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of that day. Isa. 23

APPLICATION

1. How may we apply the predicted inter-relationships between Israel, Egypt and Assyria, in Isaiah chapter 19:16-25?
2. What application may be made for the Christian today of the account of Sargon's exploits in Isaiah, chapter 20?
3. What application may be made for Christians of Isaiah's denouncement of Shebna in Isaiah 22:15-25?

SPECIAL STUDY

PROPHECY OF THE GRACE THAT WAS TO BE . . .

A Series of Four Outline-studies on Christ, the Church
and Salvation From the Old Testament Prophets

by Paul T. Butler

O.T. PROPHECY — A PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

I. O.T. PROPHETS — A UNIQUE PART OF GOD'S REVELATION OF HIMSELF TO MAN

- A. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets . . ." Heb. 1:1
1. Actually, a prophet was anyone who spoke God's message to God's people.
 2. Moses was a prophet.
 3. In the Hebrew way of classifying their Bible, the books

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from Joshua to Kings are called "The Former Prophets." So prophecy is more than prediction . . . it might even be history.

4. But a prophet was primarily a preacher.
- B. The N.T. emphasizes the significance of O.T. prophecy
 1. Jesus said that He came to *fulfill*—not abolish the law and the prophets Matt. 5:17.
 2. He told two on the way to Emmaus that if they did not recognize in Him all the fulfillment of the O.T. prophets they "were foolish men and slow of heart to believe." Lk. 24:25 ;
- C. N.T. writers (apostles) make frequent use of O.T. prophecy in their messages.
 1. Not just direct quotations, either, but just as significant is the way in which the very language (figurative) and thought of the prophets are appropriated and made a part of the Christian message.
 2. Even more significant is the basic premise of the N.T. that there is a *total fulfillment* of the O.T. in the N.T. (the books of Galatians and Hebrews are prime examples).

II. O.T. PROPHETS — PART OF GOD'S REVELATION WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND

- A. "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." Rom. 15:4
"Now these things (history of Israel's sins and God's judgments) happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come." I Cor. 10:11
- B. Prophecy is so grossly perverted by false teachers.
 1. All too often prophecy is so perverted as to make it completely misunderstood—the Word of God is actually made void by misuse of O.T. prophecy

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2. There are preachers and students of prophecy who seem to delight in playing on the fears and anxieties of people.
 - a. They like to prophesy war but say little of the things that make for peace.
 - b. They are much concerned to identify men and nations and focus attention on "antichrists" rather than on Christ.
 - c. They are more concerned to prove what prophecy says about Russia or about Israel, than to proclaim what it says about the kingdom of God.
3. SUCH EMPHASIS IS NOT ONLY WRONG, IT IS A PERVERSION BECAUSE ATTENTION IS FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON TRANSIENT EVENTS INSTEAD OF ON THE REDEMPTIVE ACTIVITY OF THE LIVING GOD.

III. OUTLINE OF O.T. PROPHETIC COMMUNICATION

- A. Aim
- B. Approach
- C. Application

DISCUSSION

I. AIM (Purpose)

A. Reveal

1. The "prophetic word is a lamp shining in dark place" to which Christians are to give heed (II Pet. 1:19); Christ expected Jews of His day to understand O.T. prophecy as being a revelation of His Person and His Work and to believe it (Lk. 24, etc.) BUT THE WAY IT IS TREATED BY MOST PREACHERS TODAY IT IS USED MORE TO OBSCURE AND HIDE THAN IT IS TO REVEAL.
2. The nature and person of God is revealed in O.T. prophecy.

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- a. His wisdom; His holiness; His love; His justice;
 - b. His power to know men and nations as they are and as they will be
 - c. His power to overcome and use the evil actions of world empires to serve His purposes of bringing about redemption
 - d. His goodness and love to deliver man when men trust Him and live by faith in Him
 - e. His absolute faithfulness and trustworthiness to keep His word; to judge sin and rebellion; to reward faith and good works.
3. The potential of man is revealed
- a. His potential to be what God intended—holy, true, good, helpful, as exemplified by men like Hosea, Daniel, Jeremiah, etc.
 - b. His potential to be what the devil can make him; perverse, insensible, cruel, unjust, inhuman, as exemplified by the nations of Israel, Judah, Babylon, Persia, etc.
4. The plan and program of God for the redemption of man is revealed
- a. The coming of a King-Shepherd to rule in justice, righteousness, victory, wisdom, understanding, one like David (Isa., Jer., Ezek.)
 - b. The establishment of an everlasting kingdom in which everyone will be secure, peace-filled, blessed with abundance of the good things of God; this kingdom will be universal; it will conquer people of all nations (Isa., Dan., Joel.)
 - c. Restored fellowship on a personal basis with God (Hosea, Isa., Ezek., Zech.). A new covenant relation with God.
 - d. A reborn people in this kingdom; with a new name; a new language; a new heart and spirit; a new priesthood; a new temple; (Isa., Jer., Ezek., Zech.)
 - e. During the time of the prophets God is working to "finish the transgression, put an end to sin, atone

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for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal both vision and prophet, and anoint a most holy place." Dan. 9:24—GOD SUMMARIZED HIS WHOLE WORK OF REDEMPTION AS HE WAS GOING TO FINISH IT FROM THE TIME OF DANIEL ON TO CHRIST. . . . THIS IS WHAT ALL THE PROPHETS PREACHED AND WORKED FOR . . . TO REVEAL THIS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THEIR DAY.

B. Relate

1. The aim of God was to bring sinful man and the holy God into a confrontation and so He spoke through the prophets.
2. Language makes the communication of minds possible. By language it is possible for one person to superimpose his will and personality upon another.
3. Man cannot relate to God unless man knows first that God exists and what kind of God He is (Heb. 11:6).
4. God must show man and tell man . . . CONFRONTATION INVOLVES THE MEETING OF MINDS IN TRUTH! LANGUAGE CONVEYS TRUTH (or falsehood).
5. By means of verbal communication, one mind can make contact with the mental world of another mind and thus a relationship.
6. The aim is to get the covenant people to relate to God in a person to Person relationship. This could only be done when the truth concerning God's Person was communicated. As long as they continued to conceive of Him (sin darkened minds) as less than personal (like the heathen gods about them), there could be no personal encounter.
7. Without communication there is an impenetrable boundary to personal encounter. Human language forms the limitation of man's ability to send or receive communication. In fact, language is necessary even for the mind of man to communicate with himself. Man's finite experience is the totality of his experience. He knows not how to communicate except by using words

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to symbolize his own experiences.

8. God spoke to man in man's experiences with man's language.
9. It is our privilege and responsibility to study, assimilate and appropriate the personality of our Creator as He communicates through the prophetic message.

C. Redeem

1. God is not just talking to man to be talking. He is not just talking to man for some selfish, egotistical reasons; or because He is lonesome.
2. He is telling men of His nature and His plans for them in order to change them.
3. He wants to change their minds and actions toward Him and thus to change their minds and actions toward others and toward themselves.
4. He knows that men, created moral beings, inevitably take on the character of that which they love (Hosea 9:10; Psa. 115:3-8).
5. God wants to bring men into a personal relationship to Himself so intimate that only the marriage relationship on earth can provide a meager human representation. . . . God wants to be provider, lover, protector.
6. He wants to deliver man from his enemy who enslaves man with false information and false actions; to deliver man from the tyranny and misery of hate, envy, pride.
7. He wants to make man over into a person of reason, love, truth, selflessness, happiness, peace and faithfulness, FIT TO LIVE IN A COMMUNITY OF OTHER SUCH PERSONS.
8. This is the ultimate aim of God's prophetic communication.

II. Approach

A. Educate

1. Sermons
 - a. The primary way in which the prophets communi-

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cated to the people was in preaching.

- b. This often took the form of recounting the history of the nation and the miraculous deeds of God in dealing with the people in matters of judgments and deliverances (sermonizing on the various times their ancestors were punished for sin and various times they were delivered by God's overcoming their enemies).
- c. At other times their sermons expounded the law of Moses, reminding the people of its commandments and interpreting its spiritual meaning.
- d. At other times their sermons were composed of expositions of current events.
- e. Sermons were always intended to communicate by appealing to the minds, the intellect, the reasoning powers of the people.
- f. The prophets expected the people to, first of all, think, **BECAUSE REPENTANCE IS A MATTER OF CHANGING THE MIND BEFORE ANY OTHER EFFECT CAN BE PRODUCED!**

2. Signs

- a. The prophets were great educators. They knew that 80% of the learning process is done through the "eye-gate."
- b. They were convinced that symbolism and object-lessons were needed to communicate to a people whose minds had built-in resistance to any kind of spiritual message.
- c. More often than not their signs were primarily designed to confirm that their message was from God (Jeremiah and Hananiah, Jer. 28).

