



EQUIPPING CHURCH LEADERS
• EAST AFRICA •

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

by

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December 2009; revised May 2013; corrected July 2014, February 2015, July 2015; revised June-November 2016; revised December 2018; revised June 2021.

Biblical Theology is the basic story-line of the Bible, from the creation of the world and humanity in Genesis, through the fall of humanity into sin and its aftermath, and the history of God's progressive redemption of humanity, culminating in the new heavens and new earth in Revelation. The Bible tells a coherent story, with Jesus Christ at its heart. Biblical Theology looks at major themes that run throughout the entire Bible, focusing on God's relationship with humanity. It also shows how Christ and the church are the fulfillment of the covenants, promises, prophecies, and institutions begun in the Old Testament. Maps, timelines, and summaries are attached as helpful aids.

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1. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY: INTRODUCTION

I. The Nature of Biblical Theology

A. Description of Biblical Theology

1. Biblical Theology (BT) is the study of the unfolding story-line of the Bible from beginning (Genesis) to end (Revelation). It is “the search for the inner unity of the Bible” (Bartholomew 2005: 84).
2. BT “follows the progress of revelation from the first word of God to man through the unveiling of the full glory of Christ. It examines the several stages of biblical history and their relationship to one another. It thus provides the basis for understanding how texts in one part of the Bible relate to all other texts. A sound interpretation of the Bible is based upon the findings of [BT].” (Goldsworthy 1991: 32)
3. Because BT is concerned to describe the inner unity of the Bible on its own terms, it is “descriptive and historical in a way that theological interpretation and systematic theology are not” (Bartholomew 2005: 86). Although BT is a descriptive and historical discipline, the Bible is selective in the historical details it describes. That selectivity is based on the overall *theology* that the Bible unfolds. “The unity of the biblical history lies in the selective way in which the story is pursued in certain directions and not by other possible routes. There is a continuation to the story line that resists turning into blind alleys. Thus we follow Seth, not Cain; Shem, not Ham; Abraham, not Lot; Israel, not Edom; David, not Saul; Judah, not Samaria; Jerusalem, not Babylon. Finally, the most significant selection is that of Jesus as the Messiah over against the current rejection of him. The New Testament sees the real historical continuity of the nation of Israel as the people of God being found in Jesus Christ. This assessment of history is profoundly theological and not empirical.” (Goldsworthy 2000: 69)

B. Presuppositions of Biblical Theology

1. The Bible tells a coherent story, and Jesus Christ is at the heart of that story (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:39; Acts 3:18; 10:43; 26:22-23; 1 Pet 1:10-12). Each book of the Bible contributes something to that story, and the over-all story offers a framework within which each book may be best interpreted.
2. Although the Bible tells a unified story, God’s revelation is *progressive*—it unfolds throughout the Bible. A number of important principles flow from these facts.
 - a. *Scripture will never contradict Scripture.* Two passages which appear to contradict each other will be found not to do so when they are closely analyzed. One passage may modify or qualify the other but will not contradict it.
 - b. *Both the stage of redemptive history and “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) must be taken into account in order to rightly understand any particular passage.* The doctrine of “progressive revelation” tells us that the stage of redemptive history must be considered when considering any particular passage. The Bible is a unity which tells one coherent story. However, the truths of the Bible are not revealed all at once but are progressively revealed. The full meaning of any particular passage or biblical doctrine may not be clear unless the whole Bible is taken into consideration.
 - c. *The NT interprets the OT.*
 - (1) All biblical texts need to be read within the framework of the grammatical (the language and genre of the text) and historical situations in which they were first given. The NT is built on the foundation of the OT. Many NT concepts are based on the OT. Our understanding of the NT is greatly enriched by understanding the OT. At the same time, we should not read the OT as if the NT did not exist. There is both continuity and discontinuity between the OT and the NT. The NT builds on OT concepts, often in surprising ways. That is particularly true with how the NT treats OT prophecy.
 - (2) We must remember that OT laws, ceremonies, and other practices have been fulfilled and superseded in Christ (Matt 5:17; Rom 10:4; 2 Cor 3:12-16; Gal 3:23-4:7). In many respects, physical OT Israel, its laws, ceremonies, and other practices, were “types,” “symbols,” “shadows,” “copies,” or “examples” of NT realities (Matt 5:17; 1 Cor 10:1-6; 2 Cor 3:12-16; Gal 3:23-4:7, 21-31; Col 2:16-17; Heb 1:1-2; 8:1-10:22). Therefore, when we consider the overall picture, particularly when we apply the Scriptures, we should “read the Old Covenant Scriptures through the lens of the New Covenant Scriptures” (Lehrer 2006: 177). As it is said, “The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed.”

II. The Story-line and Themes of Biblical Theology: Overview

A. The Basic Story-line of the Bible

1. In the most general sense, the Bible is the story of the creation, history, and destiny of the world and of mankind, as told primarily from a theological viewpoint. God created a beautiful world and human beings to live joyful, fulfilled lives in fellowship with Him. Through our sin we lost that fellowship and brought evil and death into the world. However, God did not leave us in our sin and death. By means of a grand plan which involved calling Abraham and the nation of Israel, he prepared the way for his own coming to earth in the person of Jesus Christ to bring forgiveness of sin and to restore fellowship with Him. He is coming again to utterly destroy sin and death without destroying us. He will consummate our restoration and our relationship with Him; and He will renew the earth to be even more glorious than when it was first created. Within that framework, the basic story-line would look like this: *Creation (Genesis 1-2)*=>*Fall and its Aftermath (Genesis 3-11:26)*=>*Redemption (Genesis 11:27-Revelation 20)*=>*Re-Creation (Revelation 21-22)*. God Himself is both the author of the story and its primary character.

2. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself and of his plan (the gospel) to mankind.

a. The central figure of that revelation—the one who is the active agent of creation, the means of redemption, and source and summation of the new creation—is Jesus Christ (see **2 Cor 1:20; Eph 1:9-10; Phil 2:6-11; Heb 1:1-3**).

b. Thus, the OT is the preparation of the gospel; the Gospels are the manifestation of the gospel; Acts is the expansion of the gospel; the Epistles are the explanation of the gospel; and Revelation is the consummation of the gospel.

3. The Bible is the story of God's relationship with mankind, from creation to re-creation.

Commentators have described the story of that relationship in slightly different ways:

a. "In Christian narrative, God's world is the *setting*, the *theme* is the rescue of the fallen world and of humankind; the *plots* are the biblical narratives, from creation, election, to incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension; the *resolution* is the last judgement, heaven and hell" (Sykes 1997: 14).

b. "Biblical theology is about God's bringing in his kingdom in which all relationships are restored to perfection" (Goldsworthy 1991: 76).

c. "God's people, in God's place, under God's rule, living God's way, in God's holy and loving presence, as family" (Cole 2006: n.p.).

B. The Themes of BT

BT may be approached in different ways. One may approach BT by trying to explain the overall unfolding story-line of the Bible chronologically from beginning to end. Within that overall story-line, important themes and concepts regularly occur throughout the Bible, which help to focus and "flesh out" the overall biblical story. Ultimately, these themes, and the Bible itself, are related to and find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ (see **Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39, 46**). Some of the more important themes and concepts are:

1. Promise and Fulfillment. God is faithful to keep His promises; but often his promises are fulfilled in surprising ways. The ultimate fulfillment of God's promises is found in Jesus Christ. As Paul says in **Eph 1:9-10**, "*He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his kind intention which he purposed in him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.*"

2. The Covenants of God. God made a number of important covenants (solemn agreements) over the course of biblical history. The major covenants are: *Noahic Covenant (Gen 8:20-9:17)*; *Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; and 22:15-18)*; *Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19-24)*, also known as the *Old Covenant (2 Cor 3:14; Heb 8:6, 13)*; *Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:8-17; Ps 89:1-4)*; and the *New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34; 32:40; Ezek 36:22-28; 37:15-28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:6-13; 10:15-17)*. In many respects, God's entire plan of redemption may be seen as the outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant. As the story of redemption proceeds, the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic Covenants all find their fulfillment in the New Covenant—and that covenant finds its fulfillment in Christ and his people, the church.

3. Type-Antitype; Shadow-Substance. A "type" is "an event which offers likeness to something in the future, but yet does not really fulfill this something" (Danielou 1960: 125); the fulfillment or antitype is always greater than the shadow or type. As God's plan is enacted over time, He first called Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, through whom He created the nation of Israel, to be the instruments by which

His plan became reality. However, in a theological or spiritual sense, all of the OT examples or institutions—such as the Tabernacle and Temple, the sacrificial system, the feasts and festivals, the Law, the Promised Land, the Kingdom, Zion, Jerusalem, and Israel itself—represented physical, earthly “types” or “shadows” which pointed to future, New Covenant, spiritual realities (**Gal 4:21-31; Col 2:16-17; Heb 8:5; 9:15-10:22; 12:18-24**). The true realities to which the OT types and shadows pointed are found in Christ, the church, heaven, New Jerusalem, and the new heaven and the new earth. As Leonhard Goppelt says, “There is no typology that by-passes Christ; he is the antitype of the entire OT” (Goppelt 1982: 116).

4. The “pattern of reversal” (i.e., God’s choosing the younger, the weaker, the outsider) in order to accomplish his purposes, is prominent throughout Scripture. God’s grace and sovereign choices are demonstrated throughout this section: e.g., Seth over Cain (**Gen 4:25**); Isaac over Ishmael (**Gen 17:18-19**; see **Rom 9:6-9**); Jacob over Esau (**Gen 25:23**; see **Rom 9:10-13**); Ephraim over Manasseh (**Gen 48:8-21**); Judah over his older brothers (**Gen 49:1-12**). This shows that God does not value the power, prestige, and wealth that the world values but by his grace chooses “*the least of these*” (see **Matt 25:40, 45**). God demonstrates this same pattern again and again: e.g., Moses over Pharaoh (**Exod 2:1-14:31; Heb 11:25-29**); Israel over the other nations (**Deut 7:7-8**); David over his older brothers (**1 Sam 16:1-13**); Solomon over his older brothers (**1 Kgs 1:5-40; 1 Chron 3:1-5**); the Gentile widow of Zarephath over Israelite widows (**1 Kgs 17:9**; see **Luke 4:25-26**); Naaman the Syrian over Israelite lepers (**2 Kgs 5:1-14**; see **Luke 4:27**). Jesus Himself was a poor man and a servant of all (**Matt 20:25-28; Phil 2:5-8**). Thus, he tells us, “*the one who is greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant*” (**Luke 22:26**). He says, “*If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all*” (**Mark 9:35**; see also **Mark 10:42-44; John 13:12-16**). He adds, “*the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great*” (**Luke 9:48**). He concludes, “*Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*” (**Matt 18:4**; see also **Mark 10:14-15**).

5. Exile and return. The theme of exile and return is another one of the grand themes of the Bible. It is a theme that is not limited to geographical exile but ultimately is related to the greater exile—separation from God. We see both aspects of this theme beginning with Adam and Eve, who are exiled from the garden as a result of their sin (**Gen 3:23-24**). Cain is sentenced to be “*a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth*” because of his sin of killing Abel (**Gen 4:9-15**). God tells Abram to leave his own land and family to go to a land God will show him (**Gen 12:1**). Jacob takes Esau’s birthright, deceives his father, and must flee into exile for years before he finally can return to his homeland (**Gen 27:1-45**). David flees from Saul and then from Absalom before returning to his rightful place (**1 Sam 27:1-3; 2 Sam 2:1-4; 15:13-16; 19:8-15**). Israel as a whole repeats the pattern. First, it is enslaved in Egypt. When it finally enters the land it falls away from God, is oppressed, cries out for deliverance, and finds temporary deliverance with judges. The nation goes after other gods and later is taken into exile in Babylon. Even after it returns to the land, the prophets speak of a new exodus, a new land, and a new rule of God. Thus, geographic exile was a sign of the more fundamental estrangement from God. Christ is the one who brings the true and lasting return to God, and that is consummated geographically in the new heaven and new earth which will be permanent and in which God and Christ will dwell among their people “*and we shall see him as he is*” (**1 John 3:2**).

6. God’s Pattern for Relationship: God initiates and acts by His grace; his people are to respond by faith. God has always sought a people for Himself. Thus, a recurrent statement throughout the Bible (with some variations) is, “*I will be their God, and they will be my people*” (see **Gen 17:8; Exod 6:7; 29:45; Lev 26:12; Jer 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1, 33; 32:38; Ezek 11:19-20; 14:10-11; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Hos 2:23; Zech 8:8; 13:9; 2 Cor 6:16; Heb 8:10; Rev 21:3**). The recurrent pattern throughout the Bible in order for people to be in right relationship with God is that God initiates, and His people respond by faith (which essentially means “trust and obedience, from the heart”).

a. God acts with grace toward people; even in judging and punishing wrongdoing He demonstrates his grace. God began the process by creating Adam and Eve and communed with them in the Garden of Eden (**Gen 2:7, 15-25; 3:8**). After Adam and Eve fell into sin, by grace God initiated that plan of redemption by promising a savior (**Gen 3:15**) and sacrificing animals to clothe them (**Gen 3:21**). By grace, God chose Noah and his family to save when he destroyed the rest of the world in the Flood, and Noah responded in faith (**Gen 6:5-22**). God chose Abraham, who responded in faith (**Gen 12:1-5; 15:5-6**). By His grace God sent the prophets to warn Israel of the consequences of their sins and call them back to faithfulness. Finally, by His grace God Himself became a man in the person of Jesus Christ to save people from their sin and restore right relationship between God and mankind.

b. *Because people are inherently sinful, they cannot “earn” or “work” their way into a right relationship with God (Acts 13:39; Gal 2:16; 3:11; Eph 2:1-3, 12).* The only way people can be in right relationship with God is if they respond in faith to what God, by His grace, has done for them. For that reason, the concept of faith and faithfulness to God—*“the just shall live by faith”*—recurs throughout the Bible (**Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38**; see also **John 6:27-29; 20:26-29; 1 John 3:23**). Unfortunately, the pattern consistently has been that most people do not put their faith in God, although there has always been a “faithful remnant” who have done so (**1 Kgs 19:11-18; Rom 11:1-5**; see also **Luke 18:8**).

2. THE BASIC BIBLICAL STORY-LINE

I. Creation (Genesis 1-2)

“Creation is not only a question of beginnings, but of purpose and relationships” (Goldsworthy 1991: 92). In creation we see God as the source of everything. Further, as originally created, we see everything as “*very good*” (**Gen 1:31**)—i.e., God, mankind, the animals, plants, and physical creation all fulfilling their created purpose and in right relationship with each other. “Scholars have noted that the early chapters of Genesis . . . are designed to answer the question of why things are the way they are. One set of questions that the early chapters of Genesis answers is, ‘Why are men the way they are? Why are men always seeking greater knowledge? Why are men always seeking greater mastery over the earth? Why are they always trying to invent new things, to find new uses of “natural” resources? Why do men paint, sculpt, draw, build buildings, write music and poetry? Why are men constantly and invariably involved in cultural pursuits of art, science, and technology?’ The answer of Genesis 1 is that God so made man. Man is God's image. God is the Creator and King. As His image, man creates and rules.” (Leithart n.d.: n.p.)

A. The biblical story-line begins with God (Gen 1:1)

1. God alone is eternal and self-existing. God is not a part of the universe or *vice versa*. Everything that exists besides God (matter; angels; human beings, etc) was created by God and is dependent on God for its very existence (**Acts 17:28; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3**). This fact shows that the true, biblical God is unlike the “gods” of other religions. God is unlike the Eastern (e.g., Hindu; Buddhist) idea that God and physical reality are all “one” (i.e., the concept of monism). God is also unlike the religions of cultures (including those in the ancient Near East at the time when the Bible was written), which believe that inanimate objects have “spirits,” and that the first humans were partly human and partly divine.

2. God alone is self-sufficient. There is only one God, but He is a complex being, unlike anything else. Thus, although there is only one God, He exists in three persons (Trinity): Father; Son; and Holy Spirit. That is important. If God were a simple unity (like the Islamic conception of Allah), and not a Trinity, God would not be self-sufficient: i.e., He would have *needed* to create other beings in order to have relationship. However, God did not need to create anything (see **Acts 17:24-26**)—he already had a perfect love relationship among the three persons of the Trinity before He created the world. Thus, the Bible (unlike the Qur’an) tells us that “*God is love*” (**1 John 4:8**).¹

B. God created everything out of nothing

1. The world did not consist of pre-existing matter which God then shaped into stars or plants or animals. Rather, God simply spoke or decreed, and the world came into existence out of nothing (**Gen 1:1, 3, 6-7, 9, 11, 14-16, 20-21, 24, 26-27**). Elsewhere, in both the OT and NT, the Bible affirms the same thing (see **Exod 20:11; 31:17; Ps 8:3-5; 33:6; Matt 19:4; John 1:3; Acts 14:15; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 11:3; Rev 4:11**).²

2. Mankind was the crowning event of God’s creation. Only human beings are said to have been created “*in the image of God*” (**Gen 1:26-27**); God blessed the man and woman (**Gen 1:28**); and God spoke to them and had fellowship with them (**Gen 1:28-30; 2:16-17, 19; 3:8-9**). Further, whereas each day after He created inanimate objects, plants, or animals, God called his creation “*good*” (**Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25**), after He created human beings God saw that creation was “*very good*” (**Gen 1:31**).³

¹ God’s self-sufficiency, the differences between Yahweh and Allah, and the Trinity are all discussed in depth in Menn, *Christianity and Islam: Theological Essentials* (2015-2016), chapter 4—Yahweh and Allah, which is available for free on the “ECLIA Courses & Resources” page of the ECLIA website (www.eclia.net).

² Whether the six days of creation referred to in **Genesis 1** are literal or metaphorical is a matter of some debate. See David G. Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation* (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux, 2001).

³ The depth of the fact that Jesus Christ is at the heart of the biblical story is seen even in the parallels between creation and

3. The creation account of Gen 2:4-25 is a parallel or supplementary account of the account of creation contained in Gen 1:1-2:3. The account of **Gen 2:4-25** goes back to fill in the details found in **Gen 1:26-27** concerning how God created human beings. Both male and female were part of God’s intention from the beginning (see **Gen 1:27**), although God created Adam first and then created Eve to be his helper and companion (see **Gen 2:18-25**). This suggests that male and female natures and roles are to a certain extent complementary, not completely interchangeable (see **1 Cor 11:3-15; Eph 5:28-32; 1 Tim 2:11-13**), although the extent to which that may be so is debatable.

4. Both males and females equally bear the image of God. The basic meaning for “man” (Hebrew, *adam*) is the collective “mankind, people,” which includes both male and female. That is made clear in **Gen 1:26**, which says, “*Let Us make man in Our image . . . and let them rule.*” **Gen 1:27** makes explicit that both male and female are included equally, since it says, “*And God created man [adam] in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*” Further, in **Gen 1:28** God blessed “them” (the man and the woman) equally and spoke to “them.” In **Gen 1:29**, when God says “*I have given you every plant yielding seed,*” the “you” is plural, not singular.

C. God created mankind to have dominion over all of creation (Gen 1:26-28)

1. Adam and Eve living with God in the Garden of Eden provides us with the pattern of the kingdom of God. “The pattern of the kingdom of God is this: God establishes a perfect creation that he loves and over which he rules. The highest honor is given to mankind as the only part of creation made in God’s image. The kingdom means that everything in creation relates perfectly, that is, as God intends it should, to everything else and to God himself.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 99)

2. Adam and Eve were commanded to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it” (Gen 1:26-28). Since human beings are uniquely created “in the image of God,” by spreading over the earth in obedience to God’s command, people would be magnifying God’s glory by spreading his image over the entire earth. That “dominion mandate” further indicates they were to extend the geographical boundaries of Eden until it covered the whole earth. By extending Eden to cover the earth, Adam and Eve and their descendants would be turning the earth into a mirror of heaven: i.e., making the whole earth a paradise fit for God and man, filled with holy people.⁴

3. Only reliance on the word of God enables mankind to fulfill its dominion mandate properly. “When Adam named the animals he began the process of observation, classification and description which is the heart of scientific knowledge. But he could never deduce his own relationship to God or even to the world purely by observation. Rather it was the word of God that came to Adam to tell him how he related to God and to the world. It is the word of God which informs man that he is to be a scientist and loving caretaker of the world rather than a magician and power-motivated exploiter of the world.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 99)

II. Mankind’s Fall into Sin and its Aftermath (Genesis 3-11:26)

A. Adam and Eve sin and are excluded from the garden (Genesis 3)

1. The Bible clearly implies that Satan “fell” before the sin of Adam and Eve, since Satan is the one who tempted Adam and Eve and lied to them about the nature and consequences of eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil (compare Gen 2:16-17 and Gen 3:1-4). Thus, Jesus called Satan both a “murderer from the beginning” and “a liar and the father of lies” (**John 8:44-45**).

2. “Knowledge of good and evil” (Gen 2:17) represents moral independence or autonomy.
 a. *The “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” was not a magical tree that produced knowledge of good and evil in everyone who ate from it.* “It is more likely that God designated

the death and resurrection of Christ: “On the Friday, the sixth day of the week, Jesus stands before Pilate, who declares ‘behold, the man!’ [**John 19:5**], echoing the creation of humankind on the sixth day of creation. On the cross Jesus finishes the work the father has given him to do [**John 17:4**], ending with the shout of triumph (*tetelestai*, ‘it is accomplished’, [**John 19:30**]), corresponding to the completion of creation itself. There follows, as in Genesis, a day of rest, a sabbath day [**John 19:31**]; and then, while it is yet dark, Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb ‘on the first day of the week’. . . . Jesus’ public career is to be understood as the completion of the original creation, with the resurrection as the start of the new.” (Wright 2003: 440)

⁴ **Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:18, Eph 4:22-24, and Col 3:9-10** all indicate that, in some sense, the “image of God” was tarnished through sin but is being restored in God’s people as they come into a saving relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ and progressively become more and more like Jesus. Jesus’ “Great Commission” to his followers (**Matt 28:18-20**; see also **Acts 1:8**) fulfills in a deeper, spiritual way the “dominion mandate.”

the tree as off limits as the means of showing the difference between good and evil. In other words, the choice for Adam and Eve was not between ignorance and knowledge of good and evil, but between remaining good and becoming evil themselves. The nature of the test was such that whatever choice they made they would know both good and evil. They were moral beings who would know right and wrong through their personal response to God.”

(Goldsworthy 1991: 98) If they passed the test, their trust in and obedience to God would confirm their goodness, and they would know it. If they failed the test, their distrust of and disobedience to God would turn them into people who have evil at the core of their being, and they would know that, too.

b. *In some OT passages (2 Sam 4:17; 1 Kgs 3:9) the phrase “good and evil” refers essentially to the ability to make a judicial decision.* Thus, what was forbidden to man was the power to decide what was in his best interests and what was not. God did not delegate that determination to man because only God is all-knowing, all-wise, and all-loving. Therefore only God can make the correct and loving decision that is truly in mankind’s best interest, all the time. When man acts autonomously he makes himself the center of reference for his moral guidelines and decides for himself what is good and evil. He thereby attempts to be “like God” (see **Gen 3:5, 22**). However, because man is not all-knowing, all-wise, and all-loving, his attempts to be god-like necessarily will fail. Instead, he will end up acting more like “the god of this world” (**2 Cor 4:4**), with similar results.

3. Satan entered the serpent and deceived Eve (**John 8:44; 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9**). Although Eve was deceived, “it was Adam’s task to guard the Garden and all within it [**Gen 2:15**], [therefore] he should have guarded her. . . . He failed to guard the Garden, and admitted the enemy.” (Jordan 1988: 137) Adam was present with Eve, did nothing to try to stop her and, not being deceived, willingly chose to follow his wife into sin (**Gen 3:6; 1 Tim 2:14**). As James Boice puts it, “If Adam was not deceived, as 1 Timothy 2:14 clearly states, then he must have sinned in full knowledge of what he was doing. That is, he chose to eat in deliberate disobedience to God.” (Boice 1986: 196) That may be why Adam’s sin is greater, and why the consequences to the rest of mankind are said to flow from Adam’s sin and not from Eve’s (see **Rom 5:12-14, 17-21; 1 Cor 15:21-22**).⁵

4. Satan’s strategy is a paradigm for the temptations we face.

a. *He approached Eve first.* That was a subtle attempt to deceive the person who had not received the command directly from God and to play one person against the other.

b. *He focused on the only prohibition God had decreed.* Despite God’s giving abundant provision, by focusing on the only thing they were not to do, Satan in effect implanted a false or distorted view of reality in their minds.

c. *He sought to cast doubt on the truth of God’s Word (3:1).* By asking “has God [really] said, ‘you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” Satan sought to cast doubt and sow confusion concerning what God really required.

d. *He lied and contradicted God’s Word (3:4).* Interestingly, the one truth Satan attacked concerned the wrath of God and the consequences of sin. As was true with Adam and Eve, we face the choice: whom will we believe? Under Satan’s (and the world’s) strategy, God’s Word “is no longer accepted as self-evident truth, but is reduced to the status of the word of the creature. Both God and his Word are seen as lesser authorities that must constantly be tested by higher authorities. Again the cunning of the snake: he does not suggest that humans transfer their allegiance from God to himself, but only that they themselves should consider and evaluate God’s claim to truth. The final effect was the same as if they had installed Satan as Lord, but it is achieved without the humans realizing it.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 104)

e. *He attacked the character of God Himself (3:5).* In effect, Satan was saying that God was

⁵ Adam is explicitly called a “type” of Christ in **Rom 5:14** (see also **1 Cor 15:22, 45-47** where the roles of Adam and Christ are contrasted, and Christ is called the “last Adam” and the “second man”). Thus, Adam and Christ “each acts as a covenantal representative whose response to God’s authority affects all those whom he represents. . . . The dissimilarity lies in the fact that Adam’s and Christ’s responses to the divine will are polar opposites, and therefore the effects on those represented are likewise diametrically opposed to each other. Because Adam disobeyed, all for whom he acted were constituted sinners, condemned to death. Because Christ obeyed, all for whom he acted are constituted righteous, vindicated in life ([Rom] 5:15-21).” (Johnson 2007: 202-203) This points up the fact that the anti-type (the fulfillment) is always greater than the type (the shadow), and there is always an element of contrast between the two. Consequently, when considering types in Scripture, “our interpretation must pinpoint not only what makes their role similar to Christ but also what makes their fulfillment of that role *unlike* Christ’s perfect and complete fulfillment” (Ibid.: 203).

unloving to restrict Adam and Eve in what they could eat, and was unloving in wanting His creatures to depend on Him for the knowledge of good and evil, rather than making that determination themselves.

f. *He appealed to human pride.* Satan promised Eve that by disobeying God she would have life (“*you surely will not die*”), knowledge (“*your eyes will be opened*”), the happiness of an exalted state (“*you will be like God*”), and the superiority of moral autonomy (“*knowing good and evil*”). Paradoxically, however, for Adam and Eve to make the decision on their own (i.e., moral autonomy) is the *essence of death*, because it is *separation from God*. Thus, the essence of their sin was unbelief (i.e., lack of faith and trust in God, manifested by obedience to God). Even from the beginning, God’s plan was that people would look to Him and trust Him for the truth of what is good and evil, and for how we should live our lives—i.e., “*the just shall live by faith*” (**Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38**).

5. Adam and Eve’s sin affected not only themselves but everyone else throughout history.

a. *Instead of bringing happiness and fulfillment, Adam and Eve’s sin brought guilt, shame, fear, estrangement from God, from the rest of creation, from each other, and ultimately death (Gen 3:7-19).* Adam and Eve wanted autonomy (i.e., independence; separation from God), and they received it. However, such separation from God is the essence of death and hell. “The fall exhibits the stark contrast between life and death. God is the source of life, and disobedience to Him fittingly results in death (Genesis 2:17). Life means first of all spiritual life, real life in communion with God on the day when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they died in a real and spiritual sense. But physical death is a fitting concomitant to this deeper spiritual death. Because human beings have renounced and destroyed their true life with God, their own physical life is in turn destroyed. Physical death is thus simultaneously a punishment and a symbol of deeper spiritual loss.” (Poythress 1991: 83-84) Because of what they did, Adam and Eve first experienced shame in connection with their nakedness (**Gen 3:7-10**). Their very sexuality should have reminded them that they were *not* like God: they could not create out of nothing (like God), but could only procreate. “So sexuality reminds them [or should have reminded them] of their interdependence and challenges [or should have challenged] their assumptions of independence and Godlikeness” (Goldsworthy 1991: 105).⁶ As a result of the pattern established in the garden, God often lets people have their own way and then bear the consequences (see **Exod 16:1-20; Num 11:18-20, 31-34; Rom 1:24, 26, 28**).

b. *The punishments that God decreed (Gen 3:16-19) on the man (work becomes difficult) and woman (childbearing becomes painful) each relate to essential life functions of men and women.* Further, **Gen 3:16b** reflects the beginning of marital discord and/or sexual power struggle—from now on the relationship between husbands and wives will be tainted by sin (see, e.g., the following different ideas concerning the nature of the interaction between “desire” and “rule” in **3:16**: Busenitz 1986: 203-12 [woman will still desire her husband as before the Fall and he will still rule as before the Fall, but both the desire and the rule are now tainted with sin]; Cassuto 1961: 165-66 [as woman caused her husband to do what she wished, although she will continue to yearn for him, now he will rule and cause her to do what he wishes]; Walton 2001: 227-28 [the basic desire of woman to have children puts the man in a position to dominate]; Stitzinger 1981: 41-42 [“desire” is the pre-existing subordinate relationship of the woman, but “rule” means that the man will now dominate harshly]; Foh 1974-75: 376-83 [woman’s desire is to master her husband, and his God-ordained rule will now require effort]).

6. The Bible views all people as having been one with Adam (“in Adam”), with Adam acting as our head or representative (see **Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22; cf., Heb 7:9-10**). Consequently, as a result of Adam’s sin, the entire human race receives: universal “legal” guilt, which leads to universal moral corruption (**Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9; 7:14-25**), which leads to universal individual sin (**Rom 3:10-18, 23**), which leads to universal individual guilt. The exact mechanism of how and why Adam’s posterity have been found guilty and radically corrupted as a result of Adam’s sin is a matter of debate. The following are some considerations:

a. *The Bible often views groups of people as one “corporate person” (see **Josh 7:10-26; Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22**).* This is similar to viewing Adam like the seed or root of a tree, and his progeny as the branches and leaves: it is all one tree; the branches and leaves receive both

⁶ After Eve “*took and ate*” (**Gen 3:6**), Jesus Christ had to taste poverty and death before the words “*take, eat*” (**Matt 26:26**) became words of salvation instead of death.

their life and nature from the seed and root. Adam, as the head of the race, reproduces fallen, rebellious creatures just as he was after he sinned. Adam's headship "involves a deeper privilege than ordinary fatherhood. It includes the dignity of defining what it means to be human [see **Gen 5:3; 1 Cor 15:49**]. . . . If individuals wish to protest, on what ground may they do so? I can see no ground for them to stand upon, no fulcrum for their plea, since their individual freedom has no independent, self-existent consistency. God created it as he created them, in and through Adam, as part of their Adamic nature." (Blocher 1997: 130)

b. *Since Adam was created without sin and had every personal and circumstantial advantage, there was no better person to represent humanity as a whole.* As our representative, Adam's sin, and thus his guilt, was imputed to us (see Johnson 1974: 298-316). The situation is something like a nation: "when a head of state declares war on another nation, all children born during the war are at war with the other nation. In Adam's case, the consequence operates at a much deeper level, because our Adamic (that is, human) solidarity is more essential, and because the relationship is to God 'in whom we live and move and have our being'." (Blocher 1997: 129)

c. *It was not necessary for God to do anything for all people to become corrupt as a result of Adam's sin.* "Only God's withdrawing, as it was highly proper and necessary that he should, from rebel-man, and his *natural* principles being *left to themselves*, is sufficient to account for his becoming entirely corrupt and bent on sinning against God" (Edwards 1984, *Original Sin*: 219).

d. *The result of the Fall, and of our being "in Adam," is that on our own, without Christ, we are "dead in our trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1).* This means that there is a radical depravity or corruption about every person (also called the power of indwelling sin) which affects everything about us, including how we think, reason, speak, act, feel, and relate to people and to God. The result of this corruption is that apart from Christ's intervention we are: totally unable to come to Christ and believe in Him (**John 6:44, 65; Eph 2:8-9**); totally unable even to see the kingdom of God (**John 3:3, 5**); totally unable to submit to God's law and obey Him (**Rom 8:6-8**); totally unable to understand spiritual truth about God (**1 Cor 2:14**); totally unable to please God (**Heb 11:6**); enslaved by sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil, totally devoid of any spiritual life at all, and are subject to God's wrath and judgment (**Rom 6:16-17; Eph 2:1-3**) (see also Edwards 1984, *Original Sin*: 143-233; Owen 1979: *passim*).

7. Adam's sin affects all of creation. "Creation is there for our benefit. Humanity is the representative of the whole creation so that God deals with creation on the basis of how he deals with humans. . . . When man falls because of sin the creation is made to fall with him." (Goldsworthy 1991: 96) Further, Adam receives some of his own medicine: just as he rebelled against God's rule, now the rest of creation, over which he is to rule, will rebel against him. "The curse on the ground is in fact a curse on Adam. The king of the earth now has no obedient servant in the soil. The freedom to eat of all the trees in the garden is replaced by the struggle to get the earth to yield the necessary daily bread. . . . The end of man is to nourish the earth by returning to the dust from whence he came." (Ibid.: 106) The cosmic effect of the Fall is reflected in **Rom 8:18-25** ("the creation was subjected to futility," it is in a state of "slavery and corruption," and "the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now").

8. Even in his judgment on Adam and Eve, God demonstrated his grace.

a. *He made adequate garments of animal skin to clothe Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21).* This is typological of the salvation we have in Christ: Adam and Eve's sewing fig leaves together (**Gen 3:7**) typifies salvation by works. God in his grace provided adequate clothing for them, particularly since they would be leaving the garden and entering a new, hostile world (**Gen 3:17-19, 23-24**). However, the clothing God provided came at a cost—an animal had to die, just as, by his grace, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (**Rom 5:8**) so that we could be clothed in his righteousness (**Isa 61:10; Zech 3:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:27; Rev 3:5**).

b. *Although God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden (Gen 3:22-24), he did not revoke their stewardship over all the earth (compare Gen 2:15 and 3:23).* Indeed, the expulsion from the garden helped to effectuate God's plan that mankind fill and subdue the earth (**Gen 1:28**).

9. In Gen 3:15 God made the first announcement of his plan for the salvation of the world: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." **Gen 3:15** has been called "the protoevangelium (the 'first gospel') because it was the original proclamation of the promise of God's plan for the whole world. . . . The 'seed/offspring' mentioned in this verse became the root from which the tree of the OT promise of a

Messiah grew. This, then, was the ‘mother prophecy’ to all the rest of the promises.” (Kaiser 1995: 37-38) According to this prophecy, an individual from among the woman’s seed (subsequently identified as Christ) will deal a death blow to Satan at the cross, while Satan will bruise Christ’s heel, or cause Him to suffer. This announcement, coupled with the provision that Adam and Eve would not be able to eat from the tree of life (**Gen 3:22**), insured that they would not be able to live forever in sin. Instead, those who live by faith in Christ will be able to eat from the tree of life on the new earth forever in righteousness (**Rev 22:2**).

B. The results of the Fall—from Cain through the Tower of Babel (Genesis 4-11:26)

“After Adam and Eve sinned, their descendants continued to rule the earth. The problem was not that they were not taking dominion. On the contrary, Genesis 4 records their contributions to the development of music, metallurgy, animal husbandry, architecture and politics (‘Cain built a city’, v. 17). The main problem of sinful man has never been his refusal to rule over the earth. The main problem is that he rules over the earth in an ungodly manner. Adamic man rules to make a name for himself, not to glorify the name of the Lord. Sinful men try to rule while they themselves are slaves of sin and Satan. God created Adam and Eve to construct a replica of His city on earth. Their descendants constructed the perverted city of Man.” (Leithart n.d.: n.p.)

1. Cain and his offspring (Gen 4:1-24).

a. *With Cain we see an intensification of sin: impiety⁷ (4:3); anger (4:5); jealousy, deception, and murder (4:7-8); lying (4:9); self-seeking and self-pity (4:13-14); alienation from God (4:14, 16).* The intensification of sin is also apparent in that Cain did not just murder anybody but murdered his own brother who was a “righteous” man (**Matt 23:35; Heb 11:4**). Again, however, notice God’s grace to Cain in protecting him from being murdered by his other brothers and sisters (**Gen 4:15**).

b. *Cain’s later descendant, Lamech (4:18-19, 23-24), takes moral decline to the bottom: he is proud and arrogant; he has turned his back on God’s divine intention of monogamy (Gen 2:23-24; Matt 19:3-6).* Polygamy is not God’s ideal. In the Bible polygamy is always shown to be negative and leads to bad consequences. Therefore, it is not surprising that the first polygamist, Lamech, is a violent man who has proclaimed his complete independence from God by killing people over minor matters and by claiming God’s right to vengeance (see **Deut 32:35**). His vicious claim to revenge against others “*seventy-sevenfold*” (**Gen 4:24**) finds its counterpart in Christ’s statement that we should forgive others “*seventy times seven*” (**Matt 18:21-22**).

2. From Seth to Noah (Gen 4:25-6:8).

a. *One of the most distinctive features of Genesis is the use of similar headings to introduce the narratives and genealogies which alternate throughout the book.* “These occur in 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2. The common element in all of these headings is the Hebrew word [*Toledot*—usually translated as “descendant(s); generations; account; list; record”]. . . . The [*Toledot*] headings serve two functions. Firstly, they are like chapter headings in modern books. Some of them introduce major narrative sections, indicating a new stage in the development of the plot. . . . [Second, the *Toledot* headings] focus the reader’s attention on a particular individual and his immediate children. This enables the author of Genesis to trace the fortunes of the main family line without having to follow in detail the lives of all other relatives.” (Alexander 1993: 258, 259)

b. *Beginning in Gen 4:25 the plot of the book turns to the line of Seth.* Thus, the *Toledot* of Adam, beginning in **Gen 5:1**, focuses on Seth and then of particular descendants of Seth. The Bible does this intentionally because the people it focuses on are central to the unfolding story.⁸

⁷ Abel’s offering was by faith (**Heb 11:4**); Cain’s obviously was not. Necessarily, therefore, Cain’s offering was by “works,” i.e., an attempt to manipulate God. Further, Abel’s offering was firstfruits, a recognition that the productivity of the flock is from the Lord and that all of it belongs to the Lord. Abel’s offering also was of the best portions of the flock (i.e., “their fat portions”). Implicitly, therefore, Cain’s was not of his firstfruits, but was simply some of “the fruit of the ground”—evidently, in contrast to Abel’s offering, a thoughtless offering, done without faith, and for improper motives. Hence, **1 John 3:12** calls Cain’s deeds (in context referring to the offerings) “evil” and Abel’s “righteous.” John Cross argues that the crucial difference was that Abel’s offering was a blood sacrifice for sin and Cain’s was not (Cross 2014: n.p.).

⁸ There is controversy over who were the “*sons of God*” and the “*daughters of men*” in **Gen 6:2**. The four main theories are: 1. “Sons of God” = fallen angels; “daughters of men” = mortals; their sin = marriage between supernatural and mortal beings (but see **Matt 22:20**). 2. SOG = the Godly line of Seth; DOM = ungodly line of Cain; sin = marriage of holy to unholy. 3. SOG = dynastic rulers; DOM = commoners; sin = polygamy. 4. SOG = demon possessed dynastic rulers; DOM

c. *The Toledot of Adam is also important for another reason: after mentioning each man's age and significant offspring, it repeatedly concludes, "and he died" (Gen 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31).* That emphasizes the effect of the "curse" which resulted from Adam's sin (see **Gen 2:17; 3:19**). Although the people before the Flood lived far longer than people do today, each one was subject to death because each was in the image and likeness of Adam (**Gen 5:3**)—i.e., having within him indwelling sin. The one exception was Enoch (**Gen 5:21-24**). It was not that Enoch did not have indwelling sin (like all other people, he did). Rather, God's "taking" Enoch was another manifestation of God's grace because Enoch had "walked with God" as a godly man.

d. *The Toledot of Adam also demonstrates the decline of mankind through sin.* It begins with Adam in a state of God's blessing (**Gen 5:1**), and ends with God's sorrow that he made man, and his determination to cleanse the earth of man's presence, because "*every intent of the thoughts of [man's] heart was only evil continually*" (**Gen 6:5-7**). However, one man, Noah, found grace in God's eyes and thereby provided hope for mankind (**Gen 6:8**).

3. Noah and the Flood (Gen 6:9-9:29).

a. *This section is one of contrasts.* It begins with God's judgment on the world (**Gen 6:11-13**) but ends with his entering into a covenant with all living creatures to never again destroy the earth by a flood (**Gen 8:21-9:17**). On the other hand, this section begins with Noah being described as "*a righteous man, blameless in his time, [who] walked with God*" (**Gen 6:9**). It ends with Noah drunk and cursing Canaan (**Gen 9:20-27**).⁹ One mark of the Bible's truthfulness is that it does not shy away from describing the sins of even the most important characters.

b. *The flood narrative parallels the original creation narratives and amounts to a "re-creation" of the earth:* "The earth is made inhabitable by the separation of the land from the water (Gen. 8:1-3; cf. Gen. 1:9-10). Living creatures are brought out to repopulate the earth (Gen. 8:17-19; cf. Gen. 1:20-22, 24-25). Days and seasons are re-established (Gen. 8:22; cf. Gen. 1:14-18). Humans are blessed by God (Gen. 9:1; cf. Gen. 1:28a), commanded to 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth' (Gen. 9:1b, 7; cf. Gen. 1:28b), and given dominion over the animal kingdom (Gen 9:2; cf. Gen. 1:28c). God provides humanity—made in his image (Gen. 9:6; cf. Gen. 1:26-27)—with food (Gen. 9:3; cf. Gen. 1:29-30)." (Williamson 2007: 61) Further, just as Eden was an elevated location, possibly a mountain (see **Ezek 28:14, 16**) since from it flowed a river (**Gen 2:10**), so the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat (**Gen 8:4**). Even the immediate post-flood activities of Noah are parallel: Just as there was a garden in Eden (**Gen 2:15**), so Noah planted a vineyard (**Gen 9:20**). Just as Adam sinned in the garden (**Gen 3:6**) and his son then sinned (**Gen 4:8**), so Noah sinned in the vineyard (**Gen 9:21**) and his son then sinned (**Gen 9:22**).

4. The covenant that God made with Noah (the "Noahic Covenant," Gen 8:21-9:17) is the first covenant explicitly mentioned in the Bible.¹⁰ In this covenant "God showed His gracious mercy toward all mankind, both redeemed and unredeemed. . . . He demonstrated His unwillingness to allow the sinfulness of man to derail His plan set forth in Genesis 3:15, His unwillingness to allow the sinfulness of man to abrogate the pre-fall command to 'be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.'" (Busenitz 1999: 182) In **Gen 8:21** God cites humanity's depravity as the reason for his mercy, just as he earlier had cited it as the reason for his judgment (**Gen 6:5-7**). Were it not for God's mercy and grace in establishing his covenant with Noah, then mankind inevitably would be heading for extinction again, just as happened at the time of the flood. "The theological significance of the Noahic covenant is at least twofold. First of all, it is the basis for our present confidence in God as Sustainer. It is the Noahic covenant that gives us the assurance that God will sustain the creation order, despite the chaos that continually threatens to engulf it. . . . [Second] the Noahic covenant provides the biblical-theological framework within which all subsequent divine-human covenants operate." (Williamson 2007: 67-68)

= commoners; sin = ungodly unions. Note that in theories 1 and 4 the SOG are evil; in theory 2 the SOG are good.

⁹ There is controversy over what Ham did when he "*saw his father's nakedness,*" and why Noah cursed Canaan (Ham's son), not Ham himself (**Gen 9:21-27**). Because Genesis is a part of "Torah" (instruction), it is linked to the Ten Commandments, including the commandment to "*honor your father and your mother*" (**Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16**). Therefore, the most likely explanation is that Ham saw his father's nakedness, and through joking about it dishonored his father. Noah cursed Canaan so that he would then have contempt for his own father.

¹⁰ A divine-human covenant may be defined as "the solemn ratification of an existing elective relationship involving promises or obligations that are sealed with an oath" (Williamson 2007: 43; see also Klooster 1988: 149; Beckwith 1987: 96). The major covenants in the Bible are the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New Covenants.

5. The Table of Nations (Gen 10:1-32). The Table of Nations (**Gen 10:1-32**) probably followed the Tower of Babel (**Gen 11:1-11:9**) in history, since the former talks about the separating and spreading of different nations according to their languages. The author of **Genesis** probably placed this account first for literary reasons: it follows-up on the histories of Shem, Ham, and Japheth from the end of **Genesis 9**; it demonstrates that, since all peoples of the world are descended from Noah through Shem, Ham, and Japheth, all peoples are of the same “blood” and ultimately are of the same family; it functions as the fulfillment of the divine command in **Gen 9:1**, and shows that the dispersal of the nations may therefore be evaluated positively as well as negatively (i.e., God’s judgment in **Gen 11:9**).

6. The Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9). The Tower of Babel (**Gen 11:1-9**) demonstrates mankind’s continued disposition to rebellion against God. God’s initial mandate to human beings was to “*fill the earth*” (**Gen 1:28**). He repeated the same command to Noah and his sons in **Gen 9:1**. Nevertheless, despite God’s judgment of the Flood mankind again directly disobeys God: humanity chooses not to fill the earth but to stay in one place. Further, it wants to build a tower to heaven to exalt its own name and become like God (again, like the sin of Adam). Consequently, whereas “God is interested in making the whole earth his residence by filling it with holy people . . . Babel represents the antithesis of what God intends” (Alexander 2008: 31). In fact, “the Babel rebellion was an even more radical apostasy than that which occasioned the flood; it was universal and organized. The city with its tower reaching to the heavens was an attempt of the seed of the serpent to dethrone the living God as king.” (Klooster 1988: 147) Babel was also “the first instance of an organized religion recorded in the Bible. . . . The people, in trying to build a tower to the heavens, were devising their own way of reaching God.” (Cross 2012: 94) Consequently, God “*confused their language*” and “*scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth*” (**Gen 11:7-8**).¹¹ This account demonstrates the inherent sinfulness of man. From a literary standpoint it leaves the reader looking for an answer to mankind’s continual sinfulness and rebellion against God.

7. The Toledot of Shem (Gen 11:10-26). After Babel, the Bible focuses on the line of Shem, which both Noah and God have blessed. This *Toledot* takes us to Abraham, whom God will call and through whom God will enact his plan to redeem and bless the world.

III. The Drama of Redemption—God’s Calling a People for Himself (Gen 11:27-Revelation 20)

A. God’s new beginning—from Abraham through Joseph (Gen 11:27-50:26)

1. In this crucial section of the biblical story, God now chooses one man (Abraham) to begin his specific plan for the redemption of the world. “In spite of human rebellion, God does not abandon His plans for His world. About two thousand years before Jesus, God sets into motion a plan that will lead to the recovery of the world. This promised plan has two parts: First, out of this mass of rebellious humanity, God will choose one man [Abraham]. God will make this man into a great nation and give that nation a land and bless them. Second, God will extend that blessing to all nations (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18).¹²

The rest of the book of Genesis traces the ups and downs of this twofold promise. The promise is given not only to Abraham but also to his son Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4) and his grandson Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15). Many dangers threaten God’s promised plan along the way: impotence and barrenness,

¹¹ Babel and the scattering of humanity highlight that, although there are many different religions, there are only two *kinds* of religion in the world: Christianity and everything else. All other religions are man’s efforts to reach up to God by means of works, sacrifices, rituals, and other efforts. Christianity is God’s reaching down to us and, in the person of Jesus Christ, doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. On the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-11**), God in effect reverses Babel: “God causes representatives from the same scattered nations to unite in Jerusalem in order that they might receive the blessing of understanding different languages as if all these languages were one. . . . The purpose of having a unified understanding is to demonstrate the power of the eschatological Spirit in attesting to Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension to the heavenly throne to reign as cosmic king. Under the kingship of Jesus and through the power of his Spirit the representatives of these nations were to ‘scatter’ again and subdue the powers of evil by filling the earth with God’s presence . . . The precise manner in which they were to do this was by ‘witnessing’ through the power of the Spirit in word and deed on behalf of Jesus Christ (see Acts 1:8).” (Beale 2004: 202-03) Thus, “Pentecost is the redemptive counterpart to Babel; there, in fulfillment of covenant promises given Abraham, a new unity through the Holy Spirit on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ unites believers from all nations of the earth. But those gracious dimensions of the Babel judgment were not yet revealed to Abraham or even to those who were first given the book of Genesis.” (Klooster 1988: 147)

¹² Abraham is another “type” of Christ: “Jesus is the true and better Abraham, who answered the call of God to leave the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void ‘not knowing whither he went’ to create a new people of God” (Keller 2015: 77). For the typology of God’s command that Abraham sacrifice his son Isaac (**Gen 22:1-17**), see below, note 13 and section 3.VI.E. *Jesus fulfilled the Feast of Trumpets*.

foreign kings and their harems, natural disasters, hostility with surrounding people, and the unbelief of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, themselves. Through it all, God shows Himself to be ‘God Almighty’ (Gen. 17:1; Ex. 6:3), the One who has the power to carry out his plan.

Nearing the end of his life, Jacob moves his twelve sons and all their families to Egypt in order to escape a famine. The riveting story of his eleventh-born son, Joseph, shows God’s faithfulness and control of history as He manages to preserve a people through whom He will bring salvation to the world (Gen. 45:5; 50:20).” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 2)

2. God enters into a covenant with Abraham (the “Abrahamic Covenant,” Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 22:15-18), which is confirmed to Abraham’s son Isaac (Gen 26:1-5, 24) and to Isaac’s younger son Jacob (Gen 28:3-4, 13-15; 35:11-12). The Abrahamic Covenant, as it is initially formulated and then developed by different formulations in **Genesis**, has three basic “core promissory threads”: phenomenal posterity (i.e., promises relating to “seed”); national territory (i.e., promises relating to “land”); and global blessing (i.e., promises relating to the blessing of other peoples through Abraham’s seed) (Williamson 2000: 100-01; see also Kaiser 1978: 86; Essex 1999: 208; Reisinger 1998: 6). Whereas the people in Babel wanted to make their own name great (**Gen 11:4**), by his grace God will make Abraham’s name great and bless the world through him (**Gen 12:2-3**).

This covenant unfolds throughout the OT. In many respects, therefore, the Abrahamic Covenant is the theological backbone and blueprint of the rest of the Bible. The true and ultimate fulfillment of the covenant occurs in Christ (see below, section 3.II.A. *The Abrahamic Covenant is fulfilled in Christ and the church*). “Thus, while Yahweh’s purposes primarily interest Abraham and the nation that will derive from him, ultimately they have a much wider concern: ‘all the families of the earth’ (Gen. 12:3 ESV) who, through Abraham, will also experience blessing. In other words, God’s plans for Israel were always subservient to his universal purpose, his plans for all the families of the earth.” (Williamson 2007: 84)

3. Through Jacob the nation of Israel will be formed. Even though Abraham and his wife Sarah were old and unable to have children of their own, God miraculously caused them to conceive and have a son, Isaac (**Gen 18:1-15; 21:1-8**). That demonstrated that God was driving matters, to make sure that His plan and the covenant He had made with Abraham would be fulfilled.¹³ When Isaac’s wife Rebekah was pregnant with twins, the Lord told her that, in reality, two nations were in her and that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob) (**Gen 25:21-26**). God later changed Jacob’s name to Israel (**Gen 32:24-32; 35:9-12**).¹⁴ From Jacob (Israel) came the twelve tribes of Israel (**Gen 30:1-24; 35:16-18, 22-27; 41:50-52; 49:1-28**).

4. God moves His people to Egypt. Jacob’s children began living immorally like the Canaanites with whom they were dwelling (**Gen 34:1-31; 35:22; 38:1-26**). If that continued, there would be no more Israel. Therefore, God preserved his chosen people by moving them from Canaan to Egypt by means of Joseph’s brothers’ sin, and Joseph’s righteousness. God also used Judah’s sin with his daughter-in-law Tamar as part of his overall plan of redemption (see **Gen 38:12-19; Ruth 4:18; Matt 1:3**). The story about Joseph (**Gen 37; 39-50**) primarily shows how Israel got to Egypt, and how God was working out his plan which he had decreed hundreds of years beforehand (**Gen 15:13-14**) to Abraham.¹⁵ The

¹³ The typology of Isaac is apparent: “For example, the reference in John 3:16 to ‘only Son’ is a clear allusion to Isaac in Genesis 22:2, 12, and 16 (cf. Heb. 11:7) who, like Jesus, was offered to God as a sacrifice. (Likewise, ‘did not spare his own Son’ in Romans 8:32 alludes to Genesis 22:16.) The interpretive importance of this is manifold. (1) Isaac is a type of Christ. (2) Like Christ, Isaac is a son of promise. (3) Like Christ, Isaac’s birth is supernatural. (4) Like Christ, Isaac is the only and beloved son. (5) Both Isaac and Jesus were ‘suffering sons.’ Isaac suffered as a type of the Redeemer; Jesus was the Suffering Son who redeems. (6) Just as Abraham showed his love for and fear of God by his willingness to offer his beloved, only son, so God the Father shows his love for a fallen world by offering his beloved, only Son as an offering for sin. (7) Just as Abraham reasoned that God would raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:19), so God raised his Son, Jesus, from the dead.” (Johnson 2007: 9n.26) As mentioned previously, the fulfillment is always greater than the shadow. Thus, Isaac was obedient at the *risk* of his life; Christ was obedient at the *cost* of his life. The ram was a substitute sacrifice so that Isaac could have *physical* life; Christ was a substitute sacrifice so that his people could have *eternal* life.

¹⁴ Jacob’s struggling with God (**Gen 32:24-32**) when God changed Jacob’s name to Israel is a suggestive foreshadowing of the nation of Israel’s own continual struggles against God throughout its history (see **Hos 12:1-6**).

¹⁵ Joseph is another type of Christ and, as with all other types, the fulfillment is far greater than the shadow. Like Joseph, Jesus “was rejected by his own (John 1:11 [cp. **Gen 37:18-24**]) and was sold for silver coins (Matt 26:14-16 [cp. **Gen 38:26-28**]). He was denied and betrayed by his brethren, and was unjustly put into chains and sentenced to death. He too prayed fervently, asking the Father if the cup of suffering and death he was about to experience could pass from him. But when we look at Jesus’ prayer, we see that he, like Joseph, says that this is ‘the *Father’s* cup’ (John 18:11 [cp. **Gen 50:20**]). The suffering is part of God’s good plan. . . . His enemies meant it for evil, but God overruled it and used it for the saving

presence of Israel in Egypt set the stage for the next act of God’s dramatic program, the exodus. 5. God acts in history (usually through events and people’s actions that appear to us simply to be “natural,” not supernatural, occurrences) to insure that his plan is carried out. Many events threaten to prevent God’s promises from actually being fulfilled. “The importance of the threats to fulfillment lies in the fact that the promises point to an ultimate fulfillment that can be achieved only by the supernatural work of God. It is not something within the control of man, nor is it simply a matter of natural events.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 121)

B. The beginning of the nation of Israel—from Egypt to the promised land (Exodus-Deuteronomy)¹⁶

1. In this next great act of God’s drama of redemption, Israel becomes a nation, and gains its independence from slavery in Egypt, as the result of God’s faithfulness to the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 2:24).

a. *Four hundred years elapse before the story resumes.* “Abraham’s descendants, now known as Israel (the name God gives to Jacob), grow numerous in Egypt. But success brings its own problems. Egypt’s king begins to perceive this expanding racial minority as a threat. To stamp out the perceived danger, Pharaoh reduces Israel to slavery. The book of Exodus opens at the height of Israel’s oppression under Egypt. Into this scenario of intense pain and tyranny God chooses Moses to liberate Israel from the brutal rule of Egypt so that Israel can return to God.

In a series of amazing incidents, ten plagues bring God’s judgement on Egypt’s gods (Ex. 12:12), and Israel is miraculously saved from the powerful Egyptian army as they cross the Red Sea. Finally Israel arrives at the place where they will meet God—Mt. Sinai. There God meets Israel in an awesome display of lightning and fire. Why has God done all of this for Israel? God has a job for them to do. They are to be a nation and kingdom that function like priests. Their task is to mediate God’s blessing to the nations and to act as a model people attracting all peoples to God (Ex. 19:3-6). This is the calling that will shape Israel from this point on: they are to be a showcase people and model before the nations that embody the beauty of God’s original design for human life. After giving them this task, God gives them the law to guide their lives, and the people of Israel commit themselves to living as God’s faithful people. God then commands them to build a tent where he will take up residence. From now on, wherever they go, God will live visibly among them.

In Leviticus we see how Israel is to live in communion with a holy God. The book of Numbers contains the story of Israel’s journey from Sinai to Canaan. Unfortunately Israel’s unbelief requires that they spend forty years in the wilderness before arriving at Moab, on the threshold of the promised land. In Deuteronomy, Israel’s leader, Moses, instructs Israel on how they should live when they arrive in the land. Israel is poised to enter the land—they are committed to being God’s people and showing the nations around who God is and the wisdom of His original creational design for human life. As Israel sits poised for entry, Moses dies and the leadership is passed on to Joshua.” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 2-3)

b. *The interaction between God and Moses drives this section of the Scriptures.* God’s action on behalf of Israel was based on the Abrahamic Covenant (**Exod 2:24**).¹⁷ In God’s self-revelation to Moses—“*I AM WHO I AM*” (**Exod 3:14**)—God essentially was telling Moses that, “I am unique, and who I am will be understood by what I do” (see **Exod 3:13-22**).¹⁸ God’s character and nature are more specifically described in **Exod 34:6-7**. Moses himself dominates the OT. There are 770 references to him in the OT, about 1/3 of them in **Exodus**. Despite the close, personal, and miraculous interaction Moses had with God over a period of 40 years, it was Moses’ not properly representing God’s character (when Moses struck the rock at Meribah, instead of speaking to the rock), that prevented Moses from actually taking the Israelites into the promised land (**Num 20:8-13**).

of many lives [**Rom 5:18-19**; cp. **Gen 45:5, 7-8; 50:20**]. Now raised to the right hand of God, he rules history for our sake, watching over us and protecting us [**Eph 1:20-22**; cp. **Gen 41:41-57; 45:7-11**].” (Keller 2013: 268)

¹⁶ Summaries of Israel’s history are recounted at **Josh 24:1-13; Neh 9:5-37; Ps 105:1-45; 106:6-46**, and **Acts 7:2-53**.

¹⁷ When God was making the covenant with Abraham, he even told Abraham that Abraham’s descendants would be enslaved and oppressed in a foreign land for 400 years, but would come out with many possessions (**Gen 15:13-14**).

¹⁸ Interestingly, the worship of God in heaven focuses on *who God is* (His glory; His awesome nature), *and what God has done, is doing, and will do* (creation; salvation; His rule; His coming judgment)—see **Isa 6:1-8; Rev 4-5; 7:9-17; 11:15-19; 15; 19:1-6**. God’s nature and His acts are also the focus of worship in the great psalms of worship (see **Psalms 8; 19; 24; 29; 33; 46-48; 63; 65-68; 76; 84; 87; 92; 93; 96-100; 103; 104; 111; 113; 115; 117; 135; 145-150**).

2. The exodus was the decisive event for OT Israel.

a. *The exodus was an historical, physical event that dramatized spiritual truth applicable to all of God's people throughout history.* “Throughout the Old Testament, possession of the land is presented as a shadow of the future reality of living as God's people in his kingdom. But it provided no vivid pattern of the necessary route by which any child of God enters the kingdom. For this some graphic and unmistakable experience of redemption from an alien power was necessary.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 130-31) The exodus also is the preliminary stage necessary to fulfill the promise of nationhood contained in the Abrahamic Covenant.

b. *The exodus was the basis of God's self-revelation to Israel.* God stresses the exodus before and in the Ten Commandments (**Exod 19:4-6; 20:2; Deut 5:6, 15**). Significantly, in the Ten Commandments, the first word God speaks to Israel is about his *grace* in redeeming them from bondage. Only after that comes the Law. The exodus was the basis for the feast of Passover (**Exod 12:1-27**). It was frequently recalled in the **Psalter** (see **Psalms 66; 77; 80; 81; 105; 106; 114; 135; 136**). It was used by the prophets to call Israel to return to covenantal faithfulness to God, or as a warning from God (see **Isa 11:16; Jer 2:6; 7:22, 25; 11:4, 7; 16:14; 23:7; 32:21; 34:13; Hos 2:15; 11:1; 12:9, 13; 13:4; Amos 2:10; 3:1; 9:7; Mic 6:4; 7:15**).

3. God's covenant with Moses (the “Mosaic [Old] Covenant” (**Exodus 19-24**; see **2 Cor 3:14; Hebrews 8**), and the Mosaic Law (**Exodus 20-23; Leviticus 11-15; 18-20; 25:23-55; 27; Numbers 5; 27:1-14; 36; Deuteronomy 5; 12-13; 20-22; 24-25**), sacrificial system, tabernacle, Sabbath, feasts, priesthood, religious ceremonies which were intrinsic parts of the covenant (**Exodus 23; 25-31; 35-40; Leviticus 1-9; 16-17; 21-25:22; Numbers 3-4; 6-10; 15; 18-19; 28-30; 34-35; Deuteronomy 14-19; 23; 26**), defined the nation of Israel until Christ came and fulfilled them. By means of the Mosaic Covenant God set Israel apart from other nations. The Mosaic Covenant advanced the Abrahamic Covenant by guaranteeing the preservation of Israel, Abraham's national posterity, in the land. It also regulated how the physical nation-state of Israel was to live within the Abrahamic Covenant in the land (see **Lev 26:42**).¹⁹ Because it served that function, the Mosaic Covenant was significantly different from the Abrahamic Covenant and later biblical covenants in that it was conditional and emphasized the responsibilities of the human party to the covenant (Israel) in ways that the other covenants do not. “The bilateral nature of the covenant is reflected in the conditional framework (i.e. ‘If you obey . . . then . . .’ TNIV; similarly, ESV) of Exodus 19:5-6” (Williamson 2007: 96). Hence, God's blessings and curses were tied in a physical way directly to Israel's obedience or disobedience to Mosaic Law (see **Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 4; 6-9; 11; 27-29**). Through those physical means, God was endeavoring to teach Israel the spiritual principle that, “*you shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*” (**Lev 19:2**; “*holy*” occurs 152 times in **Leviticus**). Further, the covenant and the institutions created as a part of it established the principle that sinful people could only approach God through a mediator. Moses acted as the mediator between God and Israel in the wilderness. At Sinai a priesthood was established. The layout and form of the tabernacle also graphically indicated the separation between sinful people and holy God, which could only be reconciled through sacrifice and the mediatorial office of the priest.

C. Israel in the land (Joshua-1 Samuel 7)

“The book of Joshua tells us how God keeps his promise to give Israel the land. The Lord leads Israel in conquering the land and judging its wicked inhabitants, and then he distributes the land among the twelve tribes.²⁰ The book ends with Joshua's pleas for Israel to remain faithful as God's people. Judges opens with Israel's disobedience: they refuse to wage war with unbelief and to purge idolatry from the land (Ju. 1). God comes in covenant judgement and tells Israel that they will now have to live among the Canaanites (Ju. 2). Judges tells a sad story of how Israel turns from God and continually succumbs to the Canaanite pagan worship

¹⁹ When Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments from God the first time, the people fell into sin *based on the very things prohibited by the Ten Commandments themselves* (**Exod 32:1-6**). Moses' appeal to God to spare the people was based on the Abrahamic Covenant (**Exod 32:11-14**). As a result, God did not destroy the people but gave Moses a second set of the Ten Commandments (**Exodus 34**).

²⁰ Joshua is another “type” of Christ. In Hebrew, “Joshua” is “Yehoshua” or “Yeshua”; the same name in English is “Jesus.” Further, **Heb 4:4, 8** use the same Greek word, *Iēsous*, for both Joshua and Jesus. More importantly, Joshua led the people to victory over their enemies and entered the promised land. Again, the fulfillment is greater than the shadow. While Joshua did defeat his enemies and led Israel to the promised land, **Heb 4:8** says he did not give his people true “rest.” On the cross, Jesus defeated the greatest enemies of all—sin, death, and Satan—and led his people to the promised land of salvation and eternal life, i.e., our true “rest”; when he comes again, Jesus will bring with him the ultimate promised land of the new heaven and new earth.

and lifestyle. God finally lets the Canaanite and neighbouring peoples rule and oppress them until Israel cries to Him for help. And He responds in mercy, raising up military leaders, known as judges, to rescue them. With each cycle of rebellion, though, the situation gets worse. The book ends with two stories that illustrate Israel's foul rebellion and with Israel's repeated cry for a king to deliver them from this mess (Ju. 21:25)." (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 3)²¹

"Samuel is the last great judge, as well as a priest and prophet" (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 3). **1 Samuel 1-7** describes the last period of Israel's history under the rule of the judges, before the beginning of kingship. It begins the fall of Eli and his family and the rise of Samuel, and ends with the capture of the ark of the covenant by the Philistines, the return of the ark to Israel, and Israel's deliverance from the Philistines.

D. Israel as a united kingdom (1 Samuel 8; 1 Kings 11; 1 Chronicles 1-2 Chronicles 9; Psalms-Song of Solomon)

"The books of Samuel, named after him, tell of a time of great change within the Israelite nation. Israel asks God to give them a king so they can be like the other nations (1 Sam. 8:5, 19-20). So God uses Samuel to appoint Saul [1050-1010 BC], and then David [1010-970 BC], as the first kings over His people. Saul is a failure as a king, but David serves God as a faithful king, defeating Israel's pagan neighbours, enforcing God's law, and moving God's residence to Jerusalem. Here, at the hub of the nation, God's presence is a constant reminder that God is Israel's real king. Solomon [970-930 BC], David's son and successor, builds the temple as a more permanent place for God to live and hear the praise and prayers of His people. Despite being given great wisdom from God, Solomon's marriages to foreign women lead him to worship other gods, and his ambitious building projects earn him a reputation as an oppressor." (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 3) David is the central figure of the United Kingdom. His reign prefigures the Messianic Kingdom itself.

1. There were both pro-king (Gen 49:8-10; Deut 17:14-20) and anti-king (Judg 8:22-23; 1 Sam 8:1-18) strands in Israel's history before they got their first king. However, the people wanted a king in order "that we also may be like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:20). "This was indeed a rejection of the covenant model and, therefore, a rejection of God's rule (1 Sam 8:4-8)" (Goldsworthy 1991: 165). Perhaps because he had always intended to rule them through a king, God granted their request.
2. God enters into a covenant with David (the "Davidic Covenant," 2 Sam 7:8-17; 1 Chron 17:3-15; see 2 Sam 23:5; 2 Chron 6:16; Ps 89:1-4, 28-29). The Davidic Covenant becomes a specific way the Abrahamic Covenant comes to fulfillment. Even its terms allude to the promises God made to Abraham. In this covenant (2 Samuel 7) God promises David: v. 9—a great name (cf. Gen 12:2); v. 10—a place (cf. Gen 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7, 18; 17:8); v.11—rest from enemies (cf. Gen 22:17); v. 12—a "seed" (cf.

²¹ "Judges, like all the so-called 'history books' of the Old Testament, is really a prophecy. Judges is numbered among what are called the 'Former Prophets [the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings].' These books were called prophecies because the histories they recorded were regarded as exemplary [i.e., examples for us]. The histories showed God's principles in action, and thus formed prophetic warnings to the people. If we read Judges merely as a set of exciting stories, we miss this." (Jordan 1985: xi) The prophetic symbolism or typology may be fairly clear or more vague based on the patterns and themes recorded in these and other OT books and in later NT revelation. Two examples, from the beginning and end of Judges, illustrate this:

Judges 1:11-15 tells the story of Othniel and Achsah. "The characters here are the Enemy (giants), the Father (Caleb), the Son (Othniel), the Daughter (Achsah). . . . The Son destroys the Enemy in order to win the Bride from the Father. Can we see a *vague* image of the gospel here? Certainly; it fairly leaps off the page. After the marriage, we find the Bride asking the Father for springs of water. Can we see in this a *vague* image of the Church asking for and receiving the Spirit? . . . These are vague images, snapshots of truth as it were. It would be stretching matters to try to make this story into a prophetic type in the full sense, but at the same time we ought not to blind ourselves to the possibility that a more general picture of the kingdom of God is presented here. Without any doubt, the story of Othniel and Achsah is designed to picture for us the winning of the kingdom, and the blessings that come to the righteous after the kingdom is won. In a general way, this is parallel to the work of Christ in winning the kingdom, and the blessings that come to the Church afterwards." (Ibid.: xiii)

Judges 19-21 tells the story of a Levite and his concubine wife. While traveling, they spent the night in the town of Gibeah where some ruffians from the tribe of Benjamin threatened him. To save himself, he offered the concubine to the men, who raped and abused her. In the morning, he found her dead, took her home, cut her body into pieces and sent a piece to each of the other tribes, not mentioning his own cowardice. A civil war resulted which was disastrous, especially for Benjamin. Christ can be seen even in such a passage: One theme of Judges is that Israel needed a king, because without one "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6; 21:25). "It would take the ultimate King to change hearts truly. And so fitting this text into its whole canonical context—particularly the intercanonical theme of the kingdom—shows us Jesus." (Keller 2015: 88) Additionally, "When we see a man who sacrifices his wife to save his own skin—a bad husband—how can we not think of a man who sacrificed himself for us, the church, his bride (Ephesians 5:22-23). Here is a true spouse who will never abuse us. Indeed, he subjected himself to abuse in order to make us whole." (Ibid.)

Gen 22:18); **vv. 12-16**—an everlasting kingdom and throne (cf. **Gen 12:3; 13:15; 17:5-7**). “The continuity of this covenant with the covenant to Abraham can be seen in their respective summaries. ‘I will be their God, they will be my people’ sums up God’s purpose in the covenant with Abraham and after him, with Israel (Gen 17:7-8; Lev 26:12; Jer 7:23; 11:4; 30:22). Now the promise concerning David’s son, the one who will represent the many, is given as, ‘I will be his father, and he shall be my son’ (2 Sam 7:14). Thus, David’s son is also the son of God, and his house, throne and kingdom are established forever (2 Sam 7:16).” (Goldsworthy 1991: 167) This covenant found initial fulfillment in David’s son Solomon, who built the temple in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, despite “the foreshadowing of the ‘blessing of the nations’ in the Davidic-Solomonic era, this promise awaited ultimate fulfillment. The history of the Israelite monarchy illustrates why this is so. Despite a few reforming kings, none of the Davidic dynasty—including David himself—fully complied with the crucial criterion for divine-human relationship: irreproachable behaviour [see **1 Kgs 2:4; 6:12-13; 8:25; 9:4-9**].” (Williamson 2007: 145) God had promised to bless the nations through Abraham’s “seed” (**Gen 12:3; 22:18**). The Davidic Covenant identifies the “the royal dynasty from which the anticipated victorious ‘seed’ would eventually come . . . [but because of sin within David’s line] ultimately it depended on a Davidic king who would be a son of Abraham in the fullest possible way, and not merely biologically (cf. Ps. 72).” (Ibid.) Thus, the Davidic Covenant pointed forward to Jesus Christ.

3. **The Wisdom Literature (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)**. Job profoundly uses the universal theme of pain and unjust suffering as the setting for dealing with God’s sovereignty over suffering and man’s faith in God while in the crucible of suffering.²² “[David’s] hymns of praise, contrition, and instruction (the psalms, not all attributable to David) are timely yet timeless models of spiritual insight and thus central to the focus of biblical theology. Likewise the wisdom (given explicitly by God: 1 Kings 3:12) of his son Solomon stands at the center of an equally weighty literary corpus for biblical-theological work, the so-called wisdom literature.” (Yarbrough 1996: 64) The wisdom literature deals with the quest for knowledge, understanding, and relationship with God and others in a world where all relationships have been distorted by sin. Godly wisdom is *not* God’s making our decisions for us or simply giving us the correct thoughts to think. Instead, the wisdom literature of the Bible “complement one another in encouraging the believer to use mind and faculties to try to understand life in God’s universe, but also in rebuking the arrogance of those who would claim to have it all together. Trust in the goodness of a sovereign God is the underpinning of all intellectual endeavor.” (Goldsworthy 2000: 186)

E. Israel as a divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 10-31; Isaiah and Micah [prophesied to Israel and Judah]; Joel [prophesied to Judah]; Hosea and Amos [prophesied to Israel]; Obadiah [prophesied to Edom]; Jonah [prophesied to Nineveh])

“During the reign of [Solomon’s] son Rehoboam, this oppressive spirit [begun under Solomon] results in the splitting of the nation. The majority of the tribes break away in the north (Israel), leaving behind a few southern tribes [i.e., Judah and Benjamin, plus some people from the northern tribes] (Judah) [930 BC].

From this time on, the two halves have their own kings. The books of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles tell their stories. The story is of a downhill slide into rebellion led by unfaithful kings. Far from being a showcase to the nations, God’s people push his patience to the point at which He expels them from the land. God seeks to halt their deadly course by raising up prophets to call them back to repentance. Elijah and Elisha are the prophets who feature most prominently in 1 and 2 Kings. Through these prophets, God promises that if Israel will return to Him He will be gracious and continue to work with them. He also warns that if Israel continues to rebel He will bring judgement and finally send them into exile. As Israel’s situation becomes more incurable, the prophets promise that God has not given up. In fact, He promises He will send a future king who will usher in a reign of peace and justice. This promised king will achieve God’s purposes for His creation.

The words of the prophets fall on deaf ears. And so, first the citizens of the northern kingdom (722 B.C.), and then the citizens of the southern kingdom (586 B.C.) are captured as prisoners by the ruling empires

²² Job himself is a type of Christ. “Jesus is the ultimate Job, the only truly innocent sufferer. . . . As Job was ‘naked,’ penniless, and in physical pain (Job 1:21), so Jesus was homeless, stripped naked, and tortured on the cross. While Job was relatively innocent, Jesus was absolutely, perfectly innocent, and while Job felt God abandoning him, Jesus actually experienced the real absence of God, as well as the betrayal of his foolish friends and the loss of family.” (Keller 2013: 293) Further, the point of the testing of Job was whether or not Job would continue to obey God without knowing whether or not it would bring him personal benefits; however, Jesus knew that to obey his Father would, in fact, result in his death, his becoming sin, and his Father’s forsaking him! Finally, while Job *prayed* for his errant *friends* (**Job 42:7-9**), Jesus *died* for his *enemies* and now constantly intercedes for us (**Luke 23:34; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25**).

of the day [Israel by Assyria and Judah by Babylon].” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 3-4)

F. The existence, decline, and fall, of the southern kingdom (2 Kings 18-25; 2 Chron 32-36:21; Isaiah-Daniel; Nahum-Zephaniah)

1. The two tribes of the south (Judah) go into exile in Babylon. Judah followed the pattern of her northern sister Israel. Therefore, it was overrun, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the nation was taken into exile in Babylon. “Exile is a devastating experience for the Israelites. What happened to God’s promises and purposes? Had he given them up for good? During this exile, God continues to speak to them through prophets like Ezekiel, explaining why this crisis has come and assuring them that they still have a future.” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 4)

2. Throughout Israel’s history, but particularly during the period of the divided kingdom and then extending into the period of the restoration of the southern kingdom, the prophets played an important role of calling the people back to faithfulness toward God.

a. *God’s prophets applied God’s word during crises in the covenant relation between God and his people.* The main activity of OT prophets was *not* predicting the future. Rather, the prophets spoke during times of crisis and all had essentially a twofold message and ministry: (1) They warn God’s people of the consequences of disobedience to the Lord’s ways by *oracles of judgment*; and (2) They call God’s people back to faithfulness by *oracles of hope and salvation*. All OT prophets were concerned with changing people’s behavior. Their message essentially was, “if you do this, judgment will come; if you follow the Lord, blessings will come.” Their messages of judgment and salvation are therefore relevant for many generations.

b. *Historically one can see a shift in prophetic emphasis after Israel’s exile in Babylon.* Before the exile the prophets tended to stress Israel’s rebelliousness. After the exile the emphasis shifted toward the responsibility of God’s people to prepare for the full establishing of God’s kingdom. (VanGemeren 1990: 213)

3. Particularly after the exile, the prophets talk about a number of themes, including:

- *A new exodus.* God’s people will be rescued from their false shepherds (**Ezekiel 34**). They will be rescued from captivity (**Isa 40:1-5; 43:1-7, 15-21; 48:20-21; 49:24-26; 51:9-11; Jer 23:7-8**).
- *A new people.* Sometimes this is depicted as God’s faithful remnant (**Isa 10:20-23; 11:11-12; 14:1-4; 40:1-2; 46:3-4; 51:11; 61:4-7; Jer 23:1-8; 29:10-14; 30:10-11; 31:7-9; Ezek 34:1-6; 36:22-24; 37:15-22; Mic 2:12**). God’s failed, captive, and divided people will be remade, reanimated, and reunited (**Ezekiel 37**). God will bless the nations (**Isa 2:2-4; 19:18-25; 49:5-6; 56:1-8; Mic 4:1-4; Zeph 3:9; Zech 8:20-23**). Isaiah appears to redefine the “people of God” (contrary to the limitations of the Mosaic Covenant; see **Deut 23:1-8**): “Isaiah announces that in the last days, when God will reveal his righteousness, biological descent or bodily mutilation [i.e., eunuchs] will no longer determine membership in his people. Foreigners will ‘join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants’ (56:7). . . . The criterion for being a part of YHWH’s future restoration and establishment of his kingdom is not ethnic descent but a contrite spirit and a contrite heart [57:15] and a righteous response to God’s will on the part of those individuals who belong to the remnant for whom God has compassion (58:7-14)—those who ‘take refuge’ in YHWH ‘shall possess the land and inherit my holy mountain’ [57:13], both ‘the far and the near’ [57:19]. This means that in the Isaianic prophecies the criteria for membership in the eschatological people of God have changed in a fundamental way: when YHWH restores the earth, both repentant Jews and repentant Gentiles will constitute the covenant people.” (Schnabel 2002: 41)
- *A new agent to fulfill God’s purposes.* God’s agent is his anointed servant (**Isa 42:1-9; 61:1-3**). God’s agent appears as a suffering servant (**Isa 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12**). He appears as a mysterious “son of man” (**Dan 7:13-14**). He is a new David (**Isa 9:2-7; 11:1-5; 16:5; Jer 23:1-6; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Amos 9:11**). Elijah will appear (**Mal 4:5-6**).
- *A new land.* There will be a new Zion (**Isaiah 2; 11:6-9; 35:1-10; 54; 61:3-62:12; Ezek 34:11-16, 25-31; 36:35-38**). It will be a land of peace, plenty, and prosperity (**Hos 2:14-18; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13-15; Mic 4:3-4**). There will even be a new heaven and earth (**Isaiah 42:14-17; 65-66**).
- *A “New Covenant”* (**Jer 31:31-34; 32:38-40; 50:4-5; Ezek 11:16-20; 36:24-32; 37:15-28**). The promise of a “New Covenant” is explicitly mentioned in the OT only in **Jer 31:31** but is implicit elsewhere in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. “Several features underline the new covenant’s continuity with previous divine covenants: its emphasis on the divine Torah [“law” or instruction] (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27; Isa. 42:1-4; 51:4-8); its focus on Abraham’s ‘seed’ (Jer. 31:36; Ezek. 36:37; Isa. 63:16),

particularly his royal ‘seed’ (Jer. 33:15-26; Ezek. 37:24-25; Isa. 55:3); its use of the covenant formula, ‘I will be their God, and they shall be my people’ (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 37:23, 27; cf. Isa. 54:5-10).” (Williamson 2007: 180) However, it is clear from **Jer 31:32** that the New Covenant supersedes the Old, Mosaic Covenant.

The New Covenant would not be like the Old, Mosaic Covenant which Israel broke. The New Covenant “internalizes” and “personalizes” the relationship between God and his people in ways that none of the other covenants ever attempted. The “newness” of the New Covenant “must not be underestimated; it incorporates novel dimensions that reflect a radical discontinuity with the past (cf. Jer. 31:32): a complete removal of sin (Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 36: 29, 33); an inner transformation of heart (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:26); an intimate relationship with God (Jer. 31:34a; Ezek. 36:27)” (Williamson 2007: 180). There is no hint of the “conditionality” expressed in the Mosaic Covenant. Indeed, sin can no longer imperil the divine-human relationship because under the New Covenant God makes the astounding announcement, “*I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more*” (**Jer 31:34**). Therefore, “unlike the old covenant, there will be no possibility of breaking this new covenant” (Ibid.: 157). This new heart, internalization of God’s law, personal relationship with God, and complete forgiveness of sin will result in a new depth of “the knowledge (i.e. the obedience of faith) of Yahweh, [which is] the distinguishing mark of this new covenant community” (Ibid.). “The new covenant is the climactic fulfillment of the covenants that God established with the patriarchs, the nation of Israel, and the dynasty of David. The promises of these earlier covenants find their ultimate fulfillment in this new covenant, and in it such promises become ‘eternal’ in the truest sense.” (Ibid.: 181)

- *A new rule of God.* There will be a new presence of God and a new temple (**Isa 12:6; Ezek 37:27-28; 40-48; Joel 3:16-17; Zeph 3:14-17**). God will pour out his Spirit on his people (**Joel 2:28-32; Isa 32:9-20; Ezek 36:25-28**). Sometimes God Himself is described as returning to Zion (**Isa 26:21; 42:2-3, 9; 52:7-9; 66:15; Ezek 43:2-7; Zech 2:10; 8:3; 14:3-5; Mal 3:1**). His relationship with His people will be restored and renewed (**Hos 2:16, 19-20; 3:5**).

- *The “Day of the Lord.”* The concept of “the Day of the Lord” emerges out of the above prophecies. Sometimes it is described as a day coming in the near future (**Isa 13:6; Ezek 30:1-3; Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14**); in such cases it often appears to be talking about God’s destroying OT Israel’s enemies (**Joel 3:4; Obad 18-21; Zeph 1:7-11; 2:4-15**). Sometimes the time is not specified. The Day of the Lord is frequently described as a fearsome day of wrath and judgment (**Isa 2:12-21; 10:3** [“*day of punishment*”]; **13:6-13; 26:21; 34:8; 63:1-4a** [“*day of vengeance*”], **6; Jer 46:10** [“*day of vengeance*”]; **Ezek 7:19; 13:1-5; 30:1-3; Hos 1:11** [“*day of Jezreel*”]; **Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:14; Amos 5:18-20; Obad 15-16; Zeph 1:7-2:3; Zech 14:1-7; Mal 4:5**). Other passages speak of salvation for the Lord’s people on that day (**Isa 35:4; 40:9-11; 63:4b-5; Joel 2:30-32; Obad 17; Zech 2:10-13**). These latter senses depict the “*day of the Lord*” as a final, eschatological day of God’s visitation in grace and judgment.

4. These prophetic themes were not systematized into a coherent whole. However, they created hope and expectation that God would visit his people in grace and his enemies in judgment. They “point to a time in history when the Lord will bring to fruition and realize in perfection all of his gracious purposes and covenantal ways with his people” (Venema 2000: 23). The synthesis is found in Christ, of whom Paul says, “*For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes*” (**2 Cor 1:20**). The OT prophets mingled items connected with the first coming of Christ and items connected with His second coming. “Not until the New Testament times would it be revealed that what was thought of in Old Testament days as one coming of the Messiah would be fulfilled in two stages: a first and second coming” (Hoekema 1979: 12).

G. The restoration of the southern kingdom (2 Chron 36:22-Esther; Haggai-Malachi)

“After over a half [century] in exile, the way is opened for Israel to return to Jerusalem [Decree of Cyrus, 538 BC—**2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4**]. Some return; but most do not. In time, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, Jerusalem and the temple, which had been burnt by Judah’s invaders, are rebuilt [536-516 BC]. But Israel, Jerusalem, and the temple are only shadows of their former selves.

The Old Testament ends with Israel resettling in the land but resettling on a small scale and facing huge threats. They live in the shadow of the super-powers of their day. With the promises of the prophets echoing in their ears they wait for the day when God will act to deliver them and complete His redemptive work. As the curtain falls on act three, Israel has failed to carry out the task God gave them at Sinai, but hope remains because God has made promises.” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 4)

The new situation faced by Israel following the restoration to the land foreshadowed the next great act of the biblical drama—the coming of Christ and the New Covenant. Following the return from exile, “there was no Temple, and the people had to get used to the idea of a Spiritual Temple. There was no regular synagogal structure, and the people had to make do without Levitical leadership. . . . [But] God wanted non-Levitical synagogues, because these brought out the spiritual gifts of laymen, and anticipated the New Covenant Church.” (Jordan 1988: 242)

1. For awhile after the return of exiles from Babylon, leadership is held by a descendant of David, a man named Zerubbabel (Ezra 2-5; Haggai 1-2; Matt 1:13; Luke 3:27). However, the narratives of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah** make it clear that the restored nation is not the kingdom of God. The post-exilic prophets all point to glory yet to come (**Hag 2:6-9; Zech 8:20-23; 14:1-21; Mal 4:1-6**). Interestingly, the OT ends as a “book without an ending.” The Hebrew Bible ends with **2 Chronicles**, which concludes with the hope of a new temple and a return from exile. The Christian arrangement of the OT ends with **Malachi**, which concludes with the promise of the sending of Elijah and the coming day of the Lord. “Our Old Testament canon, then, ends with a frank recognition that the story is not complete” (Goldsworthy 2000: 179).

2. Between the end of the OT and the beginning of the NT there is an interlude of four hundred years. “This period is called the intertestamental period. During this time, Israel continues to believe that they are God’s chosen people and that God will act in the very near future to bring His kingdom. Under the oppression of the Persians, Greeks, and, especially, the Syrians and Romans, the flame of hope ignited in Jewish hearts is fanned into a raging inferno. How God’s kingdom will come, who will bring it in, and what way to live until it comes—on these things there is much difference among the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Essenes. But all of Israel agrees: their story is waiting for an ending. The kingdom will come soon. And so they wait in hope.” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 4-5)

H. The fulfillment of God’s plan of redemption in Jesus Christ (Matthew-Revelation 20)

“The New Testament takes up the story after a gap of nearly four hundred years. John the Baptist is seen as the one who fulfills the role of Elijah to turn the people back to God in repentance [see **Mal 4:5-6**]. We might note in this regard that the baptism of Jesus is portrayed as the identification of Jesus with Israel in repentance. We need to remember that the goal of repentance is to be turned to God. While Jesus had no sin to turn from, he shows himself to be the perfectly God-oriented Israelite, and hence the son in whom God is well pleased. We should also note in passing that it is the incompleteness of the Old Testament that makes a Christological interpretation necessary.” (Goldsworthy 2000: 179)

“The same God is both Creator and Redeemer. More than that, redemption is itself a kind of creation or re-creation. The fall damaged the whole of the lower creation. Effects flowed out from Adam who was the key representative. Appropriately, redemption repairs and overcomes this damage. Effects flow out from Christ, the representative to the whole of creation (cf. Romans 8:22). The idea of a representative standing for a larger group runs through the entire plan. Adam as the creational son represented all his descendants. . . . Similarly, Christ as the Redeemer Son represents all those who are united to Him (Romans 8:29-34).” (Poythress 1991: 77)

1. The Gospels: the OT anticipated and is fulfilled by Jesus. “The genealogies of both Matthew and Luke testify to the intrinsic connection of Jesus’ coming with God’s purpose and work in previous epochs. Luke 1-2 describes the Old Testament hopes of figures like Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna as these all voice confidence in the fidelity of God to his Old Testament promises.

