, and through which no son of man passes.
  >
  > For **[YHWH] is laying Babylon waste** and stilling her mighty voice.
  > Their waves roar like many waters; the noise of their voice is raised,

[295] See the discussion in ***Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence***

Thus says [YHWH} of hosts:
The broad wall of **Babylon shall be leveled to the ground**,
and her high gates shall be burned with fire.
(Jeremiah 51:42-43, 55, 58a ESV)

- The universal scope of Babylon's destruction is identified:
  How Babylon is taken, **the praise of the whole earth** seized!
  How **Babylon has become a horror among the nations**!
  The **nations shall no longer flow to him**; the wall of Babylon has fallen.
  Then **the heavens and the earth**, and **all that is in them**, shall sing for joy over Babylon,
  for the destroyers shall come against them out of the north, declares [YHWH].
  Babylon must fall for the slain of Israel,
  just as **for Babylon have fallen the slain of all the earth**.
  (Jeremiah 51:41, 44b, 48-49 ESV)
- The remnant who escape are to proclaim the Gospel:
  Go out of the midst of her, my people!
  Let every one save his life from the fierce anger of [YHWH]!
  Let not your heart faint, and be not fearful at the report heard in the [earth] (´eretz),[296]
  when a report comes in one year and afterward a report in another year,
  and violence is in the [earth] (´eretz), and ruler is against ruler.
  You who have escaped from the sword, **go**, **do not stand still**!
  Remember [YHWH] from far away, and **let Jerusalem come into your mind** …
  (Jeremiah 51:45-46, 50 ESV)

This anthology is an excellent example of "duality" in prophecy. Jeremiah certainly had some knowledge of the outcome of the Plan of God, but **only now**, **at the end-time**, with the full revelation of the Bible, **can these prophecies be fully understood**. The messages from God revealed through the Holy Spirit to the ancient prophets were indeed for the benefit of the original recipients, but the full impact of them is only for our benefit at the end-time.

2.9 Assessment of Jeremiah

T**he Prophet Jeremiah was an active participant in one of the most tumultuous times of human history**. Jeremiah worked tirelessly to bring the message of God to his contemporaries. All rejected God's overtures. **The nation was incorrigible**. Sadly Western Civilization careens along a similar path today. Jeremaih unequivocally reports the perspective of God as the "**God of Every Nation**". The ancient nations that had dealings with God were all punished. Similarly, Jeremiah reports God's warning of the Day of YHWH to come on the whole earth, but the punishment will be more specific for the "wicked" – those, with whom God has had dealings, and who have rejected God. **The people of Ancient Israel rejected God. Western Civilization is uniformly rejecting God now at the end-time**. **The Day of YHWH is coming**.

2.10 Ezekiel

The **Prophet Ezekiel** was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah. Ezekiel's book contains more dating material than any other prophetic book. Ezekiel was born into a priestly family in 623BC[297] – he grew up during the reform of Josiah listening to the early preaching of Jeremiah. He was no doubt **anticipating a career as an active Priest serving in the Temple**. The death of Josiah, the reduction of Israel to vassalage first under Egypt, then to Babylon, and finally **Ezekiel's own deportation to Babylon in 597BC were doubtless life shattering experiences to him**. These events set the stage for one of the most staggering theophanies recorded in the Bible.

Fundamental to the mindset of any Israelite was that YHWH "resided" in the Land of Isarel, in the city of Jerusalem, in the Temple. **The concept of YHWH appearing in a foreign land was beyond comprehension**. To counter this perception, YHWH gave Ezekiel **a vision like none other recorded in the Bible**:

[296] See footnote ***119***
[297] See Ezekiel 1:1-2; the 30th year being his age is identified with the 5th year of the exile, 593BC.

As I looked, behold, **a stormy wind came out of the north**, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal.

And from the midst of it came **the likeness of four living creatures**.
And this was their appearance:
they had **a human likeness**, but each had **four faces**, and each of them had **four wings**.
Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot.
And they sparkled like burnished bronze.
Under their wings on their four sides **they had human hands**.
And the four had their faces and their wings thus: their wings touched one another.
Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went.

As for the likeness of their faces, each had **a human face**.
The four had the **face of a lion** on the right side,
the four had the **face of an ox** on the left side,
and the four had the **face of an eagle**.

Now as I looked at the living creatures,
I saw **a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures**,
one for each of the four of them.
As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction:
their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl.
And the four had the same likeness,
their appearance and construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel.

Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse,
shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads.
And **above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne**, in appearance like sapphire;
and **seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance**.
Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of [YHWH].

And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.
And he said to me,
"**Son of man**, **stand on your feet**, and **I will speak with you**."
(Ezekiel 1:4-10, 15-16, 22, 26, 28b, 2:1 ESV)

The implications of this theophany were staggering. **YHWH was active in a foreign land**. Ezekiel's lifelong perception of the Temple in Jerusalem was shattered. **His career as a Priest could NOT occur**, but **here was YHWH speaking to him in Babylon**. YHWH went on to outline to Ezekiel what would be his commission as a Prophet to the Exiles in Babylon.

Ezekiel is the only prophet who was told that his work would yield positive results. The focus of his commission was to identify those persons among the exiles whom God was calling and bring them to repentance. These people would form the remnant community to return to the Land of Israel and prepare for the First Advent. **This commission was vital to the successful working out of the Plan of God**. For the Messiah to come as a human being, born as a baby, there had to be a community of True Worshippers among which the child Messiah could grow into manhood. Ezekiel was told that some among the exiles would hear his message, "**they 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.
(Ezekiel 2:3-5, 7, 3:11 ESV)

Ezekiel was successful, because the return from exile occurred in 538BC and the remnant community was established, and it was there when the Messiah came. This is discussed further in section

2.3.3 The Purpose of the Restoration in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. **Although Ezekiel's focus is always the Exiles, he always sees them in the context of the larger world around – the nations**.

2.10.1 Israel and the Nations

God explicitly contrasts Israel's apostacy as being more wicked than the nations around who were NOT given the knowledge of God:

> Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
>
> > **This is Jerusalem**.
> > **I have set her in the center of the nations**, with countries all around her.
> > And she has rebelled against my [mish^{e}patim][298] by **doing wickedness more than the nations**,
> > and against my statutes more than the countries all around her;
> > for they have rejected my [mish^{e}patim] and have not walked in my statutes.
>
> Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
>
> > Because **you are more turbulent than the nations** that are all around you,
> > and have not walked in my statutes or obeyed my [mish^{e}patim],
> > and have **not even acted according to the [mish^{e}patim][299] of the nations** that are all around you,
>
> therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
>
> > Behold, I, even I, am against you.
> > And I **will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations**.
> > And because of all your abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done,
> > and the like of which I will never do again.
>
> (Ezekiel 5:5-9 ESV see also verses 14-15)

Because the nations were NOT given knowledge of God, they were NOT held responsible. As discussed in section ***1.3 The Purpose of Ancient Israel***, **God's purpose for ancient Israel was to bring the knowledge of God to the nations of the world**. Ezekiel reports God's lamenting the failure of ancient Israel to accomplish this:

> But **they rebelled against me** and were not willing to listen to me.
> None of them cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on,
> nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt.
> Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them
> and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.
>
> But **I acted for the sake of my name**,
> **that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations** among whom they lived,
> in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt.
> (Ezekiel 20:8-9 ESV see also 20:14, 22)

God will use the New Israel to get the knowledge of the Way of God to the nations in the World Tomorrow.[300] Ezekiel makes note of this more than once:

> Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
>
> > It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act,
> > but **for the sake of my holy name**,
> > which you have profaned among the nations to which you came.
> > And **I will vindicate the holiness of my great name**,
> > which has been profaned among the nations,
> > and which you have profaned among them.
> >
> > And **the nations will know that I am [YHWH]**, declares the Lord [YHWH],
> > **when through you I vindicate my holiness** before their eyes.
>
> (Ezekiel 36:22-23 ESV see also 37:26-28, 38:14-16, 23)

For the first ten years of his career in Babylon, Ezekiel's messages from YHWH focused on the impending destruction of Jerusalem. This was necessary to convince the exiles that indeed God was in charge and that Nebuchadnezzar was acting as God's agent to punish Israel. Finally when Nebuchadnezzar was actually on the way to issue the final destruction to Jerusalem, **God give Ezekiel a message indicating that the "sword" in the hand of Nebuchadnezzar is actually the Sword of God**:

---

[298] See the discussion of ***mish^{e}patim*** in Isaiah chapter 26 in section ***God's Perspective***

[299] "*mish^{e}patim*" is used almost sarcastically here: God's *mish^{e}patim* is the highest attainment of a human being to know the Way of God. Israel's apostacy made the nation worse than even the "way of the world"; see also 11:12, 20:18

[300] See section ***2.4.5.2 The New Israel*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

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.
And **all flesh shall know that I am [YHWH]**.
I have drawn my sword from its sheath; **it shall not be sheathed again**. …"
And the word of [YHWH] came to me:
"Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord, say:
A sword, **a sword** is sharpened and also polished,
sharpened for slaughter, polished to flash like lightning!
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. …"
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.
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,
to set battering rams, to open the mouth with murder, to lift up the voice with shouting,
to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up mounds, to build siege towers. …"
(Ezekiel 21:1-3, 5, 8-10a, 11, 18-19, 21-22 ESV see also 12:12-14, 17:12-21)

The final destruction of Jerusalem was not just punishment on Israel; God always has an eye to his larger purposes. The final destruction of Jerusalem was a warning to all nations, ancient and modern, "**all flesh shall know that I am YHWH**". As with Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Book of Ezekiel contains a collection of prophecies concerning the nations around Israel.

2.10.2 The Neighbour Nations

The Book of Ezekiel is very carefully structured. The exact day upon which the siege of Jerusalem began is noted, January 15, 587BC:

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. …"
(Ezekiel 24:1-2 ESV)

The next chapters contain the collection of Ezekiel's prophecies concerning the nations. The obvious message of this organization is that as with Nebuchadnezzar, the sword in the hand of God, **the nations are completely under God's control**. God is in control of history. **The fate of all nations is determined by the Plan of God**. First, the Book of Ezekiel contains small prophecies concerning the neighbour nations of Israel; then, there are larger prophecies concerning **Tyre**, **as a "type" of "world city"**,[301] and **Egypt**, **as a "type" of Satan the Devil**, the perennial enemy of God.

Ammon

The oracle concerning Ammon in **chapter 25** was given after the destruction of Jerusalem, although it was foreshadowed prior to the destruction in **chapter 21**:

And you, son of man, prophesy, and say,
Thus says the Lord [YHWH] **concerning the Ammonites** and **concerning their reproach**; say,
A sword, a sword is drawn for the slaughter.
It is polished to consume and to flash like lightning …
And **I will pour out my indignation upon you**;
I will blow upon you with the fire of my wrath,
and I will deliver you into the hands of brutish men, skillful to destroy.

[301] See footnote ***12***

You shall be fuel for the fire.
Your blood shall be in the midst of the land.
You shall be no more remembered, for I [YHWH] have spoken.
(Ezekiel 21:28, 31-32 ESV)

Son of man, **set your face toward the Ammonites** and prophesy against them.
Say to the Ammonites,
Hear the word of the Lord [YHWH]: Thus says the Lord [YHWH],
Because you said, 'Aha!' **over my sanctuary when it was profaned**,
and **over the land of Israel when it was made desolate**,
and over the house of Judah when they went into exile,
therefore behold, **I am handing you over to the people of the East** for a possession,
and they shall set their encampments among you
and make their dwellings in your midst.
They shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk.
For thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet
and **rejoiced with all the malice** within your [being] (nephesh)[302]
against the land of Israel,
therefore, behold, I have stretched out my hand against you,
and will **hand you over as plunder to the nations**.
And I will cut you off from the peoples and will make you perish out of the countries;
I will destroy you.
Then you will know that I am [YHWH].
(Ezekiel 25:2-4, 6-7 ESV)

Ammon's sin was unjustified enmity towards Israel, "**concerning their reproach**", "**over my sanctuary**", "**over the land of Israel**". The fate of the nation of Ammon was eradication, "**I will destroy you**", "**you shall be no more remembered**". However, God's purpose in the destruction remains constant, "**then you will know that I am YHWH**". The ancient nation of Ammon did disappear. The territory was taken over by the Nabatean Arabs and the people were absorbed into that pool of humanity. However, God does prophesize a restoration of Ammon in the World Tomorrow – see section ***2.3 2 Zephaniah***.

Moab

The judgement of Moab is the same as for Ammon for the same reasons:
Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
Because Moab … said,
'Behold, **the house of Judah is like all the other nations**,'
therefore I will lay open the flank of Moab from the cities, from its cities on its frontier,
the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim.
I will give it along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession,
that the Ammonites may be remembered no more among the nations,
and **I will execute judgments upon Moab**.
Then they will know that I am [YHWH].
(Ezekiel 25:8-11 ESV)

God's purpose remains resolute, "**then they will know that I am YHWH**". Again, God prophesizes a restoration of Moab in the World Tomorrow – see section ***2.3 2 Zephaniah***.

Philistia

The judgement of Philistia is also very similar to Ammon and Moab,
Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance,
[vengeance][303] with malice of [being] (nephesh),[304] to destroy in never-ending enmity,

[302] See footnote ***225***
[303] The ESV translator omitted this word, but its inclusion emphasizes the depth of "malice" implied by "malice of nephesh".
[304] See footnote ***225***

therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH],
Behold, **I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines**,
and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the rest of the seacoast.
I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes.
Then they will know that I am [YHWH], when I lay my vengeance upon them.
(Ezekiel 25:15-17 ESV see also 16:27, 57)

Again the Philistines have disappeared form history, and there is no prophecy of restoration. However, God's purpose remains the same "**then they will know that I am YHWH**".

Edom

Chapter 25 contains a brief oracle concerning Edom very similar to the oracles concerning Ammon, Moab and Philistia; then, in **chapter 35**, there is a more detailed judgement of Edom:

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
Because Edom acted revengefully against the house of Judah
and has grievously offended in taking vengeance on them,
therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH],
I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it man and beast.
And I will make it desolate; from Teman even to Dedan they shall fall by the sword.
And **I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel**,
and they shall do in Edom according to my anger and according to my wrath,
and they shall know my vengeance, declares the Lord [YHWH].
(Ezekiel 25:12-14 ESV)

Conspicuously absent is the assertion that Edom "**will know that I am YHWH**". Also, the detail is added that the agent of Edom's punishment would be "**the hand of my people Israel**". **Chapter 35** reiterates and enlarges upon **Edom's enmity** for Israel; even taking it to **an affront to God**:

Because **you cherished perpetual enmity**
and **gave over the people of Israel to the power of the sword** at the time of their calamity,
at the time of their final punishment …
Because you said,
'These two nations and these two countries shall be mine,
and we will take possession of them'—**although [YHWH] was there** …'
I have heard all **the revilings that you uttered against the mountains of Israel**, saying,
'They are laid desolate; **they are given us to devour**.'
And **you magnified yourselves against me with your mouth**,
and **multiplied your words against me**; I heard it.
(Ezekiel 35:5, 10, 12b-13 ESV)

In response, **YHWH heightens the desolation of Edom**, stating that it will be perpetual, even into the World Tomorrow, "**while the whole earth rejoices**". The people will disappear, and the territory will remain desolate, "**I will make you desolate**":

I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation, and I will cut off from it all who come and go.
And I will fill its mountains with the slain.
On your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those slain with the sword shall fall.
I will make you a perpetual desolation, and your cities shall not be inhabited.
Then you will know that I am [YHWH].
Thus says the Lord [YHWH]: **While the whole earth rejoices**, **I will make you desolate**.
(Ezekiel 35:7-9, 14 ESV)

The fate of Edom was to be absorbed into Israel, "**then you will know that I am YHWH**". By Hellenistic times, the Edomites had moved into Southern Israel and became known as "Idumeans". In about 120BC, John Hyrcanus forced them to accept Judaism, to be circumcised.[305] The last vestiges of the people of Edom disappeared with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.[306]

[305] Josephus Antiquities 13,9,1 and the discussion in Shürer First Division volume 1 page 280
[306] See Shürer First Division volume 2 page 227-230, 245-250, **IDB** volume 2 page 26

2.10.3 Phoenicia

Chapters 26, 27, and 28 of the **Book of Ezekiel** concern **Phoenicia**. The **city of Tyre** is addressed in chapters 26 and 27. Chapter 28, first addresses the "**Prince of Tyre**", the human king; then, shifts to the "**King of Tyre**", Satan the Devil. There is also a brief oracle concerning **Sidon** in chapter 28.

The oracle in chapter 26 is dated to 586BC, although the month is NOT given, the oracle assumes that Jerusalem has been destroyed, so likely September or later.[307] **Tyre gloats over the possibility of increased control over inland trade with Jerusalem gone**. God warns Tyre that he will bring successive nations against Tyre until it is destroyed:

> In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month,
> the word of [YHWH] came to me:
> Son of man, **because Tyre said concerning Jerusalem**,
> 'Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken; it has swung open to me.
> **I shall be replenished**, now that she is laid waste,'
> therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
> Behold, **I am against you**, **O Tyre**,
> and will **bring up many nations against you**, **as the sea brings up its waves**.
> They shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers,
> and I will scrape her soil from her and make her a bare rock.
> She shall be in the midst of the sea a place for the spreading of nets,
> **for I have spoken**, declares the Lord [YHWH].
> And **she shall become plunder for the nations**,
> and her daughters on the mainland shall be killed by the sword.
> **Then they will know that I am [YHWH]**.
> (Ezekiel 26:1-6 ESV)

The first assailant of Tyre would be Nebuchadnezzar, but he would not be entirely successful. It would take later "waves" crashing on Tyre to bring her to destruction:

> For thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
> Behold, **I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon, king of kings,
> with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers.
> **He will kill with the sword your daughters on the mainland**.
> He will set up a siege wall against you and throw up a mound against you,
> and raise a roof of shields against you.
> (Ezekiel 26:7-8 ESV)
>
> In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month,
> the word of [YHWH] came to me:
> "Son of man, **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre.
> Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare,
> yet **neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor**
> that he had performed against her. …"
> (Ezekiel 29:17-18 ESV)

Nevertheless, the **final destruction of Tyre is declared certain by God**.[308] This is where we begin to get an inkling that **Tyre is a "type" of "world city"**. God is NOT just concerned with the ancient city but with the whole system of the world represented by the massive trade empire constructed by Tyre:

> And **I will stop the music of your songs**, and the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more.
>
> I will make you a bare rock.
> You shall be a place for the spreading of nets.
> **You shall never be rebuilt**,
> for I am [YHWH]; **I have spoken, declares the Lord [YHWH]**.
>
> Thus says the Lord [YHWH] to Tyre:
> **Will not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall**,
> when the wounded groan, when slaughter is made in your midst?
> Then all the princes of the sea will step down from their thrones
> and remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments.

[307] The city fell July 19, 586BC; the Temple was destroyed August 15, 586BC; see Thiele pages 164, 169.
[308] The ancient city was finally destroyed by Alexander in 332BC; see the discussion of the destruction of Tyre in section ***2.4.2 Fulfilled Prophecy*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

They will clothe themselves with trembling;
they will sit on the ground and tremble every moment and be appalled at you.

And **they will raise a lamentation over you** and say to you,

How you have perished, you who were inhabited from the seas,
O city renowned, **who was mighty on the sea**;
she and her inhabitants imposed their terror on all her inhabitants!

Now the coastlands tremble on the day of your fall,
and the coastlands that are on the sea are dismayed at your passing.

(Ezekiel 26:13-18 ESV)

Chapter 27 is a literary masterpiece. It is identified as a "**lamentation**", and Ezekiel quotes from YHWH citing Tyre's overriding problem – **arrogance**:

The word of [YHWH] came to me:

Now you, son of man, **raise a lamentation over Tyre**,
and say to Tyre, who dwells at the entrances to the sea,
merchant of the peoples to many coastlands,

thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

"**O Tyre**, **you have said**,
'**I am perfect in beauty**.' …"

(Ezekiel 27:1-3 ESV)

Verses 4 through 11 contain a description of the "beauty" of Tyre, describing her as a fantastic ocean vessel with a stellar crew. **Verses 12 through 25** list Tyre's trading partners and many of the goods exchanged. **Verses 26 through 36** describe the fall of Tyre as **a shipwreck on the high seas**, and the impact this will have on the trading partners:

Your rowers have brought you out into the high seas.
The **east wind has wrecked you** in the heart of the seas.

Your riches, your wares, your merchandise,
your **mariners and your pilots**, your caulkers, your dealers in merchandise,
and all your men of war who are in you, with all your crew that is in your midst,
sink into the heart of the seas on the day of your fall.

In their wailing they raise a lamentation for you and lament over you:

"**Who is like Tyre**, like one destroyed in the midst of the sea?
When your wares came from the seas, **you satisfied many peoples**;
with your abundant wealth and merchandise
you enriched the kings of the earth.
All the inhabitants of the coastlands are appalled at you,
and **the hair of their kings bristles with horror**; their faces are convulsed.
The **merchants among the peoples hiss at you**;
you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever."

(Ezekiel 27:26-27, 32-33, 35-36 ESV)

The destruction of Tyre is echoed in the final destruction of "world city":[309]

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. …"

(Revelation 18:15-19 ESV)

The arrogance of Tyre is laid at the feet of the Prince of Tyre. No particular king is identified implying that "arrogance" was a common trait of the Kings of Tyre. This is of course the implication for the

[309] See footnote ***12***

"mighty" of the world – **their "arrogance" becomes their "idol"** which they worship in place of God. **God will bring down the arrogant**:

> The word of [YHWH] came to me:
>
> Son of man, **say to the prince of Tyre**, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
>
> Because **your heart is proud**, and **you have said**,
>
> '**I am a god**,
>
> I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,'
>
> yet **you are but a man**, and **no god**,
> though you make your heart like the heart of a god—
> by your wisdom and your understanding **you have made wealth for yourself**,
> and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries;
> **by your great wisdom in your trade** you have increased your wealth,
> and **your heart has become proud** in your wealth—
>
> therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
>
> Because **you make your heart like the heart of a god**,
> therefore, behold, **I will bring foreigners upon you**, the most ruthless of the nations;
> and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom
> and defile your splendor.
>
> **Will you still say**,
>
> '**I am a god**,'
>
> **in the presence of those who kill you**,
> though **you are but a man**, and **no god**, in the hands of those who slay you?
>
> (Ezekiel 28:1-2, 4-7, 9 ESV)

The source of "arrogance" is of course Satan the Devil, to whom **verses 11 through 19** now turn. **Satan the Devel is the creator of "world city"** – it is his device to entrap and deceive human beings. For further discussion see section ***3.1.2.2 World City*** and section ***2.2.1 The Foundation of the World*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**"; see also section, ***1. The Foundation of the World*** in the paper "**The Human Condition**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. **God summarizes the sin of Satan, passes judgement on him, and indicates his fate**:

> (11) Moreover, the word of [YHWH] came to me:
>
> (12) Son of man, raise a lamentation over **the king of Tyre**, and say to him,
> Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
>
> You were **the signet of perfection**, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
> (13) **You were in Eden**, the garden of God;
> every precious stone was your covering,
> sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle;
> and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings.
> **On the day that you were created** they were prepared.
>
> (14) You were an anointed guardian cherub.
> I placed you; **you were on the holy mountain of God**;
> in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.
>
> (15) **You were blameless** in your ways **from the day you were created**,
> **till unrighteousness was found in you**.
> (16) In the abundance of your trade
> **you were filled with violence** in your midst, and you sinned;
>
> so **I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God**,
> and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub,
> from the midst of the stones of fire.
>
> (17) **Your heart was proud** because of your beauty;
> you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.
>
> **I cast you to the ground**;
> I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.
>
> (18) By the multitude of your iniquities,
> in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries;
> so I brought **fire out from your midst**; **it consumed you**,
> and **I turned you to ashes** on the earth in the sight of all who saw you.
>
> (19) All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you;
> you have come to a dreadful end and **shall be no more forever**.
>
> (Ezekiel 28:11-19 ESV)

Analysis:

- **Verse 12**, Satan is the **god of this world**,[310] King of World City, "**the king of Tyre**"
- **Verses 13 & 15**, Satan is an angelic being: he was created by God, "**on the day that you were created**", "**from the day you were created**"
- **Verse 13**, only Adam, Eve, YHWH, and Satan the Devil were in the Garden of Eden, "**you were in Eden**"
- **Verses 15 & 16**, from a perfect beginning, "**you were blameless**", Satan became sinful, "**unrighteousness was found in you**", "**you were filled with violence**"
- **Verse 17**, arrogance led to Satan's sin, "**your heart was proud**"
- **Verses 16 &17**, Satan was banished from eternity, removed from the presence of God and cast down to earth, "**I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God**", "**I cast you to the ground**"
- **Verses 18 & 19**, unless these verses are in some way a metaphor, Satan's ultimate fate is to be destroyed, "**fire out from your midst**", "**it consumed you**", "**I turned you to ashes**", "**shall be no more forever**"

Chapter 28 verses 20 through 23 briefly address **Sidon**. There is no explicit indication why this short prophecy was left to the end. **Sidon was the "mother" city of Tyre**. Perhaps the implication is that as a product of Satan the Devil, the sin of "world city" was endemic from the beginning. God reiterates his purpose, "**they will know that I am YHWH**". Sidon's judgement , "**I execute judgments**", is destruction, "**pestilence**", "**blood**", "**the sword**".

> The word of [YHWH] came to me:
> "Son of man, **set your face toward Sidon**, and prophesy against her and say,
> Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
> Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, and I will manifest my glory in your midst.
> And **they shall know that I am [YHWH]**
> when **I execute judgments** in her and manifest my holiness in her;
> for I will send **pestilence** into her, and **blood** into her streets;
> and the **slain shall fall** in her midst, **by the sword** that is against her on every side.
> Then **they will know that I am [YHWH]**. …"
> (Ezekiel 28:20-23 ESV)

God's judgement of Tyre as a type of "world city" is unequivocal. Satan the Devil is the originator of "world city" – he is the god of this world. Ezekiel describes the riches of Tyre in terms that make it seem desirable, which is exactly the device used by Satan to entrap people. **As surely as God did wreck the "good ship Tyre", God will bring down Satan's world**. The arrogance of the leaders of this world, like the Prince of Tyre, will be punished. Satan himself will ultimately face the judgment of God.

2.10.4 Egypt

Chapters 29, 30, 31 and 32 deal with Egypt. Most of the material is dated to the periods of the siege of Jerusalem and just after the fall of Jerusalem. **The Exiles to whom Ezekiel directed his prophecies no doubt expected Egypt to come to the assistance of Jerusalem** and force the Babylonians to lift the siege. God, through Ezekiel, tells them in no uncertain terms that Egypt will NOT be of any help to Jerusalem. In fact, the Babylonians will serve depredations on Egypt. Other main themes of these prophecies are Pharaoh himself, the Land of Egypt, and eschatology.