3. Stunts

- a. Jeremiah (waistcloth rotted; the potter and spoiled vessel; the broken vessel; the yoke; the purchased field)
- b. Ezekiel (scratching a picture upon a brick; lying on his sides 390 days and 40 days; shaving his head;)

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- c. One prophet was told to walk through the streets clad only in his underclothing.
- d. Many prophets put their sermons into song form.
- e. One prophet was forbidden to marry; one was forbidden to mourn when his wife died.
- f. **IT IS EASY TO SEE THAT WHEN WE READ THE PROPHETS, WE ARE NOT READING ORDINARY LITERATURE!**

B. Electrify

1. It takes more than mere relating of facts and ideas to communicate. Especially is this true with people so materialistically oriented as the Jews of the prophet's day.
2. Somehow these facts about who God is and what He does and the ideas of what He is going to do (about the Messianic kingdom) must be made to register on sin-calloused minds—the impression of God's nature must be imprinted there—the expectation of His program for the world must be etched on their souls.
3. They must be made to feel, to know, to think, to participate.
4. The prophets were actually called upon to be creative artists . . . they must use words in such a way as an artist uses paints or a musical genius uses tones and sounds. They must actually deliver their message in such a way as to involve their audiences intellectually, emotionally, willingly, spiritually . . . they must **ELECTRIFY!**
5. They must be poets, orators, dramatists, story-tellers; they must use every type of figure of speech available—vision, type, metaphor, parable, parallelism, hyperbole, personification, fable.
6. **IT WILL BE APPARENT TO ANYONE WHO STUDIES THE PROPHETS VERY LONG THAT MUCH OF WHAT THE PROPHETS SAID MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS SYMBOLIC TYPICAL AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE!**

C. Eventuate

1. Because God's plan for the redemption of man was to

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be fulfilled many centuries future to the time of the prophets, they had to speak of what God was GOING TO DO (through the Messiah and His kingdom) in terms the people of their day would understand!!

2. Much of the predictive element of the prophets is couched in figurative language; types, symbols, metaphors, etc.
3. Their mission was to call the covenant people back to renewed faith in the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant promises God had made with their forefathers (Abraham, Moses, David, etc.).
4. THAT COVENANT WAS TO FIND ITS FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH (we know this from the N.T., Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, etc.). BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETS DAY MUST HAVE THESE GLORIOUS EVENTUALITIES COMMUNICATED IN ELECTRIFYING, SYMBOLIC TERMS THEY WOULD UNDERSTAND . . . THIS IS WHAT WE CALL "TIMES-COLORING." IT IS A METHOD WE USE EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES TO COMMUNICATE IN VIVID, ARRESTING WAYS!

III. Application

A. Relevancy

1. The basic issues of life are the same today as they were in the days of the prophets.
 - a. Where did I come from, why am I here, where am I going?
 - b. What is life all about, is life worth living, is Anyone in control of events, where is everything headed?
2. Men still trust in material strength and delight in wealth and luxury while they forget God. There is nothing particularly new about lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery.
3. Oppression and injustice are rampant. Men still tend to heed the politician or leader who presents the pleasant message and assures them that their deeds are satisfactory.

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4. Men prefer to make amends by ritual and lip service rather than self-denial and moral purity.
5. The prophets, properly interpreted, speak to these issues as though they were among us today . . . presenting their thoughts in unforgettable figures of speech.
6. With crime, injustice, immorality, international conflict on every hand . . . with gigantic powers populated by hundreds of millions of pagans threatening to destroy everything that resembles godliness . . . **THE PROPHETS DEFINITELY ARE RELEVANT TO ALL WHO WILL GIVE HEED!**

B. Realism

1. The electrifying, vivid, symbolism and typical figures used by the prophets gives them a **REALISM** that is especially needful in our day when there is so much that is **unreal**.
2. There is a tone and flavor of spirituality and reverence for that which is good and true and pure that is needed in our day.
3. The figures of speech, the associations of truth with the common experiences of man, give a needed realism to the message of God as the prophets proclaimed it.
4. The scope of history dealt with, the working of God in these great spans of history, the reactions of men to God's involvement in men's affairs . . . all give us a perspective that is desperately needed.
5. **THE PROPHETS HAD AN UNCANNY, PERCEPTIVE WAY OF RELATING THE UNEXPERIENCABLE TO THE EXPERIENCABLE . . . AND THIS IS THE VERY SUPREME NEED OF MAN (as witness the current popularity of occultism). The prophets received their information from the Supernatural God . . . this they proved by demonstrations of the miraculous.**

C. Renewal

1. The whole counsel of God for the renewal of man was proclaimed by the prophets.
2. A message and a demonstration of God the Savior;

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about redemption; about God's Messiah and Servant who would accomplish His work; about salvation and redemption originating in the grace of God; about man appropriating that salvation through faith, repentance, obedience to the revealed will of God. This was God's plan of salvation; it is God's plan of salvation. Covenant terms are made surer; covenant requirements for appropriating it are changed; but the plan is basically the same.

3. There has never been more than one Savior, and that is God. In the fullness of time, God manifested Himself in the flesh in Jesus Christ, but He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
4. There has never been more than one way of salvation, the way of faith in the person and promises of God and repentance toward the will of God.

CONCLUSION

I. Good News

- A. The prophets did not have the fullness of the gospel in the sense in which it was actualized in Christ.
- B. They predicted it, promised it and did so graphically.
- C. The prophets had all the particulars, but they just did not know what person it would be or when it would be . . . but God even revealed that to them. (I Pet. 1:10-12)
- D. The good news is this: "What God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord . . ." (Acts 3:18-19)
- E. These days of the New Testament dispensation are the days that "all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came afterward" predicted. (Acts 3:24)

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II. All things are yours.

- A. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth: “. . . All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” I Cor. 3:21-22.
- B. All the glorious things promised by the prophets in such glorious, exciting, expectant terms, belong to Christians. Everything they said about Zion, the church (Heb. 12); about victory; about peace; about the presence of the Holy God; about security; about abundant prosperity (spiritual prosperity—which, after all, is the only lasting, satisfying prosperity) . . . ALL BELONGS TO THE CHRISTIAN.

III. Conditioned upon your acceptance

- A. How do we accept them?
- B. By believing . . .
- C. By repenting . . .
- D. By obeying the covenant terms . . .

O.T. PROPHECY — A PREDICTION OF THE CHRIST

“Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: The Lord is our righteousness.” (Jer. 23:5-6)

INTRODUCTION

I. Give us a king.

- A. Thousands of years ago in the days of Samuel, God’s

chosen nation cried for a king.

1. Samuel was told by God, "They have not rejected you, they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." (I Sam. 8:7)
2. They wanted a "king like the nations."
3. Ever since the Garden of Eden men have been rejecting the kingship of God in favor of earthly kings.
4. And they have been doing it for the very same reason; THE DEVIL HAS DECEIVED THEM INTO BELIEVING THAT THIS CARNAL WORLD IS ALL THE WORLD THERE IS. The devil has deceived man into thinking that man can be his own sovereign and rule the world.

B. So God gave them a "king like the nations" SAUL (handsome, proud, personable, magnetic, a leader of men).

1. But he was also vain, jealous, headstrong.
2. He refused to submit to the will of God as preached through God's prophet.
3. He made a mess of the kingdom; he tyrannized the people with taxes and other oppressive measures; he led the people into sin; he becomes insane and helpless; the nation is helpless.

II. God is King.

A. God can be rejected, but He cannot be dethroned. They have rejected God from being King, but they never dethroned Him, and He is still ruling.

1. God appoints another king—David. Now, God says, I have chosen ME a king—not from outward appearance, but I have looked upon his heart.
2. Whatever we may think about David—in the matter of Kingship of God, he always recognized it. Whether in victory or defeat, or in sin or repentance, there is not a single sentence or act in which he either ignores or forgets the Kingship of God.
3. God is attempting to call His people back to submission to Divine sovereignty as He rules through David—

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but David is human and cannot rise above his humanity. He fails and falls.

- B. But David serves as a type of The King, who is to come.
1. As shepherd of the people; as deliverer; as just judge; as builder of God's house—David served as a picture of the King God was going to send.
 2. And so the prophets predicted that The Ultimate King God would send would be of the lineage and family of David.

III. Man cannot be his own king.

A. Proven from history and experience

1. Other men are inadequate to lead their fellowmen.
2. Man cannot govern himself as he should (provide, control, secure, etc.).