In Jesus of Nazareth God’s deliverance and fulfillment arrive. . . . Over a span of some three years Jesus traverses the lands of Galilee, Judea, Samaria, and adjoining districts. He devotes special attention to a group of twelve who will carry on his work once he departs, but he also issues a call and instruction to the (predominantly but not exclusively Jewish) masses. His message targets ethnic Israel but has application to all peoples, even during his lifetime. His teachings, sublime by any reckoning, cannot be separated from a consciousness of unique filial relationship to God. He appeared to be asserting that he was in some sense God’s equal. His teaching must also be seen in the light of his insistence that he came to bring deliverance, not through mastery of knowledge he transmits, but through personal trust in the sacrificial, saving death he undergoes (Mark 8:31; 10:32-34, 45). The four Gospels concur in presenting the climax of Jesus’ coming, not in his miracles, wisdom, or ethics, great as these are, but in his atoning death and vindicating resurrection.

Jesus’ ministry, then, is the culmination of God’s saving plan established in Old Testament times. His call to repentance and offer of new life fulfills the prophetic office; his sacrificial death and mediatorial role fulfill the role of an eternal high priest; the rule he possesses (John 18:37) in David’s train establishes him as King of kings, the invisible God’s incarnate regent over all space, time, and

history. The messianic deliverance already foretold in Eden (Gen 3:15) finds definitive expression in the Messiah Jesus.” (Yarbrough 1996: 64-65)

2. Acts and the Epistles: the spread of the church. “The book of Acts begins with the sudden and explosive coming of the Holy Spirit, whose coming the prophets and Jesus, himself, had promised (Acts 2). He comes, intent on bringing the new life of God’s kingdom to all who turn from sin, believe renewal has come in Jesus, and are baptised into the emerging kingdom community. This new community is established and commits itself to doing those things that God promises to use to renew in them the life of the resurrection: the Word of God, prayer, fellowship with one another, and the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42). As they do this, the life of God’s kingdom more and more shows itself in Jerusalem, and the church begins to grow. The church spreads from Jerusalem to Judea and into Samaria. Then a new centre is established in Antioch (Acts 11:19-28). . . . Paul plays the biggest role in the spread of the good news throughout the Roman Empire. He was once a militant enemy of the church, but a dramatic encounter with Jesus turns him into a leading missionary to the non-Jewish world. On three separate journeys he travels throughout the Roman Empire establishing churches. He writes thirteen letters to these newly founded churches to encourage them and instruct them about how to live as followers of the risen Jesus. These letters, along with others, eventually are collected into the New Testament. Each of these letters continues today, in the twenty-first century, to give valuable instruction on what to believe about the good news and how to live faithfully under God’s rule in our daily lives.” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 6)

I. Jesus’ revelation of the true nature of the Messiah, the Kingdom of God, and the church

Although Jesus is God’s final and fullest revelation who fulfills the OT prophecies and expectations, “he fulfills them in such a surprising way that no one could have fully predicted the way he would bring in the kingdom” (Goldsworthy 1991: 203). The Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles reveal Jesus’ unique revelation of the true nature of the Messiah, the Kingdom of God, and the church.

1. Jesus the Messiah. Most Jews expected Messiah to be more of a political figure who would drive out the Romans and re-establish Jerusalem and the temple in splendor as the center of the new earth. Jesus did not meet the expectations and interpretations of the Jewish religious leaders. He synthesized different strands of the OT in ways not systematized before. He revealed that He was fully God incarnate (**John 1:1-14; 10:30; 14:6-11; Phil 2:5-7; Col 1:16-17; 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8**), and yet was also truly a man—the last Adam, the seed of Abraham, the son of David, the true prophet (**Matt 21:9; Luke 14:16-24; Rom 1:3; 5:19; 1 Cor 15:22, 45; Gal 3:16; Col 1:15**). His claims to be God, and His taking the role of the temple onto Himself (see **John 2:13-22; 7:37**) drove the Jewish leaders into a frenzy of hatred. The reason is that in Eastern religions “God” was something like a “life-force” that permeated everyone and everything. In Western, polytheistic religions there were many “gods” who took on human form from time to time. For a human being in those contexts to claim to be divine would not be entirely beyond credibility. Judaism was different. It had an extremely “transcendent” view of God: God was the creator, separate and distinct from his creation. For a human being to claim to be God in Jesus’ context of first century Judaism was both inconceivable and blasphemous. Indeed, on more than one occasion, the Jewish leaders understood Jesus’ claims and even sought to stone Him to death for blasphemy (see **Lev 24:10-16; Matt 9:2-3; 26:63-66; Mark 2:5-7; 14:61-64; Luke 22:70-71; John 5:17-18; 8:58-59; 10:30-33; 19:7**).

2. The spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. The very nature of the kingdom is different from the expectations of the Jews and even of Jesus’ own disciples (at first). They had been expecting a renewal of Israel’s earthly status and power (see **Acts 1:6**). Instead, Jesus ordained his church as the visible representation of the kingdom on earth (**Matt 16:18-19**). He told Pilate, “*My kingdom is not of this world*” (**John 18:36**). Earlier he had told the Pharisees, “*The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst*” (**Luke 17:20-21**). Further, the kingdom is not limited either to Jews or to the land of Palestine. Instead, it is radically inclusive. It includes Jews and Gentiles on an equal basis (**Acts 10-11; Eph 2:11-22**) and includes the entire earth (**Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rev 5:9; 7:9**). **Acts 1:8** is a template for the spread of the church.

3. The “already/not yet” aspect of the Kingdom of God. “Not clearly foreseen, apparently, by either Old Testament prophets or the earliest New Testament disciples, was the already-not yet complexion of the messianic age” (Yarbrough 1996: 65). When Jesus cast out demons He told the Pharisees, “*the kingdom of God has come upon you*” (**Luke 11:20**). Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth and even now is reigning from the “throne of David” in heaven (**Matt 28:18; Acts 2:29-36; Eph 1:18-23**).

Nevertheless, we still experience sin and evil, and much of the world is opposed to Christ and His rule. This seeming paradox is explained by the “already/not yet” nature of the kingdom of God: i.e., although the kingdom of God and reign of Christ have been inaugurated and realized in principle (the “already” of the kingdom), they have not yet been fully manifested but await a future consummation in all their glory (the “not yet” of the kingdom).²³ This is seen in several ways:

a. *Throughout the NT, the writers speak of the “two ages”:* “this age,” and the “age to come.” “This age” is characterized by marriage and things temporal (e.g., **Mark 10:30; Luke 20:34; Rom 12:2**), evil (**Gal 1:4; Eph 2:2**), and worldly wisdom (**1 Cor 1:20; 2:6-8**). On the other hand, “the age to come” is characterized by resurrection life and immortality (e.g., **Mark 10:30; 1 Cor 15:50**), the lack of marriage (**Luke 20:35**), and absence of evil (**1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5**) (Riddlebarger 2003: 82-83). The first coming of Christ brought with it the inauguration of the age to come in Christ and among those who are his. Consequently, the two ages currently overlap. Since the reign of Christ has already begun (**Heb 2:9; Eph 1:21**), in a certain sense the age to come also has begun. As this age is the age of the old creation, and the age to come is the age of the new creation, in a sense the new creation has already been inaugurated (**2 Cor. 5:17; Gal 6:15**). As a result of Christ’s first coming, this age is in its “last days” (see **Acts 2:17; Heb 1:2; Jas 5:3; 1 Pet 1:20; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18**). “This age” will end and the “age to come” will be fully consummated in all its glory at the Second Coming of Christ (see **Matt 24:3; Titus 2:12-13**).

b. *The overlapping of the two ages, and the “breaking in” of the age to come into this age, explains why the Bible constantly assumes a “two-stage” character of salvation.* “Justification (Romans 5:1; Matthew 12:37), adoption (Romans 8:14-16 with v. 23 of the same chapter and also Galatians 4:4-6 with Eph. 4:30), and redemption (Ephesians 1:7 with 4:30) with many other of the biblical realities associated with salvation can be spoken of both as past realities and future blessings. This is so because *the age to come* which brings salvation unfolds itself in two stages. There is an overlapping of *this age and the age to come.*” (Waldron n.d.: n.p.) Similarly, some of Jesus’ parables, such as the parable of the wheat and the tares (**Matt 13:24-30, 36-43**) and the parable of the dragnet (**Matt 13:47-50**), speak of the dual nature of the kingdom. The kingdom is present now but has not yet been fully consummated. Currently, good and evil co-exist, but there will come a time of harvest and of separation of good from evil. **1 Cor 15:20-28** indicates the same thing: just as the coming of Messiah as sower and then harvester in **Matthew 13** mark the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom, so the resurrection of Christ as firstfruits and then the resurrection of those who are Christ’s at His coming (**1 Cor 15:23**) mark the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom.

4. The Kingdom of God comes through the preaching and living out the Gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus presented an unexpected fulfillment of what Messiah and the kingdom truly were, so he introduced a new dimension to OT expectations concerning God’s Spirit and the new rule of God: he would be absent in the body but present inside of his followers in the Spirit (**John 14-16; Acts 1-2**). Jesus began his public ministry by linking the kingdom and the gospel: “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel*” (**Mark 1:15**). With the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the full power of the gospel is now available. **Acts 2:38** describes what happens when anyone hears the gospel and believes it: his sins are forgiven and he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. In answer to His disciples’ question about restoring the kingdom to Israel (**Acts 1:6-8**), Jesus in effect responded that: “The kingdom is being restored now, but not in the way they had expected it. It comes through the preaching of the gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The power of the kingdom does not lie in the Holy Spirit’s work alone, nor does it lie in the word of Christ alone, rather it lies in both working together. Jesus thus gives the definitive interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the day of salvation.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 212) By our faith in Christ, God has “*rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son*” (**Col 1:13**).

5. The church is now a preview of the coming kingdom. Christ ordained His church as the visible manifestation of His body on the earth after he ascended back to the Father (**Matt 16:18**; see **1 Cor 12:12-28**). Christ commissioned the church, “*as the Father has sent me, I also send you*” (**John 20:21**),

²³ The “already/not yet” schema has been discussed by many commentators. See, e.g., Hoekema 1979: 13-22; Venema 2000: 12-32; Vos 1979: 38 (helpful diagram). It is reflected in the Beatitudes of **Matt 5:2-10**: vv.2, 10 are in the present; all other rewards are future. “This distinction is significant, for it underscores that although the kingdom of God (the reign of Christ) is a present reality, the consummated kingdom awaits his return in glory” (Alexander 2008: 95).

and “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*” (**Matt 28:19-20**). The NT epistles instruct the church “to keep firmly in our minds that the whole of Christian existence is the application of the gospel to every part of our lives. We start with Christ as the new creation for us, and we move toward the goal, which is to be made like him in the universal new creation.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 233) “The church picks up Israel’s task of being a showcase of what God intends for human life (Ex. 19:3-6; cf. 1 Pet. 2:9-12). The church is to continue the kingdom mission that Jesus began among the Jews, a kingdom established now among all the people of the earth. The church today is guided by the stories of the church in Acts as it faces new and very different contexts for its mission. The mission of God’s people is to make known the good news of the kingdom. This is what gives the contemporary time period its meaning. And since the rule of Jesus covers the whole earth, the mission of God’s people is as broad as creation. In effect, God’s people are to live lives that say, ‘This is how the whole world will be some day when Jesus returns!’” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 6-7)

IV. The New Heavens and the New Earth (Revelation 21-22)

“The last book in the Bible is Revelation. In that book John is ushered into God’s throne room to see how things really are. He is shown that, whatever evidence exists to the contrary, Jesus, whom the church follows, is in control of world events. He is moving history toward its appointed end. At that end, the old world dominated by evil, pain, suffering, and death will be overthrown. God will again dwell among humanity as He did in the beginning. He will wipe away tears. There will be no more death, mourning, pain, suffering, or evil. With joy, those of us who have followed this story anticipate hearing God’s own voice: ‘I am making everything new!’ (Rev. 21:5) The marvellous imagery of the last chapters of Revelation directs the reader’s gaze to the end of history and to the restoration of the whole of God’s creation. He invites all the thirsty to come even now and to drink the waters of life but warns all those who remain outside the kingdom. The Bible ends with a promise repeated three times—‘I am coming soon’ (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20). And we echo the response of the author of Revelation: ‘Yes! Come Lord Jesus.’” (Bartholomew and Goheen n.d.: 7).

A. The new creation of Revelation links with the original creation of Genesis

“In Genesis God created the heaven and the earth; in Revelation we read of a new heaven and earth (21:1). In Genesis the luminaries are called into being; in Revelation the glory of the Lord lights the city [**21:23; 22:5**]. In Genesis we read of the cunning power of Satan; in Revelation the devil is bound and hurled into the lake of fire (20:10). In Genesis we read of paradise lost; in Revelation paradise is restored. Genesis describes the divorce of humankind as Adam and Eve run from God; in Revelation the redeemed enjoy the intimate fellowship of marriage to the Lamb [**19:7-9; 21:2-4; 22:4**]. In Genesis nature threatens the security and hurts humanity; in Revelation nature sustains and comforts people [**22:1-2**]. In Genesis the tree of life is protected by an angel lest anyone eat its fruit; Revelation restores humanity’s access to the fruit (22:14). This obvious correlation between the first and last books of the Bible illustrates the fulfillment of the first messianic prophecy (Gen. 3:15) and God’s faithfulness to the covenant (Rev. 21:3).” (Hamstra 1998: 123)

B. The new creation of Revelation surpasses the original creation of Genesis

“The fact that there is no more sea or night in the new heaven and new earth [**21:1, 25**] suggests an allusion to the first creation since in both instances these elements are in some way subjugated, divided or restrained. . . . It is as if the first creation, while good in itself, had had the potential to develop in two directions: if humankind fulfilled its role and lived in harmony with God and the rest of creation, the latent powers of chaos represented especially by the sea and darkness would be forever within the scope of human dominion and would become perhaps sources of creative energy and delight—just as they were for God, for whom even Leviathan could be a plaything. But if the covenant between God and his creatures was broken and human beings allied themselves with the serpent and its realm, the forces of chaos would be let loose and the sea become a thing of terror, an abode of evil and an instrument of judgement. Scripture may be largely a record of humankind opting for this latter path, but John’s intent is to assure the churches that they have not therefore been abandoned to a world of sorrow, pain and mourning. Instead, the triumph of the ‘Lamb that was slain’ means that the creator’s fidelity to his creation—hinted at in the rainbow around the throne [**4:3**], sign of the Noachic covenant—is expressed finally through nothing less than the renewal of the cosmos, an event in which the world is brought beyond any threat of future rebellion or sin.” (Moo 2009: 166-67) “Outside of the Bible, no other major religious faith holds out any hope or even interest in the restoration of perfect *shalom* [absolute wholeness; peace; full, harmonious, joyful, flourishing life], justice, and wholeness in this material world. Vinoth

Ramachandra, a Sri Lankan Christian writer, can see this very clearly. All other religions, he says, offer as salvation some form of liberation from ordinary humanness. Salvation is seen as escape from the shackles of individuality and physical embodiment into some kind of transcendent spiritual existence.” (Keller 2008: 223-24) Christianity alone holds out hope for the salvation of the *world*: human beings who have glorious new bodies living in a renewed earth, with God directly in their midst.

3. CHRIST AND THE CHURCH AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The fact that Jesus is the ultimate subject of the OT shows that the OT does not stand on its own. We can reach an understanding at the historical level concerning OT events, and can even reach a certain theological understanding concerning the unfulfilled promises of God to his people in the OT. Nevertheless, “it is impossible from the Old Testament alone to understand the full measure of God’s acts and promises that it records” (Goldsworthy 1991: 54). The reason why the OT alone does not convey its full, underlying meaning is the doctrine of progressive revelation (see **Heb 1:1-3**). “Progressive revelation means that God’s revelation was not given all at once in the beginning, but was revealed by stages until the full light of truth was revealed in Jesus Christ. This revelation has as its center the promises of God and their fulfillment. . . . [Jesus] is the final and the fullest revelation of what the promises are really about. This means that the form and the content of the fulfillment exceeds by far the form and content of the promises themselves.” (Ibid.: 64, 65)

I. The Bible Ultimately is About Jesus Christ—He is its Central Person and Integrating Theme

A. Jesus and the NT authors all applied the OT to Jesus

“And he said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory? Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.’” (Luke 24:25-27)

“Now he said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.’” (Luke 24:44-47)

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about me; and you are unwilling to come to me so that you may have life. . . . For if you believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote about me.” (John 5:39-40, 46)

“But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he has thus fulfilled. . . . And likewise all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.” (Acts 3:18, 24)

“Of him [Jesus] all the prophets bear witness that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.” (Acts 10:43)

“So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of his resurrection from the dead he would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” (Acts 26:22-23)

“As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.” (1 Pet 1:10-12)

B. Jesus appeared in pre-incarnate form in the OT

There is only one God, but God is Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit—one God in three persons. This is hinted at in various ways in the OT. For example, “*Yachad* is the OT word used for absolute unity; a mathematical or numerical one. It is used about 12 times in the OT, but never to describe

the unity of God (Gen. 22:2, 12; Zech. 12:10). *Echad* however speaks of a compound or collective unity. In marriage ‘the two shall be one flesh’ (Gen. 2:24); a crowd can gather ‘as one’ (Ezek. 3:1); or be of one mind or heart: ‘All the rest of Israel were of one heart to make David king’ (1 Chron. 12:38). This is the compound plural always used of God when He is called ‘one’ Lord.” (Pratney 1988: 259) Further, “the typical OT word for Israel’s God is *elohim*, and it is plural” (Feinberg 2001: 448). There are three interesting aspects of this. First, the singular of *elohim* is *eloah* which is occasionally used to refer to God. “Unless the intent is to make a point about plurality, why not just use the singular *eloah*?” (Ibid.: 449) Second, while the plural *elohim* typically is used for God, it is most often used with a singular verb. Normally, nouns and verbs agree in number, so this is grammatically unusual. Occasionally, however, “a plural verb is used with *elohim* to refer to Israel’s God [**Gen 20:13; 35:7; 2 Sam 7:23**]” (Ibid.). Third, while generally singular pronouns (e.g., “I,” “He,” “My”) are used to refer to God, sometimes plural pronouns are used, which “seem to suggest plurality of some sort in the Godhead” (Ibid.). For example, in **Gen 1:26** (“*Let us make man in our image*”) “the verb ‘make’ (*na’aseh*) is plural, and so is ‘our’” (Ibid.: 450; see also **Gen 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8**). Similarly, **Job 35:10; Ps 149:2; Eccl 12:2; Isa 54:5** all speak of God as the creator or maker of human life and of Israel. In all those passages the Hebrew words translated “creator” or “maker” are in the plural (Ibid.: 455). Although some might suggest that this is a “plural of majesty,” Klaas Runia points out that *elohim* “cannot be explained as a ‘plural of majesty’; this was entirely unknown to the Hebrews” (Runia 1982: 166; see also Archer 1982: 359). In the context of the above verses, the plural pronouns cannot refer to angels or anyone other than God himself (Archer 1982: 359; see also Feinberg 2001: 450). All these grammatical examples point to plurality in the Godhead.

Although the identity of God the Son—Jesus Christ—is only made explicit in the NT as a result of his incarnation, he is present in pre-incarnate form even in the OT:

1. The “Lord.” Most of the references to God in the OT do not distinguish the persons of the Trinity. However, in several OT passages where God is referred to as the “Lord,” NT writers, and Jesus himself, clarify that the “Lord” was really a reference to Jesus Christ.²⁴ For example, **2 Chron 36:15-16** says, “*The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers,*” but the people continually mocked the prophets and despised God’s words. In **Matt 23:34**, Jesus alludes to this and says, “*I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes,*” but you scourge and persecute and kill them. Peter confirms that it was “*the Spirit of Christ*” who spoke through the prophets (**1 Pet 1:10-12**).

- **Isa 6:1-13** is a vision of God’s glory. **Isa 6:1** talks about the “Lord” sitting on a throne in the temple of heaven. In **Isa 6:8** the “Lord” says, “*Who will go for us?*” In **Isa 6:9-10**, Isaiah is commissioned to go to the people but to render them insensitive so that they will not understand and be healed. **John 12:39-41** quotes **Isa 6:10** and comments, “*These things Isaiah said because he saw His [Jesus’] glory, and he spoke of Him [Jesus].*”
- **Rom 10:13** quotes **Joel 2:32** (**Joel 3:5 LXX**, “*whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*”) and applies that to faith in Christ. **Rom 10:11** does the same thing (quoting and applying **Isa 28:16 LXX**).
- **Heb 1:5-13** quotes from **Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 97:7; 45:6-7; Isa 61:1; Ps 102:25-26; 110:1** and applies them to Christ. **Heb 2:12-13** quotes from **Ps 22:22; Isa 8:17-18** and applies them to Christ.
- **Isa 8:12-13** (LXX) talks about not fearing people but, instead, “*Sanctify ye the Lord himself; and he shall be thy fear.*” **1 Pet 3:14-15** quotes this passage but says “*sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.*”

2. The Angel of the Lord. Apart from referring to angels in general, the OT speaks of “the Angel of the Lord.” On some occasions “the Angel of the Lord” is identified as God or receives worship as God (**Gen 16:7-13; 22:11-16; 31:11-13; Exod 3:2-6; Josh 5:13-15** [“*the captain of the host of the Lord*”]; **Judg 13:6-22; Isa 63:9** [“*the angel of His presence*”]); on other occasions, “the angel of the Lord” appears to be distinguished from God (**Num 22:22-35; Judg 13:8-9**). These passages “warrant saying that while there is only one God, in some sense there is plurality in the Godhead, for the angel of the Lord is called God and yet is distinguished from God” (Feinberg 2001: 453). Edmund Clowney states,

²⁴ The depth and subtlety of the OT’s references to Christ are seen in **Isa 1:3** which says, “*An ox knows its owner and a donkey its master’s manger. But Israel does not know, My people do not understand.*” Edmund Clowney observes, “With vivid irony the words of Isaiah find unimagined fulfillment. . . . Luke’s word for ‘manger’ [*phatnē*, **Luke 2:7, 12, 16**] occurs in this passage in the ancient Greek translation of Isaiah [i.e., the Septuagint (LXX)], and ‘master’s’ is literally ‘lord’s’ (*kuriou*).” (Clowney 2003: 20) Even the ox and the donkey know the manger of the Lord but, as the apostle John said, “*He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him*” (**John 1:11**).

“The Angel of the Lord spoke to Moses from the bush, but identified himself as I AM, the God of the fathers [Exod 3:2-14]. This is a well-established pattern in the theophanies [manifestations or appearances of God] of the Old Testament. The Angel was, in fact, God the Son, the Lord. He is the Angel of God’s presence who spoke with Abraham (Gen. 18:1-2, 22, 33), who wrestled with Jacob (Genesis 32 [see also Hos 12:3-5]), who went before Israel (Ex. 23:20), whom Moses desired to know (Ex. 33:12-13), and who appeared to Manoah to announce the birth of Samson (Judges 13). The Angel speaks as Lord, bears the name of God, and reveals the glory of God (Ex. 23:21). Glimpsing his face in the early dawn, Jacob says he has seen the face of God (Gen. 32:30).” (Clowney 2003: 12-13) Consequently, “the Angel of the Lord” could not have been God the Father since no one has seen God (the Father) or can see him and live (Exod 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16). Since several people in the OT *did* see God and live, “the Angel of the Lord” undoubtedly was God the Son in pre-incarnate form.

C. Jesus fulfills the OT’s promise of the Messiah

“The term [‘Messiah’] denotes an expected or longed-for savior, especially in the Jewish tradition. . . . In its primary biblical usage, then, ‘anointed’ is, virtually a synonymous term of ‘king,’ in particular David and his descendants. . . . Eventually royal language and imagery came to be applied primarily to a hoped-for future king, whose reign would be characterized by everlasting justice, security, and peace. . . . Belief in a priestly messiah, son of Aaron, who would arise alongside the Davidic messiah to save Israel, appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls. . . . Finally, the tradition that the divinely appointed savior should suffer (Luke 24:26; Acts 3:18) has its roots in numerous psalms attributed to David (e.g., 22; 55; 88).” (Sawyer 1993: 513-14) OT prophecies suggested the Messiah would come in one of three forms: (1) a king (see Jer 23:5-6; Ps 110:1-2); (2) a priest (see 1 Sam 2:35²⁵; Ps 110:3-4; Zech 6:12-13); and (3) a prophet (see Deut 18:15-19). Importantly, the Messiah was not merely to be “a king” but was to be “the king”—the *final* king of the world. “In rabbinic thought, the Messiah is the king who will redeem and rule Israel at the climax of human history and the instrument by which the kingdom of God will be established” (Jacobs 2013: “Messiah in Rabbinic Thought”). His priesthood would be “forever” and would not be like the Levitical priests but would be “according to the order of Melchizedek” (Ps 110:4). Further, many OT passages indicated that the Messiah would be a human being (e.g., Gen 3:15; Isa 11: 1-5; 42:1-6; 59:20; Jer 30:18-22; 33:14-15); but other passages suggested that the Messiah would be divine (e.g., Ps 2:6-12; 110:1-7; Isa 9:6; Jer 23:5-6; Mic 5:2; Zech 14:9).²⁶

“Messiah” (Hebrew = *mashiach*) itself means “anointed” or “anointed one.” The Greek term for “anointed” or “anointed one” is *christos* from which is derived the name “Christ.” The NT clearly shows that Jesus Christ fulfills the Israelite expectations of a king and savior sent by God (see, e.g., Matt 2:4-11; 16:16, 20; 22:42-45; 26:63-64; Mark 8:29; 12:35-37; 14:61-62; Luke 4:41; 20:41-44; 22:67-70; 23:2-3, 39; 24:26, 46; John 4:25-26; 11:25-27; 20:30-31; Acts 2:30-36; 9:22; 17:3; 18:5, 28; 1 John 2:22; 5:1). Jesus was the prophesied king. This was recognized at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (John 1:49, “*Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel*”) and when Jesus entered Jerusalem the final time, which all four Gospels interpret that as the coming of the prophesied Davidic king (Matt 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-16). Jesus also is the perfect high priest “according to the order of Melchizedek” in the true Temple (Heb 2:17; 4:14-5:10; 7:1-8:6; 10:11-22). Further, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Moses that God would raise up another prophet like him (John 1:45; 6:14; Acts 3:20-23). Finally, Jesus was both fully man *and* fully God (see APPENDIX 6—JESUS IS FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN).

Jesus received worship *as the Messiah*, but Jesus the Messiah, i.e., the longed-for savior, came to save people not in a political sense but from their enslavement to sin (see Matt 9:2-8, 12-13; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 5:17-26, 31-32; 7:47-50; 9:56; 19:10; John 5:33-34; 8:1-11; 10:7-9; 12:47). Jesus’ crucifixion caused those who believed he was the promised deliverer to lose their hope because a crucified Messiah seemed to be a contradiction in terms (see Luke 24:19-21). The people did not then understand that the crucifixion was the means by which salvation from sin had to be accomplished. Then the unexpected occurred: Jesus rose from the dead. After his resurrection, Jesus explained to his disciples, “*Was it not necessary for the Christ [i.e., the Messiah] to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?*” (Luke 24:26), and “*Thus it is written, that the Christ [i.e., the Messiah] would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day*” (Luke 24:46).

²⁵ The grammar of this verse, including the issue of who “*will walk before My anointed always*,” is discussed at Kaiser 1995: 74-76.

²⁶ There are more than 100 direct messianic predictions in the OT as well as numerous “types” that pointed to the Messiah (see Kaiser 1995: 29, 34; Payne 1980: 665-72). Further, the messianic prophecies were not disconnected or random. “Instead, it is amazing how the depictions concerning the coming Messiah and his work comprised one continuous plan of God. Each aspect was linked into an ongoing stream of announcements beginning in the prepatriarchal period . . . down to the postexilic times of Israel’s last leaders and prophets.” (Kaiser 1995: 29)

The apostles were able to reason from the OT scriptures that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah (**Acts 2:29-36; 3:18-20; 4:5-12; 5:29-32; 8:30-37; 9:22; 13:32-39; 17:2-3, 10-12; 18:5, 24-28; 26:22-23; 28:23-24**). Paul even argued that he was arrested and on trial “*for the sake of the hope of Israel*” (**Acts 28:20**), i.e., “the hope of messianic salvation [that] has been made a present reality by the resurrection of Jesus, who is the one whom God is fulfilling his promises that constituted Israel’s hope” (Schnabel 2012: 1069; see also Marshall 1980: 423 [“What was at issue in his trial, as he had insisted all along, was the true nature of *the hope of Israel* in the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection”]; Harrison 1975: 402 [“‘the hope of Israel’ . . . centered in the person of Jesus of Nazareth as validated by His resurrection from the dead”]; Kepple 1977: 231-41). Hence, the NT repeatedly proclaims Jesus as the savior—the Messiah, the Christ—who alone can save people from their sins (**Matt 1:21; Luke 2:11; John 1:29; 3:17; 4:42; Acts 3:26; 4:12; 5:31; 13:23, 38-39; 15:11; 16:31; Rom 3:24-26; 4:25; 5:1, 6-11, 15-21; 8:2; 10:9; 1 Cor 1:30; 6:11; 15:17; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Gal 1:3-4; Eph 2:13-16; 4:32; 5:2, 25-26; Phil 3:20; Col 1:12-14; 3:13; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9-10; 1 Tim 1:15; 2 Tim 2:10; 3:15; Titus 1:4; 2:13-14; Heb 2:17; 5:9; 7:25; 13:20; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 3:18; 2 Pet 1:11; 1 John 3:5; 4:9-10, 14; Rev 5:9; 14:4**). Jesus fulfilled all the OT prophecies and expectations of the Messiah, but he did so in an unexpected way; he thereby gave the term a greater and deeper meaning than people had anticipated (see **APPENDIX 5—SELECTED MESSIANIC PROPHECIES AND THEIR FULFILLMENT**).

D. Jesus fulfills the OT’s promise of the gospel

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ is founded on and was promised in the OT. The essence of the gospel is that God is God is holy, just, righteous, and good (**Gen 18:25; Exod 34:6-7; Lev 11:44; Job 34:10-12; Ps 5:4; 136:1; 145:17; Hab 1:13**; see **Rom 1:18; Jas 1:13**). However, people are sinful and inclined to evil (**Ps 51:1-5; Isa 64:6**; see **Rom 3:23; 7:8-21**). Our sin has brought about death and separation from God (**Gen 2:17; Isa 59:1-2; Ezek 18:4**; see **Rom 5:12-14; 6:23**). We cannot bridge that divide by anything we can do because our problem is within us and we cannot change our own hearts (**Ecc 9:3; Isa 1:5-6; Jer 17:9**; see **Matt 15:18-19; Mark 7:20-23; Rom 1:21; 3:10-18**). Consequently, if we are to be accepted by God, God must do for us what we cannot do for ourselves by a substitute who will bear our sin and the penalty for that sin so that we may be forgiven (**Gen 15:17-18; 22:1-14; Lev 17:11; Isa 53:4-5; Jer 31:31-34**; see **2 Cor 5:21; Heb 10:10; 1 Pet 2:24**). Just as our sins can only be fully paid for by a substitute, so the righteousness we need to stand in God’s presence can only be imputed to us by God by his grace through our faith (**Gen 15:6; Ps 32:1-2; Hab 2:4**; see **Rom 3:21-22, 24; 4:5, 22-25; Eph 2:8-9**).

2. The NT summarizes how Christ fulfills the gospel that was promised in the OT. **Rom 1:1-4** refers to “*the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.*” Goldsworthy explains this: “First, it is God’s gospel. . . . It does not primarily deal with our needs as we perceive them—how can I live a better life, overcome my hang-ups, make sense of my existence—although it may include these. The gospel is God’s way of dealing with his ‘problem’ of how he, a holy and just God, can justify and accept the sinner. . . .

Second, it is the gospel of the Old Testament. An important part of biblical theology is to try to understand how the promises given in the Old Testament are actually fulfilled in the New. In other words, the Christian’s use of the Old Testament is guided by the way we see its message relating to Christ and, through him, to us. . . .

Third, there is the defined subject matter of the gospel. It is about the Son in a way that it is not about the Father, or the Holy Spirit, or the believer. . . . He is not only God the Son, the second person of the eternal Trinity. He is Jesus of Nazareth who is descended from David the King of Israel. . . .

Fourth, there is the central fact of the gospel, which is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Paul says that the resurrection identified Jesus as the Son of God. . . . The bodily resurrection of Jesus dominates the New Testament understanding of the gospel. . . . The resurrection is central because it presupposes his death and because it stands as the new beginning of the human race. . . . Thus, we are born again by Christ’s resurrection (1 Pet 1:3). Through his resurrection we enter into newness of life (Rom 6:4-11).” (Goldsworthy 1991: 81-82, 229)

E. Jesus fulfills the entire OT

1. The following chart shows similarity of Peter’s and Paul’s initial sermons in Acts. It shows that the entire OT finds its fulfillment Jesus.

Gospel	Peter (Acts 2)	Paul (Acts 13)
1. The OT is fulfilled	2:16-21, 25-31, 34-36	13:16-23, 32-39
2. in the person and work of Jesus	2:22	13:23-26
3. who died	2:23	13:27-29
4. and rose again	2:24, 32	13:30-31, 34-37
5. and is now exalted	2:33, 36	13:34
6. Through Him is forgiveness of sins	2:38	13:38-39
7. Therefore ...	2:38-40	13:40-41

2. The OT's covenants, institutions, events, and the nation of Israel itself pointed to NT spiritual truths. "In the Old Covenant era we see spiritual truths being related in picture form. When God revealed man's need for atonement, He used types and shadows of an elaborate sacrificial system including thousands of priests and barnyard animals. When God revealed the promise of His people to dwell with Him, He did so in the types and shadows of the land in the Middle East and in a building made of bricks and mortar. This is the way in which God revealed His plan in the Old Covenant era. So when God used the prophets to explain the spiritual fulfillment of God's plan in the New Covenant era, God decided to use the language of types and shadows. He was describing the New Covenant in the language of the Old Covenant. He pointed toward the spiritual goal of God's plan in the brightest and clearest way that the physical types and shadows would allow." (Lehrer 2006: 85)

In other words, OT Israel as a nation and all of its covenants, laws, ceremonies, and institutions, were "types," "symbols," "shadows," "copies," or "examples" of NT realities that were fulfilled in Christ and his church (**Matt 5:17; 1 Cor 10:1-6; 2 Cor 3:12-16; Gal 3:23-4:7, 21-31; Col 2:16-17; Heb 1:1-2; 8:1-10:22**). The important thing to remember is that "when fulfillment happens, the institutions that were types or symbols of that reality are no longer necessary. They are displaced by the reality they symbolize." (Holwerda 1995: 74-75; see also Carson 1984: 142 [that which prophesies by its nature is provisional and is "taken up in and transcended by the fulfillment of the prophecy"]; Kaiser 1995: 34 ["The sacrifices, the furniture, and the high priest of the tabernacle . . . would be obsolete when the real, of which they were only shadows and patterns, came on the scene"]). The following sections show how Christ and the church are the substance that the OT "types" pointed to.

II. The Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants Pointed to and are Fulfilled in Christ and the Church

"The Abrahamic Covenant contains both the Old [i.e., Mosaic] and the New Covenants. That is, the Old and New Covenants are the physical and spiritual fulfillments of the Abrahamic Covenant. The covenant God made with Abraham reveals God's plan to save a people and bring them into His land. Under the Old Covenant, God physically saves the people of Israel (the physical descendants of Abraham) from the Egyptians and brings them into the Promised Land, Palestine. Under the New Covenant, God spiritually saves His people (the spiritual descendants of Abraham) from sin and condemnation and brings them into the spiritual land (salvation rest now and in heaven)." (Lehrer 2006: 29)

A. The Abrahamic Covenant is fulfilled in Christ and the church

"God's covenant with Abraham lays the foundation for the entire ensuing history of redemption recorded in the Scriptures" (Holwerda 1995: 32). It was "the first step to fulfill the prediction made in Genesis 3:15 concerning the Unique Seed coming to die on the cross in fulfillment of the eternal unchanging purpose of grace" (Reisinger 1998: 25). This is graphically illustrated when the covenant was ratified in **Gen 15:9-21**. God had Abraham bring certain animals, cut them in two, and lay them side-by-side. "Usually when a covenant was made at that time, both parties would walk between the cut pieces of the sacrificed animals. It was an acted oath, as if the people were saying, 'May I be cut to pieces like these animals do not fulfill my part of the covenant' [see **Jer 34:17-20**]." (Assohoto and Ngewa 2006: 34) In this case, however, when darkness fell only God passed through the pieces (**Gen 15:17**). He was symbolically taking on himself the covenant curses both for himself and for Abraham. It was as if he was saying, "If I do not fulfill my part of the covenant—and if you don't—then may I become like these slain animals." Approximately 2000 years later, darkness again fell and on the cross Jesus Christ—no longer symbolically but in actuality—bore the covenant curses that should have been borne by sinful humanity (**Mark 15:33-39**; see also **Isa 53:8; Heb 10:19-20**).

In one way or another, the other covenants grow out of the Abrahamic Covenant. The argument of **Heb 6:13-8:2** is that Jesus also is *superior* to Abraham and the guarantor of a *better* covenant.

1. In the Abrahamic Covenant (**Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 22:15-18**) there are three basic "core promissory threads": a. *phenomenal posterity* (i.e., promises relating to "seed"); b. *national territory* (i.e., promises relating to "land"); and c. *global blessing* (promises relating to the blessing of

other peoples through/in Abraham's seed) (Williamson 2000: 100-01; see also Kaiser 1978: 86; Essex 1999: 208; Reisinger 1998: 6).

2. God's formulation of the covenant changed over the course of his dealings with Abraham. God initially promised to make Abram "*a great nation*" (**Gen 12:2**) but later *expanded* this to make him the father of "*a multitude of nations*" (**Gen 17:5**). The "land," initially undefined (**Gen 12:1**), was first defined as what Abram could see (**Gen 13:14-15**), then was geographically described (**Gen 15:18-21; 17:8**), and finally was included in the comprehensive statement that "*your seed shall possess the gates of their [lit., 'his'] enemies*" (**Gen 22:17**). At the same time, God *narrowed* the "seed" through whom he would establish the covenant: not all of Abraham's biological descendants were included but only the line of Isaac (**Gen 17:18-21**). Through that seed "*all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*" (**Gen 22:18**).

3. The Abrahamic Covenant was designed to extend beyond a "physical" fulfillment in OT Israel.

a. *OT Israel was the "physical" fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.* Regarding the "seed" promise, **Exod 1:6-13; Num 23:10; Deut 1:10** indicate the phenomenal expansion of the Israelites. **Deut 1:10** says, "*The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number.*" Similarly, the "land" promise was fulfilled at least twice (in the days of Joshua [**Josh 21:43-45**] and during the reign of Solomon [**1 Kgs 4:20-21**]).

Regarding the "blessing" promise, in **1 Kgs 10:1-13; 2 Chron 9:1-12** the Queen of Sheba acknowledged the great blessings that Solomon had brought to Israel and to everyone who heard his wisdom. Thus, Solomon declared in **1 Kgs 8:56**, "*not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant*" (see also **Josh 21:45; 23:14**).

b. *Despite its initial physical fulfillment in OT Israel, the OT pictures an unfulfilled aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant.* Regarding the "seed" promise, **Deut 30:4-5; Jer 23:3; Ezek 36:10-11** "project the promise of numerical increase into the post-exilic period and associate it with the blessings anticipated in a new covenant era" (Williamson 2000: 112). Regarding the "land" promise, retention of Canaan was conditioned on Israel's obedience. The OT reflects a pattern of partial fulfillment, followed by dispossession and subsequent repossession. Thus, the concept of the land was never fully exhausted during the OT period. Regarding the "universal blessing" promise, **Isa 42:6; Isa 49:6** point to God's Servant who, in the future, will be "*a light to the nations.*" "With the possible exception of Solomon's 'Golden Age,' the 'blessing of the nations' remained an unrealized hope for the duration of the period covered by the Old Testament. Certainly in the Prophetic Literature such a prospect was envisaged as still future." (Williamson 2000: 115) Confidence that God would fulfill His promises to Abraham sustained Israel when they experienced God's judgment (**Isa 41:8-16; Mic 7:18-20**). **Jer 33:23-26** connects the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant with the Lord's sending His king in fulfillment of **Num 24:17** and **2 Sam 7:16**, an event that would take place in the future.

4. The NT "spiritualizes" all of the Abrahamic promises. According to the NT, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant is found in the coming, atonement, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

a. *The "seed" promise.* In many translations, the reference to Abraham's "seed" (**Gen 13:15; 15:3, 5, 18; 17:7, 9, 19; 22:17, 18**) is often translated "offspring" or "descendants." The Hebrew word for "seed" can denote either singular or plural. In the NT, the singular aspect of the "seed" promise is applied to Christ as the true "seed" of Abraham; the plural aspect of the "seed" promise is applied to all those who are "in Christ" by faith (the church).

(1) Jesus is the true "seed" of Abraham. God's mercy, and his covenant with Abraham, referred to in **Jer 33:26**, are cited by Mary in **Luke 1:54-55** concerning the coming of Jesus. Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, likewise viewed the coming of Jesus, and his forerunner John, as fulfilling the covenant with Abraham (**Luke 1:67-79**). **Luke 2:32** applies **Isa 42:6; 49:6** to Jesus. Jesus Himself stressed that the Abrahamic Covenant ultimately was spiritual and that he fulfilled it (see **John 8:31-58**). In **Gal 3:16** Paul specifically points out that the promise was made to Abraham "*and to his seed.*" He emphasizes that the word for "seed" is *singular* and refers to Christ.

(2) All who are "in Christ" by faith are the true children of Abraham. This crucial point is made by virtually all of the major figures of the NT.

- *John the Baptist.* John the Baptist downplayed physical descent from Abraham by saying, "*do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham*" (**Matt 3:9; Luke 3:8**).

- *Jesus Christ.* Jesus distinguished between the *physical* descendants of Abraham (who are *not* the true fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant) and the *spiritual* descendants of Abraham (who *are* the true fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant). He indicated that since the Jews were slaves of sin they were not truly Abraham’s sons (**John 8:33-36**). If they were children of Abraham they would do the deeds of Abraham, but their attempt to kill Him was proof that they do not. Thus, they are not children of Abraham but of the devil (**John 8:39-41, 44**). He argued that if God were their father they would love Jesus and hear his word (**John 8:42**).

- *The Apostle Peter.* In **Acts 3:25-26** Peter specifies that it is believers in Christ “*who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers.*”

- *The Apostle Paul.* Paul echoes what Jesus said in **John 8:34-44** concerning who are the true children of Abraham. The promises to Abraham are fulfilled in those who have faith in Christ. In **Rom 4:11-18** he points out that the promise to Abraham was made “*not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.*” He reiterates that in **Rom 9:6-8** where he points out that “*they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel,*” and “*it is not the children of flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.*” The argument of **Galatians 3-4** as a whole is that Christ and the church are the true fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. “The person of Abraham is vital to Paul’s argument from [**Gal 3:6**] onwards—‘Consider Abraham’ (v. 6)—whom he repeatedly mentions throughout chapter 3 (vv. 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 29). But it is important to note that the patriarch is broached only as a way to lead on to the One who is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise, Jesus Christ, the Son of God (3:16, 26). Essentially, what Paul presents in this passage is a Christocentric and Christological reinterpretation of the Abrahamic covenant. . . . In short, Paul is reinterpreting the Abrahamic covenant, where the priority is to belong to Christ, and *all* who are in him, Jew and Gentile alike, also qualify as the seed of Abraham.” (Burke 2006: 112, 114n.33) Thus, in **Gal 3:29** Paul specifies, “*if you belong to Christ, you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.*” That occurs *not* by physical descent, but through *faith* (**Gal 3:7-9, 14**). Just as God had promised to Abraham that his seed would be “*as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore*” (**Gen 22:17**), so that has been fulfilled by Christ’s church (i.e., Abraham’s true spiritual seed), which includes people “*from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” in the world (**Rev 5:9; 7:9**).

b. *The “land” promise.* “The land was a concrete expression of God’s promise. As such, it was only a pointer to ‘the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God’ (Hebrews 11:10). Taking possession of the land did not constitute the final Sabbath rest, but was a foretaste of it (Hebrews 4:8-11). . . . Prosperity in the land was to be an index of Israel’s faithfulness (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). Exile and loss of the land would result from continued disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-29:28). These arrangements prefigured the inheritance of the new heaven and new earth, which we receive now on the basis of Christ’s obedience, not our own (1 Peter 1:4).” (Poythress 1991: 106, 72)

(1) In the NT the “land” is universalized. Since Christ’s church comprises people “*from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” (**Rev 5:9; 7:9**), **Rom 4:13** expands the “land” promise to include Abraham and his descendants as “*heir of the world.*” In **Rom 4:13** the word for “world” is the Greek word *kosmos*. “The apostle apparently selects *kosmos* for its global (at least, and potentially universe-wide) connotation in preference over *ge*, used in the ancient accounts of the Abrahamic covenant (e.g., Gen. 12:1; 13:15 LXX). Since *ge* can refer to a bounded ‘land,’ although it does sometimes encompass the whole ‘earth’ (Gen. 1:1 LXX), Paul makes explicit that God’s promise of a homeland to Abraham the believer and his children by faith, whether circumcised or not, is *world-wide*, not confined to even the widest borders of the ‘land’ once occupied by Israel.” (Johnson 2007: 284n.24) When Paul quotes the command to “*honor your father and mother . . . so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth*” (**Eph 6:2-3**), he “modifies the original Old Testament form of the promise by omitting the phrase, ‘that the Lord your God is giving you,’ a phrase referring to the

land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 5:16). By omitting this specification, Paul declares that now in Christ the promise applies to any land . . . What was once a blessing promised to God's people in the particular land of Canaan, given by God as a gift, is now promised to God's people living anywhere on the earth, which was given by God as a gift." (Holwerda 1995: 102)

(2) The NT reinterprets the OT physical Canaan (which had been promised to Abraham) as a figure of the true "land," i.e., the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem (Heb 11:8-16; Revelation 21-22). The OT picture of the "mountain of God" (see, e.g., Isa 56:7) was a "shadow" or "copy" using picture or physical language to denote the greater living and spiritual reality of Christ Himself (Col 2:16-17; Heb 8:1-10:22). In Christ we have "not come to a mountain that can be touched . . . but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb 12:18, 22; 13:14). Heb 11:8-16 even makes clear that Abraham himself was not looking for a physical land but a spiritual one: "for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb 11:10); and "but as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one" (Heb 11:16). Paul made the same point in Gal 4:21-31, where he said that the physical Mount Sinai and physical Jerusalem were actually in slavery but "the Jerusalem above" is free and "she is our mother." Significantly, "Paul not only applied to the heavenly Jerusalem an Old Testament text (Isa. 54:1 in Gal. 4:27) which had originally applied to the earthly Jerusalem; he also denied that the latter was in any way connected to the 'Jerusalem above' (Walker 1996: 131). Similarly, in Matt 5:14 when Jesus referred to "a city on a hill," his saying may "refer to OT prophecies about the time when Jerusalem or the mountain of the Lord's house, or Zion, would be lifted up before the world, the nations streaming to it" (Carson 1984: 139-40). There is no definite article ("the") before "city," so the reference is not certain, but "if valid it insists that Jesus' disciples constitute the true locus of the people of God, the outpost of the consummated kingdom, and the means of witness to the world—all themes central to Matthew's thought" (Ibid.: 140).

(3) The NT further reinterprets the "land" promise to refer to the believers' spiritual or salvation rest. The heart of the land promise was Israel's "rest" from all of its enemies and full provision for all of its needs (see Deut 12:9-11; 25:19; Josh 1:23; Ps 95:10-11). "A literal understanding of the promise in Genesis 17:8 [regarding the land] would in fact commit us to the view that circumcision is still required of God's people (Genesis 17:9-14). But Paul won the argument against that view in Galatians and at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15)!" (Travis 1982: 134) Consequently, Heb 3:7-4:11 transforms the meaning of the promise of the "land" given in the Abrahamic Covenant and equates it with our salvation rest. With respect to the promise of the land, Heb 3:7-11, 15, 4:3, 5, 7 quote from Ps 95:7-11 and allude to Num 14:23 and Deut 1:34-35 where "entering God's rest" is equated with entering the promised land of Canaan. However, Heb 3:11; 4:3, 5 also quote that part of Ps 95:11 which says, "they shall not enter my rest." Heb 4:9-11 concludes by saying that there is a rest that we should be diligent to enter. "These Scriptures [i.e., Heb 3:7-4:11] seem to be in direct conflict [with Josh 21:43-45] until we take into account the way *rest* and *land* are being interpreted in Hebrews chapters 3 and 4. The wilderness generation in the book of Exodus was not allowed to 'enter God's rest,' meaning that they were not allowed to enter the Promised Land. This is understood in Hebrews 3 to mean that they did not obtain salvation. Joshua, however, *did* take the Israelites into the Promised Land and they were given rest from their physical enemies! But the author of Hebrews is pointing past a physical fulfillment concerning physical land and rest from war into a spiritual rest. The promise of Canaan as an everlasting possession is finally and ultimately fulfilled with the everlasting possession of our eternal salvation." (Lehrer 2006: 36)

c. *The "blessing" promise.* "Through Jesus God has done exactly what he had promised Abraham (Gen. 12:3) and later reiterated through the prophets; namely, extending blessing to all the nations of the earth" (Williamson 2007: 190). In Acts 3:25-26 Peter quotes the "blessing" promise given to Abraham in Gen 22:18 and applies it to all who are saved by faith in Christ, declaring, "It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be

blessed. For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.” In **Gal 3:8-9, 14** Paul quotes the “blessing” promise of **Gen 12:3** but explains that “*the blessing of Abraham*” is our *justification through faith* which is only found “*in Christ Jesus.*” Thus, as with the “seed” promise and the “land” promise the “blessing” was always intended to be fulfilled not in a “physical” way but spiritually in Christ.

B. The Davidic Covenant is fulfilled in Christ and the church

2 Sam 7:1-17 contains the “Davidic Covenant” in which God promised to raise up David’s seed after him and “*establish the throne of his kingdom forever*” (**2 Sam 7:12-13, 16**; see also **Ps 89:29, 36-37**). The Davidic Covenant refined the Abrahamic Covenant and specified, in part, how God was going to fulfill his promises to Abraham. As a result, the two covenants are linked. That was indicated in **Jer 33:23-26**, which connects the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. In fact, Mary’s Magnificat (**Luke 1:46-55**) and Zacharias’ prophecy (**Luke 1:67-79**) “collapse the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants together into one. . . . And in the progressive discovery of the unfolding narrative, readers catch that Gabriel’s promise about Jesus on the throne of David is grounded in God’s promise to Abraham” (Brawley 1995: 20). “Two key events, above all, are seen as the preparation for the coming of Jesus. These are the covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the reign of David. Three people, Abraham, David, and Jesus, bind the saving purposes and acts of God into a single great work of salvation. The whole history of Israel is thus caught up into the redemptive revelation of God, which climaxes in Jesus Christ.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 56)

This pivotal linkage of Abraham, David, and Jesus is seen in many ways. Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus “summarizes its structure as taking us from Abraham to David, from David to the exile, and from the exile to Christ (Matt. 1:17). . . . When we come to Peter’s first gospel sermon we find his focus is mainly from David to Christ [**Acts 2:22-36**]. Paul’s sermon at Antioch alludes first to Abraham, moves through salvation history to David, and then jumps from David to Christ (Acts 13:17-23). . . . Paul’s summary of the gospel in Romans 1:1-4 reinforces this understanding. We gain from these passages a basic structure in the proclamation of the gospel. There is a starting point with Abraham involving the history of his descendants, climaxing with David. Then we move to the descendant of David in whom it all comes to fruition, namely, Jesus of Nazareth. . . . The reason Matthew and Paul can leap from David to Jesus is that the sum total of prophetic expectation is the coming of the glorious kingdom foreshadowed in David’s kingdom. The fulfillment is seen to be through the literal descendant of David who comes to save and then to reign over the kingdom.” (Goldsworthy 2000: 89, 108)

1. Jesus’ genealogy and birth indicate that he fulfills the Davidic Covenant.

a. *The angel Gabriel’s announcement.* Even before Jesus was born the angel Gabriel alluded to **2 Sam 7:12-13** and **Isa 9:6-7**, and said that Jesus would fulfill the Davidic Covenant when he told Mary that Jesus “*will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end*” (**Luke 1:31-33**). Thus, Matthew begins his gospel by describing Jesus as “*the son of David, the son of Abraham*” (**Matt 1:1**).²⁷ The term “*son of David*” is a Messianic term (see **Matt 22:42**; **Mark 12:35**). Others who recognized Jesus’ power and uniqueness applied the term “*Son of David*” to Him (**Matt 9:27**; **12:23**; **15:22**; **20:30-31**; **21:9**; **Mark 10:47-48**; **Luke 18:38-39**). Jesus applied the term to Himself (**Mark 12:35-37**). “By healing the blind man from Jericho who addressed him as the Son of David, Jesus publicly acknowledged this role” (Goppelt 1982: 87).

b. *The “father-son” promise of the Davidic Covenant.* The promise “*I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me*” (**2 Sam 7:14**) is applied to Jesus in **Heb 1:5**. In light of **2 Sam 7:14**, the phrase “*Son of God*” was a messianic phrase denoting the promised Davidic king. Thus, to indicate fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, Jesus frequently is called the “*Son of God*” (**Matt 4:3, 6**; **8:29**; **26:63**; **27:40, 54**; **Mark 1:1**; **3:11**; **15:39**; **Luke 1:35**; **3:38**; **4:3, 9, 41**; **John 1:34, 49**; **11:27**; **20:31**; **Acts 8:37**; **9:20**; **Rom 1:4**; **2 Cor 1:19**; **Gal 2:20**; **Eph 4:13**; **Heb 4:14**; **6:6**; **7:3**; **10:29**; **1 John 3:8**; **4:15**; **5:5, 10, 12, 13, 20**). Jesus also referred to Himself as the “*Son of God*” (**Matt 26:63-64**; **27:43**; **Mark 14:61-62**; **Luke 22:70**; **John 3:18**; **5:25**; **10:36**; **11:4**; **19:7**; **Rev 2:18**).

c. *Micah’s prophecy.* Micah prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (**Mic 5:2**). In fulfillment of Micah’s prophecy, Jesus was born in Bethlehem (**Mic 5:2**; **Matt 2:1-6**;

²⁷ “Many have suggested that Matthew’s schematic division of Jesus’ genealogy into three sets of fourteen (1:17) may also contain a hint of its Davidic character since the numerical value of David’s name in Hebrew (the consonants *d*, *w*, and *d*) is fourteen ($d = 4$, $w = 6$)” (Holwerda 1995: 33n.10).

John 7:42), where David also was from (**Ruth 4:11, 22; 1 Sam 16:1-13**). Luke carefully records that Joseph (Jesus' putative father) was "*of the house and family of David,*" and that Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, was "*the city of David*" (**Luke 2:4**).

2. The NT portrays Jesus' life as that of the promised Davidic king. In **Isa 11:1-10** the prophet foretold that "*a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him.*"²⁸ **Jer 23:5** says that the "*righteous branch*" whom the Lord "*will raise up for David*" will "*reign as a king*" (see also **Jer 30:9**). The NT writers stress the fact that Jesus was "*a descendant of David*" (**John 7:42; Acts 13:22-23; Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8**). Jesus Himself asserts both His Davidic authority and lineage (**Rev 3:7; 5:5; 22:16**). In **Rom 15:12** Paul quotes **Isa 11:10** and applies it to Jesus Christ and the gathering of the Gentiles into the church. Jesus' position as the foretold Davidic king of Israel is seen during each stage of His earthly life and now in His resurrection glory.

a. *Jesus' early life.* The magi who came from the east after Jesus' birth knew this from having read the OT (see **Matt 2:1-6**). Their question was, "*Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him*" (**Matt 2:2**).

b. *Jesus' baptism and transfiguration.* **Matt 3:16** and **John 1:32** both apply **Isa 11:2** to Jesus at His baptism where John the Baptist saw "*the Spirit of God descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.*" At Jesus' baptism and transfiguration the Father's declaration, "*You are my beloved son, in you I am well-pleased*" (**Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22**) echoes **Ps 2:7**. **Psalm 2** is a messianic psalm, and "the immediately preceding verses of that psalm had been concerned with the theme of the Davidic kingship in Jerusalem" (Walker 1996: 2). In **Acts 13:32-33** Paul explicitly applies **Ps 2:7** to Jesus in His resurrection. Just as David had been anointed by Samuel before being recognized as the true king of Israel, so "Jesus' baptism was his enthronement as the true Davidic king over Jerusalem. . . . When Mark later recounts the actual arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem, these themes return to the surface—of Jesus as the true Davidic 'King' (10:47-48; 11:10; 12:35) and as the 'Lord' (11:3)." (Ibid.) The same configuration of Jesus, Elijah [now with the actual Elijah present, not John the Baptist], and the Father's announcing "*this is my beloved son, with whom I am well-pleased*" that had been present at Jesus' baptism, also occurs at Jesus' transfiguration (**Matt 17:1-13; Mark 9:1-13; Luke 9:28-36**).

c. *The beginning of Jesus' ministry.* When Nathanael first met Jesus he said, "*Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel*" (**John 1:49**).

d. *Jesus' ministry in Galilee.* When Jesus began his ministry in Galilee, **Matt 4:14-16** places it in the light of fulfilled prophecy by quoting **Isa 9:1-2** ("*The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali . . . saw a great light*"). "Matthew proclaims a twofold connection between this prophecy and Jesus. First, the prophecy promises light and salvation to the people living *in Galilee*. Second, the context of Isaiah 9:1f. promises that this salvation will be brought by the promised Son of David, who will establish the eternal kingdom [**Isa 9:7**]. Thus that Jesus ministered in Galilee is not noted just as a matter of geography but also as a revelation that the zeal of Yahweh is now at work in history establishing the rule of justice and righteousness of the promised Davidic kingdom (Isaiah 9:6f.)." (Holwerda 1995: 49)

e. *Jesus' entry into Jerusalem for the last time.* **Zeph 3:8-20** is an oracle of judgment and salvation. It ends with a new community ("*the remnant of Israel*"—**Zeph 3:12-13**) and "*the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst*" (**Zeph 3:14-17**). He will usher in peace and joy "*on my holy mountain*" (**Zeph 3:11, 18-20**). **Zech 9:8-17** gives a similar oracle of the salvation of Israel. The king is described as "*coming to you . . . humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey*" (**Zech 9:9**). When Jesus entered Jerusalem the final time, all four Gospels interpret that as the coming of the prophesied Davidic king (**Matt 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-16**). **Mark 11:10** explicitly says, "*Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David.*" Matthew and John combine quotations from **Isa 62:11**, **Zeph 3:16**, and **Zech 9:9** to affirm that Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the King of Israel entering Jerusalem (**Matt 21:1-5; John 12:12-16**).

f. *Jesus' trial and death.* Jesus Himself confirmed that He was the "*King of the Jews*" (**Matt**

²⁸ "The best illustration of an application of the words of the OT, borrowed for a new situation is Matthew 2:23: 'and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene.'" Apparently, Matthew is referring to Isaiah 11:1, where the word for 'Branch' is *nezer*. By assonance [similarity of sounds], *nezer* became 'Nazarene.' Matthew must have had a twinkle in his eye as he set forth that pun, a literary device that the prophets loved to employ." (Kaiser 1995: 35)

27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3). In **John 18:33-37**, however, while confirming that He was, indeed, a king, Jesus also indicated that the nature of His kingdom was not the physical, earthly kingdom that most of the people were expecting or assuming. When He was crucified, a sign was placed over Him declaring that He was the “*King of the Jews*” (**Matt 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19-20**; see also **Matt 27:42; Mark 15:32; Luke 23:37; John 19:21-22**). g. *Jesus’ resurrection*. In **Acts 2:29-36** Peter quoted the Davidic Covenant that “*God had sworn an oath to seat one of [David’s] descendants on his throne*” (**Acts 2:30**; cf. **Ps 132:11**) and also quoted **Ps 16:10** that God “*will not allow your holy one to undergo decay*” (**Acts 2:27, 31**). He then said that those prophecies were not referring to David because “*he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day*” (**Acts 2:29**). Instead, those prophecies “*looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of Christ*” (**Acts 2:31**). Additionally, all of the everlasting promises, blessings, and mercies shown to David were summarized by Isaiah’s phrase “*the sure mercies of David*” (**Isa 55:3**). The essential promise and blessing to David was “*Your house and your kingdom shall endure before me forever; your throne shall be established forever*” (**2 Sam 7:16**). In **Acts 13:34** Paul quotes the LXX [i.e., the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible; also known as the Septuagint] of **Isa 55:3** and says that the promise of “*the holy and sure blessings of David*” have been fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus. Thus, Christ’s resurrection from the dead is the way that God fulfilled his promise to establish David’s throne forever.

3. Jesus alluded to Himself as David’s “greater son” on more than one occasion.

a. *When Jesus’ disciples picked heads of grain on the Sabbath* (**Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5**). When Jesus’ disciples were accused by the Pharisees of breaking the Sabbath by picking and eating heads of grain while they were walking through a field, Jesus cites **1 Sam 21:1-6**, where David and his followers ate the consecrated “bread of the Presence” from the Tabernacle. Jesus noted the illegality of what David did (it “*is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone*”). Jesus’ point is not that David’s action justifies what the disciples did (“it is not suggested that the example of David makes it legitimate for any hungry Israelite to eat the shewbread, or to harvest grain on the Sabbath” [Beare 1960: 134]). Nor is He simply asserting the priority of human needs over requirements of the law (in this case there is no claim that the disciples were starving or otherwise in need). Nor is He simply saying that the Scripture allows greater leniency than do the Pharisees. Instead, Jesus is making a Messianic claim: “A more satisfactory view can be attained when the emphases in the text itself are noted: 1. all three narratives strongly highlight, with awkward insertions, the relation of David and his followers; 2. all three narratives conclude with a claim of Christological authority over the Sabbath; and 3. Matthew adds immediately after the reference to 1 Samuel 21 an explicitly typological appeal to the OT [i.e., **Matt 12:5-6**]. Taken together, these factors suggest that the point of the allusion is to set up a typological relationship between David and Jesus: if David, along with his followers, has the right to break the law, David’s ‘greater Son’ and his followers have an even greater right.” (Moo 1984: 8; see also Beare 1960: 134)

b. *After the triumphal entry into Jerusalem when Jesus was debating with the Pharisees* (**Matt 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44**). Jesus asked the Pharisees what they thought about the Christ: “*Whose son is he?*” They responded that he is “*the son of David.*” Christ then quoted **Ps 110:1** which says, “*The Lord said to my Lord.*” He then asked, “*If David [who wrote the psalm] then calls him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?*” Jesus was pointing to Himself as the Messiah, David’s “greater son,” and that He was divine (see Goppelt 1982: 83 [“The term ‘Lord’ (*kurios*) makes him equal with God”]). The writers of the NT understood what Jesus was saying. **Ps 110:1** became a key text in the NT (there are 21 quotations or allusions to it in most of the NT writings). The importance of this to the early Christian writers, especially given their own context of Jewish monotheism, was profound. “[**Ps 110:1**] could, for example, be read to mean simply that the Messiah is given a position of honour as a favoured subject beside the divine throne, where he sits inactively awaiting the inauguration of his rule on earth. This is how some of the rabbis later read it. It is quite clear, however, that early Christians read it differently: as placing Jesus on the divine throne itself, exercising God’s own rule over all things.” (Bauckham 1998: 29)

4. Jesus’ resurrection shows that he is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. Paul’s major speech in **Acts 13:16-41** concerns how Christ is the promised savior, a descendant of David (**Acts 13:22-23**). His central point is that God fulfilled his promise to David and to Israel by raising Jesus from the dead (**Acts 13:30-37**). Throughout his address, Paul’s words parallel the wording of the Davidic Covenant in **2**

Samuel 7, particularly as phrased in the Septuagint (see Goldsmith 1968: 321-22). In **Acts 13:34**, Paul points out that Christ has been raised from the dead and therefore will “*no longer return to decay.*” Because of that, Paul quotes or paraphrases **Isa 55:3**, “*I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David,*” which “refers to the covenant promise to David” and is connected with the “holy one” of **Ps 16:10** [15:10, LXX] (Ibid.: 323-24). In other words, “Isa 55:3 is cited to show how God has fulfilled the promises of II Sam 7. . . . II Sam 7:15a and 16a are fulfilled in the fact that Jesus is now incorruptible. . . . The complex of OT citations in Acts 13:33-37 is not a random selection, but one carefully conceived on linguistic and theological grounds to show the Jews *how* God fulfilled his promise to David in II Sam 7—namely, by raising Jesus from the dead.” (Ibid.: 324)

5. Jesus has now ascended to, is sitting on, and is reigning from, the “throne of David.” Before He was born, the angel Gabriel promised Mary that the Lord God would give Jesus “*the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end*” (**Luke 1:32-33**). After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples that “*all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth*” (**Matt 28:18**). It was at His ascension, however, that the final aspect of the Davidic Covenant was fulfilled—the true “seed” of David, the Son of God sat down on the “throne of David” where He is reigning now with all power (see **Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Eph 1:20-23; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 1 Pet 3:21-22; Rev 1:5; 3:21**). On the Day of Pentecost Peter explicitly explained how Jesus fulfilled the Davidic Covenant through His resurrection and ascension (**Acts 2:22-36**). Peter relates by quotation and allusion **2 Samuel 7** and **Psalms 16:8-11; 110:1**, and **132:11** to the effect that “*being seated on David’s throne is linked to being seated at God’s right hand.* In other words, Jesus’ resurrection-ascension to God’s right hand is put forward by Peter as a fulfillment of the Davidic covenant” (Bock 1992: 49, *emph. in orig.*).

6. Paul alludes to **2 Sam 7:14** in **2 Cor 6:18** and applies the Davidic Covenant to the church. Significantly, Paul changes the wording of the promise God made concerning David’s son Solomon (“*I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me*”) to “*I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me.*” That demonstrates that the Davidic Covenant extended far beyond David and Solomon and finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and the church.

C. *The New Covenant is fulfilled in Christ and the church*

Jer 31:31-34 had promised a New Covenant “*with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.*” The New Covenant would be an everlasting covenant in which God would write his law in His people’s hearts, His people would truly know the Lord, and He would forgive their sins and remember them no more (see also **Jer 32:38-40; 50:4-5; Ezek 11:14-20; 36:24-32; 37:15-28**).²⁹

1. At the Last Supper Jesus explicitly stated that He was inaugurating the New Covenant in His blood (**Luke 22:20**; see **1 Cor 11:25**). “The allusions to both the forgiveness anticipated by Jeremiah (Matt. 26:28; Jer. 31:34) and the blood associated with the establishment of the original Mosaic covenant (Luke 22:20; Exod. 24:7) further underline that Jesus understood his death as the inauguration of the new covenant” (Williamson 2007: 184). Indeed, “In so many of his [the writer of Hebrews] references to the ‘new’ or ‘better’ covenant, it is the blood of Jesus that is stressed by our writer (10:29, 12:24, 13:20). He interprets the oracle of Jeremiah in priestly and sacrificial terms because he views the Old Covenant in those terms and sees the work of Christ as *the reality towards which the cult and the prophecy were both pointing.*” (Peterson 1979: 77) The covenant was confirmed and finalized on the cross (**Heb 9:12-17**). It was ratified when Jesus rose from the dead, then ascended to heaven and sat down on the throne with the Father (**Heb 10:11-18**). Thus, “He is not simply the mediator of God’s New Covenant; he is the incarnation of it” (Goppelt 1982: 116).

2. Although in its form as originally given to Jeremiah the New Covenant was “with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,” as is true with the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants, the NT affirms that the New Covenant actually is fulfilled in Christ and the church, not with the physical nation(s) of Israel and Judah.

a. *When Jesus initiated the New Covenant at the Last Supper, his reference to “the” New Covenant could only refer to the New Covenant promised by Jeremiah because **Jer 31:31** is the only place where the expression “New Covenant” had been mentioned in Scripture prior to Jesus’ reference to it at the Last Supper.* Thus, the New Covenant applies to all those who are

²⁹ **Ezek 11:14-20** speaks of the return of Israel from exile but uses New Covenant language (“*I will give them one heart and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.*”). Thus, the return from exile to the land is itself a “type” of the New Covenant.

believers in Christ (i.e., the church), whether Jew or Gentile (as Paul makes clear when he quotes Jesus' words to the largely Gentile church at Corinth in **1 Cor 11:25**).³⁰

b. **Hebrews 8-10** specifically apply the New Covenant to Christ and the church. **Heb 8:8-12**, the longest OT quote in the NT, quotes the New Covenant of **Jer 31:31-34** in full (including the reference to “*the house of Israel and the house of Judah*”). The rest of **Hebrews 8-10** apply the New Covenant to the church. It is quoted again at **Heb 10:16-17**. **Heb 10:15-18** applies the New Covenant to “us” [i.e., Christians, the church]. **Heb 8:6, 9:15, and 12:24** all state that Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant. The fact that he “is” (present tense) the mediator shows that the New Covenant is now in effect. **Heb 9:12-17** points out that Christ's blood confirmed and finalized the New Covenant. **Heb 8:13** points out that the New Covenant has made the first covenant (i.e., the Old, or Mosaic Covenant [see **Heb 8:9**]) obsolete.³¹ **Heb 10:9** similarly says that “*He takes away the first in order to establish the second.*” “The point is supported by the fact that the New Covenant is called an everlasting covenant [**Isa 55:3; 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26**] whereas the term ‘everlasting’ is never used of the Sinai [Mosaic] covenant” (Gentry 2010: 38; see also *ibid.*: 43n.33, “Nowhere is the Sinai covenant called a ‘permanent’ covenant”). The whole argument of **Hebrews 8-10** is that the Mosaic Covenant, the temple, priesthood, law, and the entire Israelite sacrificial system, were simply the “symbol” (**Heb 9:9**), or “copies” (**Heb 9:23-24**), or “shadow” (**Heb 10:1**; see also **Col 2:16-17**) of the “*better covenant*” which is based on “*better promises*” (**Heb 8:6**): i.e., the true and permanent reality found in Christ and the New Covenant.

c. *Paul applies the New Covenant to the church.* In **2 Cor 3:5-6** (written to the largely Gentile church in Corinth) Paul says that “*God . . . made us . . . servants of a new covenant.*” The entire argument of **2 Corinthians 3** contrasts the Mosaic Covenant with the New Covenant: (1) It is the difference between the letter and the Spirit (**2 Cor 3:3, 6, 17-18**). (2) The first is the ministry of death and condemnation; the second is life, hope, liberty, and Spirit (**2 Cor 3:6-9, 12, 17**). (3) It is the difference between something written on tablets of stone and the writing on human hearts (**2 Cor 3:2-3, 7**). (4) Each has its own glory, but the second has an incomparably greater glory (**2 Cor 3:7-11, 18**). (5) The first fades away, but the second remains forever (**2 Cor 3:7, 11, 13**). (6) The first is veiled, but in the second the veil is taken away (**2 Cor 3:13-16, 18**). Consequently, only the New Covenant gives us boldness and transforms us into the image of Christ (**2 Cor 3:2-3, 12, 18**). Similarly, in **2 Cor 4:3-6** Paul “identifies the ‘new covenant’ as the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-6), and the Christian community as those in whom the blessings of the new covenant have been realized (2 Cor. 3:3; cf. Jer. 31:32-33; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26-27). . . . Clearly, these verses unpack the life-giving, liberating and more glorious

³⁰ Strictly speaking, one might say that the New Covenant was inaugurated with Israel and Judah in the sense that all of the disciples present during the Last Supper were Israelites. Nevertheless, the NT makes abundantly clear that the New Covenant applies to all Christians (i.e., the church), regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Since it is only the New Covenant which forgives sins (i.e., through Christ), the New Covenant is the only way by which Israel can be saved (see **Rom 11:26-27**).

³¹ **Heb 8:8-12** quotes in full the New Covenant passage of **Jer 31:31-34**. **Heb 8:13** then goes on to comment, “*When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.*” The mere designation of a “new” covenant by Jeremiah shows that “within the prophetic perspective, which focuses on the better promises of the new covenant (v. 6), the old is clearly seen as outmoded and destined to be discarded. The shadow of its impending abolition already lies upon it.” (Hughes 1977: 302) Nevertheless, more may be implied by the last sentence of **8:13**. “This statement that the old covenant is near to disappearing probably implies the continuance of the cultic ritual at the time the author writes. From his perspective that ritual is outmoded and pointless and therefore cannot last long. If the author writes in the early sixties, he may well be thinking of the prophecy of Jesus about the fall of Jerusalem (Mark 13:2). In any event, had he written after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, he could hardly have avoided referring explicitly to the historical confirmation of his theological argument.” (Hagner 1990: 124) Hagner's point is reinforced in that, although the date when Hebrews was written cannot be established with certainty, much evidence supports a date before AD 70 (O'Brien 2010: 15-20). Further, the last phrase of **8:13** (“*ready to disappear*”) in Greek is *eggus aphanismou*. “Though the word *aphanismos* occurs only here in the NT, it is used frequently in the LXX (56x) to describe the physical destruction of Israel (Je. 12:11; Ezk. 6:14; Mi. 7:13; Joel 2:13), Jerusalem (Je. 19:8) and the Temple (Dn. 9:26; Jdt. 4:12). It is never used to denote a gradual disappearance as suggested by most English renderings of Hebrews 8:13 (e.g. ‘ready to disappear’ NASB). To the contrary, it always denotes the demise of persons or things by violent means usually due to God's judgement. The author's point is that the superiority of the New Covenant would soon be sealed by the complete destruction of the Old Covenant including its priests, sacrifices and Temple.” (Gleason 2002: 108-09)

‘ministry of the Spirit’ (2 Cor. 3:8) associated with ‘ministers of a new covenant’ (2 Cor. 3:6).” (Williamson 2007: 192, 192n.33) In **Gal 4:21-31** “Abraham’s wives, Hagar and Sarah, are interpreted as representing two different covenants. The first of these (represented by Hagar) is identified as the Mosaic covenant (‘from Mount Sinai . . . in Arabia’ Gal. 4:24-25 ESV). The second covenant (represented by Sarah), while not explicitly identified, is clearly associated with Mount Zion and the promises of the new covenant (Gal. 4:26-27; cf. Isa. 54:1). Thus Hagar represents a covenant of enslavement (to the law), corresponding to ‘the present Jerusalem’ (Gal. 4:25 ESV), whereas Sarah represents a covenant of freedom and promise connected with ‘the Jerusalem above’ (Gal. 4:26 ESV).” (Ibid.: 199)

d. *Because only the New Covenant provides for the forgiveness of sins, and only in Christ can people’s sins be forgiven, forgiveness of sin is central to the Gospel.* The New Covenant is the only one of God’s covenants which provides for the forgiveness of sins. That is accomplished through Christ, “*the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (**John 1:29**; see also **Matt 1:21; Acts 5:31; 1 John 3:5**). Consequently, proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Christ is central to the Gospel (see **Luke 24:44-49; Acts 2:38; 10:43; 13:38-39; 26:15-18**).

3. In **Ezek 36:25-27** God promised to “*sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean,*” and said, “*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh,*” and “*I will put My Spirit within you.*” The Old Covenant could not change people from the inside-out. The Old Covenant was based on external, ritual activities that the people were required to perform. As such, it had a great weakness: it could not change people from the inside-out; it could not change their hearts. **Heb 9:9-10** says that under the Old Covenant “*both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.*” **Heb 7:19, 25; 10:1** also make clear that, “the perfecting of man as a would-be worshiper of God involves the provision of unhindered access to God. Those who sought to draw near to God through the provisions of the Old Covenant were not perfected in this sense because the system was unable to deal effectively with the problem of a guilty conscience (9:9) or ‘consciousness of sin’ [10:2].” (Peterson 1979: 76) Under the Old Covenant people had hearts of stone (**Zech 7:12**). Finally, Moses had prayed, “*Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!*” (**Num 11:29**). Nevertheless, in the OT, the Spirit of God only came upon limited numbers of people, usually those in positions of religious or political authority, in order to perform specific functions (see **Exod 31:3; Num 11:16-29; Judg 3:10; 6:34; 14: 6, 19; 1 Sam 10:1-11; 16:13-14; 19:20-24**).

The New Covenant changes people from the inside-out. Because the New Covenant is based on what Christ has done for us, rather than what we have to do, it does for us what we are unable to do for ourselves. Whereas under the Old Covenant we had unclean consciences, in the New Covenant “*the blood of Christ . . . cleanse(s) your conscience from dead works to serve the living God*” (**Heb 9:14**) and “*has perfected for all time those who are sanctified*” (**Heb 10:14**). “By that cleansing of the conscience Christ consecrates his people to God in the relationship of heart-obedience envisaged by Jeremiah (9:4, 10:10, 22). By dealing decisively with the sin problem Christ has made it possible for those who are called to receive the promised eternal inheritance (9:15).” (Peterson 1979: 81) We now have unhindered access to God and can draw near to Him with confidence (**Heb 4:16**) because Christ has “*entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle*” (**Heb 9:11**), is in the presence of God Himself (**Heb 9:24; 10:12**), and “*always lives to make intercession for [us]*” (**Heb 7:25**). In the New Covenant God removes our hearts of stone and gives us hearts of flesh. **Heb 10:22** alludes to **Ezek 36:25** by speaking of “*having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*”

2 Cor 3:3 also alludes to **Ezek 36:26** when Paul says, “*you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*” Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit who would “*be with you forever*” and who “*will be in you*” (**John 14:16-17**). Beginning on the Day of Pentecost, He has done that. No longer is the Spirit or his gifts limited to the few, but now in the New Covenant God has poured out his Spirit on all of his people, regardless of age, sex, or race (**Acts 2:14-18**; see also **Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19**). Now, “*all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*” (**Rom 8:14**). The Spirit “seals” his people, unlike the case in the OT (**Eph 1:13-14**). “Paul goes even further to state that the Spirit now enables God’s people to do what the Law could never accomplish: ‘in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us’ (Rom. 8:4)” (Burke 2006: 133-34). Thus, “the old covenant inaugurated at Sinai has been superseded by the new covenant predicted in the Old Testament

by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. . . . This general pattern (the replacing of the old covenant with the new) as we have seen, is depicted in Galatians and Romans in terms of the *old epoch of the Law* (Gal. 3/Rom. 7) and the *new epoch of the Spirit* (Gal. 4/Rom. 8). The change of covenants was necessary because no individual could fully keep the stipulations of the old covenant, a fact Israel had repeatedly demonstrated at national and individual levels.” (Ibid.: 132) So profound is the change between what the New Covenant in Christ accomplishes compared to the Old Covenant that **2 Cor 5:17** concludes, “*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*”

III. Jesus is the New, True, Faithful Israel

“If Jesus is the one through whom the [Abrahamic] promise is being fulfilled, then he can lay claim to being Abraham’s true descendant, the one who is what a descendant of Abraham is supposed to be. Jesus, then, is true Israel, the one who does everything that Israel was supposed to do and who is everything that Israel was supposed to be.” (Holwerda 1995: 33) Jesus succeeds where both Adam and Israel failed. Thus, he alone makes possible a new humanity. This is seen in several ways.

A. Jesus recapitulates the history of Israel

1. Jesus and the Exodus. **Matt 2:15** quotes **Hos 11:1**, “*Out of Egypt I called my son,*” and applies it to Jesus. God had first called Israel his “son” at the time of the exodus (**Exod 4:22**—“*Israel is my son, my firstborn*”). Matthew is now showing how OT Israel’s history is being re-enacted by Jesus. Jesus literally re-enacts the exodus from Egypt in **Matt 2:19-21**. “By affirming that Hosea’s words are ‘fulfilled’ in the young Jesus’ return from Egypt with his parents, Matthew is not claiming that Hosea’s words fit Jesus *instead of* Israel but that they fit Jesus *because he is Israel’s fulfillment*” (Johnson 2007: 208). **Hos 11:1-11** both recounts Israel’s exodus and hints at a second exodus because Israel’s disobedience after the first exodus thwarted God’s intention to create a holy people. Although the physical nation returned to the land after the exile in Babylon, it remained under the control of foreign powers, and the “holy nation” never truly existed. By applying **Hos 11:1** to Jesus, “Matthew proclaims not only that Jesus is Israel, God’s beloved Son, but also that the long awaited [second] exodus has begun” (Holwerda 1995: 40). That Jesus was recapitulating Israel’s exodus in his own life extends even to the details that on the Mount of Transfiguration he spoke of his own “*exodus*” [the Greek term translated as “departure”] (**Luke 9:30-31**), and his own death occurred on Passover which marked the beginning of Israel’s exodus from Egypt.
2. Jesus’ baptism. “When Jesus comes to be baptized by John, John immediately sees an inappropriateness in the situation (Matthew 3:13-15). John’s baptism signified washing sin away and was administered to those who acknowledged their sinfulness (3:6). Jesus is sinless and needs no baptism. In comparison to Jesus’ sinlessness, even John himself is a sinner along with the rest, and needs to be baptized (3:14). But Jesus impresses on John the necessity of doing the seemingly inappropriate thing: ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness’ (3:15). Once again the key word *fulfill* occurs. Jesus the sinless One is identifying Himself with the sinful position of His fellow Israelites by being baptized like them. His identification with them here anticipates His complete identification with sinners when He bears their sins on the cross.” (Poythress 1991: 253) Jesus’ baptism also is a re-enactment of the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan River (which is where he was baptized), and entering the land (**Exod 14:13-22; Josh 3:14-17; see Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:31-34**).
3. Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness (**Matt 4:1-2**) are a miniature of the forty years which Israel spent in the wilderness. Just as God led Israel in the wilderness (**Exod 13:17-18, 21**), the Holy Spirit led Jesus in the wilderness (**Luke 4:1**). The temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness (**Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13**) paralleled Israel’s temptations in the wilderness. “In the first temptation and Jesus’ response there are several interesting and significant parallels centering on the common theme of the sonship of both Jesus and the nation of Israel. Both are ‘sons’ (Deut. 8:5; cf. Matt. 4:3, 6); both are ‘led’ (Deut. 8:2; cf. Matt. 4:1); both are taken to the desert/wilderness (Deut. 8:2; cf. Matt. 4:1); and both hunger (Deut. 8:3; cf. Matt. 4:2).” (Burke 2006: 173-74n.55) Where Israel had been dissatisfied with God’s provision of manna (**Num 11:1-6**), Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread (**Matt 4:3; Luke 4:3**). Later, after feeding the 5000, Jesus specifically compared Himself to the manna which Israel had eaten in the wilderness by saying, “*I am the bread that came down out of heaven*” (**John 6:1-14, 41, 48-58**). Where Israel put God to the test at Massah and Meribah demanding proof of His presence and power (**Exod 17:1-7**), Jesus was tempted to jump from the Temple’s pinnacle to force

God to honor His promises (**Matt 4:5-6; Luke 4:9-11**). Where Israel turned from God to a molten calf (**Exod 32:1-6**), and later worshipped Baal (**Hos 2:1-13**), Jesus was tempted to fall down and worship Satan (**Matt 4:8-9; Luke 4:5-7**). Further, Jesus met the temptations by deliberately quoting from Moses' summary of Israel's history in the wilderness (**Deut 8:3; 6:13, 16**). "The selection of three texts from the same short section of the Old Testament indicates that he saw a theological parallel between Israel's experience and his own. Israel had been disciplined 'as a man disciplines his son' (Deuteronomy 8:5), but had not learned the lessons well. Now Jesus, newly declared 'Son of God' at the Jordan, has that sonship tested along similar lines. But where Israel failed, Jesus proves to be a true Son of God. In him Israel's promise is fulfilled." (France 1975: 67)

4. Matthew quotes Jer 31:15 ("A voice is heard in Ramah . . . Rachel weeping for her children") and applies it to Jesus (Matt 2:17-18). Ramah is where the captives of Judah were gathered in chains to be sent to exile in Babylon (see **Jer 40:1**). The significance of Matthew's use of "Rachel weeping" is as follows: "Rachel, the favorite mother of Israel, had died centuries earlier and had been buried on the way from Bethel to Bethlehem-Ephrath, not far from Ramah. As Israel journeys into exile, the prophet 'hears' Rachel weeping over the loss of her children. But the Lord instructs Rachel to stop weeping because 'there is hope for your future' and her children will return (31:16-17). Israel did return from exile, but the oppression of the enemy continued unabated. Therefore, Matthew, like Jeremiah, hears Rachel still weeping over the loss of her children: In Herod's slaughter of the infants the oppression and destruction of Israel still continues. The hope promised to Rachel had not yet been fully realized. Matthew quotes Jeremiah 31:15 not only to establish the continuity of Israel's grief but also to signal the fulfillment of Israel's hope contained in its context. Jesus escapes the slaughter, and therein lies the fulfillment of Israel's hope. Since Jesus is now Israel, Abraham's true seed and God's true Son, God's promise to Rachel of a restored family is now on the way to fulfillment. The hope promised for her future is now being realized. Jesus relives Israel's history and thereby restores Israel." (Holwerda 1995: 42)

B. The NT shows Jesus as a new and greater Moses who delivers people not just from physical bondage but from spiritual slavery to sin and death (John 1:29; Rom 6:3-23)

There are several parallels between Moses and Jesus. Nevertheless, despite the parallels, Jesus is never directly called a new Moses; instead, there is an element of contrast in which Jesus is shown to be incomparably greater than Moses. Thus, Hebrews describes how Christ is like Moses but greater than Moses (**Heb 3:1-6**): Christ "is worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house" (**Heb 3:3**); and whereas "Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant . . . Christ was faithful as a son over his house" (**Heb 3:5-6**).