Pharaoh

Chapter 29 opens setting the theme for these prophecies with **a castigation of "Pharaoh"**. No name is mentioned, although Apries (Hophra) was Pharaoh. Again, **God is more concerned with the office of Pharaoh than the individual on the throne**:

> In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, [311]
> the word of [YHWH] came to me:

[310] See 2 Corinthians 4:4
[311] January 7, 587BC; the siege had commenced on January 5, 587BC; see Block (**EZ1**) pages 772-774

"Son of man, **set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt**,
and prophesy against him and against all Egypt;
speak, and say, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
Behold, **I am against you**, **Pharaoh king of Egypt**,
the great dragon (tannin) that lies in the midst of his streams, that says,
'**My Nile is my own**; I made it for myself.'
I will put hooks in your jaws,
and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales;
and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams,
with all the fish of your streams that stick to your scales.
And I will cast you out into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your streams;
you shall fall on the open field, and not be brought together or gathered.
To the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens I give you as food. …"
(Ezekiel 29:1-5 ESV)

The word תַּנִּין - tannin, in the ESV, is translated "sea creature",[312] "serpent",[313] "sea monster",[314] "dragon",[315] and "monster".[316] Clearly the word can refer to actual animals as well as to imaginary or metaphoric creatures. **Satan the Devil is referred to as a "serpent" and a "dragon"**:

Now war arose in heaven,
Michael and his angels fighting against **the dragon**.
And **the dragon** and his angels fought back, but he was defeated,
and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.
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 12:7-9 ESV)

The implication being that **Pharoah is a proxy for Satan the Devil**. The Pharaohs claimed divinity for themselves. They claimed ownership of the Nile. God says, "No", all the creation belongs to God. Pharoah will be jerked out of the Nile and thrown to desert scavengers. This theme is reiterated in **chapter 32 verses 1 through 10**.[317]

Chapter 31 contains **another literary masterpiece** by Ezekiel. The prophecy could be entitled "**The Allegory of the Cedar Tree**". The imagery is complex, and the tone is sarcastic. Egypt is likened to Assyria who is **iconized as a great cedar tree**.[318] As the allegory unfolds, it is clear that the cedar tree simultaneously represents both Assyria and Egypt. **The beauty of the "cedar tree" is first extolled**:

In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month,[319]
the word of [YHWH] came to me:
Son of man, **say to Pharaoh king of Egypt** and to his multitude:
Whom are you like in your greatness?
Behold, **Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon**, with beautiful branches and forest shade,
and of **towering height**, its top among the clouds.
The **waters nourished it**; the deep made it grow tall,
making its rivers flow around the place of its planting,
sending forth its streams to all the trees of the field.
So it towered high above all the trees of the field;
its boughs grew large and its branches long from abundant water in its shoots.
All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs;
under its branches **all the beasts** of the field gave birth to their young,
and **under its shadow lived all great nations**.
It was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches;
for its roots went down to abundant waters.
The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it, nor the fir trees equal its boughs;

[312] See Genesis 1:21, Psalm 148:7
[313] See Exodus 7:9,10,12, Deuteronomy 32:33, Psalm 91:13
[314] See Job 7:12, Psalm 74:13
[315] See Isaiah 27:1, 51:9, Ezekiel 29:3, 32:2
[316] See Jeremiah 51:34
[317] Dated to March 3, 585BC after the seige; the city fell July 19, 586BC; the Temple was destroyed August 15, 586BC; see Thiele pages 164, 169
[318] Compare Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 4:10-12,20-22
[319] June 21, 587BC, Jerusalem is under siege

neither were the plane trees like its branches;
no tree in the garden of God was its equal in beauty.

I made it beautiful in the mass of its branches,
and all the trees of Eden envied it, that were in the garden of God.

(Ezekiel 31:1-9 ESV)

Next, **God passes judgement on the "cedar tree" because it became "proud" in its beauty**:

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Because it towered high and set its top among the clouds,
and **its heart was proud of its height**,
I will give it into the hand of **a mighty one of the nations**.

He shall surely deal with it as its wickedness deserves.
I have cast it out.
Foreigners, **the most ruthless of nations**, **have cut it down** and left it.
On the mountains and in all the valleys its branches have fallen,
and its boughs have been broken in all the ravines of the land,
and **all the peoples of the earth have gone away** from its shadow and left it.

On its fallen trunk dwell all the birds of the heavens,
and on its branches are all the beasts of the field.

All this is in order that no trees by the waters may grow to towering height
or set their tops among the clouds,
and that no trees that drink water may reach up to them in height.

For **they are all given over to death**, to the world below,
among the children of man, with those who go down to the pit.

(Ezekiel 31:10-14 ESV)

The fate of all human beings is death. The "great cedar trees", the mighty kings of Assyria, the powerful Pharaohs of Egypt, were all subject to God's control – none could attain greatness without God's permission, and all were brought to death at God's discretion. This is hammered home in the final section of the allegory:

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

On the day the cedar went down to [death] (sh^{e}ʹol)[320] **I caused mourning**;
I closed the deep over it, and restrained its rivers, and many waters were stopped.
I clothed Lebanon in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field fainted because of it.
I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall,
when **I cast it down to [death] (sh^{e}ʹol)** with those who go down to the pit.

And **all the trees of Eden**, the choice and best of Lebanon,
all that drink water, were comforted in the world below.
They **also went down to [death] (sh^{e}ʹol)** with it, to those who are slain by the sword;
yes, those who were its arm, who lived under its shadow among the nations.

Whom are you thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden?
You shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the world below.
You shall lie among the uncircumcised, **with those who are slain by the sword**.

"**This is Pharaoh and all his multitude**,"
declares the Lord [YHWH].

(Ezekiel 31:15-18 ESV)

As a proxy for Satan the Devil, **Pharaoh comes under God's judgement**. Pharaoh's arrogance is manifest in his claims of divinity and ownership of the Nile. God will throw all the "arrogant" to the scavengers. The beauty of a cedar tree is compared to the **Kings of Assyria** and to the **Pharaohs of Egypt** – all **the "arrogant" will be brought down**.

Egypt & Babylon

Nebuchadnezzar is explicitly stated to be the agent of God's punishment on Egypt:

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt,
by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

[320] See footnote ***46***

He and his people with him, the most ruthless of nations,
shall be brought in to destroy the land,
and they shall draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain.
(Ezekiel 30:10-11 ESV see also 30:24-25, 32:11-12)

In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month,[321]
the word of [YHWH] came to me:

Son of man, **Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon** made his army labor hard against Tyre.
Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare,
yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor
that he had performed against her.

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Behold, **I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon**;
and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it;
and it shall be the wages for his army.
I have given him the land of Egypt as his payment for which he labored,
because they worked for me, declares the Lord [YHWH].
(Ezekiel 29:17-20 ESV)

Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Pharoah Necho at the Battle of Charchemish in 605BC is well documented.[322] **Subsequent action of Nebuchadnezzar in Egypt is NOT well documented**.[323] Jeremiah had also prophesized that Nebuchadnezzar would come to Egypt.[324] In any case, the full extent of these prophecies was clearly NOT fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar. **Nebuchadnezzar, in God's eyes, was just the first exponent of the period of "world ruling empires"**.[325] The subsequent subjugation of Egypt by the Persians, the Greeks, and finally by Rome, is well documented.[326] These "world empires" fulfilled the prophecies of destruction on Egypt.

Land of Egypt

God unequivocally states that Egypt will become a desolation:

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Behold, I will bring a sword upon you, and will cut off from you man and beast,
and **the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste**.

Then they will know that I am [YHWH].

Because you said,
'The Nile is mine, and I made it,'

therefore, behold, I am against you and against your streams,
and **I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation**,
from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Cush.

No foot of man shall pass through it, and no foot of beast shall pass through it;
it shall be uninhabited forty years.

And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation **in the midst of desolated countries**,
and **her cities shall be a desolation forty years** among cities that are laid waste.

I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries.

For thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

At the end of forty years
I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered,
and **I will restore the fortunes of Egypt** and bring them back to the land of Pathros,
the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom.
It shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations.
And I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations.
(Ezekiel 29:8-15 ESV see also 30:12-26, 32:13-16, Joel 3:19)

[321] April 26, 571BC; this is the latest date cited in the Book of Ezekiel; see Thiele page 173
[322] See Wiseman (**NB**) pages 14-15; **DOTT** pages 78-79
[323] There is one tablet in the British Museum which suggests Nebuchadnezzar was Egypt in 568BC, see Wiseman (**NB**) pages 39-41.
[324] See Jeremiah 43:8-11 and the discussion in section ***2.8.2 Egypt & Babylon***
[325] See the discussion in sections ***2.6.3 The Period of World Empires*** and ***2.12 Daniel***
[326] See **IDB** volume 2 pages 55-56

Very few commentators find a period of history where Egypt was desolate and empty.[327] Most commentators take the "forty years" as just symbolic of punishment.[328] However, this prophecy seems to be implying more than that. The object, as always, is for humanity to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, "**they will know that I am YHWH**". This will only happen in the World Tomorrow. The desolation of Egypt is to occur "**in the midst of desolated countries**". This sounds like the aftermath of the world war preceding the Day of YHWH. Finally after the "forty years" of desolation, **Egypt will be restored**, but never again attain pre-eminence. **This sounds like a prophecy to be fulfilled in the future**, specifically after the Second Advent.

Eschatology

Chapter 30 verses 1 through 9 contain what appears to be a prophecy for the end-time:

(1) The word of [YHWH] came to me:
(2) Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
Wail, '**Alas for the day**!'
(3) For the day is near, **the day of [YHWH] is near**;
it will be **a day of clouds**, a time of doom for the nations.
(4) **A sword shall come upon Egypt**, and anguish shall be in Cush,
when the slain fall in Egypt,
and her wealth is carried away, and her foundations are torn down.
(5) Cush, and Put, and Lud, and all Arabia, and Libya,
and the people of **the land that is in league**, **shall fall with them by the sword**.
(6) Thus says [YHWH]:
Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down;
from Migdol to Syene they shall fall within her by the sword,
declares the Lord [YHWH].
(7) And **they shall be desolated** **in the midst of desolated countries**,
and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste.
(8) **Then they will know that I am [YHWH]**,
when I have set fire to Egypt, and all her helpers are broken.
(9) **On that day messengers shall go out from me in ships**
to terrify the unsuspecting people of Cush,
and anguish shall come upon them on the day of Egypt's doom; for, behold, it comes!
(Ezekiel 30:1-9 ESV)

Analysis:

- **Verses 2b & 3** closely echo **Joel's pronouncements** of the Day of YHWH:
  Alas for the day!
  For **the day of [YHWH] is near**,
  a day of darkness and gloom, **a day of clouds** and thick darkness!
  (Joel 1:15a, 2:2a ESV)
- **Verses 4 & 7** sound very much like the prophecies of Egypt's desolation and subsequent emptiness, "**a sword shall come upon Egypt**", "**they shall be desolated** **in the midst of desolated countries**":
  And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation **in the midst of desolated countries** …
  (Ezekiel 29:12a ESV)
- **Verses 5 & 6** sound like Daniel's prophecies of the King of the South, "**those who support Egypt shall fall**":
  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** …
  (Daniel 11:40-41a ESV)
- **Verse 8**, God's objective remains the same, "**they will know that I am YHWH**"

[327] See Hoeh volume 1 pages 212-217
[328] For example, see KD9 pages 247-248

- **Verse 9**, these may be the same **messengers** identified by Isaiah:[329]

> **Go, you swift messengers**,
> to **a nation tall and smooth**, to a people feared near and far,
> a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide.
> (Isaiah 18:2b ESV)

It would appear that Egypt will be desolate at the beginning of the World Tomorrow but will later be restored and exist as a nation. This is also suggested by other prophecies.[330]

2.11 Assessment of Ezekiel

The Focus of the Book of Ezekiel is always the Exiles among whom Ezekiel worked. In order to get the attention of the Exiles, **God revealed himself to Ezekiel in a theophany demonstrating that God was NOT tied to the Temple in Jerusalem in the Land of Israel**. God is the owner of the whole world and the "**God of Every Nation**". The prophecies given to Ezekiel concerning the nations demonstrate the sovereignty of God. Repeatedly God expressed his purpose in dealing with the nations, "**then they will know that I am YHWH**". God gave Ezekiel a summary of God's dealing with the nations of this world, the **Allegory of the Grave**. All that is of this world will pass away and God will make all things new:

> Son of man, wail over the multitude of **Egypt**, and send them down,
> her and the daughters of **majestic nations**,
> to the **world below**, to those who have gone down to the **pit** …
>
> They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword.
> The **mighty chiefs** shall speak of them, with their helpers, out of the midst of [**a grave**] (**shᵉʿol**):[331]
> 'They have come down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.'
>
> **Assyria** is there, and **all her company**,
> its **graves** all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword,
> whose **graves** are set in the uttermost parts of the **pit**;
> and her company is all around her **grave**, all of them slain, fallen by the sword,
> who spread terror in the land of the living.
>
> **Elam** is there, and **all her multitude** around her **grave**; all of them slain, fallen by the sword,
> who went down uncircumcised into the **world below**, who spread their terror in the land of the living;
> and they bear their shame with those who go down to the **pit**.
>
> **Meshech-Tubal** is there, and **all her multitude**,
> her **graves** all around it, all of them uncircumcised,
> slain by the sword; for they spread their terror in the land of the living.
>
> **Edom** is there, **her kings and all her princes**,
> who for all their might are laid with those who are killed by the sword;
> they lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the **pit**.
>
> The **princes of the north** are there, all of them, and all the **Sidonians**,
> who have gone down in shame with the slain,
> for all the terror that they caused by their might;
> they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword,
> and bear their shame with those who go down to the **pit**.
> (Ezekiel 32:18, 20a, 21-24, 26, 29-30 ESV)

The nations of the world in all their pomp and arrogance are all under the control of God.
They rise and fall as God determines.

[329] See the discussion of Isaiah chapter 18 in section ***Assyria, Egypt, & Other Nations***
[330] See Isaiah 19:16-25, Zechariah 14:18-19
[331] See footnote ***46***

2.12 Daniel

Daniel, of course, did NOT hold the office of "prophet". Daniel was among the first hostages Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylon after the Battle of Carchemish in 605BC.[332] In Nebuchadnezzar's service, Daniel became a statesman,[333] a counsellor,[334] and an administrator.[335] Nevertheless, **Daniel was given revelations and visions which laid out the course of world history, as directed by God, to move inexorably to the establishment of the Kingdom of God**.

Daniel's first revelation related to **a dream of Nebuchadnezzar**. Daniel was summoned to interpret the dream, and God revealed to him its meaning:

> Then **the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision** of the night.
> Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.
> Daniel answered and said:
>
> > Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.
> > He changes times and seasons; **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.
> >
> > To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise,
> > for you have given me wisdom and might,
> > and have now made known to me what we asked of you,
> > for you have made known to us the king's matter.
>
> (Daniel 2:19-23 ESV)

Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream of a magnificent image which no one could interpret. **The dream had come from God and God gave only Daniel the ability to interpret the dream**.

2.12.1 The Period of World Empires

This initial understanding given to Daniel was the framework of human history from his time until the arrival of the Kingdom of God. **Nebuchadnezzar's image depicted four "kingdoms", starting with the Neo-Babylonian Empire originated by Nebuchadnezzar**:

> **You saw, O king, and behold, a great image**.
> This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.
>
> The **head** of this image was of fine **gold**,
> its **chest** and **arms** of **silver**,
> its **middle** and **thighs** of **bronze**,
> its **legs** of **iron**, its **feet** partly of **iron** and partly of **clay**.
>
> As you looked, **a stone was cut out by no human hand**,
> and **it struck the image** on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.
> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces,
> and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away,
> so that **not a trace of them could be found**.
>
> But **the stone** that struck the image **became a great mountain and filled the whole earth**.
>
> **This was the dream**.
>
> **Now we will tell the king its interpretation**.
>
> **You**, **O king**, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom,
> the power, and the might, and the glory,
> and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell,
> the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens,
> making you rule over them all—**you are the head of gold**.
>
> **Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you**,
> and **yet a third kingdom** of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.
> 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.

[332] See Daniel 1:1-4
[333] See Daniel 2:24-25,49, 4:9
[334] See Daniel 1:17-20, 5:11-12
[335] See Daniel 2:48, 5:29, 6:1-3

> 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: 31-40, 44 ESV)

This vision defines the **mainstream of civilization** from the time of Daniel until the establishment of the Kingdom of God. **The empires themselves define "world city"**[336] – the nations of the world going their own way in ignorance and defiance of the Way of God. God has left the nations of the world to define their own forms of government, social organization, economic systems, and religions under the sway of Satan the Devil to make it clear that no humanly devised way can work. **Only the Way of God can bring peace, order, good government, happiness, and freedom to humanity**. This will happen when the Kingdom of God is established.

Starting with the time of Daniel, **God has always worked with a small "remnant"**, a small group of people who are True Worshippers of God. **Ezekiel established the first remnant**.[337] Since then, the remnant community has always existed within the mainstream of civilization. Throughout the Persian, Greek, and early Roman periods, the remnant community was sheltered within the larger group that came to be known as "Jews". This is the community to which the Messiah came in the First Advent.

At the time of the First Advent, **Imperial Rome defined the mainstream of civilization**. Imperial Rome was destroyed by the Germanic tribes by about 500AD. This ushered in the middle ages which would be followed by the renaissance and the modern world. Since the fall of Imperial Rome, there has always been within Western Civilization a continued fascination with **the "mystic" of the Roman Empire**.

The Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation dovetail each other to explain the flow of history within the mainstream of civilization as depicted by the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The "mystic" of Rome would materialize into repeated incarnations of the "Roman Empire".[338] The final incarnation is the "**Babylon the Great**" identified in the Book of Revelation. This is discussed further in the next section, ***2.12.2 The Fourth Kingdom***, and in section ***3.3 Babylon the Great***.

With the establishment of the New Testament Church the nature of the remnant community changed.[339] The growth of the New Testament Church forced a separation from Judaism. The "remnant community" now had to stand alone. **Satan's attack on the Church was immediate**. The Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian Elders of what would happen:

> Now from Miletus {Paul} sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.
> And when they came to him, he said to them:
>
> > **Pay careful attention to yourselves** and to all the flock,
> > in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,
> > **to care for the church of God**,
> > which he obtained with his own blood.
> >
> > I know that after my departure **fierce wolves will come in among you**, not sparing the flock;
> > and **from among your own selves** will arise men speaking twisted things,
> > to **draw away the disciples after them**.
> > (Acts 20:17-18a, 28-30 ESV)

Satan corrupted the mainstream of the Church through deception and lies. By the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325AD, the process was complete. The visible church was given carte blanche to kill True Worshippers of God. The remnant community had to hide from the mainstream church which claimed to be the true church. In modern times, True Christians can function in the open, but **the mainstream of "Christianity" remains locked into lies**.

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[336] See footnote ***12***

[337] See section ***2.10 Ezekiel***

[338] See, for example, the following articles on the "Holy Roman Empire": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire and https://www.britannica.com/place/Holy-Roman-Empire.

[339] See section ***2.3.4 The Purpose of the New Testament Church*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

Since the time of Daniel, God has dealt with a "remnant community" within the mainstream of civilization. Since the middle ages the mainstream of civilization has been Western Civilization. The remnant community today comprises individuals and small groups who are True Worshippers of God. The purpose of the remnant today is to prepare for the Second Advent, "**the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed**".

2.12.2 The Fourth Kingdom

In **chapter 7** of his book, **Daniel reports a vision which parallels Nebuchadnezzar's dream image**:

> 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**.
> >
> > **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 7:2-8 ESV)

The **first beast** had been identified already as the **Neo-Babylonian Empire**.[340] In **chapter 8**, the second beast is identified as the **Persian Empire,** and the third beast is identified as the **Greek Empire** of Alexander.[341] The fourth beast is NOT identified. **Daniel specifically inquired about the fourth beast**:

> 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.
>
> As I looked, **this horn made war with the saints**
> and **prevailed over them**, until the Ancient of Days came,
> and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High,
> and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.
>
> Thus he[342] 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.

[340] See Daniel 2:37-38
[341] See Daniel 8:20-22
[342] An angelic being, see verse 16

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;
and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

But the court shall sit in judgment,
and **his dominion shall be taken away**,
to be consumed and destroyed to the end.

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 7:19-27 ESV)

The identity of the fourth beast is only made clear in the Book of Revelation. John is NOT seeing the same vison as Daniel saw. The imagery is different, but **the connections between the visions make it clear that what is being represented is the same**:

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.

And the beast was given **a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words**,
and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.
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** …
(Revelation 13:1-2, 5-7 ESV)

In John's vision, the beast has characteristics of the first three beasts of Daniel's vision. These beasts were consumed by the fourth beast of Daniel's vision, "**it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet**", implying they became part of it. The most important connection is the "**mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words**", which is clearly the same as "**another horn**, **a little one**", "**a mouth speaking great things**". In Daniel's vision, this little horn "**made war with the saints**" and "**prevailed over them**". In John's vision, the beast is "**allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them**". The fourth beast "**shall devour the whole earth**"; to it "**authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation**".

John's vision extends to a **second beast** which is closely related to the first beast. This beast exercises the power from Satan, "**to it the dragon gave his power**". This is the power of the "**little horn**" in 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 …
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 …
(Revelation 13:11-14a ESV)

Later an angel explained to John the relationship between these two beasts.[343] John sees them both together in another vision:

> 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)

The second beast is likened to a "**great prostitute**" who seduces the world into spiritual whoredom,[344] "**the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality**". The "**great prostitute**" is identified as "**Babylon the great**", the final incarnation of "world city".[345] Finally the angel clarifies the identity of the images in the visions:

> 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 17:15, 18 ESV)

The fourth beast of Daniel's vision represents Rome, in all the incarnations of the Roman Empire – especially the final incarnation to occur at the end-time, "**Babylon the great**". The "**little horn**", the "**great prostitute**", represents the religious authority that emanates from that city.

2.12.3 God of All Humanity

The Book of Daniel contains four episodes which emphasize **the dominion of God over the individual rulers and their empires**, but also that **God's dominion extends all humanity**. **Chapter 3** contains the incident of **Nebuchadnezzar's "image of gold"**:

> King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits.
> He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.
>
> And the herald proclaimed aloud,
> "You are commanded, **O peoples, nations, and languages**,
> that when 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 3:1, 4-5 ESV)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship the image.[346] They are accused[347] and are thrown into a furnace[348] where they are protected by an angel.[349] **Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the superiority of God and extols his greatness**:

> **Nebuchadnezzar** answered and said,
> "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,
> who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him,
> and set aside the king's command,
> and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

[343] For a detailed comparison of beasts in Daniel and Revelation see the chart "**Beasts of Revelation and Daniel**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/reference-material
[344] See section ***6. Spiritual Whoredom*** in the paper "**The Human Condition**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[345] See footnote ***12***
[346] See Daniel 3:16-18
[347] See Daniel 3:8-12
[348] See Daniel 3:19-23
[349] See Daniel 3:24-27

Therefore **I make a decree**:

Any people, nation, or language
that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins,
for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way."

King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, **that dwell in all the earth**:

Peace be multiplied to you!
It has seemed good to me to show the **signs and wonders**
that **the Most High God has done** for me.

How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders!
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and **his dominion endures from generation to generation**.

(Daniel 3:28-29, 4:1-3 ESV)

Chapter 4 contains **Nebuchadnezzar's second dream**. In the dream, he sees **a great tree visible to the whole earth**.[350] An angelic being comes and chops down the tree[351] and proclaims:

The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones,
to the end **that the living may know** that **the Most High rules the kingdom of men**
and **gives it to whom he will** and sets over it the lowliest of men.
(Daniel 4:17 ESV)

Daniel is summoned to interpret the dream,[352] which he does,[353] predicting bad times for Nebuchadnezzar:

… this is the interpretation, O king:

It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king,
that **you shall be driven from among men**,
and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.
You shall be made to eat grass like an ox,
and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven,
and **seven periods of time**[354] shall pass over you,
till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and **gives it to whom he will**.
(Daniel 4:24-25 ESV)

After Nebuchadnezzar does his "**seven periods of time**" wandering among animals,[355] Nebuchadnezzar officially acknowledges **the universal superiority and dominion of God**:

At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me,
and **I blessed the Most High**, and praised and honored him who lives forever,

for **his dominion is an everlasting dominion**,
and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;
all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
and he does according to his will among the host of heaven
and **among the inhabitants of the earth**;
and none can stay his hand or say to him,
"What have you done?"
(Daniel 4:34-35 ESV)

Chapter 5 recounts **Belshazzar's final feast**,[356] during which a hand appeared and inscribed the famous saying on the wall, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN".[357] Daniel is summoned to interpret the writing.[358] **Daniel** warns the king of his arrogance and pronounces **the judgement of the writing**:

O king, **the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar** your father
kingship and greatness and glory and majesty.
And because of the greatness that he gave him,
all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him.
But when **his heart was lifted up** and his spirit was hardened so that **he dealt proudly**,
he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him.

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[350] See Daniel 4:10-12
[351] See Daniel 4:13-15
[352] See Daniel 4:8-9
[353] See Daniel 4:20-23
[354] This is a "non-determinant" period of time; "seven" is symbolic for completeness; see ESV comment, **KD9** page 590, Young (**DN**) page 105.
[355] See Daniel 4:28-33
[356] See Daniel 5:1-5
[357] See Daniel 5:25
[358] See Daniel 5:10-12

… **until he knew** that **the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind**
and **sets over it whom he will**.

And you his son, **Belshazzar**, **have not humbled your heart**, though you knew all this,
but **you have lifted up yourself** against the Lord of heaven.
And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives,
and your concubines have drunk wine from them.
And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone,
which do not see or hear or know,
but the **God** in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, **you have not honored**.

This is the interpretation of the matter:

MENE, **God has numbered the days of your kingdom** and **brought it to an end**;
TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting;
PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

(Daniel 5:18-19a, 20, 21b-23, 26-28 ESV)

Chapter 6 recounts Daniel's experience in the **den of lions**. Similarly to chapter 3, where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are accused by jealous peers, Daniel is set up by the king's decree.[359] Daniel calmly ignores the decree and is thrown to the lions.[360] God protects Daniel,[361] and the **King issues a decree acknowledging the superiority and universality of the dominion of God**:

Then **King Darius** wrote **to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth**:

"Peace be multiplied to you.
I make a decree, that **in all my royal dominion**
people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,
for he is the living God, enduring forever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and **his dominion shall be to the end**.

He delivers and rescues;
he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

(Daniel 6:25-27 ESV)

These four incidents, in conjunction with the visions reported in the Book of Daniel, provide a strong statement that **God is in control of history**, as well as **each and every person who has ever lived**. Nations and empires come and go as God allows. Individuals must stand alone before God and make the determination to worship only the True God, as did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

2.13 Assessment of Daniel

Daniel filled a unique role in the working out of the Plan of God. Daniel lived his entire adult life in the heart of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, "world city"[362] exemplar. In that environment, God gave Daniel visions that map out the course of human history until the arrival of the Kingdom of God. **Daniel was a man of understanding and wisdom**, but **he could not fully comprehend the visions**:

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**."

(Daniel 8:15-17 ESV)

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**.

(Daniel 12:8-9 ESV)

[359] See Daniel 6:4-9
[360] See Daniel 6:10-18
[361] See Daniel 6:19-22
[362] See footnote ***12***

The understanding of the visions of Daniel is only possible when they are matched with the visions of the Apostle John reported in the Book of Revelation.[363] **The Book of Revelation was given to John by Jesus Christ for the understanding of the New Testament Church**; mainstream Christianity has never understood the Book of Revelation:

> **The revelation of Jesus Christ**,
> which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.
> He made it known by sending his angel to **his servant John**,
> who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.
> 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 is near**.
>
> **John to the seven churches that are in Asia**:
>
> > Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come,
> > and from the seven spirits who are before his throne …
>
> … **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.
>
> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.
> But he laid his right hand on me, saying,
>
> > "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one.
> > I died, and behold I am alive forevermore,
> > and I have the keys of Death and [the grave] (hades).[364]
> > **Write therefore the things that you have seen,**
> > **those that are and those that are to take place after this**. …"
>
> (Revelation 1:1-4, 11, 17-19 ESV)

3. The Nations in Prophecy

Section ***2. Prophecies Concerning the Nations*** has dealt with the individual prophecies. This section contains a synthesis of the prophecies concerning each of the nations.

3.1 Neighbours of Israel

The immediate neighbours of the Land of Israel were Edom, Ammon, Moab, Philistia, Phoenicia, and Aram. Edom, Ammon, and Moab were related to Israel by descent through Abraham. Phoenicia was the last exponent of the Canaanites. The Philistines were most likely related to the early inhabitants of Greece, so their linage would go back to Javan. Aram, the eponymous ancestor of the Nation of Aram, was a son of Shem, so from a related line from which Abraham descended.