B. But man is a creature.

1. And will surrender to some sovereignty or other.
2. Rom. 6 (we will obey whomever we yield ourselves to as servants).

DISCUSSION

VI. Chronology

A. Jesus expected the Jews of His day to have some knowledge of the *time* the Messiah was to appear.

1. "And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, When it is evening, you say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be stormy today for the sky is red and threatening. You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."
2. As thoroughly as the rabbis and scribes studied the

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- O.T. prophets they should have known almost the very year when the Messiah would appear (anointed one).
- B. Daniel 9:24-27; "Seventy Weeks of Years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy thing or one (place)."
1. These 70 weeks of years are to begin "from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem" 457 B.C. (Artaxerxes' decree for the Jews to rebuild their commonwealth).
 2. 7—7's (or 49 years later) 408 B.C. the Jewish commonwealth was restored officially.
 3. 62—7's (or 434 years later) we come to the year 26 A.D. when Jesus Christ was baptized and anointed with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.
 4. This is the 70th week. In the midst of this 70th week the anointed one is to be "cut off."
 5. Christ was crucified in the middle of the last prophetic week or 3½ years after the beginning of His public ministry.
 6. For 3½ years after the death of Christ the gospel privileges were confined to the Jews by reason of providence.
 7. The prophecy that 490 years (70 weeks of years) would be allotted to the Jews for completing God's redemptive work with them was finally fulfilled for after that 3½ years Paul took the gospel to the Gentiles.
- C. The Jews should have been watching their prophecies and they should have known almost the very year in which the Anointed One of God was to appear.
1. I believe some of the more spiritual-minded Jews were aware that He was to appear when He did (Joseph of Arimethea, Mk. 15:43).
 2. Simeon the old prophet in Luke 2, "was looking for the consolation of Israel." Of course, the Holy Spirit had

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revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ.

3. When John the Baptist began preaching like he did, it appears that multitudes of people had already been in expectation, and they questioned in their hearts whether perhaps he was the Christ. Lk. 3:15
- D. They knew well what the O.T. prophets said about *where* the Messiah was to be born . . . Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2; Cf. Matt. 2:1-6)
- E. These prophecies (and scores of others) can find their fulfillment only in Jesus of Nazareth, born 4 B.C. in the days of Caesar Augustus; Quirinius, governor of Syria; Herod the Great.
 1. These prophecies can find fulfillment only in a Person; never in a nation.
 2. IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON (KING, ANOINTED ONE).
 3. When there was a universal language; when there was political stability; when the Jews had been dispersed over the world GOD PREDICTED IT 600 YEARS EARLIER . . . THEN FULFILLED IT EXACTLY ON TIME.

II. Character

A. Man

1. Promise was made to David that his house and throne would be established forever. (II Sam. 7:16)
2. That promise is repeated over and over again through the Psalms and the Prophets. Amos 9:11-12 speaks of raising again the "tabernacle" (household) of David in the last days (fulfilled in Acts 15).
3. Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given . . ."
4. Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots . . ."
5. Isaiah 7:14 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear

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- a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
6. On first consideration it may not seem important that God’s Messiah-King should come as a man.
 7. But I think this is why they rejected God as their King in the first place. God was off in heaven, far removed from their experiences and problems (they thought)—HOW COULD GOD KNOW HOW TO RULE OVER THEM, LIVING OFF THERE IN HEAVEN—WHAT WE NEED, THEY FOOLISHLY REASONED, IS A HUMAN KING, ONE LIKE THE NATIONS, ONE TOUCHED WITH OUR INFIRMITIES.
 8. Jeremiah 33:14-16: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: The Lord is our righteousness.”
 9. Zechariah 6:12: “Behold, the *man* whose name is the Branch . . .”
 10. In Daniel 7:13ff Daniel is given a vision of one coming with the clouds of heaven—one like a *son of man*, who came to the Ancient of Days, to whom was given glory and dominion and an everlasting kingdom. . . . THIS IS SPEAKING OF THE FIRST COMING OF THE MESSIAH.
- B. God
1. If there is one thing emphasized by the prophets it is that in the “last days” when God restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem . . . when the kingdom of God is established on the earth . . . THEN GOD WILL RULE AS KING IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE.
 2. Isaiah calls Him, Immanuel (God with us); Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 3. Ezekiel closes his great vision of the glorious future kingdom of God (the church) by saying, “And the

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name of the city henceforth shall be, The Lord is there." Ezek. 48:35

4. Joel writes: "So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who dwell in Zion, my holy mountain . . . for the Lord dwells in Zion." Joel 3:17, 21
5. Obadiah says, "Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." Obad. 21
6. Micah: "And the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore." Micah 4:7
7. Zephaniah: "The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more. . . . The Lord, your God, is in your midst . . ." Zeph. 3:15, 17
8. Zechariah: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you says the Lord." Zech. 2:10ff (see also 8:1-8; 13:9)
9. Malachi: "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming . . ." Mal. 3:1

C. God-Incarnate

1. Since no mortal sits "in a house by the side of the road" and watches all of history pass by, no one, from a human viewpoint can answer the question, "Where is history going? —What is life all about?"
2. What man needs is someone from a suprahuman sphere who knows the historical process in its entirety.
3. Such a supernatural person did invade the human sphere in the Person of Jesus Christ—revealed to men the nature and significance of history and human life and brought men into contact with eternal values.
4. This Person was born in a stable in Bethlehem nearly 2000 years ago. He was born when God said He would be; He was born where God said He would be born.
5. He was Who God said he would be.
"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth,

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a man attested to you by God with mighty works and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ. . . ." Acts 2:22, 36

6. Mankind constitutes a kingdom which has been invaded by a rebel—a usurper—the devil.
 - a. The devil is called the ruler of this world, Jn. 12:13; 16:11.
 - b. He is called the god of this world, II Cor. 4:4.
 - c. Men are said to be in a great battle against the wiles of the devil . . . against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Eph. 6:12
 - d. Man gets himself into this kingdom of darkness which is ruled by the prince of darkness when man "walks and follows the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air. . . ." Eph. 2:2
7. God condescended to man's weakness and man's need to be delivered from the devil's rule.
 - a. So God became man and as Man conquered the devil.
 - b. Now if man willingly surrenders to the victorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords, man may be "delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son." (Col. 1:13)
 - c. Jesus Christ was God-Incarnate, "partaking of the same nature as man, that through death he might destroy him (the devil) who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage." Heb. 2:14-15

THE GREATEST BATTLE EVER FOUGHT WAS FOUGHT AT CALVARY AND AT THE GARDEN TOMB. THE TWO KINGS OF ETERNITY MET HEAD-ON AND HAD IT OUT IN EVERY ULTIMATE SENSE.

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This is the way the coming of God's Messiah is pictured in the O.T.—He is coming to wage a great and final battle with the enemies of God's people. . . . He will be victorious and God's people will be delivered from their enemies.

Colossians 2:8-15 refers to the fact that God triumphed over the powers of darkness in him (Christ).

EVERY MAN HAS AN OPTION TO EXERCISE. EVERY MAN MAY CHOOSE WHICH KINGDOM HE WANTS TO BE A CITIZEN IN. OF COURSE IT MEANS A MAN MUST SUBMIT TO THE RULE OF THE KING OF HIS CHOICE!

III. Commission

A. Rule

1. "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be *ruler* in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days." Micah 5:2
2. Isaiah 9:6-7 ". . . and the government will be upon his shoulder . . . of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore."
3. How does a King really rule? Only by the consent of the governed! A rule sustained only by sheer force is not a rule in reality . . . but only in appearance. Bodies may be controlled and manipulated by sheer force, but minds, real personality, is ruled by ideas— either by true ideas or false ideas.
4. God's King will rule by persuasion, by truth, by justice, by righteousness.
"Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." Jer. 23:5
". . . this is the covenant which I will make with the

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house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest . . ." Jer. 31:33-34

"Behold, the man whose name is the Branch. . . . It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear royal honor and shall sit and rule upon his throne. And there shall be a priest by his throne, and peaceful understanding shall be between them both. . . . And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the Lord." Zech. 6:12-13, 15

5. ". . . and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come and say: Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. . . ." Isa. 2:3

GOD WANTS TO REGAIN HIS RULE OVER MEN BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT ONLY AS HE RULES WILL THAT WHICH IS TRUE, REAL, GOOD AND ABIDING BE ACCEPTED AND ASSIMILATED BY MAN.