1. Moses was a precursor of the Messiah. Moses was unique among the prophets, both for the mighty works he did and for the fact that God did not speak to him in visions and dreams but "mouth to mouth" and "face to face" (**Num 12:6-8; Deut 34:10-12**). He prophesied that God would raise up another prophet like him (**Deut 18:15, 18**). Jesus fulfilled that prophecy (**John 1:45; 6:14; Acts 3:20-23; 7:37, 52**). However, Jesus was far greater than Moses. Jesus did greater miracles than Moses, including rising from the dead. And Jesus did not just speak God's words from time to time; instead, he did nothing on his own initiative, but *everything* he did and said was what the Father had him do (**John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10**). The reason is that Jesus did not just speak the words of God but was himself the very Word of God come to earth as a man (**John 1:1, 14**).

2. There are clear parallels between the attempts of Pharaoh and Herod to kill the Hebrew children (Exod 1:15-22; Matt 2:16). Both Pharaoh and Herod were ungodly rulers who were afraid of the rise of a power who might oppose or supplant them (see **Exod 1:8-12; Matt 2:1-3**).

3. There is a parallel between Moses's return to Egypt and Jesus' return from Egypt (Exod 4:19; Matt 2:20). Both Moses and Jesus escaped to another country (**Exod 2:15; Matt 2:13-15**). In both cases they were supernaturally told when to return because those seeking to kill them were dead (**Exod 4:19-20; Matt 2:19-21**).

4. Moses led his people out of slavery in Egypt to a new life of freedom. Jesus led his people out of the far greater slavery to sin, death, and bondage to the law, so that "if you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (**John 8:30-31**).

5. Moses struck the rock in the wilderness and gave the people water (Exod 17:6; Num 20:11; Ps 78:15). In **1 Cor 10:4**, Paul points out that the Israelites really "were drinking from a spiritual rock . . . and the rock was Christ." Although the water that came from the rock Moses struck in the wilderness

gave physical life to the people, Jesus gives the “*living water*” of eternal life (**John 4:10-14; 7:36-39**). The typology does not end there. Moses was not allowed to lead his people into the promised land because he struck the rock a second time to get water rather than speaking to it as God had commanded him (**Num 20:8-12**). Not only was this disobedience to God, but it was misrepresenting the gospel. The reason is that, as the rock, Christ was “struck” with the rod of God’s justice only once, not twice: he made “*one sacrifice for sins for all time*” (**Heb 10:12**; see also **Heb 10:10, 14**).

6. Jesus is compared to the manna which the Lord provided while Moses led Israel in the wilderness (**Exod 16:1-21**). In comparing Himself to the manna the Israelites ate in the wilderness, Jesus said, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. . . . I am the bread of life.*” (**John 6:32, 35**) The manna was physical and temporary. The bread that Jesus gives (Himself) provides eternal life to anyone who eats it (**John 6:48-58**).

7. Just as God gave Moses the Law on the mountain (**Exod 19:20**), so Jesus gave his law on the mountain (**Matt 5:1-2**). Nevertheless, the two are qualitatively different, as the Apostle John says: “*The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ*” (**John 1:17**).

8. Sacrifice and atonement. Although Moses offered to make atonement and sacrifice himself for his people’s sin (**Exod 32:30-32**), Jesus actually made atonement and sacrificed himself for his people’s sin (**Rom 3:23-25; 5:6-8; Heb 9:26-28; 10: 11-12; 1 John 2:2**).

9. Just as Moses’ face shone as he was coming down from Mt. Sinai after having received the Ten Commandments the second time (**Exod 34:29**), so Jesus’ face and garments shone on the mount of transfiguration (**Matt 17:2; Mark 9:2-3; Luke 9:29**). Luke reports that on the mount of transfiguration Jesus, Moses, and Elijah were discussing Jesus’ own “*exodus*” [the Greek term translated as “departure”] (**Luke 9:30-31**).

10. Just as Moses was a mediator between God and Israel (**Exod 20:19; Deut 5:5; Gal 3:19**), so Jesus is “*the one mediator between God and men*” (**1 Tim 2:5**). Although Moses spoke God’s words to the people, Jesus is the very Word of God (**John 1:1, 14; Rev 19:13**).

11. At the Last Supper Jesus said, “*This is My blood of the covenant*” (**Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24**). That echoes Moses’ words in **Exod 24:8**. The Mosaic covenant did not forgive sins or give eternal life; the New covenant which Jesus inaugurated in his blood does forgive sins and give eternal life.

12. Jesus compared his death to Moses. “*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up*” (**John 3:14**; see **Num 21:9**). To look to the bronze serpent in the wilderness spared a person from physical death; to look to Jesus gives one eternal life and saves a person from the second death.

13. The dead bodies of both Moses and Jesus cannot be found. **Deut 34:6** says that Moses was buried in the land of Moab, “*but no man knows his burial place to this day.*” Jesus also was buried, but his body also cannot be found because he is risen! As the angel told Mary Magdalene, “*He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying*” (**Matt 28:6**).

C. The NT applies terms and titles for OT Israel to Jesus

1. Jesus is God’s true Son. Just as **Exod 4:22** and **Hos 11:1** called Israel “*my son*” the Father confirms that Jesus is God’s true son at Jesus’ baptism (and at the transfiguration), where he calls Jesus “*my beloved son*” (baptism—**Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22**; transfiguration—**Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35**; see also **Matt 4:3; 14:33; Mark 3:11; Luke 1:35; John 1:34, 49; Acts 9:20; Gal 2:22** for Jesus as the “*Son of God*”). The voice from heaven at Jesus’ baptism (“*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased,*” **Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22**), “first of all expresses God’s special approval of the baptism. It is indeed the sign of ‘all righteousness’ being fulfilled. Second, the voice combines the language of Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 42:1; and possibly Genesis 22:2. It shows that the Law (Genesis 22:2), the Prophets (Isaiah 42:1), and the Writings (Psalm 2:7) simultaneously come to focus in Jesus. The language of Jesus being God’s Son is also reminiscent of the earlier quote from Hosea 11:1, where Israel is the son. Israel’s sonship and Isaac’s sonship is now fulfilled in the coming of the true and final Son, the Son in the supreme sense of the word.” (Poythress 1991: 254)

2. Jesus called Himself “*the true vine*” (**John 15:1**). “In the Old Testament the vine is a common symbol for Israel, the covenant people of God (Ps. 80:9-16; Is. 5:1-7; 27:2ff.; Je. 2:21; 12:10ff.; Ezk. 15:1-8; 17:1-21; 19:10-14; Ho. 10:1-2). Most remarkable is the fact that whenever historic Israel is referred to under this figure it is the vine’s failure to produce good fruit that is emphasized, along with the corresponding threat of God’s judgment on the nation. Now, in contrast to such failure, Jesus claims, ‘I am the *true vine*, *i.e.*, the one to whom Israel pointed, the one that brings forth good fruit. . . . The

true . . . vine, then, is not the apostate people, but Jesus himself, and those who are incorporated in him. The theme would prove especially telling to diaspora Jews: if they wish to enjoy the status of being part of God's chosen vine, they must be rightly related to Jesus." (Carson 1991: 513-14)

3. Titles of persons who represent Israel—King, God's Servant, Son of Man—were applied to Jesus.

"Jesus was tried on the charge that he claimed to be 'king of the Jews' (Mark 15:2, 26, 32, etc.). No such claim is recorded, and it is unlikely that Jesus would have used such 'political' language explicitly, though his deliberate enactment of Zechariah 9:9 ('Lo, your king comes to you') when he rode into Jerusalem points that way, and Luke tells us that the crowd so interpreted it (Luke 19:38). But he did make explicit use, of two other Old Testament figures, the Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah [see **Isa 42:1-6; 49:3-6**] and the Son of Man in Daniel 7 [Jesus is called the 'Son of Man' approximately 80 times in the Gospels; it is his most frequent description of Himself], both of which, like the king in Old Testament thought, combine individual and representative features. Just as the king was Israel, so the Servant is addressed as 'Israel', and the Son of Man turns out in the latter part of the chapter to be a figure for 'the saints of the Most High' [**Dan 7:18, 22, 25, 27**]. Jesus' frequent allusions to these two figures suggests that he saw it as his mission to represent Israel, to sum up Israel's ideals in himself." (France 1975: 66-67)

4. Jesus applied Psalms which originally related to the suffering and vindication of Israel to Himself.

"The clearest of these is Psalm 118, quoted by Jesus in Mark 12:10-11 and Matthew 23:39. The rejected and vindicated stone of Psalm 118:22 seems to have referred originally to a dramatic victory of Israel against the odds. Psalms 22, 41 and 42-3 (quoted or alluded to in Mark 15:34; 14:18; 14:34 respectively) are expressed in more individual terms, and may have been used by Jesus as typical expressions of the theme of righteous suffering, but a national reference in such individually worded Psalms is widely agreed." (France 1975: 68)

D. In Jesus the OT promises of the restoration of Israel are fulfilled

The prophets (e.g., **Isaiah 60-62; Jeremiah 30-33; Ezekiel 34-37**) had prophesied the restoration of Israel under the leadership of God's anointed king, who would reign from Jerusalem or Mount Zion. Although the people had returned from the exile in Babylon approximately 500 years before Jesus, "in Jesus' day many, if not most, Jews regarded the exile as still continuing. The people had returned in a geographical sense, but the great prophecies of restoration had not yet come true." (Wright 1996: 126) Thus, restoration was still hoped for by the people in Jesus' day (**Luke 2:25, 38; 19:11; 24:21; Acts 1:6**). In Jesus, those prophecies of restoration are fulfilled (**Luke 1:68**) but in an unexpected way: the new Zion, the restored Israel, is not identified with a place or a nation-state but with the person of Christ and His people.

1. Jesus' ministry was intimately linked with the restoration or redemption of Israel. When Jesus was brought to the Temple to be circumcised, the Holy Spirit came upon a man named Simeon who was "looking for the consolation of Israel" (**Luke 2:25**). That same day, the prophetess Anna began to "speak of Him [i.e., Jesus] to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (**Luke 2:38**). The prophets saw Israel's exile as the result of, or punishment for, her sins (see, e.g., **Jer 2:1-25:11; Ezek 3:1-24:27**). These two passages are parallel. "The receptions of Simeon and Anna are told sequentially, but their combined witness is necessary to complete Luke's narrative effect. Simeon and Anna represent male and female awaiting redemption in Christ, both espouse the same messianic hope (vv. 25, 38), and their joint witness is necessary to establish valid testimony in accordance with Torah (Deut 19:15)." (Edwards 2015: 83) Simeon and Anna were both expressing the eschatological hope of Israel's deliverance by the promised Messiah. "Israel's consolation . . . was a key element in many strands of OT and Jewish eschatology, referring to the hope of deliverance for the nation (Isa. 40:1; 49:13; 51:3; 57:18; 61:2; 2 Bar. 44.7). Later, the rabbis would refer to Messiah as *Menahem* (comforter) because they saw him as the one who would bring this consolation. . . . The phrase ['redemption of Jerusalem'] refers to the redemption of Israel, since the capital stands for the nation. Equivalent to the phrase *consolation of Israel* (2:25), it has OT background in that it refers to God's decisive salvific act for his people (Isa. 40:9; 52:9; 63:4)." (Bock 1994: 238, 253)

Both Simeon and Anna had used phrases concerning Messiah's deliverance of Israel that had nationalistic connotations, but when they saw Jesus their focus was on *him*. Thus, Simeon's remarks concentrate on who Jesus is and what he will do (**Luke 2:30-35**). Anna likewise "continued to speak of *Him*" (**Luke 2:38**). This all indicates that, even before Jesus began his public ministry, the Holy Spirit was revealing that God's plan for the consolation and redemption of Israel was not a political or nationalistic program at all. Instead, the real work of the Messiah was of a fundamentally different and far deeper and broader nature, encompassing "all peoples" including the Gentiles (**Luke 2:31-32**),

designed to bring about the forgiveness of sin and the inauguration of God's true kingdom.

Although it was deeper and broader than the Jews were expecting, God's program in Christ did have national implications for Israel, as N. T. Wright observes: "From the point of view of a first-century Jew, 'forgiveness of sins' could never simply be a private blessing, though to be sure it was that as well. . . . Overarching the situation of the individual was the state of the nation as a whole; and, as long as Israel remained under the rule of pagans, as long as Torah was not observed perfectly, as long as the Temple was not properly restored, so Israel longed for 'forgiveness of sins' as the great, unrepeatable, eschatological and national blessing promised by her god [see, e.g., **Isa 40:1-2; 43:25-44:3; Jer 31:31-34; 33:4-11; Lam 4:22**]." (Wright 1996: 269, 271) Given that context, when John the Baptist, as Jesus' forerunner, preached "*a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*" (**Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3**) and then declared "*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (**John 1:29**), what John was preparing the way for and what Jesus was then offering in His call to "*repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (**Matt 4:17**; see also **Mark 1:15**) and His claim that "*the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins*" (**Matt 9:6; Mark 2:10**), was nothing less than "the redemption for which Israel was longing . . . a new world order, the end of Israel's long desolation, the true and final 'forgiveness of sins', the inauguration of the kingdom of god." (Ibid.: 271-72)

2. **Matt 4:13-17** redefines the prophecy of **Isa 9:1-2** to link it with Jesus. "Matthew links his account of Jesus' first preaching in Galilee with the comment that his sojourn in 'Capernaum by the sea . . . the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali' fulfills the prophecy of Isa 9:1-2: 'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned' (Matt 4:13-16). The original context speaks of a crushed people, defeated by the Assyrian army and carried off into exile (2 Kgs 15:29; 1 Chr 5:26), that is given the promise of a son from the house of David who will bring salvation. Matthew sees this prophecy fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus: he interprets the literal destruction and the political crisis as moral and spiritual darkness, and interprets Jesus' announcement of the dawn of God's kingdom (Matt 4:17) as the fulfillment of the deliverance 'on the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations' (Isa 9:1)." (Schnabel 2002: 43)

3. Jesus identifies John the Baptist with Elijah, who "*is coming and will restore all things*" (**Matt 17:11-13**; see **Mal 4:5-6**). **Isa 40:3-11** and **Mal 3:1** say that the Lord would send his messenger before the Lord came to his people and to his temple. Zacharias (John the Baptist's father) confirmed that by stating that God "*has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant*" (**Luke 1:69**, referring to Jesus). Then in **Luke 1:76** he quoted from **Mal 3:1** in referring to John the Baptist ("*and you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare his ways*"). John the Baptist himself quoted from **Isa 40:3-5** and **Mal 3:1** prior to Jesus' baptism (**Matt 3:3; Mark 1:2-3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23**). Jesus confirms that John the Baptist was the "*messenger*" referred to in the prophecy of **Mal 3:1** (see **Matt 11:7-10; Luke 7:24-27**).³² Thus, John the Baptist and Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of **Isa 40:3-11** and **Mal 3:1**. The messenger who will go before the Lord is specified in **Mal 4:5** which says that God would send "*Elijah the prophet*." John the Baptist is portrayed as having the spirit of Elijah to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord (**Matt 11:14; 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:13-17, 76**). Jesus' identification of John the Baptist with Elijah in **Matt 17:11-13** "made clear that the longed-for age of 'restoration' was now in the process of being effected—but paradoxically through the 'suffering' of the Son of Man" (Walker 1996: 43).

4. Jesus chose 12 disciples (**Matt 10:1-2; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-26**), which alludes to the 12 tribes and symbolizes the restoration of Israel. "Jesus' calling of twelve disciples (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-26; Matt 10:1-2) is highly significant: if Jesus saw Himself as the Messiah, the twelve disciples represent his claim that his ministry initiates the eschatological restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel" (Schnabel 2002: 45). "The very existence of the twelve speaks, of course, of the reconstitution of Israel; Israel had not had twelve visible tribes since the Assyrian invasion in 734 BC, and for Jesus to give twelve followers a place of prominence, let alone to make comments about them sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes [**Matt 19:28; Luke 22:28-30**], indicates pretty clearly that he was thinking in terms of the eschatological restoration of Israel." (Wright 1996: 300) (See also section IV.D.4., below)

5. In connection with the exile, the prophets frequently speak of God "gathering" again the remnant of Israel (**Ps 147:2; Isa 11:12; 27:12; 49:5; 56:8; Jer 6:9; 31:10; Ezek 11:17; 28:25; 34:13; 37:21; 38:8; 39:28; Hos 1:11; Mic 2:12; 4:6; Zeph 3:18-20; Zech 10:8, 10**). Jesus claimed to "gather" Israel (**Matt 3:12; 12:30; 13:30, 47-48; 18:20; 22:10; 23:37; 24:31; Mark 13:27; Luke 3:17; 11:23; 13:34**).

³² Jesus himself is "*the messenger of the covenant*" referred to in the latter part of **Mal 3:1**.

6. Ezekiel speaks of God restoring Israel as a “shepherd” (Ezek 34:1-31; 37:24). Jesus said, “*I am the good shepherd*” (John 10:11, 14; see also Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27). He is called the “great shepherd” in Heb 13:20 and the “chief shepherd” in 1 Pet 5:4. The context of Ezekiel 34 is the restoration of Israel. In that context, God emphasizes how the shepherd cares for his sheep (Ezek 34:11-16). When Christ said, “*The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep*” (John 10:11, 15), he was demonstrating the ultimate fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy. In Ezekiel, God also said, “*I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David*” (Ezek 34:23). “This does not mean that David will be reincarnated as king once again. Instead, the Messiah will come in David’s line and fulfill everything that has been promised to him. He is called the new David (Eze 34:23; 37:24; Hos 3:5).” (Kaiser 1995: 189) R. T. France says, “When he announced that his mission was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10) he was, surely consciously, echoing Ezekiel’s description of God as the shepherd who will rescue his scattered flock (Ezekiel 34, esp. verses 16, 22)” (France 1975: 57). Given that background, this means, among other things, that in Jesus the restoration of Israel has been fulfilled, although not in the physical nation-state way that most Jews probably were anticipating.

7. Jesus’ healings and other mighty works were signs that Israel was being restored and the kingdom of God was being inaugurated. “The prophecies of return from exile, and of the return of YHWH to Zion, saw these events as being marked by the dramatic restoration of creation, focused on the healing of the sick [e.g., Isa 35:1-10: “*Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.*”]: . . . We can say with confidence that Jesus intended his ‘mighty works’ of healing to be understood symbolically as a fulfillment of this expectation. . . . Thus it was that, when the eschatological prophet John was puzzled by what Jesus was doing, and perhaps by what he was not doing, Jesus replied by alerting John’s messengers to the symbolic value of his characteristic praxis [practice; action]: ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind are seeing, the lame are walking, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are being raised up and the poor are hearing the good news. And blessed is the one who is not offended at me’ [Matt 11:4-6].” (Wright 1996: 428-29)³³

Similarly, “Jesus exercises power over the natural order, bringing it into a new harmony with itself and with the divine saving purpose only previously seen at odd moments such as the crossing of the Red Sea” (Ibid.: 193-94). Such events include the extraordinary catch of fish (Luke 5:4-11; John 21:1-14); the stilling of storms (Matt 8:23-27; 14:32; Mark 4:35-41; 6:51; Luke 8:22-25); walking on water (Matt 14:22-31; Mark 6:45-50; John 6:16-21); the miraculous feeding of thousands (Matt 14:13-21; 15:32-38; Mark 6:32-44; 8:1-9; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-14); turning water into wine (John 2:1-11); and cursing the fig tree (Matt 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14, 20-21). “In all of these, as in the ‘mighty works’ as a whole, what was ‘seen’ within the first-century Jewish worldview would be the restoration of creation, which Israel had expected to happen when her god became her king and she was vindicated by him. . . . In particular, the exorcisms carry with them the haunting word: ‘If I by the finger of god cast out demons, then the kingdom of god has come upon you [Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20].’ This evokes the same implicit narrative: Israel’s god will one day become king; the establishment of this kingdom will involve the defeat of the enemy that has held Israel captive; there are clear signs that this is now happening; therefore the kingdom is indeed breaking in. YHWH really is becoming king; Israel really is being liberated.” (Ibid.: 194, 228).

8. After His resurrection, Jesus made it clear to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:21, 25-27) that the “restoration of Israel” was a spiritual restoration based upon faith in Him, not a physical or political restoration of Israel as a nation-state. Immediately after his resurrection, Jesus met two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. They did not recognize Him but said they had been “*hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel*” (Luke 24:21). “Undoubtedly they possessed a more political than religious understanding of how Christ would redeem Israel. For them the redemption of Israel meant Israel’s liberation from their enemies, i.e., the Romans.” (Stein 1992: 611; see also Bock 1996: 1913-14)

³³ Jesus not only the “king of Israel” (Matt 2:2; John 1:49) but is Lord over the entire world and is reigning now with all power (Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:22-36; Eph 1:20-23; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 1 Pet 3:21-22; Rev 1:5); his kingdom is “*from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” (Rev 5:9; 7:9). Because the creation as a whole and we ourselves are described as “groaning” until we receive “*the redemption of our body*” (Rom 8:22-23; see also 2 Cor 5:1-4), which will occur when Christ comes again (1 Cor 15:20-57), Jesus’ healing people and raising the dead had a far greater significance than simply the restoration of Israel. Disease, bodily infirmity, and death are disruptions of the world and of mankind as God had created them to be. Consequently, Jesus’ healing people “implied the victory of the Divine King in the cosmic conflict . . . as an aspect of the imposition of His government” (Gray 1979: 1n.1).

a. *Jesus' rebuke of the two disciples.* In his answer to the two disciples, Jesus rebuked them, saying, “*O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?*” (**Luke 24:25-26**). “The clear implication is that Jesus has redeemed or restored Israel, but in a manner contrary to their expectations. In looking for a political Messiah ushering in a political ‘restoration’, they had completely misunderstood those Old Testament prophecies. They were to see the restoration of Israel as having been accomplished in the resurrection of Jesus.” (Walker 1996: 285)

b. *The significance of the “third day.”* The two disciples had noted that “*it is the third day since these things happened*” (**Luke 24:21**). In **Luke 24:46** Jesus mentions that His resurrection on “*the third day*” had been “*written*” about in the OT. “Yet to what verses is he referring? Whilst it is possible that there is an allusion to the story of Jonah, the far more likely reference is Hosea 6:2 (‘after two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us’). If so, Jesus has taken a verse which originally referred to the restoration or revival of Israel and applied it instead to himself as Israel’s Messiah. . . . As Dodd rightly concluded: ‘the resurrection of Christ is the resurrection of Israel of which the prophets spoke’.” (Walker 1996: 285)

9. The Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

a. *OT background.* **Ps 2:6-8** had prophesied a restored Israel, with the Messianic King enthroned on Mount Zion, God’s “*holy mountain,*” as God’s “*Son,*” with the nations and the “*ends of the earth*” given to him as his possession (see also **Ps 48:1-2**). In OT prophecy God was pictured as dwelling with his people on Mount Zion (**Ps 2:6**; see **Ps 9:11**; **43:3**; **68:16**; **76:1-2**; **Isa 8:18**; **Joel 3:17**; **Zech 8:3**). The nations would have to *come to Zion* in order to experience God’s presence and blessings (see **Isa 2:2-3**; **25:6-7**; **56:6-8**; **Mic 4:1-2**; **Zech 8:20-23**).

b. *Jesus reoriented Ps 2:6-8 and similar OT prophecies to Himself, his people (the church), and the spread of the gospel.* Jesus the “*Son*” (**Ps 2:7**; **Matt 28:19**; cf. **Acts 13:33**, where Paul applies **Ps 2:7** to Jesus) has “*all authority in heaven and on earth*” as Messianic King (**Ps 2:6**; **Matt 28:18**). Jesus the Lord gives a decree to his disciples (**Ps 2:7**; **Matt 28:18-20**). His decree likewise applies to “*all the nations*” (**Ps 2:8**; **Matt 28:19**). However, instead of people *coming to God’s “holy mountain,”* Jesus tells his people to *go out* to all people and places to teach the word of the Lord. We do not have to go to a special place to be with the Lord (see **John 4:21-23**). Instead, he assures us that “*I am with you always, even to the end of the age*” (**Matt 28:20**; cf. **Matt 1:23**—“*and they shall call his name Immanuel, which translated means ‘God with us’*”). The new kingdom, the new Mount Zion is where the king is. It is no longer a specific geographical location but is spiritual. It is everywhere that Christ’s people are (see **John 4:21-24**; **Heb 12:22-24**). Christ has replaced Zion as the center of God’s dealings with his people, and in Christ all of the hopes associated with Zion have been fulfilled.

10. Jesus’ response to his disciples’ question concerning the restoration of the kingdom in Acts 1:6-8.

Before Pentecost and their receipt of the power of the Holy Spirit, even Jesus’ disciples did not understand how Jesus had redefined what the “restoration of the kingdom of Israel” was all about. They were still thinking in geographical and political terms, not spiritually. They were only thinking that Messiah would restore a small nation-state, not redeem the entire world. However, in His answer to their question about “*restoring the kingdom to Israel*” Jesus expands on what He had said in the “Great Commission” and reorients them to a very different idea of what the “restored kingdom of Israel” really is: it is spiritual, worldwide, and consists of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation, not just Israelites. His ascension to heaven (**Acts 1:9-11**), which immediately follows his explanation of the true nature of the kingdom, emphasizes this: “It [Jesus’ ascension] is, in other words, the direct answer to the disciples’ question of 1.6. This is how the kingdom is being restored to Israel: by its representative Messiah being enthroned as the world’s true lord.” (Wright 2003: 655)

a. *A new definition of “restoration of the kingdom” and what constitutes the true “Israel.”* Although the first part of Jesus’ answer in **Acts 1:7-8** could be viewed simply as “a correction of their ‘time-tabling’ (this ‘restoration’ would take place, but not now),” the second part of his answer (i.e., beginning in **Acts 1:8**), indicates that what Jesus really is talking about is a new and different concept of “restoration of the kingdom”: “The background in Luke 24 suggests that Jesus is criticizing their very concept of ‘restoration’. He reaffirms the expectation, but alters the interpretation. His emphasis is on the ‘kingdom of God’ (v. 3), not Israel’s political kingdom; the Spirit will be given (vv. 4-5), not for the ‘restoration of the kingdom to Israel’, but

to enable them to witness far beyond the borders of Israel . . . In Luke 24 the disciples were invited to see Jesus' work of redemption by looking *back* to his crucifixion, now they are invited to look *forwards* to their mission 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8). The 'redemption of Israel' is a two-fold entity—inaugurated through Jesus' death and resurrection, but implemented through the disciples' mission. . . . Israel was being restored through the resurrection of its Messiah and the forthcoming gift of the Spirit. The way in which Israel would then exert its hegemony over the world would not be through its own political independence, but rather through the rule and authority of Israel's Messiah. The chosen method of this Messiah's rule was through the apostles' proclamation of his gospel throughout the world bringing people into the 'obedience of faith' (*cf.* Rom. 1:5). Jesus' concern, now as before, was not for a political 'kingdom of Israel', but rather for the 'kingdom of God' (Acts 1:3)." (Walker 1996:96, 292) In other words, "the kingdom is indeed being restored, but it will come to Jew and gentile alike through the preaching of the gospel" (Goldsworthy 2000: 238; see also Peterson 2009: 109-10 ["Through the witness of Jesus' apostles, 'the kingdom' would be restored to Israel, but not in nationalistic or political terms"]; Wright 1996: 383-90 ["He was *affirming* Israel's election even as he *redefined* it," i.e., to now consist of everyone who heard his words and followed him]).

b. "*To the ends of the earth*" also redefined prophecy. The conclusion of Jesus' answer that His disciples are to go "*to the ends of the earth*" (Acts 1:8, NIV) recalls the Great Commission and echoes Ps 2:8, which says that the very "*ends of the earth*" have been given to the Messianic King as his possession. "In Jesus' charge to the disciples to go to all the nations 'until the ends of the earth,' the prophetic vision of the nations coming to Jerusalem (Isa 2:2-5, Mic 4:1-5; Zech 8:20-23) is replaced by the reality of Jewish missionaries going to the nations. The anticipated movement from the periphery to the center is redirected in terms of a mission from the center (Jerusalem, where Jesus had died and was raised from the dead) towards the periphery (the ends of the earth)." (Schnabel 2002: 47)

11. The spiritual nature of the restoration of Israel was confirmed at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. Although David had been promised an everlasting kingdom, Israel had been divided, then exiled. God, through the prophet Amos, had promised restoration: "*In that day I will raise up the fallen tabernacle of David,*" after which the Gentile nations would seek or be subject to the Lord (Amos 9:11-12).

a. *Beginning in Acts 10, God showed Peter that no nation, tribe, or people group was now to be considered "unclean."* As a result, large numbers of Gentiles began to be converted, but were not being circumcised or living according to Jewish law. The issue of whether Gentiles had to conform to OT Jewish rites and laws was the subject of the Council at Jerusalem in Acts 15. The Council concluded that Gentiles were *not* subject to the OT rites and laws.

b. *In making this ruling, in Acts 15:15-18, the apostle James quoted from Amos 9:11-12 (using the LXX version) but began and ended his OT quotation with wording from Hos 3:5, Jer 12:15, and Isa 45:21.* Those verses put the main quotation from Amos in the context of the conversion of the Gentiles in the messianic age. James concludes that the ingathering of the Gentiles into the church *is* the rebuilding of the "*tabernacle of David*" (i.e., restoration of Israel). In fact, the coming to faith by the Gentiles shows that the "*tabernacle of David*" *already had been rebuilt*, since "the text suggests there must indeed be a 'restoration' before the Gentiles can come in ('I will restore it, *so that* . . . the Gentiles'). James' using it to affirm the validity of Gentile mission must indicate acceptance that Israel had *already* been restored." (Walker 1996: 97)

c. *As had been true with the Abrahamic "land" promise, the early church "spiritualized" the OT prophecy of Amos to refer to the church, not to a new physical temple or political kingdom of Israel.* "In selecting a text which justified the inclusion of the Gentiles, James chose one which fueled the conviction that God's work amongst the Gentiles could only begin *after* he had acted on behalf of his own people ('David's fallen tent'). The clear implication was that this sequence of expectation (Israel's restoration, followed by the 'ingathering of the nations') was in itself quite correct. What had been wrong was the definition of Israel's 'restoration' James' ruling was accepted, indicating that the apostles finally laid aside any earlier belief that Israel's restoration consisted either in political independence or in its people coming *en masse* to faith in Jesus." (Walker 1996: 293-94)

d. *The judgment at the Council of Jerusalem is confirmed by Isa 49:6. Isa 49:6 is one of Isaiah's "Servant" passages. It links Israel's restoration with God's call of the Gentiles: "He*

says, ‘Is it too small a thing that you should be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’ As with **Amos 9:11-12**, the “Gentiles” being reached with the Gospel was the sign that the longed-for moment of Israel’s restoration had arrived” (Walker 1996: 98). Paul and Barnabas quoted the second half of **Isa 49:6** in **Acts 13:47**. They would have been aware of the link between the “restoration of Israel” and the salvation of the Gentiles. The quotation from **Isa 49:6** caused rejoicing, glorifying the word of the Lord, and salvation among the Gentiles (see **Acts 13:48-49**). In fact, that was part of the background of the Council at Jerusalem since and both Paul and Barnabas reported everything that God had done through them among the Gentiles at the Council (**Acts 15:2-4, 12**).

12. Paul described Christ and the church as “the restoration of Israel.”

a. In **Rom 9:4-5** Paul views Jesus as the culmination of, and superior to, all of Israel’s rich blessings: the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the law, the temple service, the promises, and the fathers. Thus, “Jesus’ proclamation of the arrival of God’s kingdom was accompanied by a redefinition of what the kingdom meant, with the symbols of Israel’s identity either missing (circumcision, Sabbath, food) or transformed (nation, land, Torah, Temple). The promised restoration of Israel was redefined in terms of allegiance to Jesus rather than to the old national symbols of Israel: the focus is not on the Temple, or the law, or the land, but on the message of the dawn of God’s rule in the ministry and person of Jesus.” (Schnabel 2002: 42-43)

b. Paul redefined the “restoration of Israel” as a spiritual phenomenon. **Isa 49:8** talks about the Lord’s helping “You” (his Servant) “to restore the land.” Paul quotes the first half of that verse in **2 Cor 6:2**, not in connection with any physical restoration of the land or kingdom of Israel but in connection with being an ambassador of Christ and receiving the grace of God. Elsewhere he points out that Abraham is the father of all who believe, and all who belong to Christ are Abraham’s children (**Rom 4:11; Gal 3:29**). The old distinction between Jews and Gentiles, “outsiders” and “insiders,” has been eliminated in Christ (**1 Cor 5:12; Gal 3:28; Eph 2:14-19; Col 3:11; 1 Thess 4:12**). “Thus, when Paul asserts that God’s promise to Abraham is now wholly fulfilled in Christ, including especially the extension of God’s blessing to the Gentiles, and when he asserts that this realization takes place in the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ, he expresses his conviction that the church, consisting of believing Jews and [Gentile] Christians, represents the eschatological restoration of Israel” (Schnabel 2002: 54) Similarly, in **Acts 13:32-34, 38-39** Paul equated “the sure blessings of David” with the resurrection of Jesus. “These promises and blessings, further, are interpreted as meaning, not a future Jewish kingdom in the millennium, but forgiveness of sins and salvation. The promises made to Israel, therefore, are fulfilled in the New Testament church.” (Hoekema 1979: 197)

c. The Jewish leaders understood that Paul was preaching a new meaning of the “restoration of Israel.” After he had been arrested Paul testified that “I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers” (**Acts 26:6**). When he was sent to Rome he said, “I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel” (**Acts 28:20**). It is clear that Paul’s conception of “the hope of Israel” was radically different from, and opposed to, the Jewish leaders’ notion. The Jewish leaders manifestly had a physical notion of the hope of Israel—i.e., Israel restored as an important political kingdom, with strict separation of Jews and Gentiles, and adherence to the OT Jewish Law and Temple. If Paul had had that understanding of the OT prophecies concerning Israel’s hope of restoration, he would have been accepted, especially since he was a well-trained rabbi himself (**Acts 22:3; 23:6; 26:5; Phil 3:5**). Instead, Paul preached a different “hope,” namely Christ, the “law of Christ,” a new people of God consisting of Jews and Gentiles who are one “in Christ” and the “hope of the resurrection” (**Acts 17:1-7; 23:6; 24:14-15; 26:6-23**). That is what caused the Jews to try to kill him and led to Paul’s arrest (**Acts 21:28-33; 22:17-22**).

13. The NT writers understood that Jesus had completely reoriented OT prophecy regarding the restoration of Israel.

“The New Testament writers never suggest that Old Testament prophecy is to be fulfilled in a political restoration of the Jewish nation. When Paul asserts that the ‘hardened’ part of Israel will one day be reintegrated into the true people of God, and so ‘all Israel will be saved’ [**Rom 11:25-26**], he gives no hint that he is thinking of anything other than their spiritual conversion. Whatever uncertainties may remain about the spiritual future of the Jews, the New Testament writers consistently follow their Master’s lead in looking to the Christian church for the fulfillment of the destiny of Israel.” (France 1975: 77-78) **Heb 12:18, 22** says that in Christ we have “not come to a

mountain that can be touched . . . but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (see also **Gal 4:21-31**). While the Old Covenant was still in effect, even during Jesus’ earthly ministry, Jerusalem was called the “holy city” (**Isa 48:2; Dan 9:24; Neh 11:1, 18; Matt 4:4; 27:53**). However, “after that period, the term ‘holy city’ no longer occurs, for God took up residence not in Jerusalem but in the church; and at Pentecost the Holy Spirit filled not the temple or Jerusalem but the apostles and all those who repented and were baptized (Acts 2:1-4, 38-39). This exegesis is confirmed in Revelation where John describes the new Jerusalem as the holy city (21:2, 10; 22:19). He explains that this is ‘the camp of the saints and the beloved city’ (20:9) which Jesus calls ‘the city of my God’ (3:12). The holy city is the spiritual Jerusalem of the saints.” (Kistemaker 2000: 437)

IV. Because the Church is “in Christ,” the Church is the New, True, Spiritual Israel

A. OT Israel and the church: physical and spiritual grace, election, and faith in the OT

1. The concepts of “grace,” “election,” and “faith” are at work in the OT, just as they are in the NT. “Some important biblical themes are intertwined with the history of Abraham and the covenant. The first is *grace*. As with Noah, there is nothing special about Abraham that deserves the goodness of God in calling him into these blessings. . . . The second theme, which goes together with grace, is *election*. Whenever God acts for the good of the people he is acting against what they serve as rebellious sinners, and that action is grace. Election means that God chooses some and not others as objects of his grace. . . . The third theme is *faith* as the means of restoration to God. Abraham’s faith is certainly not perfect, not always strong, and sometimes borders on disbelief (Gen 15:2-3). Yet at the crucial times he takes God at his Word and believes his promises. The key is not the strength or perfection of Abraham’s faith, but the strength and perfection of the God he trusts. . . . And since Abraham deserves nothing of what he is promised, it must be seen as a pure and unmerited gift. That is why he is accounted righteous before God by simply believing (Gen 15:6).” (Goldsworthy 1991: 122-23)

2. The OT reveals that God “chooses” or “elects” in two different ways: physically and spiritually. **Deut 7:6** says that, “*God has chosen you [Israel] to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.*” However, being chosen in the sense of being set apart as a nation-state (i.e., “physical election”) is not the same as being eternally saved (i.e., “spiritual election”). It is only believers whom God has “*blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him*” (**Eph 1:3-4**; see also **Rom 8:29-30; 9:8-24; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 1:9**). In summary, “Israel is the elect nation, but subsequent revelation will show that this outward election proceeds side by side with an inner election to eternal life. Not all Israel are Israel, the apostle Paul will later conclude (Rom 9:6). God’s dealings with the nation as a nation will have to be distinguished from his dealings with individuals for their eternal salvation. These two aspects of election will also be distinguished from the election of certain representative individuals upon whom God focuses his purposes in a special way.” (Goldsworthy 1991: 126) Even in the OT God’s method of eternal, spiritual salvation was only by grace through faith, not simply a matter of externally obeying the Law of Moses (**Gen 15:6; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Hos 6:6; Hab 2:4; Rom 1:16-17; 4:13-24; 9:27-33; 11:17-23; Heb 11:1-12:2**).

3. Even though God chose Israel (**Deut 7:6-8**), redeemed Israel out of slavery (**Exodus 13-15**), gave Israel its own land (**Joshua 1-21**), and entered into covenants with Israel (**Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 22:15-18; Exodus 19-24; 2 Sam 7:8-17; 1 Chron 17:3-15**), throughout its entire history the nation as a whole was largely unbelieving (see **Neh 9:1-37; Acts 7:1-53**). Both the OT and the NT record that Israel’s history was characterized by unbelief and unfaithfulness toward God.

- *While Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments.* The nation began worshipping a golden calf. So God wanted to destroy them all (**Exodus 32**).
- *When they reached the edge of the Promised Land.* Ten of the twelve spies said that they should not enter the land, and the vast majority of the people rebelled against the Lord. So God made them wander in the wilderness for 40 years, with only Joshua and Caleb from that entire generation being permitted to enter the land (**Numbers 13-14**).
- *After they entered the land, during the rule of the judges.* The people constantly worshipped other gods and “*did evil in the eyes of the Lord*” (**Judg 2:11-13; 3:5-7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1; 17:6; 21:25**).
- *Israel’s demand for a king of their own.* That demand was a rejection of God so that they could be like the other nations (**1 Sam 8:1-9**).
- *Before the exile in Babylon.* God spoke through the prophets and summarized Israel’s history by

saying, “I will abandon the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they will become as plunder and spoil to all their enemies; because they have done evil in My sight, and have been provoking Me to anger since the day their fathers came from Egypt, even to this day” (2 Kgs 21:14-15).

- After the return of the nation from exile in Babylon. Israel’s sin continued, including marriages to pagans (Neh 13:23-26; Mal 2:11-15); failure to tithe or otherwise obey the law (Neh 13:10-14; Mal 2:10; 3:8-10; 4:4); no concern for the Sabbath (Neh 13:15-22; Mal 2:8-9); corrupt priests (Neh 13:7-9; Mal 1:7-14; 2:1-9); and general wickedness (Neh 5:1-13; Mal 3:5).
- Israel’s pattern of unbelief, disobedience, and rejection of God continued up to and after the time of Jesus. Jesus “came to His own, and those who were of His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11). Jesus’ parable of the landowner and the vineyard (Matt 21:22-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19) summarized Israel’s history as rejection of God’s prophets and rejection of God’s Son. Heb 3:7-4:9 concludes that Israel never entered God’s “rest” because of unbelief. Stephen summarized Israel’s history as persecution of the prophets, betrayal and murder of Christ, and disobedience to the law (Acts 7:51-53). In Acts 28:23-27 Paul quotes Isa 6:9-10 concerning Israel’s blindness and deafness as applying to Israel’s rejection of Jesus.

4. In Rom 9:6-7 Paul states, “They are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor that they are all children because they are Abraham’s descendants.” “Rather than a distinction between Israel and the church, the Bible places the crucial division within Israel itself—a division between the remnant, who are the faithful of God, and the apostate, who according to Jesus are the children of Satan (Jn 8:44)” (Grenz 1992: 125). Romans 9-11 deals with the issue of whether God has broken his Word and Covenants with Israel: “God has never, nor ever will, fail to keep every covenant He has made. ‘However,’ Paul declares, ‘God has never promised any spiritual blessing to anyone on the basis of fleshly birth.’ This is the heart of the whole issue! Paul’s words apply to every Jewish child born into the Nation of Israel, and his words also apply to every child born of Christian parents today. If this principle is grasped and then constantly applied, there will never be anymore talk about ‘a covenant nation’ (physical Israel) or ‘covenant children’ (physical children of believers). Every single promise of God that brings spiritual blessing to any individual requires that individual to personally believe the promise. Israel never inherited the promised blessing because they ‘sought it not in faith’ (Romans 9:32). . . . At the bottom line, Paul is saying that ‘not all Israel is Israel’ simply means the difference between people with special privileges and people that actually possess [saving] grace. Every Israelite enjoyed great privileges because of his physical birth (Rom 3:1-3), but no Israelite (or anyone else) ever possessed any special spiritual status or received any spiritual blessings apart from personal repentance and faith. . . . His real point in the illustration is that the ‘Israel within Israel’ is a matter of sovereign election (Rom 9:11) and effectual calling (Rom 9:24), and has nothing at all to do with physical lineage. . . . It is important to note that [in Rom 9:6-13] Paul does not demonstrate and prove the doctrine of election by comparing a ‘covenant child’ (seed of Abraham) and a ‘non-covenant’ child (Gentile), but he compares two ‘covenant’ children. And they are not just two ordinary covenant children; they are the twin grandsons of Abraham himself as well as the true sons of believing Isaac. . . . Paul uses Abraham’s twin sons in his illustration to demonstrate beyond any question that inheriting God’s true promises has nothing to do with being a so called ‘covenant child,’ nor with being ‘signed and sealed’ with covenant signs—even the God-ordained covenant sign of circumcision which was placed on Abraham, his son Isaac, and his twin grandsons. . . . In this illustration, Paul is telling us exactly what he means by ‘not all Israel is Israel.’ Nothing that God ever promised or covenanted to the Nation of Israel guaranteed, in any sense whatever, that they, or their children, would receive spiritual blessings. They had privileges, but they did not have the certainty of the blessings.” (Reisinger 1998: 47-48)

B. The relationship between OT Israel and the church

The church is both new and in another sense not new. “The New Testament actually speaks not so much of the Old Testament saints being admitted to the church, but of the Gentile believers of the New Testament age being admitted to Israel” (Bell 1967: 102).

1. The church is not new in that the church is “remnant Israel” (Rom 9:27; 11:1-7) and represents a great worldwide expansion of “remnant Israel” (see Matt 13:31-32, 47-48; 16:18; Heb 11:40; Rev 5:9; 7:9). The church is “Israel’s fruition,” i.e., “the continuation and extension of Israel as the people of God, encompassing both elect Jews and Gentiles who, together, make up ‘the Israel of God’ (Gal. 6:16)” (Williamson 2007: 191). Just as Rom 9:6-7 shows that there is a fundamental difference between physical Israel and the church, it also shows that there is a fundamental similarity and continuity

between “spiritual” Israel (the “Israel within Israel”) and the church. That similarity and continuity is found in the concept of the faithful “remnant” which Paul represents in his figure of the “olive tree” in **Rom 11:17-24**: “The olive tree represents remnant Israel. This idea is highly supported by the context of the passage. Previously, Paul has mentioned true Israel (9:6), the remnant of Israel (9:27, 11:5), the elect of Israel (11:7). . . . If Paul had confined his olive tree illustration to include Jewish people only, remnant Israel might have been something separate from the Church, or something placed within the Church. Since Gentile believers are grafted into the olive tree, however [**Rom 11:17**], it is clear that remnant Israel is not confined to physical Jews only, but rather, contains the same redeemed peoples who are members of the Church.” (Gay 2002: n.p.) “The fact that the Church is remnant Israel is evidenced by the name of the eternal home of believers (the New Jerusalem), by the gates of that home (the names of the twelve tribes of Israel), by the pillars of that home (the twelve Israelite apostles of Jesus), and by the Person seated on the throne of that home (Jesus, the King of Israel, Himself and Israelite).

Because the Church is remnant Israel, Paul—certainly a member of the Church—could say that since he was a believer in Jesus, he was part of remnant Israel (Romans 11:1-5). Because the Church is remnant Israel, Paul could say that Gentile believers in Jesus have been grafted into remnant Israel (Romans 11:17). Because the Church is remnant Israel, both Paul and Peter could say that Jews who didn’t accept Jesus would be cut off from Israel (Romans 11:17; Acts 3:23). Because the Church is remnant Israel, Paul could say that Gentile believers are no longer ‘excluded from citizenship in Israel’ and no longer ‘foreigners to the covenants of promise’ (Ephesians 2:12). Because the Church is remnant Israel, Paul could say that Gentile believers ‘are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household’ (Ephesians 2:19).” (Ibid.) The following two examples show this:

a. *The “commonwealth of Israel” (Eph 2:11-22)*. Gentiles are described as having been “excluded from the commonwealth” and “strangers to the covenants” (2:12). However, 2:19 says that “in Christ” the Gentiles “are no longer strangers and aliens, but are fellow citizens with the [Jewish] saints.” The passage is clear that, “Believing Gentiles, members of the church, have been admitted as citizens to the commonwealth of Israel, from which they had been aliens previously, and thus share in the covenants made by God with Israel in Old Testament times. There is no doubt that this commonwealth has undergone a transformation, but the continuity remains.” (Bell 1967: 105)

b. *The Olive Tree (Rom 11:1-24)*. The image of the olive tree is taken from **Jer 11:16** and **Hos 14:5-6**. **Rom 11:1-6** begins by pointing out that God has kept his promises to Israel through the faithful remnant (of which Paul, a member of the church) is a member. Paul then likens Israel to a good olive tree. “God has removed some of the branches of this Olive Tree because of their unbelief in His Son, their Messiah. At the same time, He has taken some branches from a wild olive, and has grafted them in among the branches of the good Olive Tree. But these newly engrafted branches should not boast because of their position, glorying over the Jews who were cut off. The Jewish branches were cut off because of their *unbelief*. The Gentile branches were grafted in because of their *belief*. If these Gentiles fall into *unbelief*, they too will be cut off. Position in the good Olive Tree is due to *faith alone*.” (Bear 1940-41: 152) “It should be noted that the believing Jews, represented by the good natural branches, did not move. They were not transferred to a new tree, etc. It was the Gentile Christians who became a part of the already-existing good olive tree (Israel) and who share with the already-present natural branches (Jews). . . . Romans 11, in perfect harmony with other Pauline passages such as Ephesians 2 and with the New Testament generally, teaches that God’s promises to Israel were never intended for the physical descendants as a whole, but for believing Israelites only, the remnant of Israel, represented in Paul’s day by himself and other believing Jews, and that these promises have now been extended to believing Gentiles as well who, by admission to ancient Israel (the grafting into the good olive tree), share with the believing Jews; they together comprising spiritual Israel and/or the Christian church.” (Bell 1967: 116, 118)

2. The church is new in that Jesus said, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell will not overpower it” (Matt 16:18). Jesus’ statement is in the future tense (“will build”) which indicates that the church was a new entity, yet to be built. The church is new for at least two reasons:

a. *The church is based on the death and resurrection of Christ*. “The church is a new undertaking, specifically because it is the Messiah’s congregation that He would build on the

basis of His atoning death and resurrection. Like Moses who brought the ekklesia [Greek for ‘congregation’; see **Acts 7:38**] (the Israelites) out of Egypt physically, the Messiah would bring His ekklesia out of the world spiritually, to form a spiritual assembly that included both Jews and Gentiles.” (Gay 2002: n.p.)

b. *The church is the recipient of the indwelling Holy Spirit.* “The Church is also new regarding the New Covenant’s promise of the indwelling Spirit (Ezekiel 36:24-26; Jeremiah 31:31-33). The *mystery* aspect of the Church was that non-Jews would also receive the Spirit and be placed within the same body (with believing Jews) through the Spirit (Acts 10:45, 15:8; Ephesians 2:19-3:6). This was a mystery because the New Covenant and the advent of the Spirit had been promised only for the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Jeremiah 31:31), not for Gentiles. Thus, it was hidden in the Old Testament, sparingly, such as in the covenant given to Abraham, whose seed (Messiah) would be a blessing to all nations.” (Gay 2002: n.p.)

C. Jesus rejected the nation of Israel as the vehicle for building God’s kingdom and gave that role to his own followers, the church

The Gospels depict Jesus as the fulfillment of covenantal blessings. However, in the Gospels “there is also a more negative theme: the fulfillment of covenantal curses (judgment) on unbelieving Israel (Matt. 8:12; 13:12-14; 21:43; 23:37-39; cf. Luke 16:19-31). In order to inherit the covenant promises, more was required than mere biological descent (Matt. 3:9)!” (Williamson 2007: 185)

1. Regarding the Roman (Gentile) centurion’s faith, Jesus said, *“I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel! I say to you many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast into the outer darkness” (Matt 8:10-12).* “The remarkable thing here is that the description of people coming ‘from the east and the west’ alludes to passages such as Isaiah 43:5f. and Psalm 107:3 which spoke of Jews returning from exile. Yet here is Jesus applying it to Gentiles, included among the people of God. The Jews’ *special* status as people of God is ended. The privilege of belonging to that people is open to all—Jew and Gentile alike—who have faith in Jesus.” (Travis 1982: 129)

2. In his explanation of the parable of the sower (Matt 13:10-17), Jesus contrasted the deafness and blindness of Israel with his own disciples. First, Jesus told his disciples, *“To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted” (Matt 13:11).* Second, although Israel had possessed the mysteries of the kingdom in the Law and the Prophets, it did not understand them and had sought a physical, political kingdom. Thus, Jesus said, *“even what he has shall be taken away from him” (Matt 13:12).* Third, “Jesus pronounces a spiritual judgment on Israel by quoting Isa 6:9-10” (Beale 2008: 163) which says that Israel *“will keep on hearing, but will not understand; [and] will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; for the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them” (Matt 13:14-15; see also Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:39-40).* He concludes by contrasting his disciples with the blindness and deafness of Israel by saying, *“But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Matt 13:16-17).*

3. The NT applies Isa 6:9-10 as a prophecy against Israel for rejecting Jesus. As originally given, **Isa 6:9-10** was part of a prophetic commission to Isaiah which he carried out in his lifetime, but Jesus calls it a “*prophecy*” which *“is being fulfilled” (Matt 13:14).* In **Isa 6:9-10** Israel was being judged for worshipping idols. In Jesus’ day Israel was still guilty of idol worship, except that its idols were different: it had substituted man-made tradition in place of the love of God (see **Isa 29:9-13; Ezek 14:4, 7; Matt 15:7-9; 23:29-33; Mark 7:6-13**) and sought to establish its own righteousness in place of God’s righteousness (**Rom 10:3**). Israel’s sin was even worse than in former generations, since they rejected God Himself who had come to earth in the person of Jesus. “In Isaiah 6:11 the prophet asks ‘how long’ the spiritual blindness and deafening judgment would last, and the answer was that it would continue even with the remnant who survived the Babylonian captivity and who would be in the land of promise after that captivity. It is understandable that Jesus saw the majority of unbelieving Israel in his own day as the continuation of that unbelieving and blinded remnant. In this respect, it is also understandable why Jesus saw that Isaiah 6:9-10 was a prophecy of the spiritual condition of Jews in Isaiah’s day and also of his own day.” (Beale 2008: 165) In **John 12:40** the apostle John also quotes **Isa 6:10** as applying to the blindness of Israel in *“not believing in him [Jesus]” (John 12:37).* John even

adds that “*these things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him [i.e., Jesus].*” In **Acts 28:23-28** Paul quoted **Isa 6:9-10** as applying to Israel’s rejection of Jesus and cited it as a reason why God was sending salvation to the Gentiles.

4. Jesus signaled his rejection of the nation of Israel when he cursed the fig tree (**Matt 21:18-22; Mark 11: 12-14, 20-24**). Cursing the fig tree was an “acted out parable.” The fig tree was a symbol for the nation of Israel (**Hos 9:10; Nah 3:12; Zech 3:10**). In cursing the fig tree, Jesus was condemning outward religious “show” that lacks true, spiritual fruit. However, he was doing more than that. **Jer 5:17; 8:13; Hos 2:12; Amos 4:9**, and **Mic 7:1-6** all speak of judgments on fig trees as part of God’s judgment on Israel. “The passage most likely to come to mind from this story is Mic 7:1-6, where the prophet’s dismay over the corruption of Judah is described as his failure to find ‘the first-ripe fig for which I hunger.’ Following the explicit statement that Jesus was hungry in v. 18, his inability to find early figs to eat speaks powerfully of how the prophetic vision is fulfilled in the failure of contemporary Jerusalem and its temple.” (France 2007: 793) Jesus combined his cursing of the fig tree with the statement, “*No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you*” (**Matt 21:19**). By that statement Jesus was not merely attacking religious hypocrisy (since hypocrites might possibly repent and change). Instead, he was demonstrating that the *nation* as the vehicle for spreading God’s kingdom had been permanently rejected and cast off. Similarly, after having attacked the Pharisees, Jesus had said, “*Every tree which my heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted*” (**Matt 15:13**).

5. In the parable of the landowner and the vineyard Jesus both condemned Israel’s leaders and said that “the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it” (**Matt 21:33-46**; see also **Mark 12:1-11; Luke 20:9-18**). This parable draws on **Isa 5:1-7** where “*the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel*” (**Isa 5:7**). The parable recounts the history of Israel’s relationship with God. The landowner is God; the vineyard is God’s kingdom; the vinegrowers are Israel (especially its leaders [see **Matt 21:45**]); the slaves are the prophets; and the son is Christ. Significantly, “*they took him [the son], and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him*” (**Matt 21:39**). That would find its fulfillment in Christ’s crucifixion which occurred “*outside the gate*” (**Heb 13:12**). By persecuting and killing the prophets and the killing the son in a most disgraceful way, “they make their stubborn rebellion against God complete, and the Old Covenant is broken once and for all. The vineyard, God’s salvation, will be taken from the tenants and given to others, not to another earthly people, not to humanity in general, but to the people of the New Covenant.” (Goppelt 1982: 79)

Both Jesus’ cursing the fig tree and his judgment on Israel in this parable had to do with fruit: the first was purely negative—“*No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you*” (**Matt 21:19**); the second pointed toward the positive—“*the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it*” (**Matt 21:43**). Jesus’ conclusion (**21:43**) uses the singular *ethnos* (“people” or “nation”). That is akin to Paul’s later statement, “*they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel*” (**Rom 9:6**). In other words, “The mention of another ‘nation’ to replace ‘you’ in the tenancy of the vineyard takes us to the heart of the issue of [who is the] true Israel which underlies this whole section of the gospel” (France 2007: 808). Jesus’ conclusion is profound. “This setting aside of the privilege of Israel as the unique people of God in favor of another people, namely, the church . . . is of course nothing short of revolutionary. The singular [*ethnos*], which means ‘people’ or ‘nation,’ inevitably alludes to the eventual mission to the Gentiles, the [*ethnoi*], plural of the same word.” (Hagner 1995: 623)

6. Following His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the totality of Jesus’ words and actions show that He rejected Israel and pronounced the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple because Israel had rejected Him. “Of great significance is the fact that the theme of [**Mark 13**]—Judgment—coincides with the pattern of the preceding events in Passion Week, as traced not only in Mark, but also the other Synoptics. Christ’s pronouncement of divine visitation at the time of His triumphal entry [**Matt 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-40**], the cleansing of the temple [**Matt 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48**], the cursing of the fig-tree [**Matt 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14**], the utterance of judgment parables—vineyard and rejected stone [**Matt 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18**], the marriage of the king’s son [**Matt 22:1-14**], the woes on the Pharisees [**Matt 23:1-39**]; all take place as a series of thunderclaps of Judgment.” (Ford 1979: 36) In context, the parables of the two sons (**Matt 21:28-33**), the vineyard (**Matt 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18**), and the marriage feast (**Matt 22:1-14**) function as “three parables that sequentially depict Israel’s indictment (21:28-32), sentence (21:33-46), and execution (22:1-14)” (Blomberg 2007: 74). “And there is in his warnings an inescapable note of finality. The blood of all the prophets from the beginning will be required of this generation: it is the final reckoning. The Lucan version of the prediction of the fall of Jerusalem contains the solemn words,

‘These are the days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written’ (Luke 21:22). The note of climax we have seen in Jesus’ declaration that in him all the hopes of the Old Testament were finding fulfilment [**Mark 1:15; Luke 4:21; 24:27, 44-47**] is paralleled by this idea of the coming disaster as the culmination of all Israel’s rebellion.” (France 1975: 62)

The judgment upon Israel was based primarily on Israel’s rejection of Jesus. When He entered the city for the last time Jesus connected the Jews’ rejection of Him and the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (**Luke 19:41-44**). That is best explained by the fact that in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem Jesus was fulfilling the OT expectations that “YHWH is returning to Zion. He will do again what he did at the exodus, coming to dwell in the midst of his people [**Isa 4:2-6; 24:23; 25:9-10; 35:3-6, 10; 40:3-5, 9-11; 52:7-10; 50:15-17, 19-21; 60:1-3; 62:10-11; 63:1-9; 64:1; 66:12-19; Ezek 43:1-7; Hag 2:7-10; Zech 2:4-5, 10-12; 8:2-3; Mal 3:1-4**].” (Wright 1996: 616) “Within his own time and culture, his riding on a donkey over the Mount of Olives, across Kidron, and up to the Temple mount spoke more powerfully than words could have done of a royal claim. The allusion to Zechariah (and, with that, several other passages) is obvious [**Zech 9:9-10**; see also **Gen 49:8-12; Ps 72:8; Isa 63:2-6**]. The so-called ‘triumphal entry’ was thus clearly messianic.” (Ibid.: 490-91) However, Israel did not recognize that the OT was being fulfilled, the King had come, God was visiting His people. Consequently, Jesus “bursts into tears and solemnly announces judgment on the city for failing to recognize ‘its time of visitation’ [**Luke 19:41-44**]. YHWH is visiting his people, and they do not realize it; they are therefore in imminent danger of judgment, which will take the form of military conquest and devastation. This is not a denial of the imminence of the kingdom. It is a warning about what the imminent kingdom will entail. . . . It was a warning that, when YHWH returned to Zion, he would come as judge for those in Israel who had not been faithful to his commission. When YHWH returned, as Israel hoped and longed for him to do, he would come as much as a judge as to save, and the judgment would begin with his own household. ‘Why do you desire the day of YHWH? It is a day of darkness, not of light’ [**Amos 5:18**]. Israel’s hopes of national victory would be set aside; the only people vindicated when their god returned, to act in fulfillment of his promise, would be those who responded to the divine summons now being issued in Jesus’ kingdom-announcement.” (Ibid.: 636-37)

The basis of judgment in His parables of the vineyard and rejected stone (**Matt 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18**) and the marriage of the king’s son (**Matt 22:1-14**) was the Jewish leaders’ repeated rejection of God’s rule over them, culminating in their rejection Himself when He came to them in person. In His lengthy discourse against the scribes and Pharisees (**Matt 23:1-39**), Jesus made the same connection. He said He was sending prophets, wise men, and scribes whom they would kill and persecute, “so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah” (**23:34-35**). As a result, “Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation” (**23:36**). He concluded by connecting Himself with Jerusalem’s fate: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I have wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (**23:37-39**)³⁴ He even reiterated the connection between rejection of Himself and the judgment that would soon fall on Jerusalem and the temple as He was being led to His crucifixion (**Luke 23:28-31**): i.e., “(1) If the Romans treat Me, whom they admit to be innocent, in this manner, how will they treat those who are rebellious and guilty? (2) If the Jews deal thus with One who has come to save them, what treatment shall they receive themselves for destroying Him?” (Plummer 1942: 529) One commentator summarizes: “As far as the New Testament is concerned, the events at the close of the Old Testament era, the death of Christ and the fall of Jerusalem, were the beginning of the End. They were the first act in the drama of the end time, and the last act would be the Parousia.” (Ford 1979: 31)

7. Summary of the biblical data. “Not one clear NT passage mentions the restoration of Israel as a political nation or predicts an earthly reign of Christ before his final appearing. None depicts the consummate glory of Christ as an earthly king ruling over the restored nation of Israel. The Spirit’s

³⁴ “A hint of a future for Israel is sometimes found in Mt. 23:39/Lk. 13:35, where the prediction of Jerusalem’s destruction ends, ‘I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”’. There is no consensus on the exegesis of this passage, whether the acclamation of Jesus as king implies the conversion of at least some Jews, or whether it is a reluctant admission of his sovereignty when he comes as judge. . . . It should be noticed too that the future event is expressed indefinitely (it might be paraphrased ‘You will only see me again on condition that . . .’), the emphasis in context falling on the negative main clause rather than the second part of the sentence. But on any interpretation there is nothing in this passage [that gives a] hint of a *political* future for Israel.” (France 1975: 76n.41)

silence is deafening. . . . As the obverse side of the NT coin bears the hard imprint that no clear passage teaches the restoration of national Israel, its reverse side is imprinted with the hard fact that national Israel and its law have been permanently replaced by the church and the New Covenant. Without wresting Matt 15:13 and Mark 12:1-9, our Lord announced in these passages that the Jewish *nation* no longer has a place as the special people of God; that place has been taken by the Christian community which fulfills God's purpose for Israel." (Waltke 1988: 273, 274-75)

D. The church is the new, true, people of God—spiritual Israel

"The first Christians did not think of the Church primarily as an organized society; to them it was the faithful Remnant consisting of the heirs to the divine promises; it was the New Israel and its members were therefore the elect or chosen of God; it was the Temple of the divine presence indwelt by the Spirit; it was the body of Christ, a new creation transcending distinctions of race, class or sex. It was a divine-human organism, established by the direct action of God in history." (Davies 1965: 46)

1. Christ is "in" believers and believers are "in Christ." Just as Christ is the new, true, faithful Israel, so are all those who are united with Christ through faith.

- Christ is "in" believers (**John 14:20; 17:23; Rom 8:10; Gal 2:20; Eph 3:17; Col 1:27; 1 John 3:24; Rev 3:20**).
- Believers are "in Christ" (e.g., **Rom 8:1; 12:5; 16: 6, 7, 9-10; 1 Cor 1:2, 30; 4:10, 15; 15:18, 22; 2 Cor 1:21; 5:17; 12:2; Gal 1:22; 3:28; 6:15; Eph 1:3; 2:6, 10; Phil 1:1; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 2:14; 4:16; 1 Tim 3:13; 2 Tim 3:12; Phlm 23; 1 Pet 5:14**).
- Believers are united with Christ in his crucifixion and resurrection (**Gal 2:20; Eph 2:5-6**).
- The church is called the one "body of Christ" and individual believers are "members" of that body (**Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:17; 12:12-27; Eph 1:22-23; 2:16; 4:4, 12; 5:30; Col 1:18; 3:15**).
- Jesus commissioned his church to go out on the same basis as his Father sent Him (**Matt 16:19; 28:18-20; John 17:18; 20:21, 23**).

2. The NT takes the great OT covenant ideas and terms which had described Israel and applies them to the church. "When metaphors used for Israel in the OT are applied to Jesus' disciples, it is an allusion to the fact that they, as the new people of God, are related typologically to the old people of God" (Goppelt 1982: 109).

- *A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.* **Eph 1:4-5; Col 3:12; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; compare Exod 19:5-6; Deut 4:20; 7:6-7; 14:2; Isa 43:20-21.**
- *The people of God.* **Rom 9:22-26; 1 Pet 2:10; compare Hos 1:10; 2:23.** In **Rom 9:24-26** Paul not only quotes Hosea but specifically says that Hosea (who was talking about Israel) applies to "us" (i.e., the church).
- *The sons or children of God.* **Rom 8:14, 16; 9:26; Gal 3:26; 1 John 3:1-2; compare Exod 4:22; Deut 14:1.**
- *The seed (descendants) of Abraham.* **Rom 4:13-16; Gal 3:29; compare Ps 105:6-7.**
- *"I will be their God, and they shall be My people."* **2 Cor 6:16; Heb 8:10; Rev 21:3; compare Gen 17:8; Exod 6:7; 29:45; Lev 26:12; Jer 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1, 33; 32:38; Ezek 11:19-20; 14:10-11; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Hos 2:23; Zech 8:8; 13:9.**
- *The wife of God.* **Eph 5:25-32; Rev 21:9-14; compare Isa 54:4-7.**
- *The household of God.* **Eph 2:19; 1 Tim 3:15; compare Num 12:7.**
- *The flock of God.* **Luke 12:32; John 10:15-16; 1 Pet 5:2-3; compare Ezek 34:12-16.** Jesus "takes up Zechariah's picture of the smitten shepherd, and applies it to himself and to his disciples as 'the scattered sheep' (Mark 14:27, quoting Zechariah 13:7). Thus an Old Testament figure for Israel is applied specifically and exclusively to the disciples." (France 1975: 69)
- *God's field.* **1 Cor 3:9; compare Jer 12:10.**
- *Use of the Greek word "ekklēsia" for the church.* "The Hebrew term *qāhāl*, commonly rendered *ekklēsia* in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible), is applied to Israel in the Old Testament. To give just a few examples, we find the word *qāhāl* used of the assembly or congregation of Israel in Exodus 12:6, Numbers 14:5, Deuteronomy 5:22, Joshua 8:35, Ezra 2:64, and Joel 2:16. Since the Septuagint was the Bible of the Apostles, their use of the Greek word *ekklēsia*, the Septuagint equivalent of *qāhāl*, for the New Testament church clearly indicates continuity between the church and Old Testament Israel." (Hoekema 1979: 215)
- *The (true) circumcision.* **Rom 2:28-29; Phil 3:3; Col 2:11; compare Gen 17:9-15; Deut 30:6;**

Acts 7:51; Eph 2:11; Phil 3:2.

- *The olive tree.* **Rom 11:17-24**; compare **Jer 11:16**; **Hos 14:6**.
- *God's vine.* **John 15:1-5**; compare **Hos 10:1**.
- *A kingdom of priests.* **1 Pet 2:5, 9**; **Rev 1:6**; **5:10**; compare **Exod 19:6**; **Isa 61:6**. "In Mosaic times the nation of Israel was made a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6). Hebrews 10:19-25 shows that all Christians now have the privileges of the high priest, in that they are able to enter the Most Holy Place through Christ" (Poythress 1991: 116).
- "*The Israel of God.*" **Gal 6:16**. This phrase occurs only here in the NT. Who it is referring to is disputed: the church as a whole; Jewish Christians; the "all Israel" who will be saved (referred to in **Rom 11:26** [itself a disputed term]); or possibly Jews as Jews. Given Paul's argument throughout the book of Galatians, the idea that he is giving a blessing to non-believing Jews is extremely unlikely. Some hold that the phrase refers to believing Jews. However, in the context of Galatians as a whole, "*the Israel of God*" probably refers to the entire church (i.e., Jewish and Gentile believers). "What avails in Christ, Paul argues, is the cross and the new creation, not circumcision. . . . If this expression meant the Jewish people, or even Jewish Christians, he would be directly contradicting himself. . . . It is inescapable that the *Israel of God* means the true people of God (in contrast to the Judaizers) who glory in the cross and count the new birth as that saving act of God and not circumcision." (Ramm 1970: 263-64) Further, "Since the dominant message [in Galatians] is one of doing away with national distinctions among God's people (3,7-8,26-29; 4,26-31; 5,2-12), it would seem unlikely that Paul would conclude the epistle by referring to those in the church according to their ethnic distinctives. This idea is especially unlikely since 6,11-18, as the conclusion of the epistle, is intended by Paul to summarize its major themes." (Beale 1999b: 205; see also LaRondelle 1983: 108-14; Cole 1989: 235-37; McKnight 1995: 302-04; Longenecker 1990: 297-99)

3. The NT takes OT signs and prophecies which related to Israel and applies them to the church.

- a. *Circumcision.* Circumcision was the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham (**Gen 17:9-14**). That outward, physical sign really pointed to an inward, spiritual state—"circumcision of the heart" (see **Deut 10:16**; **30:6**; **Jer 4:4**). The NT says, "*He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and the circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God*" (**Rom 2:29**). **Phil 3:3** adds, "*We are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.*" Similarly, **Col 2:11** says, "*In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*"
- b. *The New Covenant.* The New Covenant, as originally given, was promised to "*the house of Israel and the house of Judah*" (**Jer 31:31**). Nevertheless, at the Last Supper Jesus explicitly stated that he was inaugurating the New Covenant in his blood (**Luke 22:20**; see **1 Cor 11:25**). Throughout **Hebrews 8-10** the New Covenant is applied to the church. **Heb 8:8** quotes **Jer 31:31** (including the reference to "*the house of Israel and the house of Judah*"). **Heb 8:6, 9:15**, and **12:24** all state that Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant. The fact that he "is" (present tense) the mediator shows that the New Covenant is now in effect. **Heb 9:12-17** points out that Christ's blood confirmed and finalized the covenant. **Heb 10:15-18** specifically applies the terms of the New Covenant to "us" [i.e., Christians; the church]. In **2 Cor 3:5-6** (written to the largely Gentile church in Corinth) Paul says that "*God . . . made us . . . servants of a new covenant.*"
- c. *Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones and the two sticks (Ezekiel 37).* The vision given to Ezekiel of the dry bones coming to life (**Ezek 37:1-14**) occurred when the kingdom of Judah was in exile in Babylon. "*These bones are the whole house of Israel*" (**Ezek 37:11**). The prophecy promised, "*I will open your graves, My people, and I will bring you to the land of Israel . . . I will put my Spirit within you and you will come to life*" (**Ezek 37:12, 14**). The vision of the two sticks (**Ezek 37:15-28**), which represented the house of Judah and the house of Israel, also occurred at that time. In the prophecy God promised to "*make them one stick . . . and I will make them one nation in the land . . . My servant David will be king over them, and they will have one shepherd; . . . I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant . . . and I will be their God, and they will be my people*" (**Ezek 37:19, 22, 24, 26-27**). Although Israel returned to its land from Babylon after 70 years' exile, the "dry bones" prophecy pointed to a spiritual, not physical, fulfillment all along, because at the time of Ezekiel's vision the nation was not physically dead, but was alive, although "entombed" in Babylon. **Ephesians 2** exactly parallels **Ezekiel 37**. Robert Suh (2007: 723-24) shows this:

<p>Ezekiel 37 37:1-10—Bringing alive the dead bones 37:11-14—Explanation 37:15-23—Unification of Judah and Israel 37:24-28—Looking forward to the establishment of the new sanctuary in a single Davidic rulership</p>	<p>Ephesians 2 2:1-7—Bringing alive sinners who were once dead for their sins 2:8-10—Explanation 2:11-18—Unification of Jews and Gentiles 2:19-22—Looking forward to the final establishment of the new sanctuary in the rulership of Christ</p>
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The way Paul transforms this prophecy is consistent with the rest of the NT, in which promises made to Israel and Judah are transferred to the church, which consists of Jews and Gentiles (see **Rom 9:22-33**; **Heb 8:8-13**). This is reaffirmed in the book of Revelation. **Rev 7:15** speaks of a great multitude “in His temple” where God “will spread His tabernacle over them.” Those references are “a clear echo of the prophecy of Israel’s restoration in Ezek. 37:26-28. . . . The link with Ezekiel is confirmed from the parallel in Rev. 21:3, where Ezek. 37:27 is quoted more fully and is immediately followed in 21:4, 6b by the same OT allusions found in 7:16-17. Yet again, the innumerable multitudes of redeemed in the church are viewed as the fulfillment of a prophecy concerning Israel’s latter-day restoration. The application of Ezek. 37:27 to the church is striking because Ezekiel emphasizes that when this prophecy takes place the immediate result will be that ‘the nations will recognize that I am the Lord who sanctifies *Israel*, when my sanctuary is in their midst’ (37:28). Therefore, Ezekiel 37 was a prophecy uniquely applicable to ethnic or theocratic Israel in contrast to the nations, yet now John understands it as fulfilled in the church. . . . The application of this Israelite prophecy to the church is highlighted by the fact that Ezek. 37:27 refers to Israel as ‘my [God’s] people,’ which is a title included in the fuller quotation of Ezek. 37:27 found in Rev. 21:3, which is likewise applied to the church.” (Beale 1999a: 440-41)

d. *Hosea’s prophecy of the restoration of Israel (Hos 2:23)*. In Hosea, God says, “I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’” (**Hos 2:23**) In context, that was talking about the restoration of Israel. Both Paul (**Rom 9:25-26**) and Peter (**1 Pet 2:10**) quote that verse and apply it to the church, particularly calling of the Gentiles into the church.

e. *Joel’s prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32)*. In Joel’s prophecy, God promised to “pour out My Spirit on all mankind” (**Joel 2:28**). According to the form of the prophecy, God was speaking only to Israel (**Joel 2:27**; **3:1-2**). On the Day of Pentecost, however, Peter quoted that prophecy and specifically said that it was fulfilled by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the believers in Jesus Christ, which had caused them to speak in other languages (**Acts 2:14-21**). **Joel 2:32** also talks about those “on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem” who “call upon the name of the Lord” will escape God’s judgment. **Heb 12:22** says that those in Christ “have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (see also **Gal 4:21-31**). **Rom 10:13** quotes **Joel 2:32** and applies it to Jesus and the preaching of the gospel.

f. *Amos’ prophecy of the “rebuilding of the tabernacle of David” (Amos 9:11-12)*. The context of Amos’ prophecy was the restoration of Israel following God’s judgment and Israel’s captivity (**Amos 9:7-10, 13-15**). At the Council of Jerusalem in **Acts 15** the issue was whether or not the Gentiles who were turning in faith to Jesus Christ needed to submit to the Mosaic Law and be circumcised. In holding that they did not, in **Acts 15:13-19** the apostle James quoted **Amos 9:11-12** and said that that prophecy did not have to do with the restoration of Israel or the physical rebuilding of David’s throne or Israel’s tabernacle but instead was fulfilled by the Gentiles becoming part of the church. “The imagery of a rebuilding of the fallen tent of David parallels closely the imagery of the messianic age described in Isa 11:1. A root of Jesse will spring forth. It shall be an ensign to the peoples. The nations shall seek this sign. [Likewise] the tent of David is to be restored so the remnant of men may seek the Lord.” (Robertson 1988: 105) In fact, “the Gentiles now are having God’s name set on them, which indicates that the ‘tent of David’ already must have been restored” (Ibid.: 107).

4. Jesus’ founding the church on the basis of 12 disciples/12 apostles symbolized that He was founding a new, spiritual Israel. Jesus’ selection of 12 disciples/12 apostles (**Matt 10:1-2**; **Mark 3:13-19**; **Luke 6:12-26**) is symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel. “They are the representatives of and the active nucleus for the formation of the twelve new tribes” (Goppelt 1982: 108). James recognizes this by beginning his letter “to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad” (**Jas 1:1**). That letter is obviously written to Christians (see **Jas 2:1**). “In using the phrase [*ai dōdeka phulai*; “the twelve tribes”], the author looks on the recipients of the epistle as the true Israel. The church has quite naturally appropriated the title, for it was the work of the Messiah to reestablish the twelve tribes (Je. 3:18; Ezk. 37:19-24; Pss. Sol. 17:28),

and Christians recognized themselves as the true heirs of the Jewish faith (Romans 4; 1 Cor. 10:18; Gal. 4:21-31; Phil. 3:3).” (Davids 1982: 63) Significantly, Jesus did not identify Himself simply as one of the 12. Instead, he was the head.³⁵

a. In **Matt 19:27-28** Jesus says that, “In the regeneration [or, renewal of all things] when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (see also **Luke 22:29-30**). The reference to the “Son of Man” alludes to **Dan 7:13**. “In Daniel 7 it is Israel ‘the saints of the Most High’ [**Dan 7:22, 27**] who receives the kingdom and rules over the nations, whereas Jesus asserts that it will be the twelve disciples who will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. This transfer highlights the role of the disciples for the spiritual state and the eschatological fate of Israel.” (Schnabel 2002: 45) Additionally, Jesus’ reference to the Twelve judging Israel “probably refers to the Twelve sharing in judgment on the unbelieving people of Israel in association with Jesus rather than to some kind of rule over a reconstituted ethnic Israel. The language is symbolical, but the symbolism points to some kind of community which corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus is saying in the strongest way possible that the old Israel is coming under judgment, and that the judgment will be in the hands of those who have been called by him as his close disciples. The implication is that there will be what we may call a new Israel.” (Marshall 1992: 123)

b. On the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem are written “the names of the twelve tribes of Israel” (**Rev 21:12**), but on twelve foundation stones of the New Jerusalem are “the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (**Rev 21:14**). “Those who believe in this Jesus are unashamedly the true continuation of the ‘people of God’. The twelve gates of the new Jerusalem are named after the ‘twelve tribes of Israel’, but the city’s twelve foundations are named after the ‘twelve apostles of the Lamb’ (21:12-14). John is asserting the essential unity between Old Testament Israel and the followers of Jesus and his apostles. Rather than being dismissive of ‘Israel’ in the past, there is a bold appropriation of its status.” (Walker 1996: 239)

c. The apostles themselves recognized the significance of the “12”:

- In **Acts 1:12-26** they concluded that it was necessary to fill Judas Iscariot’s position as apostle.
- Although Paul was an apostle (see, e.g., **Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 9:1**), the NT (and Paul himself) recognizes a distinction between the apostleship of Paul and “the Twelve” (see **Acts 6:2; 1 Cor 15:5, 8**). This may have to do with the fact that Paul’s ministry primarily was to the Gentiles (see **Acts 9:15; 13:46; 18:6; Gal 1:16; 2:7**), whereas Peter, the evident leader and spokesman of the Twelve, primarily was an apostle to Jews (see **Gal 2:7-8**).

E. As the new, true, spiritual Israel, the church faces the same tests of faithfulness that OT physical Israel faced

1. As the new, true, spiritual Israel, the church is called to protect its purity before the Lord. “By focusing upon Jesus as the fulfillment of the covenant relationship, the NT is able to resolve the tension of the OT between ‘the kindness and the severity of God’, as Paul puts it in Romans 11:22. Israel experienced both: God’s kindness in that they became ‘Israel’ at all, and his severity in so far as they remained unredeemed ‘Jacob’. And now, because it is Jesus, rather than the church, who fulfills the covenant relationship, the church faces the same moral demand as Israel did, to ‘put to death what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry’ (Col. 3:5, author’s translation). Paul knows that Israel’s besetting sin of idolatry is an option for the church too, disguised, as always, as inordinate desire which is not longing and love for God. Christians live with the tension between Israel and Jacob within themselves until the final redemption comes (Rom. 8:23, etc.).” (Motyer 2000: 596)

2. Suffering and afflictions are not signs that God has abandoned the church, but are signs that God is purifying His new temple. As Peter discusses in **1 Pet 4:12-19**, believers “may be assured that their present sufferings—far from being an indication of God’s abandonment or of the failure of the hope promised in Christ’s resurrection—are in fact another indication that Christians are the new temple of God on which the Spirit rests and in which his fiery presence is purifying and proving his dwelling

³⁵ In their typological relationship, the church far surpasses Israel. This is seen in the fact that the church will judge the twelve tribes of Israel (**Matt 19:27-28; Luke 22:29-30**) and consists of people from every tribe, tongue, nation, and people of the world (**Rev 5:9; 7:9**). It is even seen in the language used in **Mark 3:14** when Christ “appointed” the twelve. The word translated “appointed” is the Greek word “*epoiēsen*,” which is the same word translated “created” in **Gen 1:1, LXX**. In other words, Christ was creating the new, worldwide people of God.

place. . . . Their present troubles are the inauguration of the messianic baptism of Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16-17), which cleanses those who bear Messiah's name that they may rejoice at the revelation of his glory and which will finally consume his enemies (2 Thess 1:7-8—where, as in 1 Pet 4:17, the enemies are described as those who do not obey the gospel). From this perspective afflictions for the name of Christ become themselves an occasion of joy, a cause for gratitude for the present resting of the Spirit of glory and of God on the new, living sanctuary.” (Johnson 1986: 291, 293)

V. Christ and the Church Fulfill and Replace the Temple

In his famous speech in **Acts 7**, Stephen pointed out that the tabernacle and temple were only models or shadows of true reality because “*the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands*” (**Acts 7:44-50**). Now in Christ the reality has appeared; therefore, the model or shadow fades away. Thus, **Heb 9:1-2, 11-12, 24** contrast the earthly tabernacle/temple which was a mere “copy” of the true one (Christ and heaven): “*Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.* ²*For there was a tabernacle prepared . . .* ¹¹*But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;* ¹²*and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption . . .* ²⁴*For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*” Consequently, as Jesus said, “*An hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father . . . [but] an hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth*” (**John 4:21, 23**).

A. *Jesus is the true Temple*

“The earthly tabernacle was a copy or shadow of the true dwelling place of God in heaven (Hebrews 8:5; 9:24). It showed what God was like and what was needed to deal with sin. In this way it symbolized what the Messiah was to do for our salvation. . . . The shadow was always inferior to the reality. The earthly tabernacle was made of earthly things, and could never equal the splendor or holiness of God in heaven. The earthly sacrifices of bulls and goats could never equal the blood of Christ, who cleansed us from sin forever. . . . In fact, the tabernacle foreshadowed the fact that Christ would become incarnate and dwell among us. ‘The Word became flesh and lived for awhile [tabernacled] among us’ [John 1:14]. . . . [With respect to Solomon’s building the permanent temple in Jerusalem] What does Solomon foreshadow? Why, the work of Christ, of course. Solomon was the son in David’s line, the line leading to the Messiah. He built a dwelling place for God, foreshadowing Christ who builds His church (Matthew 16:18) and who is Himself the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20) or foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11). Christ builds not on the earthly Mount Zion but on a heavenly site: ‘But you [Christians] have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God’ (Hebrews 12:22).” (Poynthress 1991: 12-14)

1. Jesus, not the Temple, was the unique dwelling place of God on the earth.

- Jesus was called “Emmanuel” which means “God with us” (**Matt 1:23**).
- **John 1:14** says, “*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*” The word “*dwelt*” is the verbal form of the noun “tent” or “tabernacle” (so literally means that He “*tabernacled*” among us).
- Just as God filled the Tabernacle and the Temple (**Exod 40:34-38; Num 9:15-23; 1 Kgs 8:10-11; 2 Chron 5:11-14; 7:1-2**), so the Holy Spirit publicly came down upon Jesus and filled Him (**Matt 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34**). Jesus was both led by the Spirit and filled with the Spirit (**Matt 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 1:15; 4:1**). Unlike God’s leaving the Temple, the Holy Spirit remained with Jesus (**John 1:32-33**) until Jesus released him on the cross (**Luke 23:46**). The Spirit glorifies Jesus (**John 16:14**). Jesus has the power to send the Holy Spirit to indwell his followers (**John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7**).

2. Jesus fulfilled the role of the Temple in a greater way than ever could occur through Temple rituals.

- a. *Jesus had the unique ability to forgive people’s sins on their own, without their having to offer any sacrifices or take part in any OT Temple rituals at all (see Matt 9:2-6; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-25; 7:40-50; John 8:1-11).* “The paralytic lowered through the roof by four friends, for example, was not only healed, but forgiven his sins. This angered the leaders because Jesus was claiming to do something that could only happen at the Temple; thus he was claiming to be the true Temple (John 2:18-22).” (Gentry 2010: 39) “In just the same way, Jesus offered membership in the renewed people of the covenant god *on his own authority* and *by his own process*. . . . Jesus declared on his own authority that Zaccheus was a true son of Abraham, and that salvation had ‘today’ come to his house [**Luke 19:1-10**]. In other words, what Zaccheus

would normally have obtained by participating in the sacrificial cult, Jesus gave him on the spot. . . . What made each such act so scandalous, was not (of course) that Jews of Jesus' day were opposed to forgiveness, love, grace and so forth, but that they were not expecting these gifts to be available outside the context of Temple and cult. . . . Forgiveness was an eschatological blessing; if Israel went into exile because of her sins, then forgiveness consists in her returning: returning to YHWH, returning from exile. Jesus' action and claim indicated that this symbol of return was now becoming a reality. . . . And, since Jesus was claiming to offer the new heart [as promised in the New Covenant (see above, **CHRIST AND THE CHURCH AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OT**, section **II.C. *The New Covenant is fulfilled in Christ and the church***)], the blessing of the new covenant through which people would at last be able to keep the *Shema* [**Deut 6:4-9**] by loving their god and neighbor . . . indicates that, for Jesus, part of the point of the kingdom he was claiming to inaugurate would bring with it all that the Temple offered, thereby replacing, and making redundant, Israel's greatest symbol." (Wright 1996: 257, 434-35) In fact, through the one sacrifice of Himself, Jesus permanently atones for the sins of people from "*every tribe and tongue and people and nation*" (**Rev 5:9**; see **Hebrews 9-10**). The sacrifices and rituals performed at the Temple only covered Israel's sins and those only temporarily.

b. In **Rom 9:4-5** Paul declares that Jesus is qualitatively superior to all of Israel's other blessings and advantages, including temple worship. In **Rom 9:4** "*the service*" (*hē latreia*) "likely refers to 'the temple service' (so NASB, NASB update) or 'the temple worship' (NEB, NIV), renderings that are preferable to vaguer translation 'the worship' of RSV, NAB, and NRSV" (Sweeney 2003: 608n.16). Thus, Jesus not only was the perfect sacrifice for sin, but also is the perfect high priest in the true Temple (**Heb 2:17; 4:14-5:10; 7:1-8:6; 10:11-22**).

c. *The mercy seat*. The LXX (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Septuagint, which was used during Jesus' time on earth and often is quoted in the NT) translates the word for "mercy seat" (the lid of the ark of the covenant in the Tabernacle and Temple, which was sprinkled with the blood of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement), as "*hilastērion*" (**Exod 25:17**, LXX; see also **Heb 9:5** which refers to the mercy seat as the *hilastērion*). **Rom 3:25** calls Jesus' sacrifice on the cross a "*propitiation*" (or "sacrifice of atonement"—NIV). The word used for "propitiation" is *hilastērion*.