3.1.1 Edom

Esau and Jacob were twins. Esau was the elder, hence, the holder of the "birthright". Jacob purchased the "birthright" from Esau, when he was under duress, for a bowel of red stew.[365] The word "red" in Hebrew is אָדֹם ʼadom, so Esau became known as אֱדוֹם ʼedom. Later, Jacob lied to his father Isaac and swindled the patriarchal blessing from Edom.[366] For this, Esau planned to kill Jacob. At the behest of Rachel, their mother, Jacob was sent to Haran[367] where he stayed for some twenty years. When Jacob returned to Canaan, he and Esau were reconciled.[368] The descendants of Esau settled in the hill country south of the Dead Sea, known as "Seir".[369] This became the traditional territory of Edom.

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[363] For a detailed analysis of Daniel's visions see the chart "**Apocalyptic Sweep in Daniel**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/reference-material

[364] The Greek word ἅδης - hadēs, is the equivalent of the Hebrew *shᵉʼol*; *hades* should always be translated by "death" or "grave", or similar; see footnote ***46***.

[365] See Genesis 25:21-34

[366] See Genesis 27:1-29

[367] See Genesis 27:41-45, 28:1-5

[368] See Genesis 33:4-11

[369] See Genesis 36:8

The Bible gives no information as to how **the descendants of Edom developed unremitting hatred for the descendants of Jacob**, Israel; but when the Israelites were about make their final approach to the Plains of Moab from Kadesh-barnea, the descendants of Edom demonstrated unremitting hatred:

> **Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom**:
>
> "**Thus says your brother Israel**:
> You know all the hardship that we have met:
> how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt a long time.
> And the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and our fathers.
> And when we cried to [YHWH], he heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt.
>
> And here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory.
> **Please let us pass through your land**.
> We will not pass through field or vineyard, or drink water from a well.
> We will go along the King's Highway.
> We will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left
> until we have passed through your territory."
>
> But **Edom said to him**,
>
> "**You shall not pass through**, lest I come out with the sword against you."
>
> And the people of Israel said to him,
>
> "We will go up by the highway,
> and if we drink of your water, I and my livestock, then I will pay for it.
> Let me only pass through on foot, nothing more."
>
> But he said, "You shall not pass through."
>
> And **Edom came out against them with a large army** and with a strong force.
> Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory, so Israel turned away from him.
> (Numbers 20:14-21 ESV)

This hatred became the basis of all Edom's dealings with Israel. All of the Prophets dealt with this hatred. The **Book of Obadiah**[370] is the prototypical prophecy concerning Edom. All subsequent prophecies reflect its themes. The **Prophet Joel** makes passing reference to Edom's hatred.[371] The **Prophet Amos** identifies Edom's hatred as the basis of God' wrath.[372] **Jeremiah chapter 49 verses 7-22** can be considered an elaboration of the **Book of Obadiah**.

Starting in the **Book of Obadiah** there is a thread of symbolism where **Edom is used as a type of "world city"**.[373] The **Prophet Amos** expanded upon this thread, and his usage is quoted in the **Book of Acts**.[374] The **Prophet Isaiah** also builds on this thread.[375] Several prophecies use "Edom" as a type of "world city" in an end time context.[376] Another thread of **prophecies foretell perpetual desolation of the territory of Edom and no restoration of the nation**:

> **Edom shall become a horror**.
> Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its disasters.
> As when Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities were overthrown, says [YHWH],
> **no man shall dwell there**, **no man shall sojourn in her**.
> (Jeremiah 49:17-18 ESV)
>
> For **my sword has drunk its fill** in the heavens;
> behold, **it descends for judgment upon Edom**,
> upon **the people I have devoted to destruction (ḥerem)**.[377]
>
> And **the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch**, and her soil into sulfur;
> her land shall become burning pitch.
> Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever.
> **From generation to generation it shall lie waste**;
> none shall pass through it forever and ever.
> Its nobles—**there is no one there to call it a kingdom**, and all its princes shall be nothing.
> (Isaiah 34:5, 9-10, 12 ESV see also Joel 3:19)

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[370] See section ***2.1.1 Obadiah***
[371] See Joel 3:19
[372] See Amos 1:11-12
[373] See Obadiah 15-16
[374] See Amos 9:11-12 and the discussion of these verses in section ***2.3.1 Amos***
[375] See Isaiah 21:11-12 and the discussion in section ***World City: Babylon & Tyre***
[376] See Isaiah 34:1-5, 63:1-6, Jeremiah 49:12-22
[377] See ***Excursus 1 – Devoted to Destruction: ḥaram*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

The **Prophet Ezekiel** alludes to Edom's moving into the Land of Israel during the Exile, noting that God takes it as a personal afront.[378] Ezekiel also notes that the final blow to Edom will be delivered by Israel.[379] This was fulfilled when **the last vestiges of the people of Edom were forced to accept Judaism** by John Hyrcanus in about 120BC.[380] The people of Edom became known as "Idumeans". With the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, the Idumeans disappeared from history, the last exponents being considered "Jews".[381]

3.1.2 Ammon & Moab

Like Edom, these people were related to Israel, but more distantly. They were descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew.[382] There were seldom smooth relations between Israel and Ammon and Moab, but they are NOT castigated for the same unremitting hatred as Edom.

Like Edom, Moab resisted Israel's advance to the Promised Land. The area to the east of the Jordan River, where Israel camped, was called "**the Plains of Moab**"[383] because it had previously been Moabite territory. When Israel got there, the territory was under the control of the **Amorite King**, **Sihon**. Israel defeated Sihon and took control of the territory.[384] Maintaining a desire to regain control of the territory, Moab conspired with a group of Midianites to hire Bilᵉ`am, a famous soothsayer, to curse Israel.[385] God forced Bilᵉ`am to bless Israel.[386] Having failed in a direct attack on Israel, Bilᵉ`am devised a plot to corrupt[387] Isarel through idolatry:

> While Israel lived in Shittim,[388] **the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab**.
> These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods,
> and **the people ate and bowed down to their gods**.
> So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor.
> And the anger of [YHWH] was kindled against Israel.
> (Numbers 25:1-3 ESV)

The **Prophet Micah** alludes to this incident many years later:

> O my people, **remember what Balak king of Moab devised**,
> and what Balaam (Bilᵉ`am)[389] the son of Beor answered him,
> and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
> that you may know the righteous acts of [YHWH].
> (Micah 6:5 ESV)

Over the succeeding centuries, both Ammon and Moab exhibited on and off enmity with Israel. Both are castigated in the **Book of Amos** for atrocities in war.[390] Through the **Prophet Zephaniah**, God pronounced the fate of both Ammon and Moab to be eradication:

> I have heard the **taunts of Moab** and the **revilings of the Ammonites**,
> how they have taunted my people and made boasts against their territory.
> Therefore, as I live, declares [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel,
> "**Moab shall become like Sodom**,
> and **the Ammonites like Gomorrah**,
> a land possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a waste forever.
> (Zephaniah 2:8-9a ESV)

The **Book of Isaiah chapters 15 and 16**[391] is the most detailed prophecy of Maob. Much of **Jeremiah chapter 48**[392] is a reiteration of the prophecies in Isaiah, indicating that the prophecies were still in force

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[378] See Ezekiel 35:5-13
[379] See Ezekiel 25:14
[380] Josephus Antiquities 13,9,1 and the discussion in Shürer First Division volume 1 page 280
[381] See Shürer First Division volume 2 page 227-230, 245-250; and, IDB volume 2 page 26
[382] See Genesis 11:27b,31, 12:4, 19:30-38
[383] See Numbers 22:1
[384] See Numbers 21:21-30
[385] See Numbers 22:3-21
[386] See Numbers chapters 23 and 24
[387] See Numbers 31:8
[388] The Plains of Moab, see Numbers 33:49
[389] The transliteration "Balaam" is not even close for בִּלְעָם - bilᵉ`am.
[390] See Amos 1:13-15, 2:1-3
[391] See section ***Assyria, Egypt, & Other Nations***
[392] See section ***2.8.3 Prophecies Concerning the Nations***

and had not yet been fulfilled. **Jeremiah chapter 49** also reiterates the sin and punishment of Ammon.[393] **Ezekiel chapter 21** contains a unique prophecy concerning Ammon. When Nebuchadnezzar is on his way to Jerusalem in 588BC, Ezekiel describes his deliberations as to the point of attack:

> 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.
> (Ezekiel 21:18-20 ESV)

Nebuchadnezzar went first to Jerusalem and **the Ammonites cast reproach on Israel**.[394] **Ezekiel Chapter 25** describes the prophesized **fate of both Ammon and Moab**:

> The word of [YHWH] came to me:
> Son of man, set your face toward the Ammonites and prophesy against them.
> Say to the Ammonites, Hear the word of [YHWH]:
> … **I am handing you over to the people of the East for a possession**,
> and they shall set their encampments among you
> and make their dwellings in your midst.
> They shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk.
> Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
> Because **Moab** … said, 'Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations,'
> **I will give it along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession**,
> that the Ammonites may be **remembered no more among the nations** …
> (Ezekiel 25:1-3a, 4, 8, 10 ESV)

This was fulfilled during the exile when the Nabatean Arabs began to take over the traditional territories of Ammon and Moab. Over the next decades, both nations completely disappeared. However, the Book of Ezekiel does indicate the possibility of mitigation:

> **Then you will know that I am [YHWH]**.
> (Ezekiel 25:5b, 7bβ, 11b ESV)

To acknowledge God requires existence. Jeremiah explicitly reports God's intention to recreate Ammon and Moab in the World Tomorrow:

> But afterward **I will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites**, declares [YHWH].
> Yet **I will restore the fortunes of Moab** in the latter days, declares [YHWH].
> (Jeremiah 49:6, 48:47a ESV)

The **Prophet Joel** reports that the Valley of Shittim, in the **Plains of Moab**, will be restored by the **River of Life** in the World Tomorrow:

> Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold,
> **water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east** (for the temple faced east).
> The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.
> And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?"
> Then he led me back to the bank of the river.
> As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other.
> And he said to me,
> "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah,
> and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh.
> And **wherever the river goes**, every living creature that swarms **will live**,
> and there will be very many fish.
> For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh;
> so **everything will live where the river goes**.
> (Ezekiel 47:1, 6-9 ESV)
> On that day **living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem**,
> half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea.
> It shall continue in summer as in winter.
> (Zechariah 14:8 ESV)

[393] See Jeremiah 49:1-5
[394] See Ezekiel 21:28-32

> Then the angel showed me the river of **the water of life**, bright as crystal,
> flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city;
> also, on either side of the river, **the tree of life** with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.
> The leaves of the tree were for **the healing of the nations**.
> (Revelation 22:1-2 ESV)

> 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;
> and **a fountain shall come forth from the house of [YHWH]** and **water the Valley of Shittim**.
> (Joel 3:18 ESV)

Both Ammon and Moab have disappeared from history, but in the World Tomorrow, their traditional territories will be restored and repopulated.

3.1.3 Philistia, Phoenicia, and Aram

These three neighbour nations were unrelated to Israel. At times they were allies of Israel; at times, they were enemies. None of these nations receives the severe castigations of Edom, Moab, and Ammon. **God's judgement of these nations is typical of the nations of the world in general**. God never condones or accepts sin, but the nations without knowledge of God receive lessor punishment.

In the **Book of Joel**, Philistia and Phoenicia are collectively challenged by God and are punished, in kind, for their treatment of Israel.[395] Similarly, in the **Book of Amos**, Aram, Philistia, and Phoenicia are castigated for atrocities[396] and meted out punishments of destruction:

> … the people of [**Aram**] (ʿaram)[397] shall go into exile to Kir, says [YHWH]
>
> … the remnant of the **Philistines** shall perish, says the Lord [YHWH]
>
> So I will send a fire upon the wall of **Tyre**, and it shall devour her strongholds.
> (Amos 1:5b, 8b, 10 ESV)

Similarly, in the **Book of Zechariah**, God is explicit that:

- he views **Aram** as typical of "the nations"
  > The oracle of the word of [YHWH] is against
  > the land of Hadrach and Damascus[398] is its resting place.
  > For **[YHWH] has an eye on mankind** …
  > (Zechariah 9:1 ESV)
- the vast commercial empire of **Phoenicia** is an affront
  > … the Lord will strip her of her possessions and **strike down her power on the sea** …
  > (Zechariah 9:4a ESV)
- the pride of **Philistia** is its undoing
  > … I will cut off **the pride of Philistia**.
  > (Zechariah 9:6b)

Furthermore, like Edom, **the last vestiges of the Philistines will be absorbed by Israel**:

> … it too shall be **a remnant** for our God;
> it shall be like **a clan in Judah**, and Ekron shall be **like the Jebusites**.[399]
> (Zechariah 9:7b ESV)

Zephaniah's prophecy of the destruction of **Philistia** in chapter 2 verses 2-6, is followed up by a prophecy that **the territory of the Philistines will revert to Israel** in the World Tomorrow:

> And you, O seacoast, shall be pastures,
> with meadows for shepherds and folds for flocks.
> **The seacoast shall become the possession of the remnant of the house of Judah**,
> on which they shall graze …
> (Zephaniah 2:6-7a ESV see also Ezekiel 48:7-29, Numbers 34:1-12)

The **Book of Jeremiah** prophesizes the end of the nations of Philistia and Phoenicia:

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[395] See Joel 3:4-8 and the discussion in section ***2.2.1 Joel***

[396] See Amos 1:3-10 and the discussion in section ***2.3.1 Amos***

[397] See footnote ***61***

[398] Hadrach and Damascus are within Aram.

[399] Early in his reign, David took the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites; see 2 Samuel 5:5-7. The remaining Jebusites were absorbed into Israel; see 2 Samuel 24:18-24, 1 Kings 9:20-21.

> … because of the day that is coming to **destroy all the Philistines**,
> to **cut off from Tyre and Sidon** every helper that remains.
> (Jeremiah 47:4a ESV see also Ezekiel 25:15-17)

Isaiah's prophecy of a **contemporary punishment of Philistia** at the hand of Assyria, in Isaiah chapter 14 verses 29-31, is discussed in section ***Assyria, Egypt, & Other Nations***. Isaiah's similar prophecy of the **contemporary destruction of Aram** by Tiglath-pileser, in chapter 17 verses 1-4, is discussed in the same section. Ezekiel's major prophecy concerning Phoenicia, specifically Tyre, is discussed in section ***2.10.3 Phoenicia***. The Book of Jeremiah contains a brief prophecy concerning Aram, specifically the city of **Damascus**, in chapter 49 verses 23-27. The city of Damascus has more than once been destroyed, but it has been rebuilt and continues to this day.

3.2 Major Powers

Egypt, **Assyria**, and **Babylon** were the major powers of the ancient world that shaped the geopolitical scene in which ancient Israel existed. They **exemplify how God controls history**. The powerful nations of the world believe themselves to be self sufficient, but in reality, they are nothing more than the pawns Satan the Devil tries to use to try to thwart the Plan of God. Repeatedly, God has stepped into history and brought down a major power to demonstrate that he is in control. History has unfolded according to the Plan of God.

3.2.1 Egypt

Egypt was the perennial nemesis of Israel. The Patriarchs went to Egypt looking for succor. Egypt showed her true colours as the **proxy of Satan the Devil** by enslaving the descendants of the Patriarchs. **God exercised his universal dominion** by thrashing the "gods" of Egypt and delivering the people of Israel and constituting them into the Nation of Israel. God's intention was that Israel would never again look to Egypt,[400] or any other physical nation for deliverance. Yet, as discussed in section ***2.8.2 Egypt & Babylon***, there was always a "party" in Jerusalem wanting to lean on Egypt:[401]

> Because **you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel**,
> when they grasped you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders;
> and when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their loins to shake.
> (Ezekiel 29:6b-7 ESV)

> Behold, you are trusting in **Egypt**, that **broken reed of a staff**,
> which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it.
> Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.
> (Isaiah 36:6 ESV)

The prophets repeatedly warned of **God's judgement on Egypt**:

> **Egypt** shall become a **desolation** …
> (Joel 3:19 ESV)

> You also, O Cushites,[402] shall be **slain by my sword**.
> (Zephaniah 2:12 ESV)

> Behold, **[YHWH] is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt**;
> and the **idols of Egypt will tremble** at his presence,
> and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.
> and the spirit of the Egyptians within them will be emptied out,
> and **I will confound their counsel**;
> (Isaiah 19:1b, 3a ESV)

> Son of man, **set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt**,
> and prophesy against him and against all Egypt;
> speak, and say, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
> Behold, **I am against you**, **Pharaoh king of Egypt** …
> (Ezekiel 29:2-3a ESV)

[400] See Deuteronomy 17:16, 28:68, Exodus 13:17, 14:13
[401] See also Hosea 7:11, 12:1, Isaiah 30:2,7
[402] Alluding to the 25th Dynasty

The **Prophet Ezekiel** reports a "**lamentation**" which clearly identifies Egypt, specifically Pharoah, as a **proxy for Satan the Devil**, and representing "**world city**",[403] to be destroyed at the Second Advent:

> Son of man, raise **a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt** and say to him:
>
> > You consider yourself a lion of the nations, but **you are like a dragon**[404] in the seas;
> > you burst forth in your rivers, trouble the waters with your feet, and foul their rivers.
> >
> > Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
> >
> > > I will throw my net over you **with a host of many peoples**,
> > > and they will haul you up in my dragnet.
> > > And I will cast you on the ground; on the open field I will fling you,
> > > and will cause all the birds of the heavens to settle on you,
> > > and I will gorge the beasts of **the whole earth** with you.
> > > I will strew your flesh upon the mountains and fill the valleys with your carcass.
> > > I will drench [earth] (ʹeretz)[405] even to the mountains with your flowing blood,
> > > and the ravines will be full of you.
> > >
> > > **When I blot you out**, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark;
> > > I will **cover the sun** with a cloud, and the **moon shall not give its light**.
> > > All the **bright lights of heaven will I make dark** over you,
> > > and put darkness on your land,
> >
> > declares the Lord [YHWH].
> >
> > I will trouble the hearts of many peoples, **when I bring your destruction among the nations**,
> > into the countries that you have not known.
> > I will make many peoples appalled at you,
> > and the hair of their kings shall bristle with horror because of you,
> > when I brandish my sword before them.
> > They shall tremble every moment, every one for his own life, **on the day of your downfall**.
>
> (Ezekiel 32:2-10 ESV)

Pharoah is a proxy for Satan the Devil, "**you are like a dragon**". At the Battle of Armageddon,[406] the armies of "**the whole earth**" will suffer as described for Pharoah:

> 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.
> (Revelation 19:17-19 ESV)

The downfall of "world city" will affect all nations of the world, "**the day of your downfall**" "**when I bring your destruction among the nations**". The "downfall" of "world city", "**when I blot you out**", symbolized by Pharaoh occurs at the Day of YHWH, after the "**heavenly signs**", the sixth seal:

> 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,
> and every mountain and island was removed from its place.
> (Revelation 6:12-14 ESV)
>
> "**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.
> (Revelation 18:2 ESV)

Ezekiel does report that Egypt will be restored in the World Tomorrow, and Isaiah had previously prophesized a restored role for Egypt :

> … I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered,
> and **I will restore the fortunes of Egypt**

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[403] See footnote ***12***
[404] See the discussion of the "dragon" in section ***Pharaoh***
[405] See footnote ***119***
[406] See footnote ***38***

and bring them back to the land of Pathros, the land of their origin,
and there they shall be a lowly kingdom.
It shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations.
And I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations.
(Ezekiel 29:13b-15 ESV)

And **[YHWH] will make himself known to the Egyptians**,
and **the Egyptians will know [YHWH] in that day** and worship with sacrifice and offering,
and they will **make vows** to [YHWH] and **perform them**.
(Isaiah 19:21 ESV)

Egypt was always the nemesis of Israel, a proxy of Saten the Devil. The territory of Ancient Egypt remains well known but the original people are gone. **A restored Egypt is prophesized for the World Tomorrow**.

3.2.2 Assyria

Although Assyria had briefly shown "repentance" at the peaching of Jonah, **the history of the nation was generally bleak**. From the time of Noah's Flood until its destruction in 609BC, **Assyria exemplified "world city"**.[407] The **Prophet Hosea** articulates **Isarel's "whoredom" with Assyria**;[408] but, in the end, Hosea prophesizes that the New Israel in the World Tomorrow will learn to look to God rather than Assyria or any the other nation:

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. …"
(Hosea 14:1-4 ESV)

The Prophet Isaiah clearly explains God's view of Assyria. Assyria is like all the nations of the world – God controls the rise and fall of nations. God commands the nations as he wills to carry out his Plan:

[YHWH] will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house
such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—**the king of Assyria**!

In that day [YHWH] will whistle for the fly that is at the end of the streams of Egypt,
and for the bee that is in **the land of Assyria**.
Woe to Assyria, **the rod of my anger**; the staff in their hands is my fury!

When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem,
he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of **the king of Assyria** and the boastful look in his eyes.
(Isaiah 7:17-18, 10:5, 12 ESV)

As the time for the destruction of Assyria drew closer, **the Prophets Nahum and Zephaniah reiterated God's judgement of Assyria**:

[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 1:14 ESV)

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.
(Zephaniah 2:13 ESV)

In the "**Allegory of the Grave**" **the Prophet Ezekiel lists Assyria as the prototypical nation laid to rest**:

Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword,
whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the pit;

[407] See the chronological chart "Summary of History" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts
[408] See Hosea 5:13, 7:11, 8:9, 9:3, 10:6, 11:5,11, 12:1; and, the discussion in section ***2.2.2 Hosea***.

and **her company is all around her grave**, all of them slain, fallen by the sword,
who spread terror in the land of the living.
(Ezekiel 32:22-23 ESV)

Assyria was the prototypical nation of the ancient world representing "world city".[409] God allowed Assyria free reign to function according to decisions of the "leaders" of the nation who were under the sway of Satan the Devil, although they did NOT understand. God used Assyria as he chose to punish Isarel. When it was time to move on to the next phase of history as God planned it out, Assyria disappeared.

3.2.3 Babylon

While living under Assyria, both the **Prophets Isaiah and Micah** looked past the hegemony of Assyria and **saw Babylon** coming:

The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah,
"Hear the word of [YHWH] of hosts:
Behold, the days are coming,
when **all that is in your house**,
and that which your fathers have stored up till this day,
shall be carried to Babylon.
Nothing shall be left, says [YHWH]. …"
(Isaiah 13:1, 39:5-6 ESV // 2 Kings 20 :16-17)

Writhe and groan, **O daughter of Zion**, like a woman in labor,
for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country;
you shall go to Babylon.
(Micah 4:10a ESV)

Isaiah also clearly saw the destruction of ancient Babylon and the transition to Medo-Persia:

Behold, **I am stirring up the Medes against them**,
who have no regard for silver and do not delight in gold.

And **Babylon**, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans,
will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.

I will rise up against them, declares [YHWH] of hosts,
and will **cut off from Babylon name and remnant**, descendants and posterity, declares [YHWH].
And I will make it a possession of the hedgehog, and pools of water,
and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction, declares [YHWH] of hosts.
(Isaiah 13:17, 19, 14:22-23 ESV

I am [YHWH], **who made all things**,
who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,
who frustrates the signs of liars and makes fools of diviners,
who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish,
who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,
who says of Cyrus,
'He is my shepherd, and **he shall fulfill all my purpose**';
(Isaiah 44:24b-26a, 28a ESV)

After the fall of Assyria in 609BC, both **Jeremiah** and his contemporary **Habakkuk** began to prophesize the **final destruction of Israel by Babylon**; after which **Babylon would be punished**:

For behold, **I am raising up the Chaldeans**, that bitter and hasty nation …
[YHWH], **you have ordained them for [justice] (mish^{e}pat)**,[410]
and you, O Rock, **have established them for reproof**.

The cup in [YHWH's] right hand will come around to you,
and utter shame will come upon your glory!
(Habakkuk 1:6a, 12b, 2:16b ESV)

… 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** …

[409] See footnote ***12***
[410] See footnote ***130***

Thus [YHWH], the God of Israel, said to me:
"**Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath**,
and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.
… all the kings of the north, far and near, one after another,
and all the kingdoms of the world that are on the face of the earth.
And **after them the king of Babylon shall drink**. "
(Jeremiah 25:9a, 15, 26 ESV)

When the time came for the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel's message to the Exiles is clear and specific. **Nebuchadnezzar was acting at the behest of God**. The destruction of Jerusalem was under the control of God:

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** …
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.
As for you, son of man, **mark two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon** to come.
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.
(Ezekiel 21:2b-3a, 11, 19a, 24:2 ESV)

From the **Book of Daniel**, it is clear that **God gave to Nebuchadnezzar considerable information about the working-out of the Plan of God**. The point being that rulers of nations should acknowledge the dominion of God, but due to human arrogance, they generally do NOT acknowledge God:

Daniel answered the king and said,
"No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers
can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked,
but **there is a God in heaven who** reveals mysteries,
and he **has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days**. …"
(Daniel 2:27-28a ESV)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king,
"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.
If this be so, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us** from the burning fiery furnace,
and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
But if not, be it known to you, O king,
that **we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image** that you have set up."
He answered and said,
"But **I see four men unbound**, **walking in the midst of the fire**, and **they are not hurt**;
and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."
Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared,
"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, **servants of the Most High God**, come out, and come here!"
Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire.
(Daniel 3:16-18, 25-26 ESV)

… this is the interpretation, O king:
It is a decree of the Most High,
which has come upon my lord the king, that you shall be driven from among men,
and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.
You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven,
and seven periods of time shall pass over you,
till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.
(Daniel 4:24-25 ESV)

On several occasions, **Nebuchadnezzar did acknowledge God**, **at least academically**:

Then King **Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel**,
and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.
The king answered and said to Daniel,
"**Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings**, and a revealer of mysteries,
for you have been able to reveal this mystery."
Nebuchadnezzar answered and said,
"**Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**,
who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him,

and set aside the king's command,
and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. …"

Now I, **Nebuchadnezzar**, **praise and extol and honor the King of heaven**,
for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.
(Daniel 2:46-47, 3:28, 4:37 ESV)

Although **the City of Babylon was very ancient** and the culture of Babylon was more or less identical with the culture of Assyria, God had used Assyria as the lead power of the ancient world until its destruction in 609BC. This was **a watershed in world history and in the Plan of God**. This was the transition to the **Period of World Empires**. The Neo-Babylonian Empire was given 70 years of hegemony.[411] After Nebuchadnezzar's Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Empire of Alexander, and the Roman Empire would be given hegemony in succession. These empires retained and transmitted the culture[412] and religion[413] of the ancient world into the modern world. The final incarnation of the Roman Empire, as the **proxy of Satan the Devil**, will make one final attempt to thwart the Plan of God just before the **Second Advent**. The attempt will fail:

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 2:44-45 ESV)

3.3 Babylon the Great

God is love.[414] God's purpose for human beings is that each and every person who has ever loved will have the opportunity for salvation, to receive the gift of eternal life and become a member of the God Family. **Satan the Devil has attempted to thwart the Plan of God by leading the nations of the world into multitudinous lies** – every possible form of government, sociological organization, economic system, and religious practice has been devised by human by beings. All are failures. **Only the Way of God can bring peace, order, good government, prosperity, and freedom to humanity**. The last defiant gasp of arrogant human being under the influence of Satan the Devil will see **the nations of the world** assemble and attempt to fight the King of kings as he returns to earth to establish the Kingdom of God.[415] In the Book of Revelation, this assemblage is labelled "**Babylon the Great**".