GOD WANTS TO RENEW HIS OWN NATURE IN THOSE WHO WILL SUBMIT TO HIS RULE. AND SINCE HE IS THE GOD OF TRUTH, HE SEEKS TO RULE ONLY BY MEANS OF TRUTH. HE WILL RULE WHEN MEN ACCEPT HIS WILL AND WORD TO BE WRITTEN ON THEIR MINDS AND HEARTS.

B. Provide

1. "And I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken." Ezek. 34:23
2. The rest of that chapter (Ezek. 34:25-30) speaks in glowing, figurative language of all the blessings God,

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- their King-Shepherd, is going to shower down upon them . . . "showers of blessing." THE PROPHET USES PHYSICAL, CONTEMPORARY TERMINOLOGY, BUT THE N.T. SHOWS THAT THE ESSENTIAL MESSIANIC BLESSINGS WERE SPIRITUAL. (Acts 3:26; Eph. 1:3-10)
3. Amos 9:11-15 "In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old . . ."

The remainder of this chapter describes again in PHYSICAL, AGRICULTURAL TERMINOLOGY, the future glorious providence of the Ruler of Israel for His subjects. Again, Acts 15:12-18 is conclusive that Amos' prophecy was fulfilled in the church and the spiritual blessings of redemption and salvation.

4. "Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days." Hosea 3:5
5. Micah 4:1-8 is one of the loveliest of all the Messianic contexts. Actually the whole 4th and 5th chapters of Micah are Messianic. It is a picture of God ruling in Zion, peace and security and prosperity. ". . . they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree . . . and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore."
6. So the Messiah is pictured in the O.T. Prophets as the Shepherd-Provider. Isaiah 61:1-7—Cf. with Lk. 4:18-19

JESUS CHRIST CAME AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD . . . HE CAME BRINGING THE BREAD OF LIFE . . . THE LIVING WATER. The food Jesus used to sustain Himself was "to do the will of His Father." (Jn. 4:34) "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matt. 5:6

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THE REAL THINGS THAT SATISFY AND GIVE PLEASURE ARE NOT MATERIAL THINGS . . . THEY ARE AT BEST ONLY TEMPORARY, JUST AS THE PHYSICAL BODY IS. . . . BUT WHAT REALLY SUSTAINS US . . . WHAT REALLY GIVES US LIFE . . . A LIFE WORTH LIVING . . . IS TRUTH, LOVE, PEACE, JUSTICE, RIGHTEOUSNESS. . . . IF WE DO NOT HAVE THESE, ALL THE MATERIAL THINGS IN ALL THE WORLD WOULD NOT SATISFY!

C. Protect

1. "And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth." Micah 5:4. This is the ruler to be born in Bethlehem.
2. Micah chapter 4 also speaks of the security of God's people under the coming Messiah.
3. "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion . . . the Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has cast out your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more." Zeph. 3:14-20 (Read the whole context.)
4. Zechariah 12:7—13:1
5. Malachi 4:1-6
6. There are so many great passages in the Prophets describing the victory and security that will be won by the coming Messiah. We cannot list them here. WE MUST REMEMBER THAT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, WHEN THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF GOD'S VICTORY OVER NATIONS CONTEMPORARY WITH THE DAYS OF THE PROPHETS THESE VICTORIES WERE TO TYPIFY THE GREAT VICTORY OF HIS MESSIAH OVER THE GOD OF THIS WORLD. Often when the prophets spoke of future victories over all the nations of the world, they were predicting that time when the Messiah would come and win the ULTIMATE victory which would provide security and safety for God's people (the church).
7. Jesus, the Messiah, clearly promises that protection and security. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know

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them, and they follow me; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand." Jn. 10:27-28

8. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No in all these things we are *more than conquerors* through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:35-39
9. "Put on the whole armor of God . . . above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. . . ." Eph. 6:10-18
10. ". . . your life is hid with Christ in God . . ." Col. 3:3
11. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" I Jn. 5:4-5

CONCLUSION

I. Behold Thy King Cometh.

- A. Jesus, entering Jerusalem for the final showdown, rode on a colt. This reminded the gospel writer Matthew to remark that it was a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy (Zech. 9:9).
 1. This was His public announcement to the nation of Israel that He was the promised Messiah.
 2. They had been trying desperately to get Him to announce that He was.
 3. However, they expected Him to substantiate His claim with some stupendous, spectacular economic or military victory over their hated conquerors, the Romans. He came, as He had in the past three years, meek,

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humble, seeking to rule their minds and morals.

- B. Just prior to this triumphal entry into Jerusalem . . . as He drew near the city, he told his disciples a parable about a nobleman who went into a far country to receive kingly power and then return. (Lk. 19:11-27)
1. But the citizens of this country hated the nobleman and sent an embassy after him, saying, We do not want this man to reign over us.
 2. And so it was true of the majority of the Jews even then. . . . **THEY REJECTED HIS KINGSHIP BECAUSE THEY WERE LIKE THEIR ANCESTORS WHO WANTED A KING LIKE THE NATIONS.**
 3. They were convinced that this world was all that counted and they wanted a king who would deal with the here and now—**AS THEY WANTED HIM TO DEAL WITH IT . . . THEY WOULD TELL HOW TO RULE!**
 4. Just a few days later they would cry out, “He is not king of the Jews. . . . We have no king but Caesar . . . away with him . . . crucify him . . . his blood be upon us and upon our children.”

II. Behold, Thy King

- A. When Jesus stood before Pilate, Pilate asked Him, Are you the King of the Jews?
1. Jesus said, My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.
 2. Jesus went on to say to Pilate, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.”
- B. Friend, you will be ruled over by some spiritual power or another.
1. There are two kingdoms into which all moral beings are divided—light and darkness; truth and falsehood;

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righteousness and sin.

2. Paul exhorted the Roman Christians, "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions." Rom. 6:12
 3. Paul exhorted the Colossians, "Let the peace of Christ *rule* in your hearts . . ." Col. 3:15
- C. You have a throne-room within you. It is your mind, (heart, the Bible usually calls it.)
1. Here is where Christ must rule in truth and goodness, if you want to reach the high and holy spiritual potential for which God made you.
 2. How does Christ rule?
 3. Paul says just a verse later in Colossians 3:16— "Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly. . . ." Earlier in that chapter he wrote, ". . . seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. . . . Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth." Col. 3:1-2
 4. We must surrender our thoughts, ambitions, desires, motives to His revealed will and Word. We must let Him capture our thinking. "For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war. For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and *take every thought captive to obey Christ.*" II Cor. 10:3-5
 5. John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles all preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD MUST REPENT . . . CHANGE HIS MIND!

"Repent and be immersed, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For unto you is the promise and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him."

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O.T. PROPHECY — A PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

I. Disciples understood that the Messiah's work was to *restore* kingdom.

A. "So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
Acts 1:6

1. Jesus answered by telling them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:7-8

2. A few weeks later they received this power and the church was established (Acts 2) on the Day of Pentecost.

B. Why would they understand this?

1. Because they were well studied in the O.T. prophecies
2. Because John the Baptist taught some of them concerning this
3. Because Jesus taught this concept constantly by precept and parable

II. The Kingdom of God and The Church are one and the same.

A. This is a necessary fundamental to be understood if we are to understand that O.T. prophecy is a prediction of the church.

1. The prophets were *not* predicting some far off rebuilding of the Jewish political—national—geographical kingdom.

2. If they were then Christ was mistaken, the apostles were fooled and duped, and the church for 2000 years has been a meaningless attempt to do something

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God never intended!

B. Impossible in this sermon to make an in-depth study of the kingdom-church concept but a few scriptures should suffice.

1. Colossians 1:13 "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. . . ."

2. Hebrews 12:28 "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. . . ."

3. Acts 8:12 "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

4. Romans 14:17 "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. . . ."

5. I Thessalonians 2:12 ". . . we exhorted each one of you . . . to lead a life worthy of God, who *is calling* (pres. act. participle *kalountos*) you into his own kingdom and glory."

6. Matthew 16:18-19 "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . ."

III. The promises (most of them) to Israel by the O.T. prophets were to be fulfilled in the Church.

A. Paul's great treatise on this subject is in Romans 9-10-11 . . . these chapters must be read as one context!

B. He definitely says that just being a Jew according to the flesh is no guarantee that one will receive the blessings promised to Abraham's seed!

C. In Galatians 6:16 Paul calls the church, "The Israel of God."

D. In Hebrews 12 Paul tells the church that it has come to Mt. Zion which shows that much of the glorious things

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said of Zion in the prophets was intended for the church of the N.T.