3. Jesus asserted His superiority and authority over the Temple.

a. In **Matt 12:6** Jesus said, "*I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.*" Jesus is "*greater than the temple*" because the temple was simply a building made by men, which pointed to God and the created universe. On the other hand, Jesus is God Himself and is the one who both created and sustains the universe (**Heb 1:1-3**). "Israel's former, physical temple was but a physical foreshadowing of Christ and his people as the temple. For, remember, the primary point of the temple was that it was the place where God's glorious presence was manifested on earth to his people. Now that Jesus has come as God incarnate, he is now the place where God's presence is manifested in the world." (Beale 2004: 276)

b. In **John 1:51** Jesus said, "*You will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.*" That is an allusion to **Gen 28:12** in which Jacob's temporary sanctuary memorialized a link between heaven and earth. That was a precursor to the Temple, where God's presence in heaven was linked to earth. Jesus' identification of Himself as the stairway of **Genesis 28** is another way of claiming that He, not the Jerusalem Temple, is the primary link between heaven and earth.

c. In **John 4:21-26** Jesus reaffirmed that *He is the one to establish true worship of God, not the Temple in Jerusalem*. The Samaritan woman had asked whether the correct temple where worship should be conducted was the temple in Jerusalem or the one on Mount Gerizim (**John 4:20**). In **John 4:22** Jesus said, "*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.*" In other words, *now*, according to the Law of Moses, the correct temple is the one in Jerusalem. But in **John 4:21, 23** Jesus said, "*An hour is coming when neither in this mountain or in Jerusalem will you worship the Father [but] true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.*" When Jesus refers to his "hour" in the book of John, he is referring to the hour of his death on the cross (see **John 2:4; 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1**; see also **7:30; 8:20; 16:21**). He was saying that, although there is a temple in Jerusalem where priests make sacrifices, they were only pointing to him—and he was about to make the one true sacrifice to atone for all sin; when he did that there would no longer be any

need for temples (because he is the true temple), or priests (because he is the priest to end all priests), or sacrifices (because he is the true sacrifice). By saying “*neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father*” (**John 4:21**), Jesus was saying that the entire OT sacrificial system of worship was being scrapped. From now on true worship may take place anywhere in the world as long as one has Jesus.

d. *Jesus’ statements about His disciples not fasting and putting new wine into new wineskins (Matt 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39) are eschatological and indicate that in Him the true temple has been rebuilt.* “Fasting in this period was not, for Jews, simply an ascetic discipline, part of the general practice of piety. It had to do with Israel’s present condition: she was still in exile. More specifically, it had to do with commemorating the destruction of the Temple. Zechariah’s promise that the fasts would turn into feasts [**Zech 8:19**] could come true only when YHWH restored the fortunes of his people. That, of course, was precisely what Jesus’ cryptic comments [regarding His disciples not fasting and new wineskins] implied. In other words, the party is in full swing, and nobody wants glum faces at a wedding. This is not a piece of ‘teaching’ about ‘religion’ or ‘morality’; nor is it the dissemination of a timeless truth. It is a claim about eschatology. The time is fulfilled; the exile is over; the bridegroom is at hand. Jesus’ acted symbol, feasting rather than fasting, brings into public visibility his controversial claim, that in his work Israel’s hope was being realized; more specifically, that in his work *the Temple was being rebuilt*. Those who had got so used to living in exile that they could not hear the message of liberation were deaf indeed.” (Wright 1996: 433-34)

4. Jesus judged the Temple.

a. *Jesus drove out the moneychangers from the Temple (Matt 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-46; John 2:13-16).* In doing that, Jesus quoted from **Isa 56:7** (“*my house will be called a house of prayer*”), which is part of a prophecy (**Isa 56:3-8**) that God would call the Gentiles to Himself in his “Temple” (“*holy mountain*”). He also quoted from **Jer 7:11** (“*den of robbers*”), which is part of a word from the Lord (**Jer 7:1-11**) that God has seen how Israel has not practiced justice, has oppressed foreigners and the helpless, has shed innocent blood, and has gone after other gods. Jesus’ point is that just as God rejected the first Temple in 586 BC because it had become corrupt, so the physical Temple in Jerusalem had to be replaced with a greater “Temple” because it was corrupt and not fulfilling its role. “In addition to Isaiah and Jeremiah, the whole incident cries out to be seen, as various writers have recently argued, within the context of a deliberate reapplication of Zechariah. The quasi-royal entry into the city, and Jesus’ messianic authority over the Temple . . . evokes Zechariah 9.9 and 6.12; the warning of a great cataclysm echoes 14.1-5. Further, the whole context speaks of the mighty acts whereby YHWH will set up his kingdom once and for all (14.9), whereupon the Gentiles will come in to worship (14.16-19). In this context, it may be that the action reported by Mark 11.16, where Jesus refused to allow anyone to carry vessels through the Temple (something also forbidden in rabbinic literature), was both part of the ‘cleansing’ side of the story and, more importantly, another symbol, indicating, by veiled allusion to Zechariah 14.20f., that ‘the day’ had at last arrived.” (Wright 1996: 422)

b. *Casting out the moneychangers may have briefly stopped the offering of sacrifices by shutting down the procedure by which animals were bought and sacrificed.* If that is the case, it also would have indicated that the Temple’s purpose of offering sacrifices for forgiveness was passing away. “Without the right money, individual worshippers could not purchase their sacrificial animals. Without animals, sacrifice could not be offered. Without sacrifice, the Temple had lost its whole *raison d’être* [reason for existence]. The fact that Jesus effected only a brief cessation of sacrifice fits perfectly with the idea of symbolic action. He was not attempting a reform; he was symbolizing judgment. . . . Jesus’ action symbolized his belief that, in returning to Zion, YHWH would not after all take up residence in the Temple, legitimating its present administration and its place and function within the first-century Jewish symbolic world. . . . The brief disruption which Jesus effected in the Temple’s normal business symbolized the destruction which would overtake the whole institution within a generation.” (Wright 1996: 423-24)

c. *In the OT law, anyone who had a physical defect had not been permitted to serve in the Temple (Lev 21:16-24).* When Jesus cast out the moneychangers, “*the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them*” (**Matt 21:14**). That again indicates that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy of **Isa 56:3-8** that there would be a new people of God “*in My house,*”

since that prophecy had indicated that eunuchs would be able to worship with Gentiles. We also see the new people of God as prophesied by Isaiah in **Isa 56:3-8** fulfilled in **Acts 8:26-38** when the Ethiopian eunuch converted to Christ and was baptized and with the coming of the Gentiles to faith in Christ, since all believers in Christ, regardless of physical defects or ethnic background, are now “priests” in the new, true, house of God (**Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10**).

5. Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple.

a. In **Matt 21:18-22** (**Mark 11:12-14, 20-24**) *Jesus cursed the fig tree*. The fig tree clearly represents God’s rejection of Israel (as it did in **Jer 8:11-13** to which it alludes). Central to rejection of Israel is rejection of the Temple. That is corroborated by Jesus’ remark about casting “*this mountain*” into the sea. The “mountain” probably referred to the temple mount, since that was the most important mountain in Jerusalem and the Temple was often synonymous with the mountain on which it was located. “The saying is not simply a miscellaneous comment on how prayer and faith can do such things as curse fig trees. It is a very specific word of judgment: the Temple mountain is, figuratively speaking, to be taken up and cast into the sea.” (Wright 1996: 422)

b. In **Matt 21:33-46** (**Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19**) *Jesus rejected Israel and the Temple in the parable of the Landowner and the Vineyard*. That parable alludes to **Isa 5:1-7**. Early Aramaic and Jewish writings equated the vineyard, the choicest vine, or the tower with the Temple (Beale 2004: 183). Temple imagery unites the agricultural and architectural metaphors in the parable. Jesus’ reference to “*the stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone*” (**Matt 21:42**, quoting from **Ps 118:22**) implies that “rejection of Jesus as the ‘cornerstone’ of the temple . . . is equivalent to rejection of Jesus as the true temple” (Ibid.: 184). Later NT writers explicitly identify Jesus as the “cornerstone” upon which the the new, true Temple (the church) is built (**Acts 4:10-11; Eph 2:20-22; 1 Pet 2:4-8** [which quotes **Ps 118:22**]).

c. *Although Jesus affirmed the temple as the traditional dwelling place of God on the earth* (**Matt 23:21**), *in that same discourse he called it “your house” and said that it “is being left to you desolate”* (**Matt 23:38**). Those statements indicate that because of Israel’s sin and disobedience to God—pre-eminently in rejecting Jesus as their Messiah—the Temple was no longer fulfilling its role. Thus, it was no longer “God’s” Temple and would be destroyed.

d. *Jesus specifically said that Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed* (**Matt 24:1-2; Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:20-24; see also Matt 26:61; Mark 14:58; Acts 6:13-14**). In each of these passages Jesus contrasted the Temple’s destruction with His own kingdom and coming.

6. Jesus’ body, especially in his resurrection, is identified as the new, true Temple.

a. *Jesus specifically called His body “the temple.”* He contrasted the destruction of the earthly Temple in Jerusalem with the resurrection of his own body (**Mark 14:58; John 2:18-22; see also Matt 26:60-61; 27:40; Mark 14:57-58; 15:29**).

b. *The account in Mark 14:57-58 of Jesus’ trial*. There it says that some gave “*false testimony*” against Jesus saying, “*We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’*” The falsehood of the testimony “lies most probably in the accusation that Jesus himself would destroy the Jerusalem Temple” (Walker 1996: 10). The phrase “*made with hands . . . made without hands*” contrasts the Jerusalem Temple with Jesus: “The description of the Jerusalem Temple as ‘made with hands’ (*cheiropoiētos*) is a strong means of playing down its significance. This had been a way of belittling the pagan idols (e.g. Ps. 15:4; cf. Isa. 46:6); to describe the Temple in such a fashion was potentially incendiary. Yet in this context the point of the phrase lies rather in its contrast with the description of the alternative Temple that was ‘not made with hands’ (*acheiropoiētos*). The Jerusalem Temple had been ordained of God, but Jesus predicted the appearance of a new kind of Temple, originating with God—in comparison with which the physical Temple would appear as merely human, ‘made with hands.’” (Ibid.)

c. **Heb 8:1-2** *directly links Christ’s resurrection with the tabernacle*. That passage talks about Christ’s “*having taken his seat . . . in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man*” (see also **Heb 9:11**). Thus, the Temple in Jerusalem “was an imperfect human-made realization of the prophecy [**2 Sam 7:11-13**] that a descendant of David would build a temple, and which has found fulfillment on a grander scale in Christ’s resurrection” (Beale 2004: 237).

7. When Jesus was crucified “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (**Matt 27:51;**

Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The tearing of the veil symbolized the destruction of the Temple and the free access that people now have through Jesus to God. As a result of Jesus' sacrifice, we now have "confidence to enter the holy place . . . by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil" (**Heb 10:19-20**). In Christ no one has to (or even can) approach God through the Old Covenant Mosaic system which Jesus superseded.

8. **Jesus is the true reality which the Tabernacle and Temple in Jerusalem only foreshadowed (Heb 4:14-5:10; 7:1-10:22).** Significantly, **Hebrews** never specifically refers to the "temple" but always to the "tabernacle." Walker points out why: "The author of Hebrews, however, was not wanting to cast any aspersions on the contemporary Temple in practice, but rather making a far more fundamental point concerning the very essence of the Temple. By concentrating his attention on the 'tabernacle' in the wilderness, he could argue that the Tabernacle system of worship, even when considered in its most pristine and pure form under Moses (before any human sin might have twisted the divine intention), had been declared redundant by God through Jesus. His critique of the present Temple was not bound up with any political issues or personal disenchantment, but rather with God's eternal purposes." (Walker 1996: 207-08) Jesus is the final spiritual reality. The entire OT Temple-system is no longer valid.

a. **Heb 4:14-5:10; 7:1-10:22** portray Christ as both the high priest and as the Tabernacle/Temple. That has the following significance: "Christ is the priest-king whose resurrection was the beginning of the latter-day temple and whose ascent into heaven meant that the temple's centre of gravity had shifted from earth to heaven, and would remain there during the present age. Christ as a priest-king continues reigning and ministering within the heavenly temple-palace." (Beale 2004: 299)

b. **Heb 8:1-10:22** establishes that the literal sanctuary is the heavenly one and the figurative sanctuary is the earthly one. "Hebrews 9:8-9 even refers to the old 'tabernacle' (precisely, the holy place) as a 'symbol' or 'parable' of the end-time tabernacle (e.g., in 9:11) in order to underscore that the former tabernacle was not ultimately the real one" (Beale 2004: 295).

c. **Heb 9:11** says that Christ "entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation." **Heb 9:12** adds that he entered the holy place "through his own blood." Thus, the true, heavenly "tabernacle" is equated with Christ Himself (i.e., with "his blood").

d. **Heb 10:19-20** specifically says that "the veil" [in the Temple] is "His flesh." The OT was pointing to Christ all along. "In Christ is realization. It is not so much that Christ fulfills what the temple means; rather Christ is the meaning for which the temple existed. . . . Christ is the true temple, the true light of glory, the true manna, the true vine. The coming of the true supersedes the figurative. The veil of the temple made with hands is destroyed, for its symbolism is fulfilled." (Clowney 1972-73: 177, 183)

B. As the visible representation of Christ on the earth, the church is God's "Temple" on the earth

"The Cornelius episode [**Acts 10**] forms a significant part of a biblical theology of mission that enables us to understand the apparent change in perspective from the Old Testament ingathering of gentiles at the temple in Jerusalem, to the New Testament emphasis on outreach to the nations. The heart of this modification is expressed by Stephen as he indicates the need to move from a fixed temple made with hands (**Acts 7:47-51**). Jesus is now the temple that is both in heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God, and on earth through the Spirit and the gospel. The gentiles still flow in to the temple as Isaiah saw it, but the temple is now wherever the Spirit of Jesus gathers his people through the preaching of the gospel." (Goldsworthy 2000: 241) The early church recognized the significance of the destruction of the physical temple in Jerusalem in AD 70, and the fact that God has created His church to be the new, true, spiritual temple. The *Epistle of Barnabas* (c.70-131), 16.1-10, stated: "Finally, I will also speak to you about the temple, and how those wretched men went astray and set their hope on their building, as though it were God's house, and not on their God who created them. . . . You now know that their hope was in vain. . . . For because they went to war, it was torn down by their enemies, and now the very servants of their enemies will rebuild it. . . . But let us inquire whether there is in fact a temple of God. There is—where he himself says he is building and completing it! . . . How then will it be built in the name of the Lord? Learn! Before we believed in God, our heart's dwelling-place was corrupt and weak, truly a temple built by human hands, because it was full of idolatry and was the home of demons, for we did whatever was contrary to God. . . . By receiving the forgiveness of sins and setting our hope on the Name, we become new, created again from the beginning. Consequently, God truly dwells in our dwelling-place—that is, in us. . . . This is the spiritual temple that is being built for the Lord."

1. The church as a whole, and individual believers, are called the "Temple of God."

a. *The church is called the one “body of Christ,” and individual believers “members” of that body (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:17; 12:12-27; Eph 1:22-23; 2:16; 4:4, 12; 5:30; Col 1:18; 3:15).* Thus, just as Christ called his body the Temple, so the church is the Temple. In **2 Cor 5:1** Paul uses both “temple” and “tabernacle” language by calling our bodies, literally, “*our earthly house of a tent.*”

b. *The church as a whole is explicitly called the Temple of God (1 Cor 3:9, 16-17; 2 Cor 6:16-7:1; Eph 2:21; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 3:12; see also Rev 13:6 where the church is called “His tabernacle”).* “The actual phrase ‘temple of God’ is found ten other times in the New Testament outside of 2 Thessalonians [**Matt 26:61; 1 Cor 3:16, 17a, 17b; 2 Cor 6:16a, 16b; Rev 3:12; 7:15; 11:1, 19**], and, except once, it always refers to the church. Only one time does it refer to a literal temple in Israel of the past or future. In Matthew 26:61 Jesus is quoted as saying, ‘I am able to destroy *the temple of God* and to rebuild it in three days.’ . . . The physical temple is mentioned in order to indicate a redemptive-historical shift to the end-time temple. Matthew sees the material temple being destroyed and rebuilt in Jesus’ resurrection body. . . . Israel’s former, physical temple was but a physical foreshadowing of Christ and his people as the temple. For, remember, the primary point of the temple was that it was the place where God’s glorious presence was manifested on earth to his people. Now that Jesus has come as God incarnate, he is now the place where God’s presence is manifested in the world.” (Beale 2004: 275-76) Significantly, in **1-2 Corinthians** “Paul was able to refer to believers in the 50sAD, while the Jerusalem temple was still standing, as the temple of God indwelt by the Spirit” (Sweeney 2003: 629).³⁶ Thus, in God’s eyes the Jerusalem Temple had already been replaced even before it was physically destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. In **2 Cor 6:16-7:1**, after comparing the church to a temple, Paul concludes by saying, “*Therefore, having these promises.*” The promises from which he quotes in **2 Cor 6:16-18** include **Lev 26:11-12, 2 Sam 7:14, and Ezek 37:27**, where God promises to build a house and establish David’s throne forever and be a father to him and to establish his sanctuary and dwelling place forever with his people. By referring to those promises in the context of calling the church “*the temple of the living God*” (**2 Cor 6:16**) Paul is saying, “The fullest realization of God’s covenant, the eternal and abiding presence of God, binding his people to himself and himself to them forever: these are the promises that are fulfilled in the church—we *are* a temple of the living God” (Clowney 1972-73: 186).

c. *Because the church is a living Temple not made by hands, just as we are individually called “members” of the “body” of Christ, so we are called “living stones” that “are being built up as a spiritual house” (1 Pet 2:5).* In the same way, **Eph 2:21-22** talks about the church as a temple that is “*being fitted together,*” is “*growing,*” and is “*a dwelling of God in the Spirit.*”

d. *Individual believers are called a Temple (1 Cor 6:19).* Only by being united with Christ can an individual properly be described as a Temple.

2. The church is the unique dwelling place of God on the earth. Like the Tabernacle and the original Temple, the church has been filled with the presence of God (**Matt 18:20; 28:20; John 14:17, 23; 20:22; Acts 1:8; 2:1-11, 38-39; 4:31; 8:14-17; 10:44-47; Eph 3:19; 5:18; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19**). Moses had prayed, “*Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!*” (**Num 11:29**). Beginning on the day of Pentecost, the Lord has done that. No longer is the Spirit or His gifts limited to the few, but now in the church God has poured out His Spirit on all of His people, regardless of age, sex, or race (**Acts 2:14-18**). Peter even uses language reminiscent of the Shekinah glory of God coming upon the OT Tabernacle and Temple when he says, “*The Spirit of glory and of God rests on you*” (**1 Pet 4:14**). That verse echoes **Isa 11:2** which says, “*The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him.*” There is likely another strand of OT background to the passage: “the motif of the temple sanctuary as the ‘resting place’ of Yahweh (1 Chr 6:31; 28:2; 2 Chr 6:41; Ps 132:7-8, 14; Isa 66:1-2). . . . Further confirmation for the temple imagery that underlies this reference to the Spirit’s resting upon believers is to be found in Peter’s earlier description of the Church as a ‘spiritual house’ in which ‘spiritual sacrifices’ are offered by a holy priesthood (2:5).” (Johnson 1986: 289-90) In the new, true Temple, God no longer just dwells *among* his people, but he now dwells *within* his people. Further, the Spirit “seals” His people, unlike the case in the OT (**Eph 1:13-14**). Thus, God will *never leave* the new, true Temple of the church, unlike the old physical Temple (**Matt 18:20; 28:20; Rom 8:33-39**).
3. The church received the “fire” of God at its beginning, as did the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple.

³⁶ “The dating of 1 Corinthians in the fifth decade of the first century is not greatly debated” (Sweeney 2003: 629n.116).

a. *When Aaron was consecrated as high priest and offered sacrifices on the altar in the Tabernacle, “fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offerings and the portions of fat on the altar” (Lev 9:24).* When Solomon dedicated the original Temple, *“fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house” (2 Chron 7:1).* The Shekinah glory of the Lord left the Temple before the Babylonian captivity (**Ezek 9:3; 10:1-19; 11:22-23**). There is no reference to either the Shekinah returning or to fire from heaven coming from heaven when the new Temple was constructed by Zerubbabel following the exile (see **Ezra 3-6; Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 2-4**).

b. *The next reference to the “fire” is when John the Baptist said that Jesus “will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16).* “The mention of ‘and fire’ has caused some controversy. . . . There is a question whether the ‘Spirit-fire’ refers to judgment or the refining fire of the Spirit. But this disjunction is unnecessary. It is best to see both nuances: those who accept the message of the kingdom are purified by the Spirit while those who reject it face judgment.” (Osborne 2010: 116) On the Day of Pentecost *“suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” (Acts 2:2-4)* Those “tongues as of fire” were the outward, visible sign that the spiritual truth of John’s prophecy had been fulfilled. Significantly, whereas the burnt offerings in the Tabernacle and Temple were consumed by the fire, the fire did not consume the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, because we are to be *“a living and holy sacrifice” (Rom 12:1).* For Christians, this means that “the new age begun in [Jesus] requires that the chaff of our lives be burned away. That fire, the fire of the Holy Spirit, is the fire of a love so intense that we fear its grasp. Yet it is the love unleashed in Jesus’ life—the life into which we are baptized—that, as Paul tells us in Rom. 6, frees us from the sin revealed through the law but from which the law cannot in itself deliver us.” (Hauerwas 2006: 48)

4. Just as the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle and Temple, so it filled the church. When the Tabernacle was erected, *“the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” (Exod 40:34-35)* Similarly, when the Temple was dedicated, *“the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.” (2 Chron 5:13-14)* On the Day of Pentecost, a similar phenomenon happened but, as with the fire from heaven, there was a difference. The glory of the Lord filled the house where the disciples were *“like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance” (Acts 2:2, 4).* In the Old Covenant, when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and temple the priests could *not* minister; in the New Covenant, the church is *in Christ*; thus, the glory of the Lord, the fullness of the Spirit, *empowers* the church for ministry!

5. Although the Tabernacle and Temple under the Old Covenant were made by men, the new, true Temple of the church, and the individual believers, are in essence a heavenly and spiritual entity—“a building from God, not made with hands” (2 Cor 5:1-5; see also Acts 7:44-50). **Revelation 11** depicts the church as a heavenly Temple and reality, even though it currently exists and faces hardships on the earth. **Rev 11:1-2** discusses measuring the “Temple of God.” That picks up imagery from **Rev 3:12** where Jesus says, *“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will not go out from it anymore.”* **Rev 11:4** refers to “lampstands,” which had earlier been identified in **Rev 1:20** as the churches. **Rev 11:4**, which discusses “two lampstands” and “two olive trees” also draws on imagery from **Zechariah 4**. In that passage, the “lampstand” was identified as representing the Temple which had been begun (see **Zech 4:2, 4-10**) and the “olive trees” were identified as the two “appointed ones” (probably Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the king, under whom the Temple was being rebuilt after the exile in Babylon) (see **Zech 4:3, 11-14**). This dual role of the church as priests and kings is affirmed in **Rev 1:6; 5:10** and **20:6**. **Rev 13:6** further points out that just as in **Rev 11:7-10** where believers may be killed in the flesh on the earth, nevertheless their true dwelling place, the true tabernacle, is in heaven. **Rev 11:19** mentions that the “Temple of God” *“is in heaven.”* To the same effect is **Eph 2:6** which says that Christ *“raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”*

6. Although in the OT Tabernacle and Temple only priests could enter the actual structure, in the new, true Temple of the church, all believers are royal and holy priests (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10). In the

OT, a priest had to pass a twofold test: he had to be of the tribe of Levi and had to be without a physical defect (**Lev 21:16-24; Num 4:1-4; 8:23-26; 1 Chron 23:24-32**). “Those who had passed the twofold test were dressed in white raiment, and their names were properly inscribed” (Edersheim 1988: 95). This is alluded to in **Rev 3:5** with respect to believers: “*He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life.*” Additionally, the material of the priests’ vestments “were made of ‘linen,’ or, more accurately, ‘byssus,’ the white shining cotton-stuff of Egypt” (Ibid.: 97). Accordingly, **Rev 19:8** says that Christ’s bride (the church) is clothed “*in fine linen [Gr. = bussinos], bright and clean; for the fine linen [bussinos] is the righteous acts of the saints.*”

- Our great high priest is Jesus Christ who has unlimited access to, and presence in, the true heavenly temple of God (**Heb 4:14-5:10; 7:1-10:25**).
- Unlike in the physical tabernacle and temple, we also have unlimited access to God our Father through Jesus Christ (**Matt 27:51; Heb 10:19-22**).
- The “sacrifices” we offer in the new, true Temple are our bodies and lives (**Rom 12:1**), our praises and thanksgivings (**Heb 13:15**), the giving of our money to further the gospel and help the poor and needy (**2 Cor 9:1, 12-13; Phil 4:18**), and the “spiritual sacrifices” of our faithful lives in service to Christ and to our fellow human being in his name (**Rom 15:16; Heb 13:16; James 1:27; 1 Pet 2:5**).
- Because all believers are “priests” in the new, true Temple of God, we are to be holy in all aspects of our lives just like the OT priests were to be holy (**1 Cor 3:17; 6:12-20; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Jas 1:27**).

7. Like the OT Temple, the church, as the new, true Temple of God, is characterized by its gold, silver, and precious stones. In **1 Cor 3:10-12** Paul, in discussing Christ and acts of faith, talks about a “foundation” and then building on it with “gold, silver, precious stones.” The only other place in Scripture where a “foundation” of a building is laid and “gold,” “silver,” and “precious stones” are “built” upon it is Solomon’s Temple (**1 Kgs 5:17-6:36; 1 Chron 29:1-9**). Since the new, true Temple is a living Temple, the gold, silver, and precious stones are the works which we do in this life to build the kingdom and help the poor and needy (**1 Cor 3:9-17**).

8. The church is God’s instrument to carry out God’s plan to have the earth as his dwelling place filled with holy people (**Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rev 5:9; 7:9**). That was God’s original intent in the Garden of Eden and was symbolized by the design of the tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem. As the church is faithful to its mission to “*go and make disciples of all the nations*” (**Matt 28:19**), that plan is more and more manifested on the earth. The universality of Christ’s mission is seen in two ways:

- a. *There are no geographic limits to Christ’s kingdom.* The Tabernacle and Jerusalem Temples were limited to the physical places where they were located. People had to come to them in order to worship God in the temple. However, in **John 4:21, 23** Jesus said, “*An hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . But an hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.*” In Christ, God has come to his people rather than the other way around. Thus, Jesus said, “*Where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst*” (**Matt 18:20**).
- b. *There are no racial, ethnic, or tribal limits to Christ’s kingdom.* In the Old Covenant Israel was God’s “chosen people” (**Deut 7:6**). Under the Old Covenant Jews and Gentiles were divided. In the physical Temple there was an actual wall separating Jews from Gentiles. There also were separate areas for men and women, priests and lay people. In the new, true temple of the church, the division between Jews and Gentiles has been eliminated. Together as “*one new man*” the church is “*growing into a holy temple in the Lord*” (**Eph 2:11-22**; see also **Rom 3:22; Gal 2:11-14**). In Christ all are equal, regardless of sex, ethnic background, economic status, language, or other physical characteristics (**1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11; Rev 5:9; 7:9**).

9. The sufferings of the church are part of God’s judgment on his own “Temple” (**1 Pet 4:12-17**). In **1 Pet 4:14** Peter used language reminiscent of the Shekinah glory of God coming upon the OT Tabernacle and Temple when he described “*the Spirit of glory and of God*” resting on the church. That statement was made in the context of the church’s “*ordeal,*” “*testing,*” “*sufferings,*” and being “*reviled*” (**1 Pet 4:12-16**). Peter concludes, “*For it is time for judgment to begin with the household [or house] of God*” (**1 Pet 4:17**). The Greek word he uses is *oikos* which can be translated either “household” or “house.” In **1 Pet 2:5** the same word plainly refers to the church as the new “*spiritual house*” (temple) of God. Although most translations render it “household” in **1 Pet 4:17**, the background of the passage suggests that the better translation here probably is “house,” as in “temple.” “The imagery is drawn from two Old

Testament passages which speak of God’s work of judgement beginning in the Jerusalem Temple (Ezek. 9; Mal. 3:1-5). Peter now takes this scriptural teaching and applies it without apology to the Church. The Christian community thus inherits not just the privileges but also the demanding responsibilities of the Jerusalem Temple (the first place to witness God’s judgement). This was a clear example of how the Church needed to eschew triumphalism and always apply the biblical theme of judgement in the first instance to itself. It also made quite plain that the Church had the right to see itself as the true inheritor of these Old Testament realities. Christians were the new Temple.” (Walker 1996: 311; see also Johnson 1986: 285-94)

VI. Jesus Fulfilled and Replaced the Jewish Feasts

Col 2:16-17 says that “*no one is to act as your judge . . . in respect to a festival or a new moon . . . things which are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ*” (see also **Gal 4:9-11**). Sacrifices were a required part of all of the feasts and festivals. Because Christ was the one, permanent sacrifice which fulfilled the entire sacrificial system, he thereby fulfilled all of the feasts and festivals. If Christ did not fulfill all of the OT feasts and other ceremonies, then we should still be keeping them, because they were said to be “*perpetual statutes*” (i.e., were to be kept “forever”; see **Exod 12:14; Lev 23:14, 21, 31, 41**). The fact that the church has never kept these OT customs shows that it has recognized that all the feasts pointed to Christ and their substance has been fulfilled in Christ. We keep the feasts forever “in Christ,” and therefore do not have to observe the outward *forms* as required by the Old Covenant Mosaic Law. How Jesus fulfilled each of the feasts and festivals is discussed below.

A. OT Israel’s calendar

1. OT Israel used a lunar calendar; each new day began and ended at sundown (see **Gen 1:1, 8, 19, 23, 31**). Because the lunar calendar was 360 days (12x30), every so often they had to add a “leap month.” OT Israel also had a civil calendar and a sacred calendar. The first month of the civil calendar (Tishri, which corresponds to September-October) was the seventh month of the sacred calendar (Abib [or, after the exile, called Nisan], which corresponds to March-April), and *vice versa*.³⁷ Each month began with a new moon (**Num 10:10, 28:11, 1 Sam 20:5, Ps 81:3, Isa 66:23, Ezek 46:3, Amos 8:5, Col 2:16**). The first day of the new year (1 Tishri) is called *Rosh Ha-Shanah* (“head of the year”) and was marked by the Feast of Trumpets. Every week ended with the Sabbath day when the Israelites were supposed to rest and do no work (**Gen 2:2-3; Exod 16:22-23; 20:9-11; 23:12; 31:13-17; 34:21**). When the Sabbath ended at sundown, the new week began. The Jewish months corresponded to our months as follows:

Jewish Month	Begins New Moon of	Bible References
1. Abib* / Nisan	March-April	Exod 13:4; 23:15; Neh 2:1
2. Zif* / Iyyar	April-May	1 Kgs 6:1, 37
3. Sivan	May-June	Est 8:9
4. Tammuz	June-July	---
5. Ab / Av	July-August	---
6. Elul	August-September	Neh 6:15
7. Ethanim* / Tishri	September-October	1 Kgs 8:2
8. Bul* / Marheshvan / Heshvan	October-November	1 Kgs 6:38
9. Chisleu / Chisleu / Kislev	November-December	Neh 1:1
10. Tebeth / Tevet	December-January	Est 2:16
11. Shebat / Shevat	January-February	Zech 1:7
12. Adar	February-March	Est 3:7
13. 2nd Adar (7 times every 19 years)	March 14,15	----
* Pre-exilic names		

2. Israel also had a “Sabbath year” and a “year of Jubilee.” The Sabbath year was every seven years. During that year the land was to lie fallow (**Exod 23:10-11; Lev 25:1-7**); all debts (except from foreigners) were to be forgiven (**Deut 15:1-11**); and Hebrew slaves were to be set free (**Exod 21:1-6; Deut 15:12-18**). The year of Jubilee was every 50 years. At that time debts were to be cancelled; Hebrew slaves freed; the land would lie fallow; and each parcel was to be returned to its original owner (**Lev 25:8-55**). The Bible indicates that one reason for the exile in Babylon was Israel’s failure to keep these required Sabbaths for the land (see **Lev 26:34-35; 2 Chron 36:20-21; Jer 25:11-12; 29:10**).

³⁷ While Israel was still in Egypt, God had changed the calendar when he established the Feast of Passover (**Exod 12:2**). John Sittema explains that he was “announcing to a people long structured by the agricultural calendar of the Egyptians that life would start anew with their liberation. . . . Israel was to remember—with each yearly celebration of the Feast of Passover—that her existence as the people of God began with *God’s* mighty deliverance from slavery.” (Sittema 2013: 45)

B. OT Israel's system of feasts

OT Israel had seven main feasts, celebrations, or holy days, in two sets: the Spring feasts and the Fall feasts. Hebrew males were required to appear before the Lord at the chosen place (i.e., in Jerusalem, after the conquest of the land and the building of the temple) three times per year, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover); Feast of Weeks; and Feast of Tabernacles (**Exod 23:14-17; 34:23-24; Deut 16:16**; but see **Deut 16:10-11** which indicates that all who are able are to go to the chosen place for the Feast of Weeks).

1. The Spring feasts began in the first month of the sacred calendar (Abib/Nisan [March-April]).

a. *Passover (14 Abib/Nisan)*. Commemorated deliverance from Egyptian bondage (i.e., God's angel of death "passed over" the Israelites). A lamb was slain, its blood was sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts of the house, and then it was roasted and eaten by the family (**Exod 12:1-13, 21-27; Lev 23:5; Num 28:16; Deut 16:1-8**).³⁸

b. *Unleavened Bread (15-22 Abib/Nisan)*. Associated with Passover (see **Matt 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:1**),³⁹ it commemorated the hurried flight from Egypt. Holy convocations on 15 and 22 Abib counted as Sabbaths. Burnt offerings and sin offerings were made. All leaven was to be removed from one's house at the beginning of the week, and unleavened bread was to be eaten during the week (**Exod 12:14-20; 34:18; Lev 23:6-8; Num 28:17-25**).

c. *First Fruits (16 Abib/Nisan)*. Celebrated the first fruit of the barley harvest. A sheaf of the barley harvest was to be waved by the priest and a burnt offering made (**Exod 34:26; Lev 23:10-14**).

d. *Feast of Weeks (also called Feast of the Harvest; Day of the First Fruits; and Pentecost) (6 Sivan [May-June])*. Celebrated the first fruits of the wheat harvest and how the Lord brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt. It occurred 50 days after First Fruits (hence the name Pentecost ["fiftieth"], **Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8**). A holy convocation counted as a Sabbath, wave, burnt, sin, and peace offerings were made (**Exod 23:16; 34:21-24; Lev 23:15-21; Num 28:26-31; Deut 16:9-12**).

2. The Fall feasts began on the first month of the civil calendar (Tishri [September-October]).

a. *Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Ha-Shanah) (1 Tishri)*. Celebrated the beginning of the seventh month (civil New Year) and heralded the coming Day of Atonement, nine days later. A holy convocation, trumpets were blown, and burnt, grain, and sin offerings made (**Lev 23:23-25; Num 29:1-6**).

b. *Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) (10 Tishri)*. The holiest day of the year. The sins of the people were covered and cleansed for the year. A holy convocation, burnt, grain, and sin offerings were made. After making offerings for himself the high priest was allowed to enter the holy of holies in the temple and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat as an atonement for the sins of the people. The atonement procedure involved two goats: one was killed and its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat; the other (the "scapegoat") had Israel's sins confessed over it and then was sent into the wilderness (**Lev 16:1-34; 23:27-32; Num 29:7-11**).

c. *Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) (also called Feast of the Ingathering) (15-22 Tishri)*. Commemorated the wandering in the wilderness and celebrated the completion of all the harvests. Holy convocations on 15 and 22 Tishri counted as Sabbaths. Burnt, grain, and sin offerings were made. Participants were to live in temporary booths and joyfully celebrate with palm and willow branches (**Exod 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:33-43; Num 29:12-38; Deut 16:13-15**).

3. Israel also celebrated two other minor festivals: Purim and Hanukkah. These two festivals are not part of the system of festivals, Sabbath years, and years of Jubilee established in the Torah (the Mosaic Law). They were established later. Although they are important festivals in Judaism, they are called "minor" festivals because work is permitted on them (Lehrman 1958: 70).

a. *Purim (14-15 Adar; in leap years, 14-15 2nd Adar)*. Celebrates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman's to destroy them, as recorded in **Est 7:1-9:32**. Fasting is done on 13 Adar in commemoration of Esther's 3-day fast (**Est 4:15-17**). Then on 14-15 Adar, Scripture verses

³⁸ After Israel left Egypt and entered the promised land, modifications from the "Egyptian" manner of observing Passover were made, including no longer sprinkling the blood on the lintel and doorposts (Edersheim 1988: 212-18).

³⁹ "From their close connection [Passover and Unleavened Bread] are generally treated as one, both in the Old and in the New Testament" (Edersheim 1988: 208). Confusingly, "Passover" and "Unleavened Bread" are sometimes *both* used to describe the combination of 14 Nisan (Passover) and the subsequent week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread. When this is done, the "first day of Unleavened Bread" would then be referring to 14 Nisan, not 15 Nisan (see **Matt 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:2, 7-8**).

are read, gift-giving is “an essential part of the celebration,” and “it is obligatory to eat, drink and be merry on Purim” (Lehrman 1958: 60, 65).

b. *Hanukkah* (also called the *Feast of Lights* and *Feast of Dedication*) (25 Kislev-2 or 3 Tevet). Celebrates the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt (167-160 BC). According to the Talmud, the Temple was purified and the wicks of the menorah miraculously burned for eight days even though there was only enough sacred oil for one day’s lighting. The rededication is discussed in the apocryphal books of **1 Macc 4:36-59** and **2 Macc 1:18-36**. Candles are lit for 8 nights, songs are sung, special foods are eaten, and games are played.

C. *Jesus fulfilled Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread*

1. The NT identifies Jesus with the Passover lamb. At the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry John the Baptist recognized who Jesus was and identified Him as “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (**John 1:29, 36**). By this identification, John was joining Passover (which required the sacrifice of a lamb) and the Day of Atonement (in which Israel’s sins were covered). The identification of Jesus with the sacrificial Lamb is reaffirmed in **1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6, 8**. Christ was crucified at the time of Passover when the Passover lamb was killed (**Luke 22:1; John 19:14, 31**).⁴⁰ The NT says that Passover was prophetic of the sacrifice of Christ. **John 19:36** quotes **Exod 12:46** and **Num 9:12** (which specify that the bones of the Passover lambs are not to be broken) and says, “*These things [i.e., the soldiers not breaking Christ’s legs as they did to the men crucified with Jesus] came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, ‘Not a bone of him shall be broken.’*” **1 Cor 5:7** also says, “*Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.*”

2. At the Last Supper Jesus instituted a new Passover—the Lord’s Supper (**Matt 26:20-29; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:1-22; John 13:1-2; 1 Cor 11:23-32**). The meal itself was a Passover meal (**Luke 22:15**), and many of the specifics of the meal as recorded in the Gospels reflect that, e.g., the wine, it’s taking place in the evening, interpretive sayings drawn from redemptive history (Behm 1965: 734; Goppelt 1982: 110-12). Bretscher (1954: 199-209) lists 11 comparisons between the original Passover/Unleavened Bread and the Lord’s Supper:

- a. *Each feast was instituted at the command of God* (**Exod 12:1; 1 Cor 11:23**).
- b. *Each feast involved the sacrifice of a lamb* (**Exod 12:3; 1 Cor 5:7**).
- c. *In each feast the lamb was without blemish* (**Exod 12:5; 1 Pet 1:19**).
- d. *In each feast no bone of the sacrificial lamb was broken* (**Exod 12:46; John 19:31-36**).
- e. *In each feast it is by eating of the flesh of the sacrificial lamb that the individual participates in the sacrifice and personally receives its benefits* (**Exod 12:47; John 6:52-57; 1 Cor 10:18; Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:17-19; 1 Cor 11:24**).
- f. *In each feast the blood that is shed plays a central part of the ceremony.* In Passover the blood of the lamb was to be placed on the doorposts and lintel of the house (**Exod 12:7, 22**); in the Lord’s Supper the blood becomes a part of the feast itself (**Matt 26:27-29; Mark 14:23-25; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor 11:25-26**).
- g. *To each feast God attaches his promise.* In Passover, God promised to spare his people the plague of the death of the first-born child (**Exod 12:13, 23**). In the Lord’s Supper, Christ promises the forgiveness of sins (**Matt 26:28**; see **Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20**). The Lord’s Supper is thus a far more powerful and effective feast, because it is not limited to sparing the participant’s earthly body but to saving the participant’s body and soul for eternity (see **Matt 10:28**).
- h. *Both feasts are given as a memorial to be celebrated from generation to generation.* Passover memorializes the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians (**Exod 12:14, 24-27**). The Lord’s Supper memorializes Christ who, in his death, “*takes away the sin of the world*” (**1 Cor 11:25-26**).
- i. *Both feasts imply the necessity of faith.* The Israelites’ obedience to God at the time of the

⁴⁰ Orthodox Christianity holds that Jesus was crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday morning. However, there is controversy about which *Hebrew day* the last supper occurred (the traditional Passover meal “would begin just before sundown on Nisan 14 but would *continue* into the new day of Nisan 15” [Parsons 2016b: “Passover at the Temple”]) and whether Jesus was crucified on 14 or 15 Nisan (remember that Hebrew days include part of two Roman days because Hebrew days began at sundown, not midnight, and continue until the next sundown). Michael Scheifler sets forth the basis for a 13-14 Nisan last supper and a 14 Nisan crucifixion (Scheifler n.d.: n.p.); Alfred Edersheim sets forth the basis for a 14-15 Nisan last supper and a 15 Nisan crucifixion (Edersheim 1988: 244-59, 389-401).

Passover demonstrated their faith and trust in what he said (**Exod 12:27-28**) and thereby spared them from death. In the Lord's Supper, the participants likewise must examine themselves and take the Supper in a worthy manner; failure to do so results in judgment, even to death (**1 Cor 11:27-32**).

j. *Real blood underlies both feasts, but the blood that underlies the Lord's Supper has infinite, intrinsic worth and power, whereas the blood that underlies Passover does not.* The blood of the lamb in Passover was merely a "sign" that God would see as his death angel moved through Egypt but had no intrinsic power to spare men's lives in itself (**Exod 12:13**). On the other hand, the blood of Christ which underlies the Lord's Supper is the very blood of the Son of God, which alone is intrinsically able and sufficient to "*take away the sin of the world*" (**Matt 26:28**). Thus, Jesus could say, "*This . . . is the new covenant in my blood*" (**Luke 22:20**), not merely that his blood was a "sign" of the new covenant.

k. *Both feasts are exclusive.* Passover was only for Hebrews; non-Israelites had to go through the rite of circumcision in order to partake (**Exod 12:43-45**). The Lord's Supper is for the body of Christ (**1 Cor 10:16-17, 20-21**).

3. The significance of Jesus' instituting a "new" Passover in Jerusalem. "This effectively implied that *even in Jerusalem* the people of Israel were still in Egypt and in 'slavery'. If this might seem fanciful, there is some corroboration, in that [Mark] uses the Greek word [*eksagō*] to describe Jesus' being 'led out' of the city to be crucified (15:20)—a word which elsewhere in the New Testament is regularly used to describe the 'leading out' of the Israelites from Egypt under Moses [see **Acts 7:36, 40; 13:17; Heb 8:9**]." (Walker 1996: 14) It is only through Jesus' sacrificial death that Israel, and anyone else who "eats his flesh and drinks his blood," is freed from slavery—which is what Jesus and the rest of the NT teach (see **John 8:31-36; Rom 6:1-23; Heb 2:14-15**).

4. The typological nature of the Lord's Supper itself. "The institution of the Lord's Supper proclaims that the situation in which the church passes through history is not yet the consummation. The Last Supper is itself another prophecy in type, a type that points to the joyous banquet in the future that Christ will celebrate with his disciples in the kingdom of God (Luke 22:15-18; Mark 14:25; Matt 26:29; 1 Cor 11:26). Therefore, each Lord's Supper celebrated by the church points to the consummation (Rev 21:2ff.)." (Goppelt 1982: 116)

5. Jesus' burial and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. John Sittema describes Jesus' fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: "Sundown in first-century Israel signaled the beginning of the new day. That means Jesus was buried not on Passover, but rather as the Feast of Unleavened Bread commenced, specifically fulfilling the requirement: 'On the first day remove the yeast from your houses [**Exod 12:15**].' The significance of this is momentous. Jesus didn't just *keep* the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a first-century Jew. Jesus *became* the leaven, and his entombment was the cleansing of our lives. It announced that *we* don't sweep our lives clean of the leaven of sin and evil; *he* does [see **2 Cor 5:21**]. In doctrinal terms, as the Passover Lamb, Jesus died as our substitute so that we could be declared *justified* by grace through faith. Jesus was also buried for us as a substitution, taking to the grave with him the leaven of our sin so that we can be declared *sanctified* in him." (Sittema 2013: 61)⁴¹

6. The practical implications of Passover and Unleavened Bread. In **1 Cor 5:6-8** Paul associates both Passover and Unleavened Bread in discussing how we should live our lives. He argues that *because* Christ "*our Passover*" has been sacrificed for us, *therefore* we should "*clean out the old leaven so that you may become a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened.*" Consequently, we should not live with "*the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*" Sittema concludes, "Those who are united to Christ by faith in his death as the Lamb are also united to him in his burial as the leaven. Their sin has been removed, their leaven swept clean, in him. . . . Then joining the two dimensions of sanctification into one, he affirms both the indicative [what Christ has already done for us] and the imperative [how we should then live]: we are definitively cleansed in Christ, and we ought to live like it practically." (Sittema 2013: 62-63)

⁴¹ It appears that Jesus was buried the same Hebrew day he was crucified, i.e., before sundown which would begin a new day. The reason is that the next day was a Sabbath on which no work (such as burying a body) could be done (see **Matt 27:57-62; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:14, 30-42**). If Sittema is correct, then Jesus' crucifixion and burial both occurred on 15 Nisan. However, if Jesus was crucified and buried on 14 Nisan, then Sittema is technically incorrect if he means that Jesus was *placed in the tomb* on 15 Nisan. However, the typology is preserved in that 15 Nisan is the only *entire day* in which Jesus would have been *in the tomb*; further, the Jews cleansed their homes of leaven and "traditionally the 'leaven package' is burned at the time of morning prayer on Nisan 14 . . . the exact day in which the Mashiach Yeshua was crucified, removing our sin and spiritual leaven forever" (Parsons 2016a: "Leaven and the Sacrifice of Yeshua").

D. *Jesus fulfilled the Feasts of First Fruits and Weeks*

“First Fruits” celebrated the first fruits of the barley harvest and was part of the week long Passover/Unleavened Bread celebration (**Exod 34:26; Lev 23:10-14**). It also marked the first day of the 50 day period which culminated in the Feast of Weeks (hence, Weeks was also called “Pentecost” [i.e., “fiftieth”]) (**Lev 23:15-16**). Weeks celebrated the first fruits of the wheat harvest. Thus, Weeks was also called the Feast of the Harvest (**Exod 23:16; 34:22**), and the first day of the Feast was called the “day of first fruits” (**Num 28:26**). Both feasts celebrated the bounty that God had given to the nation, of which the “first fruits” were a token.

1. Just as Jesus in his death was our Passover, so in his resurrection he is our First Fruits. “Passover was the fourteenth of Nisan, and Unleavened Bread was the fifteenth. Christ was offered up as the Passover lamb on the former, and he was buried on the eve of the latter. The evening and the day of the next day—the sixteenth of Nisan—began the Feast of Firstfruits. This is the day we call Easter, the day Jesus rose from the grave. . . . The resurrection of Jesus the Messiah finds its meaning in the fact that God planned it according to the festal calendar of Israel. God structured redemption not only so that Jesus would be in the grave until the third day (as required by the ‘sign of Jonah’ in Matthew 12:39-41), but especially so that Jesus would break open the grave *on the Feast of Firstfruits*. That feast thus defines the meaning of the resurrection: it was not merely the miracle of life after death but *the dawning of a new world after the death of the old.*” (Sittema 2013: 70-71) In **1 Cor 15:20, 23** Christ is specifically called the “*first fruits*” for all of those who are in Christ. Thus, we will be resurrected just as he has been resurrected from the dead (**1 Cor 15:20-58**).

2. The sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (“day of first fruits”) fulfilled the Feast of Weeks. Christ rose from the dead early Sunday morning after the Passover Sabbath (i.e., on “First Fruits” **Lev 23:15-16; Matt 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-6; John 20:1-2**). He appeared for 40 days to various groups of people (**Acts 1:3**). He then ascended into heaven but told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father to baptize them with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:4-5**). Ten days later (i.e., 50 days after the resurrection) “*when the day of Pentecost had come*” the Holy Spirit came down and filled Jesus’ disciples (**Acts 2:1-4**). By sending the Holy Spirit, Christ fulfilled the true spiritual meaning and purpose of the Feast of Weeks. The first fruits of the harvest represented the entire harvest (see **Num 18:29-30**). In other words, giving the first fruits to God at the Feast showed “His ownership of the land and their reliance on Him to provide the remainder of the harvest” (Litvin 1987: 4). In **Rom 8:23** Paul says that we have “the first fruits of the Spirit.” In **2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14; 5:5** Paul says that—like the first fruits of the wheat harvest given on the day of Pentecost—the Holy Spirit has been given to us as a “pledge” or “guarantee” of our resurrection, entire sanctification, and the presence of the Lord with us forever.

Additionally, over time the meaning of the Feast of Weeks was transformed. It became a commemoration of the giving of the Torah (Law) on Mount Sinai (Rich 1995-2011c: n.p.; Malabuyo 2013: “Waiting for the Gift”).⁴² Just as God “*descended upon [Mount Sinai] in fire*” (**Exod 19:18**), so on Pentecost “*there appeared to the disciples tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them*” (**Acts 2:3**). More importantly, Jewish writer Tracey Rich says that counting the 50 days before the Feast of Weeks (**Lev 23:15-16**) “is intended to remind us of the link between Passover, which commemorates the Exodus, and Shavu’ot [Weeks], which commemorates the giving of the Torah. It reminds us that the redemption from slavery was not complete until we received the Torah.” (Rich 1995-2011a: n.p.) This purpose of the Feast of Weeks also was fulfilled in a far deeper way by the giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The Law (Torah)—like the Holy Spirit (see **John 14:26; 16:8, 13**)—tells us how we should live, but the Law does not give us the power to do what we should. As Paul argues in **Gal 3:21-25**, the Law was never able to impart life and was only a temporary guardian until Christ came who would give us his righteousness. We receive Christ—and the righteousness he imputes to us—by faith. But Christ knew that even faith on its own does not give us the transforming power we need to live holy lives. Consequently, he told the disciples to wait to receive the “*power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*” (**Acts 1:8**). When the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost, our “redemption from slavery” truly became complete. The OT Law was external, written on tablets of stone. Now, the Holy Spirit lives inside us (**Ezek 36:26-27; John 14:16-17**), the law of Christ is written on our heart (**Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10**), and we ourselves are “*a letter of Christ . . . written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts*” (**2 Cor 3:3**). Linda Belleville summarizes, “With the coming of faith in Christ, the Law’s function as guardian and custodian ceases and the Spirit becomes the internal guiding principle” (Belleville 1986: 70).

⁴² There may be a basis for this later tradition from the text of **Exod 19:1-11** (see Cassuto 1967: 229).

E. *Jesus fulfilled the Feast of Trumpets*

The Feast of Trumpets was the first of the three Fall feasts (along with the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles). It was instituted in **Lev 23:23-25; Num 29:1-6** as “a reminder [or ‘memorial’]” (**Lev 23:24**), but Scripture is silent as to its purpose or what it was commemorating. Although both **Lev 23:24** and **Num 29:1** specify that the Feast of Trumpets was to take place on the first day of the *seventh month*, other ancient peoples “thought of the year beginning in the autumn, at the time of the late harvest. It is highly plausible, therefore, to see the Biblical festival as a harvest feast, marking the beginning of the agricultural year.” (Jacobs 1959: 4) Therefore, Trumpets became known as *Rosh Ha-Shanah* (“head of the year”) and announced the civil new year and anticipated the coming Day of Atonement. The days between *Rosh Ha-Shanah* and *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement) “are commonly known as the Days of Awe (Yamim Noraim) or the Days of Repentance. This is a time for serious introspection, a time to consider the sins of the previous year and repent before Yom Kippur.” (Rich 1995-2011b: n.p.) The Feast of Trumpets was fulfilled at Christ’s first coming.⁴³

1. The Feast of Trumpets’ primary role was to announce a turning point in time—the beginning of the new year. Jesus’ first coming did that.

a. *Jesus Himself implicitly announced that in **Luke 4:18-19** when he quoted from **Isa 61:1-2** that He had been sent “to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” In **Luke 4:21** He then declared, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

b. *The fact that Christ’s first coming marks a new time of human history is confirmed by the fact that his first coming marks the beginning of the “last days” which we are now in and which will continue until his return (see **Acts 2:16-17; Heb 1:2; Jas 5:1-3; 1 Pet 1:20; 1 John 2:18**). **2 Cor 5:17** further confirms the “newness” that Christ brings by stating, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature [or, “creation”]; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.”*

c. *The first coming of Jesus has changed time from BC (“before Christ”) to AD (which is an abbreviation of the Latin “anno domini”—“In the year of our Lord”). Even those who do not use the BC and AD labels—but use the “Common Era” abbreviations, “BCE” and “CE”—nevertheless are implicitly acknowledging the epoch-changing nature of Christ’s first coming. The dates are all the same as the BC and AD dates, but those using the BCE and CE abbreviations do not want to acknowledge that Jesus is, in fact, Lord.*

2. Jesus fulfilled traditional Jewish reasons for blowing the shofar (“ram’s horn trumpet”) on the Feast of Trumpets. In AD 942 a famous Babylonian teacher, Saadi Gaon, listed ten reasons why the Jews blew the *shofar* during the Feast of Trumpets (Jacobs 1959: 44-48). They all, directly or indirectly, relate to Christ:

a. *God is acclaimed as King on the New Year.* Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and has all authority (**Matt 28:18; Acts 2:36; Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:9-11; Col 2:9-10; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 17:14; 19:16**). At his crucifixion, the sign placed over Jesus declared that Jesus is “the king of the Jews” (**Matt 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:28; John 19:19**).

b. *Rosh Ha-Shanah is the beginning of the Ten Days of Penitence.* Christ fulfilled the Day of Atonement, to which the Ten Days of Penitence were directed.

c. *The Torah was given on Sinai accompanied by the sound of the shofar.* Christ is the new law giver, greater than Moses (**Matt 5:1-48**).

d. *The prophets compare their admonitions to the sound of the shofar.* Jesus is the prophet like Moses, who had been promised by God (see **Deut 18:15, 18-19; John 1:45; 6:14; Acts 3:20-23**).

e. *The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed amid trumpet blasts, and at the new year the Jews look forward to the restoration of the ancient glories.* Jesus fulfilled and replaced both the temple and the nation itself.

f. *In **Genesis 22** a ram was substituted for Isaac.* On Rosh Ha-Shanah Jews remember the merit of their righteous ancestors by sounding the ram’s horn to remind them that to give the self in service to God is the essence of true religion. The entire story of Abraham and Isaac prefigured Christ’s crucifixion. Just as Isaac was Abraham’s “only [i.e., unique] son” (**Gen 22:2**), so Christ was God’s “only begotten son” (**John 3:16**). Just as the wood to burn the sacrifice was

⁴³ Many people speculate that Trumpets relate only to the second coming of Christ because various passages indicate that the second coming and the resurrection of the dead will be heralded by angelic “trumpets” (see **Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16**). Other people say that Trumpets are somehow related to the “trumpet judgments” of **Rev 8:1-9:21; 11:15-19**. Both views overlook the three points discussed in this section.

laid on Isaac (**Gen 22:6**), so Christ was made to carry his own cross (**John 19:17**). Just as Abraham said that “*God will provide for Himself the lamb*” (**Gen 22:8**) for the sacrifice, so God provided Jesus Christ, “*the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (**John 1:29**; see also **Rev 5:6**). Just as Isaac was obedient to the will of his father, even to the point of death, so Jesus was obedient to the will of his Father, even to death (**Matt 26:39**; **Phil 2:8**). Just as Isaac was “dead” to Abraham for the three days of their journey (**Gen 22:4**), so Jesus was in the grave for three days (**Matt 12:40**; **Luke 24:21**). Just as Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead (**Heb 11:19**), so Jesus literally was resurrected (**Matt 28:1-6**; **Mark 16:1-13**; **Luke 24:1-6**; **John 20:1-28**). **Heb 11:19** (NASB) even says that Abraham received Isaac back “*as a type*.” Some have even found typological significance in the fact that the ram was “*caught in the thicket by his horns*” (**Gen 22:13**). Augustine said, “What, then, did he [the ram] represent but Jesus, who, before He was offered up, was crowned with thorns?” (Augustine 1950: 16.32)

g. **Amos 3:6** asks, “*Shall the shofar be blown in the city and the people not be afraid?*” Feelings of seriousness, reverence, and respect for life and for Him who gave it are awakened by the sound of the *shofar*. Jesus sustains our lives and is “*the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power*” (**Heb 1:3**).

h. **Zeph 1:16** speaks of Judgment Day as a “*day of the shofar and alarm*.” It is Christ who will judge both the living and the dead (**Matt 7:22-23**; **John 5:22**; **Acts 10:42**; **17:31**; **Rom 14:10**; **2 Cor 5:10**; **2 Tim 4:1**; **Jude 14-15**; **Rev 19:11**). In a real sense that judgment has already occurred as a result of people’s responses to Jesus (**John 3:17-19**), although that judgment will be finalized at the second coming (**Matt 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50**; **16:27**; **25:31-46**; **John 12:48**; **Rom 2:1-16**; **1 Cor 4:5**; **2 Thess 1:6-10**; **Rev 22:12**).

i. **Isa 27:13** speaks of the *shofar* that will herald the coming of Messiah to bring the scattered ones of Israel back to their land. Jesus is the Messiah (**John 4:25-26**). He has brought the new, true Israel to the “land” of their rest and salvation.

j. *The shofar is to be sounded at the Resurrection*. Jesus is the resurrection and the life (**John 11:25**). Jesus’ own resurrection already has occurred. It is the “*first fruits*” of the general resurrection (**1 Cor 15:22**) which will occur “*at the last trumpet*” (**1 Cor 15:51-52**).

3. The Feast of Trumpets may have been pointing to the New Covenant and the church. The Bible does not give the specific reason for the Feast of Trumpets or call it *Rosh Ha-Shanah*. Two spiritual reasons have been advanced for Trumpets which point to Christ and the church:

a. *The New Covenant*. Lev Leigh reminds us that **Lev 23:24** said that the Feast of Trumpets was to be a “remembrance” or “memorial.” That “indicates that the event to be remembered had taken place prior to this ordinance” (Leigh 2016: n.p.). He goes on to say that the “one outstanding event—connected to the blowing of trumpets [**Exod 19:13, 16-19**—that required memorializing [was] God inviting the children of Israel into a covenant: the Mosaic Covenant [**Exod 19:5**]. In a spectacular revelation, God manifested His presence in the smoke and fire on Mount Sinai—as He came to covenant with His people amidst the sound of a trumpet that caused the people to tremble. They promised to do everything that the Lord commanded. This cataclysmic event was to be stamped indelibly upon the memory of the people of Israel. Every year, at the Feast of Trumpets, those same-sounding trumpet blasts reminded Israel that they were a people under covenant; a nation who had accepted the responsibilities of being God’s people.” (Ibid.) He concludes that Trumpets finds its fulfillment in the New Covenant (**Matt 26:28**; **Luke 22:20**): “We who have accepted the New Covenant remember this fact every time we take communion. The bread and the cup remind us of the cataclysmic events of the Lord’s death and resurrection. They remind us of our responsibilities in being New Covenant-people. We repent and show remorse for our sin in falling short of this high and holy calling. Through faith in the shed blood of Jesus, we receive the full and final atonement provided by the New Covenant.” (Ibid.)

b. *The witness of the church*. Trumpets in the OT were used for multiple purposes, including summoning the people, triumphing in war, announcing good news, praising the Lord, and sounding alarm (see, e.g., **Num 10:1-10**; **Josh 6:4-20**; **Judg 6:34**; **7:16-22**; **1 Sam 13:3**; **2 Sam 6:15**; **15:10**; **20:22**; **1 Kgs 1:34-39**; **2 Chron 5:13**; **7:6**; **29:27-28**; **Neh 4:20**; **Ps 98:6**; **150:3**; **Jer 4:5**; **Ezek 33:1-9**; **Amos 3:6**). The trumpet did not stand alone but was connected to the proclamation of the herald, warner, or worshippers (see **Josh 6:5, 20**; **Judg 6:34**; **7:16-20**; **1 Sam 13:3**; **2 Sam 6:15**; **15:10**; **1 Kgs 1:34, 39**; **2 Chron 5:13**; **7:6**; **29:27-28**; **Ps 98:6**; **Jer**

4:5; Ezek 33:3, 7). John Sittema suggests that Trumpets was a type that finds its fulfillment in the “trumpet call” of the witness and preaching of the church: “Empowered and emboldened by the Spirit of Pentecost, led by her apostles and preachers, yet involving every member, the [church sounds] the claim of her King: ‘Our God reigns! Receive him! Repent of your sins, believe in his Son, and worship the King!’” (Sittema 2013:99)

F. Jesus fulfilled the Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement was a “type” that pointed to Christ’s death on the cross. All of the major elements of the ritual performed on the Day of Atonement were “types” that pointed to Christ: the rites were performed at the temple (**Lev 16:23, 20, 33**)—Christ is the true temple (**John 1:14; 2:18-22**); the high priest performed the rites (**Lev 16:2-3, 32-33**)—Christ is our high priest (**Heb 4:14-15; 5:5-10; 8:1-6; 9:11; 10:21**); a bull and a goat were sacrificed as sin offerings and their blood was shed (**Lev 16:8-9, 15**)—Christ was sacrificed for our sins and his blood was shed (**Heb 7:27; 9:12, 14, 26, 28**); the high priest entered the holy of holies behind the veil (**Lev 16:12-15**)—Christ’s body is the true veil (**Heb 10:19-20**) and he entered the true holy of holies (**Heb 8:1-2; 9:11-12, 24**); the blood of the goat was sprinkled on the mercy seat (**Lev 16:14-15**)—Christ is the mercy seat (**Rom 3:25**, cp. **Exod 25:17 LXX**); the sins of the nation were imputed to the scapegoat (**Lev 16:20-21**)—Christ bore our sins (**Isa 53:4-5; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 2:24**) and became sin for us (**2 Cor 5:21**); the scapegoat was led into the wilderness (**Lev 16:21-22**)—Christ was led into the ultimate wilderness of separation from God (**Isa 53:8; Matt 27:46**); the bodies of the slain animals were burned outside the camp (**Heb 13:11**; see Edersheim 1988: 324)—“*Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate*” (**Heb 13:12**).

1. The difference between the blood of animals and the blood of Christ. **Leviticus 16-17** stresses the importance of sacrificial blood in order to make atonement for sin. The shedding of the sacrificial animal’s blood was necessary for the high priest to have the blood he needed to bring into the holy of holies and sprinkle on the mercy seat. **Hebrews 7-10** demonstrates that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross was what the Day of Atonement had always pointed to. “The cross meant there could be ‘something to offer’ so that Christ could function as priest (8:3)” (Nelson 2003: 254). Christ’s own blood infinitely exceeded in value the blood of animals: “The old rite was ineffective because it used animal blood and was repeated (10:1-4); Christ’s priestly act took place but only once and involved his own blood as an offering of himself (7:27; 9:25-26). Moreover, it took place in the heavenly realm of true reality (9:24 in contrast to 10:1). Christ’s accomplishment is the ultimate example of the scriptural axiom that purification must be effected by the ritual utilization of blood (9:13-14, 21-23). But his blood is more effective because it was literally his own, the result of an obedient self-offering performed through ‘eternal spirit’ and thus the polar opposite of anything physical or temporary (9:12). The redeeming and purifying effect of his blood is interior and eternal rather than external and impermanent (9:12-14; cf. 10:1-4).” (Ibid.: 256)

2. The difference between the holy place the high priest entered and the holy place Christ entered. The essential element on the Day of Atonement was the high priest’s entering God’s presence in the holy of holies, behind the curtain, and applying the sacrificial blood to the mercy seat to purify the holy things and the nation from pollution and sin (**Lev 16:2-19**). By contrast, through His resurrection and ascension Christ entered “*heaven itself*” (**Heb 9:24**; see also **Heb 4:14; 8:1-2**), into “*the inner shrine behind the curtain*” (**Heb 6:19-20**, RSV). Thus, Christ acts both as victim and as high priest: as victim His blood was perfect because He led a perfect life and was without sin (**Heb 9:12-14; 10:4-10**); as high priest He was also perfect because He did not have to atone for Himself (**Heb 7:26-27; 9:7**). Further, the high priest sprinkled the blood in the holy of holies behind the veil. Jesus died in full public view, and at his death “*the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom*” (**Matt 27:51**). These two facts signify that Jesus achieved atonement for sins for everyone who has faith in him, instead of just covering the sins of the nation for a year.

3. The difference between the wilderness where the scapegoat was sent and Christ’s separation from the Father. “The role of the scapegoat is unique to the Day of Atonement, symbolizing the removal (into the most non-sacred space) of Israel’s sin. Thus the blood of one goat is brought into the Most Holy Place, while the scapegoat is driven to the furthest point from God (the wilderness).” (Williamson 2007: 110) For all of eternity Jesus had experienced a perfect, loving relationship with the Father. However, on the cross, Jesus bore our sins (**Isa 53:4-5**), and “*By oppression and judgment He was taken away [and] was cut off out of the land of the living*” (**Isa 53:8**). “In Matthew 10:28 Jesus says that no physical destruction can compare with the spiritual destruction of hell, of losing the presence of God. But this is exactly what happened to Jesus on the cross—he was forsaken by the Father (Matthew 27:46). . . .

When he cried out that his God had forsaken him he was experiencing hell itself. But consider—if our debt for sin is so great that it is never paid off there, but our hell stretches on for eternity, then what are we to conclude from the fact that Jesus said the payment was ‘finished’ (John 19:30) after only three hours? We learn that what he felt on the cross was far worse and deeper than all of our deserved hells put together.” (Keller n.d.: n.p.) The scapegoat’s being driven into the wilderness pales in comparison to Jesus’ being driven from the presence of the Father.

4. The difference between the effects of the sacrifices on people. **Heb 9:9** says that the gifts and sacrifices offered at the temple—including the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement—“*cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience.*” On the other hand, **Heb 9:14** says, “*How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*” In other words, the sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement could not make a person clean *on the inside*. Only Christ can bring about true inner change.

G. Jesus fulfilled the Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) was the last of the fall feasts. It lasted a week and commemorated the wandering in the wilderness. It also celebrated the completion of the fall harvest. To commemorate the wandering in the wilderness, the people were to make and live in temporary booths (tabernacles) during the week of the feast (**Exod 23:16-17; 34:22-23; Lev 23:33-43; Num 29:12-38; Deut 16:13-15**). The Feast of Tabernacles was fulfilled by Christ at his first coming.

1. **John 1:14** says that “the Word [i.e., Jesus] became flesh and dwelt among us.” The word “dwelt” is the verbal form (*skēnoō*) of the word for “tabernacle” (*skēnē*). Thus, the NASB has a note to **John 1:14** that says, “or *tabernacled*; i.e., lived temporarily.” Just as the booths the people made were not fancy or attractive structures, there was nothing about Jesus’ earthly appearance that would attract us to Him (**Isa 53:2**).

2. The feast of Tabernacles commemorated God’s delivering Israel from bondage in Egypt and their wandering in the wilderness on the way to the promised land (**Lev 23:42-43**). Jesus is a new and greater Moses who delivers people not just from physical bondage but from spiritual slavery to sin and death so that “*we too might walk in newness of life*” (**John 1:29; Rom 6:3-23**). Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness just as Israel was tempted (**Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13**). However, unlike Israel, Jesus did not succumb to the temptations. When he was tempted, Jesus even responded to Satan by deliberately quoting from Moses’ summary of the history of Israel’s history in the wilderness (**Deut 8:3; 6:13, 16**). Thus, in His life Jesus fulfilled everything of which the feast of Tabernacles was a “type.”

3. At the time Jesus lived on earth, a central part of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem was a “water pouring” ceremony in which the priests would pour out water and wine to the Lord at the Temple (Carson 1991: 321-22; Hillyer 1970: 46-48). “During the preparation of the burnt offering, a procession of priests with the accompaniment of flute playing and singing wended their way from the temple down to the Pool of Siloam where a priest filled a golden flask with water while a choir repeated Isa. 12:3: ‘with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation’ (see Mishnah Sukkah 4:9; 5:1; Talmud Sukkah 48b). The Pool of Siloam was a collecting pool for the spring Gihon, the major water supply for Jerusalem. The Jews referred to water from springs or streams fit for drinking as ‘living water.’ Living water was considered the most superior form of water for ritual purification.” (Satterfield 1998: 5) “These ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles were related in Jewish thought both to the Lord’s provision of water in the desert and to the Lord’s pouring out of the Spirit in the last days. Pouring at the Feast of Tabernacles refers symbolically to the messianic age in which a stream from the sacred rock would flow over the whole earth.” (Carson 1991: 322)

It is in that context—at the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles itself (**John 7:2, 37**)—that Jesus “*stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’*” The meaning of “Jesus’ pronouncement is clear: he is the fulfillment of all that the Feast of Tabernacles anticipated. If Isaiah could invite the thirsty to drink from the waters (Is. 55:1), Jesus announces that he is the one who can provide the waters.” (Carson 1991: 322-23) Jesus’ statement in **John 7:37-38** concerning “*living water*” likely alludes to a number of OT texts. Those include: the water from the rock in the desert, **Exod 17:1-6**; the river of living water from Ezekiel’s temple, **Ezek 47:1-11**; and the waters that flow in the new age from Jerusalem to the eastern and western seas, **Zech 14:8** (see also **Pss 78:15-16; 105:40-41**) (Balfour 1995: 368-78). By pointing to Himself as the rock, the new temple, the new Jerusalem, and the living waters, Jesus was indicating that those OT scriptures are being fulfilled *now*: the eschatological new age has dawned.

4. At the time Jesus lived on earth, another ceremony was performed at the Temple to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles: four huge lamps were lit, and at night the people celebrated holding burning torches; the light from the Temple area shone all over Jerusalem (Carson 1991: 337; Hillyer 1970: 49-50). It is in that context that Jesus said, *“I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).*⁴⁴ Again, Jesus was saying that the Feast of Tabernacles was fulfilled in Him (see also **John 3:19-21; 1 John 1:5-7**).

5. The feast of Tabernacles and the completion of the fall harvest (“the Feast of the Ingathering”). The connection of the Feast of Tabernacles with the harvest and the completion of Israel’s mission of gathering the nations to the Lord (**Zech 14:16-21**) finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

a. *Jesus is the focus of the ingathering.* The connection of the Feast of Tabernacles with the harvest and the completion of Israel’s eschatological mission of gathering the nations to the Lord (**Zech 14:16-21**) finds its fulfillment in Jesus. As we have seen, Jesus *is* the new, true Israel. **John 11:52** makes clear that Jesus is gathering his people, and that is happening now (see also **John 10:16; Rev 5:9; 7:9**). His gathering does not involve geographical relocation to Israel or Jerusalem. Instead, Jesus said that his being lifted up by his death on the cross is what *“will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32)*. “Jesus, not the ‘promised land’, is now the focus of this long-awaited ‘ingathering’” (Walker 1996: 189). Thus, **Zech 14:16** does not contemplate going to an earthly city to worship the Lord (see **John 4:21-24**). Although Zechariah’s prophecy (like other OT prophecies) uses the language and symbols of OT physical Israel (which the people at that time could relate to), in reality it points to Christ Himself, the heavenly Jerusalem, a city made without hands, *“whose architect and builder is God” (Heb 11:8-10; 12:18-24).*⁴⁵

b. *The nature of the harvest.* The harvest is people *“from every tribe and tongue and people and nation”* in the world (**Matt 9:36; Luke 10:1; Rev 5:9; 7:9**). Jesus has inaugurated the harvest now. He said the fields now *“are white for harvest” (John 4:35)*. He also said, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.” (Matt 9:37-38; Luke 10:2)* In the “Great Commission” (**Matt 28:18-20**) Jesus commissioned His followers to go into all the world and make disciples. People now are coming into His kingdom or are rejecting Him. “The notion that the beginning of the messianic age will be noticeable first in Jerusalem, where the good news of repentance and the forgiveness of sins is first proclaimed [**Luke 24:47; see also Acts 1:8**], also indicates a reversal of the direction assumed by the OT promises concerning the conversion of the Gentiles in the last days (Isa. 2:2-5 [Mic. 4:1-4]; 14:2; 45:14; 49:22-23; 55:5; 66:20; Jer. 16:19-21; Zeph. 3:9-10; Zec. 8:20-23; 14:16-19). Whereas the Jews expected the nations to come from ‘outside’ to Jerusalem as the center of the world, Jesus tells his disciples that they will begin in Jerusalem and then move out to the nations.” (Pao and Schnabel 2007: 401) Thus, believers are both the workers in the harvest fields and the “first fruits” of the harvest (**Jas 1:18; Rev 14:4**).

6. Because it was related to the completion of the harvest, the Feast of Tabernacles also took on an eschatological meaning. Probably in light of its water and harvest connections, **Zechariah 14** was read on the first day of the feast (Carson 1991: 322; Balfour 1995: 376). Tabernacles “looked forward to the final joyful harvest, when Israel’s mission on earth should be completed by gathering all the nations of the world to the Lord, as prophesied by Zechariah (14:16)” (Hillyer 1970: 40). In His parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus said that *“the harvest is the end of the age” (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43).*

⁴⁴ The earliest Greek NT manuscripts do not include **John 7:53-8:11**. Instead, **John 8:12** immediately follows after **John 7:52**. Thus, the context of **8:12** appears to be connected with the Feast of Tabernacles (Carson 1991: 333-37).

⁴⁵ The feast of tabernacles was required by the OT law of Moses (**Exod 23:16-17; 34:22-23; Lev 23:33-43; Num 29:12-38; Deut 16:13-15**). God’s withholding rain was an Old Covenant curse for covenantal disobedience (**Deut 11:17; 28:22-24; 1 Kgs 8:35**). In **Zech 14:16-19** Zechariah expresses the eschatological future in OT terms: the nations come to Jerusalem; they celebrate the feast of tabernacles; God withholds rain for failure to celebrate the feast. As with Zechariah’s other images, these cannot be taken literally: the entire Old Covenant and all its feasts have been superseded in Christ (**John 7:2, 37-38; 8:12; Gal 3:10-5:4; Col 2:16-17; Heb 8:6-13; 10:9**). To take **Zech 14:16-19** as indicating that the feast of tabernacles and the associated OT requirements for worship will literally be restored in a future millennium would reverse the realities found in Christ and return to the “shadows” and “types” of the OT (see **Matt 5:17; 1 Cor 10:1-6; 2 Cor 3:12-16; Gal 3:23-4:7, 21-31; Col 2:16-17; Heb 1:1-2; 8:1-10:22**). Therefore, when Christ comes again He will *not* re-institute the Jewish sacrificial system and festivals, including the Feast of Tabernacles, in the physical city of Jerusalem. Further, there cannot be covenant curses in the new Jerusalem since, according to **Rev 20:15; 21:27**, no one whose names are not written in the book of life are able to enter the new Jerusalem but have been cast into the lake of fire.

Believers now are living in their temporary tabernacles, awaiting their permanent, glorified, eternal bodies (see **2 Cor 5:1-4**; **2 Pet 1:14**). When Jesus comes again, the age of temporary tabernacles will be over, the harvest will be complete, and the judgment will reveal who are the wheat and who are the tares.

H. Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath year

During the Sabbath year, the land was to lie fallow “so that the needy of your people may eat” (**Exod 23:11**). Slaves were to be freed (**Exod 21:2**) and debts forgiven (**Deut 15:1-2**). God specifically cautioned the people not to have a hard heart as the year of remission approached but to give generously to the poor (**Deut 15:7-11**).

Jesus fulfilled all of the requirements of the Sabbath year. With respect to the fallow land so that the needy could eat, just as God promised to bless the harvest of the sixth year so that it would be sufficient for three years (**Lev 25:20-22**), so Jesus miraculously multiplied a few fish and loaves of bread to feed thousands of people (**Matt 14:13-21**; **15:32-38**; **Mark 6:30-44**; **8:1-10**; **Luke 9:10-17**; **John 6:1-14**). Jesus is the “bread of life” (**John 6:35, 48**), and those who feast on him will never hunger or thirst or die (**John 4:13-14**; **6:41-58**; **7:37-38**). With respect to slaves being freed, we all were “slaves to sin” and “slaves to impurity and to lawlessness” (**Rom 6:17-20**). However, as a result of Christ’s sacrifice of himself in our place, we have been “freed from sin and enslaved to God . . . resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life” (**Rom 6:22**; see also **John 8:31-32**). In fact, Jesus tells his disciples, “No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” (**John 15:15**; see also **Heb 2:11-12** [He also calls us his “brothers”]). With respect to debts being cancelled, Jesus has cancelled the greatest debt that anyone could possibly have—our debt of sin that results in our death: “When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (**Col 2:13-14**).

The particular concern of the Sabbath year was for the poor and needy. In connection with the Sabbath year, **Deut 15:11** says, “For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.’” Jesus identified himself as the true “Sabbath year” by quoting or alluding to that verse in connection with himself: “For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me” (**Matt 26:11**; see also **Mark 14:7**; **John 12:8**). Jesus did not just “freely open his hand” to his brother, but on the cross opened both arms, freely giving all he had including his life for those who were so poor and needy that they could do nothing to save themselves, and not just for his “brothers” but for his *enemies*!

I. Jesus fulfilled the year of Jubilee

The Sabbath year and the year of Jubilee are related. They are discussed together in **Leviticus 25**. The theme of the year of Jubilee was liberty: “You shall consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants” (**Lev 25:10**, ESV). Thus, debts were to be cancelled, slaves were to be freed, and each parcel of land was to be returned to its original owner (**Lev 25:8-55**). “Only one factor would shape the freedom Jubilee granted: the heart of God. What enabled Jubilee was his sovereign claim to all the land and property. ‘The land is mine,’ he said, ‘and you are but aliens and my tenants’ (Leviticus 25:23). And what fueled Jubilee was the love of God. His love flowed freely, not only to the successful, the achievers, and the winners, but even—and especially—to the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the alien.” (Sittema 2013: 139) OT Israel never celebrated the Year of Jubilee—but Jesus inaugurated the real Jubilee.

1. Jesus announced that he was inaugurating the year of Jubilee at the beginning of His public ministry. In **Luke 4:16-21**, in his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus spoke in the synagogue and read from **Isa 61:1-2**, a passage that alludes to the year of Jubilee. He quoted, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (**Luke 4:18-19**). He then stated, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (**Luke 4:21**). The word “release” in **Isa 61:1** (**Luke 4:18**) is the same word in **Lev 25:10** translated “liberty” (ESV) or “release” (NASB). The verbs in this passage (“preach the gospel to the poor,” “proclaim release to the captives,” “set free [the] oppressed”) refer to “the practice of the jubilee year authorized in Leviticus 25, when all properties lost in economic transactions will be returned in order to permit a stable, functioning community. Thus, the series of verbs is taken to be an announcement of the jubilee.” (Brueggemann 1998: 214) “The favorable year of the Lord” alludes to the “year of Jubilee” which is

“now made symbolic by his [Jesus’] own saving acts” (Marshall 1978: 184; see also Motyer 1999: 426; Bock 1994: 410; Lenski 1946: 252). In **Luke 4:14–21**, when Jesus quoted **Isa 61:1–2** and said, “*Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing,*” in substance He was saying, “I am the fulfillment of what that always pointed to; in me the ultimate Jubilee is now here.”

Significantly, immediately upon leaving Nazareth and for the rest of his earthly ministry, in both word and deed Jesus demonstrated the truth of what he had told the synagogue by “preaching the gospel to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, restoring sight to the blind, and setting free the oppressed” (see **Luke 4:31–44; 5:12–26; 6:6–10, 17–26; 7:1–15, 36–50; 8:1–2, 22–56; 9:12–17; 10:17–24; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 18:35–43**). While Isaiah prophesied an anointed one proclaiming deliverance, Jesus actually brings that deliverance and brings it in a far deeper and more permanent way than Isaiah could have envisioned: He frees people from their spiritual blindness and from their captivity to, and oppression by, sin. Indeed, in Luke and elsewhere “the poor and the blind have both literal and symbolic meaning. For example, while Luke 18:35–43 recounts the story of blind beggar receiving sight, Luke also refers to the receipt of salvation as ‘seeing’ (Luke 1:78–79, 2:9, 29–32; 3:6). Also, while Luke 18:22 and 19:8 certainly refer to the physically or socially poor, Luke 6:20 and 7:22 may be referring to those who are spiritually poor. To this we can also add that captives and oppressed may function similarly.” (Bruno 2010: 97) In other words, physical healing and deliverance were the outward, visible signs of the vastly more important spiritual healing and deliverance Jesus brings.

Gordon Wenham therefore concludes that the age of Jubilee “was inaugurated with Christ’s first coming (Luke 4:21). It will be completed by his second coming (Jas. 5:1–8; cf. Luke 16:19–31). The jubilee, then, not only looks back to God’s first redemption of his people from Egypt (Lev. 25:38, 55), but forward to the ‘restitution of all things,’ ‘for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells’ (Acts 3:21; 2 Pet. 3:13).” (Wenham 1979: 324)

2. Just as Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath year, so he fulfills the year of Jubilee. Since slaves were to be freed and debts canceled in the year of Jubilee as in the Sabbath year, for the same reasons (stated above) that he fulfilled the Sabbath year, Jesus also fulfills the year of Jubilee. What was unique about the year of Jubilee was that each parcel of land was to be returned to its original owner. The “redemption of the land” in the year of Jubilee (**Lev 25:24**) reflected the fact that “*the land is Mine [and] you are but aliens and sojourners with Me*” (**Lev 25:23**). These rationales point us to the fact that *we* are not the ultimate creators, sustainers, or owners of the land—God is. Further, these rationales for the redemption of the land point us to the fact that we are temporary, mortal beings, and that this life is not all there is. These rationales therefore should point us to Jesus who was the agent through whom God created the world (**Heb 1:2**), who “*upholds all things [including the earth] by the word of His power*” (**Heb 1:3**), who has “*all authority . . . in heaven and on earth*” (**Matt 28:18**; see also **Eph 1:18–23**), and who is “*the way and the truth and the life*” (**John 14:6**).

The redemption of the land also is a type or shadow of the fact that the entire “*creation was subjected to futility . . . for we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now*” (**Rom 8:20, 22**). Jesus’ miracles and power *over nature* (e.g., turning water into wine [**John 2:1–11**]; stilling the storm [**Mark 4:35–41**]; walking on water [**Matt 14:22–33**]; conquering death [**Matt 28:1–10; John 11:1–46**]) signify the inauguration of the renewed creation. The consummation of the Jubilee, when “*the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption*” (**Rom 8:21**), will occur when Christ returns (see **Acts 3:19–21; 2 Pet 3:13–15; Rev 21:1–5**).

3. Jesus’ fulfilling of the year of Jubilee is seen in how he fulfills **Dan 9:24–27**.⁴⁶ Daniel’s prophecy of the “seventy weeks” (**Dan 9:24–27**) is “best understood against the background of Jewish sabbatical years, and the Jubilee year in particular” (Williamson 2007: 174; see **Lev 24:8; 25:1–4; 26:43; 2 Chron 36:21**). Additionally, “The goal of the seventy weeks as described in Daniel 9:24 is an ultimate age of fulfillment and completion. Its accomplishments are those found elsewhere in prophecies of God’s new and everlasting covenant and of the eschatological jubilee.” (Kline 1974: 462n.25; see **Isa 60:21; 61:1–3; Jer 31:34; 32:40; Ezek 16:60–63; 20:37–38; 37:26**) **Dan 9:24** lists six goals of the “seventy weeks”: “*Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.*” Only Christ fulfills all six of those goals: they were inaugurated at his first coming and will be consummated at his second coming. Iain Duguid

⁴⁶ **Dan 9:24–27** is discussed in detail in Appendix 5—Daniel 9:24–27 (the “70 weeks”) of Menn, *Biblical Eschatology* (2010–2016), which is available for free on the “ECLEA Courses & Resources” page of the ECLEA website (www.eclen.net).

summarizes: “The seventieth week is a kind of “jubilee” week, in which God restores all things to their proper state. . . . With the coming of Jesus into the world, and especially with his death and resurrection, the seventieth week has dawned. In Christ, our jubilee trumpet has sounded, and the victory over sin and transgression has been won. What is more, with the death of Jesus on the cross, the sacrifices of the Old Testament became redundant and worthless. The Son of Man gave his life as a ransom for the many, bringing those whom God had chosen into the new covenant relationship with the Lord (Mark 10:45).” (Duguid 2008: 171-72)

To return to and conclude with the “freedom” theme of Jubilee, Christ put it like this: “*If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed*” (**John 8:36**).

J. Jesus fulfilled the festivals of Purim and Hanukkah

Although they were not part of the system of feasts set forth in the Mosaic Law, both Purim and Hanukkah are important in Jewish life and have important spiritual implications which Jesus fulfills.

1. Purim. Purim celebrates the Jewish victory over Haman as a result of Esther’s going into the king’s inner court at the risk of her life and inviting the king and Haman to a banquet at which she revealed the plot against the Jews; that caused the king to hang Haman and permit the Jews to defend themselves (**Est 4:1-9:17**). Timothy Keller notes that “Jesus is the true and better Esther, who didn’t just risk losing an earthly palace but lost the ultimate heavenly one, who didn’t just risk his life but gave his life—to save his people” (Keller 2015: 78).

2. Hanukkah. Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the temple during the Maccabean Revolt and is celebrated for eight days based on the (perhaps legendary) account that although there was only enough sacred oil to light the menorah in the temple for one day, it miraculously burned for eight days until additional oil could be obtained. As was discussed above, Jesus is the true temple. Additionally, Rabbi S. M. Lehrman states, “The celebration of Hanukkah calls attention to the significant place occupied by lights in our faith. . . . In Messianic times, the Lord alone will be our everlasting light [**Isa 60:19-20**].” (Lehrman 1958: 19) Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world*” (**John 8:12**). Further, the prophecy of Isaiah referred to by Rabbi Lehrman is specifically fulfilled on the new earth by God and Christ. **Rev 21:23** says, “*The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb*” (see also **Rev 22:5**). Finally, “the date of the Feast of the Dedication [Hanukkah]—the 25th of Chislev—seems to have been adopted by the ancient Church as that of the birth of our blessed Lord—Christmas—the Dedication of the true Temple, which is the body of Jesus” (Edersheim 1988: 334).