The Prophet Isaiah reports the words of YHWH which are echoed by angels to the Apostle John:

And he answered,
"**Fallen, fallen is Babylon**;
and all the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground."
(Isaiah 21:9b ESV)

Another angel, a second, followed, saying,
"**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great**,
she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

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**!
(Revelation 14:8, 18:1-2a ESV)

"World city"[416] **is the product of Satan the Devil**. Satan has always crowded people into cities to make it easier to control and manipulate them. At the Day of YHWH, **God will forever eradicate "world city"**:

May the offspring of evildoers nevermore be named!
Prepare slaughter for his sons because of the guilt of their fathers,

[411] 609BC-539BC; see Jeremiah 25:11-13, 29:10, Daniel 9:2
[412] The cultural foundation of society then, as now, is based on arrogance, wealth , and power.
[413] The foundation of religion in the ancient world, as now, is idolatry and lies contradicting the truth of God.
[414] See 1 John 4:7-16
[415] See Revelation 9:15-16, 16:14-16, 19:11-21
[416] See footnote ***12***

lest they rise and possess the earth, and **fill the face of the world with cities**.
(Isaiah 14:20b-21 ESV)

The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers;
the highest people of the earth languish.
The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants;
for **they have transgressed** [torah],[417] violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.
Therefore **a curse devours the earth**, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left.
(Isaiah 24:4-6 ESV)

I will punish the world for its evil, and **the wicked** for their iniquity;
I will put an end to the pomp of **the arrogant**,
and lay low the pompous pride of **the ruthless**.
(Isaiah 13:11 ESV)

Draw near, **O nations**, to hear, and give attention, **O peoples**!
Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; **the world**, and all that comes from it.

For **[YHWH] is enraged against all the nations**, and furious against all their host;
he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter.
Their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their corpses shall rise;
the mountains shall flow with their blood.
(Isaiah 34:1-3 ESV)

At the heart of Satan's lies has always been "idolatry", religious deception. "Idolatry" is "spiritual whoredom"[418] – this is the tool used by "Babylon the Great", the "great prostitute",[419] at the end-time:

… 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** …

Then I saw **another beast** rising out of the earth.
It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence,
and **makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast** …
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**.

The woman[420] 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 13:3b-4a, 11a, 12a, 15, 17:4-5 ESV)

At the destruction of "Babylon the Great", **the nations of the world who have relished her idolatry and basked her luxury will mourn**:

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 …
(Revelation 18:9-11 ESV)

The last event of the Day of YHWH is the pouring of the "**seventh bowl of wrath**". With this event "**world city**", "**Babylon the Great**", **is gone forever**:

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**!"

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.

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[417] See footnote ***18***
[418] See footnote ***344***
[419] See Nahum 3:4
[420] "The woman" and the "second beast" both represent the religious authority of the "beast power".

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. [421]

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,
"So will **Babylon the great** city be thrown down with violence, and **will be found no more**; …"
(Revelation 16:17-19, 18:21 ESV)

The Kingdom of God will replace all the lies and corruption of Satan's world with the Truth of the Bible, the Gospel. The Truth of the Bible has been available to humanity for thousands of years, but the vast majority of humanity has preferred to cling to lies. **The spreading of the Gospel started small with the inception of the New Testament Church**, it will become all encompassing over the whole earth with the inception of the Kingdom of God.

4. The Gospel to the Nations

The New Testament documents are clear and specific that **the second promise to Abraham**, particularized to Isaac and Jacob, **is fulfilled by Jesus Christ the Messiah**:

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**.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old [YHWH] appeared to Abram and said to him,
"I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,
that I may make my covenant between me and you,
and may **multiply you greatly**."

Then Abram fell on his face.
And God said to him,
"Behold, **my covenant is with you**,
and **you shall be the father of a multitude of nations**.
No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham,
for **I have made you the father of a multitude of nations**.
(Genesis 12:3, 17:1-5 ESV)

To Isaac

I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands.
And **in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**
(Genesis 26:4 ESV)

To Jacob

God Almighty bless you and **make you fruitful and multiply you**,
that **you may become a company of peoples**.

And God said to him,
"I am God Almighty: **be fruitful and multiply**.
A nation and a company of **nations shall come from you**,
and kings shall come from your own body.
(Genesis 28:3, 35:11 ESV)

At the annunciation, both **Mary** and **Zechariah allude to the promise to Abraham**:

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers, to **Abraham and to his offspring forever**.

… to show the mercy promised to our fathers and **to remember his holy covenant**,
the oath **that he swore to our father Abraham**,
to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear …
(Luke 1:54-55, 72-74 ESV)

Soon after the inception of the New Testament Church, the **Apostle Peter** is speaking to the people in the Temple courts. Peter alludes to **the promise to Abraham** having had fulfillment in Jesus' coming first to the Jews as the beginning of the blessing to "**all families of the earth**":

And **all the prophets** who have spoken,
from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days.

[421] See Jeremiah 25:15-26

You are the sons of the prophets
and of **the covenant** that God made with your fathers, saying **to Abraham**,
'And **in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed**.'
God, **having raised up his servant**, **sent him to you first**,
to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.
(Acts 3:24-26 ESV)

In writing to the newly formed Churches in the region of **Sothern Galatia** in about 48AD, the Apostle Paul establishes Abraham as "**the father of the faithful**" – an appellative that includes all True Worshippers of God. This status of Abraham is made possible by the First Advent – the beginning of the blessing promised to Abraham fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

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.
(Galatians 3:7-9 ESV)

Paul goes on to explicitly state that the covenanted blessing is Jesus Christ, the Messiah, and that "**multitudes**", "**many nations**", "**company of nations**", are the **True Worshippers** whose repentance and acceptance by God is made possible by the Messiah:

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]**[422] **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.
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female,
for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**.
And if you are Christ's, then **you are Abraham's offspring**, **heirs according to promise**.
(Galatians 3:16, 22, 26-29 ESV)

Some ten years later in writing to the Church in Rome, **Paul elaborates on the role of Abraham** and the promise to him establishing that **the basis of the promise is the faith of True Worshippers**:

He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of **the righteousness that he had by faith**
while he was still uncircumcised.
The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised,
so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,
and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised
but **who also walk in the footsteps of the faith** that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.
That is why **it depends on faith**,
in order that **the promise may rest on grace** and be guaranteed **to all his offspring**
—not only to the adherent of the [nomos][423] but also to the one who shares the faith of **Abraham**,
who is **the father of us all**, as it is written,
"**I have made you the father of many nations**"
—in the presence of the God in whom he believed,
who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.
In hope he believed against hope,
that **he should become the father of many nations**, as he had been told,
"**So shall your offspring be**."
But it is not as though the word of God has failed.
For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,
and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but
"**Through Isaac shall your offspring be named**."

[422] See section ***2.1 Faith is a Gift from God*** in the paper "**The Inner Workings of Faith**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[423] See footnote ***221***; for a discussion of Pual's use of the word "*nomos*", see section ***11.6 Paul and nomos*** in the paper "**The Writings of Moses**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God,
but **the children of the promise are counted as offspring**.
(Romans 4:11-12, 16-18, 9:6-8 ESV)

Shortly **after the destruction of the Temple**, the author of the Book of Hebrews, in addressing those members of the **Jerusalem Church who had fled to Pella**,[424] encourages their continued faith due to the promises God made to Abraham:

For surely it is not angels that he helps, but **he helps the offspring of Abraham**.

For **when God made a promise to Abraham**, since he had no one greater by whom to swear,
he swore by himself, saying,
"Surely **I will bless you and multiply you**."

And thus **Abraham**, having **patiently waited**, obtained the promise.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place
that he was to receive as an inheritance.
And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land,
living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

For **he was looking forward to the city that has foundations**, whose designer and builder is God.
(Hebrews 2:16, 6:13-15, 11:8-10 ESV)

The Book of Hebrews goes on to identify **the city to which Abraham looked**:

But as it is, they desire **a better country**, that is, **a heavenly one**.
Therefore **God** is not ashamed to be called their God, for **he has prepared for them a city**.

But you have come to **Mount Zion and to the city of the living God**, the **heavenly Jerusalem**,
and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,
and to **the assembly of the firstborn** who are enrolled in heaven,
and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,
and to **Jesus**, the **mediator of a new covenant** …
(Hebrews 11:16, 12:22-24a ESV)

The "**city to which Abraham looked**" is the Kingdom of God, the city to which those called to the New Testament Church also look. The New Testament Church is, "**the assembly of the firstborn**", "**heavenly Jerusalem**". The **Apostle Paul** elaborates, and the **Apostle Peter** affirms, that the New Testament Church is "**spiritual Israel**". **The promises and the responsibilities have passed to the New Testament Church**:

But the **Jerusalem above is free**, and **she is our mother**.
For it is written,
"Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband." (citing Isaiah 54:1)

Now you, **brothers**, like Isaac, **are children of promise**.
(Galatians 4:26-28 ESV)

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
And as for **all who walk by this rule**,
peace and mercy be upon them, and **upon the Israel of God**.
(Galatians 6:14, 16 ESV)

But you are a **chosen race**, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, a **people for his own possession**,
that you may **proclaim the excellencies** of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
Once you were not a people, but **now you are God's people**;
once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (alluding to Hosea 2:23)
(1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV)

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**.
These are the words that you shall speak to **the people of Israel**.
(Exodus 19:5-6 ESV)

[424] See ***Excursus 2 – The Book of Hebrews*** in the paper "**Pillar Three - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

After the resurrection and before the ascension, on two different occasions,[425] **Jesus instructed the Apostles on what he expected them to do**:

> And he said to them,
>
> "**Go into all the world** and **proclaim the gospel** to the whole creation.
> **Whoever believes** and **is baptized** will be saved,
> but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
>
> And **these signs** will accompany those who believe:
> in my name they will cast out demons;
> they will speak in new tongues;
> they will pick up serpents with their hands;
> and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them;
> they will **lay their hands on the sick**, and they will recover."
>
> (Mark 16:15-18 ESV)

> And Jesus came and said to them,
>
> "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me**.
> Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations**,
> **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
> **teaching them** to observe **all that I have commanded you**.
>
> And behold, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age."
>
> (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

Analysis of The Great Commission:

- Both Synoptists note the commission is universal, "**go into all the world**", "**make disciples of all nations**"
- Both Synoptists note "baptism" is required, "**is baptized**", "**baptizing them**"
- Baptism requires repentance; repentance requires knowledge; Mark notes that belief is a prerequisite, "**whoever believes**"; Matthew notes that instruction is required, "**teaching them**"
- Matthew specifies that Jesus' teaching (i.e. the whole Bible) is the basis of instruction, "**all that I have commanded you**"
- Mark specifies actions of and protection for believers, "**these signs**"
- Matthew notes Jesus' accompaniment, "**I am with you always**"

At the Ascension, **Jesus summarized what the Apostles were to accomplish**:

> So when they had come together, they asked him,
> "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
>
> He said to them,
> "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.
> But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you**,
> and **you will be my witnesses** in **Jerusalem** and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**,
> and to the **end of the earth**."
>
> (Acts 1:6-8 ESV)

The New Testament Church continues to accomplish this to this day. At the inception of the New Testament Church, the promises and responsibilities of Abraham passed to the Church. **The Church became the "great nation" promised to Abraham**. But the ultimate fulfilment is yet to come. After the Second Advent and the First Resurrection, the Gospel will fully permeate all nations to the "**end of the earth**". All nations will then comprise one "family" – the Church of God. All nations and all persons will be the "**sons of Abraham**" – **truly a Great Nation**.

[425] See the chart ***Post Resurrection Appearances*** located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts

4.1 Jesus and the Nations

On Sunday Nisan 11, three days before the crucifixion,[426] Jesus was in the Temple teaching. He was accosted by contingent of "Jewish leaders". In replying to them, Jesus presented the parable of the "**Tenants and the Vineyard**":[427]

> And they came again to Jerusalem.
> And **as he was walking in the temple**,
> the **chief priests** and the **scribes** and the **elders** came to him, and they said to him,
> "By what authority are you doing these things,
> or who gave you this authority to do them?"
>
> And he began to speak to them in parables.
> **A man planted a vineyard** and put a fence around it
> and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower,
> and **leased it to tenants** and went into another country.
>
> When the season came,
> he sent **a servant** to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.
> And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed.
> Again he sent to them another servant,
> and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully.
> And he sent another, and him they killed.
> And **so with many others**: some they beat, and some they killed.
>
> **He had still one other**, **a beloved son**.
> Finally he sent him to them, saying,
> 'They will respect my son.'
>
> But those tenants said to one another,
> 'This is the heir.
> Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'
>
> And **they took him and killed him** and threw him out of the vineyard.
>
> What will **the owner of the vineyard** do?
> He will come and **destroy the tenants** and **give the vineyard to others**.
>
> Have you not read this Scripture:
> '**The stone that the builders rejected** has become the cornerstone;
> this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? (citing Psalm 118:22-23)
>
> (Mark 11:27-28, 12:1-11 ESV // Matthew 21:23, 33-42, Luke 20:1-2, 9-17)

God the Father is "**the owner of the vineyard**", "**a man**". The Nation of Israel was created by YHWH under the direction of God the Father; they "**planted a vineyard**". The leaders of Israel were given charge of the nation, "**leased it to tenants**". The prophets are represented by "**a servant**", "**many others**". Jesus Christ is "**a beloved son**", "**the stone that the builders rejected**", "**they took him and killed him**". The parable ends with a prophecy of the destruction of the Nation of Israel, "**destroy the tenants**", and the inception of the New Testament Church, "**give the vineyard to others**".

Matthew adds a comment to the parable:

> Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God[428] will be taken away from you
> and given to a people producing its fruits.
> And the one who falls on **this stone** will be broken to pieces;
> and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.
> **When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables,**
> **they perceived that he was speaking about them**.
> (Matthew 21:43-45 ESV)

The point of this parable is that the Messiah, **Jesus Christ**, "**this stone**", was required to **come first** to the Nation of Israel and **be rejected** by the people of Israel. This would open the way for the Church to spread out to all peoples in all nations of the world. **Jesus came first specifically to be the "King of the Jews"**.[429] The **Apostle John** reports Jesus' elaboration of his coming first to Israel, then to all the world.

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[426] See the chart "**Jesus Last Ten Days**" located at https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts

[427] See section ***5.1.2 The Tenants and the Vineyard*** in the paper "**The Final Parables of Jesus**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

[428] This is one of only five places that Matthew uses "Kingdom of God" instead of "Kingdom of Heaven" (31 instances). The Jews believed they were the "kingdom of God".

[429] See section ***1.3 The King of the Jews*** in the paper "**To Be a King**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

On the Sabbath just before the above incident, some Greeks, either full converts to Judaism or "God Fearers",[430] were in Jerusalem for the Passover. They sought out Jesus' disciple, Philp, and requested to see Jesus. The narrative does NOT say whether or not Jesus actually met with the seekers, but John reports **Jesus' using their request as a segue into the spreading of the Gospel into all the world**:

> Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were **some Greeks**.
> So **these came to Philip**, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him,
> "Sir, **we wish to see Jesus**."
>
> Philip went and told Andrew; **Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus**.
> And **Jesus answered** them,
> "**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified**.
> Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies,
> it remains alone; but if it dies, it **bears much fruit**.
>
> "Now is my [mind] (psyche)[431] troubled.
> And what shall I say?
> 'Father, save me from this hour'?
>
> But **for this purpose I have come to this hour**.
> Father, glorify your name."
>
> Then a voice came from heaven:
> "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."
>
> The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered.
> Others said,
> "An angel has spoken to him."
>
> Jesus answered,
> "This voice has come for your sake, not mine.
> **Now is the judgment of this world**; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.
> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will **draw all people to myself**."
>
> 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**. …"
> (John 12:20-24, 27-32, 44-47 ESV see also 3:16-21)

Jesus also foreshadowed the **spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles** by comparing the unbelief of certain cities in which he had personally performed miracles, with ancient cities:

> Then he began to denounce the **cities where most of his mighty works had been done**,
> because they did not repent.
> "Woe to you, **Chorazin**!
> Woe to you, **Bethsaida**!
>
> For if the mighty works done in you had been done in **Tyre** and **Sidon**,
> they **would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.
>
> But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for **Tyre** and **Sidon** than for you.
>
> And you, **Capernaum**, will you be exalted to heaven?
> You will be brought down to [the grave] (hades).[432]
>
> For if the mighty works done in you had been done in **Sodom**,
> it **would have remained** until this day.
> But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment
> for the land of **Sodom** than for you."
> (Matthew 11:20-24 ESV)
>
> 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 11:32 ESV)

[430] See Bruce (**NT**) pages 145-147, 266-267
[431] See footnote ***225***
[432] See footnote ***364***

The **spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles** is again foreshadowed by the reports of the Synoptists of a couple of occasions where **Jesus was favourably impressed by the implicit faith of Gentiles**:

> Now **a centurion had a servant who was sick** and **at the point of death**, who was highly valued by him.
> When **the centurion heard about Jesus**, he sent to him elders of the Jews,
> asking him to come and heal his servant.
>
> And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying,
> "**He is worthy to have you do this for him**, for he loves our nation,
> and he is the one who built us our synagogue."
>
> And Jesus went with them.
> When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him,
> "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for **I am not worthy to have you come under my roof**.
> Therefore I did not presume to come to you.
> But **say the word**, and **let my servant be healed**.
>
> For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me:
> and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes;
> and to another, 'Come,' and he comes;
> and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."
>
> When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him,
> and turning to the crowd that followed him, said,
> "I tell you, **not even in Israel have I found such faith**."
>
> And when those who had been sent returned to the house, **they found the servant well**.
> (Luke 7:2-10 ESV // Matthew 8:5-13)
>
> And **Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon**.
>
> And behold, **a Canaanite woman** from that region came out and was crying,
> "**Have mercy on me**, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."
>
> But he did not answer her a word.
> And his disciples came and begged him, saying,
> "Send her away, for she is crying out after us."
>
> He answered,
> "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**."
>
> But she came and knelt before him, saying,
> "Lord, help me."
>
> And he answered,
> "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."
>
> She said,
> "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."
>
> Then Jesus answered her,
> "O woman, **great is your faith**!
> Let it be done for you as you desire."
>
> And **her daughter was healed instantly**.
> (Matthew 15:21-28 ESV // Mark 7:24-30)

Jesus was rejected by the people of his generation, but through the Church, created through the effort of the Apostles, **the Gospel spread to the Gentiles**, and the **blessing of humanity through the Messiah truly began with the First Advent**:[433]

> As you **come to him**, a living stone **rejected by men** but in the sight of God chosen and precious,
> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as **a spiritual house**, to be a holy priesthood,
> to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
> For it stands in Scripture:
> "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, **a cornerstone chosen and precious**,
> and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (citing Isaiah 28:16)
> (1 Peter 2:4-6 ESV)
>
> This **Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you**, **the builders**, which has become the cornerstone.
> And **there is salvation in no one else**,
> for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
> (Acts 4:11-12 ESV)

[433] See section *1.2 The Promises to Abraham*

> But first **he must suffer many things** and **be rejected by this generation**.
> (Luke 17:25 ESV)
>
> The true light, which gives light to everyone, **was coming into the world**.
> He was in the world, and the world was made through him,
> yet **the world did not know him**.
> **He came to his own**, and **his own people did not receive him**.
> (John 1:9-11 ESV)
>
> For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only Son,
> that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
> but in order that **the world might be saved through him**.
> (John 3:16-17 ESV)

Jesus came first to Israel to fulfill the Messianic prophecies. **Jesus was rejected by his own people**. All of the Gospel authors are careful to point out that **Jesus was clear and specific that his mission included the Gentiles** – the nations of the world. It would be the work of the Apostles to take the Gospel to the world. The vehicle to take the Gospel to the world was the **New Testament Church**, which was built by the Apostles as inspired by the Holy Spirt. Once the Church was functioning, the Gospel began to spread, and the Church grew.

4.2 Beginnings of Worldwide Evangelism

The Book of Acts reports the beginning of worldwide evangelism in the work of **Philip in Samaria**. After Philip, **Peter and John also preached to the Samaritans**:

> 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.
> For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them,
> and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.
>
> **So there was much joy in that city**.
> (Acts 8:4-8 ESV)
>
> Now when **the apostles at Jerusalem** heard that Samaria had received the word of God,
> they **sent to them Peter and John** …
> Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem,
> **preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans**.
> (Acts 8:14, 25 ESV)

Next the Book of Acts records **Philp's teaching a man from Africa**, an Ethiopian, clearly a Gentile. He was either a Jewish proselyte or a "God Fearer"[434] since "**he had come to Jerusalem to worship"**:

> 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** …
>
> Then **Philip opened his mouth**, and beginning with this Scripture **he told him the good news about Jesus**.
> 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**.
> (Acts 8:26-27, 35-38 ESV)

[434] See footnote ***430***

After this, Philip went up the Mediterranean Coast preaching to the Gentile cities along the way. He settled in Caesarea where there was later a significant Church:

> But **Philip found himself at Azotus**,[435]
> and as he passed through **he preached the gospel to all the towns** until he came to **Caesarea**.
>
> When [Paul] had landed **at Caesarea**, he went up and **greeted the church**,
> and then went down to Antioch.
>
> On the next day we {Paul and company} departed and came to **Caesarea**,
> and we entered **the house of Philip the evangelist**,
> who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.
> (Acts 8:40, 18:22, 21:8 ESV)

Soon after this, again **in Caesarea**, **Peter is led to baptise a large group of Gentiles**. **Cornelius** was a Centurian in the Roman Army. Through a series of visions,[436] Peter was led by the Holy Spirt come to Cornelius' house in Caesaria, where there was large gathering. As Peter preached, **the Holy Spirit manifestly fell upon the people**, **as it had on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem**. Peter recognized that God was officially extending salvation to the Gentiles:[437]

> At **Caesarea** there was a man named **Cornelius**, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort,
> **a devout man who feared God**[438] **with all his household**,
> gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.
>
> So **Peter** opened his mouth and said:
>
> > "Truly **I understand that God shows no partiality**,
> > but in **every nation** anyone who fears him and does what is right **is acceptable to him**. …"
>
> While Peter was still saying these things, **the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word**.
> And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed,
> because **the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles**.
> For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.
> Then Peter declared,
>
> > "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people,
> > who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"
>
> And **he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ**.
> Then they asked him to remain for some days.
> (Acts 10:1-2, 34-35, 44-48 ESV)

At this point in the Book of Acts, the Synoptist Luke has documented the growth of the Church in "in **Jerusalem** and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**". After this, Christianity spread to the east, the west, to the north, and to the south, "**to the end of the earth**", but we have no certain historic records of it. From here, Luke in the Book of Acts, focusses on Paul's efforts among "Jews" and "Gentiles" as he carried the Gospel to the Roman Empire.

4.3 The Journeys of Paul

Saul of Tarsus was a very zealous young man. He fervently believed all he had been taught as a Pharisee. When he observed the growth of "The Way",[439] he perceived it to be a grievous heresy and committed himself to its eradication:

> **I am a Jew**, **born in Tarsus in Cilicia**, but brought up in this city,
> **educated at the feet of Gamaliel** according to the strict manner of the [nomos][440] of our fathers,
> being **zealous for God** as all of you are this day.
>
> **I persecuted this Way to the death**, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,
> as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness.
> From them I received letters to the brothers,
> and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there
> and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.
> (Acts 22:3-5 ESV see also Acts 9:1-2, Galatians 1:13-14)

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[435] Old Testament Ashdod, a Philistine city; see ESV comment
[436] See Acts 10:3-33
[437] For further discussion of this incident, see section ***3.4.3.5 The Universal Saviour*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[438] A "God Fearer", see footnote ***430***
[439] See section ***3.1 What is the Way of God*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[440] See footnote ***221***; here *nomos* means primarily Pharisaic traditions.

Saul was instrumental in the persecution that brought Stephen before the Sanhedrin.[441] Stephen's eloquent defense is famous,[442] but it outraged the Jews of the Sanhedrin, and they illegally and mercilessly killed Stephen, **with the approval of Saul**:

> Now when they heard these things **they were enraged**, and **they ground their teeth at him**.
>
> But he, 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."
>
> But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.
> 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.
> (Acts 7:54-58, 8:1 ESV)

The conversion of Saul is one of the most famous incidents in the Bible.[443] Saul, soon to referred to as "**Paul**",[444] was **chosen by God to lead the charge in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles**, within he Roman Empire, "**go into all the world**", "**make disciples of all nations**", "**you will be my witness** … **to the end of the earth**":

> But Ananias answered,
> "Lord, I have heard from many about this man {Paul},
> how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem.
> And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name."
>
> But the Lord said to him,
> "Go, for **he is a chosen instrument of mine**
> **to carry my name before the Gentiles** and **kings** and the children of **Israel**.
> For I will show him **how much he must suffer for the sake of my name**."
>
> And {Ananias} said,
> 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will,
> to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth;
> for **you will be a witness for him to everyone** of what you have seen and heard.
>
> And I {Paul} said,
> 'Who are you, Lord?'
>
> And the Lord said,
> 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.
> But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose,
> **to appoint you as a servant and witness** to the things in which you have seen me
> and to those in which I will appear to you,
> delivering you from your people and from **the Gentiles**
> —**to whom I am sending you** to open their eyes,
> so that they may turn from darkness to light
> and from the power of Satan to God,
> that they may receive forgiveness of sins
> and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'
> (Acts 9:13-16, 22:14-15, 26:16-18 ESV see also Galatians 1:15-16)

With that commission, Paul had to learn by experience how to live by the Way of God, "**how much he must suffer for the sake of my name**". After about ten years, most of which was spent in and around Paul's home city of Tarsus,[445] Paul was ready for the Work for which God had acquired him:

> So **Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul**, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.
> For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people.
> And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.
>
> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,
> "**Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them**."

[441] See Acts 6:8-15, 7:1
[442] See Acts 7:2-53
[443] See Acts 9:3-19, 22:6-16, 26:12-18
[444] See Acts 13:9
[445] See Acts 9:20-30

Then **after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off**.
(Acts 11:25-26, 13:2-3 ESV)

This is the beginning of **Paul's First Journey**,[446] which focused on **Southern Galatia**. In most cities there were Jews, and Paul's commission included taking the Gospel to Israel, so he went first to them. On this First Journey, **Paul set the pattern he would follow in every city he would evangelize**. First, on the Sabbath he went to a synagogue and preached. Those individuals that God was calling among the Jews and the "God fearers",[447] responded. This generally caused friction with the "establishment", and Paul was driven from the Synagogue. After that he focused on the Gentiles. In each city, **Paul organized those called by God into a Church**:

… they went on from Perga and came to **Antioch in Pisidia**.
And **on the Sabbath** day **they went into the synagogue** and sat down.
After the reading from the [nomos][448] and the Prophets,
the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying,
"Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it."

So **Paul stood up**, and motioning with his hand said:
"**Men of Israel** and **you who fear God**,[449] listen. …"

As they went out, **the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath**.
And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up,
many **Jews** and **devout converts** to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas,
who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.
But when **the Jews**[450] saw the crowds,
they were filled with jealousy and **began to contradict what was spoken by Paul**, **reviling him**.

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying,
"It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you.
Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life,
behold, **we are turning to the Gentiles**.
For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,
'I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (citing Isaiah 49:6)

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord,
and **as many as were appointed to eternal life believed**.

And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

And when **they had appointed elders for them in every church**,
with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
(Acts 13:14-16, 42-49, 14:23 ESV)

Paul's Second Journey[451] commenced after **the Jerusalem Conference**.[452] The most significant outcome of the conference was the affirmation that "**circumcision**" is **NOT necessary for Christians**. Informing the existing Churches of this was important:

And after some days Paul said to Barnabas,
"Let us return and **visit the brothers** in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord,
and **see how they are**."

As they went on their way through the cities,
they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached
by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem.