DISCUSSION

I. Chronology

- A. We have already mentioned Daniel 9:24-27 and shown:
 - 1. They refer to the Messiah and His work.
 - 2. The Jews should have been able to determine very precisely and exactly what year this would take place (see our notes in sermon in this series on Christ).
- B. Daniel 2:44
 - 1. "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever."
 - 2. There can be no mistaking *which* kings.
 - a. The kings of the fourth world empire—Rome.
 - b. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation of the dream about the great image—Nebuchadnezzar was the first part of the image and there were three succeeding empires to follow him—Persian, Grecian, and the one of iron (Rome).
 - 3. This vision of the great image is paralleled by the vision of the four beasts in Daniel 7. The lion is Babylon; the bear is Persia; the leopard is Greece; the terrible and dreadful iron beast is Rome; then the vision of the son of man coming to the Ancient of Days being given dominion and glory and kingdom.
- C. Joel 2:28, 32
 - 1. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. . . . And it shall

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come to pass that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls. . . .”

2. All the context of Joel 2:28—3:21 should be understood as speaking of the establishment of the church and all that intervenes between the Day of Pentecost and the Second Coming of Christ.
 3. In other words, it is a prophecy of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth and its victory.
 4. We can be absolutely sure of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Peter, the inspired apostle, declared its fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2.
- D. Isaiah 61:1-4 (actually the entire 61st chapter is in the context).
1. Someone is to be anointed to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
 2. At this time the ancient ruins will be rebuilt; the former devastations of many generations would be repaired.
 3. Again, we can be absolutely sure of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus said in a synagogue in Nazareth, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke 4:20

“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching, the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:14-15

“I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos. . . .” Rev. 1:9

THE KINGDOM/CHURCH ARE ONE AND THE SAME. GOD PLANNED THE CHURCH/KINGDOM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. GOD PREDICTED THE KINGDOM’S COMING WITH THE MESSIAH.

THE CHURCH IS NOT AN AFTER-THOUGHT OF GOD. IT IS NOT A PARENTHESIS! IT IS GOD’S FINAL STAGE OF REDEEMING MAN

WHILE TIME CONTINUES. IT IS THE ONLY STAGE LEFT!

II. Character

A. Triumphant

1. If there is one thing emphasized in the O.T. prophets concerning the glorious future of God's rebuilt kingdom under His Messiah-King, it is **TRIUMPH, VICTORY**.
2. Victory over demonic forces of evil
 - a. These forces attempted to thwart the purpose of God to redeem man by use of force, sensuality, false teaching.
 - b. These forces manifested themselves in the form of pagan governments, pagan materialism, pagan religion and false prophets.
 - c. So God's prophets predicted the eventual triumph of God's kingdom over these forces. When they made their predictions they made them in verbal forms the people of their day would understand and related everything they predicted to nations and circumstances of their own day ("times coloring").
 - d. The Book of Revelation, so parallel to O.T. prophetic symbolism, also declares the victory of God's church over force, sensuality and false teaching (beast, harlot and false prophet).
 - e. Some great figurative passages about God's future victory for His kingdom are:
 - (1) Joel 3:1-21—God will judge all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat. All that the pagan forces can muster will be defeated by God when He restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem (read the whole context).
 - (2) Isaiah 60:1-22
 - (3) Daniel 2:44—in the vision of the great image a stone cut from a mountain by no human hand represents the kingdom of God which is to strike

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- the great image (representing world pagan power) knock it down, grind it to dust and the wind comes and blows it away. This stone (God's kingdom) triumphs over the image (pagan evil).
- (4) Micah 7:11-20—the nations shall be humbled and in fear turn to the Lord when God fulfills His covenant to Abraham in forgiving sins (this can only refer to the work accomplished in Christ—the seed of Abraham; Cf. Romans and Galatians).
 - (5) Zephaniah 3:8-20
 - (6) Zechariah 2:6-12—God will give His people victory over those who formerly plundered them, for in touching His people they touched the “apple of his eye.” He will dwell in their midst and many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be His people.
 - (7) Zechariah 13:1—14:21—A great battle of the Lord against the nations when He stands on the Mt. of Olives, etc.
3. All these and many others refer very simply to God's great triumph over the absolute worst that the forces of Hell could do in their attempt to thwart God's purpose to redeem man—when these evil forces succeed in crucifying the Lord of Glory—**GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, INSTITUTED HIS CHURCH, AND SENT THE CHURCH MILITANT OUT TO BRING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST!**

When Christ was crucified and raised from the dead, the devil was cast out, judged, and his power (the fear of death) was destroyed. (Jn. 12-16; Heb. 2) When Christ was crucified and raised from the dead, He led captivity captive. . . . At the cross God “disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, *triumphing* over them in him.” Col. 2:15. The preaching of the cross destroys the wisdom of the world (I Cor. 1:18-25). **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS THE TRIUMPHANT CHURCH, THE VICTORIOUS CHURCH. . . . WE ARE MORE THAN**

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CONQUERORS. . . . WE AWAIT ONLY THE FINAL VICTORY SUPPER WITH THE LAMB AT THE CONSUMMATION. . . . BUT EVEN NOW VICTORY IS A REALITY . . . THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMES THE WORLD . . . EVEN OUR FAITH!

B. Peaceful

1. The picture of God's future kingdom is portrayed by the O.T. prophets as one of peacefulness and tranquility.
 - a. "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned. . . . He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." Isa. 40:1, 2, 11.
 - b. When the Messiah brings in the new kingdom, men will be at peace with God and He with them.
2. "And a highway shall be there and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, and fools shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35:8-10
 - a. The member of God's future kingdom will be at peace with all of God's creation.
 - b. The peace and tranquility and harmony and dominion man enjoyed in the garden of Eden is *potentially* restored to man through Christ's meritorious work (Heb. 2:5-9).
 - c. All of God's creation becomes a storehouse of things able to be used by the Christian to glorify God in this new relationship. EVERYTHING IN GOD'S CREATION IS AVAILABLE FOR GOD TO USE TO WORK FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM (Rom. 8:28).

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- d. Even those things which test us and try us become stepping stones to steadfastness and hope. (Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4)
3. Isaiah 2:1-4; Isaiah 11:1-10; Micah 4:1-7
4. "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing." Ezek. 34:25-26
 - a. This is in the same context as Ezek. 34:20-24 concerning the "one shepherd, David," who is to come and feed God's flock. I think it applies to none other than the Good Shepherd of John 10.
 - b. Consider along with this Psalm 23.
5. ". . . and he shall command peace to the nations; . . ." Zech. 9:10 Remember this is in the same context as "Lo, your king comes to you. . . etc." Zech. 9:9 fulfilled at Jesus' triumphal entry.

NO STUDENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SHOULD HAVE TO BE REMINDED THAT PEACE IS THE GREAT RECURRING THEME OF THE CHURCH. (Ephesians 2:11-22) (Rom. 14:17; Phil. 4:7) The peace of God is to rule in our hearts, Col. 3:15; Christians are to follow peace with all men (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 12:18); Christians are called to peace in marital relationships (I Cor. 7:15).

IN GOD'S FUTURE KINGDOM, AS THE PROPHETS PORTRAYED IT, MEN OF ALL NATIONALITIES, MEN OF ALL SOCIAL STRATA, DIFFERING CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, INTELLECTUAL STRATA WOULD BE UNITED IN PEACE AND HARMONY.

Christians are to be so oriented to peace they will not even need to use civil courts when one has a grievance against a brother. . . . They will settle it between themselves, fairly, justly and peaceably. (I Cor. 6:1-11) THE LAW OF GOD, THE VERY NATURE OF GOD, WILL BE WRITTEN ON THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS AND THEY WILL IMITATE HIM!

C. Righteous

1. One of the very definite characteristics of the future kingdom of God predicted by the prophets was **RIGHT-EOUSNESS**. The kingdom of God as it was during the days of the prophets was almost totally unrighteous. There was injustice, unholiness, unfaithfulness, falsehood, exploitation and sin and crime of every description and degree rampant! Immorality, inhumanity and indecency were the common practices. **THOSE VERY FEW FAITHFUL PEOPLE OF GOD CRIED OUT FOR RIGHT-EOUSNESS. THE PROPHETS PROMISED THAT GOD'S FUTURE KINGDOM WOULD BE ONE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**
2. Justice is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. Isaiah 9:7 "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with *justice* and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore."
 - b. Isaiah 11:3-4 "He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth."
 - c. In the kingdom the prophets predicted, all dealings of God with men and men with men would be done justly, fairly and without partiality. "Truly, I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" Acts 10:34-35. Paul to Timothy concerning his ministry . . . "I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality." I Tim. 5:21. See also James 2:1-7; 3:17.
3. Holiness is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. "Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the *holy* mountain." Zech. 8:3
 - b. "Behold the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the

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earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. And they shall be called The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought out, a city not forsaken." Isa. 62:11-12

- c. Holiness, separation from worldliness, is what God intended for the Hebrew people when He first chose them. But they became so worldly-minded and worldly-acting that they actually became worse than the heathen nations surrounding them.
- d. The prophets predicted that God's new kingdom under the Messiah would be holy—separated from worldliness.