VII. Jesus Fulfilled and Replaced OT Israel’s entire Sacrificial System and Priesthood

Heb 8:4-6 explicitly says that the priests and the sacrifices and offerings they made according to the Law were “*a copy and shadow of the heavenly things*” which find their fulfillment in Christ. **Heb 10:11-12, 14** adds, “*Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He [Christ], having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, . . . for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*”

A. OT Israel’s sacrificial system

OT Israel had three categories of offerings or sacrifices. All involved the sacrifice of animals except the grain and drink offerings (but those normally accompanied the burnt and peace offerings).

1. Expiatory offerings (i.e., satisfying the wrath of God).

a. *Sin offerings* (**Lev 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22**): To atone for sins where restitution was not possible.

b. *Trespass/Guilt offerings* (**Lev 5:14-6:7; 7:1-8; Num 5:5-10**): A special kind of sin offering to atone for sins where restitution could be made to an aggrieved party (the offending party had to make the aggrieved party whole, plus pay an additional 20%).

2. Consecratory offerings (i.e., dedicating and/or expressing sincerity to God).

a. *Burnt offerings* (**Lev 1:1-17; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24**): To consecrate yourself or a building to God or to show the sincerity of other sacrifices.

b. *Grain offerings* (**Lev 2:1-16; 6:14-23; 7:9-10**): Thanksgiving and securing divine goodwill.

c. *Drink offerings* (**Lev 23:37; Num 15:1-10**): For consecration.

3. Peace offerings (i.e., establishing deeper intimacy with God) (**Lev 3:1-17; 7:11-34; 19:5-8; 22:18-30**).

a. *Thank offerings* (**Lev 7:12-15; 22:29-30**): For gratitude to God or fellowship with God or for

an unexpected blessing already received.

b. *Votive offerings* (**Lev 7:16-18; 22:18-25**): For a blessing or deliverance already granted when a vow had been made in support of the petition.

c. *Freewill offerings* (**Lev 7:16-18; 22:18-26**): To express general thankfulness and love toward God without regard to specific blessings.

4. The Levitical sacrificial system was not a complete and final scheme whereby all forms of sin could be removed. The sacrificial system was mainly concerned with sins of ignorance, carelessness, accident, and omission, including ritual defilement and misdemeanors that violated property rights. “Highhanded sins,” including all those requiring the death penalty, could not be atoned for by sacrificial ritual (see **Num 15:30-31**). Such sins done in defiance of the Lord and his commands could be forgiven only by God Himself on the basis of unqualified grace in response to faith and repentance (see **Psalms 32, 51**), or awaited cleansing on the Day of Atonement.

B. *Jesus fulfilled OT Israel’s entire sacrificial system*

1. Jesus’ death on the cross fulfilled the underlying basis of the Levitical sacrifices. “The fundamental idea of sacrifice in the Old Testament is that of substitution, which again seems to imply everything else—atonement and redemption, vicarious punishment and forgiveness” (Edersheim 1988: 107). Thus, underlying all blood sacrifices was the substitution of an innocent life (the sacrificial animal) for that of the guilty party. The symbolic nature of the tabernacle, temple, and sacrificial system “showed the necessity of sacrifice, substitution, priestly representation, and cleansing to remedy the damage of sin” (Poythress 1991: 107). “The interpretation of animal sacrifices offered in the tabernacle within the Pentateuch itself points the way to the symbolic depth of this ritual. Later Scripture corrects Israel’s failure to recognize the depth to which the slain animals pointed (Ps. 40:6-8; 50:7-15; 51:16-17), and prophets pointed to a Servant who would justify many by bearing their sin and guilt as a silent lamb (Isa. 53).” (Johnson 2007: 236) Christ fulfilled the entire basis of the sacrificial system because He alone had the capacity to act as our sacrificial substitute since only He was without sin (**Isa 53:4-12; Luke 23:41, 47; Acts 3:14-15; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:21-24; 1 John 3:5**).

a. *Christ fulfilled the concept of the expiatory offerings*: see **Isa 53:4-8, 10; Rom 8:1-4; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Heb 9:11-28; 10:11-12; 13:10-15**.

b. *Christ fulfilled the concept of the consecratory offerings*: see **Matt 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 4:34; 5:17-20, 30; 6:38; 8:28-29; 10:18; 12:49-50; 14:10, 24, 31; 17:1-26**.

c. *Christ fulfilled the concept of the peace offerings*: see **John 14:27; 16:33; Rom 5:1-11; Eph 2:13-18; Col 1:18-20**.

Poythress summarizes: “Christ bore the punishment for our sins (1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:5). Thus He is the final sin [expiatory] offering. Christ was wholly consecrated to God. He suffered death and destruction for sin, and also brings about our death to sin (Romans 6:2-7). Thus He is the final burnt [consecratory] offering. Christ in His perfect obedience gave to God the honor and thanks that are due to Him. Thus He is the final grain offering. Christ now offers us His flesh to eat (John 6:54-58). By partaking of His flesh and blood we have eternal life, we have communion with the Father, and we are transformed into Christ’s image (2 Corinthians 3:18). Thus Christ is the final fellowship [peace] offering.” (Poythress 1991: 49)

2. The NT links Passover, the Day of Atonement, and the entire sacrificial system, and says that Jesus’ death on the cross fulfilled and replaced them all. In **Rom 3:25** Jesus’ death was described as a “propitiation” or “atoning sacrifice.” That is the same Greek term (*hilastērion*) used for the “mercy seat” which covered the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies (**Exod 25:17 LXX**; see also **Heb 9:5** which refers to the mercy seat as the *hilastērion*) and was particularly associated with the Day of Atonement. “When this is combined with Paul’s references elsewhere to Christ’s ‘blood’ [see **Rom 3:25; 5:9; 1 Cor 11:25; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col 1:14, 20**] and his description of Christ as ‘our paschal lamb’ (1 Cor 5:7), it is evident that Paul saw Christ’s work as integrally connected to the two chief festivals associated with the Temple: Passover and Yom Kippur [“Day of Atonement”]. Given his emphasis on its unique efficacy, however, Paul will have seen the Cross as the *fulfillment* of these Temple rituals—not simply as something which could helpfully be compared to them. Jesus’ death is seen in cultic terms, and it is clear that it replaces what would otherwise have been the function of the Temple and its sacrifices.” (Walker 1996: 123)

C. *Jesus fulfilled and superseded the entire OT priesthood*

“The priests of the Old Testament serve as mediators between God and human beings. Because of human sin, people cannot come into the presence of God in his holiness. Instead, the priests represent the people and approach God on behalf of the people. For example, on the Day of Atonement Aaron is instructed to offer a sin offering first of all for himself (Leviticus 16:6, 11). Then he performs services dealing with the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:15-16, 19-22). The priest ‘makes atonement for himself and for the people’ (Leviticus 9:7; 16:24).” (Poythress 1991: 51) However, “According to Hebrews 7:1-8:6 the Aaronic priesthood by its imperfection showed the need for a new and greater priesthood after the order of Melchizedek” (Ibid.: 116). Thus, **Heb 7:28** says, “*The Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.*” Since the Son is “*perfect forever,*” the “weak” OT priesthood has been forever superseded. Further, Jesus “*was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests*” (**Heb 7:14**). According to the OT law, Aaron and the Levites were to be God’s priests “*forever*” (**Num 18:1-8, 11, 19-23; 1 Chron 15:2; 23:13**). However, under the New Covenant, all that has changed. Jesus is a priest “*according to the order of Melchizedek, and not . . . according to the order of Aaron*” (**Heb 7:11**; see also **5:6**). **Heb 7:12** then says that because the coming of Christ resulted in a new priesthood, “*when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.*” T. D. Alexander summarizes that “the reference here to ‘a change in the law’ indicates that the regulations associated with the Levitical priesthood were no longer in force once the church became the new temple of God” (Alexander 2008: 150; see above for Christ and the church as the new, true temple of God).

The sacrifice and work of Christ involved a “*setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness*” [i.e., the Levitical priesthood] and “*a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God*” (**Heb 7:18-19**). The fact that Jesus is called both a “priest” and a “high priest” (**Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 7:11, 15-17, 24, 26, 28; 8:1-2; 9:11**) indicates that the entire OT sacrificial system and priesthood have been replaced because, according to the OT law, Jesus was not able to be a priest at all since he was not descended from Aaron or the tribe of Levi but from the tribe of Judah (**Heb 8:4**; see **Matt 1:2-3; Luke 3:33-34**). Instead of an entire priesthood acting as mediators between God and mankind, now there is “*one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*” (**1 Tim 2:5**). In contrast to the OT priesthood being limited to the tribe of Levi (**Num 18:1-24; Jer 33:19-22**), as a result of the sacrifice of Christ *all* believers in Jesus Christ are now priests in the eyes of God (**1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10**).

D. *Hebrews contrasts Israel’s entire sacrificial system and priesthood with Christ*

1. The OT sacrifices are contrasted with Christ. “The author [of **Hebrews**] criticizes the sacrificial rituals of Israel as ineffective (7:11, 18-19; 10:4), endlessly repetitious (7:23; 10:1), impermanent (8:13; 9:9-10), and tainted by the sin of the priests who offered them (5:3; 7:27; 9:3). . . . Hebrews criticizes the previous sacrificial system to highlight, by contrast, the effectiveness of a ‘better’ sacrifice (9:23) that enacts a ‘better covenant’ (7:22) based on ‘better promises’ (8:26) made by Christ as the superior priest (7:1, 15, 26-27).” (Nelson 2003: 251)
2. The contrast in **Hebrews** is not limited to the yearly Day of Atonement but involves Israel’s entire sacrificial system and priesthood. “Sprinkled blood is also a feature in the sacrificial ritual by which Moses ratified the covenant in Exod 24:3-8. The blood that Moses sprinkled on people and altar unified God and Israel covenantally. Likewise, Jesus mediated a new covenant through his own death and sprinkled blood (9:15; 12:24). Hebrews 9:18-22 expands on what scripture reports about Moses—Moses sprinkles the law book, the tabernacle, and its vessels—and conflates a variety of ritual acts and items from the red heifer ritual (Num 19:9, 18, 20) to the scarlet wool (Lev 14:2-6). This rhetorical device communicates that the priestly act of Jesus culminated and transcended the entire former sacrificial system.” (Nelson 2003: 256-57)
3. **Heb 13:10-14** shows that continuing to worship in the OT manner in the physical Temple and worshipping Jesus are mutually exclusive. “Jesus had inaugurated a new Temple-system (symbolized by the term ‘altar’) which stood in stark contrast to the Temple-system associated with the ‘tent’. In fact the two systems were mutually exclusive: those involved in the earlier system were effectively excluded from this new system (‘those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat’: v. 10); by implication those who now believed in Jesus were equally to regard themselves as excluded from that former system (‘let us go to him *outside* the camp’: v. 13). . . . This forces a new sense of contrast. Jesus’ death had taken place ‘outside the city gate’ (v. 12), not (as for the sacrificial animals) in the ‘sanctuary’ (v. 11). A choice was therefore required—either go to Jesus ‘outside the camp’ (v. 13) or remain, as it were, within the city and focused on the Temple. To use alternative ‘geographical’ language, were one’s loyalties with the Temple mount or with ‘the place of the skull’? The contrast between the two was plain. A new

means of approaching God had been established; a choice had to be made.” (Walker 1996: 206-7)

4. The finality and perfection of Christ’s Atonement—and thus the complete and permanent elimination of the entire OT sacrificial system and priesthood—is seen in the fact that he “sat down at the right hand of God” in the true heavenly holy of holies (Heb 1:3; 10:12, 14; see also Ps 110:1; Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20-21; Col 3:1; 1 Pet 3:21-22). “Because sacrificial service entailed the posture of *standing* before God or at the altar (10:11; Deut 10:8; 18:7), the contrasting act of *sitting down* indicates the termination of Christ’s sacrificial act (10:12). Yet, at the same time, his enthronement at God’s right side gives him the access and status appropriate for ongoing, effective intercession.” (Nelson 2003: 257)

5. Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, and his resurrection and ascension, far exceed what all of Israel’s sacrifices and priests, including the high priest on the Day of Atonement, could ever have hoped to achieve.

a. *The old sacrificial system required multiple sacrifices and priests (Heb 7:23; 9:25; 10:1, 11).* The former priests existed in great numbers “because they were prevented by death from continuing” (Heb 7:23). But “because [Jesus] continues forever, [he] holds His priesthood permanently” (Heb 7:24), and he had to make only one sacrifice for all people and for all time (Heb 7:24, 27; 9:12, 25-28; 10:10-14).

b. *The old sacrificial system could not change people on the inside or make them perfect.* By his sacrifice Christ does that (Heb 7:11; 9:9-10; 10:1-2, 14-16).

c. *The old Day of Atonement served as a “reminder” of sins every year.* Through Christ’s sacrifice the Father “will remember their sins and lawless deeds no more” (Heb 10:3, 16-18).

d. *Christ did what no earthly priest could do.* He ascended into heaven itself, where he continually intercedes for his people with the Father (Heb 7:24-25) and not just as a priest but as a high priest (Heb 4:14-15; 7:26; 8:1-2).

e. *By his death, resurrection, and ascension Christ now enables every believer to do what only the OT priests could do.* In the OT only the priests could enter the holy place of the Temple. Jesus has enabled all of his people with “confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus” all of the time (Heb 10:19-22; 4:16).

VIII. Jesus Fulfilled and Replaced the OT Law

Heb 10:1-2 says that the Law was “only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things” (see also Rom 13:8-10). The contrast between the Mosaic Law and the incomparable greatness of Christ is made clear in John 1:17: “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.” In order to understand the epoch-changing significance of the coming of Jesus, an issue of central importance is what effect Christ, His teaching, and His announcement of the kingdom had with respect to OT law (Torah). When Jesus appeared He forced His contemporaries to make a choice: “what does loyalty to Israel’s god mean for a Palestinian Jew faced with the announcement that the long-awaited kingdom is now at last appearing? Jesus’ zealous contemporaries would have said: Torah provides the litmus test of loyalty to Israel’s god and to his covenant. Jesus said: what counts is following me.” (Wright 1996: 381) The same issue—our understanding of the NT’s effect on the OT—still faces us today.

A. *The OT Law was part of the Mosaic (Old) Covenant*

The Mosaic Covenant and Law (including the Sabbath) were designed to regulate the nation of Israel in the land. Hence, God’s blessings and curses were tied in a physical way directly to Israel’s obedience or disobedience to Mosaic Law (see Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 4; 6-9; 11; 27-29). Although the Law itself was holy, spiritual, and good (Rom 7:12, 14, 16), it was not designed or able to impart life (Gal 3:21). It could not justify people (Rom 3:21; Gal 3:11). It was not a basis for righteousness (Gal 3:21). If the Law *could* have been the means of life, then Christ did not need to come (see Gal 3:11-13, 19-24; 4:4-5). Mosaic Law was instituted because of the people’s sin (Gal 3:19). It revealed people’s sinfulness (Rom 3:19-20; 7:7-12). It even aroused or increased sin (Rom 4:15; 5:13-14, 20; 7:5; 1 Cor 15:56). It imprisoned people under sin (Rom 7:6, 23; 8:2-3; Gal 3:23; 5:1; Col 2:14). It brought death and condemned people for their sinful behavior (Rom 7:5, 9-11; 2 Cor 3:7-9). It proved to be “a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear” (Acts 15:10).

B. *The OT Law was temporary*

The OT Law was designed to have only a temporary function that prepared people for Christ (Gal 3:15-4:31; see also Rom 7:24-25). The Law showed people that if they were to have right standing with God it could

not be on the basis of Law-keeping (since they could not perfectly keep the Law) but would have to be through some other means (i.e., through Jesus Christ who *could and did* perfectly keep the Law and through the *grace* of God who graciously imputed Christ's perfect righteousness to those who are united to Christ by faith). The Law thereby prepared people for Christ.

In light of the pre-existing Abrahamic covenant, the OT Law was only temporary until the coming of Christ.⁴⁷ In **Gal 3:1-19** Paul discusses the relationship of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant and Law, and Christ. Paul argues that Abraham was justified by faith, not by the works of the Law (**Gal 3:6**, quoting **Gen 15:6**). Further, God's Covenant with and promises to Abraham were given 430 years before the Law was given to Moses, and the law "*does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise*" (**Gal 3:17**). The Law was added "*because of transgressions*" (**Gal 3:19a**). The OT Law acted as a "guardian" (pedagogue) (**Gal 3:24-25; 4:2**) over "minor children" (**Gal 4:1-3**) until sonship came with Christ (**Gal 3:26; 4:4-7**). A pedagogue (Greek = *paidagōgos*) "was a domestic slave within the household, whose task was to oversee the activities of the children in the family from infancy to puberty . . . As a result, the life of a child under the control of a *paidagōgos* was strictly supervised. It was without any measure of freedom. . . . The tightly knit structure of this argument and the broad pattern of chiasm in these verses points to a single function of the Law. This function is that of a custodian who closely regulates and supervises God's people in a period of spiritual minority. Like the elementary principles of the world [**Gal 4:3, 9**], the Law orders the daily affairs of its wards until sonship is realized. It was established as a temporary but necessary expedient given the operative principle of sin and functions as a 'bridle' for a people that are prone to sin, bringing to light the defined will of God as a basis for covenant obligation. With the coming of faith in Christ, the Law's function as guardian and custodian ceases and the Spirit becomes the internal guiding principle." (Belleville 1986: 59, 60, 70)⁴⁸ **Gal 3:23** and **3:25** show the contrast: "*Before faith came in, we were kept in custody under the law,*" but "*Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a pedagogue.*" The "faith" is found in Jesus Christ (**3:24**).

C. The OT Law was symbolic

The Mosaic Law had symbolic purposes that pointed to and are fulfilled in Christ and the church. Several examples of this are food laws, laws relating to ceremonial uncleanness, laws relating to yoking and muzzling animals, and criminal laws.

1. Food laws. After the Flood, God told Noah that people could eat animals of *all kinds*, without restriction (**Gen 9:3-4**). Only with the Mosaic Covenant came the prohibition against eating certain "unclean" animals (**Lev 11:1-23, 41-47; Deut 14:1-21**). This suggests that the law was symbolic. Poythress states, "In the Old Testament the principles of holiness and separation were temporarily expressed on a symbolic, physical level in the distinction between clean and unclean foods. Such a symbolic distinction was appropriate during the time when salvation as a whole was expressed in a symbolic and shadowy form. Salvation had not yet come in its definitive and final form, namely, Christ Himself and His sacrifice on the cross." (Poythress 1991: 85-86)

Because these laws were symbolic—a "type" and "shadow" that was pointing forward to Christ and heavenly realities (**Heb 10:1-2**)—they were fulfilled when the reality to which it pointed appeared. That the food laws were symbolic of the *heart* or inner state of a person is made clear by Christ in **Mark 7:14-23** where he says that it is not what goes into a person (i.e., certain kinds of food) that defiles the person, but what comes out of the person's heart defiles the person. That the food laws were symbolic of *people* was further made clear in the vision God gave to Peter in **Acts 10:9-20**. Three times Peter saw a sheet filled with "unclean" animals, and God told Peter to "*kill and eat*" them. Peter thought that only animals were being talked about, but God then told him, "*What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy*" (**Acts 10:15**). Peter then understood that God meant that all human beings of whatever tribe or ethnic group are equally "clean" (**Acts 10:28, 34-35; 11:1-18; 15:7-9**). Finally, the symbolism of the OT food laws has been fulfilled in that those who are Christ's have feasted on the ultimate, life-giving food: the body and blood of Christ himself (**John 6:51-58**). Therefore, in Christ all the lesser symbols have been done away with. Indeed, now that Christ has come and fulfilled the Law, to require a person to abstain from certain "unclean" foods amounts to a form of falling away from the faith because God

⁴⁷ Significantly, although the covenants with Noah (**Gen 9:16; Isa 24:5**), Abraham (**Gen 17:7, 19; Ps 105:10; 1 Chron 16:17**), David (**2 Sam 23:5; 2 Chron 13:5**), and the New Covenant (**Isa 55:3; 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26**) are all called "everlasting" covenants, the covenant with Moses is never called "everlasting" or "permanent."

⁴⁸ By using "we" in **4:3**, Paul was including himself with the Galatian Christians, and also was indicating that the Mosaic Law was one of the enslaving elements of the cosmos. The pre-Christian, pagan, Gentile Galatians had been just as "enslaved in their pagan idolatry as the Jews had been in their servitude to the Law," and equally in need of salvation (Burke 2006: 86-87).

has created all food “to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.”⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;⁵ for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.” (1 Tim 4:3-5)

2. Laws relating to ceremonial uncleanness. Israelites were not to touch human corpses (Num 19:11-22) or the carcasses of certain animals (Lev 11:24-40) because they would thereby become “unclean” for a period of time and have to perform various purification rituals. “The prohibition rests on the fact that ‘you [Israelites] are a holy people to the Lord your God’ (Deuteronomy 14:21). The world has been contaminated with curse and uncleanness originating in the fall. The Gentile nations participate in this uncleanness through their contact with unclean animals. But such uncleanness is not in itself sin. It is merely *symbolic* of sin. And separation from uncleanness accompanies *symbolic* holiness. Israel alone is required to observe a special ceremonial cleanness, because they are holy people.” (Poythress 1991: 84-85) Further, the distinction between the clean and the unclean dramatized the prevailing power of sin: the unclean pollutes the clean; the clean does not purify the unclean (Hag 2:10-14).

Christ is the fulfillment of what the cleanliness laws symbolized since he is the only completely pure and holy being who ever lived and he triumphed over sin and death (see Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30; Rom 5:19; 6:6; 1 Cor 15:21-22; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:20). Therefore, the prevailing power of Christ reverses the principle of the cleanliness laws. When Jesus touched a leper, Jesus was not defiled, but the leper was cleansed (Matt 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14). Indeed, through his sacrifice on the cross Jesus sanctifies all who are united to him by faith (Heb 10:10). This same “principle of reversal” applies in practical ways in our lives: although OT Israelites who married unbelievers were supposed to separate from their pagan spouses (Ezra 9:1-10:14), Christians are not required to separate from their unbelieving spouses (1 Cor 7:10-13). Instead, the unbelieving spouse and children of the marriage are deemed “clean” by virtue of their connection with the Christian (1 Cor 7:14).⁴⁹

3. Laws relating to yoking and muzzling animals. Deut 22:10 says, “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together” (see also Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9, 11 for other forbidden mixtures). Paul applies this concept to people in 1 and 2 Corinthians: do not “associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person” (1 Cor 5:11); marry “only in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39); “Do not be bound together [lit. ‘unequally yoked’] with unbelievers” (2 Cor 6:14). Similarly, Deut 25:4 says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.” In 1 Cor 9:9-10 Paul quotes this law and then comments, “God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written.” He quotes this law again in 1 Tim 5:17-18 as the reason why the church should pay the pastor. James Jordan concludes, “In other words, all the animal laws are really concerned about human life. . . . One thing is clear: The primary focus of the animal laws in the Mosaic legislation is the symbolic and human dimension.” (Jordan 1988: 98)

4. Laws relating to manslaughter. If a person accidentally killed someone, he could flee to a city of refuge and thereby escape the family members of the deceased person seeking to avenge the death (see Num 35:1-34; Deut 19:1-10). The person would have to remain in the city of refuge until the high priest died (Num 35:25-27). The reason for this “incarceration” of the manslayer is that even accidentally spilled blood “pollutes the land” (Num 35:32-34; see also Gen 4:10-11 [“The voice of [Abel’s] blood is crying to Me from the ground”]). “When Jesus Christ died, He died as the great High Priest [Heb 2:17; 4:14-5:10; 7:1-8:6; 10:11-22]. His death permanently, once and for all, atoned for blood spilled on the ground. . . . The only permanently defiled place in God’s universe any more is hell, and in hell the great Avenger of Blood pours out eternal wrath on those who refused to flee to Jesus Christ, our City of Refuge (Heb. 6:18).” (Jordan 1984: 101-102).

5. Laws relating to capital punishment. God cannot abide in the presence of sin (see Isa 59:1-2; Hab 1:13). The Law required the death penalty for certain sexual sins, idolatry, and other matters to signify God’s holiness and the standard of holiness he requires of his people, i.e., “Be holy, for I am holy” (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26). The NT takes the principle of holiness and purity but reapplies it in the church, which again shows that the OT Law is superseded when the reality to which it pointed has arrived: “Leviticus 20:11 required that Israel put to death a man who had sexual relations with his father’s wife. The apostle Paul, addressing the same situation in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, instructs the church to exercise

⁴⁹ Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor 7:14 assumes that the marriage to the unbeliever took place before the now-believing spouse became a Christian, since believers are always to marry “in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39). Thus, in 2 Cor 6:15-17 Paul asks, “What has a believer in common with an unbeliever?” and quotes Isa 52:11 (“Do not touch what is unclean”) to emphasize that the *principle* of separation from sinfulness which was at the heart of the OT cleanliness laws still applies to Christians in their marital and other relationships.

ecclesiastical excommunication, not physical execution. This formal expulsion of the unrepentant sinner is a sobering and severe sanction, since it is ‘to deliver this man to Satan.’ Yet, excommunication also envisions the possibility that God’s mercy will soften the offender’s hardened heart through the church’s discipline, to the end ‘that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord’ (vs. 5). By closing his discussion with a citation from another text from the Mosaic law dealing with penalties for sexual sins (‘Purge the evil person from among you,’ Deut. 22:22, 24), Paul identifies the church as the fulfillment of Israel and the spiritual discipline by which the church protects its communal purity as the fulfillment of the penal sanctions by which Israel was to maintain its corporate holiness. In the books of Moses, the same formula, ‘Purge the evil person from your midst,’ is applied to the execution of Israelite idolaters (Deut. 17:7), malicious false witnesses (19:19), and defiant and abusive youths (21:18-21), as well as those found guilty of various sexual sins. In each of these cases, the formula reinforces that the rationale for so severe a punishment is not an abstract principle of justice among the nations at large, but rather the preservation of Israel’s purity as God’s covenant people. The procedures of church discipline specified by Jesus (Matt. 18:15-20) and his apostles (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 1 Tim. 5:20-25; etc.) are the means by which God now calls his new covenant people to protect its purity.” (Johnson 2007: 281-82)

D. *The OT Law was prophetic*

In **Luke 16:16** (“*The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached*”) Jesus announced a fundamental change in the OT Law (see also **Matt 11:13** which states that the Law had a prophetic function that terminated with John). Jesus was saying that “the period during which men were related to God under its [i.e., the OT’s] terms has ceased with John . . . the entire OT is being viewed as the first member in a ‘prophecy-fulfillment’ understanding of history” (Moo 1984: 23). Because the Mosaic Law (and the OT in general) had a prophetic function which pointed to Jesus and his teaching, that which prophesies by its nature is provisional and is “taken up in and transcended by the fulfillment of the prophecy” (Carson 1984: 146).

E. *Jesus came to fulfill the Law*

Jesus said, “*Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill, for truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished*” (**Matt 5:17-18**).

1. “The Law or the Prophets” refers to the entire OT. “Jesus is taking pains to relate his teaching and place in the history of redemption to the OT Scriptures. For that is what ‘Law or the Prophets’ here means: the Scriptures. The disjunctive ‘or’ makes it clear that neither is to be abolished. The Jews of Jesus’ day could refer to the Scriptures as ‘the Law and the Prophets’ (7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 28:23; Rom 3:21); ‘the Law. . . , the Prophets, and the Psalms’ (Luke 24:44); or just ‘the Law’ (5:18; John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; 1 Cor 14:21); the divisions were not yet stereotyped.” (Carson 1984: 142)
2. Jesus was born under the Law and perfectly kept it. Jesus was “*born under the Law*” (**Gal 4:4**). He perfectly complied with all the demands of the Old Covenant and Law (see **Isa 53:9; Luke 23:40-41; John 8:46; Heb 4:15**). Jesus was not accused of law-breaking at his trial (see **Matt 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:19-24**).
3. The OT had pointed to Christ, and he “fulfilled” it (**Matt 5:17**). The word “fulfill” (Greek = *plēroō*) normally means “to bring to its intended meaning” (Hays 2001: 29), or to “bring something to completion” (Poythress 1991: 368). In Matthew’s Gospel, which is the context of **5:17**, the vast majority of all uses of *plēroō* “clearly refer to fulfillment of prophecy in the life and passion of Christ” (Meier 1976: 80). When Jesus said that He came to “fulfill” the Law, he was saying that the Law and the Prophets pointed to Him. They were incomplete in themselves but anticipated His teaching. He and His teaching completed and fulfilled what they hinted at, pointed to, and began. Jesus’ work on the cross brought the *purpose* and the *binding nature* of OT (Mosaic) law to an end. The OT law expressed God’s rule in at least three ways: “First, it publishes and imposes an order, a system of regularity, righteousness, and fitness. It specifies the way life is to be lived within God’s dominion, and the distinctions and orders that are to be preserved. Second, it expresses the character of God and opens Israel to a personal communion with God the speaker. God’s communication to Israel embodies an intimacy with Israel unlike His relation to other nations (cf. Psalm 147:19-20). Third, it expresses the awesomeness of punishments and judgments that fall on people who are disobedient and unholy, and the rewards for the obedient. . . . Christ brought to fulfillment the three sides of God’s rule that we have already seen. He brought to expression the order of God’s life by His example, His teaching, and the

teaching of the apostles sent by Him. He also opened the way to a new depth of communion and personal fellowship with God as He revealed to us the very character of God. He is ‘the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being’ (Hebrews 1:3). And He made the definitive atoning sacrifice for sins when He died on the cross, thus satisfying the law’s penalties for disobedience. . . . Thus Jesus Christ perfectly kept the law, perfectly embodied it, and perfectly exemplified it. . . . The law of Moses is a reflection and foreshadowing of the absolute perfection and righteousness of Christ, rather than Christ being a reflection of the law.” (Poythress 1991: 78-80, 92-93) See also **Rom 10:4** (“*Christ is the end [or, goal] of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes*”).

4. “All was accomplished” (Matt 5:18) at the cross and resurrection. Jesus’ death and resurrection are the turning point between the old and new eras. In **Matt 5:18** verse “18d [“*until all is accomplished*”] reinterprets the apocalyptic language of 18b [“*until heaven and earth pass away*”] in terms of the fulfillment of all prophecy in Christ (culminating in his death-resurrection). In short, 18d says that 18b takes place at the death-resurrection of Jesus, which is the fulfillment of OT prophecies; vs. 18b says that 18d is the apocalyptic event ushering in the new aeon. The two clauses have a reciprocal relationship.” (Meier 1976: 64-65) Thus, Jesus’ last words from the cross immediately before he died were “*It is finished!*” (**John 19:30**).

5. In his death and resurrection Jesus transcended and superseded the OT Law. “Jesus had died by crucifixion and so, according to the law, had become a curse of God [see **Deut 21:23**, quoted in **Gal 3:13**]. But Paul’s conversion experience caused him to realize that God had now vindicated Jesus by raising him from the dead. Thus, Jesus (or perhaps more precisely, God’s action through Jesus) had transcended the law that pronounced Him accursed and was now active in a new way; it was now Jesus, and not the law or the Mosaic covenant, that has become the locus of God’s saving work for both Jews and Gentiles.” (DeLacey 1982: 161)

F. Jesus asserted and demonstrated his authority over the entire OT Law

1. Jesus said that He is “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt 12:6; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). The Pharisees claimed that Jesus’ disciples were guilty of breaking the Sabbath because they picked heads of grain on the Sabbath. Jesus answered that “the disciples are innocent *because* [He] as the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (Carson 1982: 67). By saying that, Jesus was asserting his “superiority over the Sabbath and, hence, of the authority to abrogate or transform the Sabbath law” (Moo 1984: 17). He made a similar claim to have equality with God in **John 5:17-18** when he healed a man on the Sabbath and told him to “*pick up your pallet and walk,*” in violation of Sabbath regulations. Thus, Jesus’ claim to be “*Lord of the Sabbath*” relates not only to His own conduct but also affects the conduct of others (i.e., made it lawful for the man to carry his pallet when that was prohibited). Because the law of the Sabbath was part of the Ten Commandments, “Jesus’ authority as the law’s fulfiller stands even over the Decalogue” (Moo 1984: 29).

2. Jesus taught on his own independent authority, not dependent on either the oral laws or traditions, or even the written OT law (Matt 7:28-29; 13:54; Mark 1:21-22; Luke 4:31-32; John 7:46). His statements, “*You have heard it said . . . But I say to you*” (**Matt 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44**), were not simply expounding the OT law, or showing its “true meaning,” or even deepening or radicalizing it. Instead, “The ‘*I say to you*’ emphasizes a new and startling focus on the authority of this Jesus of Nazareth, an authority that goes far beyond a restatement of the OT law” (Moo 1988: 205). Indeed, “Jesus’ own demands go considerably beyond any fair exegesis of the actual texts he quotes; nor do most of his demands find support anywhere in the OT” (Ibid.). He confirmed this authority by the miraculous signs he performed (**Matt 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:18-26**).

3. Jesus explicitly broke and condemned the “oral law.” The Jews believed that the “oral law” (*Halakah*) had been given at Mount Sinai along with the written law (*Torah*). The oral law was accepted as authoritative, even if its authority did not match that of the written law (Carson 1982: 76; Moo 1984: 18). Jesus’ life demonstrated a clear distinction between the written law and the oral law. “There is no undisputed example of a specific precept of the written Torah that He Himself actually contravened” (Carson 1982: 79). On the other hand, “In general, Jesus rejects the Halakah in a radical way, without sympathy and without equivocation, especially when it conflicts with His own use of the Old Testament, or with His kingdom teaching” (Ibid.: 76). Examples of Jesus’ attacks on, or violations of, the oral law include: “Corban” (money dedicated to the Temple) (**Matt 15:5-12; Mark 7:9-13**); non-emergency healings on the Sabbath (**Matt 12:9-14; Luke 13:10-17; John 5:1-17**); eating with unwashed hands (**Matt 15:1-3; Mark 7:1-9**).

G. *Jesus lived under the Old Covenant but was a messenger of the New Covenant*

Although Jesus Himself lived under the Old Covenant, his teachings struck at the heart of the Mosaic Law and ushered in the New Covenant.

1. Jesus' life and teaching occurred in the context of OT Israel but anticipated the New Covenant era. "During his public ministry, Jesus restricted himself in principle to the land and people of Israel, though there were a few prophetic exceptions that signified what was to come after the death-resurrection. Correspondingly, during his public ministry, Jesus proclaimed his stringent fidelity to the Mosaic law. . . . After his death-resurrection, the Lord abolishes those limitations of territory and people which had clung to his public ministry. Correspondingly, his command to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them implicitly rescinds the command of circumcision and so rescinds that fidelity to the Mosaic Law which marked his public ministry. In all this there is a natural, inner logic. A ministry restricted to the land and people of Israel could hardly be carried out otherwise than with fidelity to the Mosaic Law, just as an unrestricted mission to the Gentiles would hardly be conceivable—let alone successful—without the rescinding of such prescriptions as circumcision." (Meier 1976: 29-30)
2. Jesus taught principles that struck at the heart of the Mosaic Law. In **Mark 7:14-23** Jesus asserted a principle ("*whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, [but] that which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man*") that was "destined to abrogate large segments of Pentateuchal laws" (Moo 1984: 28). By asserting that principle, Jesus "*declared all foods clean*" (**Mark 7:19**; see also **Acts 10:9-16**; **Rom 14:1-17** [*"the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking"*]; **1 Cor 8:1-9:4**; **10:23-30**; **Col 2:16-17** [*"no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink"*]; **1 Tim 4:3-5**). He thereby overturned the entire body of OT food laws.

Further, the major issue at the Council of Jerusalem (**Acts 15**) was whether or not new believers in Christ were required to be circumcised and obey the Law of Moses (**Acts 15:1-2, 5-6**). The Council concluded that circumcision and being bound by the Law of Moses were *not* required (**Acts 15:7-11, 19-20, 28-29**). That was the same issue addressed by Paul in **Gal 5:1-6**. Since the church, in accordance with Jesus' command in **Matt 28:19**, "is to use baptism rather than circumcision as the essential initiation rite for these proselytes, then we cannot honestly speak of either . . . Christ or the . . . church as commanding faithful observance of the Mosaic Law . . . in the post-resurrection period. For rabbinic Judaism, a faithful observance of the Mosaic Law that dispensed *in principle* with circumcision was a contradiction in terms." (Meier 1976: 29)

Christ had said, "*Not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until all is accomplished*" (**Matt 5:18**). The food laws and circumcision were not minor matters but went to the heart of the Law and what it meant to be a Jew (see **Lev 20:26** [Israel was to be "set apart" from other peoples]; **Lev 11:44-47**; **Deut 14:21** (the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" foods symbolized holiness); **Gen 17:9-14** [circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant]; **Lev 12:3** [circumcision was necessary for all Jewish male children]; **Josh 5:2-9** [circumcision was necessary for Israel to enter the promised land]). By no longer requiring adherence to the food laws or circumcision, the church recognized that, in his life and in his death on the cross, Christ had "accomplished all" the Law had foreshadowed. Therefore, to be a follower the gospel of Christ means that one is no longer under the Law of Moses.

3. Jesus' actual teaching on law changed or revoked the letter of the Mosaic Law. "Christ on Calvary embraces and completes the principles that lie behind the law of Moses" (Goldsworthy 2000: 96). However, because Christ completes or fulfills the *principles* behind the OT law, He did not leave the *letter* of the OT law intact. "Jesus clearly and authoritatively modified [*restricting divorce*, **Matt 5:31-32**], intensified [*love your enemy in addition to your neighbor*, **Matt 5:43-44**], repealed [*oaths*, **Matt 5:33-37**; *lex talionis* ("*an eye for an eye*"), **Matt 38-42**], or invested with deeper meaning [*murder includes hatred*, **Matt 5:21-22**; *adultery includes lust*, **Matt 5:27-28**], various parts of the Old Testament. . . . Jesus' authoritative teaching *anticipates* the change, which does not actually come until the Resurrection." (Carson 1982: 79)

H. *Christians are not bound by the Mosaic Covenant or any of the OT Laws but are under the "Law of Christ"*

1. Either Christ superseded the entire OT Law or the entire OT Law is still in effect. Jesus said "*Not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished*" (**Matt 5:18**). When He said that, "Jesus was not stating that the Law is eternally binding on New Testament believers. If that were the case, Christians today would be required to keep the sacrificial and ceremonial laws as well as the moral ones, and that would clearly violate other portions of the New Testament" (Hays 2001: 29). In

other words, Christians cannot “pick and choose” which OT laws are still directly applicable today and which are not; the entire Law hangs together. Thus, in connection with circumcision, Paul said that for someone to go back and put himself under the authority of one part of the OT law means that he is thereby subject to the *entire* OT law: “*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*” (**Gal 5:1-4**)

2. The result of the change of redemptive eras (i.e., from the Old Covenant to the coming of Christ) is that no Mosaic commandment is directly applicable to believers. Because Jesus said “*not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished*” (**Matt 5:18**), when one law was abrogated, the entire OT Law went with it. Thus, when Christ declared “*all foods clean*” (**Mark 7:19**), and God told Peter “*What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy*” (**Acts 10:15**), that meant *all* had been accomplished: the *entire* OT Law had been fulfilled and is no longer directly applicable to Christians. Similarly, the OT requirement of circumcision—which went to the very heart of the Old Covenant—has been eliminated (**1 Cor 7:18-19; Gal 5:1-2, 11-12; 6:13-15; Phil 3:2-3**). The *entire* Old Covenant is “*obsolete*” (see **Heb 8:13**). **Eph 2:14-15** says, “*The Law of commandments contained in ordinances*” which distinguished between and separated Jews from Gentiles was “*broken down*” and “*abolished*” in Christ. **Col 2:13-14** says, “*The certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us*” was “*canceled,*” “*taken out of the way*” and “*nailed to the cross.*” **Heb 7:11-12** says that the coming of Christ resulted in a new priesthood, and “*when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.*” **Gal 3:13** says, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law.*” **Heb 10:9** adds, “*He takes away the first [Old, Mosaic Covenant] in order to establish the second [New Covenant].*” **Rom 6:14** says, “*Sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*” Paul’s point is that, “the Christian lives in a new freedom from the power of sin, because he no longer lives under that regime in which the Mosaic Law strengthened the power of sin. . . . Not to be under the law, then, includes not being directly subjected to the ordinances of the Law of Moses.” (Moo 1988: 212) In **Rom 7:1-6** Paul argues that “*the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives*” (**7:1**). However, we “*were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ*” (**7:4**). Therefore, “*we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter*” (**7:6**). The point of **Gal 4:21-31** is that “the Mosaic covenant *as a covenant* is exclusive to the Jews (‘the present Jerusalem,’ 4:25); God’s new dealings, with Jew and Gentile alike, have bypassed it” (DeLacey 1982: 163).

3. Jesus is the true interpreter of the OT and is the ultimate source of authoritative teaching. When Jesus said that He did not come “*to abolish, but to fulfill*” the “*Law or the Prophets*” (i.e., the OT) (**Matt 5:17**) He was saying that “the OT’s real and abiding authority must be understood through the person and teaching of him to whom it points and who so richly fulfills it” (Carson 1984: 144). Thus, “Jesus is to Moses what the butterfly is to the caterpillar. . . . In Christ Moses reaches maturity and emerges in full bloom. Moses’ law still has relevance, but only as it comes to us from the hands of the Lord Jesus. Christians today must still read Moses, and for great profit, but when they read him they must wear their Christian lenses.” (Wells and Zaspel 2002: 157) In other words, the OT Law and the Prophets “are superseded by the eschatological fulfiller of the Law and the prophets, Jesus the Messiah. Jesus, in his words and in his actions, is the norm of morality for Christians. . . . The Son of God alone can fully teach the sons what it means to do the will of the heavenly Father (cf. [Matt] 5:43-48 and 11:25-30). For the Christian, the person of Jesus, who is God-with-us, simply takes the place of the Torah as the center of the Christian’s life (cf. [Matt] 18:20, in conjunction with 1:23 and 28:20).” (Meier 1976: 88)

4. Instead of being subject to the Old Covenant, Christians are now subject to the New Covenant—the “law of Christ” (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8-13; 9:15). “When the New Testament writers were faced with ethical issues in the various churches to which they wrote, it would have been relatively easy to appeal to the Ten Commandments. This they did not do. Let us state this fact as a rule of thumb: the New Testament basis for ethical decisions is no longer Moses on Sinai but Christ on Calvary. . . . In dealing with ethical issues, indeed all matters of decision making (ethical or otherwise), the question we should ask ourselves is, ‘What course of action or behavior is consistent with the gospel?’” (Goldsworthy 2000: 96) The “law of Christ” is not only the teachings of Jesus but also that of the NT writers (see, e.g., **John 14:24-26; 16:12-15; 17:8, 18-20; 1 Cor 14:37; Gal 1:11-12; Eph 2:20; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6, 14; Heb 2:3; Rev 1:11**). The law of Christ includes “both general principles and some detailed demands—much more than the bare requirement of love is involved” (Moo

1984: 30). Jesus alone brings “life” (**John 3:36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:40, 68: 10:10; 11:25; 14:6; 20:31**). He said that if we “abide” or “continue in” his word, then we “*will know the truth, and the truth will make you free*” (**John 8:31-32**). His word transforms us from the “inside-out” into the image of Christ Himself (see **Rom 8:29; 12:2**). The OT Law never could do what Jesus and the law of Christ can do (see also **Acts 15:10-11**). Although the OT law has been superseded by Christ, it may still have symbolic applications. For example, in **2 Cor 6:14-17** Paul refers to the OT prohibition against touching unclean things in order to underscore the general principle of separation from sinfulness. This is an example of what Wells and Zaspel said above: “Christians today must still read Moses, and for great profit, but when they read him they must wear their Christian lenses” (Wells and Zaspel 2002: 157).⁵⁰

IX. Jesus Fulfilled and Replaced the OT Sabbath

In **Col 2:13-15** Paul argues that Christ cancelled our debt of sin on the cross and made us alive together with him. In **Col 2:16-17** he concludes, “*Therefore, no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ*” (see also **Gal 4:9-11**).

A. Jesus asserted and demonstrated his authority over the Sabbath

Jesus said that He is “*Lord of the Sabbath*” (**Matt 12:6; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5**). The Pharisees claimed that Jesus’ disciples were guilty of breaking the Sabbath because they picked heads of grain on the Sabbath. Jesus answered that “the disciples are innocent *because* [He] as the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (Carson 1982: 67). By saying that, Jesus was asserting his “superiority over the Sabbath and, hence, of the authority to abrogate or transform the Sabbath law” (Moo 1984: 17). He made a similar claim to have equality with God in **John 5:17-18** when he healed a man on the Sabbath and told him to “*pick up your pallet and walk,*” in violation of Sabbath regulations. Thus, Jesus’ claim to be “*Lord of the Sabbath*” relates not only to His own conduct, but also affects the conduct of others (i.e., made it lawful for the man to carry his pallet when that was prohibited). His claim to be Lord of the Sabbath “is not only a messianic claim of grand proportions, but it raises the possibility of a future change or reinterpretation of the Sabbath” (Carson 1982: 66).

B. The NT transforms the significance of the Sabbath

“The letter of the fourth commandment [**Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15**] clearly specifies the seventh day, not simply a ‘one-in-seven’ principle” (Moo 1984: 48n.204). The Sabbath was uniquely associated with Israel (see **Exod 16:22-30; 31:12-17; Neh 9:13-14**). It was the sign of the Old Covenant (**Exod 31:16-17**).

1. Jesus fulfills the two rationales for the OT Sabbath. The Fourth Commandment (regarding the Sabbath) had two rationales: God’s resting from his work of creation (**Exod 20:11**) and the exodus from Egypt (**Deut 5:15**). Although it may not be apparent how the exodus serves as a basis for the Sabbath, that becomes clear when one considers that the purpose of the exodus was to free Israel from its slavery of work in Egypt; but more than that—the exodus was to find its completion when Israel was planted in its own land where it would find rest from all its enemies (**Deut 12:9-10; 25:19; Josh 11:23; Ps 106:7-12**). Jesus’ own actions of healing on the Sabbath indicated the fulfillment of the Sabbath. For example, in His healing of the woman in **Luke 13:10-17**, “Jesus is portrayed as taking up and transforming the great theme of Sabbath as release from work, bringing into immediate presence and sharp focus the theme of Sabbath as rest after trouble, as redemption from slavery. Jesus was claiming that Israel’s longing—for a great Sabbath day when all her enemies would be put to shame, and she herself would rejoice at God’s release—was being fulfilled in him. That is why it was not merely generally appropriate that this woman should be healed, and if it happened to be on the Sabbath, well and good. The claim was that the Sabbath day was the *most appropriate* day, because that day celebrated release from captivity, from bondage, as well as from work.” (Wright 1996: 394)

2. Heb 3:7-4:11 completes the transformation of the meaning of the Sabbath and equates it with our salvation rest. The book of Hebrews reveals that the OT Sabbath day was merely a type or shadow of New Covenant salvation, i.e., our true “Sabbath rest.” Although the *consummation* of our rest remains future (**Heb 4:11**), **Heb 4:3, 10** state that those who believe in Christ “*enter that rest*” or “*have entered His rest*” just as, by faith, we already have “*come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*” (**Heb 12:22**). In other words: “God’s rest is entered by believing (4:3). Therefore the New Covenant people of God discharge their duty of Sabbath observance, according to this writer

⁵⁰ Application of OT law and principles today is discussed in detail in Menn, *Biblical Interpretation* (2008-2017) at pages 39-56 and Appendices C and D.

[i.e., the writer of Hebrews], by exercising faith. . . . They cease from their own works so that God may work in them (cf. 13:21). . . . Thus the true Sabbath, which has come with Christ, is not a literal, physical rest but is seen as consisting in the salvation that God has provided. . . . In short the physical rest of the Old Testament Sabbath has become the salvation rest of the true Sabbath. Believers in Christ can now live in God’s Sabbath that has already dawned. Jesus’ working to accomplish this superseded the Old Testament Sabbath (John 5:17) and so does the doing of God’s work that He now requires of people—believing in the one God has sent (John 6:28, 29). In fact the Sabbath keeping now demanded is the cessation from reliance on one’s own works (Heb. 4:9, 10). . . . Christ brings the spiritual reality; His work fulfills the intent of the Sabbath, and with Christ comes that for which the Sabbath existed. The reality of salvation rest supersedes the sign. The Gospel passages show that the Old Testament Sabbath and the rest associated with it can be used to describe the realities that *have* come with Christ, while Hebrews indicates in addition that they can be used to describe the heavenly realities that *are* and as they *will* come with Christ.” (Lincoln 1982: 213, 215)

The argument in **Hebrews 3-4** is very similar to Paul’s argument concerning faith and the law in **Galatians 3-4**. In Galatians, Abraham was justified by faith, not by the law (**Gal 3:6-11**), and the promised blessings through Abraham accrue only to those who believe in Jesus Christ (**Gal 3:14, 16, 18, 22, 29**). The law was only temporary until the coming of Christ (**Gal 3:23-25**). Likewise, Hebrews argues that because of *unbelief*, OT Israel never truly entered the “rest” God had promised (**Heb 3:7-12, 16-19; 4:2, 5-6**). Although Israel ultimately entered the promised land, it never found rest and peace but continued to experience war, oppression, and exile. However, Christ has defeated our only permanent enemies—sin, Satan, and death. Therefore, by faith we have “*entered His rest*” (**Heb 4:3, 10**). In the OT, refraining from work one day per week (i.e., “keeping the Sabbath”) reflected the temporary and partial nature of Israel’s rest from her enemies. However, in the New Covenant, because Christ has done *all the work* needed to secure our *permanent* salvation, our *rest* is *permanent*. Consequently, early church father Justin Martyr recognized that Christianity does *not* require keeping one particular Sabbath day; instead, we are living in a “perpetual Sabbath” (Justin Martyr c.155-165: 12; see also *Epistle of Barnabas* c.70-131: 15.8-9).

The fact that the Sabbath Day was a “type” which finds its true fulfillment in the permanence of our Sabbath rest in Christ (i.e., our “perpetual Sabbath”) is even hinted at in the first mention of God’s resting on the seventh day in **Gen 2:1-3**. William Dumbrell observes that it is “most remarkable” that “unlike the previous six days, the seventh day is without beginning and end [cp. **Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31** with **2:2-3**]. The intention of the narrative seems to be to underline the distinctly special and unending place of the seventh day. . . . The unending Sabbath day provides the context in which the ideal life of the garden is to take place and is to be perpetuated in human society. . . . Heb. 4:9-11 endorses the continuing Sabbath but indicates that there are dimensions of the meaning of the Sabbath day which have continued to elude human experience.” (Dumbrell 2001: 220-21) Thus, although in the OT one day each week was set aside as a day of physical rest, the Sabbath always was pointing forward to the much deeper and permanent rest we find in the salvation inaugurated by Christ’s first coming which will be consummated in the new earth to be brought into being at his second coming.⁵¹

3. The New Covenant supersedes the Old Covenant and renders Sabbath keeping no longer binding. The Sabbath was the sign of the Old Covenant with the nation of Israel (**Exod 31:12-17**). When the Old Covenant was superseded by the New Covenant, so was the sign of the Old Covenant. Thus, under the New Covenant the Sabbath and other Jewish festivals are no longer binding (**Rom 14:5; Gal 4:8-11; Col 2:15-17**).

C. The fulfillment of the Sabbath in Christ means that Sunday is not simply a “Christian Sabbath” day of rest equivalent to Saturday as the Jewish Sabbath

Christians early-on recognized the significance of the end of the Old Covenant by transforming their understanding of the Sabbath and no longer “honoring the seventh day” as a day of rest and worship. At the Jerusalem Council (**Acts 15**) the whole point was whether “it is necessary to circumcise [new Gentile believers] and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses” (**Acts 15:5**). The answer was a resounding “No!” Sabbath observance (or even some alternative “Sabbath day” for Gentiles) was not required of Gentile believers by the apostolic decree of **Acts 15**. Early on, Christians began gathering for worship on Sundays in honor of Christ’s

⁵¹ This typological relationship is corroborated by the fact that the new heaven and new earth is the consummation of the biblical theme of God’s dwelling with mankind which began in the garden. For more on this see below, section **4.I. The Temple and the Earth: God’s Dwelling Place with Mankind**.

resurrection (**Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2**). This is confirmed by the early church fathers. Ignatius of Antioch said, “Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days” (Ignatius c.100-110: 9). Justin Martyr similarly said, “We all hold this common gathering on Sunday, since it is the first day, on which God transforming darkness and matter made the universe, and Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead on the same day” (Justin Martyr c.151-154: 67). Evidence from the second century reveals “no trace whatever of any controversy as to whether Christians should worship on Sunday, and no record of any Christian group that did not worship on Sunday. This universality is most easily explained if Sunday worship was already the Christian custom before the Gentile mission, and spread throughout the expanding Gentile church with the Gentile mission.” (Bauckham 1982: 236)

Christians are not “commanded” to worship on Sundays. They are free to worship any day of the week. However, Christian worship on Sunday (“the Lord’s Day” [see **Rev 1:10**]) underscores the different basis of Christian worship and worship on the Jewish Sabbath: “In that Christ’s resurrection fulfills the rest signified by the Old Testament Sabbath, a link can be seen between the seventh day and the first day on which Christians commemorated the Resurrection. The link says nothing about a ‘Christian day of rest’ . . . [T]he link between this first day and the Old Testament Sabbath was not seen in terms of a day of physical rest but in terms of celebration of the true Sabbath rest of salvation brought by Christ whom believers worshipped and with whom they had fellowship. The evidence from the New Testament writers’ perspective on Sabbath rest points to there being no warrant for applying the physical rest of the Old Testament to the New Testament Lord’s Day.” (Lincoln 1982: 205, 215-16)⁵²

X. Christ and the Church are the prophesied “Servant of the Lord”

A. Jesus is the prophesied “Servant of the Lord”

In **Isaiah** four passages are known as “Servant Songs”: **Isa 42:1-9; 49:1-6 [or, 13]; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12**.⁵³ The specific identity of the “Servant” is ambiguous. Sometimes he is seen as a collective (i.e., all of Israel itself, “ideal” Israel, or the faithful remnant of Israel) (see **Isa 41:8-9; 44:1-2; 45:4**). However, all of the Servant Songs also describe individualistic characteristics which distinguish the Servant from the nation itself, especially the third and fourth Songs which describe the “Suffering Servant.” As described by Isaiah: the Servant has the Spirit of God upon him (**42:1**); he will bring salvation to Israel and the Gentiles, and is a “*light of the nations*” (**42:6; 49:6**); he is beaten and afflicted (**50:6; 52:14, 53:4-5, 7, 10**); he is despised and forsaken (**53:3**); despite persecution he does not open his mouth (**42:2; 53:7**); he dies as an offering, bearing the sins of many (**53:4-6, 8-12**). Jesus both lived like a Servant and described Himself as a Servant (**Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27; John 13:5-16**). The NT writers describe Jesus as the “Servant” (**Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27. 30; Phil 2:7**) and specifically quote and apply the Servant passages to Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy.

1. First Servant Song—Isa 42:1-9.

- **Matt 12:17-21** quotes **Isa 42:1-4**, with slight variations, and applies it to Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy.
- **Isa 42:1** says that God “delights” in his Servant and “*I have put my Spirit upon him.*” At his baptism and transfiguration the Father said that he was “*well-pleased*” with Jesus (baptism—**Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22** transfiguration—**Matt 17:5**). At his baptism the Spirit came “upon” him (**Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32**). Jesus Himself quoted from **Isa 61:1** that “*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me*” in the fulfillment of Scripture (**Luke 4:18, 21**).

2. Second Servant Song—Isa 49:1-6 [or, 49:1-13].

- **Isa 49:1** says, “*From the body of my mother he [the Lord] named me.*” Before Jesus was born the angel Gabriel told Mary that “*you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus*” (**Luke 1:31**; see also **Matt 1:21-23**).
- **Isa 49:2** says, “*He has made my mouth like a sharp sword.*” **Rev 1:16; 2:12; and 19:15** all describe a sharp sword coming from the risen Christ’s mouth.

⁵² Walter Martin in *The Kingdom of the Cults* (1985), 459-73 provides a detailed biblical and historical refutation of the claim by Seventh Day Adventists that seventh day (Sabbath) worship is required of Christians (see also Martin 1999: n.p.).

⁵³ “The first servant song is traditionally identified as Isa. 42:1-4. However, the following verses (vv. 5-9) seem to unpack the Servant’s mission. Cf. Isa. 49:7-13, which similarly unpacks the Servant’s work after the Servant’s reintroduction in vv. 1-6. Most understand the second song to end at v. 6, identifying the subject of the ‘you’ in cc. 7-8 as Israel. In this case the Servant’s calling as ‘a covenant to the people’ is continued through the restored covenant community. . . . However, the following verses (vv. 7-13) appear to be describing the Servant’s work . . . and the ‘people’ seem to refer primarily to Israel. Hence, there is no compelling reason for identifying Israel, rather than the Servant, as the ‘covenant to the people’ in Isa. 49:8.” (Williamson 2007: 159n.44)

- **Isa 49:6** says, “*I will also make you a light of the nations.*” When Jesus was brought to the Temple to be circumcised, the Holy Spirit came upon Simeon who held Jesus in his arms and then quoted or alluded to **Isa 9:2; 42:6; 49:6** as referring to Jesus, saying, “*A light of revelation to the Gentiles*” (**Luke 2:32**). Jesus Himself alluded to that passage when He said that “*I am the light of the world*” (**John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46**). **Isa 49:6** was also quoted by Paul and Barnabas in **Acts 13:47** as being fulfilled through the salvation of the Gentiles in response to the gospel.
 - **Isa 49:5-6** appears to give the sequence of restoring Israel first so that salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. In Peter’s sermon in **Acts 3:11-26**, he concludes by saying, “*For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways*” (**Acts 3:26**). “The use of the word ‘first’ (*prōton*) implies the sort of sequence portrayed in Isaiah 49:5-6, where the Servant of the Lord is used to ‘restore the tribes of Jacob’ so that they can be a ‘light for the Gentiles’ and bring God’s salvation ‘to the ends of the earth’ (cf. Acts 1:6; 13:46-48; 26:16-18). In other words, that significant ‘Servant Song’, which reveals the way in which God will ultimately fulfill his promise to Abraham, appears to lie behind the final challenge of Peter’s sermon.” (Peterson 2009: 185)
 - **Isa 49:8** says, “*In a favorable time I have answered you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.*” Paul quotes that in **2 Cor 6:2** and applies it to receiving God’s grace of salvation in Christ.
3. Third Servant Song—Isa 50:4-9. **Isa 50:6** describes the Servant being beaten, humiliated, and spat upon. In **Mark 10:33-34** Jesus alludes to **Isa 50:6** to explain what would happen to Him when he reached Jerusalem. Before He was crucified, all three of those things (i.e., beaten, humiliated, spat upon) happened to Jesus (**Matt 27:26-31; Mark 15:15-20; Luke 22:63-65; 23:11; John 18:22; 19:1-3**).
4. Fourth Servant Song—Isa 52:13-53:12.
- In **Rom 15:18-21** Paul quotes from **Isa 52:15** as applying to the preaching of the gospel of Christ in Jerusalem and many other places, both to Jews and Gentiles.
 - In **John 12:37-38** John quotes **Isa 53:1** as being fulfilled when people did not believe in Jesus even though he had performed many signs before them.
 - In **Matt 8:14-17**, after Jesus healed the sick and cast out evil spirits from people, Matthew quotes **Isa 53:4** as having been fulfilled.
 - In **1 Peter 2:21-24** Peter quotes from **Isa 53:9**, and alludes to **Isa 53:4-7**, as having been fulfilled by Jesus (see also **Rom 4:25**).
 - In **Acts 8:26-35** Philip explained to the Ethiopian eunuch that **Isa 53:7-8** was written concerning Jesus.
 - In **Luke 22:20** Jesus says that the cup of wine symbolizes His blood which is “*poured out*” for his followers, an allusion to **Isa 53:12** (“*He poured out Himself to death*”).
 - In **Luke 22:37** Jesus Himself quotes from **Isa 53:12** as applying to Him in order to fulfill prophecy (see also **Mark 15:28**).
 - In addition to the above explicit quotations and applications, the NT makes many allusions to the Fourth Servant Song as applying to Jesus. **Phil 2:9** alludes to **Isa 52:13; Matt 26:38, 56, 69-75; Mark 14:50, 66-72; Luke 22:54-61; John 18:15-18, 25-27** all allude to **Isa 53:3, 12; John 1:29; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:28** all allude to **Isa 53:4-6, 8-12; Matt 26:62-63; 27:12-14; Mark 14:60-61; 15:3-5; Luke 23:9; John 19:9** all allude to **Isa 53:7; Matt 27:57-60** alludes to **Isa 53:9; Rom 5:18-19** alludes to **Isa 53:10-12**. In **Acts 8:32-35**, when Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch, the Ethiopian was reading **Isa 53:7-8**; thereupon, “*beginning with this Scripture*” Philip preached Jesus to the man.

B. The church is the collective “Servant of the Lord,” just as Jesus was the individual “Servant of the Lord”

Jesus applied the “Servant” indicators to the church.

1. “*I have put My Spirit upon him*” (**Isa 42:1**). Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to his church (**John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14**). In **John 20:22** (in what perhaps was an “enacted parable”), “*he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’*” In **Acts 1:8** Jesus promised that “*you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.*” That occurred on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**). Now “*the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you [the church] . . . For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*” (**Rom 8:11, 14**).

2. The “Servant of the Lord” was called a “servant” (**Isa 42:1; 49:3, 5-6; 52:13**). Jesus told his disciples, “*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man*

did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (**Matt 20:25-28**; see also **Matt 23:11**; **Mark 9:35**; **10:42-45**; **Luke 22:25-27**). In **John 13:5-17** Jesus did the work of a slave when he washed his disciples’ feet. He told his disciples, “I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you . . . [because] a slave is not greater than his master” (**John 13:15-16**).

3. “I will make you a light of [or, to] the nations [or, Gentiles]” (**Isa 49:6**). In **Matt 5:14** Jesus told his disciples, “You are the light of the world.” In **Acts 1:7-8** Jesus commissioned his disciples to go “to the remotest part of the earth.” That also alludes to **Isa 49:6**, where the Servant likewise is commissioned to be a “light of [or to] the nations” and bring salvation “to the end of the earth.” In the Greek, the phrase translated “to the remotest part of the earth” is identical to the LXX of **Isa 49:6**. In **Acts 13:47** Paul quotes **Isa 42:6**; **49:6**, “I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth,” in connection with his own mission to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Further, when speaking to Agrippa in **Acts 26:16-18**, Paul recounts that he has been commissioned to go to the Gentiles “to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God.” That alludes to **Isa 42:6-7**, where the Servant is sent as a light to the nations “to open blind eyes” and to bring “those who dwell in darkness from the prison.”

4. The Servant of the Lord is rejected, beaten, and afflicted (**Isa 50:6**; **52:14**, **53:1, 4-5, 7, 10**). Jesus told his disciples, “If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (**John 15:20**). That has proven to be true throughout the history of the church, beginning shortly after Jesus died and ascended back to the Father (see **Acts 4:1-22**; **5:17-32**; **8:3**; **11:19**; **12:1-5**; **14:19-22**; **16:19-24**; **21:27-36**; **2 Cor 4:8-9**; **11:23-33**; **2 Tim 3:12**). Paul also applies the fourth “Servant Song” to the church by quoting **Isa 53:1** (“Lord, who has believed our report?”) in **Rom 10:16**, to show that not everyone who heard the gospel believed.

4. THREE BIBLICAL THEMES CONCERNING GOD’S RELATIONSHIP WITH MANKIND

I. The Temple and the Earth: God’s Dwelling Place with Mankind

The biblical story of God’s relationship with mankind begins with God’s creating man and placing him in a garden (**Genesis 1-3**). It ends with a vision of “a new heaven and a new earth” (**Rev 21:1**), which **Rev 21:2-3**, **10-2:3** then immediately describe as “a city that is garden-like, in the shape of a temple” (Beale 2004: 23). “The very strong links between Genesis 1-3 and Revelation 20-22 suggest that these passages frame the entire biblical meta-story” (Alexander 2008: 10). Between **Genesis 1-3** and **Revelation 21-22** we find God dwelling with mankind first in the garden, then in a tabernacle, a temple, in Jesus Christ, in His people (the church), and finally in the new heaven and new earth (New Jerusalem). All of these dwelling places have strong similarities and links, which knit the biblical story together. They demonstrate that the Bible describes the unfolding of a unified plan of God to dwell with His holy people (mankind) in a holy place (the earth). Consequently, in the Bible, the cosmos itself can be viewed as something like a temple (see Walton 2009: 71-91). This is reflected in various “microcosms” of God’s holy reality: the Garden of Eden; the Tabernacle; the Temple; Ezekiel’s visionary temple; Jesus Christ; the church; and, ultimately, the New Jerusalem.⁵⁴

The ultimate “model” for all of these dwellings of God with mankind is God Himself. In **John 14:11** Jesus said, “I am in the Father and the Father is in Me.” “This and similar language in John about the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son presents us with the ultimate form of indwelling, namely, the original indwelling of the Persons of the Trinity. This original uncreated indwelling must be the model for all instances of God dwelling with human beings who are made in the image of God.” (Poythress 1991: 33)

A. The Garden of Eden (Genesis 2-3; see also Ezek 28:13-16)

1. The Garden of Eden had a number of features that are characteristic of sacred places, particularly of God’s holy temples or dwelling places.

- a. The Garden was the unique place of God’s presence (**Gen 3:8**).
- b. The Garden was an elevated location, possibly a mountain (see **Ezek 28:14, 16**), since from it flowed a river (**Gen 2:10**).
- c. The Garden was noted for its gold and precious stones, in addition to its abundant vegetation (**Gen 2:11-17**; **3:22**; see **Ezek 28:13**).
- d. As originally created, Adam and Eve were holy (i.e., without sin).

⁵⁴ These themes are discussed in detail by G. K. Beale in *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (2004) and T. D. Alexander in *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: Exploring God’s plan for life on earth* (2008).

e. In **Gen 2:15**, God placed Adam in the Garden “to cultivate it and keep it.” The Hebrew word for “cultivate” is *abad* (which also means “work” and “serve”). The Hebrew word for “keep” is *shamar* (which also means “guard” and “protect”). Those words “are found in combination elsewhere in the Pentateuch only in passages that describe the duties of the Levites in the sanctuary (cf. Num. 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-6)” (Alexander 2008: 22-23).

f. Eden was entered from the east, and was guarded by cherubim (**Gen 3:24**). “Guard” in **3:24** is the same word (*shamar*) as “keep” in **2:15**. “The guarding function of the cherubim probably did not involve gardening but keeping out the sinful and unclean, which suggests that Adam’s original role stated in Genesis 2:15 likely entailed much more than cultivating the soil, but also ‘guarding’ the sacred space” (Beale 2004: 70).

2. One other aspect of Adam and Eve’s role in the Garden is not directly stated but may be inferred: they were to extend the geographical boundaries of Eden until it covered the whole earth. That follows from God’s blessing and command to Adam and Eve to “*be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it*” (**Gen 1:26-28**). Human beings are uniquely created “*in the image of God*” (**Gen 1:26-27**). By spreading over the earth in obedience to God’s command, people would be magnifying God’s glory, by spreading his image, over the entire earth. “While Genesis 2 merely introduces the start of this process, the long-term outcome is the establishment of an arboreal temple-city where God and humanity coexist in perfect harmony . . . for God is interested in making the whole earth his residence by filling it with holy people” (Alexander 2008: 25-26, 29).

3. The history after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden indicates both mankind’s continued rebellion against God’s plan but also God’s continuing plan to have the entire earth as his dwelling place filled with holy people.

a. *Noah and the Flood (Genesis 6-9)*. Mankind had been obedient to the command to “*be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.*” However, they were *not* properly spreading the image of God throughout the earth and were not properly “guarding” or “keeping” the ways of God, because “*the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” (**Gen 6:5**). Therefore, God used the Flood to cleanse the earth of the universal pollution from sin that mankind had brought to it.

Nevertheless, God passed on to Noah the blessing and commission that he had originally given to Adam: “*And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth’*” (**Gen 9:1**; see also **9:7**).

b. *The Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9)*. Mankind’s rebellion took a new form. People refused to spread God’s image over the earth, but instead wanted to stay in one place, make their own name great, and (as in the Fall) reach heaven on their own (**Gen 11:4**). Therefore, God forced the people to spread over the earth (**Gen 11:8**).

c. *God chose one man, Abraham, and promised to make his name great, to bless him and be with him, and to bless all the families of the earth through him (Gen 12:1-3; 17:1-8; 22:15-18)*. God continued those blessings and promises to Abraham’s sons, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) (**Gen 26:1-5; 28:1-4; 35:9-12**).

d. *The building of altars and shrines by Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 8:20; 12:7-8; 13:4, 18; 22:9; 26:25; 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7)*. They are like explorers or settlers who “plant the flag” for God and “claim the land” where God would later take up permanent residence. Those altars and shrines foreshadow the tabernacle and temple.

B. The Tabernacle (Exodus 25-31, 35-40)

1. The Tabernacle was a special tent used by the Israelites as a special place for worship during their early history. The design of the Tabernacle was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai when God also gave Moses the 10 Commandments and the other laws (**Exod 25-30**).

a. *The design and materials symbolize God’s dwelling with his people.* “As one drew closer to the Most Holy Place [or, “Holy of Holies”] the ground became progressively more holy. This is reflected in the correlation between proximity to the Most Holy Place and the preciousness of the construction materials used (e.g. the curtains; the metals). Thus the very building materials symbolically represent the fact that a holy God lived in the midst of his people.” (Williamson 2007: 104)

b. *The Outer Courtyard.* The Tabernacle had an outer courtyard with a fence around it approximately 150 feet long by 75 feet wide (**Exod 27:9-19**). The outer courtyard contained a bronze altar for animal sacrifices (**Exod 27:1-8**) and a laver where the priests washed before

entering the tent itself (**Exod 30:17-21**).

c. *The Tabernacle itself.* The Tabernacle itself was a tent approximately 45 feet long by 15 feet wide; it had two main sections: the outer room, known as the Holy Place, and the inner room, known as the Holy of Holies (**Exod 26:33**).

(1) The Outer Room (“Holy Place”). That contained an altar where incense was burned (**Exod 30:1-10**); a seven-branched gold candlestick (**Exod 25:31-40**); and a table for showbread, signifying the presence of God (**Exod 25:23-30**).

(2) The Inner Room (“Holy of Holies”). Although the Bible does not give the specific dimensions, first-century Jewish historian says that the Holy of Holies was a cube measuring 10x10x10 cubits (Josephus 1987, *Ant.*: 3.122). It was separated from the Holy Place by a veil or curtain (**Exod 26:31-37**). The Holy of Holies contained the “ark of the covenant” (**Exod 25:10-15**), which was also called the “ark of the testimony” because into it was placed the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them (i.e., “the testimony”) (**Exod 25:16, 22; 40:20; Deut 10:1-5; 1 Kgs 8:9; 2 Chron 5:10**). On top of the ark of the covenant was a lid called the “mercy seat” made of gold with two gold cherubim which faced each other (**Exod 25:17-22**). Placed in front of the ark were a pot of manna (**Exod 16:31-36**), a portion of Moses’ incense (**Exod 30:36**), Aaron’s rod that budded (**Num 17:8-11**), and a copy of the book of the law written by Moses when he commissioned Joshua to bring the sons of Israel into the promised land (**Deut 31:24-26**) (see also **Heb 9:3-4**).

2. When Israel wandered in the wilderness the Tabernacle was moved with them from place to place (**Exod 40:36-38**). When the Israelites pitched camp in the wilderness, the Tabernacle was to be in the center, with the tribes arrayed in a specific order on the four sides of the Tabernacle (**Numbers 2**). The Levites were in charge of the Tabernacle and all of its furnishings and camped around the Tabernacle (**Num 1:47-54; 4**).

3. After the conquest of Canaan, the Tabernacle was moved to Shiloh where it remained during the period of the judges (**Josh 5:10-11; 18:1**). Later the Tabernacle was located at Nob (**1 Sam 21:1-6**) and Gibeon (**1 Kgs 3:4**). When the Temple was completed, Solomon had the Tabernacle moved to Jerusalem (**1 Kgs 8:4**) where it apparently had no further use.

4. Like the Garden of Eden, the Tabernacle had several features that denoted its special and holy status as God’s dwelling place.

a. *The Tabernacle was God’s special dwelling place on the earth.* “Tabernacle” itself means “dwelling” or “dwelling place.” Further, the cloud of God’s glory (the “Shekinah”) filled the Tabernacle and remained with it (**Exod 40:34-38; Num 9:15-23**). Moses met regularly with God at the Tabernacle, which was called the “tent of meeting” (**Exod 25:22; 27:21; 28:43; 29:4; 40:2; Lev 1:1; 3:2; Num 1:1; 2:2**).

b. *The ark of the covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies (**Exod 25:33**) which represents the unseen, heavenly reality.* The ark of the covenant was called God’s “footstool” (**1 Chron 28:2**; see also **Pss 99:5; 132:7**). That indicates that God’s real throne is in heaven and is not confined to the tabernacle, but it also links heaven and earth or extends the heavenly throne to earth.

c. *Cherubim were present on the mercy seat over the ark of the covenant (**Exod 25:18-22**).* Those are models that represent the heavenly creatures that guard God’s true, heavenly throne (see **Isa 6:1-6; Ezek 10:1-22; Rev 4:5-9**).

d. *Only consecrated, holy priests from the tribe of Levi were permitted to “serve and guard” in the tabernacle itself (**Exodus 29; Num 3:5-10; 8:1-26; 18:5-6**).* The high priest’s garments included gold and precious stones (**Exod 28:6-30**). Later, only the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies only once per year on the Day of Atonement following a specified ritual in order to make atonement for the sins of the nation before God (**Leviticus 16**).

5. The Tabernacle had several features which recalled the Garden of Eden.

a. The tabernacle and its furnishings included large amounts of gold and silver (the mercy seat and the lampstand were each made of pure gold) (**Exod 25:17-18, 31; 38:24-28**).

b. The entrance to the Tabernacle was on the east (**Exod 38:13-19**).

c. The seven-branched lampstand was designed to resemble a tree, possibly the tree of life (**Exod 25:31-37**).

d. The cherubim recall the cherubim which God placed to “guard the way to the tree of life” (**Gen 3:24**).

e. The instructions for the design of the Tabernacle and the priests’ garments were given to

Moses on a mountain (**Exod 24:18-25:1, 40**).

6. The design of the Tabernacle may indicate that it was to symbolically be a model of the cosmos which “conveys the idea that the whole earth is to become God’s dwelling place” (Alexander 2008: 42).

- a. *The construction of the Tabernacle was associated with the Sabbath (Exod 31:12-17; 35:1-3).* God’s six formulas of address to Moses (**Exod 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1**) parallel the six days of creation in **Gen 1:1-2:3**. Biblical language about creation parallels the tabernacle (e.g., **Ps 104:2**—“*He stretches out the heavens like a tent*”).
- b. *First century Jewish historian Josephus writes that every aspect of the Tabernacle was “made in imitation and representation of the universe” (Josephus 1987, Ant.: 3:180).* The layout of the Tabernacle was “an imitation of the system of the world,” with one veil “embroidered with all sorts of flowers which the earth produces,” and other curtains “seemed not at all to differ from the color of the sky” (Josephus 1987, Ant.: 3.123, 126, 132). He adds that the colors of the veils signified the “four elements” (air, earth, fire, water), as did the colors and composition of the priests’ garments (Ibid.: 3.179-87; see also Alexander 2008: 37-40 regarding the tabernacle as a microcosm or model of the cosmos).
- c. *The Tabernacle (and later the Temple) was an earthly “shadow” or “copy” of heaven itself (Heb 8:1-5; 9:23-24; Rev 15:5).* Thus, ultimate fulfillment will come when the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven to the earth and the dwelling place of God will be with his people (**Rev 21:1-3, 10-11**).

C. *The Temple (2 Sam 7:1-17; 1 Kings 6; 8:1-11; 1 Chron 17:1-15; 22:1-16; 28:1-29:9; 2 Chronicles 3-5)*

1. The Temple was designed to be a permanent dwelling place for God on the earth and in many respects paralleled the Garden of Eden and the Tabernacle.

- a. The Temple became the center of ancient Judaism, was one of the most magnificent buildings in the ancient world, and was the sole place of sacrifice (**1 Kgs 3:2; 1 Chron 28:1-29:22**).
- b. The cloud of God’s presence filled the Temple just as it had filled the Tabernacle (**1 Kgs 8:10-11; 2 Chron 5:11-14; 7:1-2**).
- c. The entire building was overlaid with gold and adorned with precious stones (**1 Kgs 6:20-35; 1 Chron 29:1-8; 2 Chron 3:4-10**).
- d. *The interior of the Temple followed the pattern of the Tabernacle, with a Holy Place and a Holy of Holies (1 Kgs 6:16-20; 2 Chron 3:3-8).* The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies were separated by a great veil (**2 Chron 3:14**).
- e. *The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube: 20x20x20 cubits (about 30x30x30 feet) in size (1 Kgs 6:20; 2 Chron 3:8).* It was overlaid with pure gold (**1 Kgs 6:20; 2 Chron 3:8**). In the Holy of Holies were two cherubim overlaid with gold whose wings touched the walls and met in the middle (**1 Kgs 6:23-28; 2 Chron 3:10-13**). The ark of the covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies (**1 Kgs 8:1-9; 2 Chron 5:1-10**).
- f. *Throughout the temple and its furnishings were garden-like carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and flowers (1 Kgs 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:24-26, 49-50).* Lilies and pomegranates decorated the tops of the pillars (**1 Kgs 7:15-22, 42; 2 Chron 3:15-16**).
- g. *The Temple was built on the top of Mount Moriah (“Zion”) where God had told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22:2; 2 Chron 3:1).* A portion of Jerusalem which had been a stronghold of the Jebusites (who had originally inhabited Jerusalem) had been called Zion. When David captured it he called it the “City of David” (**2 Sam 5:6-9; 1 Kgs 8:1**). The transfer of the ark of the covenant to the Temple caused the Temple, the Temple Mount, and even the entire city of Jerusalem to be referred to as Zion (see **Pss 2:6; 76:1-2**). Thus, in a special way the Temple and, more generally, Jerusalem and Mount Zion, were said to be God’s dwelling place (**Pss 48:1-3, 12-14; 78:68; 84:1-7; 87:1-7; 132:13-14**).
- h. The main entrance to the Temple was the *eastern gate*, called the “Beautiful Gate” (Edersheim 1988: 47; see **Acts 3:2, 10**).
- i. *“As the dwelling place of God on earth, the temple-city of Jerusalem is in miniature what God intends for the whole world” (Alexander 2008: 45).*⁵⁵

(1) **Ps 78:69** says, “*He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He has*

⁵⁵ Levenson states, “To view creation within the precincts of the Temple is to summon up an *ideal world* that is far from the mundane reality of profane life and its persistent evil. It is that ideal world which is the result of God’s creative labors.” (Levenson 1988: 99)

founded forever.” That suggests that the OT Temple was a small model of the entire heaven and earth. **Heb 8:1-10:1** similarly suggests that the Tabernacle and Temple were “*shadows*” or “*copies*” of the real heavenly things.

(2) Some associated the splendor of the gold in the Temple with God’s presence (see Josephus 1987, *Ant.*: 3.187). That may account for Solomon’s bringing large quantities of gold into Jerusalem (**2 Chron 1:15**). That also may signify that the entire city has become God’s dwelling place.

(3) The presence of the Temple in Jerusalem may be related to the land of Israel being compared to the Garden of Eden (see **Gen 13:10; Isa 51:3; Ezek 36:35; Joel 2:3**).

(4) First century Jewish historian Josephus saw mystical significance in the veil of the Temple (he was writing about the Temple that existed in Jesus’ time, but that was based on the plan of the Temple given to Solomon). The large veil “was a kind of image of the universe . . . This curtain had also embroidered upon it all that was mystical in the heavens, excepting that of the [twelve] signs, representing living creatures” (Josephus 1987, *Wars*: 5.212-14; see **Exod 26:31; 2 Chron 3:14**).⁵⁶

2. The Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC (2 Kgs 25:1-21; 2 Chron 36:11-21; Jer 32:28-44; Lamentations; Psalm 79).

a. *Israel (i.e., Judah after Israel split into two kingdoms) was not faithful to God or to the covenant.* Therefore, God sent prophets who warned that unless the kingdom repented it would be overthrown, Jerusalem would be destroyed, and the nation would be taken into exile in Babylon for 70 years (see **Isa 1:21-5:30; 28:14-30:17; 39:1-8; Jeremiah 2-29; Ezekiel 4-16:52; 23; Micah 1-3; Habakkuk 1-2; Zephaniah 1; 3:1-11**).

b. Before the Babylonians destroyed the Temple, the cloud of God’s glory and presence left the Temple (**Ezek 9:3; 10:1-19; 11:22-23**).

c. It is highly ironic that God used the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple because in **Gen 11:1-9** “Babel” was the exact opposite of God’s plan (in Hebrew “Babel” and “Babylon” are identical).

3. After the exile in Babylon, a Temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel in 515 BC (Ezra 3-6; Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 2-4); that Temple was reconstructed under Herod the Great beginning in 20 BC.

a. The temple as reconstructed by Herod is the Temple that was in existence when Jesus was on the earth.

b. *The interior dimensions and design of the Temple (i.e., the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies), as well as the veils, followed the pattern of Solomon’s Temple.* However, Herod greatly expanded the overall size of the Temple. It was 100 cubits (about 150 feet) high. Herod also massively expanded the size of the temple courts (which were outside of the building itself) (Josephus 1987, *Wars*: 5.184-221).

c. *Although the Temple itself had been rebuilt, it lacked its most important ingredient: the presence of God.* The Bible never says that the glory of the Lord ever filled the rebuilt Temple as he had filled the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* says, “According to the Babylonian Talmud (Yoma 22b), the Second [Zerubbabel’s] Temple lacked five things which had been in Solomon’s Temple, namely, the Ark, the sacred fire, the Shekinah, the Holy Spirit, and the Urim and Thummim” (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, “Temple, the Second,” 2002: n.p.). In Herod’s Temple “The Holy of Holies was quite empty” (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, “Temple of Herod,” 2002: n.p.).

d. Herod’s Temple was completely destroyed by the Romans in AD 70 just as Jesus had said would happen (**Matt 24:1-2, 15-22; Mark 13:1-2, 14-20; Luke 21:20-24**).

D. Ezekiel’s vision of a new Temple (Ezekiel 40-48)

While Israel was in exile in Babylon, Ezekiel had a vision of a new Temple and a new Jerusalem.

1. The Temple Ezekiel saw in his vision was unlike any other physical temple.

a. *Ezekiel’s Temple was square, 500 reeds (about 1 mile) in size (Ezek 42:15-20; see Ezek 40:5; see also Ezek 48:30-35 which speaks of 4500 cubits per side).* That is approximately the same size as the boundaries of ancient Jerusalem itself during the second temple era (Beale

⁵⁶ Levenson discusses other aspects of the temple that had cosmic symbolism and holds that “the Temple in Jerusalem was indeed conceived as a microcosm” of heaven and earth (Levenson 1988: 78-99; see especially 90-99). See also Alexander 2008: 40-42 regarding the temple as a model or microcosm of the cosmos.

2004: 341). The description by Ezekiel generally lists only lengths and widths, not heights, except for side pillars of 60 cubits (**Ezek 40:14**).

b. *Ezekiel's Temple lacks essential elements from the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple.* There is no reference to the bronze basin, golden lampstand, table of showbread, altar of incense, veil separating the holy of holies, ark of the covenant, cherubim, anointing oil, or high priest.

c. *As part of the vision, God told Ezekiel that the land of Israel would be divided among the tribes in a completely new way.* There were to be 13 parallel strips of land, apparently of equal widths, running east to west between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, twelve for the tribes and one for the Lord (**Ezek 45:1-8; 47:13-48:29**).

d. *The glory of the Lord would fill the Temple and God would dwell with his people forever* (**Ezek 43:1-9**).

2. The Temple and City Ezekiel saw in the vision were not intended as plans for construction of a literal Temple and City.

a. "There is no indication in Ezekiel that the construction of such a city and such a Temple was authorized by God. . . . The new Temple is God's doing. The prophet's only task is to describe it in as full detail as he can." (Taylor 2004: 68)

b. *"The sheer impracticability of much of the vision leads one to the view that its message is in the symbolism, not in its architecture or in the literal partitioning of the land"* (Taylor 2004: 68). Those "impracticabilities" include:

- The reference to the "very high mountain" on which the city was located (**Ezek 40:2**).⁵⁷
- The measurements generally only of lengths and widths but the omissions of heights.
- The absence of any reference to the bronze basin, golden lampstand, table of showbread, altar of incense, veil separating the holy of holies, ark of the covenant, temple furniture, or any "wall around the inner court, to which its three massive gates might stand in relation" (Greenberg 1984: 193).
- "The massive size of the gatehouses verges on caricature: their dimensions (25x50 cubits) exceed those of the main hall of the Temple (20x40 cubits); their length is half that of the inner court (100 cubits)!" (Greenberg 1984: 193)

3. To the extent that Ezekiel's Temple and God's presence were intended to replace Solomon's Temple, they were conditional on Israel's repenting and obeying God completely, which Israel did not do. God's conditions included not only repentance and obedience (**Ezek 43:6-12; 45:9-12**), but land redistribution for the Lord, the priests, Levites, tribes, and Gentiles (**Ezek 45:1-8; 47:13-48:29**).

The people did not repent and obey the Lord (see **Ezra 10; Hag 1:1-11**). The Temple that they finally built under the leadership of Zerubbabel was not built according to Ezekiel's vision and did not compare in glory even to Solomon's Temple (**Ezra 3:8-13; Hag 2:1-3**). Further, even after the Temple was completed, Israel and its priesthood did not repent of their sinful and disobedient ways (**Malachi 1-4**).