So **the churches were strengthened** in the faith, and **they increased in numbers daily**.
(Acts 15:36, 16:4-5 ESV)

From **Southern Galatia**, **Paul headed north and west** and intended to evangelize cities along the way; however, **through the Holy Spirt he understood NOT to preach in these areas**. These are the areas to which **Peter later addressed in his letters**. Most likely Peter had already been through these areas:

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[446] See Acts chapters 13 and 14
[447] See footnote ***430***
[448] See footnote ***221***
[449] "God Fearers"
[450] These are the Synagogue leadership group.
[451] See Acts 15:36-41, all of chapters 16 and 17, and 18:1-21
[452] See the discussion of the conference with the Book of Galatians in the section ***4.4.1 Galatians***

> And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia,[453]
> having been **forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia**.
> And when they had come up to **Mysia**, they attempted to go into **Bithynia**,
> but **the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them**.
> So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.
> (Acts 16:6-8 ESV)
>
> Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
> To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia,[454] Cappadocia, **Asia**, and **Bithynia**,
> (1 Peter 1:1 ESV)

Going over to **Macedonia** and then down into **Greece**, Luke reports Paul having evangelized **Philippi**,[455] **Thessalonica**,[456] **Bera**,[457] **Athens**,[458] and **Corinth**.[459] In each of these cities, Paul's experience was similar to Pisidian Antioch. With the possible exception of Athens, a Church was certainly established in each city. In **Corinth**, Paul met **Aquilla** and **Priscilla**. They were Jews who had been converted in Rome. Paul worked with them while in Corinth, then they travelled with him as far as **Ephesus** where they remained. It would seem that they initiated the Church in Ephesus.[460]

Paul returned to Antioch; spent some time there; then followed the same route into **Southern Galatia** to start his **Third Journey**.[461] From there he took the southern overland route to **Ephesus**,[462] where he found some people who had been baptized by disciples of John the Baptist.[463] Paul spent three years in and around Ephesus.[464] After that Paul spent some time in **Macedonia** and **Greece**.[465] Paul then determined to go to Jerusalem. On his way, Paul stopped at **Miletus** and assembled the **elders from Ephesus** to whom he summarized his activities:

> Now from **Miletus** he sent to **Ephesus** and **called the elders of the church** to come to him.
> And when they came to him, he said to them:
>
> > "You yourselves know how I lived among you
> > the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia,
> > serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials
> > that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;
> > how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable,
> > and teaching you in public and from house to house,
> > **testifying both to Jews and to Greeks** of repentance toward God
> > and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
> >
> > And now, behold, **I am going to Jerusalem**, constrained by the Spirit,
> > not knowing what will happen to me there …"
>
> (Act 20:17-22 ESV)

Paul's three journeys covered a period of about ten years. Paul started many Churches and taught the Way of God to many people. **Many of these people carried on the work Paul started**. Through these efforts, the Gospel was spread to the entire Roman Empire. At various points in his journeys (and later during and after his imprisonments), **Paul wrote letters** to the congregations with which he had worked. Paul's letters are an invaluable part of the teaching of the Bible – in particular, **the universality of God's word**.

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[453] Southern Galatia
[454] Northern Galatia
[455] See Acts 16:11-40
[456] See Acts 17:1-9
[457] See Acts 17:10-15
[458] See Acts 17:16-34, for a discussion of Paul's preaching in Athens see section ***3.4.3.5 The Universal Saviour*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[459] See Acts 18:1-17
[460] See Acts 18:18-21, 24-28
[461] See Acts 18:23 and all of chapters 19 and 20
[462] See Acts 19:1
[463] See Acts 19:2-3
[464] See Acts 20:31, 19:10
[465] See Acts 20:1-3

4.4 The Epistles of Paul

The Bible contains thirteen epistles written by the Apostle Paul.[466] He clearly wrote other letters that have not been preserved.[467] Most of Paul's epistles contain explicit material related to taking the Gospel to the Nations. The following chart summarizes Paul's epistles:

Epistle	Date Written	Location of Writing	Key Scripture
Galatians	≈ 48AD	Syrian Antioch	Acts 14:28
1 Thessalonians	≈ 50AD	Corinth	Acts 18:11
2 Thessalonians	≈ 50AD	Corinth	Acts 18:11
1 Corinthians	≈ 54AD	Ephesus	Acts 19:21
2 Corinthians	≈ 55AD	Macedonia	Acts 20:1
Romans	≈ 57AD	Corinth	Acts 20:2-3
Ephesians	≈ 62AD	Rome	Acts 28:30-31
Philippians	≈ 62AD	Rome	Acts 28:30-31
Colossians	≈ 62AD	Rome	Acts 28:30-31
Philemon	≈ 62AD	Rome	Acts 28:30-31
1 Timothy	≈ 63AD	Macedonia	1 Timothy 1:3
Titus	≈ 63AD	Nicopolis	Titus 1:5, 3:12
2 Timothy	≈ 66AD	Rome	2 Timothy 1:8,17, 2:9

4.4.1 Galatians

Philip and **Peter** clearly were the first to take the Gospel to Gentiles.[468] **Paul's evangelism in Southern Galatia was the first contact with Gentiles in the broader context of the Roman Empire**. Paul made this contact on his first journey in 46-47AD. After the journey, Paul returned to Syrian Antioch. Soon after his return, some "**false teachers**" showed up in Southern Galatia and **attempted to convince the new converts that they had to become "Jews"**. This is discussed in detail in section ***11.1 False Teachers in Galatia*** in the paper "**True Worship of the True God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.[469]

Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians to refute the teaching of the "false teachers". Paul asserts that it would be a great sin for Gentiles to accept Judaism after conversion to Christianity.[470] The key requirement of the "false teachers" was to inflict "**circumcision**" **on the Gentile converts**. The Jerusalem Conference of 49AD was convened to address this issue.[471] Although circumcision was the main issue, the result of the conference was stated diplomatically in terms of prescriptions, but avoiding a direct proscription on circumcision:

> Therefore my judgment is that **we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God**,
> but should write to them to abstain
> from the **things polluted by idols**, and
> from **sexual immorality**, and
> from what has been **strangled**, and
> from **blood**.

[466] The Book of Hebrews is also ascribed to Paul by some. Paul's authorship of Hebrews is extremely unlikely. See ***Excursus 2 – The Book of Hebrews*** in the paper "**Pillar Three - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
[467] Two additional letters to Corinth are mentioned, see 1 Corinthians 5:9, 2 Corinthians 7:8; also, a letter to Laodicea, see Colossians 4:16.
[468] See section ***4.2 Beginnings of Worldwide Evangelism***
[469] See also ***11.6.2 The Epistle to the Galatians*** in the paper "**The Writings of Moses**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[470] See Galatians 5:1-6
[471] See Acts 15:6-21

For from ancient generations **Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him**,
for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.
(Acts 15:19-21 ESV)

The general statement, "**we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God**", is clear that conversion to "**Christianity**" **supersedes and obviates any need to accept "Judaism"**. The four prescriptions reinforce the "**spiritual intent**" of the teaching of contained in the Writings of Moses, *torah*, and elaborated and expounded in the whole Bible, **The Way of God**:

- "**things polluted by idols**": idolatry is the root of all sin
- "**sexual immorality**": was physically rampant in the world at that time; but the broader implication of "**spiritual whoredom**",[472] as addressed by all the prophets, is far more important
- "**what has been strangled**": endorses the whole definition of "holiness" as specified in the Book of Leviticus[473]
- "**blood**": alludes to the "**Covenant of Justness**"[474] given to Noah for all humanity:

  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.
  (Genesis 9:5-6 ESV)

The Gentile converts were enjoined to go and learn the Way of God as specified in the Writings of Moses. At that time, they could go to any synagogue on the Sabbath and hear expositions from the Writings of Moses. But, acceptance of Pharisaic interpretations, accepting "Judaism", was anathema. The Church groups organized by Paul quickly took over the teaching of the Way of God to new converts. By the end of the First Century, the Jews took measures to ensure that no "Christians" could participate in synagogue services.[475]

Paul is clear and specific that he was commissioned by God to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles, and that he was taught directly by Jesus Christ, not by any person:

For I would have you know, brothers, that **the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel**.
For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it,
but **I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ**.

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 1:11-12, 15-16 ESV see also 2:2, 7-8)

Having been a Pharisee, Paul was intimately familiar with the teachings of "Judaism". **Paul rightly discerned that "Judaism" was incompatible with Christianity**.[476] Paul's teaching forced the early Church to deal with the issue head-on, although it is clear in later letters that problems continued.

4.4.2 First & Second Thessalonians

Paul commenced his Second Journey soon after the Jerusalem Conference in 49AD. After passing through Southern Galatia,[477] **Paul**, **Silas**, and **Timothy** went into the Roman Province of **Macedonia**, where **Thessalonica** was the second city they visited.[478] In Thessalonica, **Paul went first to the synagogue and met with some success**, with the normal reaction from the establishment:

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**."

[472] See footnote ***344***
[473] See section ***6. Holiness*** in the paper "**To Be a Priest**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[474] See section ***2. The Covenant of Justness*** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[475] See Barrett pages 166-167; Bruce (**NT**) pages 385-386; Shürer Second Division volume II pages 85-88 (see especially Shürer footnote 164).
[476] See, for example, Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees in Matthew chapter 23.
[477] See Acts 15:36, 40-41, 16:1-5
[478] See Acts 16:11-12, 17:1

> And **some of them were persuaded** and joined Paul and Silas,
> as did **a great many of the devout Greeks** and not a few of the leading women.
>
> But **the Jews were jealous** …
> (Acts 17:2-5a ESV)

After this, Paul evangelized **Bera** and **Athens**[479] before settling in **Corinth** for about 18 months.[480] **While in Corinth**, **Paul wrote First & Second Thessalonians**. As with most of the Churches started by Paul, it comprised both Jews and Gentiles. Paul commends the Church for their example of faith particularly emphasizing the example of the **Gentiles**, who had been **idol worshippers**:

> And you became imitators of us and of the Lord,
> for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,
> so that **you became an example to all the believers** in Macedonia and in Achaia.
>
> For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia,
> but **your faith in God has gone forth everywhere**, so that we need not say anything.
> For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you,
> and how **you turned to God from idols** to serve the living and true God …
> (1 Thessalonians 1:6-9 ESV

Paul commends the Thessalonians for enduring persecution by their countrymen, comparing it to what the Jewish establishment continually did:

> And we also thank God constantly for this, that **when you received the word of God**,
> which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men
> but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.
>
> For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea.
> For **you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews**,
> who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out,
> and displease God and oppose all mankind by **hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles**
> that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins.
> But wrath has come upon them at last!
> (1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 ESV)

As identified in the Jerusalem Conference, "**sexual immorality**" was **rampant in the Gentile world from which many of the Thessalonians had come**. Paul exhorts them to avoid "sexual immorality", but emphasizes avoidance of "**spiritual whoredom**":[481]

> For this is the will of God, **your sanctification**: that you **abstain from sexual immorality**;
> that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,
> not in the **passion of lust like the Gentiles** who do not know God;
> that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter,
> because the Lord is an avenger in all these things,
> as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.
> For **God has not called us for impurity**, **but in holiness**.
> (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 ESV)

Paul's second letter to the Church in Thessalonica was likely written soon after the first letter to encourage the people regarding certain problems.[482] Perhaps the problems were precipitated by "false teachers", as in Galatia. In any regard, **Paul addresses the Church as a unified group with no distinction between Jews and Gentiles**.

4.4.3 First & Second Corinthians

Corinth was the last city Paul evangelized on his Second Journey.[483] Paul spent some 18 months in Corinth.[484] His time in Corinth was likely during 50-51AD. As always, **Paul worked for as long as possible with the synagogue**:

> And **he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath**, and tried to persuade **Jews and Greeks**.
> When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia,
> Paul was occupied with the word, **testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus**.

[479] See Acts 17:10, 15
[480] See Acts 18:1, 11
[481] See footnote ***344***
[482] See 2 Thessalonians 1:6, 2:2-3,15, 3:2,6,13-15
[483] See Acts 18:1-18
[484] See Acts 18:11

And **when they opposed and reviled him**, he shook out his garments and said to them,
"Your blood be on your own heads!
I am innocent.
From now on **I will go to the Gentiles**."
(Acts 18:4-6 ESV)

After his time in Corinth, Paul returned briefly to Syrian Antioch and then set out on his Third Journey. [485] Paul travelled overland to **Ephesus** where he spent some three years, likely during 52-55AD.[486] **In the spring**,[487] likely of 54AD, **Paul wrote the letter we have as First Corinthians**. Soon after that, Paul made his "**painful visit**" to Corinth and returned to Ephesus where he wrote **another letter**, **now lost**.[488] When his time in Ephesus was over, Paul travelled north into **Macedonia** from where he wrote the letter we have as **Second Corinthians**.[489]

Paul's letters to the Church in Corinth reflect a Church with little tension between Jews and Gentiles, although clearly the Church comprised both Jews and Gentiles. The Church was having problems integrating Christian living with the pressures of the world outside. The issue of "**divisions**" within the Church[490] is immediately addressed by Paul. **Paul adjures the people to understand their true relationship with God**:

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;
God chose what is low and despised in the world,
even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,
so that **no human being might boast in the presence of God**.
(1 Corinthians 1:26-29 ESV)

Paul lays out the basis for humility whether a person's background is "Jew" or "Gentile":

For **the word of the cross** is folly to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved it **is the power of God**.
For it is written,
"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." (citing Isaiah 29:14)

Where is **the one who is wise**?
Where is **the scribe**?
Where is **the debater of this age**?

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
For since, in the wisdom of God, **the world did not know God through wisdom**,
it pleased God through the folly of **what we preach** to save those who believe.

For **Jews demand signs** and **Greeks seek wisdom**,
but **we preach Christ crucified**, **a stumbling block to Jews** and **folly to Gentiles**,
but **to those who are called**, **both Jews and Greeks**,
Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For **the foolishness of God is wiser than men**, and **the weakness of God is stronger than men**.
(1 Corinthians 1:18-25 ESV see also 3:18-23)

Analysis of Paul's argument:

- Greek philosophy was considered the epitome of wisdom, "**the one who is wise**"
- To the Jews the Pharisaic interpretations were the epitome of understanding, "**the scribe**"
- Whether "Jew" or "Gentile", wisdom was reflected in worldly knowledge, "**the debater of this age**"

[485] See Acts 18:22-23
[486] See Acts 20:31
[487] The spring Holydays are on Paul's mind, 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, 10:16-17, 11:17-32.
Paul plans to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 1 Corinthians 16:8.
[488] See 2 Corinthians 2:1,3-4, 7:8-12
[489] See Acts 20:1, 2 Corinthians 2:12-13
[490] See 1 Corinthians 1:10, 3:1-14, 11:18, 12:4-6

- Neither the Greeks nor the Jews were able to come to a true knowledge of God through their "wisdom", "**the world did not know God through wisdom**"
- The Gospel, "**what we preach**", is the "**power of God**", and it is "**a stumbling block to Jews**" and "**folly to Gentiles**"
- The concept of a "dead saviour", "**the word of the cross**", "**we preach Christ crucified**", cannot be reconciled by the Jews, who "**demand signs**", or the Greek philosophers, who "**seek wisdom**"
- Only through the calling of God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirt can any person, "**those who are called**", "**both Jews and Greeks**", understand that "**Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**"

Whatever the source of "division", it is inconsistent with the calling of God. **Humility of Christians one to another is the basis of harmonious relationships within a Church**. Far more importantly, **a true perspective on who and what God is**, provides **the basis of Christian faith**.

At several points, Paul addresses the problem of physical "**sexual immorality**".[491] This would have been a carry-over from the pagan background of some Church members. While actual "sexual immorality" is clearly a problem, Paul is explicit that "**idolatry**" is "**spiritual whoredom**":[492]

> **Do not be idolaters** as some of them were; as it is written,
> "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." (citing Exodus 32:6)
>
> We must **not indulge in sexual immorality** as some of them did,
> and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.
> Therefore, my beloved, **flee from idolatry**.
>
> You know that **when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols**, however you were led.
> (1 Corinthians 10:7-8, 14, 12:2 ESV)

The issue of "idolatry" came to fore in the problem of **food offered to "idols"**. Paul asserts that "idols" have no real existence so food used in an offering is NOT actually defiled, but if a brother does NOT understand this, offense must be avoided:[493]

> Therefore, **as to the eating of food offered to idols**,
> we know that "**an idol has no real existence**," and that "there is no God but one."
>
> However, not all possess this knowledge.
> But some, **through former association with idols**, eat food as really offered to an idol,
> and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.
>
> Therefore, **if food makes my brother stumble**, **I will never eat meat**, lest I make my brother stumble.
> (1 Corinthians 8:4, 7, 13 ESV)

A major theme throughout **Second Corinthians** is **the "universal" nature of the offer of salvation**. God has no partiality regarding whom he calls,[494] and ultimately, all the world will be called. **Paul looks to the Second Advent** and the **First Resurrection** as the beginnings of salvation to all humanity:

> For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand
> and I hope you will fully understand—just as you did partially understand us
> —that **on the day of our Lord Jesus** you will boast of us as we will boast of you.
>
> Since **we have the same spirit of faith** according to what has been written,
> "I believed, and so I spoke," (citing Psalm 116:10)
>
> we also believe, and so we also speak,
> knowing that **he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus**
> and bring us with you into his presence.
> For it is all for your sake,
> so that as **grace extends to more and more people** it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.
> (2 Corinthians 1:13-14, 4:13-15 ESV)
>
> **Since we have these promises**, beloved,
> let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit,
> **bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God**.
> For godly grief produces a **repentance that leads to salvation** without regret,

[491] See 1 Corinthians 5:9-11, 6:9-10,13,18, 7:2, 10:8, 2 Corinthians 12:21
[492] See footnote ***344***
[493] For a more detailed discussion of this, see section ***5.4 Meat Offered to Idols*** in the paper "**The Human Condition**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[494] See Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11

whereas worldly grief produces death.
For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband,
to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
(2 Corinthians 7:1, 10, 11:2 ESV)

Paul identifies the **indwelling of the Holy Spirit** as the agency which can lead a person to salvation. Similarly to First Corinthians chapter 15, Paul contrasts our current physical body with **the immortal spiritual body** to be provided at the First Resurrection:

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**.

For we know that if **the tent that is our earthly home** is destroyed,
we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, **eternal in the heavens**.
For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,
if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked.
For **while we are still in this tent**, **we groan**, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed,
but that we would be further clothed, **so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life**.

He who has prepared us for this very thing is **God**, who **has given us the Spirit as a guarantee**.
(2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 5:1-5 ESV)

Paul makes it clear that **the process of salvation is individual** – each person is responsible to work out his or her own salvation.[495] However **God's intention is to reconcile the whole world**. Paul implores each person to stand in faith before Jesus Christ:

For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**,
so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ**, **he is a new creation**.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
All this is from God,
who **through Christ reconciled us to himself** and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;
that is, **in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself**,
not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

For **he was crucified in weakness**, but **lives by the power of God**.
For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you **we will live with him by the power of God**.

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith.
Test yourselves.
Or do you not realize this about yourselves, **that Jesus Christ is in you**?
—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.
(2 Corinthians 5:10, 17-19, 13:4-6 ESV)

The Church in Corinth had its share of problems, but there was apparently little or no tension between those of Jewish background and those of Gentile background. Paul used this situation to emphasize the universality of the calling of God. **All persons of all backgrounds are of equal standing before God**. What matters is living by the Way of God.

4.4.4 Romans

While Paul was in Ephesus during his Third Journey, he expressed his desire to go to Rome. A little while later, probably in 57AD, while he was in **Corinth**, **Paul wrote the Book of Romans**.[496] The Bible does NOT specify how the Church in Rome was started.[497] There were "**visitors from Rome**" present at the first Christian Pentecost – perhaps they were among the "three thousand" who were baptized.[498] It is unlikely that any of the other Apostles had been to Rome since Paul states that he avoided building on another's foundation:

… and thus I make it my ambition to **preach the gospel**,
not where Christ has already been named,
lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written,

[495] See Philippians 2:12
[496] See Acts 19:21, Romans 1:15
[497] See Bruce (**NT**) pages 297-299
[498] See Acts 2:10,41

"Those who have never been told of him will see,
and those who have never heard will understand." (citing Isaiah 52:15)
(Romans 15:20-21 ESV)

However the Christians in Rome received their teaching, **Paul expresses confidence in their level of understanding**. Nevertheless, Paul does take the liberty to add to their faith emphasizing that they were in his purview as a "Gentile" Church:

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you,
because **your faith is proclaimed in all the world**.
For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—that is,
that **we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith**, both yours and mine.

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**.

But **on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder**,
because of **the grace given me by God** to be a minister of Christ Jesus **to the Gentiles**
in the priestly service of the gospel of God,
so **that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable**, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 1:8, 11-12, 15:14-16 ESV)

In the letter's salutation, **Paul makes the scope of his work clear**. The salvific work of Jesus Christ was prophesized, and **Paul is authorized to bring the Gospel to all nations**. In his final doxology, Paul returns to the same theme, stating that he has brought knowledge of **the mystery of Jesus Christ to the nations**:

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, **set apart for the gospel of God**,
which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,
concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh
and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness
by his resurrection from the dead, **Jesus Christ our Lord**,
through whom we have received grace and apostleship
to bring about the obedience of faith **for the sake of his name among all the nations** …

Now to him who is able to strengthen you **according to my gospel** and the preaching of Jesus Christ,
according to **the revelation of the mystery** that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed
and **through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations** …
(Romans 1:1-5, 16:25-26a ESV)

Unlike Corinth, **in Rome there was obvious tension between those of Gentile background and those of Israelite background**. Paul is clearly aware of this and addresses it immediately in his letter:

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians,[499] both to the wise and to the foolish.
So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
For I am not ashamed of **the gospel**,
for it **is the power of God for salvation** to everyone who believes,
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written,
"The righteous shall live by faith." (citing Habakkuk 2:4)
(Romans 1:14-17 ESV)

Paul's argumentation is subtle, but it seems that he lays the **cause of the tension** on "**human pride**" leading to "**competition**" between those of "Israelite" background and those with "Gentile" background. **In chapter 2**, Paul addresses "**retributive justice**".[500] Paul addresses "**humanity**" in general, making it clear that **all are due God's judgement**; then, Paul explicitly states that he is talking to **both "Jews" and "Greeks"**:

Therefore you have no excuse, **O man**, every one of you **who judges**.
For in passing judgment on another **you condemn yourself**,
because **you**, the judge, **practice the very same things**.

We know that the judgment of **God** rightly falls on those who practice such things.
He **will render to each one according to his works** …

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil,
the **Jew first** and **also the Greek**,
but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good,
the **Jew first** and **also the Greek**.

[499] Note that Paul is here acknowledging a non-Greek Gentile faction in the Church in Rome.
[500] See ***Excursus 1 – Retributive Justice***

For **God shows no partiality**.
(Romans 2:1-2, 6, 9-11 ESV)

Paul then gets to the point of the contention – the diverse background and preconceptions of Jews and Gentiles. The **Jews felt superior due to their knowledge of the Scriptures**. The **Gentiles felt superior due to their ready response to the Gospel**:

But if **you call yourself a Jew** and **rely on the [nomos]**[501] **and boast in God**
and **know his will** and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the [nomos];[502]
and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,
an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children,
having in the [nomos] **the embodiment of knowledge and truth**
—**you then who teach others**, do you not teach yourself?

For when **Gentiles**, who do not have the [nomos], by nature **do what the [nomos] requires**,
they are a [nomos] to themselves, even though they do not have the [nomos].
They show that **the work of the [nomos] is written on their hearts** …
(Romans 2:17-21a, 14-15a ESV)

In chapter 3, Paul goes on demonstrate that **all humanity is suffering under sin**[503] – all are "**accountable to God**". The "**pride**" and "**competition**", "**the bosting**", of the factions in the Roman Church is of no account. Each and every person must stand alone before God and come to position of true faith:

What then?
Are we Jews any better off?
No, not at all.

For we have already charged that **all**, **both Jews and Greeks**, **are under sin** …

Now we know that whatever the [nomos] says it speaks to those who are under the [nomos],[504]
so that every mouth may be stopped, and **the whole world may be held accountable to God**.
(Romans 3:9, 19 ESV)

Then **what becomes of our boasting**?
It is excluded.
By what kind of [nomos]? {By a law}[505] of works?
No, but **by the [nomos] of faith**.

For we hold that **one is justified by faith apart from works**[506] of the [nomos].

Or **is God the God of Jews only**?
Is he not the God of Gentiles also?
Yes, of Gentiles also,
since **God is one**—**who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith**.
(Romans 3:27-30 ESV)

In chapter 9, Paul develops a sophisticated allegory to elucidate God's prerogative of "**election**".[507] Using God's **election of Isaac over Esau**,[508] Paul asserts:

This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God,
but **the children of the promise are counted as offspring**.
(Romans 9:8 ESV)

The point of Paul's allegory is that "**the children of the promise**" comprise both "Jews" and "Gentiles" who were being called the New Testament Church. The "**background** and **preconceptions**" of those called is of no consequence to God – **election is purely a matter of mercy and grace**:

… in order to make known **the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy**,
which he has prepared beforehand for glory
—**even us whom he has called**, not **from the Jews** only but **also from the Gentiles**?

What shall we say, then?
That **Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it**,
that is, a righteousness that is by faith;

---

[501] See footnote ***221***
[502] For a discussion of Paul's use of "*nomos*" in Romans, see section ***11.6.1 The Book of Romans*** in the paper "**The Writings of Moses**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[503] See Romans 3:10-18
[504] To be "under the *nomos*" means to be under the penalty of death due to sin; see Romans 3:23, 6:20-23.
[505] These words are supplied by the translator; they are NOT in the Greek text.
[506] See section ***11. Faith AND Works*** in the paper "**True Worship of the True God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[507] For further discussion, see section ***2.3.1 Election*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[508] See Romans 9:6-13

but that **Israel who pursued a [nomos]** that would lead to righteousness
did not succeed in reaching that [nomos].
Why? Because **they did not pursue it by faith**, but as if it were based on works.[509]
(Romans 9:23-24, 30-32a ESV)

In chapter 10, **Paul summarizes the calling of God to the Church**:

For the Scripture says,
"Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (citing Isaiah 28:16)

For **there is no distinction between Jew and Greek**;
for the same Lord is Lord of all,
bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For
"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (citing Joel 2:32)
(Romans 10:11-13 ESV)

In chapter 11, **Paul addresses the issue of Israel's rejecting and killing the Messiah**, Jesus Christ. Paul asserts that **all occurred according to the Plan of God** so that **salvation could extend to all humanity**:

So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall?
By no means!
Rather, **through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles**, so as to make Israel jealous.
Now if **their trespass means riches for the world**,
and if **their failure means riches for the Gentiles**, how much more will their full inclusion mean![510]

Now I am speaking to you Gentiles.
Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles,
I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.
or if **their rejection means the reconciliation of the world**,
what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?[511]

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers:
a partial hardening has come upon Israel, **until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**.
(Romans 11:11-15, 25 ESV)

In chapter 15, Paul cites a series of scriptures **extolling the Plan of God**:

For I tell you that **Christ became a servant to the circumcised** to show God's truthfulness,
in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,
and **in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy**.
As it is written,
"Therefore I will praise you among the **Gentiles**, and sing to your name."
(citing 2 Samuel 22:50 // Psalm 18:49)

And again it says,
"Rejoice, O **Gentiles**, with his people." (citing Deuteronomy 32:43 LXX)

And again,
"Praise the Lord, all you **Gentiles**, and let all the peoples extol him." (citing Psalm 117:1)

And again Isaiah says,
"The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the **Gentiles**;
in him will the **Gentiles** hope." (citing Isaiah 11:10 LXX)

May the **God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
(Romans 15:8-13 ESV)

Paul used the tension between Jews and Gentiles in Rome to teach the universality of the Plan of God.
All human beings are commonly burdened with the propensity to sin. Election is purely a matter of God's mercy and grace – no one is worthy of the calling of God. Those called now, whether Jews or Gentiles, are called for the purpose of working out the Plan of God. Humility is in order.

[509] This was the teaching of the Pharisees.
[510] The "**full inclusion of Israel**" alludes to the establishment of the New Israel in the World Tomorrow.
[511] The allusion to "**life from the dead**" looks to the second resurrection when all the dead, including all physical Israelites, will be restored to life and have the opportunity to attain salvation.