This would involve purging God's people of idolatry and false prophets.

"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. And on that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more; and also I will remove from the land the prophets and the unclean spirit." Zech. 13:1-2

- 4. Faithfulness is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. The main characteristic of the rebellious and stubborn Israelites was unfaithfulness to covenant relationship with God.
 - b. God's new kingdom which the prophets predicted would be characterized by God demonstrating once and for all His absolute faithfulness (Heb. 6:13-20; II Cor. 1:20-21) and man's responding by faithfulness in keeping covenant with God.
 - c. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins." Isa. 11:5
 - d. "And in that day, says the Lord, you will call me, My husband. . . . And I will betroth you to me for

ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord." Hosea 2:16-20 (In its context, this has to be Messianic.)

- e. Perhaps the most significant prediction of the nature of faithful covenant relationship in the future kingdom of God is that prediction in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (quoted as fulfilled in the N.T. in Hebrews 8:8-12).

The Lord will make a new covenant, not like the one their fathers broke, it will be written on their hearts and minds, God will be their God and they shall be his people.

Also, Jeremiah 32:37-40 "Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation; I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, *that they may not turn from me*. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in *faithfulness*, with all my heart and all my soul."

THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE CHARACTERIZED BY RIGHTEOUSNESS. WHEN GOD SHOULD SEND HIS MESSIAH-KING TO RULE, HE WOULD RULE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. JUSTICE, HOLINESS AND FAITHFULNESS.

OUT OF RESPONSE, MEMBERS OF THIS KINGDOM WOULD CHARACTERIZE THEIR CONDUCT BY JUSTICE, HOLINESS AND FAITHFULNESS.

In this new kingdom there would be judicial and experiential righteousness. God would judicially cleanse and pronounce men

righteous through the sufferings of His Servant (Isa. 53). Then those cleansed would respond with righteous living.

RIGHTEOUS IS SOMETHING WE ARE, FIRST OF ALL. GOD MAKES THAT POSSIBLE THROUGH THE ATONING, JUSTIFYING, SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH OF HIS SERVANT, THE MESSIAH. BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ALSO SOMETHING WE DO!

“Little children, let no one deceive you, He who does right is righteous, as he is righteous. . . . By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother.” I John 3:7, 10 So, AS DANIEL PREDICTED, 490 YEARS WERE ALLOTTED FOR THE HEBREW PEOPLE OF OLD “TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION, TO PUT AN END TO SIN, AND TO ATONE FOR INIQUITY, TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, TO SEAL BOTH VISION AND PROPHECY, AND TO ANOINT A MOST HOLY PLACE.” Dan. 9:24

III. Commission

1. Militant

- a. Being triumphant, this kingdom will also be militant in that it will “possess” all the nations.
- b. Now it should be readily apparent that this was never intended to be literal and absolute in the sense of some physical, worldwide political kingdom. IT IS REFERRING TO GOD’S SPIRITUAL RULE IN A UNIVERSAL SENSE.
- c. It is true that the kingdom of God through the church has a universal dominion. There are members of every nation under heaven who have been “possessed” by God’s kingdom. Many of these have been some of the greatest “jewels” of the different races and nationalities of men.
- d. The O.T. prophets definitely portrayed the future kingdom of God as a militant, evangelistic, conquering kingdom. It was not one that would just be defensive. . . . IT WOULD GO ON THE OFFENSE,

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DOING BATTLE WITH THE FORCES OF EVIL, CAPTURING (OR DELIVERING) MEN FROM THE DOMINION OF THE DEVIL WHEREVER THEY WERE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

- e. This definitely is what is meant by Amos 9:12 . . . “that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this.” BECAUSE AMOS 9:12 IS IN THE VERY CONTEXT WITH AMOS 9:11 WHICH THE APOSTLES QUOTED AS FULFILLED IN ACTS 15:15-18 WHEN THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO THE GENTILES AND THEY BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE GOSPEL!
 - f. There are other references, too numerous to list them all, which portray the future kingdom of God, as the prophet saw it, possessing all the nations of the world. (1) Obadiah, verses 17-20 (2) Zechariah 8:20—9:8 (3) Isaiah 55:4-5
2. Prosperous
- a. The prophets spoke of the future kingdom of God as one of glorious abundance and prosperity. THEY SPOKE IN PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL TERMS. BUT THEY MEANT SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY AND ABUNDANCE. WE KNOW THIS FROM WHAT THE N.T. SAYS ABOUT THE FULFILLMENT OF SOME OF THE PROPHETIC PASSAGES.
 - b. Micah 4:4 . . . “but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree . . .”
 - c. Isaiah 25:6 . . . “On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for *all* people a feast of fat things. . . . etc.”
 - d. Isaiah 55:1-3 “. . . he who has no money, come, buy and eat! . . . buy wine and milk without money and without price . . . eat what is good . . . delight yourselves in fatness . . . I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. . . .” THIS IS SAID TO BE FULFILLED BY THE

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PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF GRACE IN ACTS 13:34ff.

- e. Amos 9:13-15 another description in physical terms of the coming spiritual prosperity in the prophetic kingdom of the future.

JESUS LIKENED THE KINGDOM UNTO GREAT FEASTS AND CELEBRATIONS IN HIS PARABLES. IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, PETER EXHORTED THE PEOPLE TO "REPENT . . . AND TURN AGAIN, THAT TIMES OF REFRESHING MAY COME FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. . . . FOR GOD HAVING RAISED UP HIS SERVANT, SENT HIM TO YOU FIRST, TO BLESS YOU IN TURNING EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM YOUR SINS." (Acts 3:17-26)

Paul wrote, "He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3); "all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours. . . ." (I Cor. 3:21-22); Christians have "a better possession and an abiding one. . . ." (Heb. 10:34) CHRISTIANS HAVE INHERITED THE EARTH AND THE HEAVENS! SO THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF GOD OF THE FUTURE WAS PORTRAYED WITH A COMMISSION OF MILITANCY AND PROSPERITY (BLESSING).

IT WOULD GO INTO ALL THE NATIONS AND RACES OF THE EARTH, DOING BATTLE AGAINST THE WORLD POWERS OF DARKNESS THAT HOLD MEN UNDER THE DOMINION OF SIN. . . .

IT WOULD SHED ITS LIGHT OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AND DELIVER AND CAPTURE MEN AND WOMEN FOR GOD.

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, MEN WOULD BE FILLED. THEY WOULD BE INVITED TO THE KING'S FESTIVE TABLE OF GOODNESS AND REFRESHMENT WOULD COME TO THEIR VERY LIVES. LOVE, JOY, PEACE, GENTLENESS, KINDNESS, MEEKNESS, SELF-CONTROL, FREEDOM, FRUITFULNESS, SATISFACTION. . . ALL THESE WOULD BE SPREAD OUT BEFORE THEM IN THIS NEW KINGDOM!

CONCLUSION

I. The Kingdom of God has come!

- A. The angel promised to Mary that her virgin-conceived son would be great, would be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord would give to him the throne of his father, David and he would reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there would be no end. Luke 1:32-33
 - 1. Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, announced the same news in predicting the mission of his son John as the forerunner of the Messiah, Luke 1:67-79.
 - 2. Simeon the aged and devout man in the temple when Mary went for purification announced the same news, Luke 2:25-35.
- B. It was predicted even to the exact year; to the exact place; including the exact phenomena that would accompany it.
 - 1. Passage after passage in the N.T. confirms without room for doubt that the founding of the church on the Day of Pentecost was the official establishment of that kingdom.

II. The Kingdom of God is the rule of God in the hearts of men.

- A. the kingdom and the church are synonymous. But that does not mean that mere nominal church membership and citizenship in God's kingdom are synonymous.
 - 1. The kingdom is not provincial. It is not *merely* outward. It is in one sense a visible kingdom (the church), but it is not *just* visible.
 - 2. When the peace of Christ *rules* our hearts, when Christ is *Lord* of our minds and deeds, then the kingdom is in us and we are in the kingdom.
 - 3. Because when Christ is *Lord*, we will obey His commands.
- B. His kingdom is not "of" this world.