4. Certain features of Ezekiel's vision show that it always was intended to be symbolic and heavenly, not physical, in nature.

a. *The introduction in Ezek 40:1-2 contains three elements: (1) reference to a specific date when the experience occurred; (2) a statement that "the hand of the Lord was upon me"; and (3) a statement that he saw "visions."* The only other places in **Ezekiel** where that three-fold introductory formula occurs are in **Ezek 1:1-3** and **8:1-3**. In both of those other cases, the vision which Ezekiel saw was of a heavenly temple (i.e., God's dwelling place in heaven), not an earthly one. The heavenly temple is explicitly clear in **Ezek 1:1-28** where the focus is exclusively in heaven. In **Ezek 8:1-11:23** the vision is of the heavenly presence that is linked to God's earthly presence with his people. Ezekiel saw the glory of God (**8:4**), which in the days of Solomon's Temple dwelt in the Temple. However, Ezekiel then saw the abominations which were being done in the physical temple (**8:5-17**). Therefore, the glory of God began to leave the physical temple (**9:3**). The scene then shifts to the heavenly temple (**10:1-22**), and the glory of God completes his departure from the physical temple (**10:4; 11:22-23**). God's presence is still with the faithful exiles in Babylon (**11:16**) who are the true earthly temple even though the

⁵⁷ The fact that Ezekiel did not see an actual city but only "a structure like a city" (**Ezek 40:2**) indicates that this is not to be taken literally. Dennis Johnson states, "Prophets describe their visions in such cautious and ambiguous similes in order to keep readers from a wooden literalism, lest we forget the limited capacity of human experience and language to convey heavenly reality" (Johnson 2001: 216n.24).

physical temple building had been destroyed by the Babylonians.

b. *In Ezekiel's vision, the river must be symbolic and supernatural because even though no tributaries are mentioned, the water gets progressively deeper, from a trickle to a river that could not be forded (47:2-5).* Further, unlike a natural, earthly river, it makes salt water fresh rather than *vice versa* (47:6-12).

c. *Although Ezekiel wrote using language and imagery that his immediate audience could understand, in light of the coming of Christ, Ezekiel's temple could not possibly represent a literal, physical building to be constructed in the future.*

(1) Throughout his vision Ezekiel describes animal sacrifices which are said to have an "atoning" purpose and effect (Ezek 43:13-27; 45:15-25). Such sacrifices could not possibly truly be atoning sacrifices since that would reverse redemptive history and deny the efficacy and sufficiency of Christ's once-and-for-all sacrifice of Himself, contrary to **Heb 9:11-10:22**. That also would return to the "shadows" in place of the substance and reality (see **Col 2:16-17; Heb 8:1-10:22**).

(2) To take "literally" (i.e., physically) Ezekiel's portrait of Jerusalem as the center of the world's worship (Ezekiel 47-48), where non-Israelites are excluded from the temple (Ezek 44:6-9), likewise completely reverses what Christ has done. Jesus eliminated the requirement that worship be conducted at some special place (**John 4:21, 23**) and eliminated the distinction between Jews and Gentiles among God's people (**1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Eph 2:11-22; Col 3:11; Rev 5:9; 7:9**).⁵⁸

(3) To say that the sacrifices are simply "memorials" of Christ's sacrifice means that there is likewise no reason to take the temple itself "literally" (i.e., as a physical structure). Additionally, to view the sacrifices referred to by Ezekiel as "memorials" also would dishonor Christ since the only memorial that Christ Himself gave to "memorialize" his redemptive work was the Lord's Supper, not a return to OT sacrifices (**Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26**).

(4) David Holwerda concludes: "The essential truth of Ezekiel's temple has become reality apart from a building of stone. That may seem like a surprising twist in the fulfillment of prophecy, but with Stephen and the prophet Isaiah we should know that 'the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands' (Acts 7:48). God dwells in Jesus and in us (John 14:23), and the reality of Ezekiel's temple exists throughout the world. . . . Jesus' body is the new temple because Jesus is both the place of atonement and the place of God's presence. . . . Jesus did not come to turn Ezekiel's architectural blueprints into the most magnificent temple ever constructed by human hands. That the Messiah was supposed to do this was the misunderstanding of Jesus' opponents, a misunderstanding shared by his own disciples until the resurrection opened their minds. Ezekiel's temple of glory is Jesus, a truth revealed in the incarnation, proclaimed in Jesus' teaching, and made understandable by his resurrection [**John 2:21-22**]." (Holwerda 1995: 74-75)

5. Jesus inaugurated the fulfillment of Ezekiel's vision of a new Temple in Himself and in his people (the church).

a. *Ezekiel's vision showed the "glory of the Lord" filling the Temple and would dwell among his people forever (Ezek 43:1-9; see also Ezek 37:26).* John uses language about Jesus reminiscent of Ezekiel: "*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth*" (**John 1:14**; see

⁵⁸ The symbolic nature of Ezekiel's vision is indicated in an intriguing article by Bob Pickle, entitled "Ezekiel's City: Calculating the Circumference of the Earth" (Pickle 2004: n.p.). Pickle views the city and land allotment given to Ezekiel as a model of the new earth. He says, "If we enlarge Ezekiel's map [i.e., the 13 strips of land allotted to the tribes and the Lord] till Ezekiel's city is the size of Revelation's New Jerusalem, then Ezekiel's map encircles the globe. The proportion of Ezekiel's city to Revelation's New Jerusalem is the same as that of Ezekiel's map to the earth's circumference." His calculations are based on a number of assumptions: (1) He uses 4500 cubits for each side of Ezekiel's city (**Ezek 48:30-35**); (2) All 13 strips of land (**Ezek 45:1-8; 47:13-48:29**) have equal widths of 25,000 cubits (for a total of 325,000 cubits); (3) The size of New Jerusalem (**Rev 21:16**) is 3000 stadia *per side*, for a total of 12,000 stadia, not 12,000 stadia per side (the Greek says only that the measurement was "12,000 stadia" and that "*its length is as great as its width*"); (4) Each Roman stadium is between 606-607 feet in length. Although Pickle's idea is not what is being contended for here, it is intriguing, and recognizes that what Ezekiel saw was, at root, to be taken symbolically, rather than as an actual physical building and city to be constructed in the future.

also **Luke 9:32; John 2:11; 2 Pet 1:16-18**). Jesus said that through the Holy Spirit he would dwell in his people and would always be with us (**Matt 28:20; John 14:16-17; Heb 13:5**). Fulfillment of that promise began on the Day of Pentecost when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:1-21**).

b. *Ezekiel's vision also showed a river of life-giving water flowing out from under the Temple (Ezek 47:1-12)*. Since Jesus is God's true Temple, he is the true source of life-giving water. In **John 4:10-14** he told the Samaritan woman that he is the source of eternal, "living water." In **John 7:37-39** Jesus said, referring to his giving the Holy Spirit, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" Since no OT text explicitly says, "from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water," "it is likely that a multiple allusion to pertinent scriptures is in mind. Those would be passages that were of prime significance for the meaning of the festival and were read at it: chief among them were the record of the gift of water from the rock in the desert, Exod 17:1-6 (cf. also Pss 78:15-16; 105:40-41), the flowing of the river of living water from the temple in the kingdom of God, Ezek 47:1-11, and the waters that flow in the new age from Jerusalem to the eastern and western seas, Zech 14:8." (Beasley-Murray 1999: 116) In other words, Jesus connects the eschatological temple of Ezekiel with Himself as the new temple. Hence, the waters flow, not from a physical temple in Jerusalem, but from Jesus Himself. The church is the channel of the life-giving water whose source is Jesus.

6. The New Jerusalem (**Rev 21:1-22:5**), not a physical building to be constructed on the earth in the future, is the consummation of Ezekiel's Temple (**Ezekiel 40-48**) and is the true reality to which Ezekiel's vision pointed.

a. In **Ezek 40:2** Ezekiel was taken to a "very high mountain" where he saw a "structure like a city." There are no "very high mountains" in or around physical Jerusalem. Further, the fact that he saw a structure "like" a city also suggests that Ezekiel is entering into "the realm of symbolic geography of heaven and earth that pertains to eschatological conditions" (Beale 2004: 336).

That is confirmed by **Rev 21:10** which parallels Ezekiel's language in describing the New Jerusalem. That passage says an angel "carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."

b. In Ezekiel's vision both the temple and the city are described as square (**Ezek 42:15-20; 48:15-20**). The identification of Ezekiel's city with the New Jerusalem is confirmed by **Rev 21:16** which describes New Jerusalem as "laid out as a square." The Greek word literally is "four-square" (*tetragōnos*). "The Greek OT of Ezek. 45:1-5 and 41:21 uses the same word for the entire temple complex" (Beale 2004: 348n.37).

c. *The essential element of Ezekiel's vision is that God is present and will dwell among his people forever.* In fact, the book of Ezekiel ends with the statement, "the name of the city from that day shall be, 'The Lord is there'" (**Ezek 48:35**). That is fulfilled in the New Jerusalem of **Revelation 21-22**.

(1) In **2 Cor 6:16-7:1** Paul linked the promises of **Lev 26:11-12, 2 Sam 7:14, and Ezek 37:27**, and showed how fulfillment of those promises was inaugurated in the church. Ezekiel's final vision builds upon and consummates what he earlier had said in **Ezek 37:26-28**. Just as that passage twice said that God would "set up a sanctuary in their midst forever," so **Ezek 43:7-9** twice says "I will dwell among them forever." In the Greek OT, the root for "dwell" in **Ezek 43:7** is "tabernacle." **Rev 21:3** indicates that the New Jerusalem is the consummation of all prophecy, including Ezekiel's vision, by echoing **Ezek 43:7, 9** and twice saying, "the tabernacle of God is among men" and "He will dwell among them." Additionally, three times **Rev 21:3** says that God will be "among" his people.

(2) Similarly, **Ezek 43:7** says, "this is the place of my throne." **Rev 22:1, 3** both state that "the throne of God and of the Lamb" will be in New Jerusalem.

(3) The apostles and the tribes of Israel are described as part of the very structure of New Jerusalem itself: the apostles are the foundation (**Rev 21:14**); the twelve tribes are the gates (**Rev 21:12-13**). Not only are Ezekiel's Temple and the New Jerusalem the same shape, they both have twelve gates in the same configuration: three on the north; three on the east; three on the south; three on the west (compare **Ezek 48:31-34** and **Rev 21:12-13**). "The integration of the apostles together with the tribes of Israel as part of the city-temple's structure prophesied in Ezekiel 40-48 confirms further our

assessment . . . that the multiracial Christian church will be the redeemed group who, together with Christ, will fulfill Ezekiel's prophecy of the future temple and city. This is in line with other NT passages in which the whole covenant community forms a spiritual temple where God's presence dwells (1 Cor.3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5)." (Beale 1999a: 1070)

(4) Ezekiel's temple is at the center of everything. In New Jerusalem there is no physical temple building there, "for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Rev 21:22). Thus, the true temple—God and the Lamb—is now central. "The equation of God and the Lamb with the temple approaches closely the essence of the Ezekiel vision, which is God's glorious presence itself (e.g., 48:35, 'the name of the city' is 'the Lord is there'). All that Israel's old temple pointed to, the expanding presence of God, has been fulfilled in Revelation 21:1-22:5, and such a fulfillment has been anticipated within Ezekiel 40-48 itself." (Beale 2004: 348)

d. **Ezek 47:1-12** describes a river flowing from out of the temple which is healing and life-giving. **Rev 22:1-2** uses the same imagery and applies it to the New Jerusalem. The identification of the river in Ezekiel's vision with the river in the New Jerusalem is corroborated by **Ezek 47:7, 12** which says that there were trees on both banks of the river. That parallels **Rev 22:2** which similarly says that the tree of life was "on either side of the river." In both cases the trees are said to bear fruit (**Ezek 47:12; Rev 22:2**). Further, in both cases the leaves of the trees are "for healing" (**Ezek 47:12; Rev 22:2**).

e. *Ezekiel's Temple would only be a reality for those who had put away their abominations and sins (Ezek 43:6-9).* **Rev 21:27** similarly says that "nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination" will be in the New Jerusalem. That shows that Ezekiel's Temple could only be referring to people who are "in Christ." Just as Christ inaugurated his kingdom and forever forgave sins at his first coming, so the New Jerusalem forms the consummation of Christ's kingdom, in which sins are forever eliminated.

7. Ultimately, the issue of the interpretation of Ezekiel's vision is a matter of hermeneutics.

a. *Prophetic language and progressive revelation.* "Ezekiel 40-48 is a figurative vision of a real heavenly temple that would descend and be established on earth in non-structural form in the latter days. . . . Ezekiel may well have prophesied the end-time temple through the traditional symbols of a material temple that Israelites at the time would have understood. In this regard, he portrays an altered temple to highlight in part that this will be a different kind of temple. The progressive revelation of the New Testament makes clearer just how different the eschatological temple was to be: it was not, in fact, to be a building but it was to be fulfilled by the divine Messiah dwelling in the midst of his people." (Beale 2004: 353, 359)

b. *The NT's interpretation of the OT.* "Many would see Ezekiel's expansive vision of the Temple (chs. 40-48) as encouraging a belief that there will be an end-time Temple matching Ezekiel's prophetic description. Yet a biblical theologian cannot approach this prophecy without noting the way in which this prophecy is understood by the New Testament writers. Ezekiel's imagery of the river flowing from the Temple (Ezek. 47:1ff) reappears twice in the New Testament. In John 7:37-9 the 'rivers of living water' flow from Jesus himself; meanwhile in Revelation the 'river of the water of life' flows through the middle of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1ff). These two writers have consciously drawn upon Ezekiel's prophecy and applied it to Jesus and the heavenly Jerusalem. As a result, they were presumably not expecting Ezekiel's prophecy to be fulfilled literally at some future point in a physical Temple. Instead this prophecy became a brilliant way of speaking pictorially of what God had now achieved in and through Jesus. Paradoxically, therefore, although Ezekiel's vision had focused so much upon the Temple, it found its ultimate fulfillment in that city where there was 'no Temple', because 'its Temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb' (Rev. 21:22)." (Walker 1996: 313)

E. The New Heavens and the New Earth (Revelation 21-22)

1. The New Jerusalem is the consummation of God's eternal plan to dwell in a holy place with His holy people that had been foreshadowed by the Garden, the Tabernacle, and the Temple.

a. *The entirety of New Jerusalem is a Holy of Holies.*

(1) Just like the Holy of Holies (**1 Kgs 6:16-20; 2 Chron 3:8**), the city is a perfect cube (**Rev 21:16**).

(2) Just as the Holy of Holies was overlaid with pure gold (**1 Kgs 6:16-20; 2 Chron**

3:8), “*the city was pure gold, like clear glass*” (**Rev 21:18**).

(3) Just as the Holy of Holies was the special place of God’s presence and glory, the city is now the place of God’s presence and glory (**Rev 21:22-23; 22:1, 3-5**).

(4) Thus, only the Holy of Holies, not the other sections of Israel’s temple (i.e., the holy place and the outer courtyard), is found in Revelation 21. The reason is that God’s special presence, which formerly was limited to the Holy of Holies, now encompasses all of his new creation.

b. *New Jerusalem consummates and surpasses both the Holy of Holies and even the current church with respect to our access to God.*

(1) Only holy Adam and Eve could be in Eden, and only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies. In the New Jerusalem all of God’s people are without sin and are in the Holy of Holies of the New Jerusalem and will serve the Lord and reign forever and ever (**Rev 21:7-8, 27; 22:3-5**).

(2) On the Day of Atonement—the only day when the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies—the high priest had to offer incense which formed a thick cloud that covered the mercy seat so that he could not see God’s glorious appearance or he would die (Lev 16:13; see Exod 33:20). In the New Jerusalem all of God’s people will “*see his face*” (**Rev 22:4**).

(3) Even in the church as it now exists, it is our great high priest, Jesus Christ, who has unlimited presence in the true heavenly temple of God (Heb 4:14-5:10; 7:1-10:25). Now we have unlimited access to God our Father, through Jesus Christ (**Matt 27:51; Heb 10:19-22**). In the New Jerusalem we not only will have direct access to God, but we will always be in his immediate presence (**Rev 21:3-4, 22-23; 22:3-5**).

c. *In Rev 3:12 Jesus promised, “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God.”* That passage “speaks not of pagan temples or the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 7:15-21; 2 Chr 3:15-17) but of the new Jerusalem that is coming down out of heaven. This means that the saints are honored within that heavenly temple, which in fact is nothing less than the very presence of God. . . . In short, the expression ‘temple’ must be interpreted figuratively. God intends to honor his people in his sacred presence.” (Kistemaker 2000: 434)

2. Other features of New Jerusalem show that it consummates the concepts which the Garden, the Tabernacle, and the Temple foreshadowed.

a. Just as God Himself had “*planted a garden*” in Eden (**Gen 2:8**) and gave the plans for the Tabernacle and Temple which corresponded to heavenly realities, so now the New Jerusalem “*comes down [to the renewed and restored earth] out of heaven from God*” (**Rev 21:10**; see also **Rom 8:18-21**).

b. Just as Eden, the Tabernacle, and the Temple were characterized by their gold and precious stones, so the New Jerusalem is characterized by its gold and precious stones (**Rev 21:18-22**).

c. Just as Eden, the Tabernacle, and the Temple were characterized by their vegetation (or garden-like images of vegetation), so the New Jerusalem is characterized by its fruit trees (**Rev 22:2**).

d. Just as Eden had the tree of life, so the New Jerusalem has the tree of life (**Rev 22:2**).

e. Just as Eden and Ezekiel’s Temple were the source of a river, so the New Jerusalem has “*a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb*” (**Rev 21:6; 22:1**).

f. Just as the high priest in the Tabernacle and Temple wore an engraving “*Holy to the Lord*” on his forehead (**Exod 28:36-38**), so in the New Jerusalem all of God’s people will have “*His name on their foreheads*” (**Rev 22:4**).

g. Just as in Eden there was no death, sorrow, and pain, in Eden before the Fall into sin, so in the New Jerusalem there is no more curse, or death, or sorrow, or pain (**Rev 21:4; 22:3**).

h. Just as God “*walked in the garden*” (**Gen 3:8**) and filled the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple with his presence so in the New Jerusalem “*the tabernacle of God is among men, and he will dwell among them, and they shall be his people, and God Himself will be among them*” (**Rev 21:3**).

3. **Revelation 21** suggests that “*New Jerusalem*” IS the “*new earth*.” John begins by describing “*a new heaven and a new earth*” (**Rev 21:1**) but then immediately describes “*the holy city, new Jerusalem*” (**Rev 21:2-3; 10-22:5**). John’s focus from **Rev 21:2** on is on the city, not anything outside of it or in addition to it. The identity of New Jerusalem with the new earth is further indicated by the following:

a. The “seeing-hearing” pattern of identification in **Revelation**, where what John sees is then interpreted by what he hears (or vice versa), suggests that the New Jerusalem is equivalent to the new heaven and new earth.

(1) In **Rev 21:1** John saw “a new heaven and a new earth.” That was followed by his vision of “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (**21:2**). In **21:3** John then “heard a loud voice” saying “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and he will dwell with them.” What appears to be taking place is that the second vision (**21:2**) interprets the first, and what is heard about the new tabernacle (**21:3**) more explicitly interprets both verses—i.e., the new heaven and new earth of **21:1** is identical to the New Jerusalem of **21:2**, and both are identical to the new tabernacle of **21:3**.

(2) A similar pattern of identification occurred in **Rev 5:1-10**. In that passage John saw a book and heard an angel asking who was worthy to open the book. He then heard one of the elders say that “*the Lion from the tribe of Judah*” was worthy to open the book (**5:5**). However, the next thing that John saw was not a Lion, but “*a Lamb standing, as if slain*” (**5:6**). It was the Lamb who took the book and was worthy to open it (**5:7-10**). Thus, the Lamb was equivalent to the Lion (and both are pictures of Jesus Christ).

b. The “*throne of God*,” which elsewhere in the Bible is depicted as being in heaven, is now said to be among God’s people in the New Jerusalem. Throughout the Bible God’s “throne” is said to be in heaven (see **1 Kgs 22:19**; **2 Chron 18:18**; **Ps 103:19**; **Isa 6:1**; **66:1**; **Matt 5:34**; **23:22**; **Acts 7:49**; **Heb 8:1**; **Rev 4:2-10**; **5:1-13**; **6:16**; **7:9-15**; **8:3**; **12:5**; **14:3-5**; **16:17**; **19:4-5**; **20:11**). In **Rev 22:1-3** God’s throne is said to be in the New Jerusalem. Thus, New Jerusalem appears to be equivalent to heaven which has now come to earth.

c. **Rev 21:27** says that “*nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into [the city].*” To that same effect is **Rev 22:15**, which says that “*outside [the city] are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*” Those verses probably mean that no one who is unclean or sinful is allowed into the new heaven and the new earth, because **Rev 21:8** uses similar language and says “*for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*”

d. **Rev 21:27** also says that “*only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life*” will be able to come into the city. That also probably means that only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life will be able to enter the new heaven and new earth, because **Rev 20:15** says that “*if anyone’s name was not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*”

e. The equivalence of the “new heaven and new earth” with the “New Jerusalem” in **Revelation 21** is indicated by the parallel use of those terms in **Isaiah 65-66**. “Revelation 21:1-2 follows the pattern of Isaiah 65:17-18. Since Isaiah 65:17 is clearly alluded to in Revelation 21:1, it is most natural to understand the new Jerusalem of 21:2 also echoes Isaiah 65:18 and is equated with the ‘new heaven and earth’ of Revelation 21:1! . . . Consequently, the new creation and Jerusalem are none other than God’s tabernacle, the true temple of God’s special presence portrayed throughout chapter 21.” (Beale 2004: 368; see also Levenson 1988: 89-90, 107) The only places in the OT where a “*new heavens and a new earth*” are referred to are in **Isa 65:17** and **66:22**. In **Isaiah 65-66** “Jerusalem” appears to be equal to the “*new heavens and new earth*,” for the following reasons:

(1) **Isa 65:17-18** appear to equate the “*new heavens and new earth*” with “*Jerusalem.*” **Isa 65:17** says, “For behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.” **Isa 65:18** then immediately says, “But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness.” The same “*for behold, I create*” language formula is used for both the “*new heavens and new earth*” and “*Jerusalem*” in **65:17-18**. The first part of **65:18** (“*But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create*”) refers to what God “creates,” which has just been stated in **65:17** to be the “*new heavens and new earth*,” but **65:18** then again describes what God “creates” as “*Jerusalem.*” In **65:18** God even says to “*be glad and rejoice*” in what he creates (i.e., what he has just described as the “*new heaven and new earth*”), but then says that “*Jerusalem*” is

created for “rejoicing” and her people for “gladness.”

(2) **Isa 65:19-66:24** appear to equate “heaven and earth” with “Jerusalem.” **Isa 65:19-25** is prefaced by referring to “Jerusalem,” but then talks about conditions that would evidently exist on the “new heavens and new earth.” **Isa 66:1-2** refers to “heaven” and “earth” using “temple” terminology (i.e., “Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool”) and appears to relate back to what has just been said about “Jerusalem,” since **66:1** begins with “Thus” and **66:2** says “For my hand has made all these things.” Further, **66:3-21** relates to what God has just said about “heaven” and “earth,” but discusses what conditions will be like in terms of Temple sacrifices and Jerusalem. **Isa 66:22** then talks about “the new heavens and the new earth,” but relates that back to what had just been said about Jerusalem by beginning the verse with the word “For.” Finally, in **Isa 66:23** God goes on to use “temple” language, and says “All mankind will come to bow down before me.” That suggests an activity in a specific locality such as the temple in Jerusalem. Thus, “the new heavens and the new earth” appears to be equated with “Jerusalem” and even with the temple in Jerusalem.

f. *The equivalence of the “new heaven and new earth” with the “New Jerusalem” is indicated by God’s goal throughout biblical history: to fill every part of His creation with His presence.* Beginning at the Garden of Eden, God desired to make the entire earth His dwelling place that He would share with his holy people. Because of sin, God’s glory could not dwell completely in the old creation. Thus, although He had walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve (**Gen 3:8**), because of their sin He drove them out of the Garden (**Gen 3:24**). God then progressively revealed His special presence on the earth among His people in the tabernacle and in Solomon’s temple, which may have been models of heaven and earth and served as “a copy and shadow of the heavenly things” (**Heb 8:5**; see also **Ps 78:69**; **Heb 8:1-10:1**; **Rev 15:5**). He then inaugurated the final stage of His presence in the person of Jesus Christ. Through the Holy Spirit’s indwelling His people, the church, His presence is now spread over the entire world. The time of the “shadows” of man-made temples has been completed, and the time of the new, true temple—His actual presence in Christ and the church—has come. However, although the true spiritual reality to which the OT tabernacle and temple pointed has been inaugurated, it has not yet been consummated. That consummation will occur when Christ returns to the earth. When He does, all of creation will be redeemed (**Rom 8:15-25**). With sin being forever eliminated from creation, the entire world (the “new heaven and new earth”) will be an Eden-like garden/city/temple—the perfect container for God’s glorious presence. Thus, all of creation will be a vast Holy of Holies (**Rev 21:16**). No longer will there be the need for God’s special and glorious presence to be housed in a physical building. Instead, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb themselves will fill not just a portion of creation but all of it (**Rev 21:22**).

II. God’s Relationship with His People in Terms of Marriage

Throughout the Bible sexual immorality and infidelity are equated with spiritual infidelity (forsaking God to pursue other gods and ungodly practices) and *vice versa* (see, e.g., **Jer 3:6-10**; **Ezek 16:15-22**; **Hos 2:2**; **4:12**; **Mal 2:13-16**; **1 Cor 6:15-18**; **Jas 4:4**; **Rev 2:18-22**; **14:8**; **17:1-5**; **18:1-3**; **19:1-2**).

A. Gen 2:23-24 (the woman specially created for the man; the man leaving his father and mother to be joined to his wife and become “one flesh” with her) is a paradigm which describes the relationship God desires to have with His people

1. Adam and Eve originally walked in unity and harmony with each other and with God in the Garden of Eden. Sin (**Genesis 3**) severed the harmonious union between people and God.
2. God’s plan of redemption, as it is unfolded throughout the rest of the Bible, is designed to restore a perfect, harmonious marital union between God and his people. Thus, Jesus “left his father” (**Gen 2:24**; see **Phil 2:6-8**) in order to restore the perfect union between God and his people in the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church.

B. In the OT God’s marital bond with His people is implied, but Israel was unfaithful

1. Israel’s relationship with God is characterized essentially as “playing the harlot with other gods.” To “play the harlot” with other gods is to “cultivate a relationship with them, to render them one’s obedience and devotion, to walk in their ways and pursue their ideals . . . the imagery is sexual . . . because the larger controlling motif is marital” (Ortland 1996: 32).

2. From its beginning through the period of the united kingdom, Israel was unfaithful.

- a. In **Exod 34:11-16**, immediately after Israel had committed idolatry with the golden calf when Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments from God, God described pagan worship as “an attractive whoredom easily capable of spreading its enticements to others” (Ortland 1996: 32). In fact, when Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments from God the first time, the people fell into sin based on the very things prohibited by the Ten Commandments themselves (**Exod 32:1-6**). That is like committing adultery on one’s own wedding night!
- b. In **Lev 17:3-7** and **20:4-6**, when God gave Israel the Levitical law, he again warned the people about the evil and dangers of following false gods, calling it “playing the harlot.” In **Lev 20:6** he extended the warning beyond the worship of false gods to pursuing false revelation through human means. Thus, “consulting mediums and spiritists also amount to whoredom, because, like idolatry, resorting to their ministrations denies Yahweh’s all-sufficiency” (Ortland 1996: 37).
- c. In **Num 15:38-40** the people listened to the ten spies instead of listening to Joshua and Caleb. God again extended the reference of “playing the harlot” to include “all the wayward desires of the heart and the lusts of the eyes . . . implying without limitation the various temptations which may be imagined, perceived and caressed through the senses” (Ortland 1996: 39).
- d. In **Deut 31:14-21** Moses commissioned Joshua as his successor. God warned Moses that even then before they had entered the land the people were itching to commit harlotry in the land they were going to, and that such infidelity would cause them “many evils and troubles.”
- e. In **Judg 2:16-17; 8:22-35**, during the time of the judges, the people repeatedly forgot God’s actions to rescue them and did not listen to the judges God raised up for them. Instead, they quickly and repeatedly whored after the gods of their oppressors whom God had defeated! The fact that they “quickly” turned away from God to idolatry implied their genuine affection for the Canaanite gods and their low view of Yahweh’s worth. Indeed, with Gideon they even made an idol out of Gideon’s ephod (**Judg 8:27**). That evidently so conditioned the people’s minds that “as soon as Gideon was dead” the people again “played the harlot” with foreign gods (**Judg 8:33**).
- f. In the Wisdom Literature (e.g., **Ps 50:18; Prov 6:26-32; 7:1-27; 30:20**) adultery and harlotry are portrayed as the way of foolishness, sin, and death. Such activity cuts a person off from a covenant relationship with God.

3. During the time of the divided kingdom, God condemned both Israel and Judah as unfaithful.

- a. *The Northern Kingdom (Israel)*. God primarily sent the prophet **Hosea** (c.750 BC), who not only condemned Israel’s whoring after other gods but was required to *act out* God’s condemnation of Israel’s idolatry by himself marrying a whore or prostitute (**Hosea 1-2**). God condemned the entire country for “committing flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord” (**Hos 1:2**). Despite Israel’s adulteries against God and the punishment he would bring, he nevertheless recounted his great faithfulness and love to her, yearned for her repentance, and held open the hope of future restoration (**Hos 2:1-3, 14-23; 11:1-11; 14:1-9**). The prophet Micah (c.750-686 BC) further condemned Israel’s idolatry which he equated with harlotry and which would result in her total destruction (**Mic 1:1-7**).

(1) The basic issue that Israel faced. “At issue was the all-sufficiency of Yahweh, with the question perhaps put this way: Where does life, in all its richness and fullness, come from? Does it come from Yahweh alone, or from Yahweh plus others? If it comes from Yahweh alone, then one will look obediently to him alone for that life. But if it comes from Yahweh plus others, then one will spread one’s allegiance around, because Yahweh alone is not enough.” (Ortland 1996: 49)

(2) The specific forms of Israel’s harlotry included the shedding of innocent blood, following Canaanite religious practices, economic self-sufficiency, lack of concern for the poor, and the search for political security in the policies of realpolitik (alliances with Egypt and Assyria) instead of obedience to God (**Hos 4:1-10:15; 1:12-13:16**). *Realpolitik* (i.e., political policy based on power and practical considerations rather than ideals) is “whoredom toward God” because it evidences “a ‘whatever it takes’ attitude of thrusting oneself forward at the expense of others. Spiritual adultery entails more than religious offenses; whenever God is not trusted fully and obeyed exactly, including the realm of politics, his people deny the adequacy of his care and protection, so that

they fend for themselves, on their own terms.” (Ortland 1996: 52) In fact, as **Hos 2:4-5, 13** tell us, unlike most whores, who let their customers approach them, Israel actively pursued her other “lovers” and forgot God. However, the only thing that her new lovers had to offer her was merely earthly [much like today’s so-called “prosperity gospel”] rather than the higher things which God alone (who also is the true owner of all the earthly things) can give.

(3) As a result of Israel’s whoredom, God turned the material things and political alliances she sought against her (**Hos 2:6-13**) and caused Assyria to destroy the Northern Kingdom and carry her away into captivity (**Hos 6:4-10; 15; 12:1-13; 16**).

Israel’s destruction was accomplished in 721 BC.

b. *The Southern Kingdom (Judah)*. God sent several prophets, most notably (in chronological order): Isaiah (c.740-700 BC), Jeremiah (c.626-586 BC), and Ezekiel (c.593-571 BC). Each of those prophets condemned Judah for its spiritual harlotry, for many of the same reasons as the Northern Kingdom had been condemned.

(1) Isaiah equated Judah’s harlotry with its lack of justice, its corruption, its materialism, and its lack of concern for the poor and needy (**Isa 1:21-23**). In **Isa 57:1-13**, the prophet says that such practices demonstrate that even though they may claim that they are “sons of Abraham” the people who do such things really have a different mother and father. They are “*sons of a sorceress, offspring of an adulterer and a prostitute*” (**Isa 57:3**). That language is very much like the language Jesus used against the Pharisees in **John 8:34-47**.

(2) **Jeremiah 2-3** is particularly filled with marital and sexual imagery to describe Judah’s unfaithfulness to God. God recounts his faithfulness to Judah (**Jer 2:1-7**). However, as was true with the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Judah forsook the Lord, pursued both Egypt and Assyria, and is described as initiating the pursuit of many other lovers (**Jer 2:7-3:10**).

(3) As was the case with the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom was invaded, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people carried off into captivity by the Babylonians between 606-586 BC. Nevertheless, even in the midst of warning Judah of what would come, God still pleaded with her to repent (**Jer 3:11-23**).

(4) During the exile in Babylon Ezekiel wrote in order to “make known to Jerusalem her abominations” (**Ezek 16:2**). In **Ezekiel 16** the prophet points out that God took Judah from nothing, gave her everything, but she repaid Him by “*pouring out your harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing*” (**Ezek 16:15**). Those harlotries included idolatry, foreign alliances with the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians, sexual immorality, and not helping the poor and needy despite having economic abundance (**Ezek 16:16-59**). **Ezekiel 23** compares the Northern and Southern Kingdoms and condemns them as adulteresses for their idolatries, faithless foreign alliances, and worldliness. As a result, God says, “*Thus I will make lewdness cease from the land, that all women may be admonished and not commit lewdness as you have done. Your lewdness will be requited on you, and you will bear the penalty of worshipping your idols; thus you will know that I am the Lord God.*” (**Ezek 23:48-49**)

C. In the NT the marital theme is extended and made specific in Christ and the church

1. Both John the Baptist and Christ Himself specifically identify Jesus as “the bridegroom” (**John 3:28-30; Matt 9:14-15 [Mark 2:18-20; Luke 5:33-35]**). The OT image of Yahweh’s being married to His people is applied in the NT to Jesus Himself.

2. Even though Jesus is the bridegroom, and His people should rejoice while He is with them, the consummation of the wedding would be delayed while He is taken away from them (**Matt 9:14-15 [Mark 2:18-20; Luke 5:33-35]**). That reinforces the “already/not yet” concept of the Kingdom of God, which already is present in the first coming of Jesus, but is not yet fully consummated until Second Coming. Jesus also anticipated being rejected by God’s OT people, Israel. Therefore, He opens the doors of the wedding feast to people of all the nations (see **Matt 22:1-14; 25:1-13**).

3. The NT Epistles make the “marriage” theme explicit, specifically apply it to the church, and reinforce the connection with **Gen 2:24**.

a. *In 2 Cor 11:1-3 Paul describes the church’s relationship to Christ as a “betrothal to one husband.”* He further indicates that, Adam is a “type” of Christ (**Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22, 45-**

47), and connects Eve with the church (2 Cor 11:3). “With Christ, believers stand in a new Eden,” and just as “there was no marriage before Adam and Eve, [so] there is none greater after Christ and his church” (Ortland 1996: 152).

b. In Eph 5:29-32 Paul makes the relationship between Christ and his church the paradigm for the relationship between a husband and wife. Eph 5:32 specifically relates marriage to “Christ and the church.” Eph 5:30-31 directly parallels Gen 2:23-24: (1) “This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23); “we are members of his body” (Eph 5:30). (2) “For this reason a man shall leave . . . and they shall be one flesh” (Gen 2:24); “For this reason a man shall leave . . . and the two shall become one flesh” (Eph 5:31). In other words: “The great incentive and guide for the Christian marriage couple is the vision of Christ and his church in love together. . . . Our union with Christ as his body restores us to such graces as to make deep marital union applicable and attainable, if not easy, for a Christian couple. The church’s marriage to Christ is both prefigured in Adam and Eve and provides a Christian couple with the personal wherewithal for achieving marital unity at a profound human level. . . . The net message of the text, then, is that a Christian marriage faithful to its ‘one flesh’ meaning incarnates the ultimate reality of sacrificial divine love in Christ wedded to joyful human devotion in the church. . . . A Christian husband loves his wife by offering a lifetime of daily sacrifices, so that she might become ever more radiant as a woman of God. She, for her part, affirms and responds to her husband’s Christlike initiatives. Through it all, the mystery of the gospel is unveiled.” (Ortland 1996: 155-58)

4. Jesus and the NT writers compare rejection of Jesus to “adultery.”

a. *Jesus compared rejection of Him to adultery (Matt 12:38-39; 16:1-4; Mark 8:38).*

b. *Jas 4:4 extends the concept of spiritual adultery beyond specific idolatries or acts, by calling people “adulteresses” who have “friendship with the world,” or even have the “wish to be a friend with the world.”*

(1) Such a desire to be “a friend with the world” is not merely a minor failure, but “is hostility toward God,” and “makes [one] an enemy of God.” The fact that friendship with the world amounts to spiritual adultery against God is seen in the fact that Rev 17:5 calls the world system “*Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the abominations of the earth.*”

(2) The reason why such friendship with the world is enmity toward God directly follows from the comparison of faith and marriage: it is like a wife who is really lusting after other men instead of her husband. “James is not seeking merely to guard his readers from worldly patterns of behaviour; he is calling them away from even the desire for worldly approval by defining the issue so clearly, strictly and finely that no-one wishing to be God’s friend will allow himself to be drawn after the world, Demas-like, in his affections and aspirations. . . . Although the biblical drama is not greatly accelerated by this New Testament text, one nevertheless senses already a deeper, more personal, more searching penetration into the harlotry of soul which lies at the root of its outward manifestations. When this inner sickness is finally remedied, the perfect betrothal will have come.” (Ortland 1996: 142-43)

c. *1 Cor 6:15-20 describes the deep spiritual significance of actual physical, sexual immorality.* A person who “joins himself to a prostitute is one body” with a prostitute (v. 16), but a person who “joins himself to the Lord is one spirit” with the Lord (v. 17). By using the same wording in both verses, Paul is telling us what a great spiritual abomination sexual sin is. Christians have been united with Christ in the ultimate (“one spirit”) union: i.e., Christ, through the Holy Spirit, actually dwells in our bodies (v. 19), and “we are members of his body” (Eph 5:30). By sinning sexually, a believer is forming a monstrous union between Christ and a prostitute. Instead, we are to “glorify God in your body” (v. 20) by “presenting your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom 12:1). What we do with our bodies shows what we really think of Christ.

D. In Revelation the Bible’s marital imagery for God’s relationship with His people is brought to consummation in Christ, His Bride (the church), and the New Earth

1. In Rev 19:5-9 the “marriage supper of the Lamb” occurs. During this age on the earth, we have the “already” of the Kingdom but await the “not yet” of the consummation. When Christ comes again we shall experience the Kingdom in its fullness. The joy of the “marriage supper of the Lamb” with his

bride is contrasted with “*the great supper of God*,” which will involve everyone who opposes Christ (**Rev 19:17-21**). All who are invited to the “*marriage supper of the Lamb*” are “*blessed*” (**Rev 19:9**). On the other hand, at the “*great supper of God*” the birds “*eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great . . . [until] all the birds were filled with their flesh*” (**Rev 19:18, 21**).

2. Revelation contrasts the faithfulness of the bride of Christ and the harlot of the world.

a. *How they are dressed.* The Bride is clothed “*in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*” (**Rev 19:8**). The Bridegroom has sanctified her and “*cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless*” (**Eph 5:26-27**). On the other hand, the “*Mother of Harlots*” is dressed as a harlot, “*clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immoralities*” (**Rev 17:4; 18:16**).

b. *What happens to them.* The wording of **Rev 17:1** and **21:9** are parallel. Just as the garments of the great harlot of the world and the bride of Christ were contrasted, so in **17:1** the harlot is judged and destroyed, but in **21:9** the bride of the Lamb is exalted.

3. In **Rev 21:1-11** the everlasting and perfect nature of the marital relationship between Christ and his Bride, the Church, is described.

a. *In his concluding vision, John sees the Bride of Christ as “the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God”* (**Rev 21:10-11**). “The dwelling of God with man *in the form of a city* may . . . suggest the perfect social union of the redeemed with one another as God’s final and eternal answer to the successive societal failures littering the course of human history” (Ortland 1996: 166n.73).

b. *The New Jerusalem is compared with “a bride adorned for her husband”* (**Rev 21:2**). In **Rev 19:7-8** the bride was the saints (i.e., the church). The identification of the bride with the New Jerusalem is made virtually explicit in **Rev 21:9** where the angel says, “*Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb*,” and then in **v. 10** immediately it says, “*And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.*” Thus, the New Jerusalem is so closely identified with the people of God that it may be a metaphor for God’s people and his relationship with them. Revelation is obviously a highly symbolic book. Its descriptions of the New Jerusalem are more “*personal than topographical*” (Gundry 1987: 256). Consequently, just as Jesus and the church *are* the new, true Temple, so the New Jerusalem speaks more of God’s people and his relationship with them than it is a description of the new geography that will exist after Christ comes again.

III. The Problem of Evil: God’s Sovereignty, Humanity’s Responsibility, and the Existence of Sin and Evil

In his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, David Hume stated the classic “problem of evil” concerning God: “Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?” (Hume 1779: part 10, 186) Or, to put it in the form of a logical syllogism: “[1] If God exists, then he is omnipotent and perfectly good; a perfectly good being would eliminate evil as far as it could; there is no limit to what an omnipotent being can do; therefore, if God exists, there would be no evil in the world; [2] there is evil in the world; [3] therefore, God does not exist.” (Sherry 2017: “The problem”; see also Erlandson 1991: “The Anti-theist Cannot Generate”)⁵⁹ This leads to the

⁵⁹ This is what is known as the logical problem of evil. Leading atheist spokesman William Rowe admits, however, that “no one, I think, has succeeded in establishing such an extravagant claim. Indeed, . . . there is a fairly compelling argument for the view that the existence of evil is logically consistent with the existence of the theistic God.” (Rowe 1996: 10n.1) Other prominent atheists agree: Draper 1996: 26n.1 (“I agree with most philosophers of religion that theists face no serious logical problem of evil”); Gale 1996: 206 (“Almost everyone now believes that adequate defenses have now been devised to neutralize this challenge”); Mackie 1982: 150 (“There is no explicit contradiction between the statements that there is an omnipotent and wholly good god and that there is evil”), 154 (“The problem of evil does not, after all, show that the central doctrines of theism are logically inconsistent with one another”). Patrick Sherry notes that the logical argument against God “does not recognize cases in which eliminating one evil causes another to arise or in which the existence of a particular evil entails some good state of affairs that morally outweighs it. Moreover, there may be logical limits to what an omnipotent

issue of theodicy or “justifying God,” i.e., explaining how God can be perfectly good, omniscient, and omnipotent and yet ordain and permit evil.⁶⁰

God is sovereign over all of creation; he is omniscient and infinitely wise. Therefore, he knows infinitely more than we do about how everything is fitting together. Since he is eternal and his plan takes everything into account, his timeframe and scope of reference are vastly greater than ours. Nonbelieving philosophers start with the fact of rampant evil and ask, “How can God—if there is a God—ordain or allow this?” Even raising the “problem of evil” indicates that the person has abandoned orthodox Christian beliefs for an essentially secular worldview. Indeed, “the argument from evil never had anything like popular appeal and broad attraction until some time after the Enlightenment. . . . When people inside the [secular and naturalistic worldview] consider evil and God, the skeptical conclusion is already largely inherent in the premises.” (Keller 2013: 86-87; see also Erlandson 1991: “Countering Objections: [“The only way in which evil provides counter-evidence to the God of the Bible is through prior acceptance of anti-theistic presuppositions.”]) On the other hand, by putting God first—and by putting *what we know to be true about God* as our starting point—we can understand, by faith-based-on-fact, that God’s existence, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, and goodness are all still intact and are not affected by the existence of widespread evil, suffering, and injustice. That being said, let us deal with the problem of evil and the issue of theodicy in somewhat more detail, since these are profoundly important issues.

A. A good, omnipotent God is necessary to even talk coherently about good and evil

God is holy, just, righteous, and good (**Gen 18:25; Exod 34:6-7; Lev 11:44; Job 34:10-12; Ps 5:4; 136:1; 145:17; Hab 1:13; Rom 1:18; Jas 1:13**), yet sin and evil exist. Many people find it difficult to reconcile how God can be entirely good and absolutely sovereign yet reign over a world containing sin and evil. However, the argument against God assumes that some things are, in fact, objectively evil: “To say something is evil is to make a moral judgment, and moral judgments make no sense outside of the context of a moral standard. . . . Evil can’t be real if morals are relative. Evil is real, though. That’s why people object to it. Therefore, objective moral standards must exist as well.” (Koukl 2013: “The presence of evil”) With respect to the different possible *sources* of moral standards, good and evil, “a morally perfect God is the only adequate standard . . . that makes sense of the existence of evil to begin with” (Koukl 2009: 138; see also Koukl 2013: “One remaining Answer”; Lewis 1996: 45-46; Craig 1997: 9-12; 2007: n.p.). In other words, there needs to be an adequate standard for determining whether something is good or evil, right or wrong, moral or immoral—and the only adequate ground and standard is God.⁶¹

being can or cannot do. Most skeptics, therefore, have taken the reality of evil as evidence that God’s existence is unlikely rather than impossible.” (Sherry 2021: “The problem”) This latter view, known as the “inductive” or “evidential” problem of evil, claims that the existence of evil, while not logically incompatible with the existence of an omnipotent and good God, is evidence that God “probably” does not exist. “It is now acknowledged on (almost) all sides that the logical argument is bankrupt, but the inductive argument is still very much alive and kicking” (Alston 1996: 97).

⁶⁰ Technically, “a theodicy purports to offer the actual reason God has for allowing evil in our world. A defense is much less pretentious, for it claims to offer only a possible reason God might have for not removing evil. As long as that possible explanation does remove the alleged inconsistency internal to the theist’s system, the theist meets the demands of the logical form of the problem of evil.” (Feinberg 1994: 19) “Most Christian thinkers and philosophers . . . have increasingly (and to my mind, rightly) recommended that believers not try to formulate theodicies but rather simply mount a *defense*. . . . A defense simply seeks to prove that the argument against God from evil fails, that the skeptics have failed to make their case.” (Keller 2013: 95) In such a case, the heaviest burden of proof is on the atheist, since he or she began the debate by attacking and trying to prove something about theism; on the other hand, if the theist attempts to prove a full theodicy, he or she will bear a heavier burden than simply mounting a defense (Feinberg 1994: 205, 283-84; Keller 2013: 95-96). It should be noted that some writers use the term “theodicy” to refer both to full theodicies and to defenses.

From a biblical standpoint, however, the entire “problem of evil” is actually backwards. The real issue is not “How can God’s allowing sin and evil be justified to people?” but “How can sinful, evil people be justified to a holy God?” God’s holiness is foundational. Sin is incompatible with his holiness. Indeed, “God is not indifferent to our immoral thoughts and behaviour. On the contrary, his holy nature is deeply offended by such things. As a perfect God, he cannot ignore anything evil. The smallest lie is an offense to the One who is truth. The tiniest feeling of animosity towards another person is repulsive to the One who is love. Due to his holy and perfect nature God cannot turn a blind eye to perverse human behaviour as if it does not matter.” (Alexander 2008: 130) Consequently, God will judge all evil and evildoers (see **Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27; Rev 20:10-15**)

⁶¹ On the other hand, prolific author and atheist professor Richard Dawkins frankly states that “nature is not cruel, only pitilessly indifferent. This is one of the hardest lessons for humans to learn. We cannot admit that things might be neither good nor evil, neither cruel nor kind, but simply callous—indifferent to all suffering, lacking all purpose.” He adds, “The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference.” (Dawkins 1995: 96, 133)

Even atheist, Marxist, existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre recognized this: “The existentialist . . . finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist, for there disappears with Him all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. There can no longer be any good *a priori* [i.e., a general truth valid in the mind independent of observation or experience], since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. It is nowhere written that ‘the good’ exists, that one must be honest or must not lie, since we are now upon the plane where there are only men. Dostoevsky once wrote: ‘If God did not exist, everything would be permitted’ . . . Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself. He discovers forthwith, that he is without excuse. For . . . one will never be able to explain one’s action by reference to a given and specific human nature. . . . Nor, on the other hand, if God does not exist, are we provided with any values or commands that could legitimise our behaviour. Thus we have neither behind us, nor before us in a luminous realm of values, any means of justification or excuse.” (Sartre 1946: n.p.) Non-Christian philosopher and ethicist Richard Taylor similarly admits, “The modern age, more or less repudiating the idea of a divine lawgiver, has nevertheless tried to retain the ideas of moral right and wrong, without noticing that, in casting God aside, they have also abolished the conditions of meaningfulness for moral right and wrong as well. . . . The concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God.” (Taylor 1985: 2-3, 84)

The consequences of this are twofold: (1) By casting aside God and his Word, i.e., the only adequate basis for right and wrong and moral obligation, we have brought sin and evil on ourselves, and God rightly holds us accountable for it. (2) The “problem of evil” is a far greater problem for atheists and other unbelievers in the God of the Bible than it is for Christians. Nonbelievers have no rational, adequate, and coherent [i.e., internally consistent; not self-contradictory] basis to claim that *any* human law or action is truly, objectively, or universally unjust, wrong, or evil—however much they oppose it and however harmful, exploitative, selfish, or deadly such a law or action may be. Greg Bahnsen puts it like this: “On the one hand, he [an unbeliever] believes and speaks as though some activity (e.g., child abuse) is wrong in itself, but on the other hand he believes and speaks as though that activity is wrong only if the individual (or culture) chooses some value which is inconsistent with it (e.g., pleasure, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, freedom). When the unbeliever professes that people determine ethical values for themselves, the unbeliever implicitly holds that those who commit evil are not really doing anything evil, given the values which they have chosen for themselves. In this way, the unbeliever who is indignant over wickedness supplies the very premises which philosophically condone and permit such behavior, even though at the same time the unbeliever wishes to insist that such behavior is not permitted – is ‘evil.’”

What we find, then, is that the unbeliever must secretly rely upon the Christian worldview in order to make sense of his argument from the existence of evil which is urged against the Christian worldview! Antitheism presupposes theism to make its case. The problem of evil is thus a logical problem for the unbeliever, rather than the believer. As a Christian, I can make perfectly good sense out of my moral revulsion and condemnation of child abuse. The non-Christian cannot. This does not mean that I can explain why God does whatever He does in planning misery and wickedness in this world. It simply means that moral outrage is consistent with the Christian’s worldview, his basic presuppositions about reality, knowledge, and ethics. The non-Christian’s worldview (of whatever variety) eventually cannot account for such moral outrage. It cannot explain the objective and unchanging nature of moral notions like good or evil. Thus the problem of evil is precisely a philosophical problem for unbelief.” (Bahnsen 1991: 15-16)⁶²

Paradoxically, therefore, the existence of evil actually is an argument for the existence of God. In a debate with an atheist, William Lane Craig put this in the form of a logical syllogism: “1. If God does not exist,

⁶² C. S. Lewis pointed out that even dualism, i.e., two equal, uncreated powers, one good and the other bad, does not provide an adequate ground for objective right and wrong, good and evil, and moral obligation. “The moral difficulty is that Dualism gives evil a positive, substantive, self-consistent nature, like that of good. . . . In what sense can the one party be said to be right and the other wrong? If evil has the same kind of reality as good, the same autonomy and completeness, our allegiance to good becomes the arbitrarily chosen loyalty of a partisan. A sound theory of value demands something different. It demands that good should be original and evil a mere perversion . . . that good should be able to exist on its own while evil requires the good on which it is parasitic in order to continue its parasitic existence. . . . The difference between the Christian and the Dualist is that the Christian thinks one stage further and sees that if Michael is really in the right and Satan in the wrong this must mean that they stand in two different relations to somebody or something further back, to the ultimate ground of reality itself.” (Lewis 1970a: 22-24) W. Gary Crampton adds, “In actuality, the philosophic system called dualism is absurd. If there were two co-eternal and co-equal deities, we could not say that one was good and one evil. That is, without a superior standard to determine what is good and evil, good and evil cannot be predicated of anything. But if there is such a superior standard (that is, something above the two deities), then there is no ultimate dualism.” (Crampton 1999: 2n.6) Only Christian monotheism provides an adequate basis for good and evil.

objective moral values do not exist. 2. Objective moral values do exist. 3. Therefore, God exists.” (Craig and Sinnott-Armstrong 2004: 19) Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga summarizes, “A naturalistic way of looking at the world . . . has no place for genuine moral obligation of any sort; a fortiori, then, it has no place for such a category as horrifying wickedness. . . . Accordingly, if you think there really is such a thing as horrifying wickedness (that our sense that there is, is not a mere illusion of some sort), and if you also think the main options are theism and naturalism, then you have a powerful theistic argument from evil [i.e., that God exists].” (Plantinga 1993: 73)

C. S. Lewis recognized that this issue goes far beyond atheism’s inability to account for the existence of right and wrong, good and evil, and moral obligations but strikes at the very heart of atheism itself. In *Mere Christianity* Lewis (himself a former atheist) wrote, “My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of *just* and *unjust*? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. . . . Of course I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too—for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my private fancies.” (Lewis 1996: 45-46) Thus, atheism is self-refuting.

If there is no supernatural existence, i.e., if the physical universe is all there is and we are merely products of physical and chemical reactions (usually called naturalism, materialism, or physicalism)⁶³—which atheism inherently entails—then this view of existence “breaks down at the problem of knowledge. If thought is the undesigned and irrelevant product of cerebral motions, what reason have we to trust it?” (Lewis 1970a: 21) He elaborated that elsewhere: “If naturalism were true then all thoughts whatever would be wholly the result of irrational causes. Therefore, all thoughts would be equally worthless. If it is true, then we can know no truths. It cuts its own throat.” (Lewis 1970b: 137; see also Lewis 1960: 12-24) Similar views have been expressed by others, including notable Christian and non-Christian scientists and philosophers (see Lucas 1970: 114-16 [see 116n.1 for others who have articulated the same point]; Moreland 1987: 77-103; Nagel 2012: 71-95; Polanyi 1964: 389-90; Reppert 2003: *passim*; Willard n.d.: n.p.).

B. The invalidity of the atheistic arguments from the existence of evil

The Christian can have confidence that the existence of evil is not evidence against either God’s existence *or his goodness*, because God has a morally sufficient reason for ordaining and permitting every act of evil even though he may not have revealed that reason to us. Greg Bahnsen states, “If the Christian *presupposes* that God is perfectly and completely good – as Scripture requires us to do – then he is committed to evaluating everything within his experience in the light of that presupposition. Accordingly, when the Christian observes evil events or things in the world, he can and should retain consistency with his presupposition about God’s goodness by now *inferring* that God has a *morally good reason* for the evil that exists. God certainly must be all-powerful in order to be God; He is not to be thought of as overwhelmed or stymied by evil in the universe. And God is surely good, the Christian will profess – so any evil we find must be compatible with God’s goodness. This is just to say that God has planned evil events for reasons which are morally commendable and good.” (Bahnsen 1991: 19, *emph. in orig.*) Or, as Doug Erlandson puts it, “A being is not morally culpable in allowing preventable evil if he has a ‘morally sufficient reason’ for so doing” (Erlandson 1991: “The Anti-theist Cannot Generate”). Thus, the answer to David Hume’s and similar logical syllogisms is: (1) A totally good God will prevent all the evil he can *unless he has a morally sufficient reason* for permitting its existence; (2) Evil exists; (3) Therefore, God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting the existence of evil. Abraham had this view when he said, “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” (**Gen 18:25**, KJV) Paul had the same view when he said “*Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar*” (**Rom 3:4**).

In light of this and in light of certain defenses that various Christians have proposed, we have already seen (see n.59 above) that even atheists admit that “the existence of evil is logically consistent with the existence of the theistic God” (Rowe 1996: 10n.1; see also Draper 1996: 26n.1; Gale 1996: 206; Mackie 1982: 150, 154). This admission is also fatal to the so-called inductive or evidential problem of evil. John Feinberg observes, “Theists and atheists alike agree that evil’s existence is *consistent* with God’s existence. Since theists have offered reasons God might have for including evil in the world, reasons that remove the alleged *inconsistency* between God’s and evil’s existence, how likely is it that evil can be compelling evidence that God’s existence is improbable? . . . Moreover, when an atheist admits that a theist’s defense can link without contradiction the existence of God and the existence of evil; i.e., it shows that God and evil can fit together, it seems that a

⁶³ J. P. Moreland defines naturalism as follows: “The three major components to naturalism are 1) scientism — the belief that scientific knowledge is either the only form of knowledge or a vastly superior form of knowledge; 2) the belief that the atomic theory of matter and the theory of evolution explain all events; and 3) the belief that non-physical things don’t exist and that the world isn’t here for any purpose.” (Moreland 2004: n.p.)

stronger inferential case can be made for the view that an omnipotent, all-loving God who has a morally sufficient reason for evil exists than for the view that there is no God. Having admitted that evil *can* fit with God, how can the atheist hope to show that evil *does not* fit with God and thus is evidence that makes His existence improbable?” (Feinberg 1994: 164, 290)

Atheists typically point to the great quantity of evil in the world, the intensity of much evil (e.g., torture; extremely painful diseases), the apparent gratuitousness (pointlessness) of much evil (e.g., a fawn dying in a forest fire; the rape and murder of a child), and/or natural evils (floods; earthquakes; diseases) in making their inductive or evidential arguments for the improbability of God’s existence. The problem, however, is that the atheists’ arguments are based on the hidden premise that God does not have a morally sufficient reason for allowing these sorts of evil, but that is just an assertion that cannot be proven. Further, there is “another implicit assumption *inside* the first hidden premise. The assumption is—‘if I can’t see any reasons God might have for permitting that evil . . . then probably he doesn’t have any.’ But that premise is obviously false. . . . A God who is infinitely more powerful than us would also be infinitely more knowledgeable than us. So the rejoinder to the skeptic is ‘If God is infinitely knowledgeable—*why* couldn’t he have morally sufficient reasons for allowing evil *that you can’t think of?*’ To insist that we know as much about life and history as all-powerful God is a logical fallacy.” (Keller 2013: 97-98) Since atheists are unable to prove that God has *no* morally sufficient reasons for allowing various evils, their inductive or evidential “probability” arguments of necessity must fail. A multitude of other reasons show that these inductive or evidential arguments cannot get off the ground:

- In making any inductive argument or judgment as to the probability of something (i.e., the existence of God), “one must base it [the argument or judgment] on total evidence relevant to the theory” (Feinberg 1994: 290). Indeed, “it is impossible to calculate the probability of a given hypothesis without incorporating background information” (Ibid.: 164). This is crucial since “what may be improbable on one piece or set of evidence may be probable on another” (Ibid.: 213). In other words, “anyone who uses an inductive argument . . . against theism, must offer good reasons *apart from evil’s existence* that God doesn’t exist. . . . Without it, appeal to evil’s existence alone accomplishes nothing more than reinforcing a foregone conclusion.” (Ibid.: 182, *emph. added*) This fact essentially renders the atheist’s argument from evil invalid, because atheists do *not* incorporate background information or evidence relevant to God’s existence. Instead, their argument “appeals to only one kind of evidence [the existence of evil itself] in making its assessment” (Ibid.: 290).

The background information or evidence that is needed in order to make a valid argument or probability judgment concerning God’s existence, would include but not be limited to: the uniqueness of the Bible; the implausibility of the universe coming into existence by itself; the implausibility of life coming from non-living matter; the implausibility of mind and consciousness coming from non-sentient beings; the inability of non-sentient forces to account for abstract universals like logic, truth, values, right and wrong; evidence of design throughout the universe; fulfilled prophecy; the resurrection of Jesus Christ; evidence of miracles; and experiences of divine and supernatural encounters. Feinberg concludes, “It may well turn out that something in that background information makes the probability that theism is correct so high that the fact of evil cannot make it improbable” (Ibid.: 164). However, the atheists’ failure to factor in any of this evidence and background information makes it impossible to even begin an argument concerning the probability of the existence of God. The fact of evil, standing alone, has no evidential value whatsoever in trying to assess the probability of God’s existence.

The importance of considering background evidence concerning God’s existence in answering the problem of evil is relevant for another important reason. John Feinberg points out that “when the atheist charges that evil is evidence against the probability that God exists, the theist should ask, ‘Evidence against which God?’ Until the atheist specifies which conception of God is under attack, and until the theist specifies which God he is defending, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to assess the success of either the attack or the defense.” (Feinberg 1994: 285) In answering the atheist’s attack, it is therefore legitimate to look to the Bible and the data contained in the Bible concerning both God and evil. This is particularly true since the atheist’s contention has its source, at least in part, in biblical revelation (i.e., the concept of an omnipotent, omniscient, and good God). K. Scott Oliphint states, “Since the objector presents the problem as one intrinsic to Christianity, there is no fallacy or logical breach if one answers the objection from the same source in which the alleged problem itself, including the characteristics of God, is found” (Oliphint 2013: 174-75).⁶⁴ The objector’s own beliefs about what he or she thinks God is like and what he or

⁶⁴ It is for that reason that K. Scott Oliphint proposes the proposition, “Adam responsibly and freely chose to disobey God, to eat the forbidden fruit, after which time he and all of creation fell,” to resolve the alleged incompatibility between the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, good God and the existence of evil, instead of the more generic proposition, “God has a morally sufficient reason for allowing evil” (Oliphint 2013: 172). The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of

she thinks God would or should do about evil are completely irrelevant (Feinberg 1994: 18; Oliphint 2013: 175).

- The atheist's argument is also invalid for a related reason: it is nothing but an assertion of what God would or should do, or, to put it another way, it postulates that, if God exists, reality would or should be considerably different from what it is. None of that is based on any empirical or observed data at all. Although we can observe many different kinds, amounts, and intensities of evil in the world, "our common experience does not include information about all the interconnections of the evil in question to other evils or goods. . . . Empirically, we can observe many evils, but we cannot observe the evaluation of them, nor can we observe God's relation to them, whatever it is. Hence, if we proceed solely from empirical data, it appears that the most we can conclude by this sort of inductive argument is that there will likely be more instances of evil. But clearly, that inductive generalization proves nothing about God and/or His relation to evil in our world. . . . The only empirical data appealed to are instances of evil. Those instances in themselves do not contain empirical evidence of how they should be evaluated (too much, gratuitous, etc.) or how they relate to God." (Feinberg 1994: 269, 288) The atheist's position amounts to the assumption that "one knows what God should and would think and do, just because one thinks she knows what she would think and do if she were God" (Feinberg 1994: 178). As Bruce Reichenbach puts it, "The atheologian's argument seems to proceed along the illicit lines that since *we* could have prevented the suffering, *God* could have prevented the suffering" (Reichenbach 1982: 37-38). The arrogance of such a claim is astounding, particularly since "they cannot provide the evidence needed to show that God could have prevented the suffering without losing a greater good." (Ibid.: 37). In short, the entire atheistic argument amounts to a hypothesis of what the atheist thinks God would or should do and various auxiliary assumptions the atheist assumes to be true (e.g., there is too much evil; there is pointless or gratuitous evil; God should remove evil; God could remove evil without forfeiting a greater good or causing greater harm). The atheist's hypothesis and auxiliary assumptions are all inherently subjective and inferential and none of them is based on any empirical facts or known truths at all!

- The fact is, God has *infinitely* greater knowledge than we have, has an *infinitely* greater vision and frame of reference, and is *infinitely* wiser than we are. Stephen Wykstra analogized our understanding of God's reasons for allowing evil and suffering to the likelihood of a one-month-old infant trying to understand his parents' purposes in allowing him to experience pain, which is to say it is not likely at all. The gap between our abilities and understanding compared to God's is actually infinitely greater than that between a one-month-old infant and his or her parents. Wykstra's point is that "the disparity between our cognitive limits and the vision needed to create a universe gives us reason to think that if our universe is created by God it is expectable that . . . if there are God-purposed goods [connected to evil and suffering], they would often be beyond our ken" (Wykstra 1996: 139-40; see also Plantinga 1996: 75-76 ["An evil is *inscrutable* if it is such that we can't think of any reason God (if there is such a person) could have for permitting it. . . . If theism is true we would expect that there would be inscrutable evil. Indeed, a little reflection shows there is no reason to think we could so much as grasp God's plans here, even if he proposed to divulge them to us. But then the fact that there is inscrutable evil does not make it improbable that God exists."]). Biblically, this is certainly true inasmuch as "*the secret things belong to the Lord our God*" (**Deut 29:29**), now "*we walk by faith, not by sight*" (**2 Cor 5:7**), and "*now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known*" (**1 Cor 13:12**).

William Alston elaborates this; after discussing many possible reasons why God might allow evil and suffering, he states, "Even if we were fully entitled to dismiss all the alleged reasons for permitting suffering that have been suggested, we would still have to consider whether there are further possibilities that are undreamt of in our theodicies. Why should we suppose that the theodicies thus far excogitated, however brilliant and learned their authors, exhaust the field? . . . Since it is in principle impossible for us to be justified in supposing that God does not have sufficient reasons for permitting E [evil] that are unknown to us, and perhaps unknowable by us, no one can be justified in holding that God could have no reasons for permitting the Bambi [William Rowe's postulated fawn who dies in a fire] and Sue [the rape, beating, and murder of a five-year-old girl] cases, or any other particular cases of suffering. . . . Even if . . . my opponent could definitively rule out all the specific suggestions I have put forward, she would still face the insurmountable task of showing herself to be justified in supposing that there are no further possibilities for sufficient divine reasons. That point by itself would be decisive." (Alston 1996: 119) Timothy Keller observes, "If an all-powerful and all-wise God were directing all of history with its infinite number of

Adam's ability to freely choose as follows: "Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God; but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it." (Westminster 1647: 9.2)

interactive events toward good ends, it would be folly to think we could look at any particular occurrence and understand a millionth of what it will bring about” (Keller 2013: 101). In short, “theists need not have any hypothesis about why God would permit evil in order to be rational. They can say that God has a reason but it is beyond us. That would be consistent with Christianity’s belief that God’s knowledge is far beyond ours. It is not irrational thinking either, because we often rationally continue to believe something without knowing how to explain it. For example, one may reasonably trust the laws of chemistry, even if a particular experiment went awry and one cannot explain why.” (Feinberg 1994: 220)

Even David Hume, the originator of the modern “problem of evil,” admitted that it is likely we would *not* know God’s reasons for allowing evil and suffering: “such a limited intelligence must be sensible of his own blindness and ignorance, and must allow, that there may be many solutions of those phenomena [evil and suffering], which will for ever escape his comprehension” (Hume 1779: part 11, 200). The book of Job alone should tell us that “it is both futile and inappropriate to assume that any human mind could comprehend all the reasons God might have for any instance of pain and sorrow, let alone for all evil” (Keller 2013: 95). Since that is the case, it is impossible for an atheist to make a valid argument that the existence, quantity, intensity, and apparent gratuitousness of evil renders God’s existence improbable.

- Concerning natural evils (e.g., earthquakes, floods, genetic malfunctions, diseases), ultimately the natural order went awry because of humanity’s fall into sin (**Gen 3:17-19; Rom 8:20-22**). John Frame states, “Natural evil is a curse brought upon the world because of moral evil. It functions as punishment to the wicked and as a means of discipline for those who are righteous by God’s grace. It also reminds us of the cosmic dimensions of sin and redemption [see **Col 1:20**].” (Frame 2008: 142) In other words, neither human beings nor the natural order are in the “very good” state in which God made them (**Gen 1:31**) but are corrupted and disordered because of humanity’s disobedience to God. It is, therefore, disingenuous to blame God for natural evils and disasters.

Beyond that, God created a world in which human beings and other creatures can live and function adequately. The world is run by various natural processes that fit the creatures God placed in it. Sometimes these natural processes produce harmful effects. However, “it is foolish to jettison processes that work well most of the time for the sake of the relatively few times they malfunction and result in evil, especially when we have no idea of what we might get in their place” (Feinberg 1994: 149). Richard Swinburne also points out, “There must be naturally occurring evils (i.e. evils not deliberately caused by men) if men are to know how to cause evils themselves or are to prevent evil occurring. And there have to be *many* such evils, if men are to have knowledge, for as we saw, sure knowledge of what will happen in future comes only by induction from many past instances. . . . Suppose that men are to have the choice of building cities along earthquake belts, and so risking the destruction of whole cities and their populations hundreds of years later, or of avoiding doing so. How can such a choice be available to them unless they know where earthquakes are likely to occur and what their probable consequences are? And how are they to come to know this, unless earthquakes have happened due to natural and unpredicted causes, like the Lisbon Earthquake of 1755? . . . The evils which have naturally befallen animals provide a huge reservoir of information for men to acquire knowledge of the choices open to them, a reservoir which men have often tapped—seeing the fate of sheep, men have learnt of the presence of dangerous tigers; seeing the cows sink into a bog, they have learnt not to cross that bog, and so on.” (Swinburne 1979: 207, 208, 209)

Further, the very thing that is beneficial about natural phenomena can also be detrimental, e.g., water is necessary for life but one can drown in it; gravity is necessary but can result in injury or death when someone falls or avalanches occur. The beneficial aspects are so essential to life as we know it that to change these phenomena and processes would fundamentally change life and the world itself. Bruce Reichenbach notes, “What would it entail to alter the natural laws regarding digestion so that arsenic or other poisons would not negatively affect the human constitution? Would not either arsenic or the human physiological composition or both have to be altered such that they would, in effect, be different from the present objects which we now call arsenic or human digestive organs? To change the actual world sufficiently to eliminate natural evils, and therefore to instantiate a possible world with different natural laws, would necessarily entail a change in existing objects themselves. They would have to be different in some essential respects, such that with different essential properties they would become different things altogether. Fire would no longer burn or else many things would have to be by nature non-combustible; lightning would have to have a lower voltage or else a consistent repulsion from objects; wood would have to be penetrable so that limbs or trees would not injure. . . . The introduction of different natural laws affecting human beings in order to prevent the frequent instances of natural evil would entail the alteration of human beings themselves.” (Reichenbach 1982: 110-11)

- Concerning the apparent gratuitousness or pointlessness of much evil (e.g., Rowe’s Bambi and Sue

examples), Reichenbach observes, “The atheologian’s argument claims that instances of suffering which are seemingly or apparently pointless are in fact or likely pointless, for we do not know of any higher good to which they are a means. But this constitutes an appeal to ignorance; that we know of no higher good does not entail that there is no higher good or that one is unlikely. . . . He argues that even if the fawn’s suffering is not really pointless, it is not reasonable to hold this to be the case in all instances of apparently pointless suffering. But this begs the question; what needs to be shown is that there are such cases.” (Reichenbach 1982: 38; see also Trau 1986: 485-89) Feinberg adds, “One must first show that there are *any* cases of *genuinely* pointless suffering before we can believe that some of the many instances of *apparently* pointless suffering are really pointless. . . . That will be a hard challenge to meet, especially because of our limited knowledge. Atheists will not likely do better than produce some evidence that a specific evil is probably genuinely pointless, but ‘probably pointless’ is not enough to answer Reichenbach’s objection about question begging.” (Feinberg 1994: 180)⁶⁵

Timothy Keller notes, “In the field of chaos theory, scientists have learned that large, macroscopic systems—such as weather—can be sensitive to the tiniest changes. The classic example is the claim that a butterfly’s fluttering in China would be magnified through a ripple effect so as to determine the path of a hurricane in the South Pacific. Yet no one would be able to calculate and predict the actual effects of the butterfly’s flight. . . . If even the effects of a butterfly’s flight . . . are too complex to calculate, how much less could any human being look at the tragic, seemingly ‘senseless’ death of a young person and have any idea of what the effects in history will be?” (Keller 2013: 100-01) Even atheist William Rowe admits, “It would seem to require something like omniscience on our part before we should lay claim to knowing that there is no greater good connected to the fawn’s suffering in such a manner that an omnipotent, omniscient being could not have achieved that good without permitting that suffering or some evil equally bad or worse” (Rowe 1996: 4).

- Concerning the quantity of evil, “Judgments of how much evil is too much for a good God to allow depend on personal value judgments, not on demonstrative proof. Thus, it is impossible to prove there is too much gratuitous evil. Those predisposed against theism will think there is too much, whereas theists will think the amount acceptable. None of this, however, proves there is too much evil, nor can it. Hence, the opinions that there is too much or just enough cannot count as *evidence* against or for theism. If so, they present no problem for theism.” (Feinberg 1994: 265)⁶⁶ As with the assertion that some evils are “pointless,” given our cognitive finiteness (especially compared to God), the assertion that there is “too much” evil is just that—an assertion, not evidence, that permits no inference against the existence of a justifying reason that God may have. Hence, it is no evidence against the probability that God exists. From our perspective, less evil might seem possible and preferable, but from God’s perspective and with his knowledge and wisdom of “how evil fits into God’s overall plans and purposes and of how it interconnects with goods and other evils, we cannot be sure we would create any different world than the one we have. . . . If judgments are made about too much evil in ignorance of why things are as they are, it is dubious that we can make a convincing case that there really is too much evil.” (Ibid.: 308) Further, different instances of evil of the same kind might be justified in entirely different ways. “We should not assume for two similar evils that God’s purpose in allowing them is identical. . . . The consequence of it is that evils we think are surplus or too much may not at all be, because they may have a different purpose and explanation than we think.” (Ibid.: 308-09)
- Finally, “God was not required to actualize any world at all, for His own existence is the highest good.

⁶⁵ Keith Yandell states, “That there are evils whose morally sufficient points, ends, or purposes, if any, are not apparent does not entail that they have no such point, end, or purpose, because it is false that if they have such ends that fact would be apparent to us. It does not entail that they probably have no such point, for it is not the case that if they had a point, that fact probably would be apparent to us. It does not follow that it is reasonable to believe that they do not have a point, because it is false that it is reasonable to believe that they have no point because it is the case that it is not apparent to us that they have one.” (Yandell 1989: 19-20)

⁶⁶ There is a related point concerning the quantity and intensity of pain and suffering. “While in imagination we may attempt to add up all the pains of the animal and human populations in the world, in all places and at all times, such a sum of suffering does not and cannot exist. Pain is not accumulable . . . for that composite pain cannot be found in anyone’s consciousness. There is no such thing as ‘a sum of suffering’ for the simple reason that no one suffers it.” (Boyd 1999: 98-99) The only one who suffers the sum of the anguish of this world “is God Himself; for He knows each of His children and all of His creatures with an immediacy more instant and acute than their own consciousness of themselves, and feels their suffering more deeply than they do in their own person. . . . If there is a sum of suffering, it is not made by a human mind, nor is it known in any human experience, but in the mind and heart of God. Only He can know the pain of this world, and only He can bear it. Yet it is we who complain of it! We hold it against Him as a reason for unbelief while all the time it is He who carries it in love and redeems it by an infinite compassion.” (Ibid.: 99; see **Isa 53:3-12**)

. . . [A theist] does not need to show that our world is better than others or the best. . . . He merely explains that ours is one of those good possible worlds God could have created.” (Feinberg 1994: 36, 142) Michael Peterson states, “Let us ponder for a moment whether our moral structures can condemn the very being who makes it possible for us even to exist, to be able to apprehend moral values in the first place, and to have the significance of life which is lived within their ambit. Of course, we morally condemn those who lie, steal, and murder, but it is not at all clear that we must likewise condemn God for creating the context in which such evils can happen. Surely it accords with the very spirit of morality for God to create a moral context and a plurality of finite beings living within it.” (Peterson 1982: 127) When moral or natural evils occur, “it is because we live in a sinful, fallen world. . . . His grace, which keeps more evil from happening than does, evidences His goodness since that grace is not owed.” (Feinberg 1994: 148) We must remember, “God’s power and love do not obligate Him to do every good thing that is possible. They only necessitate that whatever He does must be good and that if He fails to do something good that He apparently should do [e.g., remove evil], He must have a morally sufficient reason for not doing it.” (Ibid.: 178) However, God is under no obligation, moral or otherwise, to tell us why he decides to do or not do something.

The Bible indicates that one day God will create a world in which there is no longer any pain, suffering, evil, death, or curse (**Rev 21:1, 4; 22:3**). So why didn’t he start with that world since that world would be better than ours? Feinberg answers: “But better for what purpose? Presumably, God had many things He wanted to accomplish when He decided to create a world. There is no way for us to know that this other world would have accomplished those goals better than our world. Moreover, even if we think God’s only purpose is to bring Himself glory, we do not know that dispensing with our world in favor of that future world would bring God more glory than He receives from this world plus the next.” (Ibid.: 142) Since God evidently intended to create a world populated by non-glorified human beings (not superhumans or subhumans or “glorified” humans) and put them in a world where they could function, to prevent moral evil would probably require vast changes in the nature of human beings, and to prevent natural evil would probably entail significant changes in the natural order, such that God’s plan of creating human beings like us in a natural world such as ours would be thwarted (see Feinberg 1994: 130-36, 149-54, 309-10). “Was God wrong to have these other goals? Only if they are evil themselves, and they are not.” (Ibid.: 142) Therefore, “if God cannot conjointly remove evil and accomplish His other goal(s) for our world (i.e., it is logically impossible to do both), then He is not obligated to do both [i.e., he is not obligated to remove evil]” (Ibid.: 125). John Hick concludes that, by focusing on the amount of evil in the world, “Such critics as Hume are confusing what heaven ought to be, as an environment for perfected finite beings, with what this world ought to be, as an environment for beings who are in process of becoming perfected” (Hick 1977: 293-94).

C. The relationship between a good God and the existence of sin and evil

There are several facets to God’s relationship with sin and evil which must be borne in mind when we consider that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and totally good, yet has ordained and permitted sin and evil to exist.

1. God is sovereign over everything, and is actively at work accomplishing his plan

The Bible depicts God as sovereign over everything and actively involved in all aspects of the life of the world; his plan is absolute and comprehensive, and he decrees and acts to bring that plan to completion (see **1 Chron 29:11-12; Job 12:13-25; Ps 103:19; Isa 40:21-26; 46:9-11; Dan 4:35; Acts 4:27-28; Rom 9:14-24; Eph 1:11; Rev 17:14-17**). This is known as the doctrine of God’s *providence*, i.e., “that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator preserves all His creatures, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end” (Berkhof 1949: 181). For example, He creates mountains, creates wind, and makes dawn into darkness (**Amos 4:13**); He makes wind blow and water flow (**Ps 147:18**); He governs the sun, moon, and stars, and stirs up the sea (**Jer 31:35**); He governs the growth of plants (**Isa 41:19-20**); He governs the animals (**Job 39**). God is also sovereign over and active in the affairs of people. For example, He is ultimately in charge of life and death, including birth defects, sickness, and death, including death of the “innocent” (**Gen 20:17-18; Exod 4:11; 2 Sam 12:15; Neh 9:6; Job 12:9-10; Isa 44:24; Ezek 24:15-18**); He raises some up and puts others down (**1 Sam 2:7**); He rules over the nations (**2 Chron 20:6; Ps 33:10-11; Isa 40:23-25**); He stirs up people’s spirits, puts thoughts in their minds, and turns their hearts (**Ezra 6:22; Neh 2:12; 7:5; Ps 105:25; Isa 44:28; Hag 1:14**). His sovereignty includes sovereignty even over the sinful decisions of people (**Gen 45:5-8; Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23-24; 4:27-28; 13:27; Rev 17:17**). Consequently, the Bible tells us, “*Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and in the earth*” (**Ps 135:6**). God states that he “*declare[s] the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying,*

‘My purpose will be established and I will accomplish my good pleasure. . . . Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.’” (Isa 46:10-11)

2. God’s sovereignty over events includes His sovereignty over sin and evil but not in a way that makes Him sinful or evil

Many people try to shield God from *any* involvement with sin or evil (they attribute all evil either to Satan or to individual sin). However, the Bible presents a more nuanced and complex picture. On one hand, “Moral evil is not something God created when he created other things. It is not a substance at all. God created substances, including the world and the people in it. God intended that we could act, for he made us able to act. But he neither made our actions nor does he perform them. Hence, we cannot say that God intended there to be moral evil because we have it in our world. God intended to create and did create agents who can act; he did not make their acts (good or evil).” (Feinberg 2001: 788; see also Adams 1991: 59 [“He has decreed the existence of sin in such a way that men themselves freely (i.e., uncoerced and in accord with their own natures) become the authors of their sin”]; Koukl 2012: n.p.) In other words, God respects people’s integrity *as human beings*. He does not control people as if they were puppets or program them as if they were robots. People are able to think their own thoughts and make real choices.

As mentioned above, “God’s relationship with the world is comprehensive in scope: God is present and active wherever there is world. God does not create the world and then leave it, but God creates the world and enters into it, lives within it, *as God*. . . . God is present on every occasion and active in every event. From the macrocosmic to the microcosmic, there is no getting beyond the presence of God. God cannot be evicted from the world or from any creature’s life. At the same time, God’s presence does not mean either divine micromanagement or a divine will that is irresistible.⁶⁷ . . . The world retains its integrity as creature even while filled with the presence of the Creator. . . . God—who is other than the world—works relationally from within the world, and not on the world from without. . . . That is, both God and the creatures have an important role in the creative enterprise, and their spheres of activity are interrelated in terms of function and effect. . . . But, even more, God gives human beings powers and responsibilities in a way that *commits God* to a certain kind of relationship with them. This commitment entails a divine constraint and restraint in the exercise of power within the creation. For example, God will not do the procreating of animals or the bearing of fruit seeds in any unmediated way. More ominously, human beings have been given the freedom to destroy themselves, though this stands against the will of God for them. This commitment to give power and responsibility over to the creature results in an ongoing divine dependence upon creatures⁶⁸ in and through whom God will work in the life of the world.” (Fretheim 2005: 23-24, 26, 27; see also Berkhof 1949: 188-90) In keeping with this dual explanation of events, Paul tells Christians to “*work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure*” (Phil 2:12-13).

Given God’s comprehensive sovereignty, plan, and his active involvement in the world while at the same time humans retain their integrity as human beings, the Bible repeatedly presents a *dual explanation* for events: God is sovereign and has ordained all events (that, in one sense, is a full explanation for all events); yet that is compatible with and does not in any way diminish people’s responsibility for the choices they make and the things they do (that, in another sense, is also a full explanation for all events).⁶⁹ This is known as the doctrine of *concurrency*, i.e., “the co-operation of the divine power with all subordinate powers, according to the pre-established laws of their operation, causing them to act and to act precisely as they do” (Berkhof 1949: 187). This doctrine implies two things: “(1) That the powers of nature do not work by themselves, that is, simply by their own inherent power, but that God is immediately operative in every act of the creature. This must be

⁶⁷ There are different senses to the meaning of God’s “will.” His revealed or preceptive will may, indeed, be resisted by people; however, his secret or decretive will cannot be resisted (see paragraphs III. B.-E.).

⁶⁸ When Fretheim speaks of God’s “dependence” on creatures, it must be understood that he is referring only to the fact that God acts *through* his creatures, not immediately and directly: “There is no absolute principle of self-activity in the creature, to which God simply joins His activity. In every instance the impulse to action and movement proceeds from God. There must be an influence of divine energy before the creature can work. . . . God causes everything in nature to work and to move in the direction of a pre-determined end. So God also enables and prompts His rational creatures, as second causes, to function, and that not merely by endowing them with energy in a general way, but by energizing them to certain specific acts.” (Berkhof 1949: 189)

⁶⁹ K. Scott Oliphint remarks, “It is difficult to see how one thing, like God’s condescending providence, could bring together both the decree of God and the free act of Adam as a part of that decree. But surely, in a world in which God, in Christ, takes on a human nature all the while remaining God, it is no conceptual stretch to assert such a thing of God and his providence. That is, just as the person of Christ combines the divine and human without losing the essential properties of each, so also providence combines the divine (decree) and human (decision) in such a way that no essential properties are lost in each of them.” (Oliphint 2006: 301)

maintained in opposition to the deistic position. (2) That second causes are real, and not to be regarded simply as the operative power of God. . . . This should be stressed over against the pantheistic idea that God is the only agent working in the world.” (Ibid.)