4.4.5 Prison Epistles

After his Third Journey, Paul returned to Jerusalem.[512] In Jerusalem, Paul went to the Temple with some members of the Jerusalem Church.[513] In the Temple, **Paul was accused by some Jews from Asia and arrested**.[514] Eventually, Paul was taken to **Caesarea**,[515] where he was imprisoned for two years.[516] After a period of time, **Paul appealed his case to Caesar in Rome**.[517] Paul was in Rome under house arrest for two years.[518] It is possible that epistles were written from Caesarea, but most commentators ascribe to Rome as the location of writing **Philippians**, **Colossians**, **Ephesians**, and **Philemon**.[519]

Philippi was the first city of Macedonia evangelized by Paul on his Second Journey, around 50AD.[520] There was no synagogue in Philippi,[521] which implies **the Church in Philippi was mostly Gentile**. Paul most likely wrote the epistle to the Philippians from Rome, in prison,[522] in 62AD. Paul had a special affinity for the **Church in Philippi**, and they materially assisted him:

> **I thank my God in all my remembrance of you**,
> always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy,
> because of **your partnership in the gospel** from the first day until now.
>
> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia,
> **no church entered into partnership with me** in giving and receiving, **except you only**.
>
> Even in Thessalonica **you sent me help for my needs** once and again.
> (Philippians 1:3-5, 4:15-16 ESV)

The Bible does NOT report that **Paul ever visited Colossae**,[523] although he passed near to it on his Third Journey.[524] Paul's epistle to the Colossians was most likely written from Rome, when Paul was a prisoner,[525] in 62AD. The **Church most likely comprised mostly Gentiles**,[526] but Paul admonishes unity among all:

> Here **there is not Greek and Jew**, circumcised and uncircumcised, **barbarian**, **Scythian**,[527] slave, free;
> but **Christ is all**, and in all.
>
> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts,
> kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and,
> if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other;
> as the Lord has forgiven you, so **you also must forgive**.
> And above all these put on **love**, which **binds everything together in perfect harmony**.
> (Colossians 3:11-14 ESV)

Paul briefly visited the city of **Ephesus** at the end of his **Second Journey**, leaving **Priscilla** and **Aquila** in Ephesus to start the Church.[528] While they were there, **Apollos** came from Alexandria,[529] and evangelized among the Jews.[530] On his **Third Journey**, **Paul spent considerable time in Ephesus** – three years overall.[531] For three months, **Paul spoke in the synagogue**; then for two years he presented **public lectures in a meeting hall**, and **the Gospel spread throughout Asia**:

> And he entered the **synagogue** and for three months spoke boldly,
> reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

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[512] See Acts 21:15-16
[513] See Acts 21:24,26
[514] See Acts 21:27-36
[515] See Acts 23:23-24,31-33
[516] See Acts 24:27
[517] See Acts 25:11-12
[518] See Acts 28:14,16,30
[519] See Guthrie pages 526, 555, 515, 639
[520] See Acts 16:10-12
[521] See Acts 16:13
[522] See Philippians 1:13, 4:22
[523] See Colossians 1:4,7-9, 2:1; however, he does express desire to go there, see Philemon 22.
[524] See Acts 19:1
[525] See Colossians 4:3,18
[526] See Colossians 1:21,27, 3:5-7
[527] In addition to Greeks, there were also other Gentile groups represented in the Colossian Church.
[528] See Acts 18:18-21
[529] Like Rome, there is no certain information how the Church in Alexandria was started; see Bruce (**NT**) pages 294, 322.
[530] See Acts 18:24-28
[531] See Acts 20:31

But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief,
speaking evil of the Way before the congregation,
he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him,
reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

This continued for two years,
so that **all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord**, both **Jews and Greeks**.
(Acts 19:8-10 ESV)

The **Epistle to the Ephesians** was most likely written from Rome, while Paul was a prisoner, in 62AD.[532] The epistle we have as "Ephesians" may have been "**circular letter**" copies of which went to a series of cities,[533] or it may have been intended for Ephesus and various outlying Churches; in any event **Paul addresses people with whom he is NOT personally familiar**, **many of whom were Gentiles**:

For this reason, because **I have heard of your faith** in the Lord Jesus
and your love toward all the saints …

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus **on behalf of you Gentiles**
—**assuming that you have heard** of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you …
(Ephesians 1:15, 3:1-2 ESV see also 4:21)

While a significant portion of the Church in Ephesus was probably of "Jewish" background, there does NOT seem to be tension with those of "Gentile" background. Paul appeals to his audience to **reject their former life** "**in the world**":

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked,
following the course of this world,
following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience
—among whom **we all once lived in the passions of our flesh**,
carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind,
and were by nature children of wrath, **like the rest of mankind**.

Therefore remember that at one time **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[534] and strangers to the covenants of promise,
having no hope and without God in the world.
(Ephesians 2:1-3, 11-12 ESV)

Ephesus was a major center of pagan worship including occult and magic.[535] To counter "**pagan mysteries**", Paul elucidates the "**true mystery**" of **salvation through Jesus Christ**, and implores his audience to leave the "way of the world" and **live a pure Christian life**:

… how **the mystery was made known to me** by revelation, as I have written briefly.
When you read this, you can **perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ**,
which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations
as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.
This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body,
and **partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus** through the gospel.

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,
and to bring to light for everyone what is **the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God**,
who created all things …
(Ephesians 3:3-6, 8-9 ESV)

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that **you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do**,
in the futility of their minds.
They are **darkened in their understanding**,
alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.
They have become callous and have given themselves up to **sensuality**,
greedy to practice **every kind of impurity**.
(Ephesians 4:17-19 ESV)

… for **at one time you were darkness**, but now you are light in the Lord.
Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),
and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

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[532] See Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, 6:20
[533] See Guthrie pages 510-511
[534] Paul alludes to the promises made to Abraham, implying "spiritual Israel".
[535] See Acts 19:18-19,23-28

> **Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness**, but instead expose them.
> For **it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret**.
> (Ephesians 5:8-12 ESV)

Philemon was probably a Gentile. He was a wealthy slave owner in Colossae. We have no record of his conversion, but Paul knew him well.[536] A slave of his, Onesimus, ran away to Rome, and became converted; and, while Paul was a prisoner in Rome, Paul befriended Onesimus:

> I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.
> (Philemon 10 ESV)

Paul goes on to implore Philemon for **manumission for Onesimus**:

> … but I preferred to do nothing without your consent
> in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.
> For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while,
> that **you might have him back forever**, no longer as a salve but more than a slave,
> **as a beloved brother**—especially to me,
> but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
> (Philemon 14-16 ESV)

From prison, Paul reached out in love to people he knew well as well as to people he did NOT know. His message to all was the same: unity in love. **The Way of God is universal** – for all persons regardless of background. Paul had worked closely with both Jews and Gentiles – he implored all to consider themselves one in God.

4.4.6 Pastoral Epistles

Paul recruited Timothy in Lystra on his Second Journey.[537] Timothy worked closely with Paul from that time. Timothy's mother was Jewish, and his father was Greek. **We have no information on the background of Titus**. He was Greek and he accompanied Paul to Jerusalem in about 45AD:

> Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, **taking Titus along with me**.
> But even **Titus**, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though **he was a Greek**.
> (Galatians 2:1, 3 ESV)

Paul was arrested in Jerusalem in 57AD[538] and transferred to Rome by 60AD.[539] Paul was a prisoner in Rome for two years,[540] after which **Paul was freed for a period of time and then he was rearrested**. After his first imprisonment, when Paul was free, he continued his work.[541] Once free, Paul went to Ephesus with Timothy, then Paul went to **Macedonia**, from where he wrote the **first letter to Timothy**.[542] At about the same time, **Paul and Titus were in Crete**. Paul left Titus in Crete and went to **Nicopolis in Epirus**, from where he wrote the **letter to Titus**.[543] Later, after he was rearrested, **Paul was again taken to Rome**, from where he wrote the **second letter to Timothy**.[544]

Paul's overriding concerns are similar in all three letters:

- Most importantly, that the Gospel be taught as it was delivered:
  See 1 Timothy 1:3-7, 4:11-16, 6:2b-3; Titus 2:1, 15; 2 Timothy 2:2, 3:14-17a
- False teachers and false teachings must be avoided:
  See 1 Timothy 4:6, 6:4-5, 20; Titus 1:10, 14, 3:9; 2 Timothy 2:14, 16, 23, 4:3-4
- Churches must be properly organized:
  See 1 Timothy 2:8-15, 3:1-13, 5:1-22a; Titus 1:5-9, 2:2-10, 3:10
- **The Gospel is universal**:

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[536] See Philemon 4-7
[537] See Acts 16:1-3; for further discussion of the relationship between Paul and Timothy, see section ***3.3.2.1 Paul and Timothy*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
[538] See Acts 21:27-36
[539] See Acts 25;11-12, 28:11-14
[540] See Acts 28:30
[541] See Bruce (NT) pages 364-366
[542] See 1 Timothy 1:3
[543] See Titus 1:5, 3:12
[544] See 2 Timothy 1:8,17, 2:9

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings
be made **for all people**, for kings and all who are in high positions,
that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of **God our Savior**,
who **desires all people to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

For this **I was appointed a preacher and an apostle**
(I am telling the truth, I am not lying),
a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
(1 Timothy 2:1-4, 7 ESV)

For **the grace of God** has appeared, bringing **salvation for all people**,
training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions,
and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,
waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness
and to purify for himself **a people for his own possession** who are zealous for good works.
(Titus 2:11-14 ESV)

But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me,
so that **through me the message might be fully proclaimed**
and **all the Gentiles might hear it**.
So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.
(2 Timothy 4:17 ESV)

Clearly Paul had an affinity for both Timothy and Titus. His letters clearly indicate that he trusted them to continue his work of preaching the Gospel among both Jews and Gentiles.

5. All Nations in the World Tomorrow

The Pharaohs of Egypt claimed divinity. In Egypt, Pharaoh was the highest god. However, Pharaoh was, in fact, the chief exponent of Satan the Devil on this earth. When God sent Moses to Egypt to free the Israelites, **God's purpose was to also punish Pharaoh**:

And [YHWH] said to Moses,
"When you go back to Egypt,
see that you do before **Pharaoh** all the miracles that I have put in your power.
But **I will harden his heart**, so that he will not let the people go.
Then you shall say to Pharaoh,
'Thus says [YHWH], Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you,
"Let my son go that he may serve me."

If you refuse to let him go, behold, **I will kill your firstborn son**.'"
(Exodus 4:21-23 ESV)

Starting with the seventh plague, **God's purpose was to show Pharaoh personally how powerless he really was** – he was NOT the "highest god" in fact he had no "divinity" whatsoever. Pharaoh could do nothing to protect his person, his people, or his land in the face of actions by the True God. God's purpose in thrashing Pharaoh was to **demonstrate** for all people for all time that in fact, he, **YHWH**, **is the High God**, and **his Plan will be accomplished on the earth**:

Then [YHWH] said to Moses,
"Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him,
'Thus says [YHWH], the God of the Hebrews,
"Let my people go, that they may serve me.
For this time **I will send all my plagues on you yourself**,
and on your servants and your people,
so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.

For by now I could have put out my hand
and struck you and your people with pestilence,
and you would have been cut off from the earth.

But **for this purpose I have raised you up**, to show you my power,
so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. …"'"
(Exodus 9:13-16 ESV)

King David and many other Psalmists pick up this refrain looking to the time when **YHWH will be King of kings** and all nations over all the whole earth will know and worship YHWH as the True God:[545]

> **All the ends of the earth** shall remember and turn to [YHWH],
> and **all the families of the nations** shall worship before you.
> For **kingship belongs to [YHWH]**, and **he rules over the nations**.
>
> All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
> **before him shall bow all** who go down to the dust,
> even the one who could not keep himself alive.
>
> **Posterity shall serve him**;
> it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
> **they shall come and proclaim his righteousness** to a people yet unborn, that **he has done it**.[546]
> (Psalm 22:27-31 ESV)
>
> Come, behold the works of [YHWH], how he has brought desolations on the earth.
> **He makes wars cease** to the end of the earth;
> he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.
>
> Be still, and know that I am God.
> **I will be exalted among the nations**, **I will be exalted in the earth**!
> (Psalm 46:8-10 ESV)
>
> Clap your hands, **all peoples**!
> Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
> 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.
> The princes of the peoples gather as **the people of the God of Abraham**.
> For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted!
> (Psalm 47:1-2, 5-9 ESV)
>
> By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O **God of our salvation**,
> **the hope of all the ends of the earth** and of the farthest seas;
> the one who by his strength established the mountains, being girded with might;
> **who stills** the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, **the tumult of the peoples**,
> so that **those who dwell at the ends of the earth** are in awe at your signs.
> You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy.
> (Psalm 65:5-8 ESV)
>
> May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us,
> 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.
> 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)
>
> Oh sing to [YHWH] a new song; sing to [YHWH], **all the earth**!
> Sing to [YHWH], bless his name; **tell of his salvation** from day to day.
> **Declare his glory among the nations**, his marvelous works among **all the peoples**!
>
> Ascribe to [YHWH], **O families of the peoples**, ascribe to [YHWH] glory and strength!
> Ascribe to [YHWH] the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!
> **Worship [YHWH]** in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, **all the earth**!
> **Say among the nations**,
>
> > "**[YHWH] reigns**!
> > Yes, **the world is established**; it shall never be moved;
> > he will judge **the peoples** with equity."
>
> Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before [YHWH],
> for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth.

[545] See also Psalms 2:8, 33:8,11-14, 45:16-17, 48:10, 50:1-2, 57:5,11, 58:11, 66:1-4, 68:32, 72:19, 74:12, 82:8, 83:18, 89:11,27, 97:1,5,9, 98:1-4,9, 105:7-8, 108:5, 119:64, 148:11-13

[546] This alludes to the beginning of salvation at the First Resurrection; see also Psalm 52:9, Isaiah 44:23, Revelation 16:17, 21:6.

He will judge the world in righteousness, and **the peoples** in his faithfulness.
(Psalm 96:1-3, 7-10, 12b-13 ESV)

[YHWH] reigns; **let the peoples tremble**!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

[YHWH] is great in Zion; **he is exalted over all the peoples**.
Let them praise your great and awesome name!
Holy is he!

The King in his might loves justice.
You have established equity;
you have executed [justness] (mish^{e}pat) and righteousness in Jacob.

Exalt [YHWH] our God; **worship at his footstool**!
Holy is he!
(Psalm 99:1-5 ESV)

All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, [YHWH],
for they have heard the words of your mouth,
and they **shall sing of the ways of [YHWH]**, for great is the glory of [YHWH].
For though [YHWH] is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.
(Psalm 138:4-6 ESV)

The working out of the Plan of God began with the creation of the ancient Nation of Israel. In rescuing the people of Israel from slavery, God delivered an object lesson for all humanity. **The most powerful proxies of Satan the Devil are powerless when God acts**. The Plan of God will culminate with YHWH, **Jesus Christ**, the Messiah, on his throne on this earth as **King of kings** ruling all people in all nations over the whole earth.

5.1 The Restoration of the Land of Israel

The first promise to Abraham was that his descendants would become a great nation and the Land of Israel would be permanently given to his descendants.[547] This promise will be fulfilled in the World Tomorrow. **Ezekiel chapters 47 and 48** describe the allocation of the Land of Israel to each of the tribes using the thirteen-tribe paradigm. The Levites' land is around the New Temple. Each of the other tribes is assigned a strip of land from west to east as depicted in this map:

The nation of New Israel will be populated by people called form the four corners of the earth[548] as discussed in sections ***2.4.5.1 The Second Exodus*** and ***2.4.5.2 The New Israel*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. The King of kings, **Jesus Christ**, "**the good shepherd**", will personally oversee the teaching of the **Way of God** to these people:

> For thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
> Behold, I, **I myself will search for my sheep** and will seek them out.
> As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered,
> so will I seek out my sheep,

[547] See section ***1.2 The Promises to Abraham***
[548] See Isaiah 11:12

and **I will rescue them** from all places where they have been scattered
on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

And **I will bring them out from the peoples** and gather them from the countries,
and will bring them **into their own land**.

And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines,
and in all the inhabited places of the country.
I will feed them with good pasture,[549]
and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land.
There they shall lie down in good grazing land,
and on rich pasture they shall feed **on the mountains of Israel**.

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down …
declares the Lord [YHWH].
(Ezekiel 34:11-15 ESV)

So Jesus again said to them,
Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep**.
All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.
I am the door.

If anyone enters by me, **he will be saved** and will go in and out **and find pasture**.
The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.
I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

I am the good shepherd.
The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
I am the good shepherd.
I know my own and my own know me …
(John 10:7-11, 14 ESV)

God's original purpose for the ancient Nation of Israel was to be an example nation to bring the Way of God to all nations of the World.[550] Because **Israel failed**, the nations of the world have gone their own way under the influence of Satan the Devil. This has made the Day of YHWH inevitable[551] – **God will punish the nations of the world**. In the World Tomorrow, **New Israel will become the example nation God requires**. New Israel will participate in getting the Gospel into all the World:

Sing aloud, **O daughter of Zion**; shout, **O Israel**!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart, **O daughter of Jerusalem**!
[YHWH] has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, [**YHWH**], **is in your midst**; you shall never again fear evil.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
"Fear not, O Zion; **let not your hands grow weak**.
[YHWH] your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness; **he will quiet you by his love**;
he will exult over you with loud singing.

At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together;
for **I will make you renowned** and praised **among all the peoples of the earth**,
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,"
says [YHWH].
(Zephaniah 3:14-17, 20 ESV)

At the center of the New Israel will be a **New Temple** of God beside the city of Jerusalem. The key feature of this Temple will be **a new sacrificial service**. The purpose of the sacrifices will be as a memorial looking back to the propitiating sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which opened the door for salvation to all mankind. **The sacrifices will be an object lesson in "holiness"**. The new sacrificial system is discussed in detail in section ***2.4.5.3 The New Temple*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**' located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

There are many **prophecies looking to the new sacrificial service**. The sacrifice of animals will be used to teach the people of the world "holiness". The objective of living by the Way of God is to understand "holiness", to replace sinful human nature by God's divine nature. **Living by the Way of God requires**

[549] "Good pasture" is a metaphor for the truth of the Bible, the Way of God.
[550] See section ***1.3 The Purpose of Ancient Israel***
[551] See Micah 1:5, Zephaniah 1:2-6

"Christian sacrifices" to demonstrate "holiness".[552] Those who do this become candidates for the gift of eternal life, and if God in his mercy extends grace to these individuals, they may be granted admission to the God Family:[553]

> 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**.
> (Ezekiel 20:40-41 ESV)
>
> … and the **Levitical priests** shall never lack a man in my presence to **offer burnt offerings**,
> to burn **grain offerings**, and to **make sacrifices forever**.
>
> 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.
> (Jeremiah 33:18, Malachi 3:3-4 ESV)

Through the New Israel and New Temple, God will fulfill the commitment he made in the "**Covenant of Performance**":[554]

> And he said,
>
> > "Behold, **I am [cutting] (karath)**[555] **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)

The **promise to Abraham** of "**a great nation**" will ultimately extend to all persons who accept God's offer of salvation. In the World Tomorrow, the New Nation of Israel will be established in the Land of Israel and will be key to teaching **all people over the world** the Way of God.

5.2 The Blessing to All Nations

The second promise to Abraham was that through a descendant of his, all families of the earth would be blessed. The New Testament authors are clear and specific that **this blessing came through Jesus Christ**.[556] The "blessing" began with the First Advent wherein Jesus' **propitiating sacrifice** made possible salvation for all humanity.[557] But, **only a very limited number of people have been called to the New Testament Church**. The majority of humanity, including all of "mainstream Christianity", remains locked into lies. Only at the **Second Advent** will the calling of God extend to each and every person on the planet – all people will have the opportunity to come under the propitiating sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This will be **the fulfillment of the "blessing"**.

The Old testament clearly and specifically identifies **YHWH** as the "**Redeemer**", the bringer of salvation to humanity. **Salvation will begin at the Second Advent with the First Resurrection**. For a discussion of the "**concept of salvation**", see section ***2.2 Salvation*** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**"; also, see section ***1.2.3 God is the Source of Salvation*** in the paper "**First Pillar - The Nature of God**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

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[552] See section ***10.3 Christian Sacrifices*** in the paper "**True Worship of the True God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[553] See also Isaiah 19:21, 56:6-8, Jeremiah 33:11, Zechariah 14:21
[554] See section ***1.2 The Promises to Abraham***
[555] See footnote ***14***
[556] See section ***4. The Gospel to the Nations***
[557] See section ***4.1 Jesus and the Nations***

The **Patriarch Job** expressed his confidence in **Salvation through the Redeemer**:

> Oh that my words were written!
> Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
> Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!
>
> For **I know that my Redeemer lives**, and **at the last he will stand upon the earth**.
> And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet [away from][558] my flesh **I shall see God**,
> whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
>
> **My heart faints within me**![559]
> (Job 19:23-27 ESV)

King David identifies YHWH as the Redeemer, the source of Salvation; and, later Psalmists concur:

> **[YHWH] redeems the life of his servants**;
> none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.
>
> Bless [YHWH], O my [being] (nephesh),[560] and all that is within me, bless his holy name!
> who forgives all your iniquity,
> **who redeems your life** from the pit,
> who crowns you with [ḥesed][561] and mercy …
> (Psalm 34:22, 103:1, 3a, 4 ESV)
>
> Oh give thanks to [YHWH], for he is good, for his [ḥesed] endures forever!
> Let **the redeemed of [YHWH]** say so, **whom he has redeemed** from trouble
> and gathered in from the lands,
> from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.[562]
>
> He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
> [YHWH] is gracious and merciful.
> **He sent redemption to his people**;
> he has commanded his covenant forever.
> Holy and awesome is his name!
>
> **Plead my cause and redeem me**; **give me life** according to your promise!
> (Psalm 107:1-3, 111:4, 9, 119:154 ESV)

The Prophet Isaiah uses "Redeemer" as an epithet for YHWH on more than a dozen occasions:[563]

- The "Redeemer" is clearly identified as YHWH:

  > Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel!
  > I am the one who helps you, **declares [YHWH]**;
  > **your Redeemer** is **the Holy One of Israel**.
  >
  > Thus says [**YHWH**], the **King of Israel** and his **Redeemer**, [**YHWH**] of hosts:
  > > "I am the first and I am the last;
  > > besides me there is no god. …"
  > (Isaiah 41:14, 44:6 ESV see also 47:4, 49:7)

- The historic work of the "Redeemer" is recounted:

  > But now thus says [**YHWH**],
  > he **who created you**, O Jacob, he **who formed you**, O Israel:
  > > "Fear not, for **I have redeemed you**;
  > > I have called you by name, **you are mine**. …"
  >
  > Thus says [**YHWH**], **your Redeemer**, the Holy One of Israel:
  > > "For your sake I send to Babylon and bring them all down as fugitives,
  > > even the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice.[564]
  > >
  > > I am [**YHWH**], your Holy One, the **Creator of Israel**, your King."
  > (Isaiah 43:1, 14-15 ESV see also 51:10, 54:8, 63:9, 16)

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[558] The preposition מִן - min, has a locational sense, "from", and a partitive sense, "away from". The first part of the verse clearly anticipates Job's death and destruction in the grave; so, the partitive sense is clearly to be preferred.

[559] For further discussion of this passage see section ***Fifth Soliloquy: My Redeemer Lives*** in the paper "**Analysis of the Book of Job**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

[560] See footnote ***225***

[561] See footnote ***48***

[562] The "redeemed" in Psalm 107 are those people called to the New Israel, to begin their path to salvation.

[563] See Isaiah 41:14, 43:14, 44:6,24, 47:4, 48:17, 49:7,26, 54:5,8, 59:20, 60:16, 63:16

[564] This is dual: applying to the destruction of Ancient Babylon and Babylon the Great; see section ***3.3 Babylon the Great***

- The role of YHWH as Jesus Christ in the First Advent is prophesized:

  And **a Redeemer will come to Zion**,
  to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,
  declares [YHWH].
  (Isaiah 59:20 ESV)

- The "Redeemer" is the agent of the Second Exodus:

  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;[565]
  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 35:8-10 ESV)

  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)

- The "Redeemer" is made manifest to the nations:

  Thus says [YHWH], your **Redeemer**, the Holy One of Israel:
  Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea,[566]
  declare this with a shout of joy, **proclaim it**,
  send it out to the end of the earth; say,
  "[YHWH] has redeemed his servant Jacob!"[567]
  (Isaiah 48:17a, 20 ESV)

  "There is no peace," says [YHWH], "for the wicked."
  I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh,
  and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine.[568]

  Then all flesh shall know that I am [YHWH] your Savior,
  and **your Redeemer**, the Mighty One of Jacob."
  (Isaiah 48:22, 49:26 ESV)

  Fear not, for you will not be ashamed;
  be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced;
  for you will forget the shame of your youth,
  and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

  For your Maker is your husband,[569] [**YHWH**] of hosts is his name;
  and the Holy One of Israel is **your Redeemer**,
  the **God of the whole earth** he is called.
  (Isaiah 54:4-5 ESV)

  Whereas you[570] have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through,
  I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.

  You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall nurse at the breast of kings;
  and you shall know that I, [**YHWH**], am your Savior and **your Redeemer**,
  the Mighty One of Jacob.
  (Isaiah 60:15-16 ESV)

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[565] The Way of God
[566] See Revelation 18:4
[567] This alludes to the First Resurrection.
[568] See Revelation 19:17-18, Jeremiah 25:15, Isaiah 51:17-23, Revelation 14:10, and 16:19
[569] See Revelation 19:7-9
[570] The "you" in chapter 60 of Isaiah addresses "Jerusalem".

- The "Redeemer" brings salvation:

> **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**;[571]
> 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.
>
> Thus says [**YHWH**], **your Redeemer**, who formed you from the womb:
> "I am [YHWH], who made all things,
> who alone stretched out the heavens,
> who spread out the earth by myself …"
> (Isaiah 44:22-24 ESV)
>
> Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem,
> for [**YHWH**] has comforted his people; he has **redeemed Jerusalem**.
>
> [YHWH] has bared his holy arm **before the eyes of all the nations**,
> and **all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God**.
> (Isaiah 52:9-10 ESV)

The author of **Hebrews** succinctly describes **the efficacy of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ**:

> But **when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come**,
> then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)
> **he entered once for all into the holy places**,
> not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood**,
> thus **securing an eternal redemption**.
>
> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer,
> sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will **the blood of Christ**,
> who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God,
> **purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God**.
>
> Therefore **he is the mediator of a new covenant**,
> 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.
> (Hebrews 9:11-15 ESV)

The **Book of Revelation** contains an example of the **universal nature of the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ**:

> After this I looked, and behold, **a great multitude** that no one could number,
> **from every nation**, from **all tribes and peoples and languages**,
> standing before the throne and before the Lamb, **clothed in white robes**,
> with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice,
> "**Salvation belongs to our God** who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
>
> 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**.
>
> For **the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd**,
> and he will guide them to springs of living water,
> and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."
> (Revelation 7:9-10, 13-14, 17 ESV)

The **Matriarch Hannah** understood the significance of the role **her son Samuel** would play in working out **God's Plan of Salvation**. Her faith is echoed by **Jesus' mother, Mary**:

> And **Hannah prayed** and said,
> "**My heart exults in [YHWH]**;
> my horn is exalted in [YHWH].
> My mouth derides my enemies, because **I rejoice in your salvation**.
> (1 Samuel 2:1 ESV)

[571] This alludes to the beginning of salvation at the First Resurrection; see also Psalms 22:31, 52:9, Revelation 16:17, 21:6.

And **Mary said**,

"**My [heart] (psyche)**[572] **magnifies the Lord**,
and my spirit rejoices in **God my Savior**,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for **he who is mighty has done great things** for me, and holy is his name.
(Luke 1:46-49 ESV)

Several Psalms chronicle the universal nature of the offer of salvation by God:

Yet God my King is from of old, **working salvation in the midst of the earth**.
(Psalm 74:12 ESV)

Oh sing to [YHWH] a new song; sing to [YHWH], **all the earth**!
Sing to [YHWH], bless his name; **tell of his salvation** from day to day.
Declare his glory **among the nations**, his marvelous works **among all the peoples**!
(Psalm 96:1-3 ESV // 1 Chronicles 16:23-24)

Oh sing to [YHWH] a new song, for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.
[YHWH] has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness **in the sight of the nations**.