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1. It is not worldly—It does not force citizenship. Men and women become citizens by choice.
2. It is not worldly—It does not operate on pride and ambition. Men and women are servants, sheep, brethren, children.
3. It is not worldly—It is not satisfied with mere fleshly indulgences. It seeks the real and lasting values that are the very essence of life such as peace, joy, truth, justice, love, self-control.

III. THERE ARE TWO KINGDOMS THAT WILL LAST ETERNALLY . . . GOD'S AND THE DEVIL'S. GOD'S KINGDOM HAS WON. . . . THE DEVIL'S KINGDOM IS ETERNAL INCARCERATION AND IMPRISONMENT IN FALSEHOOD, UGLINESS, BITTERNESS, REBELLION, EXPLOITATION, GUILT, TORMENT. . . . GOD WILL TRANSFER YOU INTO WHICHEVER KINGDOM YOU DESIRE!

O.T. PROPHECY — A PLEA FOR CONVERSION

INTRODUCTION

- I. Basically, the pleas of the O.T. prophets is for personal conversion.
 - A. This is what the Messiah was to come to Israel for.
 - B. This is what the character of the kingdom of the future would be.
 - C. The prophets were sent by God to call the *people of their day* to repentance in preparation for the messianic age—so that the messianic program could be worked out through their people.
 - D. The prophets told the people of their day what the new messianic kingdom would be like in order to motivate their generation to repent and be the kind of people the Lord could use for redeeming the whole world.

II. The Prophets predicted that the coming Messianic Age would produce converted men.

- A. Man's problem from the sin of Adam in the garden up to the days of the prophets is one long story of rebellion against the knowledge of God and refusal to walk in the way of the Lord.**
- B. After God destroyed the world, having saved one man and his family, God began to prepare a people (descendants of Abraham), instilling in them the knowledge of His will (the law) and teaching them by discipline and miracle to walk in His way.**
- C. The people had good intentions and made many promises but their own willful desires to indulge themselves added to the attractions of sin plus the power of the devil to deceive led them progressively downward into unbelief and paganism.**
- D. Their downward plunge reached the very bottom in the days of the writing prophets, in the days of the divided kingdom.**
 - 1. God already knew that the majority of the Jews would never turn back to him without some drastic chastening.**
 - 2. God sent the prophets to warn the whole people (both Israel and Judah) of the impending judgment-captivity—and to call a righteous remnant to faith and endurance.**
- E. There are thousands of passages in the prophets which graphically describe the hard-heartedness and rebelliousness of the people toward God (Cf. Ezek. 3:1-27; Jer. 1:16-19, etc.). But two special passages portray the attitudes of the people with preciseness:**
 - 1. "There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land. . . . My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." Hosea 4:1, 6**

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2. "Thus says the Lord: Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk in it. I sat watchmen over you saying, Give heed to the sound of the trumpet! But they said, We will not give heed. . . . Hear, O earth; behold I am bringing evil upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not given heed to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it." Jer. 6:16-19

NO MORE PROMISES TO FOLLOW THE LORD. NOW THEY OPENLY REBEL! SO THE PROPHETS ARE SENT TO DECLARE THAT GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES (MADE TO THEIR FOREFATHER ABRAHAM) WILL BE FULFILLED IN A NEW KING, A NEW KINGDOM, AND WILL BE RECEIVED BY CITIZENS WHO ARE CONVERTED, MEN OF FAITH, TRUE SONS OF ABRAHAM, THOSE WHO KNOW GOD AND WALK IN HIS WAYS!

DISCUSSION

I. Know the Lord

A. It was not God's fault that men did not know Him.

1. "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, Here am I, here am I, to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices"; Isa. 65:1-2
2. God delineated His nature in His law; God demonstrated His nature in miraculously sustaining the people. There were great men of faith who did know God (Abraham, Moses, David) but they were few.
3. Even in nature there is enough of the nature of God revealed that all men may know Him if they wish (Cf. Rom. 1:18ff). MEN SIMPLY REFUSE TO HAVE GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE!

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- B. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wish to be God's people would know Him.
1. "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest . . ." Jer. 31:34
 2. "And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let my holy name be profaned any more; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, says the Lord God. That is the day of which I have spoken." Ezek. 39:7-8 THIS IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GREAT BATTLE OF GOD AND THE FORCES OF GOG-MAGOG WHICH I BELIEVE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH THE BATTLE IN THE VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT AND THUS SPEAK OF THE CROSS OF CALVARY. . . . Then will the Lord be known by true Israel and this includes Gentiles.
 3. There are other messianic passages depicting this (Isa. 59:20-21; Habakkuk 2:14; Isa. 52:1-15; 60:16).
- C. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would know Him INTIMATELY—SO THAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE LIKE THAT OF A BRIDE TO HER HUSBAND.
1. Isaiah 62:4-5 "You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."
 2. See also the whole context of Hosea 2-3.
 3. It hardly needs to be said that the N.T. refers to the church as the bride of Christ—to Christ as the

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bridegroom. (Eph. 5:21-33, etc.)

4. This is the ONENESS THAT IS TO BE KNOWN BY THE CHRISTIAN . . . LIKE THAT OF A HUSBAND AND WIFE!
 5. That kind of ONENESS can only be built upon knowing and trusting . . . knowing and trusting God to be faithful, just, loving, fair.
- D. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would KNOW HIM, DEPEND UPON HIM, AND CALL UPON HIS NAME.
1. The people of the prophet's day had devoted their energies to calling on the names of pagan gods. They had taken to worshipping idols of every description—even to worshipping the sun, moon and stars.
 2. They also were busy making military, political and economic treaties with pagan powers, hoping to call on their pagan "friends" in times of trouble. GOD TAUGHT THEM THAT THEIR WORLDLY FRIENDS COULD NOT SAVE THEM. SO GOD'S PROPHETS PREDICTED THAT IN THE FUTURE MEN'S MINDS AND HEARTS WOULD BE CONVERTED ABOUT THIS ATTITUDE.
 3. In the future time they would call upon the name of the Lord and be saved (Cf. Joel 2:30-32; Isa. 65:24)
- E. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would KNOW HIM AND WALK IN HIS NAME.
1. Isaiah 2:3 ". . . and many peoples shall come, and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he teach us his ways and that we may *walk* in his paths."
 2. Ezekiel 36:27 "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to *walk* in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."
 3. Micah 4:5 "For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever."
 4. The promise of the prophets is that men and women will be converted and walk in the way of the Lord. MEN

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WILL KNOW GOD NOT ONLY MENTALLY, BUT EXPERIENTIALLY. THEY WILL HAVE A DAY BY DAY FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AS THEY LIVE THEIR LIVES ACCORDING TO HIS DIRECTIONS!

5. "He who says, I know him, but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he (Christ) walked." I John 2:4-6

LET NO MAN SAY HE IS CONVERTED IF HE IS NOT WALKING AS CHRIST WALKED. LET NO MAN SAY HE KNOWS CHRIST IF HE IS NOT WALKING AS CHRIST DIRECTS.

II. Be renewed.

A. New Covenant (Jer. 31)

1. God and man will be in a new covenant relationship in the messianic kingdom.
2. God will cleanse men completely of their guilt.
 - a. "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness." Zech. 13:1
 - b. "Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old." Micah 7:20
 - c. AND, OF COURSE, THE GLORIOUS ISAIAH 53 PASSAGE IS TO BE INSERTED HERE.
3. The relationship between God and man will be RENEWED. Man will keep God's new covenant.
 - a. ". . . everyone who . . . holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; . . . for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather yet others to him besides those

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already gathered." Isa. 56:6-8

B. New Heart and New Spirit

1. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. . . . My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes . . . and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant. . . . My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . ." Ezek. 36:25-27; 37:24-28
2. Actually, the whole latter half of Ezekiel, from chapter 34 through 48, is messianic, basically. And it's message is concerning the new nature of the individual citizen of the future messianic kingdom.
3. To the Hebrew, heart meant the whole personality . . . mind, soul, spirit, being. **THE NEW CITIZEN OF GOD'S KINGDOM WOULD HAVE A NEW NATURE!** He would be as "dead, dry bones, raised from the grave."
4. **THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN AS GIVEN IN THE N.T.**
"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6:15 **IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD NOW, AND FOREVERMORE, NATIONALITY, RACE, CULTURE ARE IRRELEVANT. . . . IT IS THE NEW NATURE THAT GOD IS INTERESTED IN!**
5. In the fullness of time, God sent His Son to die in our

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place and to be raised from the dead, that by faith in Him and obedience to His will we might be born anew. For only those who are born again are given authority from God to become citizens of the kingdom of God. (Jn. 3:3-5)