The following biblical examples show how both God and secondary causes are involved in the same phenomena, including events involving sin and evil:

EVENT	ATTRIBUTED TO GOD	ATTRIBUTED TO SECONDARY CAUSES
Creation of animals	Gen 1:25	Gen 1:24
Abram’s defeat of four kings	Gen 14:20	Gen 14:14-16
Sarah’s conception & birth of Isaac	Gen 21:1	Gen 21:2, 5
Joseph’s brothers selling him into slavery	Gen 45:7-8; 50:20	Gen 37:25-28; 45:4-5
Joseph going to Egypt	Ps 105:17	Gen 37:28
Joseph’s prospering while a slave	Gen 39:3, 23	Gen 39:3, 23
The return of money to Joseph’s brothers	Gen 42:27-28	Gen 42:25
Israel’s exodus from Egypt	Exod 3:7-8	Exod 3:10; Deut 6:18-19
The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart	Exod 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27	Exod 7:14, 22-23; 8:15; 9:34
The golden calf & Israel’s worship of idols	Exod 32:1-8; Acts 7:39-41	Acts 7:42
Israel’s consecration & sanctification	Lev 20:8	Lev 20:7-8
Defeat of Sihon	Deut 2:30-31, 33, 36	Deut 2:32-36
Defeat of Bashan	Deut 3:2-3	Deut 3:1, 3-6
Ability of people to make wealth	Deut 8:18	Deut 8:18
Victories of Joshua	Deut 3:21-22	Deut 3:28
Israel’s conquest of the promised land	Exod 23:23, 29-30; Deut 4:37-38; 7:1-2, 22-24; 9:3a	Exod 23:24, 31; Deut 7:2, 24; 9:3b
Defeat of Jericho	Josh 6:2	Josh 6:3-5
Defeat of Ai	Josh 8:1	Josh 8:2-22
Defeat of Makkedah	Josh 10:19b	Josh 10:19a, 20-21
Defeat of other kings	Josh 11:8a	Josh 11:8b-9
Gideon’s defeat of Midian	Judg 7:7, 9, 14-15	Judg 7:16-22
Samson’s marriage to a Philistine woman	Judg 14:4	Judg 14:1-3
Samson’s killing 1000 Philistines	Judg 15:18	Judg 15:14-16
Defeat of Benjamin by Israel	Judg 20:28	Judg 20:29-48
Eli’s sons do not listen to him	1 Sam 2:25	1 Sam 2:22-25
Saul defeats the Amalekites	1 Sam 15:2	1 Sam 15:3-6
Abigail’s interceding for Nabal	1 Sam 25:32	1 Sam 25:14-31
Hushai’s advice is accepted	2 Sam 17:14	2 Sam 17:5-14
David defeats his enemies	2 Sam 22:18-20, 40-42, 48-49	2 Sam 22:38-39, 43
David sins by numbering the people	2 Sam 24:1	2 Sam 24:10, 17; 1 Chron 21:1-4
The death of Joab	1 Kgs 2:32-33	1 Kgs 2:31, 34
The division of Israel and Judah	1 Kgs 12:22-24	1 Kgs 12:16-20
Ahab goes to war & defeats Aram	1 Kgs 20:13, 28	1 Kgs 20:14-21, 29-30
Ahab goes to war & is killed	1 Kgs 22:19-23	1 Kgs 22:29-37
Return of Rabshakeh to his own land and his death	2 Kgs 19:6-7	2 Kgs 19:7
Recovery of Hezekiah	2 Kgs 20:5-6	2 Kgs 20:7
The death of Saul	1 Chron 10:14	1 Chron 10:4
Invasion of Judah by Philistines & Arabs	2 Chron 21:12-16a	2 Chron 21:16b-17
The defeat of Judah & death of Amaziah	2 Chron 25:14-16	2 Chron 25:17-28
Preparation of the temple for restored worship	2 Chron 29:36	2 Chron 29:5-35
The defeat of Judah & death of Josiah	2 Chron 35:20-21	2 Kgs 23:29; 2 Chron 35:22-24
God speaks through his prophets	2 Chron 15-16	2 Chron 15-16
Destruction of Judah by Babylon	2 Chron 36:15-17; Jer 21:8-10; Ezek 5:7-11, 13	2 Kgs 25:8-21; 2 Chron 36:17-19; Jer 21:8-10; Ezek 5:12
Decree that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple	Jer 16:15; 29:10-14; 2 Chron 36:22; Ezra 1:1; 6:14	2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1; 6:14
Ezra granted favor	Ezra 7:6, 9-10, 27-28	Ezra 7:6, 9-10, 27-28
Nehemiah granted favor	Neh 2:8	Neh 2:7-9
The plans of the Jews’ enemies are frustrated	Neh 4:15	Neh 4:11-14

Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem	Neh 6:16	Neh 3:1-32; 4:6, 21-22; 6:3, 15
The trials of Job	Job 1:12, 21-22; 2:6; 42:11	Job 1:13-19; 2:7
Creation of people	Job 10:8; 31:15; Ps 139:13-16	Gen 4:1; 5:3; Job 14:1; Ps 51:5
Defeat of David's enemies	Ps 18:17-19, 43a, 47-48	Ps 18:37
Growth of plants	Ps 104:14a-b	Ps 104:14c
Building a house or any venture	Ps 127:1a	Ps 127:1b
Guarding a city	Ps 127:1c	Ps 127:1d
People's plans, speech, and actions	Prov 16:1b, 9b	Prov 16:1a, 9a
People's decisions	Prov 16:33b	Prov 16:33a
The invasion of Judah by Assyria	Isa 7:17-20; 8:5-8	Isa 7:17-20; 8:5-8
The destruction of Israel	Isa 9:8-21	Isa 9:8-21
The destruction of Babylon	Isa 13:1-5	Isa 13:1-5
The destruction of Egypt	Isa 19:1, 2a, 4a	Isa 19:2b-3, 4b
Success of Cyrus	Isa 45:1-7	Isa 45:1-7
Death of the men of Anathoth	Jer 11:22a, 23	Jer 11:22b
Baruch & Jeremiah hide from the king	Jer 36:26	Jer 36:19
Gog's invasion of Israel	Ezek 38:1-6, 16	Ezek 38:7-16
Destruction of Edom	Obad 8-9	Obad 6-7
Casting Jonah into the sea	Jonah 2:3	Jonah 1:15
Drought in the land	Hag 1:9, 11	Hag 1:5-6, 10
Rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem	Hag 1:14	Hag 1:14
The writing & testimony of the Bible	Matt 19:4-5; John 5:37-38; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21	Gen 2:24; Luke 24:27; John 5:46-47; Acts 26:22
People coming to Christ for salvation	John 6:37, 44, 65; Acts 13:38	John 6:37, 44, 65; Acts 13:38
The betrayal of Jesus	Luke 22:22a	Luke 22:21, 22b; John 13:21-27
The crucifixion of Jesus	Isa 53:10; Acts 2:23; 4:28	Mark 14:43-15:39; Acts 2:23; 4:27
Salvation of believers	John 1:12-13; Eph 2:8-9	John 3:36; Rom 10:12-17
The righteous acts of believers	John 3:21; Eph 2:10; Phil 2:13	John 3:21; Eph 2:10; Phil 2:12
Salvation of people in Corinth	Acts 18:10b	Acts 18:9-10a
Saving Paul & sailors from a shipwreck	Acts 27:22-25, 34	Acts 27:30-32, 38-44
Preaching the gospel	1 Cor 2:4	1 Cor 2:4
The persecution of Christians	1 Cor 4:7-11; Rev 6:9-11	1 Cor 4:7-11; Rev 6:9-11
Paul's "thorn in the flesh"	2 Cor 12:7-9	2 Cor 12:7
The preservation of the saints	1 Thess 5:23-24	1 Thess 5:12-22
People who follow the "man of lawlessness"	2 Thess 2:11	2 Thes 2:9-10, 12
Where people go & everything they do	Jas 4:13-15	Jas 4:13-15
The actions of the "harlot," "ten kings," and "beast" of Revelation	Rev 17:17	Rev 17:1-16

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) summarizes the situation this way: "3.1. God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. . . . 5.2. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, He orders them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. . . . 5.4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as has joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceeds only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin." (Westminster 1647: 3.1; 5.2, 4)

Let us explain this. Given this relationship that God has with people and the world, the Bible's writers "do not shy away from making Yahweh himself in some mysterious way (the mysteriousness of which safeguards him from being himself charged with evil) the 'ultimate' cause of many evils. . . . God does not stand behind evil action in precisely the same way that he stands behind good action. . . . A certain distance is preserved between God and his people when they sin. . . . In short, although we may lack the categories needed for full exposition of the problem, *nevertheless we must insist that divine ultimacy stands behind good and evil asymmetrically.*" (Carson 1994: 28, 36-37) This interdependent divine-human interrelationship entails at least

two things: (1) “This is a relationship of unequals; it is an asymmetrical relationship. God is God and we’re not.” (Fretheim 2005: 16) This means there is a difference in metaphysical level and status between God as creator and us as creatures. This difference between levels might be analogized to the difference between a playwright and a character in a play. In “Macbeth,” Macbeth killed Duncan. “Shakespeare wrote the murder into his play. But the murder took place in the world of the play. . . . We sense the rightness of Macbeth paying for his crime. But we would certainly consider it very unjust if Shakespeare were tried and put to death for killing Duncan. . . . Indeed, there is reason for us to praise Shakespeare for raising up this character, Macbeth, to show us the consequences of sin.” (Frame 2008: 162-63) Because of the different levels of reality between God and us, God’s prerogatives as “playwrite” (e.g., creator, sustainer, lawgiver, judge, savior) are far greater than ours. While this analogy is not exact (we, after all, are real while Macbeth is not), this metaphysical difference in levels between God and us suggests a moral difference, which “may explain why the biblical writers, who do not hesitate to say that God brings about sin and evil, do not accuse him of wrongdoing” (Ibid.: 163).⁷⁰ (2) It is a paradox that defies complete definition or understanding. Nevertheless, given the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God who has a plan for the world, is sovereign, and is actualizing His plan, and given creatures who have the ability to make real choices and take real actions for which they are responsible, the relationship between God and His creatures as described above *could not be otherwise*.

God ultimately is responsible for evil in that He is sovereign over everything, declares “*the end from the beginning*” (**Isa 46:10**), and has ordained an all-comprehensive plan for the whole of creation, including the evil, that He is accomplishing (**Prov 16:4; Isa 46:8-11**). However, God’s “asymmetric” relationship behind good and evil means that “God stands behind evil in such a way that not even evil takes place outside the bounds of his sovereignty, yet the evil is not morally chargeable to him: it is always chargeable to secondary agents, to secondary causes. On the other hand, God stands behind good in such a way that it not only takes place within the bounds of his sovereignty, but it is always chargeable to him, and only derivatively to secondary agents.” (Carson 1990: 213) In other words, God is not responsible for evil in such a way that He is the author of the *evilness* of the evil or the *sinfulness* of sin. Thus, Dennis Johnson states that “although the destructive judgments revealed in the trumpet cycle [of Revelation] come from the heavenly altar by the purpose of God [**Rev 8:1-19**], the blame for the earth’s destruction falls not on the holy Creator but on those who seduce human beings into resisting him and his Christ, sowing seeds of avarice, suspicion, competition, and hostility that violate the world and its inhabitants [**Rev 8:20-21**]” (Johnson 2001: 154n.13; see also **Gen 4:1-7; Isa 10:5-16; Hab 1:1-11; Hag 1:5-11; Acts 2:22-24**).

Berkhof puts it like this, “There is not a single moment that the creature works independently of the will and the power of God. It is in Him that we live *and move* and have our being, Acts 17:28. This divine activity accompanies the action of man at every point, but without robbing man in any way of his freedom. The action remains the free act of man, an act for which he is held responsible. This simultaneous concurrence does not result in an identification of the *causa prima* [primary cause] and the *causa secunda* [secondary cause]. In a very real sense the operation is the product of both causes. Man is and remains the real subject of the action. Bavinck illustrates this by pointing to the fact that wood burns, that God only causes it to burn, but that formally this burning cannot be ascribed to God but only to the wood as subject.

” (Berkhof 1949: 189)

James 1 describes how sin arises. **Jas 1:2, 12** commend people who encounter and persevere in various “trials.” **Jas 1:13-15** then states, “*Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*” The words “trial” and “tempt” are cognates, i.e., the noun and verb forms of the same root Greek word (*peirasmos* [trial] and *peirazō* [tempt]). The context provides the distinction: God places us in circumstances to test or try us—including circumstances where we may be tempted to sin and circumstances where he knows we will, in fact, sin—*yet he does not induce us to sin*. Rather, the temptation to sin comes from within man or from a secondary source such as Satan, and the willing to sin comes from within man: “Morally evil deeds stem from human desires. Desires in and of themselves are not evil nor do they perform the evil . . . but when they are aroused so as to lead us to disobey God’s prescribed moral norms, then we have sinned. Desires are not the only culprit, however, for will, reason, and emotion, for example, enter into the process. But James says temptation and sinful deeds start with our desires.” (Feinberg 2001: 789)

We see this when we consider how sin and evil entered the world. God created the world without sin or

⁷⁰ In light of the fundamental metaphysical difference in *levels* between God and us, and therefore the fundamentally different *roles* God and we play in the drama of existence, Keith Yandell states, “What God can allow compatible with his goodness is not what we can allow compatible with ours” (Yandell 1989: 30).

evil in a state that was “*very good*” (**Gen 1:31**). God created human beings “*in the image of God*” (**Gen 1:26-27**). He gave them the ability to reason and have emotions, desires, intentions, the ability to choose, and the capacity for bodily movement, all of which we may use for good (or evil). He blessed the man and woman (**Gen 1:28**), spoke to them, had fellowship with them (**Gen 1:28-30; 2:16-17, 19; 3:8-9**), and placed them in an ideal environment (**Gen 2:8-15**). God specifically told Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and even warned him of the consequences if he did (**Gen 2:16-17**). Sin entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and rebelled against him by eating the fruit (**Gen 3:1-6**). **Gen 3:6** recounts how sin sprang from Adam’s and Eve’s desire: “*When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate.*” This is known as “the Fall” of mankind.⁷¹ Since Adam and Eve represented and had been placed in charge of the entire creation, the Fall affected not only them but the rest of humanity and the created order (**Gen 3:14-19; Rom 5:12-19; 8:20-22**). “Suffering and death in general is a natural consequence and just judgment of God on our sin” (Keller 2013: 115). In short, the original design for creation has been broken and is now abnormal. Despite the Fall, people still have the capacities for reason, choice, etc. that God created humanity with, although now we are predisposed and inclined to sin and rebel against God (see **Rom 3:9-18**). “The Christian doctrine of the Fall and its consequences on mankind and our world means that all of us are ultimately responsible through our sin for these [moral and natural] sorts of evils. God is not guilty, for He does not do the evil.” (Feinberg 1994: 148)

God permits and ordains sin, not for the evilness or sinfulness of the sin itself, but for “wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes” (Edwards 1984, *Freedom*, §IX: 76; see also Piper 2000: 107-31). In this regard, Randy Alcorn states that God “intended from the beginning to permit evil, then to turn evil on its head, to take what evil angels and people intended for evil and use it for good. . . . It is possible to plan for something you know is coming without forcing that thing to happen. God didn’t *force* Adam and Eve to do evil, but he did create them with freedom and permitted Satan’s presence in the garden, fully knowing they would choose evil and knowing that what he would do in his redemptive plan would serve a greater good.” (Alcorn 2009: 226-27)

Indeed, people may have one motive for what they do (e.g., to bring about evil), but God may have another motive for ordaining the very same event (e.g., to bring about good). God is able to work in and through his creatures without forcing them to act against their own will or desires (even when his own desire or motive is different from theirs) and without himself sinning (even when his creatures do, in fact, sin) (see **Prov 16:2**). The selling of Joseph into slavery (**Gen 45:4-8; 50:20; Ps 105:17**), the defeat of Judah by Israel (**2 Chron 28:1-15**), the invasion of Israel by Assyria (**2 Kgs 19:20-31; Isa 10:5-16**), the destruction of Judah by Babylon (**Ezek 11:5-12; Hab 1:5-11**), the betrayal of Jesus by Judas (**Matt 26:20-24; John 6:64**), the conspiracy by Caiaphas, the chief priests, and the Pharisees to kill Jesus (**John 11:47-53**), and the crucifixion of Jesus by Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel (**Isa 53:3-10; Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28**) are examples of this.

This is a mystery that cannot be fully understood by us, because God’s relationship—as infinite, omniscient, omnipotent creator—with finite creatures is unique (i.e., there is nothing else like it) and is not the same as one creature’s relationship with another creature (Talbot 2005: audio message).⁷² Further, God

⁷¹ The Bible clearly implies that Satan “fell” before the sin of Adam and Eve, since Satan is the one who tempted Adam and Eve and lied to them about the nature and consequences of eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil (compare **Gen 2:16-17** and **Gen 3:1-4**).

⁷² Philosophically, the term that describes the God-human relationship is “compatibilism”: God is absolutely sovereign, but His sovereignty never functions in such a way that human responsibility is minimized or eliminated (i.e., human beings are not turned into robots or puppets); likewise, human beings are morally responsible creatures who can make real choices and actions, including rebelling against the revealed will of God, and are rightly held accountable for such choices and actions, but this never functions so as to make God absolutely contingent. In other words, God is able to foreordain all things with certainty; human beings do what they want and choose to do (i.e., God does not force them to act against their desires and wills), but they do not have the *absolute* power to act contrary to God’s foreordained plan (see Carson 1994: 163-67, 201-22; Carson 1990: 199-227; Feinberg 2001: 625-796; Alcorn 2009: 258-69). As Feinberg states, “Each person, though causally determined to do what she does, still has the ability and opportunity to choose otherwise than she has. And when she chooses evil, she does so in accord with her wishes. Compatibilistic freedom is still freedom; it is not compulsion.” (Feinberg 1994: 138)

Some philosophers and theologians have proposed a defense to the problem of evil called the “free will defense,” which is based on another view of free will called libertarian or incompatibilistic free will. The leading proponent of this is Alvin Plantinga. Although the free will defense does counter the logical problem of evil, the notion of incompatibilistic free will is not biblical. Plantinga defines free will as follows: “If a person is free with respect to a given action, then he is free to perform that action and free to refrain from performing it; no antecedent conditions and/or causal laws determine that he will perform the action, or that he won’t. It is within his power, at the time in question, to take or perform the action and within his power to refrain from it. . . . Now God can create free creatures, but He can’t *cause* or *determine* them to do only

exhaustively knows the entire future—including its end and all the short-term and long-term, direct and indirect, effects of every word, deed, and other events. Everything is part of God’s overall plan. He is therefore uniquely qualified to know when to ordain or permit evil and suffering and when not to. Consequently, he alone can be good in allowing evil and suffering that a good human being (who does not have God’s exhaustive knowledge) would try to prevent.

3. Although sin and evil are part of God’s overall plan, he stands against sin and evil

Perhaps of greatest importance is that, although the existence of sin and evil are part of God’s plan, God stands *against* sin and evil. This stems from his nature as holy, just, righteous, and good. **Hab 1:13** says that God is “*too pure to approve evil, and You cannot look on wickedness with favor.*” We may think that sin is a relatively trivial matter and that the punishment and consequences (diseases, suffering, death) far outweigh the crime. “But that only underscores how far we are from God’s perspective on these things. . . . From the perspective of an absolutely perfect God, who has nothing to do with sin, it must be atrocious.” (Feinberg 1994: 331) We see this in **John 11:1-44** concerning the death of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the tomb. Death, of course, entered the world as a result of sin (**Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12-14**). **1 Cor 15:26** calls death “*the last enemy.*” When Jesus approached Lazarus’s tomb, **John 11:38** says that he was “*deeply moved*” (or “*groaning in Himself,*” NKJV). Timothy Keller points out that “these translations are too weak. The Greek word used by the gospel writer John means ‘to bellow with anger.’ It is a startling term.” (Keller 2013: 136; see Zodhiates 1993: “*embrimaomai,*” 574 [“to roar, storm with anger”]) Keller continues, “So Jesus is furious at evil, death, and suffering and, even though he is God, he is not mad at himself. This means that evil is the enemy of God’s good creation, and of God himself. And Jesus’ entire mission was to take evil on and end it.” (Keller 2013: 137) D. A. Carson adds that God “stands over against it [sin; evil; moral wickedness], so much so that the *logos* becomes the lamb of God who takes away the world’s sin, and the wrath of God is manifest against it ([John] 1.29; 3.36)” (Carson 1994: 160-61). Ronald Rittgers points out the importance of both sides of God’s relationship to suffering and evil: “A God who has no causal relationship to suffering is no God at all, certainly not the God of the Bible, who both suffers with humanity—supremely on the cross—and yet is in some sense also sovereign over suffering. Both beliefs were (and are) essential to the traditional Christian assertion that suffering ultimately has some meaning and that the triune God is able to provide deliverance from it.” (Rittgers 2012: 261)

This is probably the greatest mystery regarding evil, suffering, and death—that God chose to come into the world and personally be subject to evil, suffering, and death in the person of Jesus Christ. Not only is it a mystery but it was a radical plan to himself bear evil in order to turn evil on its head, create a new people to stand against evil, and ultimately end evil without destroying the very people who commit evil. The reason for this radical program is that “evil is so deeply rooted in the human heart that if Christ had come in power to destroy it everywhere he found it, he would have had to destroy us too” (Keller 2013: 137). Yet God in Christ “takes on the rebellion that is not his, and he makes it his, so that those whose rebellion it is will not suffer eternally because of it, but will be counted as righteous before him (2 Cor. 5:21)” (Oliphint 2006: 340). John Stott summarizes, “The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man alone.” (Stott 1986: 160)

The depth of our sin and what it cost God to forgive us (i.e., “*His only begotten Son,*” **John 3:16**) is revealed by Jesus on the cross. “In Matthew 10:28 Jesus says that no physical destruction can be compared with

what is right.” (Plantinga 1974: 29) This means that “in order for libertarian freedom to be affirmed, a full-orbed sovereignty must be denied with respect to God” (Oliphint 2006: 275). That is unbiblical, since “Scripture seems to represent God as determining the choices of human creatures, and yet holding them fully responsible for their choices, good and bad (cf. Ge 50:20; Isa 10:5-15; Lk 22:22; Ac 2:23, 4:27-28; 13:48; Php 2:12-13; 1 Ki 8:58, 61; Ex 4:21, 7:3, 10:20, 10:27). In other words, it doesn’t seem that Scripture shares the distinctive assumption of the FWD.” (Erlandson 1991: n.10) Indeed, in **Rom 9:19-21** Paul appeals to the difference between God as the potter and us as the clay to counter the problem of evil. John Frame points out, “This answer to the problem of evil turns entirely on God’s sovereignty. It is as far as could be imagined from a free will defense.” (Frame 2008: 164) Related to this is another issue: “If an omniscient God foreknows what I shall do – and surely, it seems, He must – then I cannot act other than I do and, consequently, I do not act freely [in the libertarian sense]. Hence, the insistence that God is omniscient seems logically incompatible with the free will defense against the problem of evil.” (Runzo 1981: 131) Feinberg concludes, “If compatibilism is correct, then, any theology incorporating the free will defense with its incompatibilism should be rejected” (Feinberg 1994: 65). Other problems also exist with the idea of libertarian freedom and the free will defense from a biblical standpoint, but we need not address them here (see Keller 2013: 90-93; Feinberg 1980: 149-50; Frame 2002: 135-45).

the spiritual destruction of hell, of losing the presence of God. But this is exactly what happened to Jesus on the cross—he was forsaken by the Father (Matthew 27:46). . . . When he cried out that his God had forsaken him he was experiencing hell itself. But consider—if our debt for sin is so great that it is never paid off there, but our hell stretches on for eternity, then what are we to conclude from the fact that Jesus said the payment was ‘finished’ (John 19:30) after only three hours? We learn that what he felt on the cross was far worse and deeper than all of our deserved hells put together. . . . When Jesus was cut off from God he went into the deepest pit and most powerful furnace, beyond all imagining. He experienced the full wrath of the Father. And he did it voluntarily, for us.” (Keller 2009: sec.4) In short, while atheists who raise the problem of evil may talk about the amount and intensity of pain and suffering, the suffering that Christ endured—on our behalf—is unfathomable; the worst suffering ever endured by any creature, whether human or animal, is infinitesimal compared to the suffering endured by Christ.

In light of the cross, Randy Alcorn reminds us, “One thing we must never say about God—that he doesn’t understand what it means to be abandoned utterly, suffer terribly, and die miserably. . . . Some people can’t believe God would create a world in which people would suffer so much. Isn’t it more remarkable that God would create a world in which no one would suffer more than he?” (Alcorn 2009: 214-15)⁷³ Non-Christian Albert Camus recognized the unique answer to the “problem of evil” in what Christ accomplished on the cross: “Christ came to solve two major problems, evil and death, which are precisely the problems that preoccupy the rebel. His solution consisted, first, in experiencing them. The man-god suffers, too—with patience. Evil and death can no longer be entirely imputed to Him since He suffers and dies. The night on Golgotha is so important in the history of man only because, in its shadow, the divinity abandoned its traditional privileges and drank to the last drop, despair included, the agony of death. . . . Only the sacrifice of an innocent god could justify the endless and universal torture of innocence. Only the most abject suffering by God could assuage man’s agony.” (Camus 1967: 32, 34) To put it another way, “If God is the co-sufferer of each and every victim, then quite clearly the justice of his ways with men and women cannot be in dispute: what is meted out to them is no less than what God himself has to endure” (Surin 1986: 90). Since Christ bore the ultimate evil for us and used it for our forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life, can we not trust him in the remaining evils that we experience?

“Jesus did not come to earth the first time to bring justice but rather to bear it. . . . His death and resurrection created a people in the world who now have a unique and powerful ability to diminish the evil in their own hearts as well as a mandate to oppose and endure without flagging the evil they find in their communities and society. And it was all because the Son of God entered into human suffering to turn evil on its head and eventually end evil, sin, suffering, and death itself for good.” (Keller 2013: 124) That “unique and powerful ability to diminish the evil” stems from the nature of the gospel and Christian conversion. The gospel involves a personal encounter with what Christ did for us on the cross. Sebastian Moore states that the gospel “presents us with the vision of Jesus, the man without evil in him, destroyed simply because he *is* without evil. It invites us, under the pressure of a new force called the Holy Spirit, to discover ourselves in that classic murder . . . to experience our evil as never before, at last unmasked, to experience our decent death-wish as murder, and *in* that experience to feel for the first time the love that overpowers evil.” (Moore 1981: 14) Christian conversion then includes adoption into the family of God (**John 1:12; Rom 8:14-17, 23; 9:4; Gal 3:26; 4:5-7; Eph 1:5; 2:19; 1 John 3:1**), receipt of a new heart (**Ezek 36:26; 2 Cor 3:3**), the mind of Christ (**1 Cor 2:16**), and the Spirit from Christ (**Ezek 36:26; John 14:17**) who works in us and through us (**Phil 2:12-13**) to make us more like Christ himself (**Rom 8:29; Eph 4:11-16**). This is the authentically Christian response to the “problem of evil” and the only way to eradicate evil and thus solve the “problem” itself; “human beings are able to overcome sin only if they first receive from God to undergo a decisive transformation of self: without this prevenient grace [i.e., divine grace operating on the human will prior to its turning to God] creaturely beings cannot even begin their conquest of evil” (Surin 1986: 122).

That Christ’s radical plan made a difference in people’s lives was demonstrated historically: “Early Christian speakers and writers not only argued vigorously that Christianity’s teaching made more sense of suffering, they insisted that the actual lives of Christians proved it. Cyprian recounted how, during the terrible plagues, Christians did not abandon sick loved ones nor flee the cities, as most of the pagan residents did.

⁷³ The crucifixion of Christ also perfectly illustrates that compatibilism has to be true if God is both sovereign and good and people are justly responsible for their actions. D. A. Carson explains: “If the initiative had been entirely with the conspirators, and God simply came in at the last minute to wrest triumph from the jaws of impending defeat, then the cross was not his plan, his purpose, the very reason why he sent his Son into the world—and that is unthinkable. If on the other hand God was so orchestrating events that all the human agents were nonresponsible puppets, then it is foolish to talk of conspiracy, or even of sin—in which case there is no sin for Christ to remove by his death, so why should he have to die? God was sovereignly at work in the death of Jesus; human beings were evil in putting Jesus to death, even as they accomplished the Father’s will; and God himself was entirely good.” (Carson 1990: 212)

Instead they stayed to tend the sick and faced their death with calmness. Other early Christian writings, like Ignatius of Antioch's *To the Romans* and Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians*, pointed to the poise with which Christians faced torture and death for their faith. . . . Writers such as Cyprian, Ambrose, and later Augustine made the case that Christians *suffered and died better*—and this was empirical, visible evidence that Christianity was ‘the supreme philosophy.’ The differences between the pagan and Christian population in this regard were significant enough to give real credibility to Christian claims.” (Keller 2013: 41-42) Telford Work summarizes: “Jesus’ career inaugurated a victory over natural corruption. His followers are not left wallowing in injustice until their Master’s return. His victory continues to unfold in their proleptic colony of the coming order, whose sanctification anticipates and prepares for Jesus’ return. Practices like evangelism, healing, mercy ministries, discipline and excommunication, almsgiving and redistribution of wealth, pacifism, obedience to governing authorities, and martyrdom presuppose affirmative answers to the questions posed by the problem of evil: Does God exist? Does God care about suffering? Is God going to act?” (Work 2000: 109-10)

Christ’s incarnation and crucifixion are not the end of the story of God’s dealing with the problem of sin and evil. Christ will return to the earth; at that time the dead will be raised and he will judge all evil and evildoers (**Rev 20:11-15**) and will inaugurate a new heaven and a new earth in which there will no longer be any natural evil (**Rom 8:21; 2 Pet 3:10**) or any moral evil, pain, suffering, death, or curse (**2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1, 4; 22:3**). Therefore, the issues of evil and suffering need to be viewed in the in the larger context of the total history of humanity which includes eternity, not just in the temporal context of this life on this earth. William Ferraiolo points out, “The most hideous embodied life that we can imagine is tantamount to no more than a pin prick by comparison with a postmortem eternity. No matter the severity or intensity of one’s terrestrial suffering, one’s subsequent eternal experience must, of mathematical necessity, dwarf the dissatisfaction accumulated from cradle to grave.” (Ferraiolo 2005: “Eternal Selves”) In light of this perspective, Jesus stated, “*Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*” (**Matt 10:28**). John Hick adds, “the ‘good eschaton’ will not be a reward or compensation proportioned to each individual’s trials, but an infinite good that would render worth while any finite suffering endured in the course of attaining to it” (Hick 1977: 341).

More than that, the resurrection and the new heaven and new earth mean that, not only will evil and evildoers be judged and justice done, but evil will itself be undone. In the new heaven and new earth, people will have glorious, new, resurrection bodies (**1 Cor 15:20-22, 35-54**). “The resurrection of the body means that we do not merely received a consolation for the life we have lost but a restoration of it. We not only get the bodies and lives we had but the bodies and lives we wished for but had never before received. We get a glorious, perfect, unimaginably rich life in a renewed material world.” (Keller 2013: 117) In fact, **1 Cor 15:54** says that, at Christ’s return, when all is renewed, “*then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’*” The language of “swallowing” suggests that death (and the sin and evil that occasioned it) will in some way be taken up into the new heaven and new earth and transformed, like food is swallowed and transformed to nourish the body. This suggests that “the eventual glory and joy we will know will be infinitely greater than it would have been had there been no evil. . . . If such is the case, that would truly mean the utter defeat of evil. Evil would not just be an obstacle to our beauty and bliss, but it will have only made it better. Evil would have accomplished the very opposite of what it intended.” (Ibid.) Thus, “human suffering will be transfigured by God at the consummation of history, a consummation that has already been inaugurated by the event of the cross” (Surin 1986: 135).

As with Christian conversion, the prospect of Judgment Day and the new heaven and new earth have practical importance in being able to deal with evil, injustice, and suffering now. The prospect of Judgment Day “enables us to live with both hope and grace. If we accept it, we get hope and incentive to work for justice. For no matter how little success we may have now, we know that justice *will* be established—fully and perfectly. All wrongs—what we have called moral evil—will be redressed. But it also enables us to be gracious, to forgive, and to refrain from vengefulness and violence. Why? . . . If we know that no one will get away with anything, and that all wrongs will be ultimately redressed, then we can live in peace.” (Keller 2013: 116) Miroslav Volf, a firsthand observer of the violence in his native Croatia, says, “The practice of nonviolence requires a belief in divine vengeance” (Volf 1996: 304), and “The certainty of God’s just judgment at the end of history is the presupposition for the renunciation of violence in the middle of it” (Ibid.: 302).

The promise of God’s just judgment and a new world proved to be a powerful, living hope that gave Christians the ability to endure terrible torture and suffering with grace and even joy: “We know that the early Christians took their suffering with great poise and peace and they sang hymns as the beasts were tearing them apart and they forgave the people who were killing them. And so the more they were killed, the more the Christian movement grew.” (Keller 2013: 314) Howard Thurman adds that Christianity and its hope of Judgment Day and the new heaven and new earth served “to deepen the capacity of endurance and the

absorption of suffering [of American slaves]. . . . What greater tribute could be paid to religious faith in general and to their religious faith in particular than this: It taught a people how to ride high in life, to look squarely in the face of those facts that argue most dramatically against all hope and to use those facts as raw material out of which they fashioned a hope that the environment, with all its cruelty, could not crush.” (Thurman 1998: 71) J. Christiaan Beker, who himself had been a slave of the Nazis, concludes, “A biblical theology of hope views the present power of death in terms of its empty future and in the knowledge of its, not God’s, sure defeat. It can tolerate, therefore, the agonizing presence of the power of death as ‘on the way out,’ and be confident that evil will not have the final say over God’s creation. And this confidence enables Christians to devise strategies of hope under the guidance of the Spirit, strategies which not only confront the idolatrous scheme of our world, but also seek to roll back the onslaught of the power of death in our midst.” (Beker 1987: 121-22)

In short, the gospel enables believers to answer Hume’s questions: “‘Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent.’ ‘No,’ answer the faithful, ‘he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.’ ‘Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent.’ ‘On the contrary, he is merciful *towards* the malevolent, and willing that all come to repentance.’ ‘Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?’ ‘Evil is everywhere, and nowhere more than on the cross, where God himself became its victim. He, more than anyone, bore the evil of his own justice and mercy. Yet it was on Calvary that evil was vanquished. We would have been vanquished along with it, if not for the time God has given for us (and you too?) to be numbered among the victors.’” (Work 2000: 110)

4. One can look at God’s ordaining that sin and evil occur as something like the sun’s relationship to darkness and cold

“There is a great difference between God being concerned thus, by his *permission*, in an event and act, which, in the inherent subject and agent of it, is sin, (though the event will certainly follow on his permission,) and his being concerned in it by *producing* it and exerting the act of sin; or between his being the *orderer* of its certain existence, by *not hindering* it, under certain circumstances, and his being the proper *actor* or *author* of it, by a *positive agency* or *efficiency*. . . . As there is a vast difference between the sun being the cause of the lightsomeness and warmth of the atmosphere, and the brightness of gold and diamonds, by its presence and positive influence; and its being the occasion of darkness and frost, in the night, by its motion, whereby it descends below the horizon. The motion of the sun is the occasion of the latter kind of events; but it is not the proper cause, efficient, or producer of them; though they are necessarily consequent on that motion, under such circumstances: no more is any action of the Divine Being the cause of the evil of men’s Wills. If the sun were the proper *cause* of cold and darkness, it would be the *fountain* of these things, as it is the fountain of light and heat: . . . and it might be justly inferred, that the sun itself is dark and cold, and that his beams are black and frosty. But from its being the cause no otherwise than by its departure, no such thing can be inferred, but the contrary; . . . and the more constantly and necessarily these effects are connected with and confined to its absence, the more strongly does it argue the sun to be the fountain of light and heat. So, inasmuch as sin is not the fruit of any positive agency or influence of the Most High, but, on the contrary, arises from the withholding of his action and energy, and, under certain circumstances, necessarily follows on the want of his influence; this is no argument that he is sinful, or his operation evil, or has any thing of the nature of evil; but, on the contrary, that he, and his agency, are altogether good and holy, and that he is the fountain of all holiness. It would be strange arguing, indeed, because men never commit sin, but only when God leaves them *to themselves*, and necessarily sin when he does so, that therefore their sin is not *from themselves*, but from God; and so, that God must be a sinful being: as strange as it would be to argue, because it is always dark when the sun is gone, and never dark when the sun is present, that therefore all darkness is from the sun, and that his disk and beams must needs be black.” (Edwards 1984, *Freedom*, §IX: 77)

5. Because God can look at an event through both a “narrow lens” and a “wide-angle lens” at the same time, he may decree something by his secret (or “decretive”) will which his revealed (or “preceptive”) will forbids

Deut 29:29 says, “*The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.*” While some passages state that God “*desires all men to be saved*” (**1 Tim 2:4**; see also **Ezek 18:23**; **2 Pet 3:9**), other passages affirm that *not all* people will be saved but God unconditionally elects only *some* (**Matt 11:27**; **John 1:12-13**; **6:37-39**, **44**, **65**; **10:25-29**; **Acts 13:48**; **Eph 1:4-5**, **11**; **2:8-9**). I. Howard Marshall says, “The fact that God wishes or wills that all people should be saved does not necessarily imply that all will respond to the gospel and be saved. *We must certainly distinguish between what God would like to see happen and what he actually does will to happen, and both of these things can be spoken of as God’s will.*” (Marshall 1989: 56, *emph. added*) John Piper adds,

“Affirming the will of God to save *all*, while also affirming the unconditional election of *some*, implies that there are at least ‘two wills’ in God, or two ways of willing. It implies that God decrees one state of affairs while also willing and teaching that a different state of affairs should come to pass. This distinction in the way God wills has been expressed in various ways throughout the centuries. It is not a new contrivance. For example, theologians have spoken of sovereign will and moral will, efficient will and permissive will, secret will and revealed will, will of decree and will of command, decretive will and preceptive will.” (Piper 2000: 109)

Piper explains one aspect of this: “God has the capacity to look at the world through two lenses. He can look through a narrow lens or through a wide-angle lens. When God looks at a painful or wicked event through his narrow lens, he sees the tragedy or the sin for what it is in itself and he is angered and grieved. ‘I do not delight in the death of anyone, says the Lord God’ (Ezek. 18:32). But when God looks at a painful or wicked event through his wide-angle lens, he sees the tragedy or the sin in relation to everything leading up to it and everything flowing from it. He sees it in all the connections and effects that form a pattern or mosaic stretching into eternity. This mosaic, with all its (good and evil) parts he does delight in (Ps. 115:3).” (Piper 2000: 126)

Jonathan Edwards elaborates this and adds the important corollary that, because God can see the same thing through both the “narrow lens” and the “wide-angle lens,” he may forbid and punish the “evil *as evil*” that people do even though he had ordained the event for his own good reasons. “There is no inconsistency in supposing, that God may hate a thing as it is in itself, and considered simply as evil, and yet that it may be his Will it should come to pass, considering all consequences. . . . Men do *will* sin as sin, and so are the authors and actors of it: they love it as sin, and for evil ends and purposes. God does not will sin as sin, or for the sake of any thing evil; though it be his pleasure so to order things, that, he permitting, sin will come to pass, for the sake of the great good that by his disposal shall be the consequence. His willing to order things so that evil should come to pass, for the sake of the contrary good, is no argument that he does not hate evil, as evil: and if so, then it is no reason why he may not reasonably forbid evil as evil, and punish it as such.” (Edwards 1984, *Freedom*, §IX: 78-79; see also Piper 2000: 107-31; Edwards 1986, *Remarks*, ch. 3: 525-43) Examples of this include God’s using Assyria to punish Israel for its sin but then punishing Assyria for its arrogance (**Isa 10:5-19**); raising up Babylon to destroy Israel but then holding Babylon guilty for its godlessness (**Hab 1:5-11**); and ordaining the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ but then pronouncing woe on the man who betrayed him (**Matt 26:24; Mark 14:21; Luke 22:22**). Timothy Keller points out, “It is a remarkable balance. On the one hand, evil is taken seriously as a reality. And yet there is an assurance that in the end, it can never triumph.” (Keller 2013: 141)

A second important corollary is that God’s secret or unrevealed decrees and the existence of sin and evil in the world do not in any way counteract God’s revealed will concerning how we should act. God’s “two wills” therefore counteract the idea of fatalism. Randy Alcorn states, “If God permits racism, slavery, and child sex trafficking, then why should we battle them? Here’s why: the Bible speaks much about God’s sovereignty, yet constantly calls upon people to take action, and to speak up for and help the poor and needy (see, for example, Proverbs 31:8-9)—this is the polar opposite of fatalism.” (Alcorn 2009: 263) In sum, for his own good reasons which in large part he has *not revealed* to us God has permitted and ordained that sin and evil will exist in this world until Christ returns to earth, but at the same time he *has revealed* to us “*what is good*” and what he requires of us: “*to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God*” (**Mic 6:8**; see also, e.g., **Deut 10:12-13; Matt 5:38-48; 6:14-15; 18:21-35; 22:36-40; 25:31-46; Mark 9:41-42; Luke 6:27-38; 12:33; Eph 4:25-5:21; 1 Tim 6:17-19; Jas 1:27**).

D. Possible reasons why God has ordained the existence of sin and evil

1. Because God is the greatest good that could possibly be, sin and evil are necessary in order that all aspects of God’s nature and character are properly revealed

“God is utterly unique. He is the only being in the universe worthy of worship.” (Piper 2010: 51) He is the source of all perfections: love, goodness, truth, holiness, righteousness, justice, mercy, grace, etc. Consequently, his glory is greater than anything (see, e.g., **Isa 43:6-7; Hab 2:14; John 7:18; 14:13; Rom 11:36; 15:8-9; 9:22-23; 1 Cor 10:31; 1 Pet 4:11; Rev 21:23**). The “problem of evil” itself (along with many theodicies) is based on the implicit premise that humanity—our well-being and happiness—is central; that God created the world to bring about the best state possible for humanity. That assumption is incorrect. God did not create this world primarily for our benefit. Rather, the Bible states that “*by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, . . . all things have been created through Him and for Him*” (**Col 1:16**). Ultimately, everything that God has ordained—including sin and evil—is part of a great plan, designed before the foundation of the world, to manifest the glory of God, the glory of Christ, and the glory of the grace of God in Christ (see, e.g., **Ps 24:1-10; 148:1-13; John 11:1-4; 13:31-32; 17:1-5, 22-24; Rom 5:12-21; 8:28-29; 9:19-23; 11:32-36; Eph 1:3-6; Phil 2:6-11; 2 Tim 1:8-9; Heb 2:9-10; Rev 13:8; 15:3**). Charles Hodge

states, “The knowledge of God is eternal life. It is for creatures the highest good. And the promotion of that knowledge, the manifestation of the manifold perfections of the infinite God, is the highest end of all his works. . . . The glory of God being the great end of all things, we are not obliged to assume that this is the best possible world for the production of happiness, or even for securing the greatest degree of holiness among rational creatures. It is wisely adapted for the end for which it was designed, namely, the manifestation of the manifold perfections of God.” (Hodge 1981: 435-36; see also Erlandson 1991: “A Biblical Perspective” [“God has ordained evil in order to display to all creation, and in particular to humanity, His glory in a way otherwise impossible. Namely, He has ordained man’s fall and the resulting evils to demonstrate His righteousness, justice, grace, and mercy as fully as possible.”])

A number of passages give examples of God’s ordaining sin and evil in order to demonstrate the different facets of his character:

- *Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.” (John 9:3)*
- *Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” (John 9:39)*
- *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.” (Rom 9:17)*
- *What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.” (Rom 9:22-23)*
- *He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace. (Eph 1:5-6a)*
- *In Him we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in the Christ would be to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:11-12)*
- *But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (Gal 3:22)*
- *You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. (Jas 5:11)*

In commenting on the Romans verses, Hodge states, “The punishment of the wicked is not an arbitrary act, having no object but to make them miserable; it is designed to manifest the displeasure of God against sin, and to make known his true character. On the other hand, the salvation of the righteous is designed to display the riches of his grace.” (Hodge 1886: 319)

Jonathan Edwards discusses *why* the existence of sin and evil are necessary for all aspects of God’s full nature to be manifest: “It is a proper and excellent thing for infinite glory to shine forth; and for the same reason, it is proper that the shining forth of God’s glory should be complete; that is, that all parts of his glory should shine forth, that every beauty should be proportionably effulgent [brilliant; radiant; splendid], that the beholder may have a proper notion of God. It is not proper that one glory should be exceedingly manifested, and another not at all. . . . For the same reason it is not proper that one should be manifested exceedingly, and another but very little. . . . Thus it is necessary, that God’s awful majesty, his authority and dreadful greatness, justice, and holiness, should be manifested. But this could not be, unless sin and punishment had been decreed. . . . If it were not right that God should decree and permit and punish sin, there could be no manifestation of God’s holiness in hatred of sin, or in showing any preference, in his providence, of godliness before it. There would be no manifestation of God’s grace or true goodness, if there was no sin to be pardoned, no misery to be saved from. . . . And as it is necessary that there should be evil, because the display of the glory of God could not but be imperfect and incomplete without it, so evil is necessary, in order to the highest happiness of the creature, and the completeness of that communication of God, for which he made the world; because the creature’s happiness consists in the knowledge of God, and sense of his love. And if the knowledge of him be imperfect, the happiness of the creature must be proportionably imperfect.” (Edwards 1986, *Remarks*, ch. 3: 528; see also Piper 1998: “2.2 Why Does God Ordain”; Erlandson 1991: “A Biblical Perspective” [“Righteousness and justice are more fully displayed when not only is good rewarded but evil punished. Mercy and grace are more perfectly manifested when the recipients are utterly unworthy. . . . Grace and mercy are also more wondrously displayed in a world in which man’s fall resulted in spiritual *death*, not partial impairment. A spiritually *sick* person might claim a hand in restoring himself to God’s favor. Only a once-dead person who has been restored to divine favor will see the *extent* of Gods mercy.”]; Edwards 1984, *The End*: 94-121; Hodge 1981: 435 [“Sin, therefore, according to the Scriptures, is permitted, that the justice of God may be known in its punishment, and his grace in its forgiveness. And the universe, without the knowledge of these attributes, would be like the earth without

the light of the sun.”]; Piper 2003: 17-50; Piper 2010: 39-54)

It also should be remembered that the drama of existence—including the role of sin and evil, suffering and death—is being enacted on a stage far greater than what we can perceive or even imagine. God’s glory and nature are demonstrated not just to people here on earth but throughout the universe, including the redeemed in heaven and the angels (see **2 Kgs 6:15-17; Ps 19:1; Matt 18:10; Luke 2:13-14; 15:7, 10; 1 Cor 4:9; Eph 3:8-10; Col 2:15; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 1:12; Heb 12:1; Rev 1:1; 15:3-4; 17:1; 21:9**). And, as discussed earlier, these matters all have eternal, not merely temporal, implications.

Finally, we earlier discussed the importance of the incarnation and the atonement for sin that Christ accomplished on the cross. The centrality of this is discussed throughout the NT:

- *Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom 8:29)*
- *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and made Him head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Eph 1:18-23)*
- *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:8-11)*
- *He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. (Col 1:18)*

W. Gary Crampton points out a probably little-thought of implication of this, “It is logically consistent that the Fall of mankind had to occur if God is to be ultimately glorified through the glorification of His Son. That is, God’s foreordination of the Fall, and His providentially bringing it to pass, are necessary. He has purposed it for His own glory. . . . If Adam had successfully passed his probation in the Garden . . . he would have been confirmed by God in positive righteousness. . . . Adam’s righteousness, then, would have been imputed to all of his descendants (that is, the entire human race). And all mankind would have gratefully looked to him, not Christ, as Savior. For all eternity, God would then share His glory with His creature: Adam. Ironically, the obedience of Adam would have led to idolatry. Therefore, that alternative would be logically impossible. Only the actual world, in which the fall of man occurred, is logically possible and redounds to the glory of God alone. Had Adam obeyed, Jesus Christ would have been denied His role as ‘the first-born among many brothers’ and the Lord of His church. And the Father would not receive the glory for His work through the Son.” (Crampton 1999: 5-6)

2. God cannot eliminate evil without at the same time eliminating human beings and the world as we know it

John Feinberg argues that, in his goodness and wisdom God chose to create a world populated by human beings. There are several characteristics that define what it means to be human. These characteristics make humans different from superhuman or subhuman beings. Although they vary from individual to individual, humans have the ability to reason, emotions, a will, desires, intentions (formed on the basis of their desires), and the capacity for bodily movement. Further, God “intended for us to use these capacities to live and function in a world that is suited to beings such as we are. Hence, he created our world, which is run according to natural laws [see, e.g., **Job 38:25-27; Matt 5:45**]. . . . Finally, God intended to make beings who are finite both metaphysically and morally (as to the moral aspect, our finitude doesn’t necessitate doing evil, but only that we do not have God’s infinite moral perfection). In sum, God intended to create non-glorified human beings, not subhuman or superhuman beings or even gods.” (Feinberg 2001: 788)

God cannot actualize contradictions (e.g., make a square circle or create a rock too heavy for him to lift). Consequently, God cannot eliminate moral evil because “if God did what is necessary to rid our world of moral evil, he would either contradict his intentions to create human beings and the world as he has; cause us to wonder if he has one or more of the attributes ascribed to him; and/or do something we would not expect or desire him to do, because it would produce greater evil than there already is.” (Ibid.: 789) Feinberg then details the many and constant ways in which God would have to constrain people’s reason, emotions, will, desires or

the objects of desire, intentions, and bodily movements, and/or interfere with the operation of natural laws, to prevent sin and evil from occurring (Ibid.: 789-95). Indeed, to bring even one person to the point of always and only freely choosing to do good would require significantly rearranging the lives of a host of others (Ibid.: 790). In short, there would no longer be a world as we know it or human beings as we know them. Further, “If there were not a stable, predictable natural order, deliberation and action would be tremendously hampered and possibly eliminated. In addition, God wants individuals to interact with one another, but such a social structure demands a natural order as the neutral context of common life.” (Feinberg 1994: 265) Peter van Inwagen observes that, for God to miraculously or otherwise prevent cases of natural or moral evil would result in a world that is massively irregular. “And, of course, there is no sharp cut-off point between a world that is massively irregular and a world that is not. . . . There is, therefore, no minimum number of cases of intense suffering that God could allow without forfeiting the good of a world that is not massively irregular.” (van Inwagen 1996: 173n.11) Again, to interfere with or change the natural laws and processes of the world would necessitate a different sort of world and thereby different sorts of creatures than human beings to populate that world.

Feinberg concludes, “Has God done something wrong in creating human beings? Not at all when we consider the great value man is and the great worth God places upon us. As an empirical fact, we can say that moral evil has come as a concomitant of a world populated by human beings. Still, it is one of those good possible worlds God could have created. God is a good God. Our world with human beings demonstrates His goodness.” (Ibid.: 795) The point here is not that God uses evil for good (as in **Rom 8:28**) but that the existence of human beings in a world like this are “a value of the first order,” i.e., a good in-an-of-itself, not a good that results from a pre-existing evil. Human beings are an antecedent good that is worth having despite the sin and evil we cause.

3. All the evil that God allows and ordains ultimately serves and brings about the greater good of creation itself

Paul said, “*We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose*” (**Rom 8:28**). One of the reasons why God ordains evil is that *sometimes* evil brings about a greater good for individuals—either the sufferers or others—in *this present age*. Feinberg points out, “In any given case, God may intend to accomplish a whole series of things, rather than just one. And not just in the life of the sufferer alone. In allowing affliction, God may intend to accomplish something in the sufferer’s life, something in the lives of those who know the sufferer, and something in regard to angelic and demonic forces.” (Feinberg 1994: 339-40) There are an almost infinite number of examples of this. Here are just a few examples:

- “The amputation of a limb is an evil; but if necessary to save life, it is a good. Wars are dreadful evils, yet the world is indebted to wars for the preservation of civil and religious liberty, for which they are a small price. . . . Thus, if sin be the necessary means of the greatest good, it ceases to be an evil, on the whole, and it is perfectly consistent with the benevolence of God to permit its occurrence.” (Hodge 1981: 432-33)
- Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers but later told them, “*you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive*” (**Gen 50:20**).
- In the Bible, God uses evil to test his servants (**Job**; **1 Pet 1:7**; **Jas 1:3**); to discipline them (**1 Cor 11:31-32**; **Heb 12:4-11**); to preserve their lives (**Gen 50:20**); to teach them patience and perseverance, develop character, and instill hope (**Rom 5:3-5**; **Jas 1:2-4**); to redirect their attention to what is most important (**Psalms 37**); to deepen their faith in Christ (**Phil 3:7-11**); to enable them to comfort others (**2 Cor 1:3-7**); to enable them to bear powerful witness to the truth (**Acts 7**); to give them greater joy when suffering is replaced by glory (**1 Pet 4:13**); to judge the wicked in history (**Deut 28:15-68**) and in the life to come (**Matt 25:41-46**); to bring reward to persecuted believers (**Matt 5:10-12**); and to display the work of God (**Exod 9:16**; **John 9:3**; **Rom 9:17**).
- Further, “God mercifully *withholds* the eschatological violence [i.e., the judgment] until every chance at repentance and forgiveness has passed. And this causes frustration, suffering, and even death for innocent victims who must wait. To the martyrs who cry, ‘Sovereign Lord, how long?’ God answers: ‘A little longer! . . . until the number of your fellow servants and their brothers and sisters should be complete, who are to be killed as you yourselves have been’ (Rev. 6:10-11). . . . And God’s mercy is such that apparently even two thousand years’ worth of martyrs – and even Crusades and Holocausts! – are not enough to exhaust it. The result of God’s extraordinary mercy in withholding judgment is, of course, *the problem of evil*. Why does God wait while people wound and annihilate other people? Who could have thought he does it out of love? But God replies: ‘Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?’ (Jon.

4:11)” (Work 2000: 107; see also **Rom 2:4; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9; Rev 2:21**)

- Timothy Keller lists four categories of how God uses suffering: “First, suffering transforms our attitude toward ourselves. It humbles us and removes unrealistic self-regard and pride. . . . Suffering also leads us to examine ourselves and see weaknesses, because it brings out the worst in us. . . . Second, suffering will profoundly change our relationship to the good things in our lives. We will see that some things have become too important to us. . . . Third, and most of all, suffering can strengthen our relationship to God as nothing else can [see **2 Cor 4:7-18**]. C. S. Lewis’s famous dictum is true, that in prosperity God whispers to us but in adversity he shouts to us. . . . Finally, suffering is almost a prerequisite if we are going to be of much use to other people, especially when they go through their own trials. Adversity makes us far more compassionate than we would have been otherwise [see **2 Cor 1:3-5**].” (Keller 2013: 190-92)
- John Feinberg discusses ten categories of things God may be accomplishing through suffering: “First, God may allow affliction for the same end as in the case recorded in John 9:1-3. In that situation, affliction *provided an opportunity for God to manifest His power*. . . . Second, God may use affliction to *remove a cause for boasting*. . . . [Third,] God allowed Job’s afflictions at least in part to *demonstrate true or genuine faith to Satan*. . . . Fourth, at times God uses affliction as an opportunity to *demonstrate to believers and nonbelievers the body-of-Christ concept*. . . . [Fifth,] Scripture teaches a number of ways in which the affliction of the righteous *promote their sanctification*. . . . [Sixth,] sometimes God permits affliction into the life of the righteous because of the *ministry that is possible in suffering*. . . . [Seventh,] God also uses affliction to *prepare us for further trials*. . . . An eighth broad use of suffering in the life of the righteous is to *prepare them for judgment of their works for rewards* [see **1 Pet 1:7**]. . . . Ninth, God may use the afflictions of the righteous as a *basis for ultimately exalting them* [see **2 Cor 4:17**]. . . . Finally, God may use affliction as a *means to take a believer to be with Himself*.” (Feinberg 1994: 340-46)
- Richard Swinburne states, “For acts of courage, compassion, etc., to be acts open to men to perform, there have to be various evils. Evils give men the opportunity to perform those acts which show men at their best. A world without evils would be a world in which men could show no forgiveness, no compassion, no self-sacrifice. And men without that opportunity are deprived of the opportunity to show themselves at their noblest.” (Swinburne 1979: 214-15)
- John Hick likens the world to a “vale of soul-making.” He says, “If, then, God’s aim in making the world is ‘the bringing of many sons to glory’ [**Heb 2:10**], that aim will naturally determine the kind of world he has created. . . . Certainly we seek pleasure for our children; but we do not desire for them unalloyed pleasure at the expense of their growth in such even greater values as moral integrity, unselfishness, compassion, courage, humour, reverence for the truth, and perhaps above all the capacity for love. We do not act on the premise that pleasure is the supreme end of life. . . . Rather, this world must be a place of soul-making.” (Hick 1977: 253, 256, 258, 259) He then quotes the poet John Keats who coined the phrase “vale of soul-making” and said, “Do you not see how necessary a World of pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul?” (Ibid.: 259n.1)
- Some people reject God as a result of affliction and suffering. However, “Just as many people *find* God through affliction and suffering. They find that adversity moves them toward God rather than away. Troubled times awaken them out of their haunted sleep of spiritual self-sufficiency into a serious search for the divine. . . . In the darkness we have a choice that is not really there in better times. We can choose to serve God just because he is God.” (Keller 2013: 5, 248) Elie Wiesel, himself a survivor of Nazi extermination camps, captures the different responses people may have to similar afflictions: “‘And Auschwitz? What do you make of Auschwitz?’ . . . Gregor was angry. ‘After what happened to us, how can you believe in God?’ With an understanding smile on his lips the Rebbe answered, ‘How can you *not* believe in God after what has happened?’” (Wiesel 1966: 192)

The great good that God is working even through evil is beginning now and applies at the individual level. Thus, God is with us in our suffering now (see, e.g., **Deut 31:6, 8; Ps 22:24; 23:4; 34:18; 94:14; Isa 41:10, 17; 43:2; 53:4; 63:9; John 14:16-20; Rom 8:35-39; 2 Cor 1:3-7; 4:8-10; 12:7-10; Phil 4:12-13; Heb 13:5; 1 Pet 4:12-19**). He knows what we are going through and enables us to withstand and even be refined by our suffering (see, e.g., **Ps 119:71; Matt 5:10-12; Acts 5:40-42; 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 1:3-4; 4:16-17; Phil 3:10; 4:6-7; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-7; 2:19-21; 5:10**). Christ so identifies with his people that he senses our sufferings as his own (**Acts 9:4-5**). In fact, God takes our grief and mourning and turns it into joy (**Ps 30:11; Jer 31:13; John 16:20**). But growth and transformation through the fire of affliction are not automatic. “We must recognize, depend on, speak with, and believe in God while in the fire. God himself says in Isaiah 43 that he will be *with* us, walking beside us in the fire. Knowing him personally while in our affliction is the key to becoming stronger rather than weaker in it.” (Keller 2013: 229)

The Bible does *not promise* that every sin and evil will result in some greater good or “happy ending” *in*

this life. Timothy Keller says, “Unlike believers in karma, Christians believe that suffering is often unjust and disproportionate. Life is simply not fair. People who live well often do not do well. . . . Suffering is so often random and horrific, and it comes upon people who seem to have done nothing to warrant it.” (Ibid.: 29, 94). The problem with only looking to this life for the goodness, justice, and recompense we long for is that our perspective is too limited—because our lives do not end when we die. Instead, the Bible promises us new, resurrected bodies living on a new, redeemed earth, all guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ (**1 Cor 15:20-26, 50-58**). “*That* is our future, and that mean[s] that . . . our personalities will be sustained, beautified, and perfected after death. And so our ultimate future is one of perfect, unhindered love—love with God and others.” (Ibid.: 42-43) Then and for all eternity we will see that evil was not an obstacle to our everlasting bliss, “but it will only have made it better. Evil would have accomplished the very opposite of what it intended.” (Ibid.: 117) Ironically, all of this is brought about by the greatest sin ever committed: the betrayal and crucifixion of the only perfect, holy, sinless person who ever lived—Jesus Christ; yet it was only by his submitting to this gross sin and evil that Christ was able to bear our sins and the punishment for those sins that we deserved in order to destroy the power of sin and evil, reconcile mankind to God, and transform our lives.

All of the suffering of this world cannot compare to the great, everlasting glory that God will bring about in the consummation (**Rom 8:18-21; 2 Cor 4:16-18; Rev 21:1-4**). “When we live peacefully on the New Earth, where joy will permeate the very air we breathe, we will look back at this present world and affirm not by faith but by sight that all the evil and suffering was worth it—and that Christ’s incarnation and redemption have made the universe eternally better” (Alcorn 2009: 195; see also Willard 2002: n.p.). Indeed, for the redeemed, the eternal and therefore infinite experience of the new heaven and new earth not only will provide “a new perspective on the evaluation of life in the body” but will “dwarf the entirety of one’s earthly sorrows—however great they may have seemed during the embodied lifetime” (Ferraiolo 2005: “Time Heals All Wounds”). In the consummation, God’s justice, grace, mercy, and righteousness will be plain to everyone; no one will accuse him of wrongdoing. Rather, “*ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED*” (**Rev 15:4**).

We began this section with **Rom 8:28**, and that verse contains a key word which we need to bear in mind. That word is “together.” **Rom 8:28** is saying that “all things—even bad ones—will ultimately *together* be overruled by God in such a way that the intended evil will, in the end, only accomplish the opposite of its designs—a greater good and glory than would otherwise have come to pass. Only God now has that eternal perspective and vantage point from which he can see all things working together for our good and for his glory—but eventually we will occupy that place and will see it too.” (Keller 2013: 301-302)

E. God’s sovereignty, humanity’s responsibility, and the existence of sin and evil: conclusion

People legitimately raise serious questions in the face of evil, particularly when evil they have not directly caused happens to them or to their loved ones and friends.⁷⁴ God has good and sufficient reasons for everything he has ordained and allows—including all the sin and evil—but he has not revealed all of those reasons to us and often does not reveal why any specific evil has occurred. **Deut 29:29** and the sufferings of Job demonstrate this. Feinberg observes, “From our perspective, there may appear to be no connection of certain evils to anything of value, but that does not necessarily prove there is none. Just as the child whose father won’t let him stay up for [a] party does not have enough information to judge whether his father’s refusal means his father does not love him, so we too are not in a position of knowing enough to make a judgment about whether there is just too much evil. . . . In the case of the child who wants to stay up for parties, we cannot assume that every time his father refuses, he does so for the same reason. One time he may refuse because the child has a cold, another time some guest may not want the child there, and another time he may refuse because the next morning the family must go somewhere and he wants his son have a good night’s sleep. Similarly . . . we should not assume for two similar evils that God’s purpose in allowing them is identical. They may serve different purposes.” (Feinberg 1994: 308-309)

While people rightly are troubled by the existence and pervasiveness of sin and evil in the world, so is God. There is a certain disingenuousness to the “problem of evil.” R. Maurice Boyd observes, “It is within our power to relieve many of the troubles we complain about, yet we choose not to. It is not God who does nothing, but we ourselves. God has placed in our own hands the means to assuage many of the evils we deplore. Yet for all the fierceness of our moral indignation, we are often unwilling to devote our time, or thought, or energy, or money to relieving the afflictions of others. It is easier to blame God for the distress of the world than to become

⁷⁴ Feinberg notes, “There is no such thing as *the* problem of evil. At best, the expression ‘the problem of evil’ stands for a series of different problems that confront theological systems.” (Feinberg 1994: 14) The issues we deal with when bad things happen to us, our loved ones, and our friends, are what Feinberg calls the “religious problem of evil.”

an instrument of His goodness.” (Boyd 1999: 107) On the other hand, God will justly judge the perpetrators of sin and evil who, in fact, already stand condemned and under God’s judgment (**Gen 18:25; Num 14:18; Ps 7:8-16; John 3:18; 16:11; Acts 10:42; Rom 2:12-16**). All the accounts will be balanced, and justice and righteousness will prevail. As Timothy Keller stated earlier, knowing that God’s justice will prevail “enables us to live with both hope and grace. If we accept it, we get hope and incentive to work for justice. For no matter how little success we may have now, we know that justice *will* be established—fully and perfectly. All wrongs—what we have called moral evil—will be redressed. But it also enables us to be gracious, to forgive, and to refrain from vengefulness and violence.” (Keller 2013: 116)

But God has done more than just assure us that he will justly judge humanity for the sins, wrongs, and evils they have committed: God himself came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ and was subject to sin and evil; he bore our sin and paid the price for our sin so that all those who turn to him will receive life instead of eternal death at the judgment. In light of all of this, Russian Christian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky concluded, “I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for. I believe that all the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will vanish like a mirage, like the despicable fabrication of the impotent and infinitely small Euclidean mind of man. I believe that at the world’s end, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, of all the blood that has been shed. I believe that it will not only be possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened.” (Dostoevsky 1957: 217)

APPENDIX 1—BRIEF SUMMARIES OF BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

http://www.bible-history.com/resource/r_books.htm

Books of the Bible with a Brief Outline, by Rusty Russell

Old Testament Books - 39 books total

Pentateuch - 5 books

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Historical Books - 12 books

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First Samuel, Second Samuel, First Kings, Second Kings, First Chronicles, Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Poetical - 5 books

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Prophetical - 17 books

Major Prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Minor Prophets - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Pentateuch - 5 books

1. **Genesis** - *The Founding of the Hebrew Nation*. Creation, the Fall, the Flood, Spread of the nations, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Enslavement in Egypt.
2. **Exodus** - *The Covenant with the Hebrew Nation*. 400 years and still enslaved, Moses, 10 plagues, Passover, Exodus from Egypt, Crossing of the Red Sea, Mt. Sinai and the Moral, Civil and Ceremonial Laws.
3. **Leviticus** - *The Laws of the Hebrew Nation*. Instructions on sacrificial system and the priesthood. Instructions on moral purity.
4. **Numbers** - *The Journey to the Promised Land*. Still at Mt. Sinai, People make the Golden Calf, Their punishment, 40 years of wandering begins.
5. **Deuteronomy** - *Reminders of the Covenant*. Moses' discourses on God's Acts for Israel the Decalogue, the Ceremonial, Civil, and Moral Laws, and the Ratification of the Covenant.

Historical Books - 12 books

1. **Joshua** - *The Conquest of Canaan*. First half of Joshua describes the 7 year conquest of the Land of Promise. The last half deals with allotting portions of the land to the 12 tribes.
2. **Judges** - *The First 300 Years in the Land*. Time of the Judges. Many were quite bad. The Israelites did not drive out all the inhabitants of Canaan and began to take part in their idolatry. 7 cycles of foreign oppression, repentance, and deliverance. In the end, the people failed to learn their lesson.
3. **Ruth** - *Beginning of the Messianic Family of David*. Boaz the Kinsman redeemer, redeeming Ruth, a Moabitess. Speaks of righteousness, love, and faithfulness to the Lord.

The next 6 books trace the time from Samuel to the Captivity

4. **First Samuel** - *Organization of the Kingdom*. Samuel carries them from Judges to King Saul.
5. **Second Samuel** - *Reign of David*. David as King, adultery, and murder.
6. **First Kings** - *Division of the Kingdom*. Solomon, Israel becomes powerful and famous. Solomon dies in 931 BC, then the division of the tribes: 10 to the north (Israel) and 2 to the south (Judah).
7. **Second Kings** - *History of the Divided Kingdom*. All 19 kings of Israel were bad; therefore, they were taken captive to Assyria (722 BC). In Judah, 8 of 20 rulers were seeking the Lord, the rest were into idolatry. The Babylonian Captivity (586 BC)
8. **First Chronicles** - *The reign of King David*. A recounting of the history of Israel to the time of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.
9. **Second Chronicles** - *History of the Southern Kingdom of Judah*. A Recounting of the life of Solomon, the building of the Temple and of Judah's history.

The next 3 books deal with Israel's Restoration

10. **Ezra** - *Return From the Captivity*. Cyrus allowed most of the Jews to return to their land of Israel. Zerubbabel led the people (539 BC). Ezra returned later with more Jews (458 BC). Built the second Temple.
11. **Nehemiah** - *Rebuilding Jerusalem*. Building the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah got permission from Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, to rebuild the walls (444 BC). Great revival in the land.
12. **Esther** - *Deliverance From Extermination*. History from chapters 6 and 7 of Ezra. Artaxerxes, Queen Esther, Mordecai and Haman. Plot to kill the Jewish people.

Poetical - 5 books

1. **Job** - *The Problem of Evil and Suffering*. A righteous man tested by God. Deals with God's sovereignty.
2. **Psalms** - *National Hymnbook of Israel*. The Psalms of David, imperfect man yet had a heart for God. Consists of 5 divisions. Worship in song. Large variety of topics.
3. **Proverbs** - *The Wisdom of Solomon*. Practical Wisdom in everyday affairs.
4. **Ecclesiastes** - *Vanity of Earthly Things*. All is vanity. The wisdom of man is futility.
5. **Song of Solomon** - *The Glorification of Wedded Love*. A song between Solomon and his Shulammitte bride displaying the love between a man and a woman.

Prophetical – 17 books

Major Prophets - 5 books

1. **Isaiah** - *The Messianic Prophet*. Looks at the sin of Judah and proclaims God's judgment. Hezekiah. The Coming One, restoration and blessing.
2. **Jeremiah** - *A Final Call for Israel's Repentance*. Called by God to plead with the people to repent and to proclaim the news of judgment to Judah, which came. God's plan for a New Covenant built upon better promises.
3. **Lamentations** - *A Dirge over the Desolation of Jerusalem*. 5 lament poems. Description of defeat and fall of Jerusalem.
4. **Ezekiel** – “*And They Shall Know That I AM The Lord.*” He ministered to the Jews in Captivity in Babylon. Description of the end of times.
5. **Daniel** - *The Empire Predicting Prophet in Babylon*. Many visions of the future predicting beforehand the empires that would govern the world, including Babylon, then Persia, then Greece, then Rome, and finally a latter day Roman Empire.

Minor Prophets - 12 Books

1. **Hosea** - *The Apostasy of Israel*. Story of Hosea and his unfaithful wife, Gomer. Represents God's love and faithfulness and Israel's spiritual adultery. Israel will be judged and restored.
2. **Joel** - *Prediction of the Holy Spirit Age*. Proclaims a terrifying future using the imagery of locusts. Judgment will come but blessing will follow.
3. **Amos** - *The Ultimate Rule of David (Type of Messiah)*. He warned Israel of its coming judgment. Israel rejects God's warning.
4. **Obadiah** - *The Destruction of Edom*. A proclamation against Edom a neighboring nation of Israel that gloated over Jerusalem's judgments. Prophecy of their utter destruction.
5. **Jonah** - *An Errand of Mercy to Nineveh*. Jonah proclaims a coming judgment upon Nineveh. But they repented and judgment was spared.
6. **Micah** - *Messiah will be born in Bethlehem (House of Bread)*. Description of the complete moral decay in all levels of Israel. God will judge but will forgive and restore. Bethlehem will be the birthplace of the Messiah.
7. **Nahum** - *The destruction of Nineveh*. Nineveh has gone into apostasy (approx.. 125 years after Jonah) and will be destroyed. All came true.
8. **Habakkuk** - *The Just Shall Live By Faith*. Near the end of the kingdom of Judah, Habakkuk asks God why He is not dealing with Judah's sins. God says He will use the Babylonians. Habakkuk asks how God can use a nation that is even

worse than Judah.

9. **Zephaniah** - *The Coming of a Pure Language*. The theme is developed of the Day of the Lord and His judgment with a coming blessing. Judah will not repent, except for a remnant, who will be restored.

10. **Haggai** - *The Rebuilding of the Temple*. The people failed to put God first, by building their houses before they finished God's temple. Therefore, they had no prosperity.

11. **Zechariah** - *Encouragement to rebuild the Temple*. Zechariah encourages the Jews to complete the temple. Many messianic prophecies.

12. **Malachi** - *Final Message to a Disobedient People*. God's people are lax in their duty to God. Growing distant from God. Moral compromise. Proclamation of coming judgment.

New Testament Books - 27 books total

Historical Books - 5 Books

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

Pauline Epistles - 13 Books

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

Non-Pauline Epistles - 9 Books

Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation

Historical Books - 5 Books

1. **Matthew** - *Jesus the King (Lion)*. Presents Jesus as the Messiah. Genealogy of Jesus through Joseph from the royal line of David. Fulfillment of O.T. prophecy.
2. **Mark** - *Jesus the Suffering Servant for Man (Ox)*. Presents Jesus as the Servant. 1/3 of the gospel deals with the last week of His life.
3. **Luke** - *Jesus the Perfect Human (Man)*. Presents Jesus as the Son of Man to seek and save the lost. Genealogy of Jesus through Mary tracing back to Adam (all mankind). Largest of the gospels. The Son of Man (man's nature).
4. **John** - *Jesus the God-man who came from Above (Eagle)*. Presents Jesus as God incarnate (God in flesh), the Christ, working the miracles and Words of God so that you might believe. The Son of God (God's nature).
5. **Acts** - *The Formation of the Church*. Historical account from Jesus' ascension to travels of Paul in his missionary Church planting journeys.

Pauline Epistles - 13 Books

1. **Romans** - *Nature of Christ's Work*. A systematic examination of justification, sanctification, and glorification. Examines God's plan for the Jews and the Gentiles.
2. **1 Corinthians** - *Various Church Disorders*. This letter deals with factions and corrections due to immorality, lawsuits, and abuse of the Lord's Supper. Also mentions idols, marriage, and the resurrection.
3. **2 Corinthians** - *Paul's Vindication of His Apostleship*. Paul's defense of his apostolic position.
4. **Galatians** - *By Grace, Never by Law*. Paul refutes the errors of legalism and examines the proper place of grace in the Christian's life.
5. **Ephesians** - *The Unity of the Church*. The believer's position in Christ and information on Spiritual warfare.
6. **Philippians** - *A Missionary Epistle*. Paul speaks of his imprisonment, his love for the Philippians. He exhorts them to godliness and warns them of legalism.
7. **Colossians** - *The Deity of Jesus*. Paul focuses on the preeminence of Jesus in creation, redemption, and godliness.
8. **1 Thessalonians** - *Jesus' Second Coming*. Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians. Teachings on purity and mention of the return of Christ.
9. **2 Thessalonians** - *Jesus' Second Coming*. More about the Day of the Lord.
10. **1 Timothy** - *The Care for the Church*. Instructions to Timothy on proper leadership and dealings with false teachers, the role of women, prayer, and requirements of elders and deacons.
11. **2 Timothy** - *Paul's Final Words*. A letter of encouragement to Timothy to be strong.
12. **Titus** - *The Churches of Crete*. Paul left Titus in Crete to care for the churches there. Requirements for elders.
13. **Philemon** - *Conversion of a Runaway Slave*. A letter to the owner of a runaway slave. Paul appeals to Philemon to forgive Onesimus.

Non-Pauline Epistles - 9 Books

1. **Hebrews** - *Jesus the Mediator of a New Covenant*. A letter to Hebrew Christians in danger of returning to Judaism. It demonstrates the superiority of Jesus over the O.T. system. Mentions the Melchizedek priesthood. (Hebrews may be of Pauline origin. There is much debate on its authorship.)
2. **James** - *Man is saved by Works, IF God is working Through Him*. A practical exhortation to live a Christian life evidencing regeneration. It urges self examination of the evidence of the changed life.
3. **1 Peter** - *To the Persecuted Church*. Peter wrote this letter to encourage its recipients in the light of their suffering and be humble in it. Mentions baptism.

4. **2 Peter** - *Prediction of Apostasy*. Deals with the person on an inward level, warnings against false teachers, and mentions the Day of the Lord.
5. **1 John** - *The Love of God*. John describes true fellowship of the believer with believer and with God. Describes God as light and love. Encourages a holy Christian walk before the Lord. Much mention of Christian love.
6. **2 John** - *Cautions Against False Teachers*. Praise for walking in Christ and a reminder to walk in God's love.
7. **3 John** - *A Rebuke to Certain Helpers*. John thanks Gaius for his kindness to God's people and rebukes Diotrefes.
8. **Jude** - *Earnestly Contend for the Faith Against Apostasy*. Exposing false teachers and uses O.T. allusions to demonstrate the judgment upon them. Contend for the faith.
9. **Revelation** - *The Rightful Owner (Heir) Coming with the Legal Document to Claim His Purchased Possession*. A highly symbolic vision of the future rebellion, judgment, and consummation of all things. Many Jewish legal proceedings mentioned dealing with the right of redemption and forfeiture of property returning to its legal kinsman redeemer as found in the Books of Jeremiah and Ruth.

APPENDIX 2—BIBLE HISTORY TIMELINE

<http://www.konig.org/timeline.htm>, copyright ©1999-2009 George Konig

Bible History Timeline, by George Konig and Ray Konig, www.konig.org

Below is a list of some historical events that are important to the study of the Bible and its prophecies. The research for this Biblical history timeline was done by George Konig and Ray Konig, authors of the book, *100 Prophecies*. Scholars vary in the dates that they assign to ancient events. The dates shown below are approximations.

2100 BC (about 4100 years ago)—God promises Abraham many descendants. Abraham lived around 2100 BC in what is now Iraq. God told him to move to Canaan, which later became Israel. Unlike many people, Abraham believed in the one true God. God rewarded Abraham's faith, making him the father of a great nation (Israel), and an ancestor to the Messiah (Jesus Christ).

2000 BC (about 4000 years ago)—Jacob (Israel) is born. Jacob, the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham, is born in Canaan. Jacob's name is changed to Israel. (Canaan is later renamed Israel, after Jacob). He has 12 sons, for whom the 12 Tribes of Israel are named.

1900 BC (about 3900 years ago)—Joseph sold into slavery. Joseph, one of the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel), is sold into slavery by his brothers, who are jealous of him. Joseph ends up in Egypt, where he rises to power as a trusted assistant of a pharaoh. His father and his brothers later leave Canaan, because of a famine, and move to Egypt. They are later saved from harm by Joseph.

1446 BC (about 3400 years ago)—Exodus begins. The Hebrews, or Israelites (descendants of Jacob), are enslaved for 400 years in Egypt until Moses leads them out of Egypt. They wander the desert for 40 years. Moses then brings them to the border of Canaan, the land that God had previously promised to their forefather Abraham.

1406 BC (about 3400 years ago)—Israel begins establishing itself as a sovereign country. After Moses dies, Joshua leads the Israelites into Canaan and begins conquering the land, establishing a sovereign country of Israel for the first time in history.

1400 BC (about 3400 years ago)—Israel is ruled by judges, not kings. From about 1400 BC to about 1050 BC, Israel was not ruled by kings. The people think of God as their King. Instead of an earthly king, Israel is led by judges who settled disputes.

1050 BC (about 3000 years ago)—Saul becomes Israel's first king. After about 350 years of being ruled by judges, the people of Israel demand to have a king, like the neighboring countries. By demanding a king, the people are turning away from their faith in God as their king. Saul becomes king and reigns about 40 years.

1010 BC (about 3000 years ago)—David becomes King of Israel. David becomes king of Israel in about 1010 BC and reigns for 40 years. David, unlike Saul, follows the commands of God. He makes mistakes, but he repents for them. He seeks to please God. He expands the size of Israel and rules over surrounding territories.

970 BC (about 3000 years ago)—Solomon becomes king, builds Temple. Solomon, son of David, becomes king in about 970 BC. He too reigns for about 40 years. Solomon builds the Temple in honor of God. The work is completed in about 960 BC. But, Solomon eventually turns away from God and worships false gods.

926 BC (about 2900 years ago)—Israel becomes a divided kingdom. Shortly after the reign of Solomon, Israel becomes a divided kingdom. The southern kingdom, called Judah, includes the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. The northern kingdom continued to be called Israel. The two often war with each other.

721 BC (about 2700 years ago)--Assyrians conquer northern kingdom of Israel. The Assyrian Empire conquers the northern kingdom of Israel in about 721 BC. The Assyrians torture and decapitate many. They force many Israelites (10 of the 12 Tribes of Israel) out of Israel and bring in foreigners.

612 BC (about 2600 years ago)—Babylon conquers Nineveh (Assyrian Empire). The Assyrian Empire's capital city - Nineveh - is attacked by coalition of Babylonians and others. As explained by the prophet Nahum in the Bible, Nineveh was to be destroyed because of the Assyrian Empire's treatment of Israelites and other people.

605 BC (about 2600 years ago)—Babylon exerts influence over Judah. The neo-Babylonian Empire, under the reign of king Nebuchadnezzar, begins forcing Judah into submission. Nebuchadnezzar takes many Jews as captives to Babylon to ensure Judah's obedience.

597 BC (about 2600 years ago)—Babylon attacks Judah. Babylonian army attacks Judah and takes more Jews as captives to Babylon. Ezekiel, one of the captives, becomes a prophet of God. Ezekiel explains that God is allowing Babylon to punish Judah because the people have been unfaithful to God.

586 BC (about 2600 years ago)—Babylon destroys Jerusalem and the Temple. Babylon attacks Judah again. This time, the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the Temple that Solomon had built. More Jews are taken as captives to Babylon.

586 BC to 573 BC (about 2600 years ago)—King Nebuchadnezzar attacks Tyre mainland. Babylon begins a 13-year siege of the mainland of the Phoenician city of Tyre.

539 BC (about 2500 years ago)—Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, the neo-Babylonian Empire begins to lose power. Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon in 539 BC, establishing the Medo-Persian Empire.

538 BC (about 2500 years ago)—Cyrus releases Jews from Babylonian Captivity. After conquering Babylon, Cyrus offers the Jews their freedom to leave Babylon and to return to Judah. Cyrus' kingdom rules over Judah and many other parts of the Middle East, but Cyrus allows people more cultural and religious freedom than did the neo-Babylonian Empire.

536 BC (about 2500 years ago)—Work begins to rebuild Temple. Some of the Jews in Babylon return to Judah and begin work in about 536 BC to rebuild the Temple, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

516 BC (about 2500 years ago)—Second Temple is dedicated. The Temple is consecrated for worship, 70 years after the Babylonians had destroyed it in 586 BC.

333 BC (about 2300 years ago)—Greeks begin rule over land of Israel. The Greeks, under the leadership of Alexander the Great, defeat Persian armies in Macedonia in 333 BC. This marks the fall of the Medo-Persian Empire and the rise of the Grecian Empire.

332 BC (about 2300 years ago)—Alexander conquers Tyre (Phoenician Empire). Alexander wars against the island fortress of the Phoenician city of Tyre. He takes rubble from the mainland of Tyre and builds a walkway to the island. Alexander's forces then conquer the island fortress, bringing an end to the Phoenician Empire.

250 BC (about 2300 years ago)—The Old Testament is translated into Greek. A Greek ruler asks the Jews to translate all or part of the Old Testament into the Greek language. The translation is called the Septuagint.

175 BC (about 2200 years ago)—Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes torments the Jews. Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes rules Syria from about 175 BC to about 164 BC. He reigns over Judah and tries to destroy the Jewish religion. He also defiles the Temple.

164 BC to 63 BC (about 2200 years ago)—Jews have independence. The Maccabees, a group that fought for Jewish independence, stage a revolt against the Greeks and establish the Hasmonean royal dynasty, as well as sovereignty over all or part of the land of Israel for about 100 years, from about 164 BC to 63 BC.

63 BC (about 2100 years ago)—The Romans take over land of Israel. After the death of Alexander the Great, the empire of the Greeks is divided up and becomes weaker. During this time, the Roman Empire becomes increasingly powerful. The Roman general named Pompey seizes control over the land of Israel.

About 5 BC (about 2000 years ago)—Jesus is born in Bethlehem. Jesus is born in the town of Bethlehem. The Apostle Matthew later points out that Jesus' birth in Bethlehem fulfilled a prophecy delivered by the prophet Micah, about 700 years

beforehand. (See Micah 5:2).

About 25 AD (about 2000 years ago)—Jesus begins His ministry. Jesus is about 30 years old when he begins his ministry. He preaches salvation, delivers prophecies and performs miracles. He announces that he is the Messiah (the Christ) who was promised by the prophets of the Old Testament. Jesus promises salvation and eternal life to those who believe in him (See John 3:16, as an example). [NOTE: Most people date the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry in 26 or 27 AD—Jonathan Menn]

About 28 AD (about 2000 years ago)—Jesus is crucified and resurrected. Jesus is falsely accused and is sent to Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler of the land of the Jews, to be crucified. Jesus is later resurrected, meaning he is brought back to life, and his followers began evangelizing him to others, allowing Christianity to spread very quickly throughout the Roman world and to eventually become the first religion to spread throughout the world. [NOTE: Most people date the crucifixion in either AD 30 or AD 33—Jonathan Menn]

70 AD (about 1900 years ago)—Romans destroy Jerusalem and Temple. In 70 AD, the Roman Army, under Titus, destroys Jerusalem and the Temple, to suppress an uprising of the Jews. According to the historian Josephus, about 1.1 million Jews were killed. Others were taken as slaves.

First century AD (about 1900 years ago)—The Bible is completed. During the first century of this era, the New Testament, which describes the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, is completed. The writing of the Bible (the Old Testament and the New Testament) comes to an end. It began during the time of Moses, about 3400 years ago. Jesus becomes, and remains, the final subject of the Bible.

APPENDIX 3—THE BIBLE IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Reading the Bible chronologically shows how the Bible’s story-line unfolds and helps us to understand the flow of events and how all the different parts fit together to make sense. This chronology is based on the biblical chronology created by Dr. George Guthrie in his books *Read the Bible for Life: Your Guide to Understanding and Living God’s Word* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011) and *Reading God’s Story: A Chronological Reading Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman, 2011). The basic chronology is available at: <http://www.bhpublishinggroup.com/readthebible/downloads/RBL-reading-plan.pdf>. The chronological order is column one first (all the way to the end), then column two, then column three.

<p><u>ACT 1: GOD’S PLAN FOR ALL PEOPLE</u> <i>Creation: The God of All of Life</i> Genesis 1–2 John 1:1–3 Psalm 8; 104 <i>Fall: Rejecting God’s Vision for Life</i> Genesis 3–5 <i>Flood: God Judges and Makes a Covenant to Preserve Life</i> Genesis 6–9 Psalm 12 Genesis 10–11</p>	<p>Ecclesiastes 1–12 1 Kings 10–11 2 Chronicles 9 Proverbs 30–31 <i>Kings and Prophets II: God Divides the Kingdom People</i> 1 Kings 12 2 Chronicles 10 1 Kings 13–14 2 Chronicles 11–12 1 Kings 15:1–24 2 Chronicles 13–16 1 Kings 15:25–16:34 2 Chronicles 17 1 Kings 17–22 2 Chronicles 18–20 2 Kings 1–8 2 Chronicles 21:1–22:9 2 Kings 9–11 2 Chronicles 22:10–23:21 2 Kings 12–13 2 Chronicles 24 2 Kings 14–15 2 Chronicles 25–27 Jonah 1–4 Amos 1–9 Hosea 1–14 Isaiah 1–12 Micah 1–7</p>	<p>Matthew 5–7 Luke 6:20–49; 11:1–13 Matthew 8:5–13; 11:1–30 Luke 7 Matthew 12:22–50 Mark 3:22–35 Luke 8:19–21; 11:14–54 Matthew 13:1–53 Mark 4:1–34 Luke 8:1–18 Matthew 8:18–34; 9:18–38 Mark 4:35–5:43 Luke 8:22–56; 9:57–62 Matthew 10; 14 Mark 6:7–56 Luke 9:1–17 John 6 Matthew 15 Mark 7:1–8:10 Matthew 16 Mark 8:11–9:1 Luke 9:18–27 Matthew 17–18 Mark 9:2–50 Luke 9:28–56 John 7–9 Luke 10 John 10:1–11:54 Luke 12:1–15 Matthew 19 Mark 10:1–31 Luke 16:1–18:30</p>
<p><u>ACT 2: GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE</u> <i>The People: God Calls a Covenant People</i> Genesis 12–50 Job 1–40:5 Psalm 19 Job 40:6–42:17 Psalm 29 <i>Deliverance: God Rescues His People</i> Exodus 1–18 <i>Covenant and Law: God Embraces and Instructs His People</i> Exodus 19–40 Leviticus 1–27 Numbers 1–13 Psalm 90</p>	<p><i>Kings and Prophets III: The Southern Kingdom as God’s People</i> 2 Kings 16–17</p>	

Numbers 14–16 Psalms 95; 90 Numbers 17–36 Deuteronomy 1–34 <i>The Land: God’s Place for His People</i> Joshua 1–24 Judges 1–21 Ruth 1–4 <i>Kings and Prophets: God Shapes a Kingdom People</i> 1 Samuel 1–20 Psalm 59 1 Samuel 21–24 Psalms 91; 7; 27; 31; 34; 52; 56; 120; 140–142 1 Samuel 25–27 Psalms 17; 73; 35; 54; 63; 18 1 Samuel 28–31 1 Chron. 10 Psalms 121; 123–125; 128–130 2 Samuel 1–4 Psalms 6; 9; 10; 14; 16; 21 1 Chronicles 1–2 Psalms 43–44; 49; 84; 85; 87 1 Chronicles 3–6 Psalms 36; 39; 77–78; 81; 88; 92; 93 1 Chronicles 7–9 2 Samuel 5:1–10 1 Chronicles 11–12 Psalm 133 2 Samuel 5:11–6:23 1 Chronicles 13–16 Psalms 15; 23; 24–25; 47; 89; 96; 100; 101; 107 2 Samuel 7 1 Chronicles 17 Psalms 1–2; 33; 127; 132 2 Samuel 8–9 1 Chronicles 18 2 Samuel 10 1 Chronicles 19 Psalms 20; 53; 60; 75; 65–67; 69; 70 2 Samuel 11–12 1 Chronicles 20 Psalms 51; 32; 86; 102; 103; 122 2 Samuel 13–15 Psalms 3; 4; 13; 28; 55 2 Samuel 16–18 Psalms 26; 40–41; 58; 61; 62; 64 2 Samuel 19–21 Psalms 5; 38; 42 2 Samuel 22–23 Psalms 57; 97–99 2 Samuel 24 1 Chronicles 21–22 Psalms 30; 108; 109 1 Chronicles 23–26 Psalms 131; 138; 139; 143–145 1 Chronicles 27–29 Psalms 68; 111–118 1 Kings 1–2 Psalms 37; 71; 94; 119:1–88	2 Chronicles 28 Isaiah 13–26 2 Kings 18:1–8 2 Chronicles 29–31 Psalm 48 Isaiah 27–37 2 Kings 18:9–19:37 2 Chronicles 32:1–23 Psalm 76 Isaiah 38–39 2 Kings 20:1–21 2 Chronicles 32:24–33 Isaiah 40–42 Psalm 46 Isaiah 43–45 Psalm 80 Isaiah 46–49 Psalm 135 Isaiah 50–66 2 Kings 21 2 Chronicles 33 Nahum 1–3 Zephaniah 1–3 2 Kings 22–23 2 Chronicles 34–35 Habakkuk 1–3 Joel 1–3 Jeremiah 1–40 Psalms 74; 79 <i>Exile: God Disciplines His People</i> 2 Kings 24–25 2 Chronicles 36:1–21 Jeremiah 52; 41–44 Obadiah Psalms 82; 83 Jeremiah 45–51 Psalm 137 Lamentations 1–5 Ezekiel 1–48 Daniel 1–12 <i>Return: God Delivers His People Again</i> 2 Chronicles 36:22–23 Ezra 1–6 Haggai 1–2 Zechariah 1–14 Esther 1–10 Malachi 1–4 Psalm 50 Ezra 7–10 Nehemiah 1–13 Psalm 126 <u>ACT 3: GOD’S NEW COVENANT PEOPLE</u> <i>Christ’s Coming: God’s True King Arrives</i> Psalm 106 John 1:4–14 Matthew 1 Luke 1:1–2:38 Matthew 2 Luke 2:39–52 Matthew 3	Matthew 20 Mark 10:32–52 Luke 18:31–19:27 <i>Christ’s Deliverance of His People: God’s Work through the Death, Resurrection, and Enthronement of His King</i> Matthew 21:1–22; 26:6–13 Mark 11:1–26; 14:3–9 Luke 19:28–48 John 2:13–25; 11:55–12:36 Matthew 21:23–22:14 Mark 11:27–12:12 Luke 20:1–19 John 12:37–50 Matthew 22:15–23:39 Mark 12:13–44 Luke 20:20–21:4; 13:31–35 Matthew 24–25 Mark 13 Luke 21:5–38 Matthew 26:1–5, 14–35 Mark 14:1–2, 10–31 Luke 22:1–38 John 13 John 14–17 Matthew 26:36–75 Mark 14:32–72 Luke 22:39–71 John 18:1–27 Matthew 27:1–31 Mark 15:1–20 Luke 23:1–25 John 18:28–19:16 Matthew 27:32–66 Mark 15:21–47 Luke 23:26–56 John 19:17–42 Psalm 22 Matthew 28 Mark 16 Luke 24 John 20–21 <i>Christ’s Church: God’s People Advance the Kingdom</i> Acts 1–4 Psalm 110 Acts 5–14 James 1–5 Galatians 1–6 Acts 15–18:18 1 Thessalonians 1–5 2 Thessalonians 1–3 Acts 18:19–19:41 1 Corinthians 1–16 2 Corinthians 1–13 Acts 20: 1–3 Romans 1–16 Acts 20:4–28:31 Philippians 1–4 Philemon Colossians 1–4 Ephesians 1–6
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1 Kings 3–4 2 Chronicles 1 Psalms 72; 119:89–176 Song of Solomon 1–8 Psalm 45 Proverbs 1–24 1 Kings 5–6 2 Chronicles 2–3 1 Kings 7–8 Psalm 11 2 Chronicles 4–7 Psalms 134; 136; 146–150 1 Kings 9 2 Chronicles 8 Proverbs 25–29	Mark 1:1–11 Luke 3 John 1:15–34 <i>Christ’s Ministry: God’s True King Manifests His Kingdom</i> Matthew 4:1–22; 13:54–58 Mark 1:12–20; 6:1–6 Luke 4:1–30; 5:1–11 John 1:35–2:12 Matthew 4:23–25; 8:14–17 Mark 1:21–39 Luke 4:31–44 John 3–5 Matthew 8:1–4; 9:1–17; 12:1–21 Mark 1:40–3:21 Luke 5:12-6:19	Titus 1–3 1 Timothy 1–6 1 Peter 1–5 Hebrews 1–13 2 Timothy 1–4 2 Peter 1–3 Jude 1 John 1–5 2 John 3 John Revelation 1–18 <i>Christ’s Second Coming and Reign: God’s Future for the Kingdom</i> Revelation 19–22
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APPENDIX 4—TIMELINE OF ISRAEL’S AND JUDAH’S KINGS AND PROPHETS

Based on K. Lawson Younger, 2006, *OT 716—Historical Books: Chronology of Hebrew Kings and Prophets, unpublished class notes*. Deerfield, IL: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and *New American Standard Bible*, updated ed., 1999, “Rulers of Israel and Judah” list, 336-37.