He has remembered his [ḥesed][573] and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
(Psalm 98:1-3 ESV)

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!
Let your glory be over all the earth!
That your beloved ones may be delivered,
give salvation by your right hand and answer me!
(Psalm 108:5-6 ESV)

The Prophet Isaiah echoes the Psalmists:

Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
let the earth open, **that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit**;
let the earth cause them both to sprout; I, [YHWH], have created it.
(Isaiah 45:8 ESV)

[YHWH] says:

"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**." (cited by Paul in Acts 13:47)

Thus says [YHWH]:

"In a time of favor I have answered you;
in a day of salvation I have helped you;
I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people,
to establish the [earth] (ʿeretz),[574] to apportion the desolate heritages,
(Isaiah 49:6, 8 ESV)

Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation;
for teaching (torah)[575] will go out from me,
and I will set my justice (mishᵉpat)[576] for **a light to the peoples**.
My righteousness draws near, **my salvation has gone out**,
and my arms will judge **the peoples**;
the coastlands 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.

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[572] See footnote ***225***
[573] See footnote ***48***
[574] See footnote ***119***
[575] See footnote ***18***
[576] See footnote ***130***

Listen to me, **you who know righteousness**, the **people in whose heart is my teaching (torah)**;
fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings.
For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool,
but my righteousness will be forever, and **my salvation to all generations**.
(Isaiah 51:4-8 ESV)

The Bible ends in the Book of Revelation with a vision of the "City of God", New Jerusalem. This vision embodies all the aspirations of humanity to attain **salvation** and be with God **in the Kingdom of God**:

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**![577]
I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
To the thirsty **I will give from the spring of the water of life** without payment.
The one who conquers will have this heritage,
and **I will be his God and he will be my son**. …"
(Revelation 21:2-7 ESV)

The heart of the Plan of God is the offer of salvation to each and every human being who has ever lived from all nations over the whole earth. God unequivocally promised to fulfill his Plan through the Nation of Israel. **YHWH, the divine Creator**, who spoke the words that created everything, willingly gave up his status in eternity and came to earth as a human being, **Jesus Christ**. Through his **propitiating sacrifice**, salvation for sinful human beings is possible. Jesus Christ now waits in eternity as King of kings for God the Father to send him back to earth. At the **Second Advent**, a New Nation of Israel will be created, and **the Gospel will go out from the Land of Israel to the whole earth**. This will be the beginning of the offer of salvation to each and every human being who has ever lived. **Jesus Christ will indeed be the God of Every Nation**!

[577] See Psalms 22:31, 52:9. Isaiah 44:23, Revelation 16:17

Excursus 1 – Retributive Justice

Retributive Justice is a modern term related to criminal law. The basic concept is that an "**offender receives punishment proportional or similar to the crime**" (Wikipedia). For the historical development of the term, see the following articles:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retributive_justice
- https://www.britannica.com/topic/retributive-justice

Although the term, "Retributive Justice", is NOT biblical, **the concept is fully developed in the Bible**. In with the **Covenant of Justness**,[578] made with Noah, God gave humanity a specification of true justice which is elaborated throughout the Bible and is ultimately reflected in all God's dealing with humanity. The **fundamental principle of justice** by which God requires all human societies to be based upon was given to Noah:

> 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.
> (Genesis 9:5-6 ESV)

The issue of "**accidental killing**" is resolved by the "**cities of refuge**".[579] When an accidental killing occurred, the killer could flee to a city of refuge where a due process of inquiry would determine the nature of the killing. If it truly was accidental, the killer could live safely in the city of refuge until the death of the current High Priest, then the killer was free to return to his allotted land.

God is the owner of every human life. God retains the sovereign right to determine who lives, who dies, and when each person dies:

> Behold, **all [persons] (nephesh)**[580] **are mine**;
> the [life] (nephesh) of the father as well as the [life] (nephesh) of the son is mine:
> **the [person] (nephesh) who sins shall die**.
> (Ezekiel 18:4 ESV)

The object of Retributive Justice is ultimately "**the wicked**", those who choose to oppose God. The issue around Retributive Justice is God's punishment of human beings, in particular, those persons referred to as "**the wicked**":

> 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?'"
> (Ezekiel 33:10-11 ESV)

God desires each and every human being to repent and learn to live by the Way of God. That is the message of the **Covenant of life**:[581]

> But if your heart turns away, and **you will not hear**,
> but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them,
> I declare to you today, that **you shall surely perish**.
>
> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,
> that **I have set before you life and death**, blessing and curse.
> Therefore **choose life**, that you and your offspring may live,

[578] See section ***2. The Covenant of Justness*** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[579] See Numbers 35:9-34, Deuteronomy 19:1-13
[580] See footnote ***225***
[581] See section ***5. The Covenant of Life*** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

loving [YHWH] your God, **obeying his voice** and holding fast to him,
for he is your life and length of days …
(Deuteronomy 30:17-18a, 19-20a ESV)

To refuse to repent, is to choose death.

Paul in Romans

The Apostle Paul addresses the issue head-on in chapters 1 and 2 of the Book of Romans. **First**, Paul appeals to **Geneal Revelation** to demonstrate that the "educated", the "teachers", the "philosophers", should be well aware of the **existence and sovereignty of God**:

For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them,
because **God has shown it to them**.
For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature,
have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world,
in the things that have been made.

So **they are without excuse**.
For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him,
but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
Claiming to be wise, they became fools,
and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images**
resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.
(Romans 1:18-23 ESV)

Secondly, Paul identifies the kinds of **sins people fall into** by rejecting the revelation of God:

And since **they did not see fit to acknowledge God**,
God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

They were **filled with all manner of unrighteousness**, evil, covetousness, malice.
They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.
They are gossips, slanderers, **haters of God**, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil,
disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Though they know **God's righteous decree** that **those who practice such things deserve to die**,
they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.
(Romans 1:28-32 ESV)

Thirdly, Paul brings it home to the Christians in Rome, asserting that **no human being is in a position to judge another human being**:

Therefore **you have no excuse**, O man, every one of **you who judges**.
For **in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself**,
because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

We know that **the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things**.
Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself
—that you will escape the judgment of God?
Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience,
not knowing that **God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance**?
But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself
on **the day of wrath** when **God's righteous judgment will be revealed**.
(Romans 2:1-5 ESV)

Finally, Paul summarizes "**Retributive Justice**" from **the perspective of God**:

He will render to each one according to his works:
> to those who by patience **in well-doing** seek for glory and honor and immortality,
> he will give **eternal life**;
> but for those who are self-seeking and **do not obey the truth**,
> but obey unrighteousness, there will be **wrath and fury**.

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil,
the Jew first and also the Greek,
but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good,
the Jew first and also the Greek.

For God shows no partiality.
(Romans 2:6-11 ESV)

Analysis of Paul's teaching on Retributive Justice:

- "**The wicked**", those who "**suppress the truth**", who become "**haters of God**", and who "**do not obey the truth**", will be served the "**wrath of God**" on "**the day of wrath**" when "**God's righteous judgment will be revealed**"
- Those who reject God's revelation, "**God has shown it to them**", "**claiming to be wise**", inevitably fall into idolatry, "**exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images**"
- Idolatry is the root of all sin, "**they did not see fit to acknowledge God**"; therefore, idolators are "**filled with all manner of unrighteousness**"
- The basis of "Retributive Justice" is that "the wicked", "**the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things**", are under a death sentence, "**God's righteous decree**", "**those who practice such things deserve to die**"
- For any human being to attempt to pronounce judgement on another human being is to bring judgment on oneself, "**in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself**"
- All human beings have the same proclivities to sin, "**you, the judge, practice the very same things**"
- For those who learn to live by the Way of God, "**in well-doing**", there is the hope of "**eternal life**"; for those reject the Way of God, "**do not obey the truth**", there is "Retributive Justice", "**wrath and fury**"
- In mercy according to his grace, God allows even "the wicked" time to repent, "**God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance**"
- All human beings are judged fairly by God, "**for God shows no partiality**", "**God's righteous judgment will be revealed**"

Paul's teaching, inspired by the Holy Spirit, reflects **a deep understanding of the Bible**. The concept of Retributive Justice is fully developed in the writings of Moses.

Moses on Retributive Justice

The most common root associated with Retributive Justice in the Old Testament is נָקַם - naqam, "take vengeance".[582] There are two derivative nouns נְקָמָה - n^{e}qamah, feminine, and נָקָם naqam, masculine, both mean "vengeance". When used with God as the subject or the operative agent of the "vengeance", these words imply God's righteous punishment of human beings for their transgressions – Retributive Justice. **Consider the following usage in the Writings of Moses**:

> 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 (noqemeth n^{e}qam)**[583] **for the covenant**.
> (Leviticus 26:23-25a ESV)

> [YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying,
> > "**Avenge (n^{e}qom niq^{e}math)**[584] **the people of Israel on the Midianites**.
> > Afterward you shall be gathered to your people."
>
> So Moses spoke to the people, saying,
> > "Arm men from among you for the war,
> > that they may go against Midian
> > to **execute [YHWH's] vengeance (n^{e}qamah) on Midian**.
>
> (Numbers 31:1-3 ESV)

[582] See **TWOT** article 1413 pages 598-599

[583] This is a superlative idiom, נְקַם נְקָמַת - noqemeth n^{e}qam, feminine participle of the verb *naqam*, followed by derivative noun, naqam, in construct – literally, "**taking vengeance of vengeance**".

[584] This is a superlative idiom, נְקֹם נְקָמַת - n^{e}qom niq^{e}math: imperative of the verb *naqam*, followed by derivative noun, *n^{e}qamah*, in construct – literally, "**seek vengeance of vengeance**".

"**Is not this laid up in store with me**, sealed up in my treasuries?
Vengeance (naqam) is mine, and **recompense (shillem)**,[585]
for the time when their foot shall slip;
for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly."

For [YHWH] will **vindicate (dyn)**[586] **his people** and have **compassion on his servants**,
when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.

"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me;
I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal;
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, '**As I live forever**',
if I sharpen my flashing sword
and **my hand takes hold on [justice] (mishᵉpat)**,[587]
I will take vengeance (nqam) on my adversaries
and will **repay (shalem) those who hate me**. …"

Rejoice with him, {O heavens; bow down to him, all gods,}[588]
for **he avenges (naqam) the blood of his children**
and **takes vengeance (naqam) on his adversaries**.
{He repays those who hate him}[589] and cleanses his people's land.
(Deuteronomy 32:34-36, 39-41, 43 ESV)

Analysis of Moses' use of *naqam*:

- These verses provide a definition of "Retributive Justice"
- In **Leviticus chapter 26**, Moses records God's specification of blessing for convent fidelity and curses for covenant violation; in **verses 23-25a**, Moses reports the consequences of covenant violation, "**walk contrary to me**": God will vigorously punish covenant violation, "**execute vengeance for the covenant**", as Retributive Justice, the sins of the people are the cause the punishment, "**for your sins**"
- In **Numbers chapter 31**, God applies Retributive Justice to the Midianites, "**avenge the people of Israel on the Midianites**": the Midianites had participated with the Moabites in Bilᵉ`am's scheme to corrupt Israel – they brought the punishment on themselves, "**execute YHWH's vengeance on Midian**"
- The specification in **Deuteronomy chapter 32** is the most complete definition of God's Retributive Justice
- God retains the sovereign right of Retributive Justice, "**as I live forever**'", "**is not this laid up in store with me**", "**vengeance is mine**"[590]
- Retributive Justice is meted out due to sin, the recipient is the cause of his or her own punishment, "**recompense**", "**repay those who hate me**"
- God's objective in administering Retributive Justice is always to accomplish the Plan of God, "**vindicate his people**", "**compassion on his servants**", "**he avenges the blood of his children**"
- God acts according to the Plan of God when the time is right, "**my hand takes hold on justice**"
- Retributive Justice is ultimately applied to those who hate God, "the wicked", "**I will take vengeance on my adversaries**", "**those who hate me**"

Retributive Justice is applied by God to accomplish his Plan. The **Plan of God** is specified in the Writings of Moses. The rest of the Bible elaborates and explains the **Plan of God** and God's application of **Retributive Justice**.

[585] The root, שָׁלַם - shalem, carries a basic meaning "to complete", "to fulfill". The noun, שִׁלֻּם - shillem, occurs only here in Deuteronomy 32:35; see **TWOT** article 2401 pages 930-932.

[586] The root, דִּין - din, carries a range of meaning including "to judge", "to plead"; see **TWOT** article 426 page 188. Here, in parallel with "compassion" a positive sense is required; hence, "vindicate".

[587] See footnote ***130***

[588] ESV follows the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls in this translation, see ESV footnote.

[589] See previous footnote

[590] This is cited twice in the New Testament, see Romans 12:19 and Hebrews 10:30.

The Plan of God

Early in the Galilean Ministry, **Jesus went into the synagogue in Nazareth** and read from the **Fifth Servant Song**, **Isaiah chapter 61 verse 1 and the first part of verse 2**:

> And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.
> And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.
> And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.
> He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,
>
> "**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**,
> because **he has anointed (chrio)**[591] **me** **to proclaim good news to the poor**.
>
> **He has sent me to proclaim liberty** to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
> to set at liberty those who are oppressed, **to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor**."
>
> And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.
> And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.
> And he began to say to them,
>
> "**Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing**."
> (Luke 4:16-21 ESV)

Jesus openly affirmed his status as the Messiah, "**the Spirit of the Lord is upon me**", "**he has anointed me**". Jesus announced the objective of the First Advent, "**to proclaim good news (the Gospel)**", "**to proclaim liberty**". Jesus affirmed that the **First Advent** was the **fulfillment of a prophesized event in the Plan of God**, "**to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor**". The verses Jesus read were widely recognized by Jesus' contemporaries as being "Messianic". Knowing this, Jesus affirmed in no uncertain terms that he, **Jesus of Nazareth**, whom the people in the synagogue had known since he was a child, **was in fact the fulfiller of this prophecy**, "**today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing**".

The first two verses of Isaiah chapter 61 read:

> The Spirit of the Lord [YHWH][592] 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,
>
> **and the day of vengeance of our God**; **to comfort all who mourn**;
> (Isaiah 61:1-2 ESV)

The second part of verse 2 looks to the **Day of YHWH** which occurs at the **Second Advent**, "**the day of vengeance of our God**"; then, the verse looks beyond the Day of YHWH to the World Tomorrow, a time "**to comfort all who mourn**". The "**vengeance**" of the **Day of YHWH**, Retributive Justice, **is a necessary step in the Plan of God in order to establish the Kingdom of God** and create the utopia of the World Tomorrow. The **99th Psalm** also looks to the establishment of the Kingdom of God and the World Tomorrow:

> (1) **[YHWH] reigns**; let the **peoples tremble**!
> He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; **let the earth quake**!
>
> (2) [YHWH] is great in Zion; **he is exalted over all the peoples**.
> (3) Let them praise your great and awesome name! **Holy is he**!
>
> (4) The King in his might loves justice (mish^{e}pat).[593]
> You have established equity;
> you have executed [justness] (mish^{e}pat) and righteousness in Jacob.
>
> (5) **Exalt [YHWH] our God**; worship at his footstool! **Holy is he**!
>
> (6) **Moses** and **Aaron** were among his priests,
> **Samuel** also was among those who called upon his name.
> They called to [YHWH], and he answered them.
>
> (7) **In the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them**;
> **they kept his testimonies and the statute** that he gave them.

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[591] The Geek word is χρίω – chriō, "to anoint"; it is also applied to Jesus in Acts 4:27, 10:38, and Hebrews 1:9 quoting Isaiah 61:1.
[592] The prophecy was given under inspiration of the Divine Being known to Israel in his role as "YHWH". The same Divine Being temporarily relinquished his Divine status in eternity and assumed the role of a human being born as a baby and growing up as Jesus of Nazareth.
[593] See footnote ***130***

(8) [YHWH] our God, you answered them;
you were a forgiving God to them, but **an avenger (naqam) of their wrongdoings**.
(9) **Exalt [YHWH] our God**, and **worship at his holy mountain**;
for [**YHWH] our God is holy**!
(Psalm 99:1-9 ESV)

Analysis of the 99th Psalm with respect to the Plan of God and Retributive Justice:

- **Verse 1**, the Day of YHWH is accompanied by earthquakes,[594] "**let the earth quake**", it is also a day of punishment for the wicked,[595] "**peoples tremble**"
- **Verses 2 through 5** describe the reign of the King of Kings, YHWH, Jesus Christ, "**holy is he**"
- In **verse 6**, the Psalmist then takes a historical perspective, alluding to **Moses**, **Aaron**, and **Samuel**
- The Pslamist continues historically, in **verses7 and 8**, by looking to the "**wilderness generation**", "**in the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them**", who faithfully served YHWH, "**they kept his testimonies and the statute**"; but were repeatedly **punished** during the wilderness wanderings **to purge them of sin**, "**an avenger of their wrongdoings**":[596]

  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.
  (Jeremiah 2:2b ESV)

  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)

- In **verse 9**, The Pslamist ends with the worship of the King of kings in the World Tomorrow, "**worship at his holy mountain**"

The Plan of God revolves around the nation of Israel and the First and Second Advents. The ancient nation of Israel was to be an example nation to facilitate teaching the Way of God to all other nations. Ancient Israel failed. The **First Advent** made salvation possible through Jesus' propitiating sacrifice. The **Second Advent** will realize salvation for all human beings, but first, "the wicked" of the world must receive Retributive Justice. The new nation of Israel, to be constituted after the Second Advent, will succeed in being an example nation.

One of the earliest Writing Prophets, **Obadiah**, introduces the concept of Retributive Justice with the Day of YHWH. The **Prophet Ezekiel** uses very similar terminology to apply Retributive Justice to the punishment of Israel in his day, and the **Prophet Jeremiah** provides a specific synopsis of the sins of Israel which brought on Retributive Justice:

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.
(Obadiah 15 ESV see also Isaiah 59:18, Jeremiah 25:14)

For thus says the Lord [YHWH]:
I will deal with you as you have done,
you who have despised the oath in **breaking the covenant** …
(Ezekiel 16:59 ESV)

Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look and take note!
Search her squares to see if you can find a man,
one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her.

How can I pardon you?
Your children have forsaken me and have **sworn by those who are no gods**.

[594] See Revelation 6:12, 8:5, 11:13,19, 16:18
[595] See Revelation 14:9-11, 16:1-21, 19:11-21
[596] See Numbers 11:1,33, 12:10,15, 14:20-23,26-38,44-45, 15:32-36, 16:31-35,46-49

When I fed them to the full, they committed adultery and trooped to the houses of whores.
They were well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor's wife.

Shall I not punish them for these things? declares [YHWH];
and **shall I not avenge (naqam) myself on a nation such as this**?

For **the house of Israel and the house of Judah have been utterly treacherous to me**, declares [YHWH].
They have spoken falsely of [YHWH] and have said,
'He will do nothing;
no disaster will come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine.'

The prophets will become wind; the word is not in them.
Thus shall it be done to them!

But this people has **a stubborn and rebellious heart**; they have turned aside and gone away.
They do not say in their hearts,
'Let us fear [YHWH] our God,
who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain,
and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.'

Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have kept good from you.
For wicked men are found among my people; they lurk like fowlers lying in wait.
They set a trap; they catch men.
Like a cage full of birds, their houses are full of deceit;
therefore they have become great and rich; they have grown fat and sleek.
They know no bounds in deeds of evil;
they judge not with justice the cause of the fatherless, to make it prosper,
and they do not defend the rights of the needy.

Shall I not punish them for these things? declares [YHWH],
and **shall I not avenge (naqam) myself on a nation such as this**?"
(Jeremiah 5:1, 7-9, 11-13, 23-29 ESV see also Ezekiel 24:8)

The **Prophet Jeremiah** also presents an interesting contrast to the pronouncement of Retributive Justice on Israel. Jeremiah **implores God to apply Retributive Justice to his persecutors**. The **Prophet Isaiah** had previously prophesized **just such help** for those marked[597] during the tribulation to be called to the New Israel. The **Apostle Paul** picks up the theme affirming **God will apply Retributive Justice in support of Christians under persecution**:

[YHWH] made it known to me and I knew; then you showed me their deeds.
But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.
I did not know it was against me **they devised schemes**, saying,
"Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,
let us cut him off from the land of the living,
that his name be remembered no more."

But, [YHWH] of hosts, who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind,
let me see your vengeance (n°qamah) upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.
(Jeremiah 11:18-20 ESV see also 15:15, 21, 20:12)

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.[598]
Say to those who have an anxious heart,
"Be strong; fear not!
Behold, **your God will come with vengeance (naqam)**, with **the recompense of God**.
He will come and save you."
(Isaiah 35:3-4 ESV see also John 3:36, Romans 5:9)

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God,
that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering
—since indeed **God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you**,
and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us,
when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,
inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God
and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction,
away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

[597] See Revelation 7:1-8

[598] Chapter 35 of the Book of Isaiah is about the World Tomorrow. Verses 1-2 and 5-7 describe general conditions in the World Tomorrow. Verses 8-10 are about he Second Exodus. The chapter follows an ABAB´ pattern: Verse 1-2 are parallel with verses 5-7. Verses 3-4 are parallel with verses 8-10. The "A" verses describe general conditions. The "B" verses are about the persons called to the Second Exodus. The "B´" verses are about the Second Exodus.

when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints,
and to be marveled at among all who have believed,
because our testimony to you was believed.
(2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 ESV)

Retributive Justice is applied by God in just measure as required to punish the sins of people.
For people with whom God working, as with Ancient Israel or those called to the New Testament Church, **God's objective is to bring people to repentance**. For the world in general, Retributive Justice was applied to various nations to their destruction, and Retributive Justice will be applied to purge the world of "the wicked" on the Day of YHWH. For example, before getting specific with God's judgement on Assyria, the **Prophet Nahum** provides a general summation of **God's Retributive Justice**:

[YHWH] is a jealous and avenging (naqam) God;
[YHWH] is avenging (naqam) and wrathful;
[YHWH] takes vengeance (naqam) 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.
He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers;
Bashan and Carmel wither; the bloom of Lebanon withers.
The mountains quake before him; the hills melt;
the earth heaves before him, the world and all who dwell in it.

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.
But with an overflowing flood **he will make a complete end of the adversaries**,
and will **pursue his enemies into darkness**.
(Nahum 1:2-8 ESV see also Isaiah 47:3, Micah 5:15)

The Plan of God is inexorable. **God will accomplish his purpose**. The Plan of God is fully discussed in the paper "**Pillar Two - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. God's Plan involves the offer of salvation to each and every human being who has ever lived. Each person must make the choice whether or NOT to accept the offer. Some, who reject the offer, become antagonistic towards God – they become his enemies. Ultimately, the object of God's Retributive Justice is "**the wicked**", "**the adversaries**", "**his enemies**". These are people who refuse to repent. People who choose to oppose God. On them, **God will pour out his wrath in full measure** and they will be destroyed.

The Wrath of God

The primary occasion of the pouring out of wrath of God is the Day of YHWH. In vision, the **Apostle John** gets a glimpse of the opening of the action on the Day of YHWH:

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[599] **like a scroll that is being rolled up**,
and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

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)

[599] This describes the opening of a "rift" or a "portal" between the physical universe and the spirit realm, "eternity".

A major theme in the **Book of Second Chronicles** is **God's increasing wrath on Southern Israel for apostacy**. Repeatedly, when the nation fell into apostacy, God's wrath was expressed in punishment which brought about a repentance. Consider the **first king of the Southern Kingdom**, **Rehoboam**:

> When the rule of **Rehoboam** was established and he was strong,
> he **abandoned [torah][600] of [YHWH]**, and **all Israel with him**.
>
> In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, because **they had been unfaithful** to [YHWH],
> **Shishak**[601] king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem …
> And he **took the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem**.
>
> Then **Shemaiah the prophet** came to Rehoboam and to the princes of Judah,
> who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them,
> "Thus says [YHWH],
> 'You abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak.'"
>
> Then **the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves** and said,
> "[YHWH] is righteous."
>
> When [YHWH] saw that they humbled themselves, the word of [YHWH] came to Shemaiah:
> "They have humbled themselves.
> I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance,
> and **my wrath shall not be poured out** on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. …"
> (2 Chronicles 12:1-2a, 4-7 ESV)

Similar incidents are reported for **Jehoshaphat**,[602] and **Joash**.[603] The apostacy of **Ahaz** is infamous.[604] It took **the reform of Hezekiah** to avert God's wrath after the apostacy of Ahaz:[605]

> In the first year of {Hezekiah's} reign, in the first month,
> **he opened the doors of the house of [YHWH]** and repaired them.
> He brought in the priests and the Levites and assembled them in the square on the east
> and said to them,
> "Hear me, Levites!
> Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of [YHWH], the God of your fathers,
> and **carry out the filth from the Holy Place**.
>
> For **our fathers have been unfaithful**
> and have done what was evil in the sight of [YHWH] our God.
> They have forsaken him
> and have turned away their faces from the habitation of [YHWH] and turned their backs.
> They also shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps
> and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the Holy Place to the God of Israel.
>
> Therefore **the wrath of [YHWH] came on Judah and Jerusalem**,
> and he has made them an object of horror, of astonishment, and of hissing,
> as you see with your own eyes. …"
> (2 Chronicles 29:3-8 ESV see also the rest of chapter 29 and chapters 30 and 31)

The apostacy of Hezekiah's son **Manasseh**[606] was even worse than the apostacy of Ahaz had been. The reform of **Josiah**[607] could not even revert the evil instituted by Manasseh.[608] The sons of Josiah fell back into apostacy[609] so that the Chronicler summarizes:

> **All** the officers of the priests and the people likewise **were exceedingly unfaithful**,
> following all the **abominations of the nations**.
> And they polluted the house of [YHWH] that he had made holy in Jerusalem.
>
> **[YHWH]**, the God of their fathers, **sent persistently to them by his messengers**,
> because **he had compassion on his people** and on his dwelling place.

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[600] See footnote ***18***

[601] Ramses II, see Rohl **TT** pages 133-157, 175-203

[602] See 2 Chronicles 19:1-3

[603] See 2 Chronicles 24:17-24; note there is no reported repentance on the part of Joash or his contemporaries. However, the next three kings are reported to have been faithful to the covenant; see 2 Chronicles 25:2, 26:4-5, 27:2.

[604] See 2 Chronicles 28:1-5,22-25

[605] Note that the Chronicler reports that Hezekiah, himself, had a problem with "pride" over which he had to repent; see 2 Chronicles 32:24-26.

[606] See 2 Chronicles 33:2-9; Manasseh is reported to have had a personal "repentance"; see 2 Chronicles 33:12-13,15-16, but the apostacy he introduced was so deep that the nation could NOT recover; see 2 Chronicles 33:17, Jeremiah 15:4.

[607] See 2 Chronicles 34:2-9, 35:1-19

[608] See 2 Kings 23:26-27, 2 Chronicles 34:23-25

[609] See 2 Chronicles 36:5,8,12

But they kept mocking the messengers of God,
despising his words and scoffing at his prophets,
until the wrath of [YHWH] rose against his people,
until there was no remedy.
(2 Chronicles 36:14-16 ESV)

As demonstrated with Israel, **God repeatedly manifested his wrath in a measured response to apostacy to bring the nation to repentance**. There was repentance, but it was always followed by worse apostacy until God had no choice but to destroy the nation. This is **an object lesson for all persons called by God**: God brings on **Retributive Justice**, his wrath, in just measure, to teach, **to bring about repentance**:

You will say to me then,
"Why does he still find fault?
For who can resist his will?"

But who are you, O man, to answer back to God?
Will what is molded say to its molder,
"Why have you made me like this?"