- a. "Of His own will he begat us (brought us forth) by the word of truth that we should be a king of first fruits of his creatures." Jas. 1:18
- b. "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. . . . That word is the good news which was preached to you." I Pet. 1:22-25

C. New Speech

1. "For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord, those who are left in Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall pasture and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Zeph. 3:12-13
2. One of the glaring characteristics of wickedness of the people of the days of the prophets was their "unclean lips." (Isa. 6:5) Not necessarily foul and obscene (although I'm sure that is involved) but false, unjust, slanderous, deceitful, proud and haughty and vain.
3. Their total and constant devotion to idolatry necessitated that they speak lies and falsehoods, because they were living a lie in their unbelief.
4. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that "evil talk (homilia) corrupts good morals." This he said in the context of discussing their "talk that there couldn't be a resurrection." In other words, false doctrine preached and taught and spoken soon leads to corruption of morals. FRIEND, THIS IS THE CAUSE FOR

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THE BREAK DOWN IN THE MORALS OF AMERICA! FALSE DOCTRINES, THE DOCTRINES OF DEMONS, UNBELIEF, LIBERAL THEOLOGY! The most evil speaking ever done is not foul language—but the subtle half-truths and half-lies of unbelieving preachers. When Jesus said, “. . . on the day of judgment men will render account for every idle (careless, vain, void) word they utter . . .” Matt. 12:36, He was not talking about profanity so much as He was the words of unbelief the Pharisees had just uttered about Him.

5. The prophets predicted that the citizens of God’s messianic kingdom would be of “pure” speech. Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor . . . let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear.” Eph. 5:25, 29

CITIZENS OF GOD’S NEW KINGDOM ARE PEOPLE OF TRUTH. TRUTH IN SPEECH, TRUTH IN LIVING, TRUTH IN DOCTRINE—AND TRUE DOCTRINE MUST COME FIRST!

D. New Name

1. “The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will give. . . . You shall no more be termed Forsaken . . . but you shall be called My delight is in her and your land Married . . .” Isa. 62:2-4
2. “You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord God will slay you; but his servants he will call by a different name. So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth. . . .” Isa. 65:15-16
3. *Name* is a term used to signify or designate one’s progenitor or institutional association. When a woman marries she takes a new name.
4. The prophets predicted that the citizens of God’s messianic community or family would be such a

completely NEW people, they would have a NEW NAME.

5. This name would be held in honor throughout the world. It would not be a name denoting any physical, fleshly origin or association. IT WOULD BE UNIQUE.

WHY THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST AND THE BIBLE WOULD WANT TO BE KNOWN BY ANY NAME OTHER THAN CHRISTIAN, I DO NOT KNOW. WHY WOULD ONE THINK GOD APPROVES OF ALL THE DIVIDING NAMES MEN HAVE CLUTTERED UP CHRISTIANITY WITH?! THERE JUST ISN'T ANY NEED FOR TRUE BELIEVERS TO WANT TO SET THEMSELVES OFF AS SPECIAL KINDS OF "CHRISTIANS."

E. New Strength

1. "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not!" Isa. 35:3-4
2. ". . . but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."
3. ". . . and the lame I will make the remnant; and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore." Micah 4:7
4. Paul prayed for the Christians at Ephesus, ". . . that they might be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Eph. 3:16ff
5. He prayed for the Colossians, "May you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy. . . ." Col. 1:11
6. THE NEW STRENGTH AVAILABLE TO THE CHRISTIAN IS THE DELIVERANCE CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED WHEN HE DESTROYED FOR MAN THE POWER THE DEVIL HAD OVER MAN THROUGH THE FEAR OF DEATH (Heb. 12:14-15). MAN CAN BE DELIVERED FROM THIS WEAKENING, PARALYZING, SHATTERING BONDAGE—FEAR OF DEATH! This is the very crux of man's

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- problem—the absurdity of life in the face of the hopelessness of the grave! THE UTTER FRUSTRATION AND MEANINGLESSNESS OF LIFE IF THERE IS NOTHING BEYOND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAPPING ALL THE MORAL, SPIRITUAL STRENGTH ANY MAN MIGHT HAVE!
7. Thanks be to God, Jesus Christ “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” (II Tim. 1:10)

III. Live rejoicing.

A. Rejoicing through worship.

1. A magnificent picture of God’s covenant people worshipping Him in spirit and in truth is portrayed concerning the messianic times. The passages in the prophets are many.
2. This worship will be done in singing NEW songs of God’s deliverance and God’s grace and God’s glory. (Isa. 25:6—26:6) (Zeph. 3:14-20)
3. This worship will be done in giving of thanks. (Isa. 12:1-6)
4. This worship will be done through ministering. (Isa. 61:6)

B. Rejoicing through serving.

1. The great closing passage of the book of Isaiah is a picture of the messianic kingdom serving the Lord by evangelizing the nations and bringing men from all nations to worship the Lord. (Isa. 66:18-23)
2. There are numerous passages depicting God’s new covenant people “building up” the ruins and walls. “They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” Isa. 61:4 Cf. also Amos 9:11 “A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended. . . .” Micah 7:11ff
3. This is exactly what the writer of the N.T. book Hebrews is talking about in Hebrews 13:8-16 . . . that

the N.T. church is the fulfillment of the O.T. law and prophets "For here (in O.T. practices and covenant) we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come. Through him (Jesus) then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

C. Rejoicing through suffering.

1. "And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, They are my people; and they will say, The Lord is my God." Zech. 13:9
2. "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming. . . . But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years." Mal. 3:1-4

THE CITIZENS OF GOD'S NEW MESSIANIC KINGDOM WILL BE SO THOROUGHLY CONVERTED THEY WILL NOT MURMUR AND COMPLAIN AND TRY THE LORD WHEN TESTED AND TRIED AS DID THOSE OF OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

CHRISTIANS WILL COUNT THEIR TRIALS AS BLESSINGS. (Matt. 5:10-12; Rom. 5:1-5; II Cor. 1:3-11; Heb. 12:1-17)

Christians know, as the writer of Hebrews says, "For you have need of endurance, that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised." Heb. 10:36

CHRISTIANS LIVE REJOICING. THEY MAKE THEIR WORSHIP A MEANS OF REJOICING. THEY MAKE THEIR SERVICE A MEANS

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OF REJOICING. THEY EVEN MAKE THEIR SUFFERING A MEANS OF REJOICING.

CONCLUSION

- I. SO GOD'S PLAN FOR ALL MANKIND . . . SINCE ADAM AND EVE REBELLED AGAINST HIM . . . HAS BEEN CONVERSION.
- II. AND THE PROPHETS HAVE GRAPHICALLY PORTRAYED, IN TERMS PEOPLE OF THEIR DAY WOULD UNDERSTAND, WHAT THE CONVERTED MAN WOULD BE LIKE WHEN GOD SHOULD FULFILL OR FINISH HIS WORK OF REDEEMING MAN.
 - A. This converted man would know the Lord.
 1. Know the Lord so intimately it would be a marriage. In fact, the word for *know* in Hebrew is *yadha* and is often used to mean the most intimate relationship of all—sexual intercourse in marriage.
 2. Know the Lord so fully that there is a oneness with the Lord to the extent that His mind becomes our mind—His will becomes our will—His desire and nature become our nature.
 - B. This converted man would be RENEWED.
 1. New relationship or covenant with the Lord
 2. New heart and mind from the Lord
 3. New speech—TRUTH
 4. New name
 5. New strength
 - C. This converted man would live REJOICING.
 1. Through worship
 2. Through service
 3. Through suffering
- III. THIS IS IN DIRECT CONTRAST WITH MOST OF THOSE TO WHOM THE PROPHETS PREACHED.

ISAIAH

- A. They did not know the Lord. They did not want to know the Lord. They mocked God's law; they persecuted God's preachers; they filled their hearts with the knowledge of idolatry and paganism.
- B. In so doing they found abomination and decadence instead of renewal. Men become like the thing they love. (Hosea 9:10)
- C. And instead of rejoicing, they lived in hate, jealousy, envy, greed, chaos.

IV. NOW GOD HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MAN TO TURN AGAIN (WHICH IS CONVERSION) TO GOD AS MAN WAS WITH GOD IN THE BEGINNING.

- A. God has confronted man face to face on man's own level.
- B. God became man and dwelt among us.
- C. God, in Jesus Christ, came and conquered all that stands in man's way of turning back to God.
- D. Now man can regain his lost destiny, his lost companionship with his Creator, his lost dominion, his lost purpose.
- E. In other words, man turning back to God, finds himself.