<u>Approx. Year</u>	<u>United Kingdom (Israel)</u>	<u>Prophet</u>	
1050	<i>Saul</i> , 40 years (1050-1010): 1 Sam 9:15-35; 28:1-25; 31:1-13; 1 Chron 10:1-14		
1010	<i>David</i> , 40 years (1010-970): 1 Sam 16:1-13; 2 Sam 1:1-1Kgs 2:11; 1 Chron 11:1-22:19		
970	<i>Solomon</i> , 40 years (970-930): 1 Kgs 1:11-11:43; 1 Chron 23:1-2 Chron 9:31		
	<u>Divided Kingdom</u>		
	<u>Judah (S. Kingdom)</u>	<u>Israel (N. Kingdom)</u>	
930	<i>Rehoboam</i> , 17 years (930-913): 1 Kgs 12:1-24; 14:21-31	<i>Jeroboam I</i> , 22 years (930-909): 1 Kgs 12:25-14:20	
913	<i>Abijam</i> , 3 years (913-910), 18 th year of Jeroboam: 1 Kgs 15:1-8; 2 Chron 13:1-14:1		
910	<i>Asa</i> , 41 years (910-869), 20 th year of Jeroboam: 1 Kgs 15:9-24; 2 Chron 14:1-16:14		
909		<i>Nadab</i> , 2 years (909-908), 2 nd year of Asa: 1 Kgs 15:25-31	
908		<i>Baasha</i> , 24 years (908-886), 3 rd year of Asa: 1 Kgs 15:32-16:7; 2 Chron 16:1-6	
886		<i>Elah</i> , 2 years (886-885), 26 th year of Asa: 1 Kgs 16:8-14	
885		<i>Zimri</i> , 7 days (885), 27 th year of Asa: 1 Kgs 16:15-20	
		<i>Tibni</i> , 5 years (885-880), overlap with Omri: 1 Kgs 16:21-22	
		<i>Omri</i> , 12 years (885-874), 27 th year of Asa: 1 Kgs 16:23-28	
874		<i>Ahab</i> , 22 years (874-853), 38 th of Asa: 1 Kgs 16:29-22:40	<i>Elijah</i> (870-850): 1 Kgs 17-2 Kgs 2:12, to Israel
872	<i>Jehoshaphat</i> , 25 years (872-848) (began as co-regent with Asa; sole reign began 869): 1 Kgs 22:41-50		
853		<i>Ahaziah</i> , 2 years (853-852), 17 th year of Jehoshaphat: 1 Kgs 22:51-2 Kgs 1:18	
852		<i>Joram</i> , 12 years (852-841), 18 th year of Jehoshaphat: 2 Kgs 1:17;	<i>Elisha</i> (850-800?): 2 Kgs 2:1-8:15;

848	<i>Jehoram</i> , 8 years (848-841), 5 th year of Joram: 2 Kgs 8:16-24	3:1-8:15	13:14-21, to Israel <i>Obadiah</i> (848-841), to Edom
841	<i>Ahaziah</i> , 1 year (841), 11 th year of Joram: 2 Kgs 9:29 <i>Athaliah</i> , 7 years (Queen) (841-835): 2 Kgs 11:1-21	<i>Jehu</i> , 28 years (841-814): 2 Kgs 9:30-10:36	
835	<i>Joash</i> , 40 years (835-796), 7 th year of Jehu: 2 Kgs 12:1-21; 2 Chron 24:1-27		<i>Joel</i> (830-815), to Judah
814		<i>Jehoahaz</i> , 17 years (814-798), 23 rd year of Joash: 2 Kgs 13:1-9	
798		<i>Jehoash</i> , 16 years (798-782), 37 th year of Joash: 2 Kgs 13:10-25	
796	<i>Amaziah</i> , 29 years (796-767), overlap with Uzziah (Azariah), 2 nd year of Jehoash: 2 Kgs 14:1-22		
793		<i>Jeroboam II</i> , 41 years (793-753) (began as co-regent with Jehoash; sole reign began 782), 15 th year of Amaziah: 2 Kgs 14:23-29	
792	<i>Uzziah (Azariah)</i> , 52 years (792-740) (began as co-regent with Amaziah; sole reign began 767), 27 th year of Jeroboam II: 2 Kgs 15:1-7; 2 Chron 26:1-23		<i>Jonah</i> (782-746): 2 Kgs 14:25, to Nineveh (Assyria) <i>Amos</i> (c. 765-755), to Israel <i>Hosea</i> (c. 755-714), to Israel
753		<i>Zechariah</i> , 6 months (753), 38 th year of Uzziah: 2 Kgs 15:8-12	
752		<i>Shallum</i> , 1 month (752), 39 th year of Uzziah: 2 Kgs 15:13-15 <i>Menahem</i> , 10 years (752-742) (reigned in Samaria), 39 th year of Uzziah: 2 Kgs 15:16-22 <i>Pekah</i> , 20 years (752-732) (reigned in Gilead; sole reign began 740), 52 nd year of Uzziah: 2 Kgs 15:27-31	
742		<i>Pekahiah</i> , 2 years (reigned in Samaria), 50 th year of Uzziah: 2 Kgs 15:23-26	
740	<i>Jotham</i> , 16 years (750-732) (began as co-regent with Uzziah; sole reign began 740), 2 nd year of Pekah: 2 Kgs 15:32-38		<i>Micah</i> (740-700?), to Judah <i>Isaiah</i> (739-691?), to Judah
735	<i>Ahaz</i> , 16 years (735-715, 16 years is from last year of Jotham, 732), 17 th year of Pekah		
732		<i>Hoshea</i> , 9 years (732-722): 2 Kgs 15:30; 17:1-41	
722		Israel falls to the Assyrians and is deported	
715	<i>Hezekiah</i> , 29 years (715-686): 2 Kgs 18:1-20:21		
686	<i>Manasseh</i> , 55 years (697-642) (began as co-regent with Hezekiah; sole reign began 686): 2 Kgs 21:1-18		<i>Nahum</i> (649-625?)
642	<i>Amon</i> , 2 years (642-640): 2 Kgs 21: 19-26		
640	<i>Josiah</i> , 31 years (640-609): 2 Kgs 22:1-23:30		<i>Zephaniah</i> (635-625) <i>Jeremiah</i> (627-575) <i>Habakkuk</i> (620?-610?)
609	<i>Jehoahaz</i> , 3 months (609): 2 Kgs 23:31-33 <i>Jehoiakim</i> , 11 years (609-598): 2 Kgs 23:34-24:7		
605	1st deportation to Babylon		<i>Daniel</i> (605-536)
598	<i>Jehoiachin</i> , 3 months (598-597): 2 Kgs 24:8-17		
597	2nd deportation to Babylon <i>Zedekiah</i> , 11 years (597-586): 2 Kgs 24:18-25:26		<i>Ezekiel</i> (597-581)

586	Jerusalem falls to Babylon. Temple destroyed. 70 years of captivity in Babylon begins: 2 Kgs 25:1-30; 2 Chron 36:11-21	
539	Fall of Babylon to Persia— (Cyrus, 539-530): Dan 5:1-31	
538	Decree of Cyrus to permit return of exiles and rebuilding of Temple in Jerusalem: 2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:1-5	
529	<i>Cambyases II</i> (Persian Emperor, 529-523)	
522	<i>Darius I</i> (Persian Emperor, 522-486)	
520	Decree of Darius I to permit completion of the Temple: Ezra 6:6-12	<i>Haggai</i> (520-505) <i>Zechariah</i> (520-487)
515	Temple rededicated in Jerusalem	
486	<i>Xerxes (Ahasuerus)</i> (Persian Emperor, 486-465)— <i>Esther</i> (Queen)	
464	<i>Artaxerxes I</i> (Persian Emperor, 464-424)	
458	Decree of Artaxerxes I to furnish the Temple in Jerusalem: Ezra 7:11-26	
445	Decree of Artaxerxes I to permit rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem: Neh 2:1-6	
424	<i>Darius II</i> (Persian Emperor, 424-404)	<i>Malachi</i> (420)
404	<i>Artaxerxes II</i> (Persian Emperor, 404-358)	
335	<i>Darius III</i> (Persian Emperor, 335-331)	
331	Persia falls to Alexander the Great	

APPENDIX 5—SELECTED MESSIANIC PROPHECIES AND THEIR FULFILLMENT

<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>OT Source</u>	<u>NT Fulfillment</u>
1. Born of the seed of woman	Gen 3:15	Matt 1:20; Gal 4:4
2. Born of a virgin	Isa 7:14	Matt 1:18, 24-25; Luke 1:26-35
3. Seed of Abraham	Gen 22:18	Matt 1:1; Gal 3:16
4. Line of Isaac	Gen 21:12	Matt 1:2; Luke 3:23, 34
5. Line of Jacob	Num 24:17	Matt 1:2; Luke 3:23, 34
6. Tribe of Judah	Gen 49:10	Matt 1:2; Luke 3:23, 33; Heb 7:14
7. Line of Jesse	Isa 11:1, 10	Matt 1:6; Luke 3:23, 32
8. Line of David	Jer 23:5; Ps 132:11	Matt 1:1; 9:27; Luke 3:23, 31
9. Born at Bethlehem	Mic 5:2	Matt 2:1-8; Luke 2:4-7; John 7:42
10. His pre-existence	Mic 5:2	John 1:1-2; 8:58; 17:5; Col 1:17
11. Preceded by a messenger	Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1	Matt 3:1-3; 11:10; Luke 1:17; John 1:23
12. He shall be called Lord	Ps 110:1	Matt 22:43-45
13. He shall be called Immanuel	Isa 7:14	Matt 1:23
14. He shall be a prophet	Deut 18:15, 18-19	Matt 21:11; Luke 7:16; John 4:19; 6:14; 7:40
15. He shall be a priest	1 Sam 2:35; Ps 110:4	Heb 3:1-6; 5:5-6
16. He shall be a judge	Isa 33:22	John 5:30; 2 Tim 4:1
17. He shall be a king	Ps 2:6; Zech 9:9	Matt 21:5; 27:37; John 18:33-37
18. He is called God's Son	Ps 2:7	Matt 3:17; 16:16; 17:5; Luke 1:32
19. He is a light to the nations	Isa 42:6; 49:6	Luke 2:32; John 1:9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46
20. He is a redeemer	Job 19:25; Isa 59:20	Luke 24: 21; Rom 11:26; Gal 3:13; Titus 2:14
21. Holy Spirit rests on Him	Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1	Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 4:18
22. Zeal for God	Ps 69:9	John 2:15-17
23. Ministry begins in Galilee	Isa 9:1	Matt 4:12-17
24. Performs miracles	Isa 35:5-6; 53:4	Matt 8:14-17; 9:32-35; 11:4-5; Mark 7:33-35
25. Teaches in parables	Ps 78:2	Matt 13:34-35
26. Enters Jerusalem on a donkey	Zech 9:9	Matt 21:6-11; Luke 35-37
27. Enters the Temple	Mal 3:1	Matt 21:12; Luke 19:45-48
28. Preaches to the poor	Isa 61:1	Matt 11:5; Luke 4:18-21
29. Rejected by his people	Ps 118:22; Isa 28:16	Matt 21:42; John 1:11; 7:48; 1 Pet 2:6-7
30. Rejected by his own family	Ps 69:8	Mark 3:21; John 7:5
31. Hated without a cause	Ps 35:19; 69:4; Isa 49:7	John 15:23-25
32. Betrayed by a friend	Ps 41:9; 55:12-14	Matt 10:4; 26:47-50; 13:21-27; Luke 22:19-23
33. Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	Zech 11:12	Matt 26:15; 27:3
34. Money thrown in God's house	Zech 11:13	Matt 27:5
35. Money given for potter's field	Zech 11:13	Matt 27:6-10
36. Forsaken by his disciples	Zech 13:7	Matt 26:31, 69-74; Mark 14:27, 50
37. Silent before accusers	Isa 53:7	Matt 27:12; Acts 8:32-35
38. Beaten and spat upon	Isa 50:6; 53:5	Matt 26:67; 27:26; Mark 10:33-34
39. Mocked	Ps 22:7-8	Matt 27:31; Luke 22:63-65
40. Hands and feet pierced	Ps 22:16; Zech 12:10	Luke 23:33; John 20:25-27

41. Suffers for the sins of others	Isa 53:5-6, 8, 10-12	Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:3; Heb 9:28
42. Dies with transgressors	Isa 53:12	Matt 27:38; Mark 15:27-28; Luke 22:37
43. Intercedes for persecutors	Isa 53:12	Luke 23:34
44. Lots cast for his clothes	Ps 22:18	John 19:23-24
45. Friends stand far away	Ps 38:11	Matt 27:55-56; Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49
46. People wag their heads	Ps 22:7; 109:25	Matt 27:39
47. People stare at Him	Ps 22:17	Luke 23:35
48. He suffers thirst	Ps 22:15; 69:21	John 19:28
49. Given gall and vinegar to drink	Ps 69:21	John 19:28-29; Matt 27:34
50. Cries out when forsaken by God	Ps 22:1	Matt 27:46
51. Commits His spirit to God	Ps 31:5	Luke 23:46
52. His bones are not broken	Ps 34:20	John 19:33
53. His side is pierced	Zech 12:10	John 19:34-37
54. Heart broken	Ps 22:14; 69:20	John 19:34
55. Darkness over the land	Amos 8:9	Matt 27:45
56. Buried in a rich man's tomb	Isa 53:9	Matt 27:57-60
57. Body will not decay	Ps 16:10	John 20:1-18; Acts 2:31; 13:35-37
58. Ascends to heaven	Ps 68:18	Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; Eph 4:8
59. Sits at God's right hand	Ps 110:1	Mark 16:19; Acts 2:34-35; Heb 1:3
60. He will come again	Dan 7:13; Zech 12:10	Matt 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Rev 1:7

APPENDIX 6—JESUS IS FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN

I. The Importance of Christology

“One principal issue facing the disciples of Jesus was the apparent conflict between his obvious humanity and his claims to divinity. For the gospel to be the gospel, Jesus has to be acknowledged as both true God and true man. The issue is that of how Jesus could be both God and man since these two natures seem incompatible. History shows us the various solutions that were given to this conundrum. First, there was the Jewish or Ebionite solution, namely, Jesus was not God at all, but only a man. . . . This is the error that is echoed in every attempt, ancient and modern, to reduce Jesus to the good teacher and leader of an ethical movement. The second solution was the Greek or Gnostic solution, which concluded that it was demeaning to Jesus to give him material or human existence and maintained that he was purely divine spirit. Between these two extremes of humanity (with no divinity) and divinity (with no humanity) there was a whole range of part-human, part-divine views. These worked on the assumption that to the extent that Jesus was divine, something of his humanity had to be diminished. The common feature of all these aberrations of Christian orthodoxy is the failure to see both full deity and full humanity as existing together in the one person, Jesus of Nazareth. . . . The heresies that the Early Church fought were seen as challenges to the very nature of the gospel and the integrity of the Christian faith. In each case they represented a perspective that rejected this ‘both-and’ perspective that the gospel requires of us. For the gospel to be the gospel, for the Bible to be the Bible, and for reality to be what it is, Jesus has to be both true God and true human, and God must be both one and three.” (Goldsworthy 2000: 64-66)

“All Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Christians assent together to the great creeds of the first thousand years of church history, such as the Apostle’s, Nicene, Chalcedonian, and Athanasian creeds. In these creeds the fundamental Christian view of reality is laid out. There is the classical expression of the Christian understanding of God as three-in-one. Belief in the Trinity creates a profoundly different view of the world from that of polytheists, non-Trinitarian monotheists, and atheists. . . . There is also a strong statement of the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ in these creeds. Christians, therefore, do not look upon Jesus as one more teacher or prophet, but as Savior of the world. These teachings make Christians far more like than unlike one another.” (Keller 2008: 116)

“Evangelical Christianity is a continuation of historic Christianity. It is the Christology stated in The Apostle’s Creed, refined in the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, elaborated in the Chalcedonian Creed, and finally summed up in the Creed of Athanasius. . . . If there is a change in Christological doctrine, a change is mandated in all other doctrines. Christology is so central to Christian theology that to alter Christology is to alter all else. . . . To abandon historic Christology is to abandon the concept of heresy. But if there is no heresy it follows logically that there is no truth.” (Ramm 1985: 15-17)

II. Historic, Orthodox Christology as Stated in the Historic, Ecumenical Creeds

A. Apostles’ Creed (c. 2nd century AD)

I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost. I believe in the holy catholic church,⁷⁵ the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

B. *Nicene-Constantinople Creed (325/381)*

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

C. *Chalcedonian Creed (451)*

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach people to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

D. *Athanasian Creed (c. late 5th-early 6th century AD)*

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is; such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and the Holy Ghost unlimited. The Father eternal; the Son eternal; and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternal; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated; nor three infinites, but one uncreated; and one infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties; but one Almighty. So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity; to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion; to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid; the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation; that he also believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess; that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Essence of the Father; begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Essence of his Mother, born in the world. Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who although he is God and Man; yet he is not two, but one Christ. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by assumption of the Manhood into God. One altogether; not by confusion of Essence; but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the God the Father Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good

⁷⁵The term “catholic” means “universal,” and must be distinguished from the modern Roman Catholic Church. “Catholic” is the term generally used for approximately the first 1000 years of church history to describe the orthodox Christian faith, particularly as that faith was defined in the universal creeds and developed at the ecumenical councils.

shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic Faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.

III. Jesus Christ is Fully God and Fully Man: Biblical Evidence

A. Jesus Christ is fully God

1. Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (**Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38**). Although Joseph was only a first-century Galilean carpenter, he “was worried about Mary’s unexpected pregnancy not because he did not know where babies came from but because he did” (Wright 1996: 186-87n.160).
2. **Jesus had miraculous powers (Matt 13:54; Luke 10:13; John 2:1-11, 23; 7:31; 10:25, 38; 12:37; 15:24; 20:30-31; 21:25):**
 - a. He miraculously healed people (**Matt 8:1-17; 9:1-8, 20-22, 27-31; 12:9-15, 22; 14:35-36; 15:29-31; 19:1-2; 20:29-34; 21:14; Mark 1:29-34, 40-42; 2:1-12; 3:1-5, 10; 5:25-34; 6:5, 53-56; 7:31-35; 8:22-25; 10:46-52; Luke 4:38-41; 5:12-15, 17-26; 6:6-10, 17-19; 7:1-10, 21-22; 8:43-48; 13:10-13; 14:1-4; 18:35-43; 22:50-51; John 4:46-54; 5:2-9; 9:1-7; Acts 10:38**).
 - b. He cast out demons (**Matt 8:28-34; 9:32-33; 12:22-29; 15:21-28; 17:14-18; Mark 1:23-28, 34, 39; 3:11, 22-27; 5:1-13; 7:24-30; 9:17-27; Luke 4:31-36, 41; 8:26-36; 9:37-42; 11:14-22**).
 - c. He gave others authority over spirits and diseases (**Matt 10:1; Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1; 10:17-19**).
 - d. He could read minds (**Matt 9:4; 12:25; Mark 2:8; Luke 5:22; 6:8; 9:46-48; John 13:10-11**).
 - e. He raised the dead (**Matt 9:18, 23-25; Mark 5:35-42; Luke 7:11-15; 8:49-55; John 11:11-44**).
 - f. He miraculously fed multitudes of people (**Matt 14:13-21; 15:32-38; Mark 6:33-44; 8:1-9; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-13**).
 - g. He could walk on water (**Matt 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-51; John 6:16-21**).
 - h. He caused others to walk on water (**Matt 14:28-31**).
 - i. He had authority over nature and the weather (**Matt 8:23-27; 21:18-19; Mark 4:35-41; 11:12-14, 20-21; Luke 8:22-25**).
 - j. He could turn water into wine (**John 2:1-11**).
 - k. He had extraordinary knowledge and wisdom (**Matt 13:54; John 1:48; 2:24-25; 4:16-19, 28-29; 6:64; 13:10-11; 16:30; 18:4; 21:17; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 2:2-3; Rev 2:23; 5:12**).

“It is naïve to suppose that first-century Galilean villagers were ready to believe in ‘miracles’ because they did not understand the laws of nature, or did not realize that the space-time universe was a closed continuum” (Wright 1996: 186n.160). The people living in Jesus’ day, like people living in our day, knew that five loaves of bread and two fish cannot feed 5000 people, that great storms cannot be stopped simply at the word of a man, that many sicknesses and infirmities cannot be healed even by the best doctors, and that dead people stay dead. “Jesus’ contemporaries, both those who became his followers and those who were determined not to become his followers, certainly regarded him as possessed of remarkable powers. The church did not invent the charge that Jesus was in league with Beelzebul; but charges like that were not advanced unless they are needed as an explanation for some quite remarkable phenomena.” (Ibid.: 186-87)

3. **The same names, titles, and other attributes that are applied to God in the OT or NT are applied to Jesus in the NT.** Sometimes a passage which applied to God is alluded to or directly quoted as applying to Jesus (in the following table, ^x, ^y, ^z indicate direct quotes).

Name/Title/Attribute	Applied to God	Applied to Jesus
I AM Lord	Exod 3:13-14 Isa 40:3^x; 45:23-24^y; Joel 2:32^z	John 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5-6 Mark 1:2-4^x; Phil 2:10-11^y; Acts 2:36; Rom 10:13^z
God	Ps 45:6-7^x	Heb 1:8-9^x; John 1:1, 18; 20:28; 2 Pet 1:1
First and Last	Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12	Rev 1:17; 2:8; 22:13
Alpha and Omega	Rev 1:8^x; 21:5-6^x	Rev 22:13^x
Savior	Isa 43:3, 11; 1 Tim 4:10	Matt 1:21; Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Titus 2:13
Judge	Gen 18:25; Ps 50:4-6; 96:13	John 5:22; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1
King	Ps 95:3	Rev 17:14; 19:16
King of Israel	Isa 43:15; 44:6; Zeph 3:15	John 1:49; 12:13
Light	Ps 27:1; Isa 60:20; Mic 7:8	John 1:4-5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5
Rock	Deut 32:4; 2 Sam 22:32; Ps 89:26	1 Cor 10:4; 1 Pet 2:4-8
Bridegroom	Isa 62:5	Matt 9:15; Mark 2:19-20; Luke 5:34-35
Husband	Isa 54:5; Hos 2:16	Mark 2:18-19; 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 21:2
Shepherd	Ps 23:1; 80:1; Isa 40:11	John 10:11, 16; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4
Creator	Gen 1:1; Ps 102:25-27^x; Isa 40:28	John 1:3, 10; Col 1:16; Heb 1:10-12^x
Giver of life	Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; Ps 36:9	John 5:22; 10:28; 11:25
Searches hearts & minds	1 Chron 28:9; Ps 7:9; 139:23; Jer 17:10	Rev 2:23
Rewards according to people’s deeds	Ps 62:12^x; Jer 17:10; 32:19	Matt 16:27^x; Rev 2:23

In **Rev 1:13-14** John receives a revelation from “*one like a son of man . . . [whose] head and His hair were white like wool, like snow.*” These images are taken from Daniel’s vision in **Dan 7:9, 13**. However, in Daniel’s vision, it was “*the Ancient of Days*” whose “*vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool.*” “In the symbolic vocabulary provided by Daniel’s vision, John sees ‘one like a son of man’ who is distinguished from and identified with the Ancient of Days—a mysterious combination but consistent with the fact that he lays claim to the title ‘the first and the last’ ([Rev] 1:17), by which God proclaimed his divine eternity (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). The Son of Man is God, infinite in wisdom and holiness.” (Johnson 2001: 59)

4. Jesus claimed to have the attributes of God and in fact has them:

- a. He claimed to be pre-existent (i.e., to have existed before He became a man) (**John 8:58; 17:5, 24**) and is in fact pre-existent (**John 1:1-2, 14-15, 30; 8:58; 1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:6-7; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:2; 1 John 2:13-14**).
- b. He claimed to come from the Father in heaven (**John 3:13; 5:23-24; 6:29, 32-39, 41-42, 46, 50-51, 57-58, 62; 7:33; 8:23, 42; 11:41-42; 16:5, 27-28; 17:3, 5, 8, 18, 23, 25**) and in fact did so (**John 3:31; 13:3; 29-30; 1 Cor 15:47; 1 John 4:9-10, 14**).
- c. He created the world (**John 1:3, 10; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:2, 10**).
- d. He claimed to be the only one who knows the Father and can reveal the Father (**Matt 11:27; John 6:46; 17:25**) and that is true (**John 1:18; Heb 1:1-2; 1 John 5:20**).
- e. He lived a perfectly holy and sinless life and is the perfect manifestation of the Father (**Matt 1:22-23; 27:3-4; Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35; 4:34; 23:22, 40-41, 47; John 5:30; 7:18; 8:29, 46; 14:6-11; 17:6; Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30; 13:28, 35; 2 Cor 4:4; 5:21; Col 1:15, 19; 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:3, 9; 3:2; 4:15; 7:26-28; 9:14; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 2:29; 3:5; Rev 3:7; 5:1-8**).
- f. He taught with divine authority. He would quote God’s Word (“*you have heard that it was said*”) but then clarify, modify, extend, deepen, or revoke God’s Word *on His own authority* by saying “*but I say to you*” (**Matt 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-43-39, 44; 7:28-29**; see also **Heb 1:1-2**). He also equated His own words with the law of God and said that His words will never pass away (compare **Matt 5:18; 24:35**). Even Moses and the prophets, who spoke for God, did not speak on their own authority but would preface their remarks by saying “*Thus says the Lord*” (e.g., **Exod 4:22; 5:1; Josh 24:2; Judg 6:8; 1 Sam 2:27; 2 Sam 7:5; 1 Kgs 20:28; 2 Kgs 19:20; Isa 7:7; Jer 2:2, 5; Ezek 2:4; Amos 1:3; Obad 1:1; Mic 3:5; Nah 1:12; Hag 1:2; Zech 1:4, 14; Mal 1:4**). As a result, the people who heard Jesus were amazed at the power, authority, and wisdom of His teaching (**Matt 7:28-29; 13:54-56; Mark 1:22-27; 10:23-27; Luke 4:31-36; John 7:45-46**).
- g. Although the Bible says that God sends the prophets (**2 Chron 36:15; Jer 26:5; Luke 11:49-51**), Jesus said that He was the one who was sending the prophets (**Matt 23:34-35**).
- h. He claimed to send and baptize with the Holy Spirit (**Luke 24:49; John 15:26; 16:7; 20:22**) and in fact does so (**Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:8; 2:1-21**).
- i. He knows and can foretell the future (**Matt 10:17-23; 12:40, 27-28; 16:21; 17: 9, 22-27; 20:17-19; 21:1-7; 23:34-36; 24:1-31; 26:1-2, 13, 20-25, 31-34, 69-75; Mark 8:31; 9:1, 9, 30-31; 10:32-34; 11:1-7; 13:1-27; 14: 9, 12-21, 27-30, 66-72; 16:6-7; Luke 8:49-56; 9:22, 43-44; 17:22-36; 18:31-33; 19: 29-35, 41-44; 21:7-28; 22: 7-13, 20-23, 31-34, 54-62; 24:6-8; John 2:18-22; 4:21; 6:70-71; 11:23, 43-44; 12:27-33; 13:18-28, 36-38; 16:4, 16-20, 32; 18:4, 25-27; 21: 4-6, 18-19; Acts 1:5, 8**).
- j. He is the Lord of the Sabbath (**Matt 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5**). “In some instances our Lord broke with the current Sabbath interpretation for humanitarian reasons; in others for theological reasons. It is the latter that is most important. For Jesus to give an authoritative interpretation of the Sabbath, which originated in the Ten Commandments, is virtually to teach with the identical authority of God. He speaks with the same authority as the One who originally gave the law (cf. Mark 2:28, Luke 6:5). It constitutes indirect evidence for his deity.” (Ramm 1985: 43)
- k. He claimed the authority to forgive people of their sins (**Matt 9:2-8, 12-13; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 5:17-26, 31-32; 7:47-50; 9:56; 19:10; John 5:33-34; 8:1-11; 10:7-9; 12:47**). He, in fact, is the savior who alone can save people from their sins (**Matt 1:21; Luke 2:11; John 1:29; 3:17; 4:42; Acts 3:26; 4:12; 5:31; 13:23, 38-39; 15:11; 16:31; Rom 3:24-26; 4:25; 5:1, 6-11, 15-21; 8:2; 10:9; 1 Cor 1:30; 6:11; 15:17; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Gal 1:3-4; Eph 2:13-16; 4:32; 5:2, 25-26; Phil 3:20; Col 1:12-14; 3:13; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9-10; 1 Tim 1:15; 2 Tim 2:10; 3:15; Titus 1:4; 2:13-14; Heb 2:17; 5:9; 7:25; 13:20; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 3:18; 2 Pet 1:11; 1 John 3:5; 4:9-10, 14; Rev 5:9; 14:4**). C. S. Lewis noted the significance of Jesus’ claim to forgive sins—any sins: “Now unless the speaker is God, this is really so preposterous as to be comic. We can all understand how a man forgives offenses against himself. You tread on my toe and I forgive you, you steal my money and I forgive you. But what should we make of a man, himself unrobbed and untrodden on, who announced that he forgave you for treading on other men’s toes and stealing other men’s money? Asinine fatuity is the kindest description we should give of his conduct. Yet this is what Jesus did. He told people that their sins were forgiven, and never waited to consult all the other people whom their sins had undoubtedly injured. He unhesitatingly behaved as if He was the party chiefly concerned, the person chiefly offended in all offences. This makes sense only if He really was the God whose laws are broken and whose love is wounded in every sin. In the mouth of any speaker who is not God, these words would imply what I can only regard as silliness and conceit unrivalled by any other

character in history.” (Lewis 1996: 55)

l. He claimed to have the power to give people eternal life (**John 3:16; 4:14; 5:25-29, 40; 6:27, 32-40, 44, 47-58, 68; 10:10, 27-28; 11:25-26; 14:6, 19; 17:1-3; Rev 1:18**) and in fact does so (**Rom 6:23; 2 Tim 1:10; 1 John 5:11-13, 20; 21:27**).

m. He claimed to be the author of life itself (**John 11:25**) and in fact is (**John 1:4; 5:26; Rev 1:18**).

n. He holds the world together (**Col 1:17; Heb 1:3**).

o. He claimed to have all authority (**Matt 11:27; 19:28; 26:64; 28:18; Mark 14:62; Luke 10:22; 22:29-30, 69; John 17:2; 18:36-37**) and in fact has all authority and rules as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (**Luke 1:32-33; 2:11; 19:37-38; 23:42; John 3:31; 13:3; Acts 2:30-36; 5:31; 10:36; Rom 9:5; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:23-28; Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:9-11; Col 2:10, 15; 1 Tim 6:15-16; 2 Tim 4:8; Heb 2:7-8; 10:12-13; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 1:5; 5:12; 11:15; 12:10; 14:14; 17:14; 19:11-16; 20:4-6**).

p. He says He will judge the world (**Matt 7:21-23; 13:41; 16:27; 25:31-46; John 5:22, 27-29; Rev 2:23; 22:12**) and in fact will do so (**Matt 3:12; Luke 3:17; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom 2:16; 14:10; 1 Cor 4:4-5; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; 1 Pet 4:5**).

All of the above claims by Jesus are significant: “Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says He has always existed. He says He is coming to judge the world at the end of time. Now let us get this clear. Among Pantheists, like the Indians, anyone might say that he was a part of God, or one with God: there would be nothing very odd about it. But this man, since He was a Jew, could not mean that kind of God. God, in their language, meant the Being outside the world Who had made it and was infinitely different from anything else. And when you have grasped that, you will see that what this man said was, quite simply, the most shocking thing that has ever been uttered by human lips. . . . I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great moral teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” (Lewis 1996: 55-56)

5. Jesus equated Himself with God and identified Himself as God (Mark 9:37; Luke 22:69-70; John 5:17-23; 8:12-58; 10:30, 34-38; 12:44-49; 14:1, 6-11; 15:23; 17:21-23; Rev 1:8). D. A. Carson summarizes some of the evidence from the Gospel of John: “Jesus insists that to believe in him is to believe in the one who sent him (12.44), to look at him is to look at the one who sent him (12.45; 14.9), to hate him is to hate the Father (15.23). He says that all must honour the Son even as they honour the Father (5.23), that he and his Father are one (10.30). We not only learn that the Son cannot do anything except what the father shows him, but that the Son does *whatever* the Father does (5.19). . . . Jesus’ words are God’s words (3.34); that is the reason why the one who receives *Jesus’* witness confirms that *God* is true [3:33]. . . . In precisely the same way, the faith that leads to life hears *Jesus’* words and believes the *one who sent him* (5.24; 14.24). Only Jesus has seen the Father (6.46); but to know Jesus is to know the Father (8.19).” (Carson 1994: 147, 156)

Jesus claimed to have a unique relationship with God the Father, calling Him “My Father” (**Matt 7:21; 10:32-33; 11:27; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10, 19; 20:23; 25:34; 26:39, 42, 53; Luke 2:49; 10:22; 22:29; 24:49; John 2:16; 5:17, 43; 6:32, 40; 8:19, 38, 49, 54; 10:18, 25, 29, 37; 14:2, 7, 20, 21, 23; 15:1, 8, 10, 15, 23, 24; 20:17; Rev 2:27; 3:5, 21**), not “our Father” (which He taught His disciples to say when praying to God [**Matt 6:9**; see also **Luke 11:2; Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 2 Thess 1:1; Phlm 1:3**]). Further, Jesus addressed the Father directly, using the Aramaic word “Abba,” a term of close, personal affection (**Mark 14:62**). Although there are very rare instances of other Jews *describing* God as Abba, “We have no evidence that others before Jesus *addressed* God as Abba” (Bauckham 1978: 249, *emph. added*). “At the very least his use of Abba placed him in a class of holy men enjoying an exceptional degree of intimacy with God, and we can scarcely explain this usage except as a reflection of his awareness of such exceptional intimacy” (Ibid.: 248). **Rom 8:15** and **Gal 4:6** indicate that Jesus taught His disciples to use His own distinctive address of God as Abba. That unique form of address shows that “the primitive church was aware that in this form of address to God it had a distinctive privilege which it owed to Jesus. In that case it was Jesus’ own relationship to God as Abba which he shared with his disciples: their sonship derived from his own.” (Ibid.)

a. *His opponents recognized that Jesus was claiming to be God and sought to kill Him for blasphemy because of that claim (Matt 9:2-3; 26:63-66; Mark 14:61-64; Luke 5:20-21; 22:66-71; John 5:18; 8:59; 10:30-33, 39; 19:7)*. The law of Moses prescribed the death penalty for blasphemy (**Lev 24:14, 16, 23**; see **John 19:7**). **John 5:18** says that the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus “*because He not only was breaking the Sabbath [by healing a man on the Sabbath], but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.*” “At this point, from the human perspective, there is only one thing for Jesus to do. He ought to deny the charge and give some reason why he healed the man on a Sabbath day. This he does not do. He says that the Jews were right. He is equal with God. In the verses that follow Jesus specifies the kind of things only God can do but yet that he can do. Hence he is equal with the Father.” (Ramm 1985: 43)

b. *Others (including angels) confessed that Jesus is God and/or worshipped Him as God, or prayed to Him (Acts 7:59-60), and Jesus accepted that worship (Matt 2:2, 11; 14:33; 28:9, 16-17; Luke 24:51-52; John 1:1-14; 5:22-23; 9:35-38; 20:28; Acts 2:36; 20:28; Rom 9:3-5; Phil 2:5-11; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:5-10; 2 Pet 1:1; 1 John 2:23; Rev 5:1-14).* The response of Jesus in accepting worship would be blasphemy and idolatry if He were not God since the worship of mere mortals is idolatrous and sinful (**Exod 20:1-5; Deut 5:6-9; Rom 1:18-23**). Jesus' accepting to be worshipped is unlike even the response of angels when people tried to worship them. When the Apostle John fell down at the feet of an angel to worship him, the angel protested and said, *"Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours"* (**Rev 19:10; 22:8-9**). It also is the exact opposite of what happened when Cornelius tried to worship Peter (**Acts 10:25-26**) and when the people in Lystra thought that Paul and Barnabas were two gods who had come to earth in human form and wanted to make sacrifices to them. Paul and Barnabas vehemently objected to this and said, *"We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God"* (**Acts 14:11-18**). That is the response that any monotheistic Jew would have and should have made to someone trying to worship him. The fact that Jesus did not object, but accepted people's worshipping Him, showed that He knew that He was God who had come to earth as a man.

6. Jesus proved that He is God by doing what only God could do after His own death:

- a. He rose from the dead (**Matt 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-7; John 2:18-22; Acts 2:29-32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 13:26-37; 17:31; 26:22-23; Rom 1:4; 4:24-25; 6:4-10; 8:11, 34; 14:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:4, 20-23; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:15; 13:4; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; Phil 3:10; Col 1:18; 2:12; 1 Thess 1:10; 2 Tim 2:8; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 1:3, 21; 3:21; Rev 1:5, 18**).
- b. He appeared to many witnesses in bodily form after rising from the dead (**Matt 28:8-10, 16-20; Mark 16:9-14; Luke 24:13-49; John 20:11-29; 21:1-14; Acts 1:1-8; 5:30-32; 10:40-41; 13:30-31; 1 Cor 15:5-8**).
- c. He could appear and disappear in bodily form at will (**Luke 24:30-31, 36-43; John 20:19-20, 26-29**).
- d. He ascended to heaven in the presence of witnesses (**Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11**; see also **Mark 16:19; Acts 1:1-2; 2:33-35; 3:20-21; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20-2:6; 4:10; Col 3:1; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:3; 4:14; 7:26; 8:1; 9:24; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22**).
- e. He was seen in heaven by witnesses on earth (**Acts 7:55-56; Rev 4:1-5:10**).
- f. He could appear to people on earth and communicate with them (**Acts 9:1-7, 10-17; 22:17-21; 23:11; 26:12-18; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8; Rev 1:9-3:22; 22:12-13, 16, 20**).

B. *Jesus Christ is fully man*

1. Jesus had a human genealogy (**Matt 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38; John 7:42; Rom 1:3; 9:5; Gal 3:16; 2 Tim 2:8**).
2. Jesus had a human gestation and birth (**Matt 1:18-2:1; Luke 1:31; 2:1-20; 11:27; Rom 1:3; Gal 4:4**).
3. Jesus had a human body of flesh, blood, and bone (**Luke 22:44; 24:39-40; John 1:14; 19:34; 20:19-29; Rom 1:3; 8:3; Phil 2:7; Col 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 2:14; 10:5; 1 Pet 2:24; 1 John 1:1-3; 4:2; 2 John 7**).
4. Jesus identified Himself as a "man" (**John 8:40**) and was recognized as a "man" by others (**Matt 8:9, 27; 12:23-24; 13:54, 56; 26:61, 71-72, 74; Mark 2:7; 6:2; 14:71; 15:39; Luke 5:21; 7:8, 39, 49; 9:9; 15:2; 23:2, 4, 6, 14, 18, 22, 41, 47; John 1:30; 4:29; 6:52; 7:12, 15, 25, 27, 35, 46, 51; 9:11, 16, 29, 33; 10:33; 11:37, 47, 50; 18:14, 17, 40; 19:5, 12; Acts 2:22-23; 5:28; 6:13; 17:31; 25:19; Rom 5:15; 1 Cor 15:21, 47; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2; Phil 2:8; 1 Tim 2:5**).
5. Jesus experienced all of the normal human, bodily experiences:
 - a. He grew (**Luke 2:40, 52**).
 - b. He was hungry and thirsty, ate and drank (**Matt 4:2; 21:18; 27:48; Mark 11:12; 15:36; Luke 4:2; 24:41-43; John 4:6; 19:28-30**).
 - c. He became tired and slept (**Matt 8:24; Mark 4:38; Luke 8:24**).
 - d. He experienced weariness and weakness (**Matt 4:11; 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26; John 4:6**).
 - e. He suffered (**Matt 20:17-19; 26:67; 27:26-31; Mark 9:12; 10:32-34; 14:65; 15:16-20; Luke 22:63-64; 23:11; John 4:6; 18:22; 19:1-3; Heb 5:8**).
 - f. He died and was buried (**Matt 27:50, 57-66; Mark 15:37, 39, 42-47; Luke 23:46, 50-56; John 19:30-42; Acts 25:19; Rom 5:8; 1 Cor 15:3-4; Phil 2:8; Heb 2:14**). When He died, out of His side came blood and water (**John 19:34**).
6. Jesus had normal human emotions and expressed them:
 - a. He felt compassion (**Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 6:34; 8:2; Luke 7:13**).
 - b. He loved (**Mark 10:21; John 11:5, 36; 13:23; 15:10, 12; 21:20**).
 - c. He got angry (**Matt 21:12-13; Mark 3:5; 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46; John 2:13-16**).
 - d. He felt sorrow (**Matt 26:38**).
 - e. He marveled (**Matt 8:10; Mark 6:6**).
 - f. He rejoiced and experienced joy (**Luke 10: 21; John 13:11**).
 - g. He was moved and troubled in spirit and experienced grief, agony, and distress (**Matt 26:37-38; Mark 3:5; 14:33-34; Luke 22:44; John 11:33, 38; 12:27; 13:21**).
 - h. He wept (**Luke 19:41; John 11:35; Heb 5:7**).

7. Jesus had a normal human mind (**Mark 13:32; Luke 2:40, 52; John 4:1; 5:6; 7:1; Heb 5:8-9**).
8. Jesus had a normal human will (**Matt 26:39; John 6:38**).
9. Jesus experienced human temptation (**Heb 2:18; 4:15**; see also **Matt 4:1-10; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-12; 2 Cor 5:21**).

a. *The relationship between Christ's humanity and His sinless nature.* In **Rom 8:3** "Paul says that God sent His Son into the world in the form of sinful flesh (*en homoiōmati sarkos hamartias*). He is emphasizing that Christ was really man. He bore a physical body fashioned according to the human body which is infected with sin. In outward form He was in no way different from other men. But Paul does not say that He came *en sarkos hamartias* [in sinful flesh]. With his *en homoiōmati* [in the form] Paul is showing that for all the similarity between Christ's physical body and that of men there is an essential difference between Christ and men. He became man without entering the nexus of human sin. The words *en homoiōmati* keep us from the deduction which Paul does not wish us to make, namely, that Christ became subject to the power of sin, and did in fact sin. For Paul Christ is sinless [**2 Cor 5:21**]. . . . The *homoiōma* thus indicates two things, first the likeness in appearance, and secondly the distinction in essence. . . . There is a similar statement in Phil. 2:7: Christ took the form of a servant, came into the world in the form of a man (*en homoiōmati anthrōpōn genomenos*), and was found in fashion as a man. . . . He truly became man, not merely in outward appearance, but in thought and feeling. He who was the full image of God became the full image of man. . . . This is only another way of saying what [John] says in 1:14: *ho logos sarks egeneto* [the word became flesh]. Paul does not say with any clarity how far the being of Christ was affected by this change. . . . But the fact that as man He accomplished what no other man could do, i.e., perfect obedience, leads necessarily to the conclusion that even as man He remained at the core of His being what He had been before. The earthly *morphē* [form] is also the husk which encloses His unchanging essential existence, though as such it is, of course, a real human body." (Schneider 1967: 195-97)

b. *The reality of the temptations Christ faced even though He had a sinless nature.* "If it is asserted that temptation is real only if one can sin, then that leads to the odd conclusion that sinners are the experts on temptation. But the church has instinctively and correctly refused to take counsel on temptation from sinners. Rather, it has turned to the saints for such counsel. The sinners are those who yielded to temptation; and saints are those who have resisted because they understood it well enough to defeat it. . . . To be tempted is to enter into the gravitational field of seduction, for temptation is but a species of seduction. The essence of seduction in temptation is to present the evil as a good. . . . The essence of temptation is then how the tempted person manages the gravitational pull of seduction and not whether or not such a person may sin. If this is the nature of temptation then a sinless person who is at the same time genuinely human (and capable of entering realistically into such a gravitational field) can have genuine temptations without yielding to sin." (Ramm 1985: 81-82) The fact that Christ was tempted in all ways like we are yet never sinned means that He experienced the *full power and pull* of temptation because He resisted the temptation all the way to the end—unlike those who give in to the temptation before it has reached its full force.

10. Jesus experienced a normal human spiritual life:

- a. He was circumcised (**Luke 2:21**).
- b. He was baptised (**Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34**).
- c. He prayed (**Matt 26:36-44; Mark 14:35-36, 39; Luke 9:18; 10:21; 11:1; 22:41-45; John 17:1-26; Heb 5:7**).
- d. He fasted (**Matt 4:2; Luke 4:2**).
- e. He kept the Jewish religious ceremonies and worshiped in the temple and synagogue (**Mark 1:39; Luke 2:41-49; 4:16, 44; John 2:23**).
- f. He read and memorized Scripture (**Matt 4:4-10; 11:10; 21:42; 22:41-45; Mark 12:10-11, 35-37; Luke 4:4-12, 18-19; 7:27; 20:41-44; 22:37; John 6:45; 15:25**).
- g. He observed the Sabbath and obeyed the OT laws (**Matt 5:17; 17:24-27; 22:15-21; Luke 4:16; 20:20-25; John 7:10-14; 15:10**).
- h. He received the fullness of the Spirit (**Matt 3:16-4:1; Mark 1:10-12; Luke 3:22; 4:1**).

IV. Implications of the Fact that Jesus Christ is Fully God and Fully Man

A. God can be truly and personally known in Christ

In other monotheistic religions God is essentially an abstract idea. In polytheistic religions the gods are simply spirits. In neither case can God's (or the gods') true nature be known in a definitive and personal way. However, Christ is "the image of the invisible God" (**Col 1:15**). In Christ "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (**Col 2:9**). "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature" (**Heb 1:3**). "Jesus became human so that human beings could have some understanding of the infinite God. A second reason God chose to become a man was to bridge the gulf between God and humankind. If Jesus had been 'only' a man or created being, then the hugeness of the gulf between God and humanity—the infinite and the finite, the Creator and the created, the Holy and the unholy—would have remained. For us to be able to know God, God had to step down to us. No created being could have bridged the gigantic gap between God

and human beings any more than a piece of clay could aspire to understand and reach the level of the sculptor. Out of love, God took that step down to us. He wanted to open a way that all might come to know Him.” (McDowell and Larson 1983: 19) Thus, only in Christ can God be *truly* known. Further, the fact that God became a man and lived among us means that we can know Him *personally*. This makes Christianity unique among all the religions of the world.

B. Christ shows us what God’s true nature is and thereby also is our true example of how to live

Because Jesus is God, it is appropriate and necessary to believe in Him and worship Him. In fact, He equated faith in God with faith in Himself (**John 14:1**; see also **Acts 16:31**; **Rom 18:8-13**). However, because He is man, He is a true example for our character and how we should live our lives here on earth: “*By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked*” (**1 John 2:5-6**). With respect to patiently enduring unjust suffering for doing what is right, Peter says: “*This finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps*” (**1 Pet 2:20-21**). It is here that Christ’s divinity and humanity converge in a profound way, both for our understanding of who God is and what He is really like, and for our understanding of how we should then live. **Phil 2:5-11** describes how Christ was God (**2:5-6**) but emptied Himself to become a man, even a slave (**2:7**) who was obedient to the point of death on a cross (**2:8**); therefore, God highly exalted Him such that everyone will worship Him as Lord of all (**2:9-11**). “This passage amounts to a Christological statement of the identity of God. The exaltation of Christ to participation in the unique divine sovereignty shows Him to be included in the identity of God. But since the exalted Christ is first the humiliated Christ, since indeed it is *because* of his self-abnegation that he is exalted, his humiliation belongs to the identity of God as truly as his exaltation does. The identity of God—who God is—is revealed as much in self-abasement and service as it is in exaltation and rule. The God who is high can also be low, because God is God not in seeking his own advantage but in self-giving. His self-giving in abasement and service ensures that his sovereignty over things is also a form of his self-giving. Only the Servant can be the Lord. Only the Servant who is also the Lord receives the recognition of his lordship—the acknowledgement of his unique deity—from the whole creation.” (Bauckham 1998: 61) The fact that God’s true nature is revealed as much in self-abasement and service as it is in exaltation and rule has profound practical implications for how God personally identifies with us in our human condition. “Having taken on the form of poverty and the form of the slave, God in Christ *is* the impoverished slave. As such, God enters into the hurts of those who suffer so that from inside those hurts, being fully identified with them to the point of communicating his divinity through them, he heals them.” (Carter 2008: 368) God’s personal identification with us in Christ then leads us to identify with others since we have received the mind of Christ (**1 Cor 2:16**) and the Spirit of Christ (**Rom 8:1-17**). We treat others with love and forgiveness because that is the way Christ has treated us (**Eph 4:32**; **1 John 4:7-21**). Our lives and actions become more and more like Christ’s as we are conformed to His image (**Rom 8:29**; **12:1-2**). As with everything else, Christianity is unlike any other religion in the world. The Christian God is unlike any other god—and it is only Christ who reveals this.

C. Redemption from our sin is only possible because Christ is both fully God and fully man

All people intuitively know that we have a problem: we are separated from God because we are sinful and God is holy and perfect. The Bible correctly sees that mankind has a fatal flaw, an inner corruption known as indwelling sin (e.g., **Gen 6:5**; **Ps 51:5**; **Jer 17:9**; **Rom 3:9-18, 23**; **7:14-24**; **Gal 3:21-22**). The Bible also correctly sees that “*the wages of sin is death*” (**Rom 6:23**; see also **Gen 2:17**; **Ezek 18:4, 20**; **Rom 5:12**). All other religions in the world try to bridge the gap between people and God by making one’s salvation or acceptance with God dependent on what the individual person *does*: each person must try to “establish his own righteousness” (**Rom 10:3**) by performing certain religious rituals, making certain sacrifices, doing enough good deeds, etc. However, all such religions are doomed to failure because they all have a defective view of the nature of mankind. No amount of desire, willing, rituals, sacrifices, or other actions can change the fundamental problem of our inner corruption and the sinfulness of mankind’s heart. Consequently, we can *never* “establish our own righteousness” or “earn” our way to heaven, salvation, or acceptance with God by any amount of rituals, sacrifices, or other actions we may do (**Gal 2:16**). Out of all the religions in the world, Christianity alone recognizes that all people have a fundamental problem of a sinful nature, cannot change that, and cannot save themselves. Consequently, God chose to do for mankind what mankind could not do for itself. That is why God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. By taking on a human body “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” (**Rom 8:3**) and coming into the world, “the intrinsically sinless Christ became the representative of sinful mankind. Hence God, by giving up Christ to death, could condemn sin by destroying His body, and thus cancel it. Christ took the likeness of [sinful flesh] in order that God in Christ might achieve the liberation of mankind from sin.” (Schneider 1967: 196) Christ lived the life we should have lived. He was “*tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin*” (**Heb 4:15**; see also **2 Cor 5:21**; **Heb 2:18**). That qualified Him to be our representative with the Father, to die the death we should have died, and pay the penalty for our sins that we should have paid (**Rom 8:3-4**). As **1 Tim 2:5** says, “*There is one God, and one mediator also between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.*” A mediator is someone who brings together two parties who are opposed to each other. A mediator therefore has to identify with each of the parties. Because He is God, Christ identifies with God the Father. Because He is man, Christ identifies with us. Because He did not sin, He did not have to atone for His own sin. Instead, Christ could take our sin onto Himself, pay the price for our sin that we should have paid, and also impute to us His righteousness so that we could stand before God (**Isa 53:5-6, 10-11**; **Rom 10:4**; **2 Cor 5:21**; **Heb 2:17-18**; **1 Pet 2:4**; **3:18**). He alone can thereby reconcile us to God (**Col 1:19-20**). No one else who has ever lived—neither Muhammad, nor Buddha, nor anyone else—ever claimed to redeem people from their sins. And no one else who has ever lived was *qualified* to redeem people from their sins even if he wanted to do so because: (1) no one else who has ever lived was both God and man like Christ is; and (2) everyone else

who has ever lived has had his own sinful nature and actual sins to deal with (**Acts 4:12; Rom 3:9-18**). Consequently, Christianity alone recognizes that salvation is not, *and cannot be*, based on what we do, but is, *and can only be*, based solely on what Christ has done for us. Salvation cannot be earned by us but is a gift given to us by the grace of God through Christ (**Rom 5:18-21; 6:23; Eph 1:7; 2:4-5, 8-9**). Therefore, we can have confidence to approach God, because Christ is our advocate who intercedes for us with the Father (**Rom 8:34; Heb 4:16; 7:25; 1 John 2:1**).

APPENDIX 7—JESUS AND THE “SIGN OF JONAH” (MATT 12:38-41; 16:1-4; LUKE 11:29-32)

I. Introduction

In **Matt 12:38-41; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-32** when the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and crowds asked Jesus for a “sign,” Jesus replied that the only sign that would be given was “*the sign of Jonah*.” Jonah is the only prophet that Jesus directly compares Himself to. Because this was the only specific “sign” that Jesus promised, and because He specifically compared Himself only to Jonah, it is important to understand the depth of the “sign of Jonah.”

Matt 12:38-41	Matt 16:1-4	Luke 11:29-32
<p>³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” ³⁹ But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; ⁴⁰ for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.</p>	<p>¹ The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. ² But He replied to them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘<i>It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.</i>’ ³ And in the morning, ‘<i>There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.</i>’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot <i>discern</i> the signs of the times? ⁴ An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.”</p>	<p>²⁹ As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, “This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah. ³⁰ For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. ³¹ The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. ³² The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.</p>

II. The “Sign of Jonah”

“Luke 11:30 seems to identify the *person* of Jonah as a sign to the Ninevites and to indicate that in some parallel fashion the person of the Son of Man will be a sign to the current generation; Matt 12:40 connects the sign of Jonah with the *burial* of Jonah in the belly of the fish, such that the parallel is now to the death (and, we may assume, resurrection) of the Son of Man. Further, in both Luke 11:32 and Matt 12:41, it is the *proclamation* of Jonah that is deemed significant. . . . Luke and Matthew agree that the sign of Jonah will be the *only* sign that is given and they both seem to presume the inevitable condemnation of the generation that receives it.” (Powell 2007: 159-60) In **Matt 16:4** the “sign of Jonah” is left undefined. The identification of the *person, proclamation, and death/resurrection* between Jesus and Jonah—which indicates the depth of the “sign of Jonah”—is seen in the following parallels between Jesus and Jonah:

A. Identification with Galilee

Jesus’ was brought up in the town of Nazareth in Galilee (**Matt 2:22-23; 13:54; 21:11; 26:71; Mark 1:9, 24; 6:1; Luke 1:26; 4:14-16, 34; 18:37; John 1:45-46; Acts 10:38; 26:9**). In **John 7:52** the chief priests and Pharisees specifically attacked the idea that Jesus was the Messiah, telling Nicodemus “*You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.*” The Pharisees were wrong. Jonah was from the town of Gath-hepher (**2 Kgs 14:25**). Gath-hepher is a small village “about three miles northeast of Nazareth” in Galilee (Merrill 1980: 25).

B. Identification with the dove

“The name Jonah means ‘Dove,’ a symbol of peace. Christ is the Prince of Peace and made peace by the death of His cross (Isa. 9:6; Luke 2:14; John 14:27)” (Stanton 1951: 246). Further, at His baptism the Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove and rested on Jesus as a sign that Jesus was the Messiah (**Matt 3:16-17; John 1:32-34**).

C. Jonah’s being swallowed by the fish and the death and resurrection of Christ

There are several parallels between Jonah and Jesus concerning the fish, death, and resurrection:

1. The storm at sea (Jonah 1-2; Matt 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). “Jonah boards a boat headed in the opposite direction of the nation to which he had been directed to prophesy; Jesus sets off in a boat toward the ‘other side,’ leaving behind a crowd that presses upon him” (Powell 2007: 160). The context of both accounts involves the movement from Jewish to Gentile territory. “As Jonah was in the ship it was seized by a mighty wind, and was tossed by ‘a mighty tempest in the sea.’ The sea ‘wrought and was tempestuous,’ and ‘the ship was like to be broken.’ In Matthew 8:23-27 Christ likewise was aboard a ship in a similar situation. There was ‘a great tempest in the sea,’ and ‘the ship was covered with the waves.’ Jonah lay down in the sides of the ship, fast asleep,

while the mariners cried out in fear and ‘cried every man unto his god.’ Christ lay ‘in the hinder part of the ship, asleep’ (Mark 4:38) until His disciples awoke Him, saying ‘Lord, save us: we perish.’ How similar is the Old Testament cry, ‘Arise, call upon thy God . . . that we perish not.’ In Jonah we read, ‘and the sea ceased her raging,’ and in Mark, ‘and the wind ceased, and there was great calm.’ (Stanton 1951: 246-47) After the sea was calmed, **Jonah 1:16** (LXX) says, “*And the men feared a great fear.*” Similarly, the Greek of **Mark 4:41** literally says, “*and they feared a great fear.*” Because Jesus is “greater than Jonah,” there are contrasts between the two. In the two accounts of the storms at sea, “Jonah was weary of God’s service. Jesus was weary *in* God’s service. Also, Christ did what Jonah could not do [but what God did in Jonah’s case]. He rebuked the wind and calmed the troubled sea, so that the men marveled at His mighty power.” (Ibid.: 247)

2. Self-sacrifice. “If we bear in mind the connections between Jonah 1 and the stilling of the storm, then we are in a better position to see that ‘the sign of Jonah’ involves more than Jonah’s three-day sojourn in the fish (Jonah 2:1) as a type of our Lord’s resurrection on the third day. *It also involves sacrificial death.* Jonah offered himself (Jonah 1:12) and descended to ‘the belly of Sheol’ (2:3 [2:2 in the Christian Bible]), where his ‘life ebbed away’ (2:8) [2:7 in the Christian Bible] in a kind of death that saved others, who believed and worshiped Yahweh (Jonah 1:15-16). All the more does the sacrificial death of the Son of Man atone for the sins of all humanity, and this salvation is received by all who believe in Him.” (Lessing 2007: 18-19) In this regard, just as in **Jonah 1:14** the sailors acknowledged that Jonah was “innocent blood,” so Judas admitted that he had betrayed “innocent blood” (**Matt 27:4**), and the centurion who crucified Jesus said, “*Certainly this man was innocent*” (**Luke 23:47**).

Nevertheless, Jesus is “greater than Jonah” in his self-sacrifice: “For all the similarities between these two bearers of grace, there is a critical difference. God’s love triumphed *over* Jonah. On the boat he displays the same cynical calculus as Caiaphas, wagering that it would be expedient to sacrifice one man for the life of the group (cf. John 11:50) . . . until he is ready to abandon all Nineveh for the sake of his soul. But Jesus is ‘greater than Jonah’ (Mat 12:41) in that God’s love triumphed *in* Jesus.” (Work 2007: 173) Jesus would not abandon sinful humanity but voluntarily gave Himself to bring reconciliation between sinful humanity and God. Jonah’s sacrifice spared the sailors from physical death; Jesus’ greater sacrifice saves humanity from the everlasting “second death.” “Thus ‘salvation belongs to Yahweh’ (Jonah 2:10) finds its fulfillment in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (Lessing 2007: 18). Timothy Keller summarizes: “How ironic it is that in Mark 4 the disciples ask, ‘Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?’ (Mark 4:38). They believe he is going to sleep on them in their hour of greatest need. Actually, it is the other way around. In the garden of Gethsemane, *they* will go to sleep on him. They will truly abandon him. And yet he loves them to the end. See? Jonah was thrown overboard for his own sin, but Jesus is thrown into the ultimate storm for *our* sin. Jesus was able to save the disciples from the storm because he was thrown into the ultimate storm.” (Keller 2015: 79-80)

3. Descent into Sheol (Hades). “*Sheol* is the opposite theological extreme of Yahweh’s presence and its dominant feature for its inhabitants is their separation from Him. . . . *Sheol* is not the Hebrew term for the underworld which awaits all people. It is exclusively reserved for those under divine judgment. . . . This means that Jonah’s use of *Sheol* in 2:3 [2:2 in the Christian Bible] indicates he is under Yahweh’s judgment.” (Lessing 2007: 12-13) The LXX (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) translates *Sheol* as *Hades*. In **Matt 12:40** Jesus compares Himself to Jonah and says that just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish “so will the Son of Man be . . . in the heart of the earth.” Although some people believe this to be simply a reference to the grave, more appears to be involved: “First, the term *kardias* (‘heart’) occurs in the LXX of Jonah 2:4 [‘*into the depth of the heart of the sea*’], where the reference is associated with *Sheol*. Second, the description of Jonah’s descent into *Sheol* in the LXX of Jonah 2:7 [2:6] is *katebēn eis gēn* (‘I went down to the earth’); here *gēn* = *h’eretz* = *Sheol*. Jesus is referring to His descent into *Sheol*. The primary meaning of the ‘sign of Jonah,’ then according to Matthew 12:40, is the correspondence between Jonah’s descent into *Sheol* and our Lord’s experience of death, especially when He—like Jonah—is ‘driven away from Yahweh’s presence’ (Jonah 2:5 [2:4]) when the Father abandons Him and He cries out, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Matt. 27:46). But this is not all, for the description of Jonah’s experience in chapter two is imbedded in a song of praise for deliverance from judgment. Matthew 12:40, therefore, also implies Christ’s resurrection . . . as deliverance from the experience of divine judgment. Jesus will be the one—and how much more so than Jonah—whose cry to the Father from the depths of *Sheol* will be heard and answered, whose life will be brought up from the pit (cf. Jonah 2:3, 7 [2, 6]; Heb. 5:7).” (Lessing 2007: 20-21) In **Acts 2:27-31** Peter refers to Christ’s resurrection and quotes from **Ps 16:10** that Jesus was not “*abandoned to Hades*.” The Hebrew of **Ps 16:10** refers to *Sheol*. Here again Jesus is “greater than Jonah”: Jonah was three days in the belly of the fish because of his own sin and disobedience; Jesus was three days in the heart of the earth because of his obedience on behalf of the sin of others.

4. Resurrection. “The resurrection is God’s great sign to Israel, as also seen in the speeches of Acts (2:24, 32, 36; 3:15; 13:30, 34, 37; 17:31)” (Osborne 2010: 486). A Jewish sermon from the 1st century “refers to Jonah’s emergence from the fish as both ‘a sign of rebirth’ and as a ‘sign of the truth.’ To the extent that Jonah is understood to have been in Sheol (see Jonah 2:2), his deliverance is also viewed as a resurrection. Indeed, a widespread tradition identified Jonah as the widow’s son raised by Elijah in 1 Kings 17:17-24. As one first-century writing puts it, Elijah raised Jonah from death ‘for he wanted to show him that it is not possible to run away from God.’ . . . All of this provides a backdrop for what we find in Matthew’s Gospel: Jonah’s temporary stay in the belly of the fish is a prophetic analogue for the death and resurrection of Jesus (explicit in Matt 12:40 and assumed in Matt 16:4). This should be the only sign Israel requires, but as Matthew tells it, the sign is obstinately rejected.

Later in the Gospel (but only in this Gospel), the religious leaders of Israel actually learn of the resurrection of Jesus (Matt 28:11-15). They are thus confronted with the promised sign of Jonah, but they respond not with repentance but with duplicity that only intensifies their opposition to the will and ways of God.” (Powell 2007: 161-62) Thus, in His resurrection Jesus again is “greater than Jonah”: Jonah was not literally raised from the dead (or, if he actually died in the fish he was only revived and lived to die again); Jesus suffered real, physical death and was truly resurrected to life again, from which He will never die. Further, Jesus is “*the first fruits of those who are asleep*” (1 Cor 15:20) and will bring the resurrection of life to all who are in Him (**John 5:28-29; 1 Cor 15:12-23, 50-58**).

5. “**Three days and three nights**” (**Matt 12:40**). The fact that Jesus was buried on Friday evening (**Matt 57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:31, 38-42**) and rose early on the following Sunday morning (**Matt 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-6; John 20:1**) does not contradict the reference to “*three days and three nights*.” That phrase is an idiom. “The *Babylonian Talmud* (Jewish commentaries) relates that, ‘The portion of a day is as the whole of it.’ The *Jerusalem Talmud* (so designated because it was written in Jerusalem) says, ‘We have a teaching, “A day and a night are an Onah and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it.”’” (McDowell 1981: 122) Since “Jewish reckoning considered a partial day to be a full day (cf. Gen 42:17-18; 1 Sam 30:12-13; Esth 4:16; 5:1 [see also 1 Kgs 20:29; 2 Chron 10:5, 12]), so Jesus was in the grave Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; and the terminology fits” (Osborne 2010: 486; see also Dellling 1964: 949-50). **Matt 27:63-64** shows the idiomatic usage of “three days” terminology specifically in connection with Jesus’ burial: In **27:63** the Pharisees went to Pilate and recalled that Jesus had said, “*After three days I am to rise again*.” Therefore, in **27:64** they requested that Pilate “*give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day*.” “If the phrase, ‘after three days,’ had not been interchangeable with the ‘third day,’ the Pharisees would have asked for a guard for the fourth day” (McDowell 1981: 122). That is confirmed in **John 2:18-19** where the Jews also asked Jesus for a sign. Jesus replied, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” (referring to the temple of His body, **John 2:21-22**). In commenting on that passage Martin Luther noted, “The Lord’s reply resembles that recorded in Matt. 12:39-40, where He says that no other sign will be given this evil generation ‘except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’ The answer is the same here; only the words and the figure of speech are different. He says: ‘This shall be your sign: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”’ That is: ‘I shall be the Jonah whom you will cast into the ocean and into the jaws of the whale, whom you will crucify and kill; and on the third day I shall rise again.’” (Luther 1957: 2:242)

D. The person

Jonah was a sign “*to the Ninevites*” (**Luke 11:30**). In that verse “the name Jonah should probably be taken as a genitive of apposition with *sēmeion* [‘sign’] so that he himself is the sign” (Merrill 1980: 24n.13; see also Osborne 2010: 485n.5 [the sign “*of Jonah the prophet*” is “an exegetical genitive, ‘the sign that is Jonah the prophet’]). “The ‘sign’ of Jonah the prophet, then, was like the sign of Isaiah and his sons (Isa. 8:18; compare 20:3), whose very presence in Judah represented the word of the Lord; like the altar and the pillar which were to be ‘a sign and witness’ to the Lord in the land of Egypt (Isa. 19:20); like Ezekiel, whose bereavement became a sign to the Jews in exile (Ezek. 24:24); like Paul, in whom were the signs or marks of a true apostle (II Cor. 12:12). In both the Old Testament and the New, that which calls attention to God’s decision-demanding presence and actions is called a ‘sign,’ whether or not it is described as miraculous.” (Scott 1965: 18-19) Although other prophets denounced ungodliness and pronounced judgment on pagan nations in addition to Israel, Jonah “is the only Hebrew prophet who is said to have traveled abroad to denounce in person the wickedness of a foreign nation and to proclaim its overthrow” (Ibid.: 20). The fact that he had been swallowed and regurgitated by a great fish probably was particularly important to the people of Nineveh, since Nineveh was called “Fishtown” and myths described it as having been founded by a fish-god (Merrill 1980: 26-30). Similarly, Jesus left His home in heaven and came to earth. Jesus’ coming had been foretold, and the fact that He had come from God was authenticated by His life and the miracles He performed. Further, “Luke’s use of the future tense (‘so the Son of Man *will be* to this generation’ . . . points inevitably to the parousia [see **Matt 24:30** ‘*then the sign of the Son of Man will appear*’]. Thus, for Luke the ‘sign of Jonah’ seems to have been a multivalent [i.e., having more than one meaning] symbol for Jesus himself and for the mission that began with his earthly preaching and would conclude with his glorious return.” (Powell 2007: 162) Here again Jesus shows Himself to be “greater than Jonah”: “*Jonah didn’t so love Nineveh that he gave them God. God so loved Nineveh that he gave them Jonah*.” (Work 2007: 171-72) So with Jesus: “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life*” (**John 3:16**).

E. The proclamation

On its face, Jonah’s proclamation to Nineveh (“*Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown*,” **Jon 3:4**) was an unqualified message of judgment. Nevertheless, Jonah himself realized that implicit in the message was a call to repentance and mercy (**Jon 4:2**). Jesus, unlike Jonah, never fled or required a second call. He began His public ministry by explicitly urging repentance and proclaiming God’s grace and salvation, “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel*” (**Mark 1:15**; see also **Matt 4:17**). The theme of judgment was implicit. Later in His ministry, Jesus’ proclamation of judgment on Israel became explicit (e.g., **Matt 21:33-45; 23:29-39; 24:1-2, 15-19, 32-34; Mark 12:1-12; 13:1-2, 14-19, 28-30; Luke 11:45-51; 13:34-35; 19:41-44; 20:9-19; 21:5-6, 20-24, 29-32**; and the “sign of Jonah” passages themselves). “As Jonah was saying, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown,’ so Jesus was

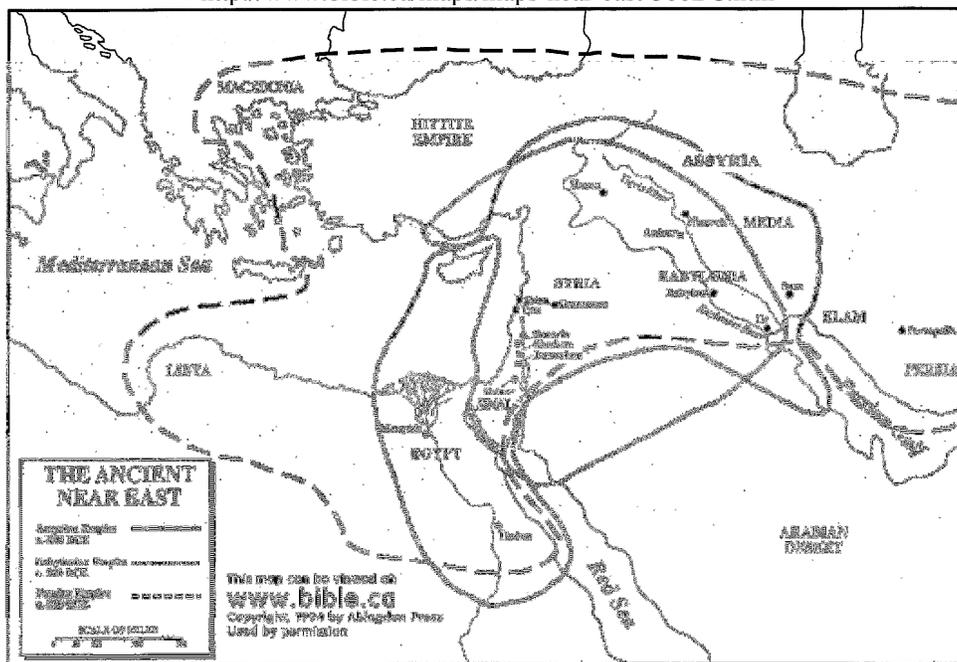
saying, by implication, ‘Yet forty years, and Jerusalem shall be overthrown’” (Wright 1996: 166n.95). Because He is “greater than Jonah,” Jesus alone offers both grace and new life, or judgment, based on one’s acceptance or rejection of Him. Ironically, although the pagan Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah, Jesus’ own people—the nation of Israel—did not repent and believe in Jesus. Jesus therefore argued in **Luke 11:32**: “Those who ignore his words are worse than the Ninevites, who repented at the grossly inferior preaching of Jonah. The note of absurd hyperbole (the Ninevites may end up being their judges in the day of reckoning) indicates that his comments retain the ironic spirit that characterizes the book of Jonah itself. His interest was not to promote the righteousness of Gentiles at the expense of Israel but to shock Israel into the realization that they were not living up to reasonable expectations [cf. **Matt 5:47**, ‘even the Gentiles’]. The ‘something greater’ theme would thus apply to Israel as much as to himself: his preaching may represent something greater than that of Jonah, but then the covenant people of God are (or should be) something greater than the people of Nineveh. So there is a double irony: the Son of Man’s preaching is turning out to be less effective than that of the reluctant prophet, and the covenant people of God are revealing themselves to be more obstinate than the notorious Ninevites.” (Powell 2007: 163-64)

III. Conclusion: The Relevance of the Sign of Jonah for the Church Today

The “sign of Jonah” reveals God’s (and Christ’s) concern both for Jews and Gentiles. “God asks Jonah to discern his sovereign redemptive purpose in the display of mercy to the Gentiles. And the purpose of showing mercy is reflexive—to provoke Israel to conviction, humiliation and repentance. God gives repentance unto life to the Ninevites so that a sign will be recorded in the canon of the Scriptures of Israel. God gives repentance to the Gentiles through Jonah in order to anticipate the mission of one greater than Jonah. . . . [Jesus] commissioned his representatives to go to the Gentiles and command men everywhere to repent and believe. And lo, the Gentiles do repent and believe. All of this serves God’s sovereign purpose to provoke Israel to jealousy (Rom. 10: 19; 11: 13, 14) that she may heed the voice of one greater than Jonah—one in whom the Gentiles come to the light and mercy of the Lord.” (Dennison 1993: 35) Consequently, “We can probably say that both Luke and Matthew connected the sign of Jonah for their own day with ‘the preaching of the church.’ It would be consistent with the theology of Luke to define the content of the church’s preaching as a call to repentance (Luke 24:47) grounded in a story of Jesus’ life and mission (Acts 1:1). It would be consistent with the theology of Matthew to define the content of the church’s preaching as being more focused on the death and resurrection of Jesus which is what grants him the authority to establish the new community of disciples with whom he abides until the end of the age (Matt. 28:18-20).” (Powell 2007: 164)⁷⁶ That mission will continue until Christ returns since the church is God’s instrument to proclaim the gospel to those whom Christ “*purchased for God with Your blood . . . from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” (**Rev 5:9**). That mission is even greater today than it was in Jonah’s day because in Christ there is no longer “Jew or Gentile” (**Gal 3:28; Col 3:11**), but “*in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity*” (**Eph 2:15-16**).

APPENDIX 8—MAP OF ASSYRIAN, BABYLONIAN, AND PERSIAN EMPIRES

<http://www.bible.ca/maps/maps-near-east-500BC.htm>



⁷⁶ Interestingly, “Drawings of Jonah appear more often in the Roman catacombs than any other Biblical figure” (Lessing 2007: 10). That may reflect that, in addition to Jesus’ saying that His disciples would be “fishers of men” (**Matt 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:10**), “the sign of Jonah” was behind the use of the “sign of the fish” as the secret symbol used by early Christians to mark meeting places, tombs, and to identify each other.

APPENDIX 9—MAP OF ROMAN EMPIRE & ITS PROVINCES

<http://www.bible.ca/maps/maps-roman-empire-peak-116AD.jpg>



The Roman Empire at its greatest in 116 AD

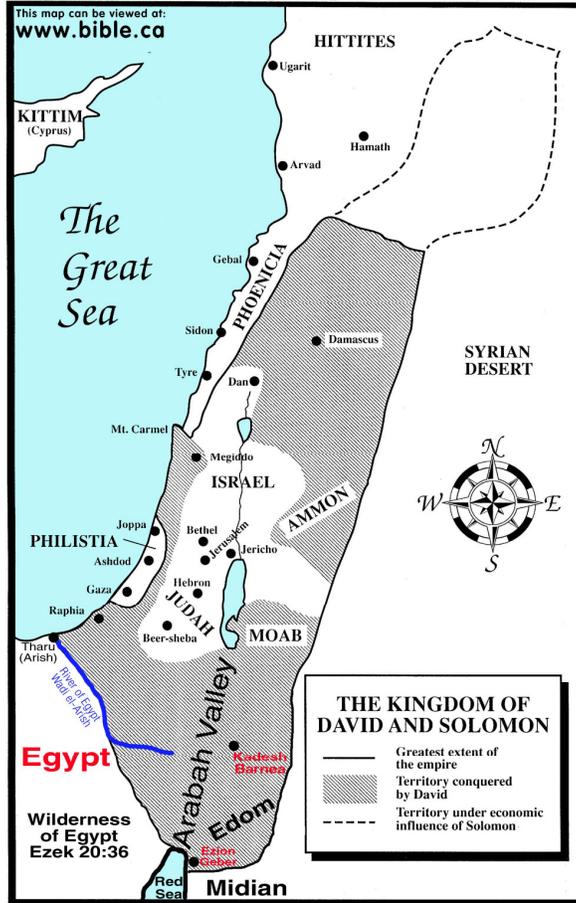
APPENDIX 10—MAP OF CANAAN: 12 TRIBE PORTIONS

http://www.bible-history.com/geography/maps/map_canaan_tribal_portions.html



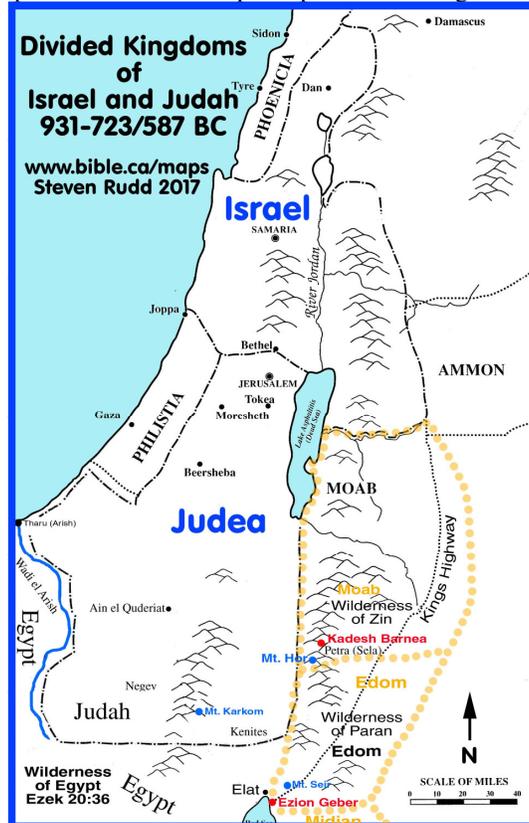
APPENDIX 11—MAP OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

<http://www.bible.ca/maps/maps-united-kingdom.htm>



APPENDIX 12—MAP OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOMS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

<http://www.bible.ca/maps/maps-divided-kingdom.htm>



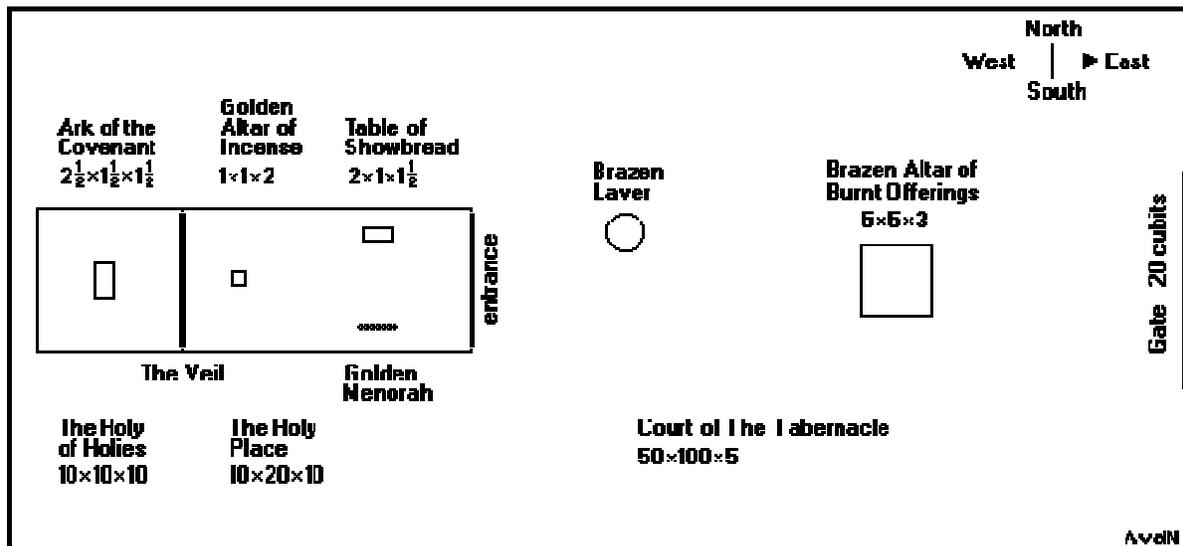
APPENDIX 13—MAP OF ISRAEL IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

http://www.bible-history.com/maps/palestine_nt_times.html



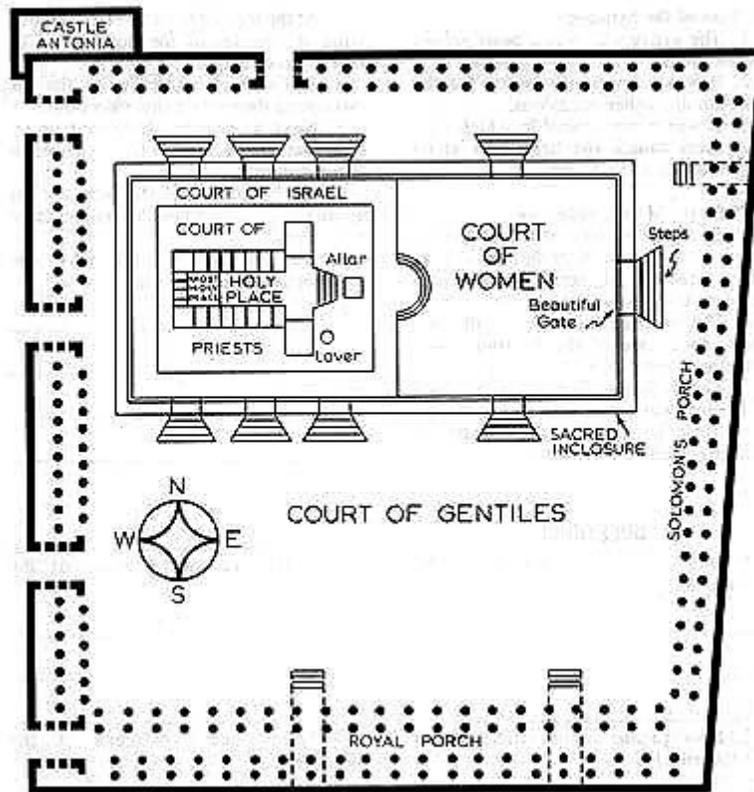
APPENDIX 14—DIAGRAM OF THE TABERNACLE

http://blogs.bible.org/impact/hal_warren/the_tabernacle_of_moses_%E2%80%93_god%E2%80%99s_heavenly_pattern_for_our_spiritual_transformation_part_v



APPENDIX 15—DIAGRAM OF THE SECOND (HEROD'S) TEMPLE

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/537828380471952314/>



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