Has the potter no right over the clay,
to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

What if **God**, **desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power**,
has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,
in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy,
which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even **us whom he has called** …

Or **do you presume on the riches of his** kindness and forbearance and **patience**,
not knowing that God's kindness is **meant to lead you to repentance**?
(Romans 9:19-24a, 2:4 ESV)

This brings us back to the **Day of YHWH**. **God's wrath on humanity has a definite purpose**.
In the **Olivet Prophecy**, all three Synoptists climax at the **Second Advent** during which the **Day of YHWH** occurs. The **Prophet Isaiah** identifies the **Day of YHWH** as a day of **wrath** and **vengeance**. Echoing Isaiah, Luke identifies the time as the "**days of vengeance**":

And there will be **signs in sun and moon and stars**,
and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves,
people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world.
For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

And **then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory**.

… for **these are days of vengeance**, to **fulfill all that is written**.
(Luke 21:25-27, 22 ESV see also Mark 13:24-26 // Matthew 24:29-30)

Wail, for **the day of [YHWH] is near**; as **destruction from the Almighty** it will come!

Behold, the day of [YHWH] comes, cruel, with **wrath and fierce anger**,
to make the [earth] (´eretz),[610] 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.

I will punish the world for its evil, and **the wicked for their iniquity**;
I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant,
and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.
(Isaiah 13:6, 9-11 ESV)

Draw near, **O nations**, to hear, and give attention, **O peoples**!
Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it.
For **[YHWH] is enraged against all the nations**, and furious against all their host;
he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter.
For **[YHWH] has a day of vengeance (naqam)**, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
(Isaiah 34:1-2, 8 ESV)

A primary objective of the Day of YHWH is to rid the world of "the wicked", so that those people who survive into the World Tomorrow will have chance to live without corrupting influences:

For the look on their faces bears witness against them;
they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it.

[610] See footnote ***119***

Woe to them!
For **they have brought evil on themselves**.

Tell **the righteous** that **it shall be well with them**, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds.

Woe to **the wicked**!
It shall be ill with him, for **what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him**.
(Isaiah 3:9-11 ESV)

[YHWH] will roar from on high, and from his holy habitation utter his voice;
he will roar mightily against his fold, and shout, like those who tread grapes,
against all the inhabitants of the earth.

The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth,
for **[YHWH] has an indictment against the nations**;
he is entering into judgment with **all flesh**,
and **the wicked** he will put to the sword, declares [YHWH].
(Jeremiah 25:30b-31 ESV)

And **in that day**, declares [YHWH],
I will cut off your **horses** from among you and will destroy your **chariots**;
and I will cut off the **cities** of your land and throw down all your **strongholds**;
and I will cut off **sorceries** from your hand, and you shall have no more **tellers of fortunes**;
and I will cut off your **carved images** and your **pillars** from among you,
and **you shall bow down no more to the work of your hands**;
(Micah 5:10-13 ESV)

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of [YHWH] as the waters cover the sea.
… and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation, **neither shall they learn war anymore**.
(Isaiah 11:9, 2:4b ESV)

Millions (billions?) will die. But there is the great equalizer – **the Second Resurrection**, the great **White Throne Judgement**. Over the course of history, many billions of human beings have lived and died with no knowledge of the Way of God. After the millennium, **these people will all be restored to physical life** and be given the opportunity to attain salvation:

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**.[611]
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] (hades)[612] **gave up the dead** who were in them,
and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.
(Revelation 20:11-13 ESV)

The "**books**" that are opened are the **books of the Bible**. To understand the Bible requires calling by God and guidance by the Holy Spirt. This has been unavailable to all but a very few over the course of human history. At the time of the White Throne Judgement, all the people restored to life will be "called". Calling requires a response. **Those who respond positively, repent, and attain baptism, will be given the gift of the Holy Spirit**, which will guide them in understanding the Bible so that they can learn to live by the Way of God and become candidates for the gift of eternal life.

The 149th Psalm provides a fitting conclusion to the discussion of Retributive Justice:

Praise [YHWH]!
Sing to [YHWH] a new song, his praise in the assembly of **the godly**!

Let Israel be glad in his **Maker**;
let the children of Zion rejoice in their **King**!
Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!

For [YHWH] takes pleasure in his people;
he adorns the humble with salvation.

[611] See section ***9.5 The Book of Life*** in the paper "**The Writings of Moses**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[612] See footnote ***364***

> Let **the godly** exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.
> Let the high praises of God be in their throats and **two-edged swords** in their hands,
> to **execute vengeance (n°qamah) on the nations** and **punishments on the peoples** …
> (Psalm 149:1-7 ESV)

The objective of YHWH, Jesus Christ, the "**King**", the "**Maker**" of human beings, is that all human beings repent and become "**the godly**", "**the humble**", whom "**he adorns with salvation**". God uses Retributive Justice, "**punishments on the peoples**", to bring them to repentance. The true "**two-edged sword**" is the Word of God, the Bible.[613] The ultimate "**vengeance on the nations**" on the nations will be to "**conquer them with the Gospel**", to bring all nations under the Kingdom of God and teach all peoples to live by the Way of God!

Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence

At the time of the First Advent, **the Jews were expecting the Messiah**. Their expectation was based on misunderstanding of the prophecies of the Second Advent – they expected the Messiah to fulfill the prophecies of the Second Advent during the First Advent. This is discussed in some detail in section ***3.4.3.4 The Messianic Hope*** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. A big part of the expectation was that the Messiah would be a "**warrior king**" inflicting vengeance on the oppressors of Israel and establishing Israel as the dominant nation. This expectation was based largely on the **prophecies of the Day of YHWH**. But there is another thread in the prophecies which supports this notion. Many prophecies, taken literally, suggest that after the Second Advent **Israel would militarily dominate other nations**. This obviously presents a **contradiction with the clear and specific prophecies that the Second Advent will bring peace and the cessation of war**:

> 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**;
> (Micah 4:3 ESV // Isaiah 2:4)

> **Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end**,
> on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
> to establish it and to uphold it with [justness] (mish°pat)[614] and with righteousness
> from this time forth and forevermore.
> The zeal of [YHWH] of hosts will do this.
> (Isaiah 9:7 ESV)

> "… **Peace, peace, to the far and to the near**," says [YHWH], "and I will heal him. …"
> (Isaiah 57:19b ESV)

> How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
> **who publishes peace**,
> who brings good news of happiness,
> who publishes salvation,
> who says to Zion, "**Your God reigns**."
> (Isaiah 52:7 ESV see also 60:17, Nahum 1:15)

> "… For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,
> but my [ḥesed] shall not depart from you,
> and **my covenant of peace shall not be removed**,"
> says [YHWH], who has compassion on you.
> (Isaiah 54:10 ESV see also Ezekiel 34:25, 37:26)

> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem;
> and the battle bow shall be cut off,
> and **he shall speak peace to the nations**;
> his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River **to the ends of the earth**.
> (Zechariah 9:10 ESV see also Micah 5:10)

[613] See Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17
[614] See footnote ***130***

All these prophecies and many others are clear and specific that the World Tomorrow will be a time of universal peace. The New Israel will be at rest with no need for warfare.

Prophecies of Violence

Consider some **prophecies of Israel apparently taking violent actions against other nations and peoples in the World Tomorrow**:

> The **house of Jacob** shall be a fire,
> and the **house of Joseph** a flame,
> and the house of Esau stubble;
> **they shall burn them and consume them**,
> and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau, for [YHWH] has spoken.
>
> Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau,
> and those of the Shephelah shall possess the land of the Philistines;
> they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria,
> and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.
>
> **The exiles of this host of the people of Israel**
> **shall possess** the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath,
> and the **exiles of Jerusalem** who are in Sepharad **shall possess** the cities of the Negeb.
> (Obadiah 18-20 ESV)
>
> 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**.
> The **jealousy of Ephraim shall depart**, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off;
> Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and **Judah shall not harass Ephraim**.
>
> But **they shall swoop down on the shoulder of the Philistines** in the west,
> and together they shall **plunder the people of the east**.
> They shall **put out their hand against** Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them.
> (Isaiah 11:12-14 ESV)
>
> 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.
>
> And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place,
> and the house of Israel will possess them in [YHWH's] land as male and female slaves.
> **They will take captive those who were their captors**, and **rule over those who oppressed them**.
> (Isaiah 14:1-2 ESV)
>
> Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion,
> for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoofs bronze;
> **you shall beat in pieces many peoples**;
> and shall devote their gain to [YHWH], their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth.
> (Micah 4:13 ESV)
>
> And you, O seacoast, shall be pastures, with meadows for shepherds and folds for flocks.
> **The seacoast shall become the possession of the remnant of the house of Judah**,
> on which they shall graze,
> and in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening.
>
> For [YHWH] their God will be mindful of them and restore their fortunes.
> "Therefore, as I live," declares [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel,
> > "Moab shall become like Sodom, and the Ammonites like Gomorrah,
> > a land possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a waste forever.
> >
> > **The remnant of my people shall plunder them**,
> > and **the survivors of my nation shall possess them**."
> (Zephaniah 2:6-7, 9 ESV)

Analysis:

- **Obadiah verse 15 looks to the Day of YHWH**:

  > For the day of [YHWH] is near upon all the nations.
  > (Obadiah 15a ESV)

  Then verse 17 looks to the Second Exodus:

  > 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**.
  > (Obadiah 17 ESV)

Verses 18-20 then deal with the **actions of the persons comprising the New Israel**.

- **Verse 12** of **Isaiah chapter 11** is a seminal scripture on the Second Exodus; God will call people from the "**four corners of the earth**" to comprise the New Israel. **Verse 13** emphasizes that the historic rivalry between the Northern Kingdom, "**jealousy of Ephraim shall depart**", and the Southern Kingdom, "**Judah shall not harass Ephraim**", will be gone.[615] Then **verse 14** describes the **actions of the persons comprising the New Israel**.

- **Isaiah chapter 14 verse 1** looks to the **Second Exodus**, "**set them in their own land**", and the **New Israel**, "**will again choose Israel**". Then again, **verse 2** describes the **actions of the persons comprising the New Israel**.

- **Chapter 4 of Micah** starts out with the seminal scripture on the **World Tomorrow in verses 1-5**, then the flow of the chapter gets complicated. **Verses 6 and 7** clearly looks to the **Second Exodus, the New Israel, and the Kingdom of God**:

  > **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**.
  > (Micah 4:6-7 ESV)

  Verse 8 then looks to **the resurrected Saints comprising the Kingdom of God**:

  > And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion,
  > **to you shall it come**, the former dominion shall come,
  > **kingship** for the daughter of Jerusalem.
  > (Micah 4:8 ESV)

  Then **verses 9-12** digress to the **contemporary situation** of the nation at the time of Micah's prophecy. **Verse 10** prophesizes the **Babylonian captivity** and **the work of Ezekiel** to establish the remnant community to prepare for the **First Advent**:

  > Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor,
  > for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country;
  > **you shall go to Babylon**.
  >
  > There you shall be rescued;
  > **there [YHWH] will redeem you** from the hand of your enemies.
  > (Micah 4:10 ESV)

  Micah was active at the time of the Aramean-Ephraimite threat to the Southern Kingdom in 735BC. At that time Northern Israel, Aram, Edom and Philistia were all threatening Southern Israel.[616] Micah alludes to this threat in **verse 11**; then, Micah goes on, in **verse 12**, to emphasize that God is in control and the working out of the Plan of God is inexorable:

  > Now **many nations are assembled against you**, saying,
  > "Let her be defiled, and let our eyes gaze upon Zion."
  >
  > But they do not know the thoughts of [YHWH];
  > **they do not understand his plan**,
  > that **he has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor**.
  > (Micah 4:11-12 ESV)

  Verse 13 then returns to the World Tomorrow[617] to describe the **actions of the persons comprising the New Israel**.

- **The Prophet Zephaniah is a master at intertwining themes**: in **chapter 2** he starts out, apparently, addressing his contemporaries, but his imploring is in reality to **all True Worshipper of God** over all times, especially now at the end-time:

  > Gather together, yes, gather, O shameless nation,
  > before the decree takes effect—before the day passes away like chaff—
  > before there comes upon you the burning anger of [YHWH],
  > **before there comes upon you the day of the anger of [YHWH]**.

[615] See Ezekiel 37:15-23
[616] See 2 Kings 16:5, 2 Chronicles 28:5-19
[617] Historically, under Ahaz, Southern Israel raised no resistance to the threat. Ahaz threw himself at the feet of Tiglath Pileser submitting the Southern Kingdom as a vasal to Assyria; see 2 Kings 16:7, 2 Chronicles 28:16,20.

Seek [YHWH], all you **humble of the land**,
who do his [justness] (mishᵉpat),[618]
seek righteousness; seek humility;
perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of [YHWH].
(Zephaniah 2:1-3 ESV)

Then in **verses 4-5 and 8**, Zephaniah briefly alludes to God's punishment of **neighbour nations** of ancient Israel. **Verses 6-7 and 9a** look to Israel's possession of the territory of the neighbour nations in the World Tomorrow.[619] **Verse 9b** alludes to the **actions of the persons comprising the New Israel** in the World Tomorrow.

Taken literally, all of these passages imply that the people of the New Israel in the World Tomorrow will engage in violent actions against other peoples and nations. How can this be? Next, consider some scriptures which, again taken literally, imply **continued violent action initiated by God against various peoples and nations** in the World Tomorrow:

Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel!
I am the one who helps you, declares [YHWH];
your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

Behold, **I make of you a threshing sledge**, new, sharp, and having teeth;
you shall thresh the mountains and crush them,
and you shall make the hills like chaff;
you shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them.
(Isaiah 41:14-16a ESV)

Not like these is he who is the portion of Jacob, for he is the one who formed all things,
and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; **[YHWH] of hosts is his name**.

"**You are my hammer** and **weapon of war**:
with you I break nations in pieces;
with you I destroy kingdoms;
with you I break in pieces the horse and his rider;
with you I break in pieces the chariot and the charioteer;
with you I break in pieces man and woman;
with you I break in pieces the old man and the youth;
with you I break in pieces the young man and the young woman;
with you I break in pieces the shepherd and his flock;
with you I break in pieces the farmer and his team;
with you I break in pieces governors and commanders.
(Jeremiah 51:19-23 ESV)

In Jeremiah, God is explicit that Israel is his agent to crush the nations, "**you are my hammer**", "**weapon of war**", "**with you I break nations in pieces**", "**with you I destroy kingdoms**". As specified in Isaiah, why would God make Israel into "**a threshing sledge**" to "**thresh the mountains**" – taking "**mountains**" as a symbol of "**nations**" and "**kingdoms**"? Are these actions of violence NOT in contradiction with the prophecies of peace quoted earlier? In the next section we will examine prophecies which clarify the meaning of the "**metaphor of violence**".

The Metaphor

The following passage begins to hint at the meaning of the metaphor:

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**."

For the hand of [YHWH] will rest on this mountain,
and **Moab** shall be **trampled down** in his place, as straw is trampled down in a dunghill.
And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim,
but [**YHWH] will lay low his pompous pride** together with the skill of his hands.

And **the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down**, lay low, and cast to the ground, to the dust.
(Isaiah 25:9-12 ESV)

[618] See footnote ***130***
[619] See Ezekiel 47:13-23, 48:1-29

I will punish the world for its evil, and **the wicked** for their iniquity;
I will put an end to the pomp of **the arrogant**,
and **lay low** the pompous pride of **the ruthless**.
(Isaiah 13:11 ESV)

In **verses 6-8**[620] of **Isaiah chapter 25**, the context of the World tomorrow is clearly specified. **Verse 9** continues that context, "**on that day**". The "speakers" are the persons called to the New Israel, "**this is our God**", "**rejoice in his salvation**". In this context, "**Moab**" has to be taken as symbolic of the "nations of the world" to whom the Gospel has not yet reached. When the Gospel gets to the nations, "**YHWH will lay low their pompous pride**", through the teaching of the Way of God. The expression to "**lay low**" is also used of the punishment of "**the wicked**" for "**arrogance**" and "**ruthlessness**". These attitudes are "**the high fortifications**" which human beings must overcome in repentance. The violence expressed against Moab, "**trampled down**", is representative of repentance. Continuing from the previous section, in **Isaiah chapter 41**, the purpose of the violence expressed in **verses 15-16a** is explained **verses 16b-17** as bringing the people of the nations to repentance:

And you shall rejoice in [YHWH]; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none,
and their tongue is parched with thirst,
I, [YHWH], will answer them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.
(Isaiah 41:16b-17 ESV)

In **chapter 19**, Isaiah is **explicit that the expression of violence is metaphoric**:

And [YHWH] will make himself known to the Egyptians,
and the Egyptians will know [YHWH] in that day and worship with sacrifice and offering,
and they will make vows to [YHWH] and perform them.

And [YHWH] will strike Egypt,
striking and healing,
and **they will return to [YHWH]**,
and he will listen to their pleas for mercy and heal them.
(Isaiah 19:21-22 ESV)

Similarly, the **Prophet Micah** makes the **metaphor explicit**:

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**.

When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces,
then **we will raise against him seven shepherds** and eight princes of men;
they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword,[621] and the land of Nimrod at its entrances;
and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.
(Micah 5:4-6 ESV)

Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me,
"Where is [YHWH] your God?"

My eyes will look upon her;
now she will be trampled down like the mire of the streets.
The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;
they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf;
they shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth;
they shall come trembling out of their strongholds;
they shall turn in dread to [YHWH] our God, and they shall be in fear of you.
(Micah 7:10, 16-17 ESV)

The meaning of the metaphor is clear. **God is violent towards sin**. **True Worshippers of God must learn to be violent towards sin**. God requires repentance of all human beings. Violent actions towards sin are required for people to root sin out of their lives.

[620] See the discussion of these verses in section ***God's Perspective***
[621] The Word of God, the Bible; see the next section

The Metaphor in the New Testament

In the New Testament, **the Christian life is frequently characterized as warfare**. Day to day life is a constant battle against Satan, the demons, and the evil they have instituted in the world:

> For though we walk in the flesh, **we are not waging war according to the flesh**.
> For **the weapons of our warfare** are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.
> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,
> and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**,
> being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.
> (2 Corinthians 10:3-6 ESV see also 6:7)

> **Put on the whole armor of God**,
> that you may be able to **stand against the schemes of the devil**.
> 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**.
>
> **Therefore take up the whole armor of God**,
> that you may be able to **withstand in the evil day**, and having done all, to **stand firm**.
> (Ephesians 6:11-13 ESV)

> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked,
> **following the course of this world**,
> **following the prince of the power of the air**,
> the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience
> —among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,
> **carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind**,
> and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
> (Ephesians 2:1-3 ESV)

Satan's attack comes from every side. He constantly tries to influence Christians into sin. The world around is geared to sin – the constant pulls of the world appeal to human nature. **The essence of the war is to overcome the world, to conquer**:

> **Do not love the world** or the things in the world.
> If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
> For **all that is in the world**—
>
> the desires of the flesh and
> the desires of the eyes and
> pride of life
>
> —is not from the Father but is from the world.
>
> And the world is passing away along with its desires,
> but **whoever does the will of God abides forever**.
> (1 John 2:15-17 ESV)

> What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?
> Is it not this, that **your passions are at war within you**?
> You desire and do not have, so you murder.
> You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.
> You do not have, because you do not ask.
> You ask and do not receive, because **you ask wrongly**, **to spend it on your passions**.
> (James 4:1-3 ESV)

> So I find it to be a [nomos][622] that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.
> For I delight in the [nomos][623] of God, in my inner being,
> but **I see in my members another [nomos] waging war against the [nomos] of my mind**
> and making me captive to the [nomos] of sin that dwells in my members.
> (Romans 7:21-23 ESV)

> Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from **the passions of the flesh**,
> which **wage war against your [being] (psyche)**.[624]
> (1 Peter 2:11 ESV)

[622] See footnote ***502***
[623] See footnote ***221***
[624] See footnote ***225***

The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end,
to him I will give authority over the nations …
(Revelation 2:26 ESV see also 2:7, 11, 17, 3:5, 12, 21)

The **Apostle Paul** adjures Timothy, and all Christians, to **fight the war with confidence**, trust God to provide victory. As he approached his death, **Paul affirmed that he had attained victory**:

But as for you, **O man of God**, **flee these things**.
Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.
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 6:11-12 ESV)

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and **the time of my departure has come**.
I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
Henceforth there is laid up for me **the crown of righteousness**,
which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day,
and not only to me but also **to all who have loved his appearing**.
(2 Timothy 4:6-8 ESV)

Living the Christian life, living by **the Way of God**, is the "**good fight**". The metaphor of "warfare", "violence", aptly describes the Christian life. **Our enemy is real**. Satan the Devil has created a world specifically to attempt to thwart the Plan of God. Christians are called to participate in the Plan of God. **The pulls of sin from Satan's world tear at our innermost being**. This is where the war must be won. **Resistance to Satan must be from the heart**. A Christian must violently root out from himself or herself all proclivities to sin and **take on the divine character of God**: this is **to overcome**, **to conquer**.

Jesus and the Metaphor

In Matthew's account, when Jesus sent **the Twelve on a preaching tour**, part of the instructions given to them was the following:

"**Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth**.
I have not come to bring peace, **but a sword**.

For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.
And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. (alluding to Micah 7:5-6)
(Matthew 10:34-36 ESV)

Jesus forewarned the Apostles that the Christian life would be a battle. The purpose of First Advent was NOT to bring peace, but to prepare a small number of people for the Second Advent through the New Testament Church. Jesus' use of **the symbol of the sword**, may be a double entendre: the sword represents war, but it is also used to represent the Word of God, the Bible:

For **the word of God** **is living and active**, **sharper than any two-edged sword**,
piercing to the division of [body] (psyche)[625] and of spirit, of joints and of marrow,
and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart**.
(Hebrews 4:12 ESV)

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;
and take the helmet of salvation,
and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is **the word of God** …
(Ephesians 6:16-17 ESV)

Then I turned to see **the voice that was speaking to me**,
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,
and in the midst of the lampstands **one like a son of man**,
clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.
In his right hand he held seven stars,
from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,
and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.
(Revelation 1:12-13, 16 ESV see also 19:15, 21)

[625] See footnote ***225***

When Jesus was an infant and his parents presented him to **Devout Simeon in the Temple**, Simeon addressed Mary using the metaphor of the sword:

> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.
> And **Simeon blessed them and said to Mary** his mother,
> "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel,
> and for a sign that is opposed
> (and **a sword will pierce through your own [heart] (psyche) also**),
> so that **thoughts from many hearts may be revealed**."
> (Luke 2:33-35 ESV)

The "**sword**" to "**pierce through your own heart**" was of course the anguish experience by Mary, as the mother of Jesus, as she witnessed his death on the cross.[626] But Simeon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, prophesizes the words later repeated by the author of Hebrews, "**thoughts from many hearts may be revealed**", "**discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart**".

On two occasions, **with reference to John the Baptist**, **Jesus made use of the metaphor of violence**. John the Baptist epitomized commitment to the Way of God, to fighting the "**good fight**", to focusing on accomplishing the Plan of God - everything God requires a True Worshipper to be.[627] When John was imprisoned by Herod Antipas, John desired to point his disciples to Jesus. He sent two of them to inquire of Jesus whether or not he was indeed "the Messiah". Jesus affirmed his identity pointing to the signs of the Kingdom which he fulfilled.[628]

After John's disciples were gone, **Jesus made the following statement to the crowd**:

> Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen **no one greater than John the Baptist**.
> Yet the **one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he**.
>
> **From the days of John the Baptist** until now **the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence**,
> and **the violent take it by force**.
>
> For all the Prophets and the [nomos][629] **prophesied until John** …
> (Matthew 11:11-13 ESV)

Analysis:

- No human being has had a more important role in the working out of the Plan of God, than John the Baptist, "**no one greater than John the Baptist**"
- The greatest human achievement cannot be compared to the gift of eternal life, "**one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he**"
- The First Advent was heralded by John the Baptist, "**from the days of John the Baptist**"[630]
- Jesus affirms that the path to the Kingdom of God requires violence, "**the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence**"
- Jesus also affirms that to follow the path to the Kingdom requires violence, "**the violent take it by force**"
- The Old Testament prophecies were all that existed, until John the Baptist began to preach the coming of the Messiah, "**prophesied until John**"

The "violence" required of True Worshippers is of course to "**fight the good fight**", to learn to hate sin, **to violently root sin out of one's character**, and to be willing and able to work to eradicate sin in the world once the Kingdom of God is established. During the time when Jesus was focusing on the training of the Twelve in and around Galilee, **Jesus explicitly used a metaphor of violence to emphasis riding oneself of sin**:

> And **if your hand causes you to sin**, **cut it off**.
> It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.
> And **if your foot causes you to sin**, **cut it off**.
> It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell (geenna).[631]

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[626] See Mark 15:40 // Matthew 27:55-56
[627] See the paper "**John the Baptist – More Than a Prophet**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
[628] See Matthew 11:2-6, Luke 7:18-23
[629] See footnote ***221***
[630] See Mark 1:2-6 // Matthew 3:1-6 // Luke 3:3-6
[631] The Greek word is γέεννα (geenna), "Gehenna"; it refers to the lake of fire; see Revelation 19:20, 20:14-15

> And **if your eye causes you to sin**, **tear it out**.
> It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye
> than with two eyes to be thrown into hell (geenna) …
> (Mark 9:43-47 ESV // Matthew 18:8-9)

Later, during his "**Later Perean Ministry**", as the crucifixion was approaching, in dealing with some Pharisees, **Jesus returned to John the Baptist** and the metaphor of violence:

> 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**.
> >
> > The [nomos] and the Prophets **were until John**;
> > since then **the good news of the kingdom of God** is preached,
> > and **everyone forces his way into it**.
> >
> > But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away
> > than for **one dot of the [nomos] to become void**."
>
> (Luke 16:14-17 ESV)

Analysis:

- Jesus had just previously used parables related to money[632] to teach commitment to the Way of God; the "**Pharisees**", perceiving that they were the object of the parables, because they were "**lovers of money**" rather than "lovers of God, "**ridiculed**" Jesus
- Jesus lays bare root of the sin of the Pharisee, self righteousness, "**you are those who justify yourselves**"
- Jesus then goes straight to the heart of the metaphor of violence, "**the word of God is living and active**, **sharper than any two-edged sword**", "**discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart**",[633] "**God knows your hearts**"
- The Pharisees were committed to the way of the world, their own corrupt interpretations, "**what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God**"
- The Pharisees prided themselves in their supposed knowledge of the Scriptures, which "**were until John**"
- With John's preaching "**the good news of the kingdom of God**", the Pharisee's defective understanding was rendered totally obsolete
- The path to the Kingdom requires the "**good fight**" of the Christian life, "**everyone forces his way into it**"
- Jesus puts the final nail in the coffin of the Pharisees, their understanding of the scriptures is worth nothing, now that the true understanding through the Gospel is available, properly understood it is not possible for "**one dot of the *nomos* to become void**"

Jesus, as YHWH, inspired the "**metaphor of violence**" throughout the Old Testament. The New Testament authors implicitly understood the "**metaphor of violence**" and forcefully applied it to the warfare of the Christian life. **Jesus own teaching as reported in the Gospels is clear and specific**:

- The First Advent was NOT to bring peace, but to open up the true understanding of the Bible through the Gospel, "**do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth**.
  I have not come to bring peace, **but a sword**", "**the sword of the Spirit**, **the word of God**"
- The purpose of the "**sword**" is to cut deeply into the hearts of those called to be True Worshippers, "**a sword will pierce through your own heart** ", "**thoughts from many hearts may be revealed**"
- The objective of the "sword" is to remove sin, "**if your hand causes you to sin**, **cut it off**", "**if your foot causes you to sin**, **cut it off**", "**if your eye causes you to sin**, **tear it out**"
- True Worshippers must be violent towards sin in order to become candidates for the gift of eternal life, "**the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence**", "**the violent take it by force**", "**everyone forces his way into it**"

[632] See Luke 16:1-13
[633] See Hebrews 4:12, quoted previously

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